# The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology

# UG Course Syllabus

Academic English for Business Studies

LANG1406

3 credits

Pre-requisites: LANG1402 unless exempt. Students exempt from LANG1402 are those who attained Level 5 (with all papers at or above Level 4) or above in English Language in the HKDSE, IELTS Band 6.5 overall or Band 6.0 or above in all parts of the test, or equivalent qualification.

Co-requisites: N/A

**Name of Course Leaders:** Aditi Jhaveri and Kathy Sin

**Email of Course Leaders:** lcaditij@ust.hk & lckathy@ust.hk

**Office Hours of Course Leaders:** Available by appointment only. Students should contact their section instructor directly with any questions.

## Course Description

LANG 1406, *Academic English for Business Studies*, is a Common Core course taken by all Business students. Over one semester, students attend three hours of class per week, complete a variety of out-of-class activities and prepare for assessed tasks.

LANG 1406 aims to develop students' ability to communicate accurately and appropriately in business contexts in the university and beyond. LANG 1406 will enable students to practice critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity, to help enhance their written and spoken communication skills, and academic literacy skills in business-specific contexts. Outside of class, students are expected to take a proactive approach to meet with group members, find information and work together toward common goals. They are also expected to take responsibility for their own learning by reflecting on coursework performance and use self-reflection and feedback from others to improve.

Key topics:

Module 1: *Foundation of Academic Literacy and Understanding Business Communication Problems.* Students will:

- be introduced to the essential academic literacy skills for business studies with a view to understanding a business communication problem within a particular industry in Hong Kong
- learn how to select, cite, and synthesize pertinent information from credible and relevant sources to construct arguments

Module 2: *Developing Business Proposal Writing.* Students will:

- practice and produce a range of business writing including a market and industry evaluation, implementation plan, and financial plan within a business proposal
- practice using clear and appropriate language, rhetorical strategies and linguistic devices in business writing to persuade the audience of an effective, feasible and innovative solution

Module 3: *Pitching a Business Communication Problem and Solution.* Students will:

- practice the essential skills of business pitching to present a business communication problem together with an effective, feasible and innovative solution to persuade the audience
- practice using appropriate verbal and non-verbal delivery skills, visuals, and Q&A strategies to persuade the audience

Methods of instruction: interactive tutorials support active learning through group discussion, collaborative activities, peer learning, online learning, input, self-reflection, practice and feedback.

**Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)**

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

5. Identify, evaluate, select, critique, integrate, and cite relevant information from business-related sources to provide evidence-based arguments
6. Develop ideas clearly and fully
7. Organize ideas coherently, ensuring logical flow and focused development from sentence to text level
8. Use written and spoken language that is accurate, fluent, and contextually appropriate in business communication

9. Demonstrate awareness of audience and reader needs and expectations and communicate with them appropriately
10. Use different modes of communication appropriately to strengthen message delivery
11. Work collaboratively in a team to achieve common goals
12. Demonstrate effective learning skills by using appropriate learning strategies and evaluating progress through reflection and feedback

## Assessment and Grading

This course will be assessed using criterion-referencing and grades will not be assigned using a curve. Detailed rubrics for each assignment are provided on Canvas.

## Assessments

| Assessment Task | Contribution to Overall Course grade (%) | Due date |
|---|---|---|
| A1: Innovators' Pitch | 35% | *Week 12 |
| A2: Business Proposal | 35% | *Week 12 |
| A3: Checkpoint tasks (in-class) | 20% | Spread throughout course |
| A4: PASSWORD TEST | 10% | Exam period |

*Specific due dates are posted on Canvas. Assessment marks for individual assessed tasks will be released within ten working days of the due date.

## Mapping of Course ILOs to Assessment Tasks

| Assessed Task | Mapped ILOs | Explanation |
|---|---|---|
| A1: Innovators' Pitch | ILO1, ILO2, ILO3, ILO4, ILO5, ILO6, ILO7 | This task assesses students' ability to synthesise academic and business-specific sources (ILO1) to collaboratively (ILO7) pitch a chosen real-world business communication problem, and |

