

BH3308 – EMPLOYEE RELATIONS AND LEGAL ISSUES IN HRM

Module Number: BH3308

Module Title: Employee Relations and Legal Issues in HRM

Number of Aston Credits: 20

Total Number of ECTS Credits: 10
(European Credit Transfer)

Staff Member Responsible for the Module:

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Availability: See Group Administrator, Jenny Thompson,
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Other Staff Contributing to the Module:

Mrs Kathy Daniels

Sessional Lecturer – Work & Organisational Psychology Group

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Availability: Please e-mail to book an appointment – details will be given in lectures.

Pre-Requisite(s) for the Module: None

Module Learning Outcomes:

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

- 1 Demonstrate an understanding of the essential theories, models and practices of employee relations, and of their relevance and appropriateness in developing organisational policies, procedures and practices.
- 2 Demonstrate skills in the critical analysis and evaluation of contemporary employee relations structures and practices.
- 3 Understand basic employment legislation, especially that underpinning Employee Relations.

BH3308 – EMPLOYEE RELATIONS AND LEGAL ISSUES IN HRM

- 4 Demonstrate skills in the formulation of management and employee representation practices in organisations. Students will be expected to contextualise their employee relations analyses within the wider economic, political and ideological environment and organisational situations.
- 5 Demonstrate abilities to work within a group and individual context in order to articulate key concepts and analyses in both written and oral presentations.

Module Content:

The main focus is on contemporary employee relations, and legal issues within Human Resource Management.

The key weekly topics are shown below. All of the 2-hour sessions will use a variety of learning methods designed to support the variety and quality of learning; for example, a lecture/discussion will normally be included, but not necessarily at the start.

Weeks

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| Week 1 | What is the employment relationship? |
| Week 2 | The impact of external factors on the employment relationship |
| Week 3 | Management and the employment relationship |
| Week 4 | Research week: Finding examples of power balance in the Employment relationship – details to be given in lecture |
| Week 5 | Employees and the employment relationship |
| Week 6 | Contracts of employment – the legal basis for the employment relationship |
| Week 7 | The role of the trade union |
| Week 8 | The law relating to employee relations |
| Week 9 | Discipline and dismissals |
| Week 10 | Case Study: The Miners' Strike |
| Week 11 | Review of case study, application of theory |
| Week 12 | No teaching (exam week – no exam in this module) |
| Week 13 | No teaching (exam week – no exam in this module) |
| Week 14 | The government and global impacts on employee relations |
| Week 15 | Discrimination |
| Week 16 | Employee Involvement |
| Week 17 | Research week |
| Week 18 | Individual legal protection |
| Week 19 | Reward and the Employment Relationship |
| Week 20 | Negotiation |

BH3308 – EMPLOYEE RELATIONS AND LEGAL ISSUES IN HRM

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| Week 21 | Resolving individual grievances |
| Week 22 | Health and Safety |
| Week 23 | Revision session |
| Week 24 | Revision session |

The syllabus covers all of the core issues and debates surrounding a contemporary study of employee relations and legal issues. Students are presented with the core employee relations theories and models with which they are expected to analyse the policies and practices of managing employee relations. They are also taught the relevant legal issues, and the analysis must take place with regard to the law. Throughout the module, students will be encouraged to draw upon the various elements of the syllabus and reflect upon their own practice past, present and future.

International Dimensions:

Comparative examples are discussed within the syllabus content to illustrate similarities and differences within employee relations systems on an international basis. For example, there is consideration of the impact of the European Union on UK practices and legislation. Students are encouraged to explore international examples and critically analyse the applicability of dominant Western approaches to employee relations.

Corporate Connections:

It is important that students are aware of how the material taught is applied in organisations. Hence, the first piece of assessed coursework requires examples of employment relationships in organisations (which will also form the basis of personal research to be carried out in week three). In addition, there will be focus on specific organisational examples throughout the module. At the start of each lecture students will be invited to discuss anything that has been reported in the news the previous week relating to employee relations – giving a clear focus on up to date situations within organisations. All students are expected to be prepared to contribute to this session.

Links to Research

Throughout the course links will be made to contemporary research. Use will be made of recent CIPD publications and surveys. Links will also be made to research into current issues associated with employee relations.

Learning and Teaching Rationale and Methods:

- a) Contact and directed learning – Lectures, group activities, case studies, discussions, group presentations, and videos.

Interactive lectures providing overviews of topic areas, models, theories and latest research and practice. These are primarily tutor-led but with space and time for students to question, challenge, draw on their own experiences.

BH3308 – EMPLOYEE RELATIONS AND LEGAL ISSUES IN HRM

Case studies are set for a number of sessions, which the students will often have prepared for advance, encouraging students to make links between theoretical and empirical material, as well as developing critical analysis skills.

Video material is used to aid explanation, stimulate debate and provide empirical examples of policy and practice.

Seminar discussions based around a reading or topic within a group.

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

b) Duration

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| Lectures | 50 hours |
| Reading | 80 hours |
| Group work | 15 hours |
| Self directed learning | 15 hours |
| Revision | 20 hours |
| Assessment | 20 hours |
| Total | 200 hours |

Ethical Approval:

This module does not require any primary research and no ethical approval will be necessary.

Assessment and Feedback Rationale and Methods:

Assessment is via a two-hour unseen closed book examination (50%), and two elements of continuous assessment (25% and 25%).

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. Assesses ability to present ideas concisely. The examination will take place in the summer term.

An individual assignment (25%) requiring a 2,500 word report.

This assesses the ability to assemble and evaluate data, apply models, reason and present ideas in a coherent and persuasive manner with reference to a wide range of reading.

An individual based case study (25%) requiring a 2,500 word report. The case study will be placed on Blackboard during week 10. Students will be required to apply the theory and concepts that have been learnt during the module in answering the case study.

Written feedback on coursework assignments will be provided within the 4 week turnaround time specified.