

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: Delian Gaskell & Gary Muddeman

Email of Course Leaders: lcdgaskell@ust.hk & lcgmuddeman@ust.hk

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

Course Description

LANG1406 is a Common Core course taken by all Business students.

Course objectives: to develop your ability to communicate accurately and appropriately in business contexts in the university and beyond.

Course content: Through this course, you practice critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity, to help enhance your written, spoken and multimodal communication skills and academic literacy skills in business-specific contexts.

Key topics:

Module 1: *Foundation of Academic Literacy and Understanding Business*

Communication Issues, students will:

- be introduced to the essential academic literacy skills for business studies with a view to understanding a business communication issue and preparing for a problem pitch to persuade the audience
- learn how to select, cite, and synthesize pertinent information from credible and relevant sources to construct arguments

Module 2: *Developing Solutions through Research*, students will:

- learn and practice writing a range of business documents such as market and industry analysis and risk assessment and implementation strategies in the form of a business proposal
- practice using clear and appropriate language, rhetorical strategies and linguistic devices in business writing to persuade the audience

Module 3: *Communicating and Defending Solutions*, students will:

- practice the essential skills of business presentations to present and defend their effective, feasible and innovative solutions to persuade the audience
- take part in group consultations and peer feedback sessions to obtain formative feedback to improve their performance and team skills, as well as for self-reflection purposes

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

Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) and Core Areas for Learning (CAfL)

Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)	Core Areas for Learning (CAfL)
a. Students can use written and spoken language that is accurate, fluent, and contextually appropriate in business communication	Written Language (WL) Spoken Language (SL)
b. Students can develop ideas clearly and fully c. Students can organize ideas coherently, ensuring logical flow and focused development from sentence to text level	Substance (SU) Coherence (CO)
d. Students can demonstrate awareness of audience and reader needs and expectations, and communicate with them appropriately	Audience Awareness (AA)
e. Students can use different modes of communication appropriately to strengthen message delivery	Multimodality (MM)
f. Students can demonstrate effective learning skills by using appropriate learning strategies and evaluating	Being an Effective Learning (EL)

progress through reflection and feedback	
g. Students can identify, evaluate, select, critique, integrate, and cite relevant information from discipline-related sources to provide evidence-based arguments	Synthesis (SY)
h. Students can work collaboratively in a team to achieve common goals	Team Skills (TS)

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

Graded Assessment	Weighting	Description	Core Areas for Learning	Tentative Schedule*
Problem Pitch (individual and group): 12 minutes	20%	A preliminary group pitch on the chosen real-world business communication issue.	Spoken Language (SL) Substance (SU) Coherence (CO) Multimodality (MM) Synthesis (SY) Audience Awareness (AA)	In-class: Week 7
Innovators' Presentation (individual and group): 12 minutes + 6-minute Q&A	25%	A group presentation on the solution to the chosen business communication issue, along with an assessed Q&A session.	Spoken Language (SL) Substance (SU) Coherence (CO) Multimodality (MM) Synthesis (SY) Audience Awareness (AA)	In-class: Week 12/13
Business Proposal (individual): 1500 word +/- 10%	40%	An individual 1,500-word proposal for a business innovation to solve the chosen real-world business communication issue.	Written Language (WL) Substance (SU) Coherence (CO) Synthesis (SY) Audience Awareness (AA)	First draft: Week 9 Final Draft: Week 13

Self-directed learning (individual)	15%	A range of tasks in class and out-of-class to develop relevant skills throughout the course.	Being an Effective Learner (EL): Graded on completion	Throughout course
-------------------------------------	-----	--	--	-------------------

*Exact schedule is posted on course Canvas sites.

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:

Grades	Short Description	Elaboration on subject grading description
A	Excellent Performance	Skilfully provides an effective, feasible, and innovative solution to a business communication issue with exceptional coherence; Synthesises high-quality sources to form a compelling evidence-based argument; Uses nuanced language and multimodality with sustained awareness of target audience/reader, context, and purpose.
B	Good Performance	Provides a well-defined and effective, feasible, and innovative solution to a business communication issue with logical coherence; Synthesises high-quality sources to form a strong evidence-based argument; Uses effective and appropriate language and multimodality with a high level of awareness of target audience/reader, context, and purpose.
C	Satisfactory Performance	Provides a defined effective, feasible, and innovative solution to a business communication issue with mostly clear coherence; Attempts to synthesise sources to form a generally evidence-based argument; Uses clear and appropriate language and multimodality with adequate awareness of target audience/reader, context, and purpose.
D	Marginal Pass	Provides a loosely defined and somewhat effective, feasible, and innovative solution to a business communication issue with somewhat appropriate coherence; Attempts to synthesise sources to form an argument, though it lacks detail and may be superficial or inaccurate; Uses somewhat appropriate

		language and multimodality with occasional awareness of target audience/reader, context, and purpose.
F	Fail	Provides a poorly defined and inadequate solution to a business communication issue with a lack of coherence and/or organization; Connections between sources are absent or inaccurate, demonstrating a lack of convincing attempts to establish an argument; Uses inappropriate and unclear language and multimodality, 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 two weeks 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.