



# BBA 216

## Business Communications

D2 2012

*Linguistics*

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## General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Unit Convenor

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Unit Convenor

Sue Spinks

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C5A 517

Friday 11am-1pm

Credit points

3

Prerequisites

(Admission to BBA or BeBus or BCom or BCom-Mktg) and 24cp

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

This unit covers the principles of effective organisation and presentation of ideas in written and oral contexts for a range of administrative applications. The unit is project based, working as far as possible with material from other units in the program. Assessment takes into account individual performance as well as group work. In all students are encouraged to explore the intricate relationship between text, technology and audience to maximise the impact of their business presentations.

## Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at <https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates>

## Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

how to synthesise and summarise issues from source material

how to meet the demands of particular business scenarios

how to analyse what other business communicators do in relation to their own business contexts

how to address intercultural issues in a specific context

how to work as a group to develop and present a communications product

how to evaluate your own business communications processes

## Assessment Tasks

| Name                         | Weighting | Due                           |
|------------------------------|-----------|-------------------------------|
| <u>Individual assessment</u> | 10%       | 06/11/2012                    |
| <u>formal exam</u>           | 30%       | University examination period |
| <u>Writing a summary</u>     | 10%       | 04/08/2012                    |
| <u>Critical review</u>       | 25%       | 03/10/2012                    |
| <u>Group task</u>            | 25%       | weeks 12 and 13               |

### Individual assessment

Due: **06/11/2012**

Weighting: **10%**

This assignment will require students to present a submission based on their role in the group project to a hypothetical business staff member. Details will be made available on ilearn during the Session

On successful completion you will be able to:

- how to meet the demands of particular business scenarios
- how to evaluate your own business communications processes

### formal exam

Due: **University examination period**

Weighting: **30%**

There will be a formal examination in this unit. Details of the exam will be given to enrolled students in lectures and on ilearn when appropriate.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- how to synthesise and summarise issues from source material
- how to meet the demands of particular business scenarios
- how to analyse what other business communicators do in relation to their own business

contexts

- how to address intercultural issues in a specific context
- how to work as a group to develop and present a communications product
- how to evaluate your own business communications processes

## Writing a summary

Due: **04/08/2012**

Weighting: **10%**

**Writing a background document (summary task) and making a recommendation based on it.** The details and materials for this assignment will be posted on iLearn at the end of week 3. The focus of this assignment is a) on your ability to extract and clearly express the central message of a text, separating the primary content from the supporting or corroborating detail; b) to write that up as a summary suitable as a background document in a hypothetical business context; c) to make a suitable recommendation based on the summary.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- how to synthesise and summarise issues from source material
- how to meet the demands of particular business scenarios
- how to evaluate your own business communications processes

## Critical review

Due: **03/10/2012**

Weighting: **25%**

**Compare and critically review two company annual reports.** Specific instructions about this assignment will be posted on iLearn at the end of week 6. The focus of this assignment is on your ability to identify the communication objectives and “spin” in business documents.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- how to synthesise and summarise issues from source material
- how to analyse what other business communicators do in relation to their own business contexts

## Group task

Due: **weeks 12 and 13**

Weighting: **25%**

1. **Group project.** You will be put into your project teams in the third tutorial session (in week

4). Briefly, your task will be twofold. Your team will spend several weeks of the session designing the first edition of a company (or other organisation) newsletter. Then in one of the last two tutorials of session, your team will present both the newsletter edition you have designed AND your project team's case as to why the organisation should continue with a newsletter along those lines. This presentation will be to the Board of Directors (or other management body) of the organisation (role-played by two members of the teaching staff). Each team will also be asked to present agendas and minutes of team meetings at two stages of the project during the Session. These will carry 5 of the 25% total weighting for the group project.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- how to synthesise and summarise issues from source material
- how to meet the demands of particular business scenarios
- how to analyse what other business communicators do in relation to their own business contexts
- how to address intercultural issues in a specific context
- how to work as a group to develop and present a communications product
- how to evaluate your own business communications processes

## Delivery and Resources

### Unit Rationale

Business communication of course involves speaking as well as writing, and we will spend some time on oral (and visual) as well as written business communication. But the main thrust of the unit is to enable you to better understand the conventions that apply within written contexts in the world of business.

