WORK1003 Foundations of Work and Employment

THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY · UNDERGRADUATE · SEMESTER 2, 2026

Full guide + ask Sia about WORK1003

SIDE 1/2 EXAM REVISION SHEET · DEFINITIONS → DECISION RULES → COMPARISONS MATERIALS: CHECK LMS Final exam **40%** · S2 2026

0 · Exam Map COURSE DATA · S2 2026

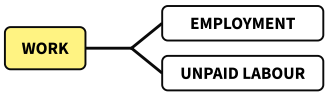
Q10 | P10 | Pres20 | Mid20 | Final40

COMPONENT	WT
Quiz	10%
Tutorial participation	10%
Tutorial presentation with Q&A	20%
Mid-semester test	20%
Final exam	**40%**

Permitted materials: not confirmed for this offering in the course materials we hold — check the exam instructions on the LMS.

SOURCE → *current Semester 2, 2026 assessment materials; final format is "End-of-semester examination".*

1 · Core Boundary C1 · TOPIC MAP + FAQ



Work is broader; employment is one institutional form.

ASK	DISTINGUISH
What activity?	Goods, services, care, identity or social reproduction.
What relation?	Employment exchanges labour capacity under organisational and legal authority.
What boundary?	Unpaid care, volunteering and subsistence remain work without a wage.
What warning?	Do not infer social value from market payment.

CLASSIFICATION RULE

```
Name the category the question needs: work / employment / occupation / labour-force participation. A narrow paid-work measure can erase household or community activity; a very broad one can hide differences in protection and bargaining power.
```

1b · Revision Priority COURSE OVERVIEW + STRATEGY

LAYER	RECITE AND CHECK
1 · Define	Give the exact category and its boundary: work is broader than employment; labour capacity is not finished output.
2 · Map	Name workers, employers, representatives, the state and any other actor; identify the governing rule.
3 · Explain	Show how a resource, alternative, dependency, sanction or authority changes available choices.
4 · Interpret	Declare unitarist, pluralist or radical assumptions before reading cooperation or conflict.
5 · Qualify	State the institutional consequence, affected group and condition limiting transfer.

2 · Employment Exchange C1 · OVERVIEW + FAQ

Labour capacity is supplied over time, not as a fully finished commodity. The employer therefore seeks authority to direct tasks within legal and contractual bounds; the worker retains agency, knowledge and interests. Because conduct cannot be specified fully in advance, the exchange remains open-ended.

CAUSAL CHAIN

```
contract establishes relation → management specifies work → worker consents / negotiates / reinterprets / resists → performed labour
```

CHECK BOTH	QUESTION
Formal authority	Who may direct, sanction or set the rule?
Practical discretion	Who still decides how work is actually done?
Dependency	Who controls alternatives, information or income?
Legitimacy	Is the later instruction fair, safe and legitimate?

Where it bites: do not treat consent to employment as settling every later instruction. Explain the continuing conversion of capacity into effort and the organisation's dependence on worker cooperation.

3 · Labour Process C1 · TOPIC MAP



System = connected actors, context and rules.

Labour-process analysis studies how work is designed and controlled after exchange. Track division of labour, targets, technology, measurement and supervision; then compare pace, skill, knowledge and discretion before and after.

MECHANISM	CAN COORDINATE	CAN REDISTRIBUTE
Targets	clarify output	pace and risk
Technology	remove hazardous repetition	surveillance or skill
Measurement	make performance visible	information and sanction
Rules/culture	support cooperation	voice and discretion

Evidence rule: compare task content, required skill, pace, discretion and access to performance data *before and after* the change. Then identify whether workers can contest the measure or must absorb its consequences.

Automation may simultaneously remove hazardous repetition, extend surveillance, alter the knowledge needed and create new expertise. The outcome depends on ownership, design and how information is used; it cannot be read from the technology alone.

4 · Rules at Work C2 · OVERVIEW + FAQ

Employment relations concerns institutions and processes governing the exchange and use of labour. It is fundamentally about rule-making: who makes, administers, invokes, enforces and contests the terms of work.

RULE TYPE	WHAT IT GOVERNS	EXAMPLES
Substantive	the term itself	wages, hours, leave, duties
Procedural	how a term is made, interpreted or challenged	consultation, bargaining, grievance, remedy

SOURCE LADDER	DIAGNOSTIC QUESTION
Law	What minimum or procedure is enacted?
Collective agreement	What organised bargain modifies the rule?
Policy	What does the organisation say should happen?
Custom/practice	What behaviour is actually expected?
Supervisory norm	What is sanctioned or protected day to day?

