

School of Management

MMBA 519: HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Trimester Two 2012

COURSE OUTLINE

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Trimester Dates:

Teaching Period: Monday 16 July – Friday 19 October

Study Period: Monday 22 October – Thursday 25 October (Monday 22 October is a public holiday, Labour Day)

Examination Period: Friday 26 October – Saturday 17 November (inclusive)

Withdrawal from Course

1. Your fees will be refunded if you withdraw from this course on or before 27 July 2012.
2. The standard last date for withdrawal from this course is Friday 28 September 2012. After this date, students forced to withdraw by circumstances beyond their control must apply for permission on an '*Application for Associate Dean's Permission to Withdraw Late*' including supporting documentation. The application form is available from either of the Faculty's Student Customer Service Desks.

Class Times and Room Numbers Mondays 19:40 – 21:30 in RH LT2

Format: One two-hour session per week

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course is designed to enable students to:

- achieve a sound understanding of contemporary human resource management issues
- analyse HRM issues, with respect to external and internal influences
- develop the ability to think about the trade-offs involved in HRM decisions
- understand how organisational strategy, global competition, technological change, workforce characteristics and government regulation influence HRM decisions
- appreciate how different HRM policies and practices relate to one another

There will be a strategic focus to the course, with the objective of understanding how human resource management policies and practices can be implemented and integrated in the strategic management of organisations and in a volatile and changing operating environment. A key assumption of the course is that students, as managers in their workplaces, need to understand the effective application of HRM to business issues and to have the ability to critically assess the HRM options available to them.

The focus for class sessions will less on describing the various HRM functions and more on looking at the rationale for using one HRM approach or tool over another. While there will be some overview of the various components of effective HRM, class sessions will emphasise the strategic imperatives underlying how HRM can contribute to organisational and business success.

In general the course will be structured thematically, looking at the people-related variables that need to be addressed in order to contribute to an effective business e.g. motivation, work effectiveness, career management, change, and diversity.

To achieve these objectives, the course requires active participation from students during class.

LEARNING FRAMEWORK

Given the breadth of the topic and the fact that there will be only 24 hours of class contact time, the course will require some self-learning by students.

The design of this course is based on two main learning streams:

- descriptive information on the various functional processes of HRM (e.g. recruitment and selection, training and development, remuneration etc.) will come from the textbook – in other words the “what” of HRM.
- the thinking around the HRM issues one needs to consider in working with these processes, and the underlying challenges relating to strategic HRM’s contribution to the business, will primarily be developed in class – the “how” and the “why”.

Therefore the following learning structure will apply:

- At the first class session students will be given a schedule of all lecture topics and their dates.
- Together with this, a full reading schedule for the textbook (and other possible reading) will be given out. This reading schedule will show the chapters to be read in the context of the topic or theme that each chapter supports e.g. chapters on remuneration and performance management will be relevant to the class sessions on employee motivation.
- A full set of slides on HRM processes will be posted on Blackboard at the start of the course to support the textbook reading.
- Each student will receive a folder of readings comprising a range of book extracts, journal/magazine articles, government reports and newspaper articles - arranged by topic. These readings focus on HRM issues, themes and challenges, and will form the basis for class discussion.
- Students will be expected to have read the relevant textbook chapter and folder articles before the scheduled class topic.
- The first 20-30 minutes of each class session will be devoted to highlighting any implications of, and answering questions about, the HRM processes described in the preparatory textbook reading for that week. (If the questions and input from the class indicates that longer is required, then we will take the time needed to ensure understanding.)

- The remainder of each class session will focus on the wider HRM topic for that week that is set out in the course programme. Discussion will be based on specific articles, case studies and general class insights into the topic.

TEXT

Nankervis, A., Compton, R., Baird, M. and Coffey, J. (2011). *Human Resource Management: Strategy and Practice*, 7th Edition. South Melbourne: Cengage Learning.

The core text should be used as resource that will be helpful throughout your studies; however, it is only a starting point. You are expected to read more widely around the course topic areas drawing on academic journal articles, books, reports and case studies.

