HRM 107
Introduction to Human Resources
Semester 2, 2011

Department of Marketing and Management
Students in this unit should read this unit outline carefully at the start of semester. It contains important information about the unit. If anything in it is unclear, please consult one of the teaching staff in the unit.

ABOUT THIS UNIT

The turbulent business climate, caused by increased global competition, changing technologies, changing employment legislation and changing workforce composition is challenging managers to use their employees more effectively in the search for sustainable competitive advantage (Bratton and Gold, 2004). It has led many organisations (both public and private) to adopt human resource (HR) strategies such as ‘downsizing’, ‘self-managing teams’, ‘re-engineering’, and performance-based pay strategies in their efforts to stay ahead of the competition. The focus on HR policy and practices reflects the view that employees are a source of sustainable advantage for organisations which makes employees the actual workers the sustainable advantage of the organisation. Recruiting, retaining and motivating employees, managing people across widely differing cultures and location, effectively renegotiating change and ensuring that all HR strategies are within the law are just some of the tasks faced by current HR practitioners.

The purpose of this unit is to introduce students to the basic elements of human resource management (HRM). Participants will critically analyse the relationship between strategy and core HRM activities such as recruitment, selection, performance appraisal and pay systems, workforce planning, training and development, career and succession management, and explore key contemporary issues to do with the quality of working life and diversity management. The course will locate HRM strategies within their organisational, business, demographic, economic, legislative and industrial contexts.

TEACHING STAFF

- Lecturer: Dr Louise Thornthwaite: B.Ec.(Hons 1) (USyd), Ph.D. (USyd) LL.B. (Hons 1) (UNSW).
- Lecturer: Mr Daniel Townsend: daniel.townsend@mq.edu.au
Other Teaching Staff:

- Mr Viktor Badenko  Victor.Badenko@mq.edu.au
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- Melinda Varhegi  melinda.varhegyi@students.mq.edu.au
- Katya Zhuralevla  Ekaterina_zhuravleva@hotmail.com

**CONSULTATION TIMES**

You are encouraged to seek help at a time that is convenient to you from a staff member teaching on this unit during their regular consultation hours. In special circumstances, an appointment may be made outside regular consultation hours. Students experiencing significant difficulties with any topic in the unit must seek assistance immediately.

Dr Thornthwaite will be available for consultation on Tuesdays 2.00-3.00 pm (drop in) and before or after class or by appointment. Contact: Building 4EA, Room 524  louise.thornthwaite@mq.edu.au or 9850 1163 (leave message)

Teaching staff will generally respond to emails within 48 hours (excluding weekends). Accordingly, students must organise their study schedules to ensure that they do not feel the need for urgent email replies. Note: students requesting detailed additional information on exams or assignments may be referred to class discussions where other students will benefit.

**CLASSES**

One 2-hour lecture each week plus one 1-hour tutorial each week. The tutorials commence in Week 2. The timetable for classes can be found on the University website at:  http://www.timetables.mq.edu.au/

- Once the tutorial groups are formed, students **cannot change** their classes.
- Attendance will be taken in all tutorials.
- Tutorial attendance is compulsory. **Warning:** You must attend at least 10 of the 12 tutorials – failure to do so will lead to failure of the subject.
- Medical certificates must be provided if you are not able to attend a class without incurring a penalty.
- Students are expected to arrive on time, and not to leave until the class ends.
- If you have a recurring problem that makes you late, or forces you to leave early, have the courtesy to discuss this with your lecturer/tutor.
Students must be quiet during classes, unless of course when class participation is required.
Mobile phone must be turned OFF and not simply set to ‘silent’.
All laptops must be turned OFF in tutorials and lectures.
Students who disturb or disrupt in lectures and tutorial class will be asked to leave.
The lecturer has the final say in the adjustment of group-work marks taking into account peer assessment ratings.

REQUIRED TEXTS AND MATERIALS

The Compulsory Text for the unit is:

Other useful texts which comprehensively cover the core material include:

For Additional Reading – refer to the Research and Practice section on pp.6-7 of this Outline and the Tutorial Guide from p.8.

