

International Business Communications

Main Aim(s) of the Unit:

To prepare students to address business communication situations encountered in their careers through the writing of memoranda, letters, reports, resumes, electronic messages; manuals with terms, mechanisms and instructions; process analysis; proposals; web portfolios; delivering oral presentations, in order to develop interpersonal skills and to foster critical thinking and problem-solving skills through the writing of effective communication for assigned business scenarios / situations.

Main Topics of Study:

The process of communication

- The objectives of communication
- The meaning of words
- Non-verbal communication
- The context or situation
- Barriers to communication
- Why? Who? Where? When?
- What? How?
- Planning the message
- Summary – how to communicate

Speaking effectively

- Basic speaking skills
- Qualities to aim for when speaking
- Summary – good speaking

Listening

- Listening – the neglected skill
- Reasons for improving listening
- Are you a good listener?
- Ten aids to good listening
- Summary – good listening

Human interaction and non-verbal communication

- Metacommunication and paralanguage
- The language of silence
- The language of time
- Body language or kinesics
- The underlying psychology: NLP, EI and TA
- Conflict between verbal and non-verbal communication
- Summary – the importance of paralanguage in human interaction

Talking on the telephone

- Telephone problems
- Basic telephone rules
- Switchboard operators
- Making a call
- Gathering information by telephone
- Answering the telephone
- Voicemail
- Mobile phone manners
- Summary – good telephoning

Interviewing

- Interviewing weaknesses
- What is an interview?
- The purposes of the interview
- Types of interview information
- How to plan an interview
- Structuring the interview
- How to question and probe
- Summary – Interviewing

Being interviewed for a job

- Preparing – the organisation
- Preparing – know yourself
- At the interview
- Tips to remember
- Summary – being interviewed for a job

Communicating in groups

- Advantages of groups
- Disadvantages of groups

- Factors affecting group effectiveness
- Summary – making groups and committees work

Running and taking part in meetings

- Chairing meetings
- Decision-making methods
- Responsibilities of participants
- Duties of officers and members
- The agenda
- The minutes
- Videoconferencing and audio-conferencing
- Formal procedure

Giving a talk

- Techniques of public speaking
- Preparation
- Developing the material
- Opening the talk
- Closing the talk
- Visual aids
- Use of notes
- Practising the talk
- Room and platform layout
- Delivery of the talk
- Summary – being a good speaker

Using visual aids

- General principles
- Whiteboards
- Flip charts
- Build-up visuals
- Physical objects
- Models and experiments
- Overhead projector
- Data projector
- Slide projector
- Videos
- Closed circuit television and video
- Points to remember about visual aids
- Video and DVD hire and purchase
- Summary – being in control of visual aids

Faster reading

- How do you read?
- The physical process of reading
- Ways of increasing your vocabulary
- Summary – faster reading

Better reading

- Determine reading priorities
- Scanning
- Skimming
- SQ3R method of reading
- Summary – better reading

Writing business letters

- Why good letter-writing matters
- Backing up the phone call or meeting
- Planning a letter
- Layout and style
- The structure of a letter
- Dictating
- Standard letters
- Summary – writing business letters

Applying for a job

- What sort of job do you want?
- What is available and what are they looking for?
- The application itself
- Job-hunting on the Internet
- Summary – applying for a job

Writing reports

- What is a report?
- Types of report
- Essentials of a good report
- What is the purpose of the report?
- Fundamental structure
- Format, layout, headings and numbering
- Long formal reports
- House style
- How to get started
- Setting your objective
- Researching and assembling the material
- Organising the material and planning the report
- Writing the first draft
- Editing the report
- Producing the report
- Summary – report writing

Memos, messages, forms and questionnaires

- Memos
- E-mail
- Fax
- Postcards and reply cards
- Text messaging
- Forms and questionnaires
- Summary – other writing tasks

Visual communication

- When to use charts and graphs
- Presentation of statistical data
- Presenting continuous information
- Presenting discrete or non-continuous information
- Presenting non-statistical information effectively

Getting to grips with grammar

- Why does grammar matter?
- What is grammar?
- How good is your English?
- The parts of speech in brief
- The framework of English
- The architecture of the sentence

Common problems with English

- Subject–verb agreement
- Problems with verbs
- Problems with adjectives
- Problems with adverbs
- Problems with pronouns
- Problems with prepositions and conjunctions
- Problems with ellipsis
- Problems with negatives
- Revision of grammar

