

Commerce 4BM3 Strategic HR Planning Winter 2026 Course Outline

Human Resources and Management Area DeGroote School of Business McMaster University

INSTRUCTOR AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Friday 8:30 – 11:20am

Dr. Yao Yao

Instructor

yao33@mcmaster.ca

Office: DSB 424

Student TA

TBD

TAsMACID@mcmaster.ca

Office Hours: TBD

Office Hours: I am generally available for quick questions and comments after classes. If you wish to speak to me longer or in private, please email to schedule an appointment.

COURSE ELEMENTS

Credit Value: 3

A2L: Yes

Participation: Yes

Evidence-based: Yes

Leadership: Yes

Ethics: Yes

Innovation: Yes

Experiential: Yes

IT skills: Yes

Numeracy: Yes

Group work: Yes

Final Exam: Yes

Global view: Yes

Written skills: Yes

Oral skills: Yes

Guest speaker(s): No

COURSE INFORMATION

Lectures: 3 hours x 1/week

Course Delivery Mode: In-person

IMPORTANT LINKS

- [Mosaic](#)
- [Avenue to Learn](#)
- [Student Accessibility Services - Accommodations](#)
- [McMaster University Library](#)

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to complete the following key tasks:

- Discuss the role of Strategic Human Resource Planning in building competitive advantage.
- Analyze the organization's strategy and discuss implications of the HR plan.
- Analyze staffing trends within the organization and staffing challenges and opportunities in the external labour force.
- Forecast labour supply and labour demand.
- Describe and select among various methods for dealing with labour surpluses and shortages.
- Discuss research evidence and practitioner guidelines for specific situations, such as downsizing and restructuring, succession planning, international HRM and outsourcing, and mergers and acquisitions.
- Use the balanced scorecard as a tool for critical thinking in the HR Planning process.

REQUIRED MATERIALS AND TEXTS

Required:

Strategic Human Resources Planning, 8th edition
by Monica Belcourt and Mark Podolsky
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The course materials for this course will be delivered through the Immediate Access Program in partnership with the Campus Store. You'll receive digital access to the required textbook on Avenue to Learn starting the first day of class.

The discounted price for this resource is **\$113.95**. This cost will be shown on your student account at or before the beginning of the term.

The deadline to make changes to your IA options (opt out or back in) is **January 16th**, any changes that you make will be reflected on your student account after that deadline. You can manage your access at any time before the January 16th deadline through your personalized booklist on the Campus Store website. A reminder email will be sent to your McMaster account before the deadline. If you choose not to participate, you will no longer have access to these materials after the deadline.

CLASS FORMAT

The class will consist of weekly 3-hour in-person meetings. Class time will be dedicated to lectures, activities and exercises, including graded elements. Some activities may require the use of a digital device suitable for typing easily. It is essential that students read the textbook and additional materials (made available on Avenue to Learn each week) before each class.

Students will be provided with one or two short breaks during each session.

COURSE EVALUATION

25% Midterm Examination

The midterm will be closed book and held in class in Week 6, starting at 9am. More details about the format and length of the exam will be announced in class and on Avenue. There is no deferred exam for this course: a student who misses the midterm examination with approved MSAF or Notification of Absence will automatically have the weight of the Midterm examination added to the weight of the final.

30% Final Examination

The final exam will be semi open book (one letter-sized page cheat sheet allowed) and test all content taught throughout the semester. The exam will be held during the examination period at time and location determined by the University. More details about the format and length of the exam will be announced in class and on Avenue.

6%*2 Group Case Studies

Groups of 5–6 members (same group as the presentation) will work together on 2 case studies. Groups have 24 hours to complete each case study, including approximately one-hour in-class work time. The assignment will be available on A2L. Note that the groups are collectively responsible for successful completion of the assignments, i.e., all members of the same groups will receive the same grade for each case (except instances of absence, see below).

All submissions use the standard cover page and follow the formatting guidelines (available on A2L). On the cover page, groups must confirm the participation of each member in each submission. Members who are absent from that assignment will not receive the corresponding grades and may be given makeup opportunities (see the "Absences, missed work, and illness" section).

20% Group Presentation

Groups of 5–6 members (same groups as the case studies) will prepare and deliver a **12-minute in-class presentation** that introduces and analyzes a real business case related to the specific topic for that week (e.g., downsizing and restructuring, international HRM, mergers and acquisitions, or outsourcing). This requires you to study the corresponding chapter in advance, but your task is not to reproduce the textbook chapter but rather to apply the concepts by examining a real organization that faced challenges in your assigned topic. In your presentation, you should briefly describe the background of the case, identify the key HRM challenges that emerged, summarize how the organization responded or pivoted to address those challenges, and what the outcomes are. Groups should **email me their chosen case** once a decision is made (at least one week before the presentation day), so I can ensure that groups presenting on the same day do not select the same organization or scenario.

