

EFFECTIVE EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS



Multiple choice

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|------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. D | 6. D | 11. C | 16. C |
| 2. A | 7. B | 12. D | 17. B |
| 3. B | 8. D | 13. B | 18. A |
| 4. B | 9. A | 14. C | 19. A |
| 5. C | 10. C | 15. A | 20. D |

Short answer questions

Question 1

- (a) **Grievance procedures can help to reduce staff turnover by allowing employees to work through problems with their employers rather than facing a situation where they have to either quit or else face an unsatisfactory work situation. Grievance procedures also allow employers and employees to resolve disputes amicably without recourse to expensive industrial action such as strikes.**
- (b) **Deadlines encourage employers and employees to resolve their grievances. This stops employers from ignoring an issue to the detriment of employees. Solving grievances in a short time frame is also of benefit to a business as grievances that reach higher levels of resolution are likely to be more costly in terms of time and money and are more likely to result in a serious deterioration in workplace relations.**
- (c) **The first step in any grievance procedure is generally for employees and their representatives to meet directly with management to discuss the problem. The role of unions will be to outline employees' concerns and to propose a possible solution to the conflict. The role of employers is to listen to the employees' concerns and then to respond in a responsible manner that will help to resolve the dispute while still maximising the profits of the business and obeying all relevant laws.**
- (d) **In some businesses, worker participation in decision-making processes is an important communication tool. Worker participation schemes can be either direct or indirect. Direct forms of participation give individual employees greater opportunity to contribute directly to a business. Indirect schemes generally involve a representation of employees meeting with senior management or the board of directors to discuss work practices as well as the overall strategic direction of the company. Worker participation schemes can result in a more flexible workplace, allowing a business to become more responsive to consumer needs.**

Question 2

- (a) **Enterprise bargaining is a collective form of employment negotiations conducted between employers and employees or their representatives. It involves the determination of employment contract at the workplace level.**
- (b) **Financial awards can include cash benefits such wages or end of year bonuses, and can also include non-cash financial awards such as stock options which still have an inherent monetary value.**
- (c) **In Australia, Awards are a legally binding tier of employment contracts setting out the minimum pay and conditions for employment in an industry. The Awards specify the minimum wage and employment conditions for certain occupations – with recent legislation simplifying the number of ‘allowable matters’ to around 20. Around one quarter of Australian workers are currently covered by an Award.**
- (d) **Non-financial rewards assist a company in attracting new employees, creating loyalty amongst current employees and maximising the productivity and job satisfaction of employees. Non-financial rewards can include such things as a comfortable workplace, good promotional opportunities or family-friendly work practices. Although these rewards do not increase the financial well being of employees they can serve to increase job satisfaction and employee loyalty. Maximising financial benefits will not be the end goal of all workers such as new mothers who must balance serious home commitments with their need and desire for employment. Those people who choose to seek a fair balance between work and non-work commitments will be encouraged to work for, and remain loyal to, businesses that value this choice. Workers who are happy in their job are likely to work more productively and will be prepared to expend maximum effort to help a business to succeed. Many studies have highlighted the importance of non-financial rewards in motivating employees.**

Question 3

- (a) **Workers’ compensation provides injured workers with weekly payments to cover loss of earnings capacity, payment of medical expenses and training expenses where necessary, and to assist their return to work.**
- (b) **WorkCover NSW administers occupational health and safety regulation in New South Wales.**
- (c) **The first step to minimising work related injuries and illness in the workplace is for a business to develop appropriate occupational health and safety policies and programs. This process should always involve extensive consultation with employees to make sure that these programs take into account the specific nature and risks involved in the business’s workplace. Businesses should establish a training strategy so that new workers are quickly brought up to speed with the business’s operations and are made aware of risks involved in the work and appropriate safety guidelines to follow. Businesses should establish hazard identification processes and encourage employees to inform management of work practices which they feel are dangerous.**

Management can then act to eliminate these dangers. Finally, business's must ensure that they maintain and, where possible, improve upon these strategies to ensure that maintaining a safe workplace environment becomes a long-term goal of the business.

- (d) **Anti-discrimination and equal employment opportunity legislation in Australia is designed to ensure that all employees receive fair and equal treatment within the employment relations system. Anti-discrimination legislation, such as the Sex Discrimination Act 1984 and the Racial Discrimination Act 1975, makes it illegal for businesses to discriminate against employees on the basis of personal characteristics such as race, sex, marital status or pregnancy. Equal employment opportunity (EEO) legislation takes anti-discrimination legislation a step further, ensuring that disadvantaged groups not only have access to employment but are also given the same opportunities for promotion and advancement as people from less disadvantaged groups. All businesses with more than 100 employees are required by law to have a formal EEO policy. Anti-discrimination and EEO legislation serves to protect employees who may not otherwise have the opportunity to achieve active and rewarding places in Australian workplaces.**