Appendices

- A Punctuation made easy
- B Using capitals
- C Using numbers
- D Business clichés or ‘commercialese’
- E Commonly misused and confused words
- F Ten (simple?) rules of spelling
- G Commonly misspelled words
- H Tips on modern business style
- I Differences between men and women communicating

Learning Outcomes for the Unit

At the end of this Unit, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate how business communication strategies and principles can be applied to prepare effective communication for domestic and international business situations
2. Discuss the relative merits of and appropriate organisational formats and channels used in developing and presenting business messages

3. Demonstrate understanding of the mechanics of oral and written communication including presentations, memos, letters, and reports.
4. Demonstrate language skills competency in grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, number usage, and sentence structure by communicating in concise, clear, straightforward language.
5. Explain relative merits and mechanisms for communicating via electronic mail, Internet, and other electronic media.
6. To deliver an effective oral business presentation (Non credit bearing assessment)
7. To demonstrate problem-solving and critical-thinking skills by analysing business problems, resulting in functional business documents, memoranda, letters, and/or reports.

The numbers in the boxes below show which of the above module learning outcomes are related to particular cognitive and key skills.

Knowledge & Understanding	1-7
Analysis	2,5,7
Synthesis/Creativity	1-7
Evaluation	1,2,5,7
Interactive & Group Skills	6
Self-appraisal/ Reflection on Practice	7
Planning and Management of Learning	1-7
Problem Solving	1,2,6,7
Communication & Presentation	1-7
Other skills (please specify):	0

Learning and teaching methods/strategies used to enable the achievement of learning outcomes:

Learning takes place on a number of levels through lectures, class discussion including problem review and analysis. Formal lectures provide a foundation of information on which the student builds through directed learning and self managed learning outside of the class. The students are actively encouraged to form study groups to discuss course material which fosters a greater depth learning experience.

Assessment methods which enable student to demonstrate the learning outcomes for the Unit:

Examination: 3 hours duration 100%

Indicative Reading for this Unit:

Main Text: 'Mastering Communications' by Nicky Stanton, published by Palgrave Macmillan, 5th Edition

Alternative Text and Further Reading:

Practical Communications - F W Bergin (Pitman)

People of Communication - D W Evans (Pitman)

Basic Business Communication – K Lesikar (McGraw Hill)

Guideline for Teaching and Learning Time

50 hours Lectures / Seminars / Tutorials / Workshops

Tutorial support includes feedback on assignments and may vary by college according to local needs and wishes.

50 hours Directed learning

Advance reading and preparation / Class preparation / Background reading / Group study / Portfolio / Diary etc

100 hours Self managed learning

Working through the course text and completing assignments as required will take up the bulk of the learning time. In addition students are expected to engage with the tutor and other students and to undertake further reading using the web and/or libraries.

MARCH 2011

INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS

Instructions to candidates:

- a) Time allowed: Three hours (plus an extra ten minutes' reading time at the start – do not write anything during this time)
 - b) Answer any FIVE questions
 - c) All questions carry equal marks. Marks for each question are shown in []
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1. Human communication is a process fraught with difficulties. Outline and discuss the main barriers to effective communication. [20]
 2. Effective speakers possess both personal qualities and vocal qualities. Discuss both personal and vocal qualities, giving examples of EACH. [20]
 3. You are about to make a business telephone call to gather information. Discuss what you would do before and during the call. [20]
 4.
 - a) Using examples, outline the main purposes of interviews. [8]
 - b) You have been offered a job interview. Discuss how you would prepare before the interview in order to maximise your chances of success. [12]
 5. Outline and discuss the advantages and disadvantages of group decision making. [20]
 6. Discuss a use, benefit and problem of EACH of the following visual aids:
 - a) Whiteboard [5]
 - b) Flipchart [5]
 - c) Overhead projector [5]
 - d) Physical object [5]
 7. A business letter consists of eight parts, starting with the letterhead and finishing with the complimentary close. Name and describe EACH part. [20]
 8. Outline with business examples the uses, a benefit and a problem of EACH of the following visual methods of communication:
 - a) Simple bar chart [5]
 - b) Component bar chart [5]
 - c) Pie chart [5]
 - d) Pictorial chart [5]

