

Module Title	Employee Relations	
Module Code	25-6021-00L	
Semester of Delivery	See Module Information Table	
Mandatory/Elective/Option	See Module Information Table	
Level	6	
Credit Points	20	
Assessment Mode Weighting	Coursework	50%
	Examination	50%
Pre-requisites		
Co-requisites	Managing People (L2)	
Class Contact Hours		
Average Weekly	1.5	
Directed Learning		
Average Weekly	5	
Module Leader	Tony Bennett	
Faculty	Organisation and Management	
Module Banding	A	
Approval Status	Validated	

Rationale

Employee relations is concerned with promoting commitment to the achievement of the organisation's business goals and objectives and ensuring that organisation change is accepted. It embraces the strategies, policies, structures and processes used to develop and maintain employee commitment. It will also broaden and deepen the general management skills of influencing and negotiating with managerial colleagues, individual employees and their representatives. The module is designed to satisfy the professional standards of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD).

Summary of Aims

- 1 To understand the changing and varied nature of the employment relationship.
- 2 To critically reflect on theory and practice relating to the processes and outcomes of employee relations.
- 3 To see the different perspectives of the parties to employee relations at organisation, industry and national levels
- 4 To be able to give professional advice on the formulation and implementation of employee relations policy.
- 5 To appreciate the strategic nature of employee relations and its contribution to organisational success.

Anticipated Learning Outcomes

On completion of the module students should be able to understand, evaluate and give professional advice on the following:

- 1 The key features of the individual employment relationship, including the psychological contract and legal rights and obligations of employers and employees.
- 2 Organisational, regional, national and international contexts and their potential impact on current employee relations strategies, policies, issues and practices.
- 3 Management strategies to gain the commitment, co-operation and empowerment of the workforce with particular reference to organisational change.
- 4 The mechanisms found in both non-union and unionised enterprises designed to achieve the reconciliation of the different interests of employers and employees for mutual gain.
- 5 Effective handling of grievance and discipline in the workplace, group problem solving and other methods of resolving differences.
- 6 Policies designed to ensure enterprises achieve a safe and healthy environment for the workplace in line with current legal requirements.

Assessment and Feedback Strategy

Students will be formally assessed in two ways which will carry equal weighting.

The students will complete one piece of coursework; a 2500 word paper answering a pre-set question by critically discussing and applying some of the key concepts in the context of employee relations. This represents 50% of the module assessment

Secondly, the more theoretical elements of the learning outcomes will be assessed by an unseen examination designed to test knowledge and understanding of contemporary debates in employee relations and the perspectives of the main players (50% weighting). Students will be expected to answer 2 questions from a range of 8 within a two hour period.

ASSESSMENT STRATEGY AND METHODS

Task No.	<u>TASK DESCRIPTION</u>	SI Code	Task Weighting %	Word Count / Duration	In-module retrieval available
1	Coursework	CW	50%	2500 words	No
2	Exam	EX	50%	2 hours	No

Teaching and Learning Strategy and Methods

The overall aim is to provide a learning environment which promote a critical understanding of employee relations and the ability to give professional advice on employee relations issues. This learning environment is designed to facilitate the development of cognitive skills (lectures, learning materials and seminar discussion) and personal/professional development individually and in groups (seminar exercises - presentations, case studies and role plays). Students will be provided with a course programme with learning objectives and general guidance but will be encouraged to participate in the design of learning activities to promote these learning outcomes. The focus of the lectures will be on material that will be assessed by formal examination while the seminars will concentrate on the development of professional skills.

Indicative Content

- **Employee Relations Management in Context**

The changing economic, social, political and technological environment of employee relations. The social dimension of the European Union. The changing role of the government and State Agencies in labour market regulation.

- **The Parties in Employee Relations**

Objectives and styles of employee relations management; the changing role and function of employer associations; management representative bodies at the EU level and at the EU sector (industry) level.

Different forms of employee voice – consultation and information giving and receiving bodies; staff/employee associations; the role, function, status and values of trade unions; the TUC and international employee representative bodies.

The State as an employer; the implications of the liberalisation of public sector product/service markets on the gaining of employee commitment in the public sector and quasi-public sector employing organisations.

- **Employee Relations Processes**

The range of techniques by which employee involvement is practiced including communication strategies and policies, problem-solving, task based involvement, quality circles, team briefing, representative participation and financial involvement.

Advice, conciliation, mediation and arbitration. Unilateral decision-making by employers. Employee participation in management decision-making by information and consultation bodies. Industrial sanctions including strikes and lockouts. Legal regulation to provide common standards. The role and function of Health and Safety Committees.

- **Outcomes**

Agreements – types (substantive, procedural, partnership, technological, single union/no strike and workforce), authorship (solely by management as predominantly in non-union firms or jointly as normally in unionised organisations)

levels and formality (informal as against formal), scope (subjects covered). Impact of employee relations on economic efficiency.

- **Employee Relations Skills**

Negotiation and bargaining skills required by management; preparation of claims/offer; techniques in searching for the “*common ground*”, skills in writing the agreement; sources of information.

Grievance handling (analysis, aims, strategy and tactics) with individual employees or groups of employees.

Handling disciplinary proceedings; devising and reviewing procedures; importance of “*natural justice*” in procedures; preparation of evidence to support management’s case at an Employment Tribunal.

Managing effectively a redundancy situation; legal requirements and the process of negotiating, devising and implementing a redundancy agreement or arrangements.

Interoperation of whether a new employee relations practice successfully implemented in one enterprise can be successfully transplanted to another organisation.

Communication, influencing and negotiating skills to achieve the implementation of change in the light of changing business objectives.

Indicative Reading List

Leat, M. Exploring Employee Relations, Butterworth Heinemann, 2001

Hollingshead, G. et.al. Employee Relations, Pitman Publishing, 1999

Salamon, M. Industrial Relations, Theory and Practice, 3rd edn., Prentice Hall, 1998

Gennard, J. and Judge, G. Employee Relations, IPD, 1997.

Blyton, P. & Turnbull, P. The Dynamics of Employee Relations, 2nd edn., Macmillan, 1998

Towers, B. A Handbook of Industrial Relations Practice, Kogan Page, 1992

British Journal of Industrial Relations

Industrial Relations Journal

Employee Relations

European Industrial Relations Review

Incomes Data Services

Industrial Relations Review and Report

FINAL TASK

According to the Assessment Strategy shown in the Module Descriptor, which task will be the LAST TASK to be taken or handed-in? (Give task number as shown in the Assessment Strategy)	Task No. 2
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MODULE REFERRAL STRATEGY

Task for Task (as shown for initial assessment strategy)	Y
Single Referral Package for All Referred Students	N

REVISIONS

Date	Reason
July 2012	Assessment Framework review