TECHNOLOGY USED AND REQUIRED

- Students are required to learn how to use word processing, blackboard and the library journals catalogue

UNIT WEB PAGE

The web page for this unit can be found at: Blackboard http://learn.mq.edu.au

LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the completion of the subject students will have been introduced to major conceptual debates within the field of HRM and the key functional areas involved in managing people. The learning objectives of this course are that, at its conclusion, students will be able to:
1. Identify and define key terms, concepts and theories discussed in the HRM literature.

2. Explain the strategic importance of HRM in managing for organisational effectiveness.

3. Demonstrate an understanding of the links between the different areas of HRM and how they may contribute to a coherent, strategically advantageous set of HR plans and policies.

4. Understand the importance of and principles of good communication and evaluation strategies for effective HRM.

**Graduate Capabilities**

Human resource graduates are expected to know the following six disciplines specific knowledge and skills upon graduation. This unit contributes to this learning by helping students develop capabilities number 1, 2, 6 and 8 (italicised).

1. **Understand the relevance of contemporary HR systems and functions to employment relationship and to organisational effectiveness**

2. **Critically evaluate the role and changing nature of government employers and employees and their representatives in the field of employment and industrial relations policy and practice.**

3. Understand the need to enhance human capital through effective and sustainable recruitment and selection practices

4. **Appreciate the key learning and cognition theories and how they link and inform effective human resources development practices**

5. Critically analyse factors impacting on an organisation’s capacity to successfully manage their human resources in a global context

6. **Evaluate key developments in contemporary HRM theory with the intention to inform practice and devise strategic HRM practices that enhance the operations of diverse organisations.**

7. Understand different theoretical perspectives and key principles of managing change effectively and critically assess the phenomenon of sustainability in the context of organisational change.
8. Recognise the pivotal role of managing diversity, ethics and sustainability in contemporary organisations

This unit contributes to this learning by helping student develop generic skills number 1, 3 and 4 below (italicised).

1. Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking  
2. Problem Solving and Research Capability  
3. Creative and Innovative  
4. Effective Communication  
5. Engaged and Ethical Local and Global citizens  
6. Socially and Environmentally Active and Responsible  
7. Capable of Professional and Personal Judgement and Initiative  
8. Commitment to Continuous Learning.

**TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGY**

Students are expected to read and research each topic in advance, participate in class and tutorial discussions and to maintain a strong interest in current issues and changes in HRM. Generally, the tutorial program follows one week after the lecture program. This means that the relevant reading for the lecture generally is also the specified reading for the tutorial in the following week. Students are expected to come to all tutorials having read the specified reading(s) for that week. For instance, you should read Chapter 1 before the first tutorial in Week 2, Chapter 2 before the second tutorial in Week 3, and so on. Topics to be covered each week are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Lecture Topic (&amp; reading)</th>
<th>Tutorial Topic (see detailed program below)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Unit Overview</td>
<td>No tutorial</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evolution of HRM (ch 1)</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>The context of HRM (ch 2)</td>
<td>The evolution of HRM (ch 1)</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Employment relationships, industrial relations and HRM (ch 3)</td>
<td>HRM contexts (ch 2)</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>HR and the Law (ch 3 and tutorial readings)</td>
<td>Employment relationships, industrial relations and HRM (ch 3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>HR planning (ch 4,5)</td>
<td>HR and the Law</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Recruitment and attraction of talent (ch 6)</td>
<td>HR planning</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Effective employee selection (ch 7)</td>
<td>Recruitment strategies</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Developing HR in organisations (ch 8)</td>
<td>Selection practices: focusing on psychometric testing</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Managing Performance (ch 9)</td>
<td>Human resource development</td>
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**Mid Semester Break Two Weeks**
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Strategic reward management (ch 10)</td>
<td>Managing performance</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Occupational Health and Safety &amp; Employee Wellbeing (ch 11)</td>
<td>Presentations - groups A and B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Managing Diversity (ch 5 and tutorial readings)</td>
<td>Presentations - groups C and D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Subject Review and Exam Preparation</td>
<td>Presentations - groups E and F</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**RESEARCH AND PRACTICE**

This unit uses research by Louise Thornthwaite:


The publications listed below are highly recommended for further reading on the topics covered in the unit. Students should also consult them for the research and preparation of assignments.

**Books**

*These are suggested books in order to broaden your reading.*


Journals

Apart from books, students will find it invaluable to get into the practice of reading relevant articles from journals. Below students will find a list of journals to start their reading and research. Those suggested can all be found within the university library system.

