

Graduate School of Business

STRATEGIC EMPLOYMENT & WORKPLACE RELATIONS 555

Unit Outline last updated 2 September 2008

TRIMESTER 3 2008 ONLINE				
Unit Index No	05266			
Credits	25			
Pre-Requisites	None			
Unit Coordinator & Lecturer	Dr Steven McEachern			
Phone	+61 8 9266 7900			
Fax	+61 8 9266 3368			
Email	steven.mceachern@gsb.curtin.edu.au			
Contact	Through online Discussion Board or email			
IMPORTANT NOTICE				
Textbook: Teicher, J., P. Holland and R. Gough (2006) <i>Employee Relations Management: Australia in a Global Context</i> , Pearson.				
BLACKBOARD ACCESS: Your online unit will become available on Tuesday 26 August (see outline for login details). Should you try to log in prior to that date, you will get the following system-generated message: "You are not currently enrolled in any units". This is an automated message and does not reflect your actual enrolment status – please ignore it.				
METHOD OF ASSESSMENT				
ASSESSMENT	OUTCOME ASSESSED	TYPE OF ASSESSMENT	MARKS	SUBMISSION DATES
Assessment 1: Online Participation: Home Page Online Discussions X 2	2, 8	Individual, Written	20%***	See Unit Planner for due dates
Assessment 2: Contemporary debate	2 & 8	Individual, Written	40%	26 October
Assessment 3: Case study of agreement making or dispute resolution	2, 3	Individual, Written	40%	23 November

This unit outline is subject to change up until 10 days prior to the commencement of the course. Any changes made to the unit within that 10 day period and after the course commences will be communicated to you directly by your Unit Controller and/or Lecturer via OASIS. This unit outline should be read in conjunction with the GSB Student Guidebook available on the GSB website.

Table of Contents

Introduction to the Unit.....	3
Aims, Outcomes and Attributes.....	3
Text Book	3
Useful websites and hotlinks	4
GSB Professional Portfolio.....	4
General Information about Online Study & Blackboard Access.....	4
Assessment Overview	5
Assessment Details.....	5
Assessment 1: Online participation (20%).....	5
Assessment 2: Contemporary Debate (40%).....	8
Assessment 3: Case study of salary setting or dispute resolution (40%).....	8
Submission Guidelines for Assignments.....	9
Chicago Author-Date Referencing Style	9
Grading and Return Of Assignments in e-Learning	10
Late Submission of Assignments.....	10
GSB Student Guidebook 2008.....	10
Student Representative	11
Student Rights and Responsibilities.....	11
GSB Student Feedback via e-Valuate	11
Appendix A: Graduate Attributes	12
Appendix B: Grading System	13
Unit Planner and Study Guide	14

Introduction to the Unit

Workplace and employment relations (alternatively referred to as industrial relations) is an important part of your management education. Within the current global economic context, where the emphasis is on productivity and efficiency, issues of distributional conflict and managerial prerogative are hotly debated. Rarely does a day go by without a report in the newspaper or on the TV/Radio about pay negotiations, wage outcomes, dismissals and other employment matters that impact on business, community and individuals. Recruiters have stressed that managers can benefit greatly from acquiring a solid understanding of the social, economic and legal framework of employment relations.

Workplace and employment relations is particularly topical at the moment in Australia and is likely to remain as such through the transition from WorkChoices (the common name for the Liberal party's industrial relations reforms) to the new arrangement under the recently elected Australian Labor Party. An important component of the promised new ALP regime will be *Fair Work Australia* and the possibility of a more consensual approach to employment and workplace relations.

Whilst the unit is primarily concerned with Australian industrial relations, this should not deter international students from enrolling in the unit. Many of the forces shaping Australian employment relations are derived from international factors. Moreover, those working in international firms with links to Australian business will benefit from a greater appreciation of the Australian business context.