On the day of the presentation, you are required to **submit your slides on Avenue to Learn by 8am** of the presentation day and **bring a copy of printed slides to class. At least 3 group members are required to participate in the presentation.**

In the total 20% weight of the group presentation, 2% will be the average peer evaluation by classmates (with outlier scores removed) on communication quality. The remaining 18% will be graded by the instructor. Each presentation will be followed by a 3-minute Q&A session, where the group will answer questions from the audience. Performance in Q&A will affect your final grade. A detailed grading rubric will be available on Avenue to Learn.

Students may freely use generative AI as a tool to prepare for this presentation as long as **the sources that generative AI used (not generative AI itself) are referenced and cited** following the [APA referencing style](#). That is, **all information provided by generative AI needs to be verified**. Use of generative AI outside assessment guidelines or without citation will constitute academic dishonesty. It is the groups' collective responsibility to be clear on the expectations for citation and reference and to do so appropriately. **All chats with the generative AI in preparation of this preparation need to be submitted along with your slides.**

Team Management:

- Teams are expected to self-govern to ensure the quality of all deliverables, and to independently resolve any conflicts within the team. If a member of a team is not pulling their weight, give them developmental feedback about how you expect them to contribute differently, such as suggesting how they can specifically contribute and by suggesting deadlines by which each member should hand something on time. If this does not work, alert the professor who will then take the necessary steps to resolve the situation by either potentially penalizing the free-rider or requiring that member to do the work alone on their own.
- Submission of the peer feedback assessment form at the end of term is optional. The form asks you to provide a numerical evaluation score for each of your team members on group presentation. No submission indicates that you are satisfied with the contributions of all teammates. If you receive unanimous poor ratings of from all other group members, your score for the group project will be reduced to up to 50% of what the team receives.

13% Individual Participation

The individual participation marks will be calculated based on two sources of information.

1) Records of the value you create for the whole class, through behaviours including but not limited to:

- Attending and engaging in every class.
- Actively engaging in class activities and submitting occasional mini-deliverables for activities.
- Asking questions that prompted the instructor to clarify complex materials. Questions can be asked in classes, in emails, or on the discussion board on Avenue to Learn.
- Asking questions about your peers' presentations and providing high-quality feedback.
- Always being respectful and professional in class.
- Participating in surveys that helps to improve the course.

The instructor will take notes throughout the semester to make sure your positive behaviours will be rewarded. You may lose participation marks if you display behaviours that harm the learning environment, such as arriving late, leaving early, and step out of the classroom without excusable reasons.

2) Your weekly check-in and reflection, written on the back of your name tent.

- At the end of each class, you will “check in” by writing down an assigned check-in word as your attendance records.
- You are also required to turn in 4-6 short learning reflections throughout the semester. Strong reflections should demonstrate in-depth understanding of the class content and active thinking during the class. These in-class learning reflection will be graded on the following rubric:
 - 3 – Excellent: Strong effort, shows clear understanding of the material, relates to personal observations and experiences, generates insight.
 - 2 – Satisfactory: Reasonable effort, shows basic understanding, but missing insights or strong connections with personal observations or experiences
 - 1 – Minimal or Needs Work: Purely summarizes the class, some parts are missing, or it shows very little effort/understanding.
 - 0 – Not Complete: The activity wasn’t turned in.
- Note that the name tent must be turned in right after the class. Attempts to receive credit for class engagement when you are not in attendance, as well as assistance in such behaviours, will be considered academic dishonesty. In-Class Participation & Learning Reflections are not eligible for MSAF.
- The use of **generative AI is strictly prohibited** in these reflection tasks.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS

Late assignments will be penalized 10% for each 24 hours they are late and will not be accepted after 72 hours past the deadline (receiving a grade of 0)

ABSENCES, MISSED WORK, ILLNESS

Exams:

Missed tests/exams will receive a grade of zero unless the student has submitted and been approved for a Notification of Absence or MSAF.

A student who misses the midterm examination with approved MSAF or Notification of Absence will automatically have the weight of the Midterm examination added to the weight of the final.

Group case study:

Students will receive group grades only if they participate in the corresponding case studies. Students who miss cases with legitimate causes (accompanied by MSAF) will be given the opportunity to make up for the grade with one additional individual case study at the end of the semester for each case missed. Any further absence and any absence without documentation will not be given make-up opportunities.