- Academy of Management Journal
- Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources
- Australian Journal of Management
- Human Resource Management Journal
- International Journal of Human Resource Management
- Journal of Industrial Relations
- Work, Employment & Society
- Employee Relations
- Harvard Business Review

Some useful websites:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/dg05/index_en.htm
http://www.innovations.gov.au

ASSESSMENT ITEMS

1. TUTORIAL Participation and Presentation (20%)

For this course, 20% of the mark is based on tutorial work. This is equally divided between a group presentation in weeks 11-13, and participation throughout the semester. Students will be assessed as follows:

1. Participation (10%) – This mark will be based on demonstrated preparation for and constructive contributions in tutorials through the semester. Please note: this is not a mark for attendance: attendance is compulsory and failure to attend at least 80% of tutorials may lead to failure of the subject.

2. Presentation (10%) – students are to present on a topic in weeks 11-13 (as allocated) in groups. Each group will consist of 3-4 students. Presentation is for 15 minutes, followed by 5 minutes of class questions or interactions.
For more details on the tutorial assessment, see the document “Assessment criteria for Tutorial Participation and Presentation” on the Unit website for more details.

2. ESSAY (40%) - 2,500 words

This is an individual written assignment – with a maximum length of 2,500 words in length (max). Essay topics will be made available on the blackboard on Thursday, Week 3 by 4 pm.

The due date for the essay is Friday 4.00 pm, Week 8.

Students are required to use at least 4 refereed journal articles in their essay. This is a minimum requirement to receive a Pass grade for the assignment. Students may, of course, use as many references as they consider appropriate. Please check documents on Blackboard pertaining to the marking criteria etc for this assignment.

For more detailed guidelines about the essay assessment, see the document Essay Requirements and Marking Criteria on the Unit website.

3. FINAL EXAMINATION (40%)

This will be a closed-book examination held during the University’s examination period. The exam may consist of case study and/or essay questions. Some further clarification of structure and content will be given in the final lecture.

TUTORIAL PROGRAM

Week 1
No tutorial

Week 2

Topic: Introduction & the Evolution of HRM

1. Introductions

2. In small groups brainstorm two separate lists of the features that you consider would together lead to the 'ideal workplace' for (a) management and (b) employees. Discuss your choices and consider the areas where conflict might
arise between management and employees. How might these differences be reconciled? Does the HR professional have a part to play?

3. Consider any ethical issues you have encountered in a workplace. They might include favouritism, a lack of confidentiality about personal information, cheating about hours worked, minor pilfering (e.g. pens, paper), bullying, or other issues. Discuss the nature and effect of these on members of the work team and the organisation as a whole. Should these issues be addressed and if so, who is responsible for addressing them? What role should HRM officials play?

Readings:
Textbook, ch 1


Week 3

*Topic:* The Context of HRM

1. Using the worksheet supplied by your tutor, identify two or three trends for each category of external influence. Regroup as a class and discuss the impact of the key trends on stakeholders. Consider the impact on the psychological contract.

2. Case Study: *HR Director’s Challenge – creating the flexible organisation.* [located in textbook, Case Study 2.1, p.75] N.B. Students will need to read the 2-page case study in advance of class.
Readings:

Textbook, ch 2


Week 4

Topic: Employment Relations, Industrial Relations and HRM

1. Quick Quiz – no study required and NO marks recorded.

2. Marking and discussion of answers to Quick Quiz

3. Mini Class Debate: “Unions are essential for the future”

Readings:

Textbook chapter 3, pp. 80-104, 110-117.


Week 5

**Topic:** HR and the Law

**Discussion questions & case study**

1. Consider the case of the following middle-aged employee with a physical disability. The woman in question had served the employer for over 11 years in a customer service capacity. She suffered from osteoarthritis of the lower back, spondylitis, bilateral varicose veins and bilateral spurs of the heels. These conditions rendered her, according to medical evidence, unable to stand for extended periods. This made it impossible for her to comply with the new company policy that forbade sitting while serving customers. If the employer sought to terminate her employment, what legal issues might arise in this case?