RULE AUDIT

```
RULE + SOURCE + ACTOR + ENFORCEMENT ROUTE + LIVED EFFECT
```

Written and enacted arrangements can contradict each other. A consultation policy paired with norms rewarding silent compliance creates a gap between formal protection and lived work. Do not reduce an institutionally structured conflict to personality.

5 · System Boundary C2 · SYSTEM FAQ

A systems approach joins workers and representatives, employers and associations, government agencies and rules within economic, technological, legal and social contexts. The boundary is an analytical choice: workplace, firm, sector, supply chain or national system.

GOOD BOUNDARY	BAD BOUNDARY
Chosen to explain a named outcome.	Everything is connected to everything.
Shows a causal link or feedback.	Lists context as background scenery.
States what may not transfer.	Treats one workplace as the whole system.

ACTOR SET	TYPICAL RESOURCE / RULE ROLE
Workers	labour, knowledge, consent, exit, collective action
Representatives / unions	organisation, bargaining, monitoring and voice
Employers / associations	direction, capital, information, policy and coordination
Government agencies	law, enforcement, adjudication and economic management

6 · Context → Power C2 · TOPIC MAP + FAQ



Context shifts resources; it does not dictate results.

CONTEXT	MECHANISM TO SHOW
Labour demand / skill scarcity	changes exit options or replacement cost
Product competition / inflation	changes what actors claim they can sustain
Technology	relocates information, discretion or sanction
Public policy / migration rules	changes legal options and dependencies
Gender, care, authority norms	shape entry and whose claims appear legitimate
Subcontracting / union presence	fragments or organises collective leverage

Relational power exists when one actor can change another's choices through a resource, alternative, sanction or recognised authority. Test: who can **delay, exit, sanction, withhold knowledge or mobilise collectively**?

CONTEXT SENTENCE

```
Because [context] changes [actor's resource/alternative/rule], [actor] can now [action], shifting [outcome] for [group].
```

7 · Work Arrangements C1 · BOUNDARY FAQ

COMPARE	DO NOT STOP AT
Employees, contractors, franchises, agencies, platforms	the formal label
Price, customer access, data, termination control	nominal task choice
Minimum standards, representation, insurance, security	"flexibility" alone
Demand risk, waiting time, equipment cost	one beneficiary

Pair every claimed benefit with the distribution of uncertainty and protection. Actual dependency and control can diverge from contractual wording.

Courier application: choosing when to log in shows scheduling discretion, yet platform control of price, customer access, acceptance ranking and deactivation concentrates market and information power. The correct finding is simultaneous choice and dependency, not a binary label.

RISK-TRANSFER TEST

```
Who bears low demand, waiting time, equipment cost and income volatility? Who can change price or terminate access? Which protection or collective forum follows the relation?
```

8 · Three Ideological Frames C3 · FULL TOPIC MAP

FRAME	STARTING ASSUMPTION	CONFLICT MEANS
Unitarist	integrated team; broadly shared objectives; legitimate authority	poor management, misunderstanding or disruptive outsiders
Pluralist	coalition of groups with legitimate overlapping and competing interests	normal; governed through representation, bargaining and procedure
Radical	owners control productive assets; workers depend on selling labour capacity	rooted in ownership, surplus, control and structural inequality

FRAME	MECHANISM	CHECK / LIMIT
Unitarist	leadership, communication and commitment align members	shared identity can be real, but costs and rewards may differ
Pluralist	unions, consultation, bargaining and disputes create durable rules	a forum does not guarantee equality of information or endurance
Radical	rules and technology reproduce or contest ownership and control	structure constrains agency but does not erase collective or operational power

FRAME TEST

```
ASSUMPTION → MECHANISM → PREDICTION → WHAT IT REVEALS → WHAT IT HIDES
```

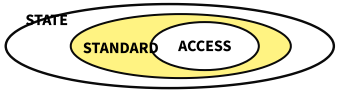
A frame must alter the causal account, not merely the vocabulary. For the same event, predict a different cause, legitimate actor, institution or distributional consequence.

QUESTION	UNITARIST	PLURALIST	RADICAL
Legitimate voice	integrated authority	multiple organised interests	workers act within ownership structure
Stability	alignment and commitment	institutionalised conflict	contested dependence and production
Best evidence	shared goal / management failure	interests, resources, bargaining rule	ownership, value, control, worker action

9 · Power + Institutions C3 · FAQS

Unitarist check: state the assumed unity; never treat cooperation as proof that material interests vanished. **Pluralist check:** name parties, interests, resources and the institution; never call compromise neutral when one side controls information or delay. **Radical check:** show the mechanism from ownership/control to the observed outcome; do not use "capitalism" as a substitute for evidence.