Aims, Outcomes and Attributes

Learning outcomes within Strategic Workplace & Employment Relations 555 will contribute to the achievement of the overarching learning outcomes sought for graduates from the GSB. For further details on the set of nine Graduate Attributes please refer to the GSB student guidebook available from www.gsb.curtin.edu.au. They are also listed in Appendix A of this document. This unit seeks to deliver on three of the nine key attributes. Students who successfully complete SW&ER555 will be able to:

Attributes	Learning Outcomes	Assessment
2 & 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain the institutional frameworks shaping contemporary employment and workplace relations 	1, 2, 3
2 & 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Critically analyse contemporary IR issues and position an IR case from national, enterprise and personal perspectives 	1, 2
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skills to explain, understand and manage diversity 	3

Text Book

Teicher, J., P. Holland and R. Gough (2006) *Employee Relations Management: Australia in a Global Context*, Pearson.

Textbooks may be purchased at the Curtin Bookshop on the Bentley campus or ordered online through their website: <http://www.bookshop.curtin.edu.au/>

The Bookshop offers a special service to GSB students whereby books ordered online can be delivered to the Murray Street Library (Level 4 of the GSB) for collection. Please remember to request this service when ordering.

Useful websites and hotlinks

In addition to the text book the online unit in Blackboard also contains additional readings and links to useful websites, particularly for research purposes.

GSB Professional Portfolio

From Trimester 2 2008, all newly commencing MLM and MBA students are required to log at least 40 hours of professional development activity in their Portfolio. Although there are plans to develop an online log of activity, currently the Portfolio is a physical document with space to record relevant activities and collate and store supporting documentation. All newly enrolled students will be sent a Professional Portfolio in the mail. If the 40-hour requirement is not met, it may delay your graduation.

The GSB Professional Portfolio is a tool for extending and developing professional development opportunities for GSB students. It is a practical way to build on skills learned through our coursework and also contributes to the GSB's strategy of encouraging life-long learning.

More information about the Professional Portfolio can be found here:

<http://www.cbs.curtin.edu.au/business/teaching-areas/graduate-school-of-business/current-students/gsb-professional-portfolio>

General Information about Online Study & Blackboard Access

If you are new to online learning at the GSB, we encourage you to look at the CBS Online section of the website at <http://www.cbs.curtin.edu.au/business/current-students/unit-and-course-information/online-units-and-blackboard>. This website provides useful information about the challenges unique to online study and provides a good introduction to Blackboard. Online units require a great degree of discipline, so please keep up with your reading and work load. Should you require assistance of any kind, please make sure you direct your queries to the appropriate area in order to get the result you need quickly. For content-related issues, contact your e-Lecturer through Discussion Board facility. For technical issues, please fill in the online help form at

http://sams.cbs.curtin.edu.au/cbs/bb_studentaccess.php

The access to your online unit in Blackboard will become available on a Tuesday of a week before trimester begins (approximately one week before the published start of a trimester date).

Direct link to Blackboard: <http://www.elearn.cbs.curtin.edu.au/>

Login to Blackboard is as follows:

Username: your Curtin student number

Password: your OASIS password

If you have not activated your OASIS logon, please go to <http://www.oasis.curtin.edu.au> and follow the prompts.

Assessment Overview

METHOD OF ASSESSMENT				
ASSESSMENT	OUTCOME ASSESSED	TYPE OF ASSESSMENT	MARKS	SUBMISSION DATES
Assessment 1: Online Participation: Home Page Online Discussions X 2	2, 8	Online participation	20%***	See Unit Planner for due dates
Assessment 2: Contemporary debate	2 & 8	Written paper	40%	26 October
Assessment 3: Case study of agreement making or dispute resolution	2, 3	Written paper	40%	23 November

***Completion of homepage and one posting into the Initial Discussion by the due date is essential. Failure to complete these two activities will result in the deduction of 5 per cent from your overall grade for the unit.

Assessment Details

Assessment 1: Online participation (20%)

Sharing ideas is a valuable way of furthering your learning experience by tapping into the thoughts of others. Participation in the online discussions is therefore an important aspect of the course and attracts a significant proportion of the overall marks. Following are the primary activities which comprise your online participation assessment.

Part 1: Developing your Homepage and Initial Discussion

When developing your homepage in Blackboard some information is mandatory, like your personal information and a small (details on formatting below) photo of **you** (not your pet or someone famous - unless you are present also!). Other background information about your likes and dislikes, work, family etc allow your peers to gain some insight into you as a person and your achievements. These can be actual or metaphorical! Your homepage is not a CV, rather something a bit more personal; information you are happy to share with your fellow students.

