

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS

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**Cambridge International Diploma in Business
Standard Level**

Scheme of Work

5162
Effective Business Communication
Core Module



UNIVERSITY *of* CAMBRIDGE
International Examinations

Introduction

The overall programme comprises three core and six option modules:

Core	Business Organisation and Environment Effective Business Communication Business Finance
Option	Marketing Human Resources Management Interpersonal Business Skills Business Start-Up Customer Care Information and communications technology

The modules have been chosen to reflect the key areas of business. It is important that in the delivery of each module, tutors appreciate that the programme is concerned with **Skills and Knowledge**. Students should be encouraged not only to demonstrate their knowledge but also their acquisition and development of complementary skills.

The programme has **four general aims** that are designed to encourage the students to:

- understand key concepts of business
- apply acquired skills to real work situations
- think about and resolve business problems
- work independently using their initiative

The over-riding objective of the programme is to prepare students either for employment or, if already in employment, for advancement. Employers expect those completing the Cambridge International Diploma in Business modules to be able to offer a working combination of skills and knowledge.

The accompanying scheme of work focuses specifically around the skills and knowledge of each competence criterion and clearly they must form the essence of the delivery of the modules.

Effective Business Communication (5162) Standard

The module Effective Business Communication, being of standard level, requires a minimum of 40 learning hours. The scheme of work has been organised to offer those 40 hours within the class- or lecture-room setting and it is expected that additional learning time will be undertaken by students outside the timetabled hours working in study groups or undertaking independent study.

The key to the module's delivery is *flexibility*. There are several means at your disposal to help you deliver the module and the use of an appropriate variety would be welcome. The standard or traditional class approach will still form the basis of much of your delivery but you might care to reinforce it by using the occasional outside or guest speaker, simulation, role-play, brainstorming session, or presentation. It is not necessary that you use them all during your teaching of this module but these alternatives will help to encourage more student interest in the subject area.

There is, however, no substitute for a lively, motivating, and stimulating teacher! The main rule to follow is that you bring the module to life and make it relevant and interesting.

It is assumed that you have ready use of the basic tools of whiteboard, flip chart and OHP and, additionally, you may have access to the Internet. Other resources that will be readily available include textbooks, newspapers and journals, balance sheets, resource packs (often given out by, for example, banks and insurance companies), past examination papers (in particular their case studies). *Please do not overlook your own role in providing stimulus material* e.g. task related to a current business event, photocopy of an article together with a discussion topic.

It is quite important that you appreciate that the International Diploma in Business programme is *holistic* or *integrated* i.e. the modules, whilst each is designed to be studied individually, must be regarded as part of a whole course and a wider experience. You may find it useful to research the modules in the syllabus compendium to see how the various modules have common areas and interlink with one another.

The Scheme of Work

You may have to revise or change the accompanying scheme to suit your own purposes but it offers an advised approach to Effective Business Communication. Activities or activity suggestions are included in the scheme but there may be more than you can use. Please keep in mind that 5162 is an examined module i.e. your students will sit a two-hour written paper in either May or October. It is helpful to your students that they have frequent tasks and assignments to complete and access to past papers.

The object of the scheme of work is to:

- offer you a guide and help to keep you on track throughout the delivery of the module
- give you structure and purpose to your teaching
- identify what and how you are going to teach
- indicate what resources you will require
- indicate how many pieces of work you will issue and to suggest their form

The scheme of work is broken down into a series of session plans and there is a guide as to how much time each plan might take to deliver. It is not the intention that, necessarily, you spend two or three hours on a session plan in one teaching session but as you will know the timeframes for your classes so you must adjust the scheme accordingly.

What should students be able to do at the end of this module?

- understand the business communication process
- produce effective written business documentation
- examine effective group communication
- investigate interviews as an effective means of communication
- understand the use of visual aids in business communications

Scheme of Work

This scheme of work is based around 40 hours study time with 2 hour sessions for 20 weeks but tutors should feel free to organise and deliver the session plans as circumstances demand.

Where textbooks are suggested in the resource section of the scheme, they refer to author and then chapter or unit. In the activities column the questions refer to ones on past examination papers. These can be obtained on the Order Publications area of the CIE Website.