10 · The State's Roles C4 · TOPIC MAP + FAQ



Effective state action needs enforcement and access.

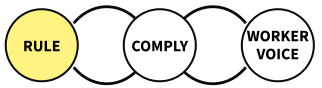
CAPACITY	WHAT TO NAME
Legislator	minimum standards and bargaining rules
Regulator	inspection, compliance and sanction
Adjudicator	dispute and remedy architecture
Employer / purchaser	direct employment and contracting practice
Economic manager	conditions affecting labour demand and leverage

Roles can conflict. Policy reflects political projects and institutional history, not one permanently neutral interest. Weak enforcement or broad contractual freedom also distributes power when government appears inactive.

EFFECTIVENESS RULE

```
ENACTMENT ≠ ENFORCEMENT ≠ ORGANISATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION ≠ WORKER ACCESS
```

11 · Regulation in Practice C4 · OVERVIEW + FAQ



Rules work through compliance, voice and remedy.

ARCHITECTURE	WORKPLACE TRANSLATION
Minimum floors	payroll, rosters, policies, supervision
Collective rule-making	recognition, bargaining, representation
Information duties	records, audit access, transparency
Remedies / liability	detection, repair, deterrence, responsibility

Classification ambiguity, supply-chain pressure and information asymmetry can make under-compliance systematic. Education, voice, record access and liability design affect whether breaches are found and repaired.

A published policy is not proof of compliance.

TRACE THE RULE

```
LEGAL SOURCE → WORKPLACE DATA → DECISION → MONITORING → REMEDY
```

INTERVENTION	MECHANISM
Deterrence	raises expected cost of breach through detection and sanction
Education	improves knowledge of rule and implementation
Worker voice	reveals recurring problems and supports contestation

WORK1003 Foundations of Work and Employment · Self-Test Drills

THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY · ANSWER PATHS · APPLICATIONS · TRAPS · EXAM-MORNING PLAN

Full guide + ask Sia about WORK1003

SIDE 2/2 SELF-TEST · FOUR WORKED APPLICATIONS · JUDGEMENT CARDS · CLASSIC TRAPS

RECALL → APPLY → COMPARE → QUALIFY

WORK1003 · v2 · 2026-10-25

12 · Universal Answer Path

COURSE STUDY STRATEGY



Case path: actors → rule → power → frame → limit.

FIVE-SENTENCE FRAME

```
1 DEFINE the concept precisely. 2
IDENTIFY actors +
substantive/procedural rule. 3
EXPLAIN the mechanism through a
resource, dependency or institution.
4 APPLY one ideological frame and
test a rival. 5 CONCLUDE with
consequence, affected group and
transfer boundary.
```

IF ASKED TO…	DO THIS
Define	category + boundary + why it matters
Explain	cause → actor resource → changed options → outcome
Compare	same facts; change assumptions, mechanism and prediction
Evaluate	strength + omitted interest + counterargument + limit
Apply regulation	legal source → implementation → enforcement → access/remedy

Self-check: Is the outcome named? Is context doing causal work? Does the frame change the explanation? Is the recommendation tied to a responsible actor and observable consequence?

COUNTERARGUMENT DISCIPLINE	MINIMUM CONTENT
Credible rival	Start from a different assumption, not a synonym.
Discriminating evidence	Name an observation that would favour one account.
Distribution	Identify who gains, who bears cost and whose voice counts.
Transfer	State the contextual condition under which the conclusion may change.

13 · Worked A · Care

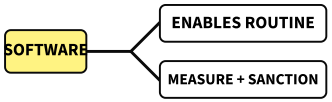
C1 · WORKED EXAMPLE

RELATION	Both perform work; only the agency relation is ordinarily organised as paid employment.
RULE	Employment contract and wage-setting institutions attach to one relation.
MECHANISM	The category changes visibility, remuneration, legal protection and bargaining power.
RIVAL	A broad work lens reveals social necessity; an employment lens preserves institutional differences.
ANSWER	Do not equate market payment with social value; match the category to the question.

14 · Worked B · Technology

C1 · FAQ EXAMPLE

Prompt: Call-centre software suggests scripts and measures pauses. It helps inexperienced staff answer routine questions but penalises time spent on complex cases; workers create workarounds.



