

# Unit 24: Employee Relations

Unit code: F/601/1271

QCF level: 5

Credit value: 15 credits

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- Aim

The aim of this unit is to introduce learners to the importance of good employee relations for business success and the impact of changes which have affected employment relationships.

- Unit abstract

The term 'employee relations' has replaced that of 'industrial relations'. Industrial relations are generally recognised as relations between an employer and a collective workforce, typically through a recognised union. Employee relations means the relationship between an employee and employer, and this is largely controlled by legislation and is being revised and updated continuously. It is important for learners to appreciate how good employee/employer relations contribute to the success and effectiveness of a business. In this unit they will investigate how cooperation between employers and employees leads to the development of good working relations against a changing background.

The success of a business often relies on its relationships with its employees. Learners will investigate and explore different types of industrial conflict and the procedures for resolving this. It is important that learners are aware of change and keep up to date with developments in dispute procedures in relation to employment law.

Legislation and EU directives play a major role in employee relations and learners will examine how these are applied in organisations. It is important that organisations have procedures in place for collective bargaining, and learners will examine how these procedures are managed and implemented properly to avoid disputes. This unit will give learners the opportunity to study the most up-to-date employment legislation and investigate how employment involvement techniques affect human resource management.

- Learning outcomes

**On successful completion of this unit a learner will:**

- 1 Understand the context of employee relations against a changing background
- 2 Understand the nature of industrial conflict and its resolution
- 3 Understand collective bargaining and negotiation processes
- 4 Understand the concept of employee participation and involvement.

# Unit content

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## 1 Understand the context of employee relations against a changing background

*The role of the trade union:* types of trade union, the Trades Union Congress, employer associations, trade union representatives

*The history and development of trade unions:* the rise of trade unionism; trade unions and the law; union growth and decline; changing business environment e.g. political, technological, social, legal and economic; relevance to industrial relations

*The main players in employee relations:* workers, managers, organisations, government agencies concerned with the workplace and work community

*Theoretical perspectives:* unitarist, pluralist, radical; review of perspectives by the stakeholders in employee relations

## 2 Understand the nature of industrial conflict and its resolution

*The nature of industrial conflict:* ideological framework, conflict and cooperation

*Different types of dispute:* collective disputes, strike action, strike statistics, ballots, no-strike agreements

*Resolving conflict:* dispute procedures, arbitration and the role of the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (Acas)

## 3 Understand collective bargaining and negotiation processes

*The nature and scope of collective bargaining:* roles e.g. shop stewards, union officials employer associations and management

*The collective bargaining process:* institutional agreements for collective bargaining, local workplace bargaining, single-table bargaining

*Negotiation processes:* negotiation strategy, preparation for negotiation, conducting the case-settlement, disclosure of information

## 4 Understand the concept of employee participation and involvement

*Consultation and employee participation:* different forms of employee consultation and participation, joint consultation committees, communication channels

*Industrial democracy and employee participation:* European Works Councils (European Objectives), the social dimensions of the European Union and supervisory boards, national cultural differences in terms of democracy and employee participation

*Employee involvement techniques:* sharing information, consultation, financial participation, commitment to quality, developing the individual, involvement of other stakeholders

*Empowerment:* devolution of responsibility/authority to line managers/employees; the impact of human resource management; approach to employee relations (link to unitarist and pluralist perspectives)

## Learning outcomes and assessment criteria

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<b>Learning outcomes</b> <b>On successful completion of this unit a learner will:</b>	<b>Assessment criteria for pass</b> <b>The learner can:</b>
LO1 Understand the context of employee relations against a changing background	1.1 explain the unitary and pluralistic frames of reference 1.2 assess how changes in trade unionism have affected employee relations 1.3 explain the role of the main players in employee relations
LO2 Understand the nature of industrial conflict and its resolution	2.1 explain the procedures an organisation should follow when dealing with different conflict situations 2.2 explain the key features of employee relations in a selected conflict situation 2.3 evaluate the effectiveness of procedures used in a selected conflict situation
LO3 Understand collective bargaining and negotiation processes	3.1 explain the role of negotiation in collective bargaining 3.2 assess the impact of negotiation strategy for a given situation
LO4 Understand the concept of employee participation and involvement	4.1 assess the influence of the EU on industrial democracy in the UK 4.2 compare methods used to gain employee participation and involvement in the decision making process in organisations 4.3 assess the impact of human resource management on employee relations.

# Guidance

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## Links

The unit has particular links with the following units in this specification: *Unit 3: Organisations and Behaviour*, *Unit 21: Human Resource Management*, *Unit 22: Managing Human Resources*, *Unit 23: Human Resources Development* and *Unit 25: English Legal System*.

This unit links to the National Occupational Standards for Management and Leadership.

## Essential requirements

Learners will need access to case books and legal texts on employee relations situations. Tutors must build a bank of resource materials to ensure there is a sufficient supply of relevant information across a range of industrial conflicts.

## Employer engagement and vocational contexts

Centres should develop links with local businesses that can provide visiting speakers on topics related to employee relations. Many businesses and chambers of commerce want to promote local business and are often willing to provide work placements, visit opportunities, information about businesses and the local business context and guest speakers. The centre, as an organisation, is a valuable resource for guest speakers and as a vehicle for learners to research employee relations. Learners can draw on their own experience through their part-time jobs and work placements.