1.0 Understanding the business communication process

Session Plan One

Competence Criteria	Skills and Knowledge
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrate understanding of the nature of business activity (1.1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> purpose of communication the need for effective communication communicating with different stakeholder groups and responding to their needs

Notes on delivery and activities

Examining the purpose of communication

Students should consider the variety and extent of their written and verbal communication over the last month. They should prepare a table (see example below) which identifies the type of communication (written or verbal), the format (telephone call, meeting, report) and their objective (the purpose whether it is to order supplies or request information).

Communication	Format	Purpose
Verbal	Informal conversation with colleague in another department	To arrange social event
Verbal	Formal meeting with co-workers	To discuss sales figures
Verbal	Interview with subordinate	To appraise performance
Verbal	Telephone conversation with line manager	To provide information
Written	Letter to customer	To tender for work
Written	Memo to the Personnel department	To request holiday
Written	Report for line manager	To report on levels of absence
Written	Fax to a supplier	To request supplies

The purpose of this exercise is to consider the variety of communications they are involved with and to examine why they communicate with others i.e. the purpose/objectives of communication.

- Question 1a October 2001 examination
- Question 1a May 2001 examination

Resources:

- Wood, Units 1 and 4
- Blundel, Chapter 1

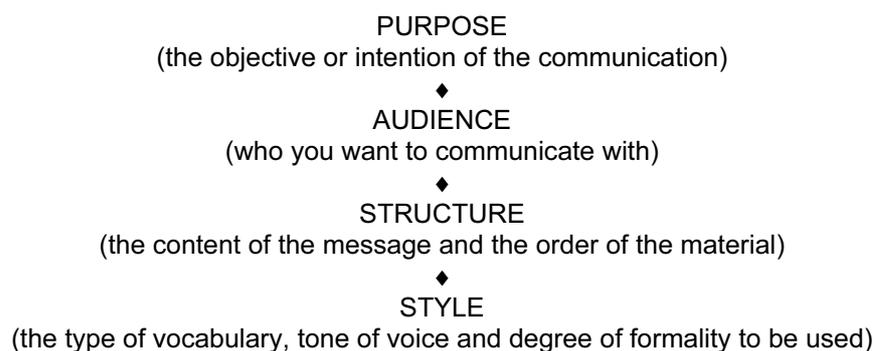
Session Plan Two

Competence Criteria	Skills and Knowledge
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> choose the appropriate methods, and routes, of business communication (1.2) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> appropriate communication routes planning business communication (who, why, what)

Notes on delivery and activities

Planning business communication

Tutors should discuss the PASS framework with students to help them plan business communication.



Students should compare how they would use the PASS framework to help them plan the following different types of communication:

- 1) a letter of complaint to the bank about a mistake on a statement
 - 2) an email to co-workers praising their hard work on completing an order ahead of the deadline
 - 3) a report for the senior management team on various photocopying machines which could be purchased for the department
- Question 1b October 2001 examination
 - Question 1b May 2001 examination

Resources:

- Carysforth, Unit 1
- Wood, Units 4 and 8

Session Plan Three

Competence Criteria	Skills and Knowledge
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> evaluate the effectiveness of business communication (1.3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> evaluating communication for cost-effectiveness, accessibility and in different situations

Resources:

- BPP, Chapter 7

2.0 Produce effective written documentation

Session Plan Four

Competence Criteria	Skills and Knowledge
<ul style="list-style-type: none">investigate methods of writing business letters (2.1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">purpose of business lettersletter layout and content

Notes on delivery and activities

Letter writing

Write a letter in reply to a customer complaint about the late delivery of goods. Your manager has agreed that the customer's next order should have 20% discount as a gesture of goodwill.

