

IB9DQ-15 Future of Work in the Global Economy

27/28

Department

Warwick Business School

Level

Taught Postgraduate Level

Module leader

Umar Boodoo

Credit value

15

Module duration

9 weeks

Assessment

100% exam

Study location

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

This module examines the changing nature of work and employment in a global economy under pressure. It asks why firms manage people differently across countries, how technology and automation are reshaping the employment relationship, and who bears the costs of global economic disruption. Rather than treating Human Resource Management (HRM) as a set of universal best practices, the module develops students' capacity to analyse employment decisions as outcomes of institutional contexts, power relations, and firm strategy. Topics include varieties of capitalism and worker voice, MNC employment decisions, talent and diversity management, performance and pay, supply chain labour standards, platform and algorithmic management, and mental health and work intensification. The module is designed for pre-experience students entering a world of work in which globalisation is contested, technology is transforming firm-worker relations, and the ability to think critically about employment across institutional contexts is a genuine competitive advantage.

[Module web page](#)

Module aims

The principal aims of this module are to:

Develop students' understanding of the institutional, technological and political forces reshaping work and employment in the contemporary global economy.

Equip students with analytical frameworks for understanding why employment practices vary across countries, firms and worker populations, and why those differences persist under globalisation pressure.

Examine how multinational corporations make employment decisions across borders, including talent management, performance and pay, and supply chain labour governance.

Critically assess the impact of technological disruption, including automation, platform work and algorithmic management, on workers, firms and institutions.

Analyse the contested politics of global work, including collective voice, transnational labour regulation, and the distribution of risk between firms and workers.

Develop students' capacity to apply critical, evidence-based thinking to employment issues they will encounter as managers, advisers or policymakers in global organisations.

Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

Globalisation and Its Discontents: the political economy of global work and its current fractures

Varieties of Capitalism and Worker Voice: institutional foundations of employment relations and collective representation

Technology, Automation and Disruption: who bears the risk of digital transformation and the green transition

How MNCs Make Employment Decisions: efficiency, power and the transfer of practices across borders

Talent, Diversity and the Global Workforce: who counts as talent, and who counts as labour

Performance, Pay and the Negotiation of Work: compensation, motivation and work-life balance in global firms

Supply Chains, Labour Standards and Corporate Responsibility: the limits of firm authority over global employment

Platform Work, Gig Economy and Algorithmic Management: technology as a tool of labour control

Mental Health, Wellbeing and the Intensification of Work: the human cost of global work in the 21st century

Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- Explain why employment practices vary across countries, firms and worker populations and why institutional differences persist under globalisation pressure
- Describe how multinational corporations make and transfer employment decisions across borders, including the role of technology, firm strategy and host country institutions
- Demonstrate awareness of transnational regulatory frameworks including ILO conventions, EU directives and corporate codes of conduct and their limits in governing global employment
- Compare and contrast employment relations developments across different levels of analysis — firm, national, regional and global
- Critically evaluate competing theoretical explanations for why the world of work is changing and assess their empirical support
- Analyse the distribution of costs, risks and benefits across workers, firms and states in the context of globalisation and technological disruption
- Construct and defend reasoned analytical arguments about complex employment situations under time pressure

Indicative reading list

[Reading lists can be found in Talis](#)

Research element

Students develop skills in identifying and evaluating academic and professional sources through weekly preparatory reading and seen case preparation

Students synthesise theoretical and empirical material in support of analytical arguments, both in exit ticket responses and the final examination

Students apply conceptual frameworks derived from academic literature to real-world cases involving multinational firms, institutional contexts and employment outcomes

Seen case preparation over a 4-week period requires independent research into the case company, industry context and relevant institutional environment

Interdisciplinary

The module draws on multiple disciplines including international business, employment relations, economic sociology, political economy, organisational behaviour and labour law. Students are encouraged to apply insights across disciplinary boundaries — for example using political economy frameworks to analyse firm-level HR decisions, or applying organisational behaviour concepts to institutional-level questions about worker voice and collective action. The module's interdisciplinary character is particularly evident in its treatment of technological disruption, which requires simultaneous engagement with economics, sociology, law and management theory.

International

The module is explicitly and comprehensively international in orientation. Its central analytical concern (why employment practices vary across countries and why those differences persist) is

inherently comparative and cross-national. International elements include the comparative analysis of employment relations across varieties of capitalism, the study of multinational corporations as cross-border employers, transnational regulatory frameworks including ILO conventions and EU directives, supply chain labour governance across global value chains, and the differential impact of technological disruption across national institutional contexts. The module's diverse pre-experience international student cohort is itself a pedagogical resource, with workshop discussions drawing on students' own national and cultural contexts to illustrate comparative themes.

Subject specific skills

Apply theoretical frameworks to the analysis of real-world employment situations in multinational firms

Evaluate corporate responses to labour standards challenges in global supply chains and assess the effectiveness of different governance mechanisms

Analyse the employment implications of technological disruption including automation, platform work and algorithmic management across different institutional contexts

Transferable skills

Communicate analytical arguments clearly and concisely in written form, both in short responses and extended examination answers

Use academic and professional databases to identify and evaluate relevant evidence and current developments

Synthesise theoretical and empirical material in support of a coherent analytical position

Demonstrate critical awareness of their own assumptions about work, management and globalisation

Study

Study time

Type	Required
Lectures	9 sessions of 1 hour (6%)
Other activity	18 hours (12%)
Private study	49 hours (33%)
Assessment	74 hours (49%)
Total	150 hours

Private study description

Self study to include preparation and completion of assessment and pre-reading for lectures

Other activity description

9 x 2 hrs workshops

Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

Assessment

You do not need to pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Assessment group B9

	Weighting	Study time	Eligible for self-certification
Assessment component			
Centrally-timetabled examination (On-campus)	100%	74 hours	No

The seen exam case will also be printed and given to each student at their examination desk.

- Students may use a calculator
- Answerbook Pink (12 page)

Reassessment component is the same

Feedback on assessment

Assessments are graded using standard University Postgraduate Marking Criteria and written feedback is provided. Overall percentage marks are awarded for examination performance and general examination feedback is provided to the cohort.

[Past exam papers for IB9DQ](#)

Availability

Courses

This module is Core for:

- Year 1 of TIBS-N1F4 Postgraduate Taught International Business (MINT)