2. To what degree are HR managers and their departments responsible for the organisation’s knowledge about the Fair Work Act and the new institutions and minimum standards in Australia? How should they alert managers and employees to such legal regulations?

3. Case Study – *FreshFirst Canning* – see Textbook, Case 3.1, p.115.

**Readings:**

Textbook ch 3, esp. pp.87-89, 104-109


Week 6

**Topic:** HR Planning

**Activities:**

1. Academic Skills: accessing and using journal articles for essays and other HRM assignments.

3. For discussion: Outsourcing at Yarra Bank: ethical dilemma. A copy of this short case will be provided by your tutor in class.

Readings:

Textbook ch 4 and 5.


Week 7

Topic: Recruitment and Attraction of Talent

Discussion Questions

1. How appropriate is e-recruiting for (a) graduate trainees, (b) plant labourers, and (c) senior managers. Explain your reasoning.

2. ‘It is unethical not to identify the organisation’s name in a recruitment advertisement’. Do you agree?

3. ‘Having to recruit outside the organisation is a sign of management failure’. What arguments might support or challenge this assertion.

Readings:

Textbook, ch 6.


**Week 8**

*Topic:* Effective Employee Selection

Case Study - *Social networking and selection – a question of ethics*, see Textbook, Case Study 7.1 pp.280-282. NB Students will need to read this case before class.

*Readings:*

Textbook, ch. 7.


Buckley, R., Norris, A and Wiese, D., 2000, ‘A brief history of the selection interview: May the next 100 years be more fruitful’, *Journal of Management History*, vol.6, no.3.


Behling, O. 1998, ‘Employee selection: will intelligence and conscientiousness do the job’, *Academy of Management Executive*, vol.12, no.1, 77-86.


**Week 9**

*Topic:* Human Resource Development

Discussion Questions.

1. The VARK questionnaire – a small sample will be distributed in class for discussion.

2. Employees learn more from practical work experiences and project participation roles than from classroom training, simulations or e-learning. Do you agree with this statement? On what basis do you agree or disagree?

3. Generation X and Y employees are quite capable of managing their own careers. They don’t need help from managers or mentors, especially as their commitment to organisations is at best transactional. Discuss this statement.


**Week 10**

**Topic:** Managing Performance

**Tutorial exercises:**

1. Case study: *Appraisals at Red Square Industries*. Extract to be provided by tutor in class.
2. In many cases, managers will assume that under-performance or non-performance will require disciplinary action. Is this really a valid assumption?

Readings:

Textbook, ch 9.


Week 11
Topic: Reward Management

Presentations – groups A and B

1. Performance-based Pay:
   Incentive pay is ‘at risk’ remuneration that is linked directly and explicitly to measures of employee performance at either the individual or group level. Debate continues about the effectiveness and fairness of such ‘at risk’ pay and also about its appropriateness for certain occupations.

   Your task is to discuss the following issue: Should school teachers be paid according to performance? If so, how? If not, why not?

2. Salary secrecy:
   [Dear Dr HR: When I signed my contract of employment, I agreed not to disclose to anybody in the organisation what my salary is. Apparently salaries are completely confidential in the organisation. It has me worried though.]

   In view of this enquiry, your task is to examine which is best from the organisation’s perspective: pay openness or pay secrecy? Why?

Readings:

Textbook, ch 10.


**Week 12**

*Topic*: OHS

Presentations – groups C and D

1. *The Toxic Boss* – a case study on bullying - copy of case to be provided. Students are to address questions **3-5** (only) in their presentation.


3. An *alternative presentation for this topic*: Students could undertake Tutorial Activity 2. (Textbook p.496) and present their findings to the class. This includes doing a comprehensive audit of part of the building in which your tutorial takes place or the FBE Building to analyse possible OHS risks and a risk avoidance strategy for the organisation to deal with these.

*Readings:*

Textbook, Ch 11.


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**Week 13**

*Topic*: Managing Diversity

Presentations – groups E and F

1. *Age Diversity*: ‘The natural ageing of Australia’s population will occur – this is inevitable. The role and place of the aged workforce in this ageing process will shape our workplace and society for decades to come’.

Your task is to identify some of the consequences of people being discriminated against because of their age and explain some of the policies that employers could use to manage diversity effectively, with specific reference to mature age employees.

