

BMA211
Business Communication

Semester 1, 2009

This unit will be offered in:

Hobart & Launceston

The lecturing team responsible will be:

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<http://www.utas.edu.au/management/student.htm>

Introduction to the Unit

This unit provides an overview of the role of communication in contemporary business practice. A range of communication concepts, theories and strategies important in the development of effective management skills are covered at an introductory level. The major topics explored include written, oral, interpersonal, organisational and technologically mediated modes of communication.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this unit, you should be able to:

- Understand communication theory and its relevance to managing organisations successfully
- Demonstrate skills in writing, editing and producing effective written/electronic texts for employment communication
- Demonstrate skills in effectively structuring and presenting information orally
- Understand the processes and effects of non-verbal communication
- Demonstrate skills in effective interpersonal communication such as assertiveness, active listening, conflict resolution and communication process management
- Demonstrate skills in working collaboratively in groups
- Demonstrate the ability to critically reflect on learning processes including group based learning and personal development
- Display a range of effective and appropriate workplace communication behaviours including those appropriate for managing difficult communication issues

Generic Graduate Attributes

The University has defined a set of generic graduate attributes (GGAs) that can be expected of all graduates (see <http://www.utas.edu.au/tl/policies/index.htm>). By undertaking this unit you should make progress in attaining the following attributes:

Knowledge

- Students will develop knowledge of contemporary communication theory and techniques.

Communication Skills

- Students will be encouraged to apply their knowledge of communication theory and techniques to demonstrate effective written electronic and oral communication, improving their communication practice in both personal and professional settings.

Problem Solving Skills

- Students will develop practical problem solving skills and apply critical analysis and creative thinking to a range of managerial communications issues
- Students will develop skills in working effectively with others in a small group collaborative learning task requiring them to reformulate problematic exhibits of business communication

Global Perspective

- Students will be introduced to aspects of intercultural communication and the use of technologically mediated communication for global business practice.

Social responsibility

- Students will develop effective interpersonal skills which will create more positive organisational environments where employee problems and concerns can be dealt with sensitively.

Prerequisites

BMA101 Introduction to Management

Texts

Prescribed Text

Eunson, B. 2008. *Communicating in the 21st Century (second edition)*. Milton, Brisbane: Wiley.

BMA211 Study Guide (Available at UniPrint for \$10)

School Publications

Students must obtain the following electronic publications which are available from the School of Management website:

<http://www.utas.edu.au/management/student.htm>

Writing Assignments: A Guide

School of Management Referencing Style

Recommended Reading

The publications listed below are highly recommended for further reading on the topics covered in the unit.

Books

Baney, J. 2004. *Guide to interpersonal communication*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Bell, A.H. & Smith, D.M. 2005. *Management communication* (2nd ed.). Milton, QLD: John Wiley & Sons

Blundel, R. 2004. *Effective organisational communication: Perspectives, principle and practices* (2nd ed.). Harlow, UK: Prentice Hall.

Bolton, R. 1986. *People skills: How to assert yourself, listen to others, and resolve conflicts*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Bonner, W.H. & Chaney, L.H. 2004. *Communicating effectively in an information age* (2nd ed.). Mason, Ohio: Thomson.

Chaney, L.H. & Martin J.S. 2004. *Intercultural business communication* (3rd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Dick, R. 1986. *Learning to communicate*. Chapel Hill, Qld: Interchange.

Dick, R. 1991. *Helping groups to be effective*. Chapel Hill, Qld: Interchange.

Dick, R., & Dalmau, T. 1990. *Values in action: Applying the ideas of Argyris and Schon*. Chapel Hill, Qld: Interchange.

- Dick, R. 1990. *Frameworks for effective third-party conflict management*. Chapel Hill, Qld: Interchange.
- Dwyer, J. 2009. *Communication in business: Strategies and skills* (4th ed.). Frenchs Forest: Prentice Hall.
- Eggland, S.A & Williams, J.W. 2004. *Human Relations for Career Success*. (6th ed.). South Melbourne, VIC: Cengage Learning
- Greene, J. O. 2003. *Handbook of communication and social interaction skills*. London: L. Erlbaum Associates
- Grellier, J. & Goerke, V. 2006. *Communication skills toolkit: unlocking the secrets of tertiary success*. South Melbourne: Thomson.
- Gudykunst, W.B., Stewart, L.P., & Ting-Toomey, S. 1985. *Communication, culture and organizational processes*. Beverly Hills, California: Sage Publications.
- Gudykunst, W.B. 2003. *Bridging differences: Effective intergroup communication* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications.
- Harris, T.E. & Nelson, M.D. 2008. *Applied organizational communication: theory and practice in a global environment*. New York: L. Erlbaum Associates
- Keyton, J. 2005. *Communication and organizational culture: A key to understanding work experiences*. California: Sage.
- Kuiper, S. 2009. *Contemporary Business Report Writing*. (4th ed.). South Melbourne, VIC: Cengage Learning
- McKenna, B., Thomas, G. & Waddell, N. 2004. *Australian guide to corporate communication: A practical handbook on effective writing and speaking*. Tuggerah: Social Science Press.
- McKenna, B., Thomas, G., Waddell, N. & Barry, M. (2007). *Corporate Communications: Effective Techniques for Business*. (2nd ed.). South Melbourne, VIC: Cengage Learning
- Manalo, E., Wong-Toi, G. & Trafford, J. 2002. *The Business of Writing: Written communication skills for business students*. (2nd ed.). Auckland: Pearson Education New Zealand
- Putnis, P. & Petelin, R. 1999. *Professional communication principles and applications* (2nd ed.). Sydney: Prentice Hall.
- Sigband, N. & Bell, A. H. 1994. *Communication for managers*. Cincinnati: South-Western.
- Spitzberg, B.H. & Cupach, W.R. 1984. *Interpersonal communication competence*. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications.