- Question 2a October 2001 examination
- Question 2a May 2001 examination

Resources:

- Wood, Unit 8
- Carysforth, Unit 2

Session Plan Five

Competence Criteria	Skills and Knowledge
<ul style="list-style-type: none">investigate methods of writing business reports (2.2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">report format and layoutreport content

Notes on delivery and activities

Report writing

Assume you are the area manager for a chain of six retail outlets. There has been an increase in staff absence in all roles (ranging from the cashiers to the security guards) in two particular stores over the last three months. Write an informal report on the levels and causes of absence for the Personnel Director. In your report identify the reasons for the absences and propose how you intend to deal with the problem.

- Question 2b October 2001 examination

Resources:

- Wood, Unit 8
- Carysforth, Units 8 and 15

Session Plan Six

Competence Criteria	Skills and Knowledge
<ul style="list-style-type: none">understand the use of other methods of written communication (2.3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">memos, faxes, emails and Internetadvanced technologyconfidentiality of information

Notes on delivery and activities

Sending an email

Tutors to direct students to access the Orange website to send visual/graphical email postcards to a friend or colleague with Internet access.

Memo writing

Write a memo to the office manager requesting additional clerical support next month when you are expecting to process additional orders.

- Question 2b May 2001 examination

Resources:

- Wood, Units 8 and 10
- Carysforth, Unit 3
- Blundel, Chapter 9
- BPP, Chapter 16

Online Resources:

- www.orange.co.uk

3.0 Examine effective communication in groups

Session Plan Seven

Competence Criteria	Skills and Knowledge
<ul style="list-style-type: none">identify appropriate use of verbal and non-verbal communications (3.1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">appropriate use of verbal and non-verbal communicationtone of voice, words usedbody language and active listening

Notes on delivery and activities

Non-verbal communication

Tutors need to discuss oral or verbal communication which concerns what you say (the actual words you use) in relation to the following topics:

- paralanguage how you say something (your tone of voice)
- non-verbal communication or body language which may reflect how you feel.
 - kinesics (facial expressions) e.g. smile or eye contact
 - gestures e.g. shaking head
 - movements e.g. pacing up and down or drumming fingers on desk
 - proxemics (physical contact) e.g. shaking hands
 - positioning e.g. sitting behind a desk
 - posture e.g. leaning forward in a chair
 - para -linguistics (feedback sounds of surprise or agreement) e.g. 'uh-uh', 'whew' 'oops', 'tut-tut' etc.
- metacommunications where it is what you **don't** say that conveys the message e.g. silence at the end of presentation could indicate that the audience is pausing for thought but often it can be very hostile and show rejection of the message that is being communicated

Tutors should illustrate to students how the sentence 'Your bank statement is ready now' can be said in different ways when the tone of voice is altered.

To help them tutors should say the sentence in the following ways:

- angrily i.e. as if you are a bank clerk who is angry that you have been interrupted but you need to point out that this is a rude response
- sarcastically i.e. as if you are a bank clerk who feels the customer has only waited a short while for the statement but has been complaining unjustly about a delay
- apologetically i.e. as if you are a bank clerk who is sorry that the statement has taken so long
- humorously i.e. as if you and the customer are both amused that the machine has taken so long to print out the statement

Ask students in groups to role-play one of the situations below using a combination of paralanguage, body language and metacommunications are used to do the following

- to 'block' an idea raised in a discussion
 - to give positive feedback to an idea raised in a meeting
 - to show hostility when dealing with a customer complaining about a product/service (in other words using body language inappropriately)
 - to show empathy when dealing with a dissatisfied customer
- Question 3b May 2001 examination

Resources:

- Wood, Unit 5
- Carysforth, Unit 7

Session Plan Eight

Competence Criteria	Skills and Knowledge
<ul style="list-style-type: none">examine the group rules (3.2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">why groups are formedgroup communication and norms

Notes on delivery and activities

Effective groups

Students to examine the accepted 'norms' in their class group - this could be the way they behave in class when they address their tutor, how they present work (using folders etc.), how they dress and if there is a leader.