2. *Men and Work-Life Balance*:
Read the case study: *Men yearn for a work-life balance too* – see Textbook, p.198-199. The group’s task is to address the following questions in your presentation on the topic of this case.

Q1 – What are the barriers to men taking more time away from work to spend time with families?

Q2 - How can diversity management policy be used to facilitate improvements in work-family balance for men.

**Readings:**


For examples of diversity policies see:
Westpac Bank site at [www.westpac.com.au](http://www.westpac.com.au) and

# Relationship Between Assessment and Learning Outcomes

The assessment of the course has the following components:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Task 1</th>
<th>Assessment Task 2</th>
<th>Assessment Task 3</th>
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<tr>
<td>Tutorial Participation and Presentation (20%)</td>
<td>Essay (40%) (2,500 words)</td>
<td>Final Exam (40%) (2 hours)</td>
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<td>Identify &amp; define key terms, concepts, frameworks, models and theories</td>
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<td>Explain the strategic importance of HRM in managing for organisational effectiveness.</td>
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<td>Explain the strategic importance of HRM in managing for organisational effectiveness.</td>
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<td>Demonstrate an understanding of the links between the different HRM</td>
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</table>
### Assessment Task 1
- Understand the importance & principles of good communication and evaluation strategies for effective HRM.

### Assessment Task 2
- Understand the importance & principles of good communication and evaluation strategies for effective HRM.

### Assessment Task 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graduate capabilities assessed</th>
<th>Assessment Task 1</th>
<th>Assessment Task 2</th>
<th>Assessment Task 3</th>
<th>Total</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Critical, Analytical &amp; integrative thinking</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Creative &amp; Innovative</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<td>4. Effective Communication</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>15</strong></td>
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</table>
**ACADEMIC HONESTY**

The nature of scholarly endeavour, dependent as it is on the work of others, binds all members of the University community to abide by the principles of academic honesty. Its fundamental principle is that all staff and students act with integrity in the creation, development, application and use of ideas and information. This means that:

- all academic work claimed as original is the work of the author making the claim
- all academic collaborations are acknowledged
- academic work is not falsified in any way
- when the ideas of others are used, these ideas are acknowledged appropriately.

Further information on the academic honesty can be found in the Macquarie University Academic Honesty Policy at: [http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic_honesty/policy.html](http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic_honesty/policy.html)

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**GRADES**

Macquarie University uses the following grades in coursework units of study:

- HD - High Distinction
- D - Distinction
- CR - Credit
- P - Pass
- F - Fail

Grade descriptors and other information concerning grading are contained in the Macquarie University Grading Policy which is available at: [http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grading/policy.html](http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grading/policy.html)

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**GRADING APPEALS AND FINAL EXAMINATION SCRIPT VIEWING**

If, at the conclusion of the unit, you have performed below expectations, and are considering lodging an appeal of grade and/or viewing your final exam script please refer to the following website which provides information about these processes and the cut off dates in the first instance. Please read the instructions provided concerning what constitutes a valid grounds for appeal before appealing your grade.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATION

The University is committed to equity and fairness in all aspects of its learning and teaching. In stating this commitment, the University recognises that there may be circumstances where a student is prevented by unavoidable disruption from performing in accordance with their ability. A special consideration policy exists to support students who experience serious and unavoidable disruption such that they do not reach their usual demonstrated performance level. The policy is available at:

http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/special_consideration/procedure.html

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Macquarie University provides a range of Academic Student Support Services. Details of these services can be accessed at: http://www.student.mq.edu.au

IT CONDITIONS OF USE

Access to all student computing facilities within the Faculty of Business and Economics is restricted to authorised coursework for approved units. Student ID cards must be displayed in the locations provided at all times.

Students are expected to act responsibly when utilising University IT facilities. The following regulations apply to the use of computing facilities and online services:

- Accessing inappropriate web sites or downloading inappropriate material is not permitted. Material that is not related to coursework for approved unit is deemed inappropriate.
- Downloading copyright material without permission from the copyright owner is illegal, and strictly prohibited. Students detected undertaking such activities will face disciplinary action, which may result in criminal proceedings.

Non-compliance with these conditions may result in disciplinary action without further notice.

Students must use their Macquarie University email addresses to communicate with staff as it is University policy that the University issued email account is used for official University communication.