Here is how to make sure your picture is of the right size and configuration:

Open up your photo with Microsoft Office Picture Manager (it is found in Microsoft Office - Microsoft Office Tools). In the "Picture" menu, select "Crop" in drop down menu if you need to get rid of any excess background. You then use the cropping tool on the picture by dragging the corners to the proportions you require. After cropping the photo, click on "Picture" again and select "Compress pictures" and click on the 'Web pages' option. This function will reduce the photo to a size appropriate for your webpage. Click OK. **VERY IMPORTANT:** When saving the photo, use the 'Save as' function and give it another name, eg. 'Gerry Blank for web.jpg' as all the changes made will override your original photo and you will not be able to reverse the changes.

You will then be able to attach the photo to your Home Page.

Keep the information on your homepage current and update it regularly. If important changes are happening in your life i.e. a new job or shifting homes, remember to change the information in your home page and advise GSB Administration - you can use **OASIS** to update your university personal records. See <http://oasis.curtin.edu.au> . For instructions on completing your Homepage see the **Technical Tips** section in your online unit.

For the Initial discussion (“My learning expectations”), you need to outline what you hope to achieve by studying the unit. This discussion will help you to explore the software, as well as managing your learning expectation. The detailed information on how to take part in the discussion is in **Technical Tips** in your online unit. Everybody is expected to make **at least one** contribution and encouraged to comment constructively on the contributions of others.

NOTE: Completion of the homepage and one posting into the Initial Discussion by the due date is essential. Failure to complete these two activities will result in the deduction of 5% from your overall grade for the unit.

Part 2: Online Topic Discussions

A significant amount of learning takes place with peer interaction; therefore, online discussions and reviews are an important part of your learning. Although you are not able to see one another, as in a traditional classroom situation, the same format and rules apply – an exchange of ideas where there is no “right” answer, while adhering to classroom courtesy.

There are two set online discussions in this unit, each worth 10%. You will be assessed on the degree to which you contribute to online discussions. The following guidelines will underpin your contributions:-

- demonstrate your knowledge of the topic in relation to relevant industrial relations strategies theory /concept/standard,
- effectively convey your thoughts, opinions and ideas
- provide evidence of relevant further readings,
- incorporate your own work and personal experience, and
- adhere to the minimum contribution guidelines presented below.

Minimum/Maximum Contribution Guidelines

Plan your time to ensure you contribute to the discussion as close as possible to the commencement date. Don't make it a last minute thing. Take the three-step approach outlined below and the discussion will be a dynamic and lively learning experience.

(a) Prior to the discussion opening,

- research the topic,
- look for examples of its practical application.

(b) Initial Discussion Comments - must be submitted in the first week of the discussion

For each discussion room topic, you are required to make one original contribution. This contribution must be made by the end of the first week of the discussion period or you will forfeit your 5% (half of your discussion mark) for that particular discussion room topic. Your contribution doesn't have to be an essay, nor should it be a one line answer. Look at the questions that are being asked, make an informed judgment about what would constitute a

reasonable answer, and then make your entry. You may want to type this up first in a word document and then cut and paste it in the discussion room. Quality is important and is one of the criteria that is used to assess your contribution. Long rambling entries are discouraged. BE SUCCINCT.

Your initial comments are a short, sharp synopsis (aim for around 200 words) of your research and your views/thoughts on that research as they relate to the topic. Your comments can be

- Provocative (always good to stir the pot!),
- Questioning
- Sharing something you have discovered in your reading related to the topic.

(c) Responses - are to be submitted in the second week of the discussion

For each discussion room topic, you are also **required to comment on an original contribution of at least two other students**. This should be completed in the second week of the discussion once everyone has entered their original contributions. Again, be succinct when commenting on the contributions of others. Quality is the focus of our entries, not quantity.

The second week is less structured; you are responding to other students' comments. Do you agree with them or not - provide some justification for your responses - this would be based on your initial research and any other relevant material and experiences.

- Respond to the comments of at least **two** other students (**absolute minimum requirement**).

Quality is measured by how well you are able to integrate course materials and your own personal experience into the discussion board conversations.

Marking criteria

The following criteria will help you understand how grades are allocated for the discussion room.