Technology can enable work while intensifying control.

LABOUR PROCESS	Task design, measurement and supervision shape pace and discretion.
WHO GAINS?	Management gains performance data and a sanction tied to pauses.
WHAT REMAINS?	Workers retain knowledge and agency through informal workarounds.
BALANCED FINDING	Coordination improves for routine work while complex judgement is discouraged.
LIMIT	Do not label automatic deskilling: compare task content and discretion before/after.

RECITE → *Technology is a contested organisational arrangement, not an independent actor. Name ownership, design, information use and the decision relocated.*

15 · Labour-Capacity Drill

C1 · FAQ EXAMPLE

Warehouse facts: broad contractual duties; daily targets, scanner settings and supervisor instructions determine pace.

WEAK ANSWER	REPAIR
"The contract controls work."	The contract creates the relation; managerial systems continually specify performance.
"The worker agreed."	Consent does not settle whether later instructions are fair, safe or legitimate.
"Management has total control."	Formal authority coexists with worker knowledge, discretion, cooperation and resistance.

ONE-LINE ANSWER

```
The indeterminacy of labour capacity
explains why control and cooperation
must be continually produced after
the contract is signed.
```

Three parallel readings: a unitarist account asks whether targets and instructions align effort with shared purpose or reveal management failure; a pluralist account treats pace and safety as legitimate interests requiring voice and procedure; a radical account connects the authority to direct and measure effort with ownership and the extraction of output.

16 · Worked C · Roster Rule

C2 · WORKED EXAMPLE

Prompt: Policy requires two weeks' notice; supervisors routinely change shifts by text the night before. The document and practice create competing expectations.



Formal and enacted rules can produce different effects.

SUBSTANCE	When shifts are scheduled.
PROCEDURE	How notice is given, varied and challenged.
FORMAL SOURCE	Two-week policy.
OPERATIVE PRACTICE	Night-before supervisor texts, backed by practical authority.
CONSEQUENCE	Uncertainty shifts to workers' planning and care arrangements.
ANSWER	Name rule, source, actor and enforcement route; do not individualise an institutional conflict.

17 · Same Rule, Different System

C2 · FAQ EXAMPLE

Prompt: The same statutory minimum applies to two firms. One has union bargaining and stable staffing; the other uses agencies and short shifts.

CONSTANT	VARIABLE	MECHANISM
statutory minimum	representation	ability to invoke and enforce the rule
national law	staffing form	continuity, information and dependency
formal protection	market subsystem	resources and practical access differ

CONCLUSION

```
Shared law enters different actor
and market systems; therefore formal
sameness need not produce the same
workplace outcome.
```

Boundary: choose the system scale needed for the outcome. The national rule alone is too wide; one supervisor alone is too narrow.

Context mechanism: stable staffing can build shared knowledge, repeated interaction and organised voice. Agency work and short shifts may weaken continuity, fragment responsibility and raise the cost of contesting a breach. These are propositions to test, not automatic effects.

COUNTERFACTUAL	EXPECTED MOVEMENT
same agency model + recognised representation	stronger monitoring and enforcement route
stable staffing + weak information	formal continuity without effective rule access

18 · Frame Drill · Weekend Work

C3 · WORKED EXAMPLE

Prompt: Management says weekend work is necessary for the team's survival and calls opposition resistance to change.



One event; three frames, mechanisms and predictions.

READING	ANSWER PATH
Unitarist	Common survival interest; strong communication and leadership should align members; resistance may signal misunderstanding.
Pluralist	Scheduling flexibility and time are legitimate competing interests; representation and bargaining should make a durable rule.
Radical	Ask who controls the decision and who bears extra time or risk while benefits flow elsewhere.

Evaluation: Shared purpose may be genuine, but it does not show equal costs or rewards. Calling opposition disloyal can delegitimise voice. A bargaining forum helps govern conflict but can remain unequal. A structural account still needs workplace evidence.

19 · Hospital Context Test

C2/C3 · FAQ EXAMPLE

Severe skill shortages do not improve outsourced cleaners' leverage when low-cost contracting fragments their relationship with the host. "Skill shortage" is not the conclusion; trace which group has scarce alternatives, who controls the contract, and whether organisation or law converts pressure into bargaining power.

CHANGE ONE CONDITION	PREDICT
strong union presence	collective voice may turn scarcity into enforceable rules
continued subcontracting	host responsibility and worker leverage remain fragmented
record / information access	monitoring and claims become more feasible

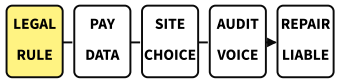
Frame contrast: pluralism asks whether representation and bargaining can organise the cleaners' interest; a radical reading asks why low-cost contracting and ownership boundaries preserve control despite local labour scarcity; a unitarist response would need evidence of a genuinely shared host–contractor purpose.