Journals and Periodicals

Apart from books, you will find it valuable to get into the practice of reading relevant articles from journals and periodicals (including newspapers and magazines).

Relevant theory and research articles can also be found in the following journals (this list is not exhaustive):

Business Communication Quarterly

Communication Research Reports

Journal of Applied Social Psychology

Journal of Business Communication

Management Communication Quarterly

Health Communication

Human Communication Research

Human Relations
Journal of Applied Communication Research
Journal of Communication
Journal of Communication Management
Journal of Language and Social Psychology
International Journal of Communication
International Journal of Intercultural Relations
Management Communication Quarterly
Western Journal of Communication

Flexible Learning: MyLO

MyLO software has been incorporated into the delivery of this unit to enhance the learning experience by providing access to up to date course materials and by allowing for online discussion through this web based environment.

The School of Management has prepared a MyLO Information Sheet which includes access guidelines and contact information. It is available to download as a word document from the School of Management website:
<http://www.utas.edu.au/management/student.htm>

Privacy Policy and Notice

The School of Management takes the utmost care to protect the privacy and security of your personal information and to ensure its accuracy.

If you have any concerns about your privacy in MyLO please contact the lecturer-in-charge of this unit or view the University of Tasmania MyLO Privacy Policy Statement available from the university website on
<http://www.utas.edu.au/coursesonline/privacy/index.html>.

Assessment

In order to pass this unit you must achieve an overall mark of at least 50 per cent of the total available marks. Details of each item of Coursework are provided in the Assignment Topics section.

Method of Assessment	Value	Due Date	Length*
Coursework			
Employment communication package	20	Friday 3 April, 2009	2000 words + communication sample
Communication case study (Group project)	30	Monday 1 June, 2009	2500 words + communication samples
Exam	50	Final Examination period	
Total Marks	100		

* **Word Limit:** The word count includes such items as headings, in-text references, quotes and executive summaries. It **does not** include the reference list at the end of the assignment.

Reading Week

All undergraduate units offered by the School of Management are scheduled to include a Reading Week.

As shown in the attached Study Schedule, a lecture and workshops ARE scheduled during Reading Week.

Examination

The three (3) hour closed book examination is worth fifty (50) percent of the total marks. The examination will be designed to test your knowledge and understanding of communication theory and business communication practices. The examination will cover the entire syllabus.

Section A will consist of a reflective essay question worth a total of 10 marks. Section B will be comprised of six essay questions from which you will be asked to answer any four. Each question is worth 10 marks.

Submission of Coursework

Lodging Coursework

All Coursework must have the School of Management Assignment Cover Sheet and Title Page attached. Both of which are available as a blank template from the School of Management website:

<http://www.utas.edu.au/management/student.htm>

Please remember that you are responsible for lodging your written Coursework on or before the due date. We suggest you keep a copy—photocopying is ideal. Even in the most 'perfect' of systems, items sometimes go astray.

Note that you may also be required to submit an electronic copy of your written Coursework. More details of this will be given in Lectures.

Hobart students: Lodge in assignment box beside room 321, Commerce & Economics Building.

Launceston students: Lodge in assignment box beside room A170.

All coursework must be handed in at 10.00 a.m. on the due date.

Late Coursework

Written Work

Extensions will only be granted on medical or compassionate grounds and will not be granted because of work or other commitments. Requests for extensions should be **made in writing** to the lecturer-in-charge prior to the due date. Medical certificates or other evidence must be attached and must contain information which justifies the extension sought.

Late assignments which have **not** been granted an extension will, at the lecturer's discretion, be penalised by deducting **twenty percent of total marks** for each full day overdue.

Assignments submitted more than five days late will normally not be accepted by the lecturer-in-charge.