REQUESTING RELIEF FOR MISSED ACADEMIC WORK

In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar [“Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work”](#) and the link below*;

<http://ug.degrote.mcmaster.ca/forms-and-resources/missed-course-work-policy/>

COMMUNICATION AND FEEDBACK

Students who wish to correspond with instructors or TAs directly via email must send messages that originate from their official McMaster University email account. This protects the confidentiality and sensitivity of information as well as confirms the identity of the student.

All students must receive feedback regarding their progress prior to the final date by which a student may cancel the course without failure by default.

- For Level 1 and Level 2 courses, this feedback must equal a minimum of 20% of the final grade.*
- For Level 3 courses and above, this feedback must equal a minimum of 10% of the final grade.*

Instructors may solicit feedback via an informal course review with students around Week #6 to allow time for modifications in curriculum delivery.

Students who have concerns about the course content, evaluation methods, or delivery should first reach out to the course instructor. If your concern remains unresolved after speaking with the instructor, you may then reach out to the relevant Area Chair for further consideration.

COURSE MODIFICATION

From time to time there may be a need to remove/add topics or to change the schedule or the delivery format. If these are necessary, you will be given as much advance notice as possible.

GENERATIVE AI

See guidelines and restrictions in the description of specific deliverables.

Any individual or group submission suspected of violating the course’s AI usage policies may be subject to an oral defence. Students will be required to explain and justify their work, and the outcome of the oral defence will be graded and factored into the final assignment mark.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. **It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty.**

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](#).

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

- plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.
- improper collaboration in group work.
- copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

CONDUCT EXPECTATIONS

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#) (the “Code”). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, **whether in person or online**.

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students' access to these platforms.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact [Student Accessibility Services](#) (SAS) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or sas@mcmaster.ca to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University's [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#) policy.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION FOR RELIGIOUS, INDIGENOUS OR SPIRITUAL OBSERVANCES (RISO)

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the [RISO](#) policy. Students should submit their request to their Faculty Office **normally within 10 working days** of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

COPYRIGHT AND RECORDING

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, **including lectures** by University instructors.

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

EXTREME CIRCUMSTANCES

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, Avenue to Learn and/or McMaster email.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COURSE POLICIES

Your enrolment in Commerce 4BM3 will be considered to be an implicit acknowledgement of the course policies outlined above, or of any other that may be announced during lecture and/or on A2L. **It is your responsibility to read this course outline, to familiarize yourself with the course policies and to act accordingly.**

Lack of awareness of the course policies **cannot be invoked** at any point during this course for failure to meet them. It is your responsibility to ask for clarification on any policies that you do not understand.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Commerce 4BM3

Strategic HR Planning

Winter 2026 Course Schedule

- Should there be any reading you must complete before class, they will be posted on Avenue with an announcement.
- At times, events may require this schedule to be slightly modified. You will be notified in an earlier class or on A2L if any changes require preparation.

Date	Topic	Reading and Deliverables
Jan 9 (Week 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intro to the Course • Strategic Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Syllabus; • Textbook Chapter 1.
Jan 16 (Week 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aligning HR with Strategy • Environmental Influences on HRM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Textbook Chapters 2 and 3.
Jan 23 (Week 3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The HR Forecasting Process • Determining HR Demand – part 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Textbook Chapters 4 and 5. • Group Case Study 1
Jan 30 (Week 4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determining HR Demand – part 2 • Ascertaining HR Supply 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Textbook Chapter 6.
Feb 6 (Week 5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Succession Management • Change Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Textbook Chapters 7 and 9. • Group Case Study 2
Feb 13 (Week 6)	Mid-Term Exam (in class, 9am) Closed-book	
Feb 20	No class – Midterm Recess	
Feb 27 (Week 7)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT for HR Planning • HR Assessment and Analytics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Textbook Chapters 8 and 14.
Mar 6 (Week 8)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Downsizing and Restructuring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Textbook Chapter 10. • Presentation: Groups 1 & 2
Mar 13 (Week 9)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic International HRM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Textbook Chapter 11. • Presentation: Groups 3 & 4
Mar 20 (Week 10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mergers and Acquisitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Textbook Chapter 12. • Presentation: Groups 5 & 6
Mar 27 (Week 11)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outsourcing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Textbook Chapter 13. • Presentation: Groups 7 & 8
Apr 3	No class—Good Friday Break	
TBD	Final Exam: During the Final Exam Period Semi-open book (one-page cheat sheet)	