- 8.5-10/10 - outstanding original contribution with both original and insightful thought as well as good integration of reference material and critical evaluation. Responses offer considered insight and analysis and are succinct.
- 7 - 8/10 - a very good score - the original contribution is of a high quality including having researched the topic and providing references and the responses to at least two others were insightful and offered food for thought and are succinct.
- 6 - 6.5 - average score - the original contribution met the requirements of the brief, there is some reference to other material, responses offer some insight to further expand or enhance learning. Contribution could be more succinct.
- 5 - 5.5 below average score - reference to unit material or other references is poor, original contribution and responses to others offer some insight, albeit small, to expand or enhance learning. Does not necessarily write succinctly.
- 1 - 4.5 inadequate - mostly opinion provided without any significant linkage to unit material or outside reference material. Contributions are superficial and add very little to expand learning. Writing is not succinct.

The reasons for the emphasis on quality and being succinct is that entries can become too

long, convoluted and distract from the key points trying to be brought out in the discussion. Try and keep your entries focused on the questions and your contributions. Avoid general comments.

While you may want to read everyone's ideas to support your learning, depending upon the class size, this can be an unwieldy process. Therefore, at a minimum you need to pick '5' students that you will monitor for each discussion room topic. These '5' students may be the same ones throughout this unit or you may change for each discussion topic. Please use your own judgment.

Each discussion is opened for two weeks.

Assessment 2: Contemporary Debate (40%)

Upper Word Limit: 5000 words

There is much debate in the field of employee relations, particularly with respect regulation of the employment contract. In this assessment exercise students are required to submit a paper outlining the arguments (pros and cons) of a particular debate. The proposed topics (choose one) are:

- (a) The right to strike
- (b) Paid maternity leave
- (c) Unfair dismissal
- (d) Minimum employment conditions and “no disadvantage”

The paper should be well researched and referenced. The papers will be marked according to the grading criteria set out in section 19.0 of the GSB Student Guidebook (p.31) available from the GSB homepage (quicklinks) or from the following url:

http://www.cbs.curtin.edu.au/files/GSB_student_guidebook_20081.pdf

Assessment 3: Case study of salary setting or dispute resolution (40%)

Upper Word Limit: 5000 words

For this assessment, you will be required to write a case study on either:

- (a) the setting of salaries/wages; or
- (b) dispute resolution procedures

In this assessment exercise students are required to submit a case study paper outlining the application of theory and concepts discussed in this unit to their particular case study topic. Further detail on the specific requirements of this assessment will be provided later in the study period. The content of the case studies and the specific submission requirements will be detailed within Blackboard.

Submission Guidelines for Assignments

- Please retain a copy of every assignment submitted for marking for your own records. This copy will be required in the event of an assignment being misplaced or unaccounted for. The onus is on the student to make available another copy of the assignment for marking.
- All assignments for this Unit are to be submitted online in Blackboard, using the **Assignments** facility available in your online unit. You are not required to submit a hard copy. However, as your assignments will be printed out for the lecturer to mark, we would appreciate them being typed using the following specifications:
 - Font: Times Roman 12
 - Margins: at least 2.5 cm top/bottom/left/right
 - Please include a cover-sheet setting out:
 - your name
 - student number
 - unit title, and
 - the title of the assignment.
- Papers will not be marked beyond the page limit/word count.
- For assignments that you would like returned, please include a self-addressed A4 envelope.
- Your assignment should be thoroughly checked for typing, spelling and grammatical errors. You may consider having a colleague proof read your assignment before you submit it.
- Make sure you acknowledge all sources used to write your assignment – eg. journals, books, articles etc...
- Provide a list of references at the end of your assignment in the Chicago Style.
- Use a range of scholarly material...eg. Peer-reviewed articles from the scholarly databases, textbooks and material from the Internet. Material from the Internet often, however, does not have the same peer review mechanisms in place so you must be wary what you use as literature to support your reviews.

PLEASE NOTE:

In the preparation of individual written assignments students are encouraged to discuss and exchange information. However, the various papers will be treated as an individual exercise and plagiarism is to be avoided. Where there is evidence of plagiarism the student will be awarded a fail grade for the unit.

