Module Number: BH2212

Module Title: Theories and Practice of Human Resource Management

Number of Aston Credits: 20

Total Number of ECTS Credits: 10

(European Credit Transfer)

Staff Member Responsible for the Module:

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Pre-Requisite(s) for the Module: BH1107 - Organisational Behaviour

Module Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of the module students will be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the essential theories, models and practices of human resource management, and of their relevance and appropriateness in developing organisational policies, procedures and practices.
- 2 Discuss and critique the relationships between people and employment in contemporary society, and how human resource discourse and practice affects and constructs these relationships.
- 3 Demonstrate skills in the critical analysis and evaluation of contemporary human resource management structures and practices.

4 Demonstrate understanding of human resource management practices in organisations. Students will be able to contextualise their analyses within the wider economic, political and ideological environment and organisational situations.

Students will be expected to be able to discuss, appreciate and apply key theory, conceptual frameworks and knowledge of issues and common practices in the human resource management area of organisation studies.

Module Content:

The main focus is on contemporary human resource management theory and its application in workplaces. Each week there will be a 2-hour session using a variety of learning methods designed to support the topic under study and the needs of the module participants.

The module will take a series of HR themes or areas of practice and, over the course of three to four weeks, develop these themes and expand upon them. As such, week by week topics cannot be specified, however the thematic areas and probable number of weeks involved are outlined below. Both students and staff will need to be flexible in their approach to this topic, depending on the pace of the group and on developments in the workplace.

The context for Human Resource Management Weeks 1-3

This section will look at the nature of work in contemporary society and the role of human resource management within that. We will consider both what theorists say HRM should be and how it is actually experienced in the workplace. Managing people at work is not just a system of rules and procedures; it is fundamentally a value-driven activity. What are your values and how would that affect you at work? We will also spend most of one session setting up the coursework assignment

Starting work – Becoming part of the organisation Weeks 4-6

This section of the module will examine what is involved in getting people into an organisation, both from the perspective of the prospective employer and the prospective employee. Questions such as "how do we know we have a vacancy?" and "how do I know if I want this job?" will be looked at.

How does employment work – Negotiating power between employers and employees Weeks 7-10

Within this section of the module we will look primarily at power in organisations: who has it, how do they get it, who makes the rules and what can be done about it? Within

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this discussion we will also look at justice in organisations: what happens if rules are broken and what rules must never be breached?

Week 11

The last week of term will be a coursework surgery. Followed by the Christmas vacation

January 2011

Weeks 12 and 13

There is no teaching in these weeks as they are the January examination weeks. This module has no January examination and you should be continuing to prepare your coursework.

Managing performance – motivation and aspiration Weeks 14-17

Organisations exist to achieve objectives that individuals cannot do alone. This means that people need to work together towards organisational outcomes. In return, they are rewarded and, on occasion, punished. This topic looks at what performance is, what we as employers want from people and how best to ensure we get it. From the employees side, we also need to think about how do I as an employee discuss with my employer what I want to do and what I am worth? Also, we will consider how organisations and employees part company. These themes are at the core of HR activity.

Improving performance – keeping up in a changing world Weeks 18 – 19

Learning, training and development is a module in itself in the final year. Here we will focus on the organisational learning environment and how organisations and individuals can try to ensure they are prepared for the future.

The big picture Weeks 20-22

While the module has looked both at theory, practice and policy, so far this has been predominantly at the micro level. This final section will look at more macro level issues, including issues of international business and HR strategy but also returning to issues of ethics and power. What is the future of HRM? What are the challenges of working in and managing an increasingly diverse workplace and what have we learned from this module that we didn't know before?

Review and revision sessions will be arranged of the last weeks of the semester according to demand.

International Dimensions:

Diversity, multiple meanings and relations between cultures are central module themes. Differences between cultures and related practices are emphasised, as are the implications of these differences for intercultural relations, ethics, and change methodologies.

Corporate Connections:

Case study analysis and guided viewing of on-air material will be used were possible. Students will be expected to contact and investigate live HR issues in the community as part of their assessed work.

Links to Research

The module is directly informed by current debates within the HR and work psychology literature. Topics are addressed to incorporate both classical and contemporary critical debates about the nature of the employment relationship. The coursework assignment also introduces student to the research process to enable them to develop a deeper understanding of the nature of knowledge and its contested nature in the social sciences.

Learning and Teaching Rationale and Methods:

The module is taught through a 2 hour session each week. There are no weekly tutorials, however additional sessions can be arranged if appropriate, particularly to support you assignment preparation.

Interactive *lectures*: providing overviews of topic areas, models, theories and latest research and practice. The extent to which these are tutor or student led will depend largely on students' willingness to engage with the module (Objectives 1, 2 & 3).

Case studies may be set for which students will be expected to complete advanced preparation. This aims to encourage students to make links between theoretical and empirical material, as well as developing critical analysis skills (Objectives 3 & 4).

Discussion based around a reading or topic within a group. (Objectives 1, 2, 3 and 4).

Students are required to carry out *preparatory work* so that the discussion is soundly based on a critical appreciation of research findings and the awareness of the practice of employee relations.

Learning hours

Contact hours

Lectures 44 hours
Tutorial support 4 hours
Examination 2 hours

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Indirect learning

Private study / lecture preparation 100 hours Preparation of assignment 50 hours

Total 200 hours

Ethical Approval:

The coursework assignment on this module provides the opportunity for students carry out some independent research. This may include collection of primary data from organisations, in the form of interviews or questionnaires. Ethical conduct in applied research will be discussed the first section of the module. Any primary data collection activities will need to be approved by a member of the module team before being implemented.

Assessment and Feedback Rationale and Methods:

Assessment is via a written assignment (50%) and a two-hour unseen closed book examination (50%). Additional guidance and information on these assessments will be provided as the module progresses.

Assignment

This takes the form of an individual report on a contemporary HR-related issue of the student's choice (50%). Students are encouraged to prepare in self-selecting groups but will each produce individual reports relating to their analysis of the situation based upon developments in human resource management theories and practice (Objectives 1, 2, 3 and 4). Students must include in their assignment commentary on how they have approached the issue of ethical research practice in collecting the information used in their assignments.

Further information is available on Blackboard and the assignment will be discussed in more detail in the first section of the module nad thereafter regularly during the module.

Individual typed feedback on the assignment will be provided to students before within 6 weeks of the submission deadline.

Examination

The examination (50%) assesses the ability to apply substantive knowledge, analyse and evaluate complex situations and formulate management and representation policy within a time constraint. This assesses ability to present ideas concisely (Objectives 1, 2, & 3). Examination preparation will take place as appropriate towards the end of the module