

HR Operations Career Development Cheat Sheet

Your journey from task executor to trusted contributor

STAGE 1

Be helpful

Master the basics and become known as dependable.

Focus	Activities
Accuracy • Responsiveness • Follow-through	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Responding to employee and manager queriesSending interview invites and tracking updatesCompleting onboarding checklistsSubmitting contract data or system changes
What good looks like	The next step
<ul style="list-style-type: none">You close loops quickly.You deliver work on time and correctly.People don’t need to follow up with you.	Identify one area where you could improve consistency or speed.

STAGE 2

Become trusted

Build reliability and clarity in how you communicate and work with others.

Focus	Activities
Clarity • Ownership • Process confidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Updating HRIS and ensuring clean dataExplaining onboarding processes to stakeholdersSpotting and correcting small process gapsManaging calendar conflicts or admin changes with calm professionalism
What good looks like	The next step
<ul style="list-style-type: none">People come to you for the right info.You explain HR steps clearly and confidently.You follow up without reminders.	Find one way to be more proactive in building trust.

STAGE 3

Get included

Be invited into planning, not just task execution.

Focus	Activities
Visibility • Initiative • Context awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Offering suggestions to improve team processesAsking questions that show forward-thinkingHelping plan for seasonal workload (e.g., review cycles, onboarding waves)
What good looks like	The next step
<ul style="list-style-type: none">You’re asked for input on templates, tools, or planning.You spot blockers before they escalate.You’re seen as part of the “core” HR workflow.	Look for a way to offer value before being asked.

STAGE 4

Be developed

Take on more ownership, deepen your HR knowledge, and expand your skills.

Focus	Activities
Skill-building • Cross-team exposure • Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Shadowing an HRBP or recruiterCreating/updating a team resource or SOPSupporting a cross-functional projectAsking for stretch tasks (e.g. ownership of an onboarding revamp)
What good looks like	The next step
<ul style="list-style-type: none">You’re given more autonomy or asked to lead small efforts.You’re applying feedback and learning from mistakes.You show curiosity about HR beyond your current task.	Choose one skill, system, or process to learn more about.

STAGE 5

Be ready for what’s next

Grow into the next level—whether it's more responsibility, complexity, or a new title.

Focus	Activities
Strategic mindset • Mentoring others • Big-picture impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Leading onboarding for a department or locationSupporting HRIS improvements or auditsTraining new Coordinators or internsBeing the “go-to” person for a specific process
What good looks like	The next step
<ul style="list-style-type: none">You’ve expanded your scope.You’re seen as calm, capable, and resourceful under pressure.You’ve started mentoring or coaching others.	Define what you want your next level to look like, and what will get you there.