Tests

Students who are unable to sit a test on medical or compassionate grounds (**work or other commitments are not considered 'compassionate grounds'**) may request that they be permitted to complete alternative coursework.

Please do not expect a special test to be held for you if you choose to go on holidays or undertake other activities on the scheduled date. If you do need to request alternative coursework, you should do so in writing to the lecturer-in-charge prior to the due date. Medical certificates or other evidence must be attached and must contain information which justifies the request. The telephone number of the doctor should also be included.

Return of Coursework

Coursework will be returned during classes or it can be collected from the lecturer's or tutor's room at nominated times; it will not be available from the School's offices.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a form of cheating. It is taking and using someone else's thoughts, writings or inventions and representing them as your own, for example:

- using an author's words without putting them in quotation marks and citing the source;
- using an author's ideas without proper acknowledgment and citation; or
- copying another student's work.

If you have any doubts about how to refer to the work of others in your assignments, please consult your lecturer or tutor for relevant referencing guidelines, and the academic integrity resources on the web at <http://www.utas.edu.au/tl/supporting/academicintegrity/index.html>.

The intentional copying of someone else's work as one's own is a serious offence punishable by penalties that may range from a fine or deduction/cancellation of marks and, in the most serious of cases, to exclusion from a unit, a course or the University. Details of penalties that can be imposed are available in the Ordinance of Student Discipline—Part 3 Academic Misconduct, see <http://www.utas.edu.au/universitycouncil/legislation/ord9.pdf>

The University reserves the right to submit (or to require you to submit) assignments to online plagiarism detection software, and might then retain a copy of the assignment on its database for the purpose of future plagiarism checking.

Learning Program

As this unit is predominantly skills based, an alternative format of a weekly **one-hour lecture** and weekly **two-hour workshops** is offered.

Week 1

The lecture will provide an introduction to the unit and an overview of communication in contemporary business practice. The issues related to communication in context are also covered e.g. the role of gender, culture and status in communication are examined.

There are no workshops in week 1 but you should sign up for your preferred times on MyLo. You will need to purchase your study guide from UniPrint before the first workshop.

Week 2

The lecture this week will focus on written communication including writing protocols and forms of written business communication such as letters, memos, reports.

The first workshop will be focussed on setting the scene for your personal development and creating a supportive atmosphere for future role-play activities and group work, covering the following major topics:

- Icebreakers
- Personal skills audit
- Johari window
- Communication breakdowns/problem analysis using a communication model

Week 3

There is no lecture this week. You should work independently on your employment communication assignment using the text book and study guide material.

In this workshop you will focus on your employment communication assignment by developing your skills in

- Presenting yourself effectively in writing
- Writing business letters and emails
- Structuring and writing reports

Week 4

The lecture will focus on an important aspect of business communication, the skills required to obtain employment and manage career progression. This content will be central to the first assessment item.

The workshop will assist you with the employment communication assignment by developing your skills in

- Developing a personal 'brand' statement
- Using the 'CAR' principle to write for selection or promotion criteria

Week 5

The lecture this week outlines important points in presenting information orally in situations such as public speaking.

During the workshop this week you will work on developing your skills in oral communication. The workshop will help you to structure the oral communication aspect of your employment communication assignment and develop an awareness of your personal strengths and weaknesses using the following activities:

- Structuring an impromptu presentation
- Developing self-awareness through peer feedback- identifying areas for development
- Preparing for your video clip of interview opening

Week 6

The lecture this week examines the phenomenon of non-verbal behaviour.

There is no formal workshop this week. You should spend the time working on your first piece of assessment: the employment communication package.

Week 7

The lecture covers skills in communicating your own thoughts, feelings and concerns to others in an effective manner.

The workshop will provide an opportunity for you to practice these important skills such as:

- Emotional self- management
- Formulating assertive statements
- Giving feedback effectively

Week 8

The lecture covers the reverse of the previous lecture by examining how to reflect an understanding of the thoughts, feelings and concerns of another party in a useful way. The application of listening and questioning skills to employment and performance appraisal interviews will also be covered.

The workshop will allow you to develop or improve skills such:

- Active listening
- Receiving feedback/complaint handling

The CD for your group assignment will be distributed in this workshop.

Week 9

The lecture this week introduces you to the process of organisational communication audits and provides you with an overview of some important business protocols regarding business meetings. These skills will also help you to operate your group project meetings more effectively.

The workshop begins the group work phase of the course and will get you started on the assignment during class. The major tasks will involve:

- Group formation and team contract development
- Case selection discussion
- Analysis of background case information - how leadership and organisational culture affect communication

You will need to schedule a group meeting (either virtual or face to face) before the next workshop in order to begin drafting material for the assignment.

Week 10

The lecture looks at the issue of technologically mediated communication tools such as email, videoconferencing and web-interfaced technologies, specifically in terms of their impact on effective business communication.

