The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology
Course Syllabus
Fall 2026–27

English Communication for Postgraduate Engineering Students
LANG 5030

1 credit
Pre-requisites: Students enrolled in an MSc program with the School of Engineering
Co-requisites: N/A
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Office Hours of Course Coordinator: Available by appointment only

Course Description

Competence in communication is critical to both academic and professional success. **LANG 5030 English Communication for Postgraduate Engineering Students** is specifically designed to enhance postgraduate engineering students' spoken English communication skills in academic and professional engineering contexts. The course helps students develop and practise communication skills appropriate for participating in seminars, leading discussions, giving presentations, and interacting effectively as members of an engineering community. Students will learn how to construct informative and persuasive messages, facilitate engaging seminars, respond to questions, use verbal and non-verbal communication strategies, and appreciate the nuances of communicating successfully in intercultural settings.

LANG 5030 combines blended and active learning. Some modules include self-study activities that prepare students for interactive face-to-face sessions. In class, students will participate in small-group discussions, collaborative tasks, presentations, seminars, simulated language activities, and peer feedback. Through these activities, students will build confidence and develop competence in spoken English communication for academic and professional purposes.

Regular attendance is essential for success in this pass/fail course, as much of the learning occurs through interactive sessions. A minimum of **80% attendance** is expected. If mitigating circumstances affect attendance, students should inform their instructors in advance.

Intended Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Lead and participate confidently in seminar discussions by expressing their ideas clearly and asking appropriate questions.
2. Deliver engaging presentations and evaluate their own and their classmates' communication skills.
3. Develop effective listening and speaking skills for academic and professional engineering contexts.
4. Apply appropriate verbal and non-verbal communication strategies in academic and professional contexts.
5. Practise professional communication skills in engineering contexts.
6. Lead and participate effectively in presentations and seminars as members of an engineering community.
7. Apply conventions and characteristics of academic texts in engineering communications.
8. Demonstrate intercultural competence by appreciating diversity in cultural conventions in communication.

Assessment and Grading

Assessment Task	Description
Seminar Facilitation	Students lead an assessed seminar discussion, demonstrating effective facilitation strategies, clear communication, active listening, questioning techniques, and appropriate interaction with participants.
Research Presentation	Students deliver a researched presentation relevant to their engineering field or academic interests, using effective structure, visuals, verbal and non-verbal communication strategies, and Q&A techniques.

Assessment Task	Description
Blended Learning Activities	Students complete self-study and blended learning tasks designed to prepare them for interactive class activities, discussions, presentations, and peer feedback.

Assessments

This course is graded **pass/fail**. Students will receive guidance, feedback, and constructive critique on their communication skills, seminar facilitation, presentation performance, and blended learning tasks.
To pass this course, students are expected to satisfactorily complete the following course requirements:

1. **Seminar Facilitation** — 35%
2. **Research Presentation** — 35%
3. **Blended Learning Activities** — 30%

Students are expected to complete at least **80% of the required self-study/blended learning activities.**

Mapping of Course ILOs to Assessment Tasks

Assessed Task	Weighting	Mapped ILOs
Seminar Facilitation	35%	ILOs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8
Research Presentation	35%	ILOs 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8
Blended Learning Activities	30%	ILOs 1–8

Weekly Course Schedule

Week	Topic	Learning Focus and Activities	Notes
1	Importance of Professional Communication	Introduction to communication in professional engineering contexts; group discussion on real-world communication scenarios.	Self-study graded for completion where assigned; 80% completion required.
2	Verbal and Non-verbal Communication in Engineering Contexts	Explore effective spoken communication, clarity, tone, gesture, posture, eye contact, and audience awareness in engineering settings.	
3	Persuasive Communication for Engineers	Review principles of persuasion; analyse engineering proposals/presentations; design a persuasive pitch.	
4	Intercultural Communication	Research cultural dimensions; role-play scenarios involving intercultural misunderstandings; group debrief.	
5	3-Minute Presentations and Speaking Skills	Study techniques for impromptu speaking, visual communication, concise message design, and Q&A; practise 3-minute presentations; analyse visuals.	
6	Group Communication in Meetings and Seminars	Simulate engineering meetings; practise agenda setting, turn-taking, active listening, and effective participation.	—
7	Seminar Facilitation Basics	Learn facilitation techniques; practise leading discussions, asking questions, managing participation, and summarising key points.	—
8	Advanced Facilitation Practice	Record a seminar facilitation video as a self-study activity; view selected facilitation videos in class; provide and receive collective feedback.	
9	Communication and GenAI in Engineering Contexts	Explore GenAI tools for literature reviews; practise using GenAI appropriately for drafting; practise oral English using GenAI speaking tools.	

Week	Topic	Learning Focus and Activities	Notes
10	Consultations for Assessments	Prepare questions about Assessments 1 and 2; receive feedback on seminar facilitation plans and research presentation preparation.	Consultation week.
11	Assessment 1: Seminar Facilitation	Students lead assessed seminar discussions.	Assessment 1
12	Assessment 2: Research Presentations	Students deliver researched presentations with Q&A.	Assessment 2
13	Course Wrap-up and Reflection	Reflection and feedback.	—

Delivery and Attendance

Regular attendance is essential for success in this pass/fail postgraduate communication course for engineers. Since participation and teamwork are central to skill development, a minimum of **80% attendance** is expected. If mitigating circumstances affect attendance, students must inform their instructors in advance. Some modules follow a blended learning format, where self-study activities prepare students for interactive sessions. The instructor will specify which modules use this approach.

Course AI Policy

Students should disclose in their writing assignments if they have used generative AI or AI-assisted technologies to support the writing process. The following format is suggested:

*During the preparation of this work, the author(s) used **[NAME TOOL / SERVICE]** in order to **[REASON]**. After using this tool/service, the author(s) reviewed and edited the content as needed and take full responsibility for the content of the text.*

Generative AI and AI-assisted technologies should only be used to improve the readability and language of students' work and should not replace key authoring tasks. Students should not list generative AI or AI-assisted technologies as an author or co-author, nor cite AI as an author. Students are ultimately responsible and accountable for the contents of their work.

Required Texts and Materials

Course materials and additional resources will be provided via Canvas.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity and honesty are key values at HKUST. Students should ensure that all submitted work is their own and that any sources, assistance, or tools used are appropriately acknowledged. Academic misconduct may include, but is not limited to, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, fabrication of information or references, unauthorized assistance in assessments, and helping another student to cheat.

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