Typical Characteristics of HR Career Levels

An “Early Career” HR professional is characterized in the following way:

- Is a specialist in a specific support function, or is a generalist with limited experience
- Holds a formal title such as, but not limited to, HR assistant, junior recruiter, or benefits clerk

Narrative example:
Jamie is relatively new to the HR profession. While Jamie is a specialist that supports a specific function in the HR department, Jamie has generalist colleagues with similar levels of experience and responsibility who support specific functions in the HR department. Jamie has responsibilities such as, but not limited to, supporting HR initiatives, executing tasks passed down from management, and operating at the tactical and transactional levels. Jamie and colleagues at Jamie’s level hold titles such as, but not limited to, HR assistant, junior recruiter, and benefits clerk.

A “Mid Level” HR professional is characterized in the following way:

- Is a generalist, or is a senior specialist
- Manages projects or program
- Holds a formal title such as, but not limited to, HR manager, generalist, or senior specialist

Narrative example:
Tyler is an HR professional who has moved beyond Entry level responsibilities. While Tyler is an HR generalist, Tyler has colleagues with similar levels of experience and responsibility who are senior HR specialists. Tyler has responsibilities such as, but not limited to, managing projects, programs, and initiatives, implementing plans passed down, and delegating tasks to entry-level staff. Tyler and colleagues at Tyler’s level hold titles such as, but not limited to, HR manager, HR generalist, and HR specialist.
A “Senior Level” HR professional is characterized in the following way:

- Is a very experienced generalist or specialist
- Holds a formal title such as, but not limited to, senior manager, director, or principal

Narrative example:
Adison is a seasoned HR professional. While Adison is a very experienced specialist, Adison has colleagues with similar levels of experience and responsibility who are very experienced generalists. Adison has responsibilities such as, but not limited to, serving as developing and leading implementation plans and analyzing business information. Adison and colleagues at Adison’s level hold titles such as, but not limited to, director or principal.

An “Executive Level” HR professional is characterized in the following way:

- Typically is one of the most senior leaders in HR
- Holds the top HR job in the organization or VP role

Narrative example:
Helen is one of the organization’s most senior HR professional. As a member of the organization’s executive committee, Helen serves as an organizational leader and designer of human capital strategy. While Helen knows of individuals with similar responsibilities at other organizations who have more years of experience as an HR professional, Helen and individuals at a similar level hold titles such as, but not limited to, chief human resource officer or vice president.