Aston Business School
Birmingham

BHM349 EMPLOYEE RELATIONS IN CONTEXT

Academic Year 2012/13

Number of Aston Credits: 15

Number of ECTS Credits: 7.5

Staff Member Responsible for the Module:

Dr. Ann Davis, Work & Organisational Psychology Group
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Availability: email for office Hours appointments
Or contact the Work Psychology Group Administrator
Mrs Jenny Thompson, SW802, Ext 3257

Other Staff Members Contributing to the Module:

Mrs Kathy Daniels, Sessional Lecturer,
Work & Organisational Psychology Group
Email: k.daniels172@btinternet.com
Availability: Email for an appointment
Or contact the Work & Organisational Psychology Group administrator
Mrs Jenny Thompson, South Wing 802, Ext: 3257

Pre-requisites for the module:

None

Mode of Attendance:

On Campus

Module Objectives and Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this module, students will be able to:

1. Describe and critically evaluate the basic concepts, theories and perspectives of employee relations.
2. Understand the impact of local, national and global contexts shaping employee relations.

3. Understand the roles and functions of different groups in the employment relationship.

4. Understand and analyse the importance and relevance of employee involvement and participation and other key processes in employment relations.

5. Understand and analyse how employment relations processes support the organisation and impact on the business strategy.

6. Demonstrate appropriate people management skills to manage conflict situations effectively.

Module Content:

Week 1: What is the employment relationship? Key concepts, theories and Perspectives

Week 2: The local and national context of employee relationships

Week 3: Strike: When Britain went to war

Week 4: The roles and functions of different groups in the employment relationship, including HR Outsourcing

Week 5: The impact of the law on employee relations, and global factors

Week 6: The roles of trade unions, and their purpose

Week 7: The process of negotiation and collective bargaining, conflict resolution and change management

Week 8: Employee involvement and participation, employee engagement, communication and diversity management

Week 9: Preparation of coursework

Week 10: Hand in coursework

There will also be one workshop which will be focused on the process of managing conflict. In this workshop the practical skills required to manage disciplinary situations, to negotiate, to listen and to communicate effectively will be addressed.

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Corporate Connections:

An experienced practitioner, who worked for many years in a unionized manufacturing environment, teaches on the module. The lecturer sits on employment tribunals, and hence is able to bring an extensive knowledge of difficulties that occur in the employment relationship.

The student body is a mixture of full-time and part-time students, many of whom are currently working in or have worked for organizations and this experience is shared with module participants

International Dimensions:

Comparative examples are used within the module content to illustrate similarities and differences within employee relations systems on an international basis. There is tutor input on the impact of the European Union.

International students are asked to give a brief presentation about employee relations in their home country in week 5, and a discussion will take place about the differences that are identified.

Students are encouraged to explore internal examples and critically analyse the applicability of dominant Western approaches. Articles from internal journals are utilised on the reading list.

Contribution of Research:

The core text book has been researched and written by the module tutor. Issues relating to Employment Law and Diversity are supported by text books that have also been researched and written by the module tutor. Research by members of the Work & Organisational Psychology Group and the CIPD is also used throughout the module

Method of Teaching:

There are weekly lectures, all of which will contain the opportunity for discussion and group work. In week 3 a documentary of the 1984/5 Miners' Strike is shown, and used as a basis for discussion. A wide variety of case studies are used.

There is also a one day workshop titled 'Managing Conflict' that further develops skills relevant to this module. During this workshop the focus will be on the practical skills that are required to manage disciplinary situations. Negotiation, interpersonal skills and communication skills will all be addressed.

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Method of Assessment and Feedback:

1. Coursework essay (90%).

This is a practical based piece of work, requiring students to apply the knowledge they acquire throughout the lectures. Feedback will be provided to students on individual feedback sheets.

2. Workshop Skills Portfolio (10%)

The portfolio will contain some combination of on-day assessed activities (e.g. worksheets, observations, evaluations) and an individual reflection on learning from the module and the skills workshop. In this reflection students will be asked to identify the skills that they need to develop further, and identify why these identified skills are necessary in the workplace. It will be submitted with the coursework assignment.

A satisfactory completion of the Skills Portfolio will be a prerequisite for achieving CIPD accreditation.

Learning Hours:

Contact hours	27
Class/workshop preparation	17
Directed learning/additional reading	50
Private study/coursework preparation	50
Workshop	6
Total	**150**

The following essential and recommended readings are subject to change.Students should not therefore purchase textbooks prior to commencing their course. If students wish to undertake background reading before starting the course, many of the chapters/readings are available in electronic form via on-line library catalogues and other resources.

Essential Reading:

Daniels, K (2006) *Employee Relations in an Organisational Context,* London: CIPD Publishing

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Indicative Bibliography:

Blyton, P. Herrey, E & Turnbull, P. (2010) *Reassessing the Employment Relationship*, London: Macmillan

Dibben, P, Klerck, G and Wood, G (2011) *Employment Relations: A Critical and International Approach,* CIPD Publishing

Gennard, J. & Judge, G. (2010) *Managing Employment Relationships*, 5th Edition CIPD

Hollinshead, G., Nicholls, P. & Tailby, S. (2003) *Employee Relations*, 2nd Edition, London: Financial Times Management

Lewis, P., Thornhill, A., Saunders, M. (2003) *Employee Relations: Understanding the Employment Relationship.* FT Prentice Hall.

Salamon, M (2000) *Industrial Relations: Theory and Practice*, 4th Edition, FT Prentice Hall

Recommended Journals:

British Journal of Industrial Relations
Employee Relations
Employment Review
Industrial Relations Journal
International Journal of Human Resource Management
Labour Market Trends
Labour Research
Human Resource Management Journal
People Management
Work, Employment and Society