Resources:

- Argyle, Chapter 7
- Evans, Chapter 5
- Murdock and Scutt, Chapter 8

Session Plan Nine

Competence Criteria	Skills and Knowledge
<ul style="list-style-type: none">explain characteristics of cost effective groups (3.3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">types of groupseffective group communicationfactors affecting group effectiveness

Notes on delivery and activities

- Question 3b October 2001 examination
- Question 3b May 2001 examination

Resources:

- Argyle, Chapter 8
- Eyre and Pettinger, Chapter 6
- Hardingham, Chapters 1-5

Session Plan Ten

Competence Criteria	Skills and Knowledge
<ul style="list-style-type: none">identify the characteristics of successful meetings (3.4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">types of meetingspurpose of meetings

Notes on delivery and activities

- Question 3c May 2001 examination
- Question 3a October 2001 examination

Resources:

- Blundel, Chapter 11
- Carysforth, Unit 13
- Wood, Unit 6

Session Plan Eleven

Competence Criteria	Skills and Knowledge
<ul style="list-style-type: none">identify the characteristics of successful meetings (3.4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">running a meeting

Notes on delivery and activities

Running a meeting

Ask the students to run a meeting as if they were the social club committee within a hypothetical organisation. They have to organise a large event or special anniversary celebration. The meeting can be the first one of many but for the committee's first meeting they must assign roles and responsibilities themselves, run the meeting within a set time limit, use an agenda and take minutes. Tutors should observe and give feedback on the meeting, how was it run and did members participate effectively during the meeting? If video recording and playback facilities are available, this would enhance this activity.

- Question 4c October 2001 examination

Resources:

- Wood, Unit 6
- Blundel, Chapter 11
- BPP, Chapter 10

4.0 Investigate interviews as an effective means of communication

Session Plan Twelve

Competence Criteria	Skills and Knowledge
<ul style="list-style-type: none">understand the purpose and nature of business interviews (4.1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">purpose of interviewstypes of interviews e.g. performance appraisal, disciplinary, problem solving, recruitment, research interviews

Notes on delivery and activities

- Question 4a and 4c October 2001 examination

Resources:

- Wood, Unit 6
- Blundel, Chapter 13
- BPP, Chapter 10

Session Plan Thirteen

Competence Criteria	Skills and Knowledge
<ul style="list-style-type: none">identify appropriate interview structures (4.2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">interview structureseffective interview structuretypes of interview questions

Notes on delivery and activities

Interviews

Tutors to prepare students in the previous session that they will be working in pairs and during the next session. Before the session they must identify a job advertised in the press that they would like to be interviewed for. One student will assume the role of the interviewer and one will be the interviewee. The interviewer needs to prepare a list of interview questions that demonstrate the use of closed questions, open questions and hypothetical questions to elicit information from the interview candidate. Interviewees should prepare as if they were applying for the job. Interviewers should not ask leading questions. Tutors should provide feedback on interview technique and the use of various types of questions.

- Question 4b October 2001 examination
- Question 4a and 4b May 2001 examination

Resources:

- Wood, Unit 7
- Blundel, Chapter 13

5.0 Understand the use of visual aids in business communication

Session Plan Fourteen

Competence Criteria	Skills and Knowledge
<ul style="list-style-type: none">understand the different types of visual aid in business (5.1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">the use of visual communication in businessthe format of tables, bar charts, pie charts, line graphs

Notes on delivery and activities

- Question 5b October 2001 examination
- Question 5a May 2001 examination

Resources:

- Wood, Unit 7
- Blundel, Chapter 4

Session Plan Fifteen

Competence Criteria	Skills and Knowledge
<ul style="list-style-type: none">understand the different types of visual aid in business (5.1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">using tables, bar charts, pie charts and line graphs

Notes on delivery and activities

Presenting data using graphs/charts

Students should use their football (or some other sport) team's results for the last two months and present this information using graphs/charts. For example, they may want to show the number of games played, won, lost and drawn in a table. They could use a bar chart to show the number of goals scored by each player. They may use a pie chart to show the attendance figures for the last game as a proportion of the attendance figures for all other matches played in their league on that day. The possibilities are limitless here - the main thing is that they use information that has meaning to them and try different ways to present the same information.

