

The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology Undergraduate Course Syllabus

Academic English for Business Studies

LANG1406

Credits: 3

Pre-requisite: LANG1402, unless exempt. Students are exempt from LANG1402 if they have attained Level 5 or above in English Language in the HKDSE, with all papers at or above Level 4; IELTS Band 6.5 overall, or Band 6.0 or above in all parts of the test; or an equivalent qualification.

Co-requisites: N/A

Course Leaders: Aditi Jhaveri and Kathy Sin

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Office Hours: By appointment only. Students should contact their section instructor directly with any course-related questions.

Course Description

LANG1406, **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.

The course aims to develop students' ability to communicate accurately and appropriately in business contexts at university and beyond. Students will practise critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity while strengthening their written and spoken communication skills, as well as their academic literacy skills in business-specific contexts.

Outside class, students are expected to take a proactive approach to meeting with group members, locating relevant information, and working together toward common goals. They are also expected to take responsibility for their own learning by reflecting on their coursework performance and using self-reflection and feedback from others to improve.

Key Topics

Module 1: Foundations of Academic Literacy and Understanding Business Communication Problems

Students will:

- be introduced to essential academic literacy skills for business studies, with a focus on understanding a business communication problem within a particular industry in Hong Kong; and
- learn how to select, cite, and synthesise relevant information from credible and appropriate sources to construct evidence-based arguments.

Module 2: Pitching a Business Communication Problem and Solution

Students will:

- practise the essential skills of business pitching by presenting a business communication problem together with an effective, feasible, and innovative solution designed to persuade an audience; and
- practise using appropriate verbal and non-verbal delivery skills, visuals, and Q&A strategies to strengthen audience engagement and persuasion.

Module 3: Developing Business Proposal Writing

Students will:

- practise and produce a business proposal that includes, among other components, a market and industry evaluation, an implementation plan, and a proposed solution; and
 - practise using clear and appropriate language, rhetorical strategies, and linguistic devices in business writing to persuade the audience of the effectiveness, feasibility, and innovativeness of the proposed solution.
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Methods of Instruction

Interactive tutorials support active learning through group discussion, collaborative activities, peer learning, online learning, instructor input, self-reflection, practice, and feedback.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes

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

1. Identify, evaluate, select, critique, integrate, and cite relevant information from business-related sources to provide evidence-based arguments.
2. Develop ideas clearly and fully.
3. Organise ideas coherently, ensuring logical flow and focused development from sentence to text level.
4. Use written and spoken language that is accurate, fluent, and contextually appropriate in business communication.
5. Demonstrate awareness of audience and reader needs and expectations and communicate with them appropriately.
6. Use different modes of communication appropriately to strengthen message delivery.
7. Work collaboratively in a team to achieve common goals.
8. 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**. 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	40%	*Week 9
A2: Business Proposal	30%	*Week 12
A3: Checkpoint Tasks — in class	20%	Spread throughout the 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) and collaborate effectively (ILO7) to pitch a selected real-world business communication problem and corresponding solution. Students must present clearly (ILO2) and coherently (ILO3) for a Hong Kong-based audience (ILO5), using appropriate spoken language (ILO4), non-verbal communication, visuals, and Q&A strategies (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 selected real-world business communication problem and corresponding solution. Students must communicate clearly (ILO2) and coherently (ILO3) for a Hong Kong-based audience (ILO5), using appropriate written language (ILO4) and visual communication strategies (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–ILO7) and to reflect on and evaluate the process of completing assignments (ILO8).
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 should refer to the rubrics to understand how their work will be assessed.

Final Grade Descriptors

Grade	Short Description	Elaboration on Subject Grading Description
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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 the target audience or reader, context, and purpose.
B	Good Performance	Content: Provides a well-defined, 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 the target audience or 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 the target audience or 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 the target audience or 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 organisation. Does not synthesise, develop, or organise ideas sufficiently. Ideas are very superficial, repetitive, irrelevant, inadequate, and/or lacking. Communication: Uses inappropriate and unclear language and non-verbal communication, demonstrating a lack of awareness of the target audience or reader, context, and purpose.

Course AI Policy

Students are encouraged to make use of available tools that can help them communicate more effectively in English. At the same time, students are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity. There is no penalty for using or not using generative AI, commonly referred to as GenAI.

However, GenAI and other tools must not be used as a substitute for a student's own work. Students are expected to write their own assessed assignments and prepare their presentations themselves.

GenAI tools can be useful for:

- brainstorming ideas and suggesting sources, although the information provided may not be accurate or relevant to the assignment;
- giving suggestions for improving the organisation of writing, although GenAI may suggest formulaic patterns that do not fit the assignment requirements;
- giving suggestions for improving language, although GenAI may suggest changes that are inappropriate for the intended context and audience;
- suggesting simple ways of expressing complex discipline-specific concepts, although these explanations may be unfamiliar to the target audience; and
- providing summaries of long texts, although important information may be omitted, particularly if the original text is not well written.

In short, GenAI provides opportunities to enhance students' use of English, but it also presents limitations and potential pitfalls of which students need to be aware.

For LANG1406, students are required to include the following GenAI declaration where applicable.

GenAI Use Declaration

Acknowledgement of Tools Used

I acknowledge the use of the following AI tool(s) to assist in the preparation of this assessment:

[AI tool name] — [insert link]

Alternatively:

I confirm that I have not used any AI tools or technologies to prepare this assessment.

How the Tool Was Used

The AI tool was used to support my learning and preparation process. Specifically, I used it to:

- [e.g., generate sample tables or outlines to help organise my ideas];
- [e.g., request feedback on grammar, clarity, and structure];
- [e.g., clarify key concepts to improve my understanding of the topic].

All final content submitted reflects my own understanding of the subject matter and has been reviewed and edited by me to ensure accuracy and academic integrity.

Records Available

A record of prompts and AI-generated outputs is available upon request.

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 questions about feedback, including marks, should consult the instructor within five working days after receiving the feedback.

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. The University has zero tolerance for academic misconduct. Students should refer to the HKUST Academic Registry website for guidance on academic integrity, plagiarism, cheating, investigation procedures, appeals, and ways to avoid academic misconduct: <https://registry.hkust.edu.hk/resource-library/academic-integrity>