POWER CHECK → *Scarcity matters only when an actor can use it through exit, delay, organisation, rule enforcement or another credible alternative.*

20 · Worked D · Payroll Regulation

C4 · COURSE WORKED EXAMPLE

Prompt: A franchise payroll system applies an outdated allowance across many sites. Individual complaints fix a few payments; audit access and head-office responsibility address the recurring process.



Rule → data → decision → detection → remedy.

RELATION / ACTORS	Workers, franchise sites, head office, representatives and regulator.
RULE	Allowance as an employment standard translated through payroll.
MECHANISM	Outdated central process repeats error; information asymmetry and site structure obscure responsibility.
WHY COMPLAINTS ARE PARTIAL	They repair visible cases without correcting system design.
INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE	Audit access, records, voice and liability can expose and alter the recurring process.
BOUNDARY	Do not assume every breach is isolated or that policy proves compliance.

21 · Formal Right → Effective Right

C4 · WORKED EXAMPLE

Prompt: Law grants a wage entitlement, but under-resourced inspection and fear of dismissal reduce claims among temporary migrants.

LAYER	FINDING
Enactment	A formal wage floor exists.
Enforcement	Inspection capacity is limited.
Worker access	Fear of dismissal raises the cost of invoking the right.
Power effect	The employer's sanction and the worker's dependency narrow practical options.
Conclusion	Formal and effective protection diverge.

ALWAYS NAME → *the state capacity and implementation mechanism; then separate law on the books, workplace translation and access to remedy.*

Competing state capacities: the same state may legislate a floor, purchase services through low-cost contracts, employ workers, manage economic conditions and under-resource an enforcement agency. Evaluate the interaction rather than treating "the state" as one coherent preference.

FINAL CHECK

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Trace enactment → payroll or roster
→ monitoring → enforcement → remedy.
Name who controls records, the
dependency raising claim costs and
what would change the result.
```

22 · Judgement Cards

ALL CHAPTERS · FAQ TRAPS

IF YOU SEE…	DO THIS
"Not paid, so not work"	Separate work from employment; do not infer value from payment.
"The contract says…"	Compare formal authority with actual direction and discretion.
"Technology caused…"	Name ownership, design, information use and relocated decision.
"Flexible contractor"	Test price, customers, data, termination, risk and protection.
"The economy made it happen"	Show the actor resource, alternative or rule that changed.
"Everyone shares a goal"	State unitarist assumptions; test cost/reward distribution.
"There was bargaining"	Check recognition, information, delay and enforcement power.
"Capitalism explains it"	Connect ownership/control to specific value and worker action.
"A legal right exists"	Separate enactment, enforcement, implementation and access.
"One complaint fixed it"	Ask whether the breach is systemic; follow data and liability.

23 · Classic Traps

TOPIC MAPS + WORKED TIPS

1. **Category drift:** answer about employment when the prompt asks about work, or vice versa.
2. **Label-only theory:** name a frame without changing mechanism or prediction.
3. **Total-control claim:** erase worker agency, knowledge and organisational dependence on cooperation.
4. **Context list:** name unemployment, technology or policy without a causal link.
5. **Policy = practice:** ignore custom, supervisory norms, sanction and practical remedy.
6. **Formal label = actual relation:** skip dependency, control and risk transfer.
7. **Neutral-state shortcut:** ignore conflicting capacities, political projects and enforcement choices.
8. **Over-transfer:** generalise from one firm without stating sector, labour-market or institutional limits.

FINAL QUALITY GATE

```
ACTOR named? RULE sourced? RESOURCE
causal? FRAME changes prediction?
CONSEQUENCE distributed? BOUNDARY
stated?
```

24 · Exam-Morning Plan

COURSE STUDY STRATEGY

PASS	ACTIVE RECALL TASK
1 · Definitions	Recite 10 terms with one boundary each.
2 · Three lenses	Give unitarist, pluralist and radical readings of one event.
3 · Four cases	Rebuild care, technology, roster and payroll answer paths without looking.
4 · State	Name five capacities; say why roles can conflict.

Semester 2 formal examination period, from 16 November 2026 (the Exams Office publishes the exact date).
Check your exam instructions on the LMS for what you may bring; use this sheet to revise and self-test.