The textbook has an Australian context, but it contains many generic analyses of HRM practices and processes and contains up-to-date perspectives of some significant HRM issues.

There is also a book of course readings that will be used as the basis for class discussion and analysis.

Additional books which you may find useful to supplement the core text include:

Bryson, J. and Ryan, R. (2012). *Human Resource management in the Workplace*. Australia: Pearson.

Macky, K. (Ed). (2008). *Managing Human Resources: Contemporary Perspectives in New Zealand..* Australia: McGraw Hill.

Baron, J.N. and Kreps, D.M. (2000). *Strategic Human Resource Management: Frameworks for General Managers.*, Brisbane: John Wiley & Sons.

Rasmussen, E. (Ed). (2010). *Employment Relationships: Workers, Unions and Employers in New Zealand*. Auckland University Press.

Millmore, M., Lewis, P., Saunders, M., Thornhill, A. & Morrow, T. (2007). *Strategic Human Resource Management: Contemporary Issues*. Essex: Pearson Education Limited.

Kirton, G. and Green, A.M. (2005). *The Dynamics of Managing Diversity; A Critical Approach*. 2nd Edition. Burlington: Elsevier Butterworth-Heinemann.

Legge, K. (2005). *Human Resource Management: Rhetorics and Realities*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Mabey, C., Salaman, G. and Storey, J. (Eds). (1998). *Strategic Human Resource Management: A Reader*. London: Sage Publications.

Rasmussen, E. (2004). *Employment Relationships: Workers, Unions and Employers in New Zealand*, 2nd Edition. Auckland University Press.

Rasmussen, E. and Lamm, F. (1999). *An Introduction to Employment Relations in New Zealand*. 2nd Edition. Auckland: Pearson Education New Zealand.

Rudman, R. (2002). *Human Resources Management in New Zealand*. 4th Edition. Auckland: Pearson Education New Zealand.

Useful Journals:

- Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources
- Employment Today
- Harvard Business Review
- Human Resources
- Human Resource Management
- Human Resource Management Review
- Human Relations
- International Journal of Human Resource Management
- New Zealand Journal of Human Resource Management
- Personnel Management

Expected Workload

Students can expect the workload to be approximately 8-10 hours work outside class for every 2 hour class.

It is assumed that students will attend all classes and read all of the required readings.

The lecture and discussion topics will be given out at the first class session.

Assessment

| Method of assessment | Due Date | Percentage |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| Group exercise | tba | 10% |
| Proposal for case study: | 6 August | 5% |
| Case study analysis | 8 October | 35% |
| Final examination | between 26 Oct – 18 Nov | 50% |

Group presentation - 10%

If not already in a work group, students will be allocated to a work group. Each week from Week 2 an issue, case, question or exercise will be scheduled for class discussion two weeks later, and a group will be selected to facilitate that discussion. All students, however, are expected to read and think about the case/question/exercise in advance and come prepared to participate.

The timetabling of group work will depend to some extent on the size of the class and the number of work groups.

The evaluation of your group exercise will depend on your overall contribution, as demonstrated by:

- Demonstrated understanding of the issue being covered
- Knowledge of HRM principles as they relate to the issue
- Ability to both ask relevant questions of the class and answer questions from the class.
- Skill in facilitating the class discussion

Individual case study

You will be required to select an organisation or firm and critically analyse three of its HRM practices in the context of the business issues facing the organisation/firm.

(a) Initial proposal - 5%

You are to write a two-page proposal indicating:

- which organisation or firm (a private, public or voluntary sector one) you intend to study;
- the HRM practices and processes you intend to focus on – select **three** interconnected practices (this will be explained further at the first class session) e
- what sort of information you will collect and how you will collect it. Use, as appropriate, primary and secondary information sources, e.g. interviews, company reports, business and strategic plans, stock market information, company brochures, collective agreements, union newsletters, newspaper articles, available surveys, books, journals, case studies, etc. Report on the availability of those data sources for the organisation you intend to study.

THE PROPOSAL IS DUE ON 6th AUGUST 2012 IN CLASS.