During the workshop you will work on analysing the email/memo and audio recording from the case study.

You will need to schedule a group meeting (either virtual or face to face) before the next workshop in order to begin drafting material for the assignment.

Week 11

This lecture will focus on an important aspect of communicating on behalf of the organisation for the purposes of public relations.

During the workshop you will work on analysing the media release and video recording from the case study.

You will need to schedule a group meeting (either virtual or face to face) before the next workshop in order to begin drafting material for the assignment.

Week 12

The lecture will examine the nature of conflict both interpersonally and within groups. A demonstration of conflict mediation skills will be used as an illustration of a problem solving approach.

In your workshop you will develop a deeper understanding of some of the ways conflict can be resolved or managed. Two specific activities will be undertaken:

- Conflict analysis discussion (you should bring your completed conflict management survey contained in the study guide to class for this activity).
- Interaction management and problem solving
- Mediation skills role play

You will also need to schedule a group meeting (either virtual or face to face) before the next workshop in order to finalise your assignment.

Week 13

The final lecture looks at the concept of reflective practice, focussing on personal development strategies.

During the workshop your group will conduct a peer feedback and evaluation process and you will complete your individual skills audit for the reflective practice report.

Assignment Topics

Employment communication

Due Date: Friday 3 April at 10:00 am

Length: 2,000 words + communication sample

Value: 20 marks

You will produce an example of effective written communication for the purpose of obtaining employment. Your assignment will be to respond to one of the position descriptions in your study guide. You must respond to one of the selection criterion for one of these positions. Your application is to be presented as a standard written job application (cover letter, statement addressing selection criteria and CV). You also need to produce a two minute video clip where you present yourself as a potential incumbent of this position.

Each component of the assessment is equally weighted.

In order to complete this task effectively you will need to utilise material in the textbook that provides both practical and technical advice on written and electronic communication and employment communication. More detailed guidelines for this assessment item are provided in the BMA211 study guide.

You will be allocated time in the Faculty media room in order to make the video recording of your oral communication skills if you require it.

This assessment item is focused on the learning outcome of the development of skills in writing, editing and producing effective written or electronic texts for employment communication. This assessment item is also designed to focus on the learning objective of demonstrating skills in effectively structuring and presenting information orally.

Business communication case study (group project)

Due Date: Monday 1 June at 10:00 am

Length: 2500 word consultancy report + communication samples

Value: 30 marks

You will work together in groups of four or five to analyse an organisational communication case study. The workshops and learning resources will prepare you with strategies for analysing the communication and for making recommendations for improvements. The case analysis will involve a communication consultancy report which refers to your case exhibits of ineffective communication (e.g. written material, video clips and audio recordings). Your task is to analyse the exhibits of communication according to what you have learned in the unit and make recommendations for improvement. Linked to these recommendations will be samples of effective communication that your group produces (e.g. re-written material, re-enacted video clips and audio recordings). You will also be required to submit minutes of your group meetings.

The material in Chapter 21 will assist you in operating the group and you will be expected to apply the communication skills developed in the skills workshops in resolving any group problems before consulting the teaching staff. All group members should be involved in writing and presenting these materials.

More detailed guidelines for this assessment item will be provided in the BMA211 study guide.

You will be allocated time in the Faculty media room in order to make the audiovisual recordings if necessary.

This assessment item is designed to focus on a number of the learning outcomes for the unit such as verbal and non-verbal interpersonal communication skills, an understanding of communication theory and its relevance to managing organisations successfully, and the ability to work collaboratively.

Study Schedule

Semester 1, 2009

Week	Start of Week	Reading	Topic	Due Dates
1	23 Feb	Ch 1	Introduction and course overview	3 April employment communication assignment due at 10:00 am
2	2 Mar	Chs 4 & 5	Written communication	
3	9 Mar		No lecture – public holiday	
4	16 Mar	Ch 22	Communication for employment and career management	
5	23 Mar	Ch 11	Oral communication and presentations	
6	30 Mar	Ch 8	Non-verbal communication	
7	6 April	Ch 9 + extra reading in study guide	Assertiveness and providing feedback	
<p>Mid-Semester Break 9-15 April</p> <p>Including the School of Management Study Week 6-8 April & 16-17 April</p>				
8	20 April	Ch 10 + extra reading in study guide	Active listening and receiving feedback	1 June group assignment due at 10:00am
9	27 April	Ch 21 + extra reading in study guide	Meetings, Communication audits	
10	4 May	Ch 6	Technologically mediated communication	
11	11 May	Ch 19	Media releases and public relations (Guest lecturer)	
12	18 May	Ch 15 + extra reading in study guide	Conflict resolution and management	
13	25 May	Extra reading in study guide	Reflective practice - personal development Review & exam preparation Unit evaluation	
<p>A Calendar/Study Planner showing dates is available from School of Management offices.</p>				