An understanding of context, and an appreciation of purpose and audience (in fact these two are part of any full discussion about context) are most important issues for any successful communication, business or otherwise. We will address these issues time and time again during the session.

### Teaching and Learning Strategies

Lecture overheads, power point presentations and any other notes to accompany lectures will be available online through iLearn. These will sometimes be available before the lecture, but please note that some lecturers may choose to post them after the lecture, preferring you to listen and absorb the information during the lecture and then use the notes for revision or reference purposes. In some cases, there will be hard copy handouts to support the lecture. When this happens, the same handout will be available online for students accessing the lectures via iLecture.

Tutorials are held weekly beginning in week 2 of session. Tutorials are **compulsory** and non attendance without due explanation could lead to you being excluded from the unit. In several tutorials you will be given time to hold team meetings for your group project (see further details below), and it is important for

all team members to be present as far as possible.

Tutorial information, assessment tasks, urgent notices and occasional news items, and other general information about the unit will also be posted on the unit iLearn site from time to time, so students will be expected to check it regularly.

Students in this unit will be expected to actively participate in small groups, including but not exclusively limited to a major team project; read relevant materials in advance of or at least shortly after the relevant lecture; and continually relate the communication issues raised in this unit to issues raised in other units throughout their degree program.

### **Learning Outcomes**

The main learning outcome of this unit is for students to acquire a good understanding of the role of context (purpose, audience, mode of delivery etc) in good business communications.

Specifically, through relevant lectures and tutorials as well as the assessment tasks listed below, you will gain insights into:

- how to synthesise and summarise issues from source material;
- how to meet the demands of particular business scenarios;
- how to analyse what other business communicators do in relation to their own business contexts;
- how to address intercultural issues in a specific context;
- how to work as a group to develop and present a communications product;
- how to evaluate your own business communications processes.

### **Generic skills**

Increasingly, employers are demanding that Australian university graduates be able to demonstrate a range of generic skills alongside content-based skills related to their chosen subjects. The obvious generic skill gained from a study of business communication is, of course, communication itself, but we can break this into several more specific generic skills that BBA216 will help you develop:

- Writing skills: how to plan, compose and edit a variety of formal written texts, following the conventions of standard written English and showing an awareness of various audiences and their communicative needs.
- Oral skills: an ability to speak clearly, coherently and confidently before a group of peers.
- Analytical skills: in particular the ability to detect and extract general principles from one set of data, contexts, or even from abstract/theoretical concepts and frameworks, and apply those principles to new sets of data and new communicative challenges.

- Interpersonal and intercultural skills: an ability to work harmoniously and efficiently in a team whose members may come from a variety of cultural and educational backgrounds.

### **Required and Recommended Texts and/or Materials**

There is no set text for this unit.

A general reference list will be posted as a separate file on the iLearn site.

Individual lecturers may also recommend background reading for their lectures.

### **Unit Webpage**

The BBA216 site on iLearn will provide a range of resources, including course notes, tasks, online discussions, etc. Students have access to the website throughout the session.

### **Assignment submission and return**

For details regarding assessment submission (format requirements, return of marked assignments etc) students should consult the relevant sections of the unit iLearn site.

## **Unit Schedule**

### **Lecture Schedule:**

|  |
|--|
| 1. Intro to business communication; theoretical perspectives on communication; spoken and written contexts; audience |
| 2. Register, genre, text type — theoretical perspectives on language in context                                      |
| 3. Group Dynamics: working as a team; leadership; conflict resolution  |
| 4.. Tying a text together — useful theory on language in context:<br>1: Cohesion in language                         |
| 5.. Tying a text together — useful theory on language in context:<br>2: Theme and thematic progression               |
| 6. Putting opinion into a text — more useful theory on language in context: Modality and attitude                    |
| 7. Appropriate use of language   |
| Mid-session break  |
| 9 a) Exposition and analysis<br>9 b Presentation skills  |
| 10. Cross-cultural issues in business communication (1)  |

|   |
|---|
| 10. Cross-cultural issues in business communication (2)         |
| 11. Report Writing, Memo Writing                                |
| 12. Medium and Message  |
| 13.a) Language and communication in some more business contexts |
| 13 b) Revision and preparation for exam                         |