(b) Detailed case study - 35%

You are to prepare a case analysis - maximum 6,000 words - that contains the following:

- A brief description of the organisation or firm and its context/environment.
- A brief description of the business strategy followed by the organisation or firm.
- An identification of the major business issues facing the organisation or firm and their current or potential impacts on it.

- A description of each of your selected HRM practices - this is a “current state” description.
- A brief analysis of the complementarity of the HRM practices i.e. how effective they are (or otherwise) in complementing/reinforcing each other.
- A detailed analysis of the effectiveness or otherwise of the HRM practices in contributing to (a) the overall business strategy and (b) addressing the business issues facing the organisation/firm.
- An outline of the implications of your findings for the organisation and recommendations (as appropriate) relating to addressing any HRM gaps.

In your analysis you should ensure that you include the material and topics covered in class including the applicable theories.

THE CASE ANALYSIS IS DUE ON 8th OCTOBER 2012 IN CLASS.

Final examination

The final examination will be a three hour closed book exam administered during the period of 26 October to 17 November 2012. The examination will be based on the lecture material, the readings and case discussions.

Mandatory Course Requirements

To meet the mandatory course requirements for MMBA 519, students must:

- Contribute to, and participate in, the assigned group exercise
- Complete the individual assignment proposal and the case analysis
- Achieve 40% of the marks available in the final examination.

Penalties

In fairness to other students, work submitted after the deadline will be subject to a penalty of 5% of the total marks available per day of lateness. Assignments more than one week late will not be accepted. A “zero” mark will be applied. In the event of unusual, unforeseen circumstances (e.g., serious illness, family bereavement), students should discuss waiver of the penalty with the course controller prior to the deadline date.

Victoria MBA Grading Standards are as follows:

Excellent Category

A- (75 – 79%) to A (80 – 84%) to A+ (85% and above): The learning is demonstrated to a very high level of proficiency, i.e. it is at a standard that makes it exceptional at Master’s level.

Very Good Category

B+ (70 – 74%): The learning is demonstrated at a high standard. Students have reached a level that clearly exceeds “competency”.

Good Category

B (65 – 69%): The learning is clearly demonstrated without being exceptional in any way. Students can be thought of as fully competent.

Satisfactory Category

B- (60 – 64%): The learning is demonstrated without being exceptional in any way. Students can be thought of as competent.

Marginal Category

C (50 – 54%) to C+ (55 – 59%): The learning is demonstrated to a minimally acceptable level. There may be flaws but these are not serious enough to “fail” the student.

Unsatisfactory / Failure Category

E (0 – 39%) to D (40 – 49%): The learning is absent or performed to a very low level, or the performance is seriously flawed.

Referencing

There are many different styles of referencing and the Faculty of Commerce & Administration at VUW has decided to make APA (American Psychological Association) referencing style the common standard across the Faculty. The Commerce and Central Libraries hold the APA Style Guide. You can also access the information from the online VUW library site

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/library/research/reference/referencingguides.aspx>

Class Representative

A class representative will be elected in the first class, and that person’s name and contact details will be made available to VUWSA, the Course Coordinator and the class. The class representative provides a communication channel to liaise with the Course Coordinator on behalf of students.

Communication of Additional Information

Additional information and information on any changes will be conveyed to students via class announcements and in written form on the university blackboard server for MMBA 519.

For the following important information follow the links provided:

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism.aspx>

General University Policies and Statutes

Find key dates, explanations of grades and other useful information at

www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study

Find out about academic progress and restricted enrolment at

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/academic-progress.aspx>

The University’s statutes and policies are available at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy, except qualification statutes, which are available via the Calendar webpage at

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/calendar.aspx> (See Section C).

Further information about the University’s academic processes can be found on the website of the Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Academic) at

www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/avcacademic/default.aspx

AVC (Academic) Website: information including: Conduct, Academic Grievances, Students with Impairments, Student Support

http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/avcacademic/Publications.aspx

Faculty of Commerce Office

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/vbs/studenthelp>

Te Putahi Atawhai

Maori and Pacific Mentoring Programme

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/tpa/>