

**The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology**  
**UG Course Syllabus**

**Professional Writing for the Workplace****LANG2061**

3 credits

Pre-requisites: LANG1403 or LANG1404

Co-requisites: N/A

Exclusions: ECON3700, LABU2040, LABU2060, LANG2063

**Name of Course Leaders:** Thomas Chan**Email of Course Leaders:** [ictomas@ust.hk](mailto:ictomas@ust.hk)

*If you have any questions, your first point of contact should be your section instructor. Please find their email address on Canvas.*

**Office Hours of Course Leaders:** Available by appointment only.**Course Description**

**LANG2061 Professional Writing for the Workplace** is a 3-credit business communication course designed to equip business students with essential writing skills for success in professional environments. Over one semester, with two 1.5-hour lessons per week, this course focuses on how purpose, audience, and context influence effective workplace communication. Through genre analysis, you will explore key business writing genres such as professional emails, company descriptions, and corporate microblogs, while developing strategies to craft messages that are clear, impactful, and adaptable. Emphasizing real-world business scenarios, this course integrates communication theories with practical applications to help you achieve tangible results in professional settings. You will analyze examples from various business contexts and refine transferable skills to enhance your professional communication abilities. As part of the course, a group-based genre analysis project will allow you to work collaboratively to evaluate and analyze a workplace genre, applying key concepts learned throughout the course.

Course Structure

This course emphasizes process, practice, and collaboration to help you develop practical workplace writing skills in a structured yet authentic way. This course is organized around two key projects:

Individual Workplace Scenario Project

In this project, you will create a hypothetical startup company and practice workplace writing within this scenario, combining creativity, authenticity, and professionalism. You will begin by crafting a concise company description that clearly outlines the mission, vision, and focus of your business. You will also write a formal workplace email inviting a real industry professional to an interview in order to gather insights into your chosen field. The insights gained from this interview will then serve as the foundation for a LinkedIn microblog post, where you will practice writing for corporate branding by sharing industry-relevant knowledge with a professional audience. After completing each key writing task, you will either explain your rationale in peer discussion sessions or provide a short written explanation and receive constructive feedback on the effectiveness of your writing. This project is designed to build foundational skills in workplace writing while highlighting the importance of process, practice, and reflection.

### Group Genre Analysis Project

Building on the foundation of your startup companies, this project adopts a collaborative approach to analyzing workplace writing. Working in small groups, you will identify a workplace genre relevant to your industry, such as specific types of proposals, memos, or reports, and gather authentic samples of this genre. Your group will conduct an in-depth analysis of these samples, focusing on factors such as audience, context, purpose, and rhetorical strategies to identify the unique characteristics that define the genre. Throughout the project, you will work closely with your peers to share your understanding of workplace writing, conduct research into your chosen genre, and synthesize your findings. The project will culminate in a formal presentation to the class, where you will demonstrate your understanding of the genre and its application to your startup companies. This project emphasizes critical thinking, collaboration, and a deep understanding of workplace genres, equipping you with essential analytical and professional skills.

### **Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)**

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

1. Analyze workplace writing genres using communication and linguistics theories to examine how audience, purpose, and context shape language, organization, and rhetorical strategies.
2. Apply knowledge of rhetoric and genre to design and produce professional documents that align with workplace-specific conventions, effectively achieving specific professional objectives.
3. Organize workplace writing to ensure clarity, coherence, and alignment with professional conventions, tailoring structure to meet audience expectations and workplace objectives.
4. Create workplace documents that responsibly incorporate generative AI and other technologies to support human input within ethical boundaries.
5. Critically evaluate written workplace documents to assess their effectiveness and suggest improvements based on audience, context, and purpose.
6. Collaboratively create and refine workplace communication strategies by integrating peer feedback and evaluating diverse perspectives.

### **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 below, outlining the criteria used for evaluation.

### **Assessments**

<b>Assessment Task</b>	<b>Contribution to Overall Course grade (%)</b>	<b>Due date</b>
A1: Seminar Discussion of Company Description Rationale	15% (individual)	Approx. week 7*
A2: Persuasive Report on Microblog Rationale	20% (individual)	Approx. week 10*
A3: Genre Analysis Project Showcase - Presentation + Q&A - Peer Evaluation & Group Work	45% (20% group + 15% individual) (10% individual)	Approx. week 13*
Progress Checkpoints	20%	Spread through course

\* Specific due dates are posted on Canvas.