## Tutorial Schedule:

|   |
|---|
| 1. “Ice-breaker”; speaking and listening styles                                       |
| 2. . Condensing information, writing summaries, preparing for assessment task 1       |
| 3. . Team selection; discussion of team project; group dynamics                       |
| 4. . Planning and running business meetings   |
| 5. Team meetings with tutor guidance  |
| 6.. a) Language analysis of a business text (1); b) preparation for assessment task 2 |
| Mid session break (2 weeks)   |
| 7. More on group dynamics; dealing with non-contributors                              |
| 8. Language analysis of business texts (2) in preparation for Q.1 in the exam.        |
| 9. Team meetings with tutor participation   |
| 10. Intercultural issues, including relevance to team project                         |
| 11. Team presentations  |
| 12. Team presentations  |

## Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central](#). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

Academic Honesty Policy [http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic\\_honesty/policy.html](http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic_honesty/policy.html)



Assessment Policy <http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy.html>

Grade Appeal Policy <http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/gradeappeal/policy.html>

Special Consideration Policy [http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/special\\_consideration/policy.html](http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/special_consideration/policy.html)

In addition, a number of other policies can be found in the [Learning and Teaching Category](#) of Policy Central.

### University Policy on Grading

Your final result will include one of the following letter grades plus a standardised numerical grade (SNG) within that letter grade range.

HD (85-100) High Distinction:

D (75-84)

Cr (65-74)

P (50-64) Pass

F (0-49) Fail

Please note that an SNG is NOT a raw mark; it is a rank. Your SNG may not simply be the sum total of a range of raw marks. For this reason, if your SNG is just below the next grade (eg a 64 or 74 for instance), you cannot assume you were therefore just one RAW mark off the next grade. Raw results may sometimes be scaled, either up or down; the process of scaling does not change the order of marks (and thus of the **ranking**) among students.

## Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of Academic Student Support Services. Details of these services can be accessed at: <http://students.mq.edu.au/support/>.

### UniWISE provides:

- Online learning resources and academic skills workshops [http://www.mq.edu.au/learning\\_skills/](http://www.mq.edu.au/learning_skills/)
- Personal assistance with your learning & study related questions.
- The Learning Help Desk is located in the Library foyer (level 2).
- Online and on-campus orientation events run by Mentors@Macquarie.

## Student Services and Support

Students with a disability are encouraged to contact the [Disability Support Unit](#) who can provide appropriate help with any issues that arise during their studies.

## Student Enquiries

Details of these services can be accessed at <http://www.student.mq.edu.au/ses/>.

## IT Help

If you wish to receive IT help, we would be glad to assist you at <http://informatics.mq.edu.au/help/>.

When using the university's IT, you must adhere to the [Acceptable Use Policy](#). The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students and it outlines what can be done.

## Graduate Capabilities

### Capable of Professional and Personal Judgement and Initiative

We want our graduates to have emotional intelligence and sound interpersonal skills and to demonstrate discernment and common sense in their professional and personal judgement. They will exercise initiative as needed. They will be capable of risk assessment, and be able to handle ambiguity and complexity, enabling them to be adaptable in diverse and changing environments.

This graduate capability is supported by:

#### Learning outcomes

- how to meet the demands of particular business scenarios
- how to analyse what other business communicators do in relation to their own business contexts
- how to address intercultural issues in a specific context
- how to work as a group to develop and present a communications product
- how to evaluate your own business communications processes

### Commitment to Continuous Learning

Our graduates will have enquiring minds and a literate curiosity which will lead them to pursue knowledge for its own sake. They will continue to pursue learning in their careers and as they participate in the world. They will be capable of reflecting on their experiences and relationships with others and the environment, learning from them, and growing - personally, professionally and socially.

