

# **The Professionalization of Human Resource Management in an East-West Context: Evidence from a Three-Year Study**

**Assoc. Prof. Paul Higgins**

## **Abstract**

This presentation summarises key findings from a three year study which examined the professionalization of human resource management in Hong Kong and the United Kingdom. Initially, the presentation illuminates the key academic debates surrounding the notion of human resource management as a profession, drawing attention to the major theoretical models of professions, the emergence of new corporate (global) professions and the paradoxes of contemporary professional identity. In the second part of the presentation, insights from a wealth of primary data derived from a mixed methodology of elite interviews, case studies, document analysis and survey research highlights the status of the HR profession both normatively (i.e. the documented professional standards of the respective people management associations) and empirically (i.e. the claimed knowledge and behaviours of certified practitioners). By drawing theory and evidence from an East-West perspective, the presentation concludes with some important implications for the Singaporean HR community and its continuing professional development.