

### 3E5 Human Resource Management 2008 CRIB

1 Briefly define *flexible working practices*. Explain the reasons for the spread of these practices in Britain. The growth of flexible working practices has occurred alongside a growing demand for a better work-life balance: Discuss the relationship between these two trends. [100%]

*Flexibility:*

- *as an over-arching principle;*
- *aspects (numerical, time, functional (task) & financial).*

*Sectoral differences.*

*Employment category differences:*

- *gender;*
- *blue/white-collar;*
- *public/private sector.*
- *Provenance of proposals for varying levels of flexibility.*
- *Work portfolios (more than one P/T job etc).*
- *Insecurity (increase in the number of 'peripheral' (non-core) jobs – 'temporary/agency' jobs).*
- *Increase in the amount of home-working.*
- *Decrease in the amount/quality of statutory rights.*
- *Cui bono?*

2 The WERS2004 evidence suggests that the formal industrial relations system in Britain may be in decline. Make the case for *either* its eventual disappearance *or* its renaissance. Whichever case you make, indicate the likely future roles for employers, employees' representatives and the state. [100%]

*Whichever case is argued, the range of discussion should include the following dimensions and illustrations of each case such as:*

- *economic - workforce characteristics, unemployment, inflation, costs, enterprise ownership and size, profitability etc;*
- *social - cultural values, gender, age, skill, work/life balance etc;*
- *psychological - aspiration levels, education systems, salience of work, role models, individualism etc;*
- *technological - service/productive, extent of IT, skill levels, organisation structure and employee autonomy;*

- *political - wider political systems, party distribution, legal framework, wider influences and regulation such as EU.*

*Their impact on employers, unions and state, following main trends of evidence in WERS 2004.*

3 Discuss the range of social and technical issues that a company should consider when choosing technologies for the production of goods and/or services. Illustrate your answer using an example of a specific product. [100%]

*Exposition of the goods/services involved.*

*Exposition of the technologies chosen.*

*Technical issues:*

- *efficiency, productivity etc.*

*Social issues:*

- *job security;*
- *training needs;*
- *career development;*
- *work/life issues (?);*
- *destruction of old occupations;*
- *destruction of traditional employment structures;*
- *implications for pay;*
- *implications for hours of work.*

*HRM issues:*

*personal satisfaction;  
individual satisfaction.*

4 Describe the main economic and social issues that the employment policies of a UK-based multinational company must address. How might the company seek to address them? [100%]

*Basic centrality and cultural models (Perlmutter, Hofstede) underpin practices*

*. economic: optimal allocation of resources and pursuit of competitive advantage, national business models and convergence thesis,*

*differential in benefit between parent and host country,  
between shareholders, managers and employees etc*

*.social: organisational structure, control and ethos, common corporate  
culture and national cultures, authority systems, salary  
wage and evaluation systems, employee involvement and voice,  
managerial and expatriate cadres etc*