This graduate capability is supported by:

#### Learning outcomes

- how to address intercultural issues in a specific context
- how to work as a group to develop and present a communications product
- how to evaluate your own business communications processes

### Discipline Specific Knowledge and Skills

Our graduates will take with them the intellectual development, depth and breadth of knowledge,

scholarly understanding, and specific subject content in their chosen fields to make them competent and confident in their subject or profession. They will be able to demonstrate, where relevant, professional technical competence and meet professional standards. They will be able to articulate the structure of knowledge of their discipline, be able to adapt discipline-specific knowledge to novel situations, and be able to contribute from their discipline to inter-disciplinary solutions to problems.

This graduate capability is supported by:

## **Learning outcomes**

- how to synthesise and summarise issues from source material
- how to meet the demands of particular business scenarios
- how to analyse what other business communicators do in relation to their own business contexts
- how to address intercultural issues in a specific context
- how to work as a group to develop and present a communications product
- how to evaluate your own business communications processes

## **Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking**

We want our graduates to be capable of reasoning, questioning and analysing, and to integrate and synthesise learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments; to be able to critique constraints, assumptions and limitations; to be able to think independently and systemically in relation to scholarly activity, in the workplace, and in the world. We want them to have a level of scientific and information technology literacy.

This graduate capability is supported by:

## **Learning outcomes**

- how to synthesise and summarise issues from source material
- how to meet the demands of particular business scenarios
- how to analyse what other business communicators do in relation to their own business contexts
- how to address intercultural issues in a specific context
- how to work as a group to develop and present a communications product
- how to evaluate your own business communications processes

## **Problem Solving and Research Capability**

Our graduates should be capable of researching; of analysing, and interpreting and assessing data and information in various forms; of drawing connections across fields of knowledge; and they should be able to relate their knowledge to complex situations at work or in the world, in order to diagnose and solve problems. We want them to have the confidence to take the initiative in doing so, within an awareness of their own limitations.

This graduate capability is supported by:

### **Learning outcomes**

- how to synthesise and summarise issues from source material
- how to work as a group to develop and present a communications product

## **Creative and Innovative**

Our graduates will also be capable of creative thinking and of creating knowledge. They will be imaginative and open to experience and capable of innovation at work and in the community. We want them to be engaged in applying their critical, creative thinking.

This graduate capability is supported by:

### **Learning outcomes**

- how to meet the demands of particular business scenarios
- how to work as a group to develop and present a communications product

## **Effective Communication**

We want to develop in our students the ability to communicate and convey their views in forms effective with different audiences. We want our graduates to take with them the capability to read, listen, question, gather and evaluate information resources in a variety of formats, assess, write clearly, speak effectively, and to use visual communication and communication technologies as appropriate.

This graduate capability is supported by:

### **Learning outcomes**

- how to synthesise and summarise issues from source material
- how to meet the demands of particular business scenarios
- how to analyse what other business communicators do in relation to their own business contexts
- how to address intercultural issues in a specific context
- how to work as a group to develop and present a communications product
- how to evaluate your own business communications processes

## **Engaged and Ethical Local and Global citizens**

As local citizens our graduates will be aware of indigenous perspectives and of the nation's historical context. They will be engaged with the challenges of contemporary society and with knowledge and ideas. We want our graduates to have respect for diversity, to be open-minded, sensitive to others and inclusive, and to be open to other cultures and perspectives: they should have a level of cultural literacy. Our graduates should be aware of disadvantage and social justice, and be willing to participate to help create a wiser and better society.

This graduate capability is supported by:

### **Learning outcomes**

- how to address intercultural issues in a specific context
- how to work as a group to develop and present a communications product
- how to evaluate your own business communications processes

## **Socially and Environmentally Active and Responsible**

We want our graduates to be aware of and have respect for self and others; to be able to work with others as a leader and a team player; to have a sense of connectedness with others and country; and to have a sense of mutual obligation. Our graduates should be informed and active participants in moving society towards sustainability.

This graduate capability is supported by:

### **Learning outcomes**

- how to address intercultural issues in a specific context
- how to work as a group to develop and present a communications product
- how to evaluate your own business communications processes