**Mapping of Course ILOs to Assessment Tasks**

<b>Assessed Task</b>	<b>Mapped ILOs</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Assessment 1: Seminar Discussion of Company Description Rationale	ILO 1, 2, 4	This task assesses students' ability to apply communication theories (ILO 2) to critically analyze writing choices (ILO 1) and evaluate the use of technologies to support workplace writing (ILO 4).
Assessment 2: Persuasive Report on Microblog Rationale	ILO 1, 2, 3, 4	This task assesses students' ability to create a well-organized report (ILO 3) to critically analyze writing choices (ILO 1) using communication theories (ILO 2) and evaluate the use of technologies to support workplace writing (ILO 4).
Assessment 3: Genre Analysis Project Showcase - Presentation + Q&A - Peer Evaluation & Group Work	ILO 1, 2, 5, 6	This group project assesses students' ability to work collaboratively (ILO 6) to apply rhetorical and genre knowledge in examining a specific workplace writing genre (ILO 1, ILO 2) and critically evaluate samples of the genre for effectiveness and alignment with audience and purpose (ILO 5).
Progress Checkpoints	ILO 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	These checkpoint tasks assess students' ability to analyze workplace genres (ILO 1), create professional documents aligned with workplace conventions (ILO 2, ILO 3) while responsibly incorporating technologies like generative AI (ILO 4), and refine writing through both individual and peer evaluation and reflection (ILO 5, ILO 6).

## 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

Letter Grade	Short Description	Elaboration on subject grading description
A	Excellent/Good Performance	Consistently produces well-crafted, audience-appropriate workplace texts with nuanced language and communication strategies, demonstrating sustained awareness of audience, context, and purpose. Exhibits excellent understanding and application of rhetorical and genre knowledge, critical analysis, logical organization, and ethical writing practices.
B	Good/Satisfactory Performance	Produces workplace texts that use effective language and communication strategies, demonstrating a very high awareness of target audience, context, and purpose. Shows a strong understanding and application of rhetorical and genre knowledge, critical analysis, logical organization, and ethical writing practices.
C	Satisfactory Performance	Produces workplace texts that use appropriate language and communication strategies, with some awareness of the target audience, context, and purpose. Demonstrates an adequate understanding and application of rhetorical and genre knowledge, with basic critical analysis, organization, and ethical writing practices.
D	Marginal Pass	Produces workplace texts that use some appropriate language and communication strategies, with little awareness of target audience, context, and purpose. Communication is often inadequate or awkward. Demonstrates a basic understanding of rhetorical and genre concepts, but with weak critical analysis, organization, or ethical writing practices.
F	Fail	Produces workplace texts with limited awareness of audience, context, and purpose. Shows limited control of language, resulting in ineffective and unclear communication. Fails to demonstrate understanding or application of rhetorical and genre knowledge.

### **Course AI Policy**

As part of HKUST's broader approach to integrating GenAI into education, LANG2061 supports the ethical use of GenAI by students to enhance learning within the course.

GenAI tools can be particularly useful for the following purposes:

- Brainstorming ideas and suggesting sources, **but** the information provided may not always be accurate or relevant to the assignment.
- Offering suggestions for improving the organization of writing, **but** GenAI often suggests formulaic patterns that may not meet specific requirements.
- Providing suggestions for improving language, **but** the recommended changes may not always align with the context, purpose, or audience of the communication.
- Summarizing long texts, **but** important information may sometimes be omitted, especially if the original text is poorly written.

In summary, while GenAI offers opportunities for students to enhance their use of English, it also presents challenges that must be carefully navigated.

Students are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity. While GenAI and other tools may inspire student work, it is essential to balance these with original thoughts and interpretations. Students should avoid regurgitating information generated by GenAI and must properly attribute all external sources to maintain academic integrity and enhance the credibility of their content and arguments. GenAI and similar tools should not replace a student's independent work. Students are required to write their own assessed assignments.

### **Communication and Feedback**

Assessment marks for individual assessed tasks will be communicated via Canvas within 10 working days after submission. Feedback on assignments will include strengths and areas for improvement where relevant. Students who have further questions about the feedback should consult the instructor within 5 working days after the feedback is received.

### **Resubmission Policy**

Resubmissions are allowed on Canvas before the deadline of the assessment.

### **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.