Acknowledge not only direct quotes but also the source of ideas, examples and materials which are not a direct quote, but which have been paraphrased from another source. All tables and charts must be sourced. For the University's policy on plagiarism, please refer to the **Graduate School of Business Student Guidebook**. The GSB is committed to undertaking plagiarism audits on assessments submitted for its units.

Chicago Author-Date Referencing Style

It is a requirement of the Curtin Graduate School of Business that all assignments submitted for assessment must be referenced using the Chicago Author-Date Referencing Style. Details of Chicago referencing style can be found online at

http://library.curtin.edu.au/research_and_information_skills/referencing/index.html

Assignments submitted without Chicago Referencing **will not be marked**. It is strongly

suggested that students learn and use EndNote software to ensure compliance with the Chicago System. Copies of EndNote are free to all GSB students from here: <http://startup.curtin.edu.au/software/endnote.cfm> and some Curtin EndNote style downloads and training are available here: http://library.curtin.edu.au/research_and_information_skills/endnote/index.html

Grading and Return Of Assignments in e-Learning

Please ensure you use the unit outline specifics to check that you have addressed all of the criteria before handing in your assignment.

Assignments are not returned to students after they are received online. You will be able to review your mark (for Discussions 1 and 2) and mark + attached feedback file (for Assessments 2 and 3) in your Blackboard unit (under **Tools – View Grades**).

Students may expect the marks (and feedback, where appropriate) to be posted online by the end of fifteen (15) working days after submission (unless otherwise negotiated between the lecturer and students). I endeavour to do my best to meet this deadline.

For an explanation of your grade, please see **Appendix B: Grading System** which explains the marking system used at the GSB.

Late Submission of Assignments

Assignments are expected to be submitted before or on due dates. Only in *critical* circumstances (acute sickness of self or close family – verified by medical certificate), may students negotiate for an extension of time. Please note that heavy employment-related workloads or deadlines will not warrant the granting of an extension. Only one extension will normally be given within this Unit. Reason/s for request for extension must be submitted in writing (postal or email) A MINIMUM OF FOUR (4) DAYS BEFORE THE DUE DATE OF THE ASSIGNMENT. Please note that an extension will not be given for reason of pressure of workload.

In the case of assignments being submitted after the due date, without permission for extension by the lecturer, the assignments will be graded:

- 20% lower if submitted 1 - 7 days late;
- 40% lower if submitted 8 - 14 days late;
- after 14 days, the assignment will **not** be accepted for marking.

GSB Student Guidebook 2008

Please refer to this publication online for essential information regarding the following:

- GSB Graduate Attributes and Learning Outcomes
- Assessment and Results which includes information on the GSB Grading System, Assessment Guidelines and the Appeals Process.
- The Student Feedback system and Student Representatives (see below).
- Referencing and Malpractice
- Plagiarism
- Ethics
- Emergency Procedures.

Please make sure you obtain a copy of this publication which is found on the **GSB Student Guidebook** available from the **GSB homepage** under **Quick Links**.

Student Representative

A student representative must be elected by the class by the end of the second week of the unit (or second day in the case of an intensive). The student representative is responsible for collecting feedback from the other students and forwarding this to the lecturer and/or unit controller. The student representative also represents the class at the Student - Staff Committee meetings. Once a student representative is elected, the name and contact details should be directed to the Student Academic Advisor. For full details on the student representative role refer to the **GSB Student Guidebook** available from the **GSB homepage** under **Quick Links**.

Student Rights and Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of every student to be aware of all relevant legislation and policies and procedures relating to their rights and responsibilities as a student. These include:

- the Student Charter
- the University's Guiding Ethical Principles
- the University's policy and statements on plagiarism and academic integrity
- copyright principles and responsibilities
- the University's policies on appropriate use of software and computer facilities

Information on all these things is available through the University's "Student Rights and Responsibilities" web page at: <http://students.curtin.edu.au/rights/>

GSB Student Feedback via e-Valuate

Curtin University has introduced a confidential unit specific student feedback system called e-Valuate. This system provides the unit coordinator, lecturer and Head of School with important information about student's learning experiences and the achievement of learning outcomes during their enrolment in this unit. You are strongly encouraged to log onto e-Valuate at the end of this unit and provide your valuable feedback. Further information on how and when to do this will be posted during the trimester.