- Question 5a and 5c October 2001 examination
- Question 5b May 2001 examination

Resources:

- Blundel, Chapter 4
- BPP, Chapter 8

Session Plan Sixteen

Competence Criteria	Skills and Knowledge
<ul style="list-style-type: none">examine the use of flow and organisation charts in business communication (5.2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">use of flow chartsuse of organisation charts

Notes on delivery and activities

- Question 3a and 3b October 2001 examination

Resources:

- Wood, Unit 7
- BPP, Chapter 8

Session Plan Seventeen

Competence Criteria	Skills and Knowledge
<ul style="list-style-type: none">investigate how technology can enhance visual communication (5.3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">how technology can enhance visual communicationuse of software packages to present graphs etc.use of multi-media aids to present information

Notes on delivery and activities

A presentation using technology to enhance visual communication

Students should work in groups to deliver a presentation using visual methods, such as, PowerPoint, multi-media facilities, overhead projectors or even basic visual aids like flip charts. Tutors should ensure that the groups avoid duplication of content by a different group covering each of the topics listed below.

Presentations should be on one of the following topics:

- how databases or spreadsheets or desktop publishing software or electronic notepads/diary systems are used in organisations to improve business communication
- how video technology or data projectors or PowerPoint and other multi-media facilities are improving the quality of business presentations

Nb A website reference is given in the resource column of the scheme of work to help students access potential sources of information about latest equipment.

- Question 3c October 2001 examination
- Question 5c May 2001 examination

Resources:

- BPP, Chapter 9

Online Resources:

- www.pcworld.co.uk

Session Plan Eighteen

Skills and Knowledge
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• revision and practice exam questions• emphasise key points about exam technique e.g. time management

Notes on delivery and activities
<p><i>Examination technique</i></p> <p>Tutors to refer to past papers and marking schemes on the www.cie.org.uk website and the examiner's reports.</p> <p>The focus of this session should be to deal with common errors that appear in examinations. One is how students regularly misinterpret questions. For example get the class to discuss how they would approach Question 2d or 4a on the May 2001 examination paper and tutors should indicate how the questions were misinterpreted in the past.</p> <p>In addition tutors should advise students that there is now 15 minutes' reading time in the examination. Tutors should also spend time helping the students to work out how much time they should use for planning answers, how much time should be used for actually writing answers and how much time should be used at the end of the exam to check their answers. Good time management is often a key factor in exam success.</p> <p>Students should be asked the week before this session to come prepared with questions about any topic areas that they have difficulty with.</p>

Online Resources:

- www.cie.org.uk

Session Plan Nineteen

Skills and Knowledge
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• mock examination

Notes on delivery and activities
<p><i>Mock examination</i></p> <p>Students should use the session to answer the most recent paper as 'mock' examination. The mock exam should be set under exam conditions and submitted to the tutor for marking and feedback for the following session.</p>

Online Resources:

- www.cie.org.uk

Session Plan Twenty

Skills and Knowledge
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• give feedback on mock exam performance and re-emphasise good exam technique

Resources:

- examiner's report for tips to improve performance

Suggested Resources

Not in order of importance:

Text books

Argyle, 1990, *The Psychology of Interpersonal Behaviour*, Pelican 0140135464
Bonny, 1999, *The Business Writing Pocketbook*, Management Pocketbooks 1870471229
Blundel, 1998, *Effective Business Communication*, Prentice Hall 0137427018
BPP study text, 2001, *Customer Communications in Marketing*, BPP study texts 0751741132
Carysforth, 1998, *Communication for Work*, Heinemann 0435455427
Dandi, Daley, MacKall, 1998, *Teamwork Skills*, Ferguson Publishing
Evans, 1990, *People, Communication and Organisations*, FT Prentice Hall 0273025880
Eyre and Pettinger, 1999, *Mastering Basic Management*, Macmillan 0333772407
Hardingham, 1999, *Working in Teams*, Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development
Murdock and Scutt, 1993, *Personal Effectiveness*, The Institute of Management and Butterworth Heinemann 0750606657
Nolan, 1989, *Problem Solving, Communication and Teamwork*, Penguin
Wood, 2001, *Customer Communications in Marketing*, Butterworth Heinemann 0750653035

Websites

www.cie.org.uk

www.orange.co.uk

www.pcworld.co.uk