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| | | corresponding solution, along with a Q&A, clearly (ILO2) and coherently (ILO3) for a Hong Kong based audience (ILO5) through appropriate spoken language (ILO4) and non-verbal communication (ILO6). |
| A2: Business Proposal | ILO1, ILO2, ILO3, ILO4, ILO5, ILO6 | This task assesses students' ability to synthesise academic and business-specific sources (ILO1) to propose a chosen real-world business communication problem, and corresponding solution, clearly (ILO2) and coherently (ILO3) for a Hong Kong based audience (ILO5) through appropriate written language (ILO4) and non-verbal communication (ILO6). |
| A3: Checkpoint tasks (in class) | ILO1, ILO2, ILO3, ILO4, ILO5, ILO6, ILO7, ILO8 | The checkpoint tasks assess students' ability to apply the skills taught in the course (ILO1, ILO2, ILO3, ILO4, ILO5, ILO6, ILO7), and reflect on and evaluate (ILO8) the process of completing the assignments. |
| A4: Password Test | ILO4 | The Password test assesses students' ability to identify appropriate linguistic features according to different contexts (ILO4). |

**Grading Rubrics**

Detailed rubrics for each assignment are provided on Canvas. These rubrics clearly outline the criteria used for evaluation. Students can refer to these rubrics to understand how their work will be assessed.

**Final Grade Descriptors:**

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| A | Excellent Performance | Content: Skilfully provides an effective, feasible, and innovative solution to a business communication issue. Demonstrates sophisticated synthesis of well-developed ideas from quality sources with exceptional coherence. Communication: Uses nuanced language and non-verbal communication with sustained awareness of target audience/reader, context, purpose. |
| B | Good Performance | Content: Provides a well-defined and effective, feasible, and innovative solution to a business communication issue. Demonstrates synthesis of well-developed ideas from high-quality sources with logical coherence Communication: Uses effective and appropriate language and non-verbal communication with a high level of awareness of target audience/reader, context, and purpose. |
| C | Satisfactory Performance | Content: Provides a defined effective, feasible, and innovative solution to a business communication issue with mostly clear coherence. Demonstrates synthesis of relevant ideas from quality sources with mostly clear coherence. Communication: Uses clear and appropriate language and non-verbal communication with adequate awareness of target audience/reader, context, and purpose. |
| D | Marginal Pass | Content: Provides a loosely defined and somewhat effective, feasible, and innovative solution to a business communication issue. Attempts to synthesise relevant ideas with some analysis of sources somewhat coherently. Ideas may be superficial, repetitive, missing or inadequate. Communication: Uses somewhat appropriate language and non-verbal communication with occasional awareness of target audience/reader, context, and purpose. |
| F | Fail | Content: Provides a poorly defined and inadequate solution to a business communication issue with a lack of coherence and/or organization. Does not synthesize, develop or organize ideas sufficiently. Ideas are very superficial, repetitive, irrelevant, inadequate, and/or lacking. Communication: Uses inappropriate and unclear language and nonverbal communication, demonstrating a lack of awareness of target audience/reader, context, and purpose. |

**Course AI Policy**

We encourage students to make use of all the tools available that can help them to communicate more effectively in English. We also expect students to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity. There is no penalty for using or not using GenAI. However, GenAI and other tools cannot be used as a substitute for a student's own work. Students are expected to write their own assessed assignments and to prepare their presentations themselves.

GenAI tools can be very useful for:

- Brainstorming ideas and suggesting sources BUT the information provided may not be accurate or relevant to your assignment.

- Giving suggestions about improving the organization of your writing BUT GenAI tends to suggest very formulaic patterns of writing which may not fit your requirements.

- Giving suggestions about improving your language BUT GenAI may make suggestions for language changes which are not appropriate for the intended context and audience.

- Suggesting simple ways of expressing complex discipline-specific concepts BUT these explanations may be unfamiliar to your audience.

- Providing summaries of long texts BUT important information may be omitted, particularly if the original text is not well-written.

In short, GenAI provides opportunities to enhance your use of English and contains pitfalls which you need to be aware of.

## Communication and Feedback

Assessment marks for individual assessed tasks will be communicated via Canvas within ten working days of submission. Feedback on assignments will include strengths and areas for improvement where relevant. Students who have further questions about the feedback including marks should consult the instructor within five working days after the feedback is received.

## Resubmission Policy

Resubmissions are not accepted, except in exceptional circumstances.

## Required Texts and Materials

Course materials and additional resources are provided via Canvas.

**Academic Integrity**

Students are expected to adhere to the university's academic integrity policy. Students are expected to uphold HKUST's Academic Honor Code and to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. The University has zero tolerance of academic misconduct. Please refer to Academic Integrity | HKUST – Academic Registry for the University's definition of  plagiarism and ways to avoid cheating and plagiarism.