The Curtin Business School values student feedback as one of the many ways to continuously inform improvement to this unit. Recent improvements have included:

1. Reduction in assessment load.
2. Clearer delineation of accountable reading requirements for unit
3. Clarification of learning outcomes and graduate attributes

Recent student feedback on this Unit is available at <https://evaluate.curtin.edu.au/login.cfm> Once you have logged in click the reports tab at the top and search for the unit summary report (USR) for your unit.

Appendix A: Graduate Attributes

The GSB offers a range of Award Programs in which the students will:

1. Have a thorough foundation of contemporary business theories, concepts and principles and be able to apply these in a group or organisational environment.
2. Create and critically evaluate innovative ideas and strategies within ambiguous and uncertain business environments.
3. Access, evaluate and synthesis diverse information for intelligent business application.
4. Effectively communicate in a manner appropriate to their audience and their desired outcomes.
5. Select and use appropriate technologies and recognise their advantages and limitations.
6. Utilise life-long learning strategies.
7. Recognise and apply international perspectives within the business environment.
8. Appropriately manage and value diversity within a business setting.
9. Apply professional skills – team work, leadership and ethical behaviour.

Appendix B: Grading System

The grading in this unit will be consistent with the grading scheme below.

% Grade	Criteria
90+	Shows a passion for the topic. Student has built on a solid base of deep knowledge and delivered original thought or provided original application of a presented model. Has displayed sound and defensible judgement.
80-89	Student has integrated/synthesised a complex body of knowledge. Is able to bring ideas together succinctly. Has displayed sound grounded opinion.
75-79	Critical evaluation or deeper understanding displayed identifies key issues on top of B below; adds value to data or basic research.
70-74	Intelligent organisation and expansion of concepts, ideas; illustrates through application; sought other reading if appropriate.
65-69	Covers key issues, on top of C below, in a superior way.
60-64	Descriptive, can summarise, organise ideas and present a basic conclusion, internally logical. Presents basic concepts can take a concept and break it into its parts. Provides a basic answer to the question.
50-59	Undertaken acceptable amount of work, sticks to the question but disjointed, ideas not linked or not well linked to the foundation of knowledge. Some errors, but not enough to flaw the answer/ argument.
<50	Superficial work, insufficient research. Some limited research but has not pulled it together. Doesn't answer the question, errors which flaw the answer, argument; displays significant gaps in foundation knowledge.

Moderation is the process by which fair assessment is assured when there are: multiple markers; one marker assesses a large number of papers; the unit is taught at different campuses; or the assessment is largely subjective. Unit controllers are responsible for ensuring that comparability of assessment is achieved. For further information and/or explanation refer to the Teaching & Learning at Curtin 2008 teaching handbook, Section 5.4, page 41 (<http://lsn.curtin.edu.au/publications/tlbook08.pdf>)

Unit Planner and Study Guide

Week	Week Beginning	Module Topics	Readings	Practical Activities & Assessment due dates
1	25 Aug	Your online unit will be opened from Tuesday, 26 August	Unit Outline	Please read the Unit Outline and familiarise yourself with your online unit.
2	1 Sept	Introduction	Ch 1 & Ch 2	Complete homepage and initial discussion by 7 September
3	8 Sept	Developments in the Australian labour market	Ch 3	Discussion 1 opens
4	15 Sept	Human resource management and industrial relations	Ch 4	Complete Discussion 1 by 21 Sept
5	22 Sept	Changing context – union decline	Ch 6	Discussion 2 opens.
6	29 Sept	Changing context – competition and privatisation	Ch 7	Complete Discussion 2 by 5 October
7	6 Oct	Labour market flexibility / work intensification	Ch 10	
8	13 Oct	Best practice management	Ch 13 & 14	
9	20 Oct	Strategic Pay	Ch 15	Assessment 2 due by 26 October
10	27 Oct	IR System	Ch 8	
11	3 Nov	Australian legal system	Ch 9	
12	10 Nov	Negotiation and dispute resolution	TBA	
13	17 Nov	Future of work and inter-generational challenges	Ch 16	Assessment 3 due 23 November
14	24 Nov	Unit evaluation survey and review of unit		e-Valuate opens on 24 Nov and closes on 7 Dec