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1. Unless somebody listens to a message and understands it there is no communication.
- a) State the reasons why we should improve our listening skills. [10]
- b) Discuss how we might improve our listening skills. [10]
2. Outline what is meant by the following types of body language and what messages each type might convey:
- a) Orientation and posture [5]
- b) Head nods [5]
- c) Facial expressions [5]
- d) Gestures [5]
3. Anyone who answers a telephone must be courteous, helpful and efficient. Discuss the key rules for answering a telephone before, during and after the call. [20]
4. Discuss the main controllable and uncontrollable variables that determine the effectiveness of groups. [20]
5. You have been asked to give a talk to your work colleagues about effective business communication. Discuss how you would approach preparing for the talk in order to make it as successful as possible. [20]
6. Discuss with examples the advantages and disadvantages of:
- a) written communication [10]
- b) oral communication [10]
7. Electronic mail has become a very popular form of business communication. Consider the advantages and disadvantages of using e-mails in a business context. [20]
8. Often organisations need to present non-statistical information effectively. Describe and discuss the following types of non-statistical visuals:
- a) Flow charts [10]
- b) Organisation charts [10]

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- 1. The simplest way to ensure good listening is to concentrate. Discuss, with examples, the aids to good listening which might improve your concentration. [20]
 - 2. State the main types of non-verbal communication and discuss with examples why such non-verbal communication is important in business. [20]
 - 3. Describe and discuss the principal rules for making a telephone call, before, during and after the call. [20]
 - 4. Compare and contrast the duties of the chairperson and secretary before, during and after a meeting. [20]
 - 5. Discuss the main factors that will make a talk or presentation effective. [20]
 - 6. Describe the layout and main uses of the following methods of business communication:
 - a) a business letter [10]
 - b) a memorandum [10]
 - 7. Electronic mail has both bad and good characteristics. Evaluate e-mail as a form of business communication in terms of both its benefits to business and its drawbacks. [20]
 - 8. Using business examples state the benefits, problems and uses of the following forms of visual communication:
 - a) graphs [10]
 - b) bar charts [10]

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1.
 - a) Explain what is meant by the **process of communication**. [8]
 - b) Discuss the factors (barriers) which can cause problems for communication. [12]
 2. Non Verbal Communication is a very important part of communication. Discuss with examples how we use space, touch and posture to convey messages to others. [20]
 3. Discuss the uses, benefits and problems of the following types of questions in an interview:
 - a) Direct (closed) questions [5]
 - b) Bipolar (yes/no) questions [5]
 - c) Open-ended questions [5]
 - d) Probing questions [5]
 4.
 - a) State and briefly describe the key agenda items found in a formal business meeting. [10]
 - b) Discuss the role of the secretary in connection with a business meeting. [10]
 5. Visual aids, when used well, can be interesting, entertaining and memorable. Select any THREE types of visual aid and explain how EACH might be used to support a presentation and any problems that might occur when using them. [20]
 6.
 - a) State and explain the rules you should follow when using the skimming method to improve your reading. [10]
 - b) Describe what is meant by the SQ3R method of reading. [10]
 7.
 - a) Describe the structure of a fully blocked business letter. [8]
 - b) Using the blocked style, write a letter to an organisation enquiring about the availability of a product of your choice. [12]
 8.
 - a) You want to apply for a job. Explain the various sources of information about job vacancies. [10]
 - b) In connection with a job application, what is a **curriculum vitae** (CV) and what information would you include in a CV? [10]

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1. a) State and explain the FOUR general objectives of communication. [8]
b) Discuss the main stages you would follow in planning a message. [12]
2. a) What reasons might you give for improving the way we listen? [10]
b) Briefly explain any FIVE aids to good listening. [10]
3. Explain with examples what is meant by the following forms of non-verbal communication:
a) The language of silence [7]
b) The language of time [7]
c) Meta communication and paralanguage [6]
4. Your friend has been offered an interview for a job. Explain to him the things he might do to prepare for the interview in order to improve his chances of success. [20]
5. Discuss the benefits of group decision making compared to individual decision making. [20]
6. a) What are the 'minutes' of a meeting and why is it important to record them? [8]
b) Write a set of formal minutes for a meeting of your choice. [12]
7. a) State and explain the differences between a fully blocked letter and a semi-blocked letter. [8]
b) Write a letter of complaint to an organisation concerning a product you have bought. [12]
8. a) Distinguish briefly with examples between continuous statistical information and discrete (non-continuous) statistical information. [8]
b) Discuss, using examples, the use of simple bar charts, component bar charts and multiple bar charts to present discrete statistical information. [12]