FÁS

Foras Áiseanna Saothair
Training & Employment Authority

Module Descriptor
Business English

Award Type: Minor
Award Level: 4
Award Code: 4N1108
Validation Date: 10th July 2012

Revision 1.0

Module Descriptor

Purpose: The purpose of this award is to equip the learner with the knowledge, skill and competence to communicate accurately and effectively in English in a business context.

Module Duration: The learning effort required from a typical learner to complete this module is **50** hours.

Learning Outcomes: By the end of this module, the learner will be able to:

1. Distinguish between internal and external business communication, to include written telephone messages, electronic communications, memoranda and letters.

2. Distinguish between formal and informal English language structures in written and spoken communications.

3. Compile a key business and job-specific vocabulary.

4. Use spoken language effectively and appropriately in a range of business contexts, to include initiating and responding to business telephone calls, booking services, making appointments, and dealing with enquiries from the public.

5. Compose a range of communications for business purposes accurately and concisely, using appropriate tone and vocabulary,, to include letters, memoranda and electronic communication.

6. Draft a range of documents for business purposes, to include notices and agendas, advertisements or mail shots, and press releases or company-related articles.

7. Proofread a range of business documents accurately, to include spelling, punctuation, grammar and syntax, vocabulary, correct usage, tone and register, and style.

Key Learning Points

Learning Outcome 1: Distinguish between internal and external business communication, to include written telephone messages, electronic communications, memoranda and letters.
Key Learning Points

- Outlining what is meant by 'communication', to include sender, receiver, message (content) and medium.
- Distinguishing between internal and external business communications.
- Describing the different types of internal business communications (memos between departments, between managers and employees, from employee to employee, and so on).
- Describing the kind of information conveyed in internal business communications (information on how to carry out business activities, requests for information, documents reporting on business performance/issues, health and safety information, changes in company policies and procedures, human resources information, notification of social events, and so on).
- Describing the different types of external communications that can take place between a business and its clients and other parties (prospective customers, suppliers, government departments, the press, the local community, and so on).
- Describing the kind of information conveyed in external business communications (changes to services or products, advertising, product launches, information for suppliers or customers, problems/issues, legal issues, and so on).
- Outlining the methods used by a business to communicate (letters, business documents, discussions and phone calls).
- Explaining the media used to convey information, to include;
    - Written information conveyed via posted document, e-mail, fax, text messages and social networking tools.
    - Spoken information conveyed via discussions, meetings, phone calls, voicemails, video calls and conference calls.

Learning Outcome 2: Distinguish between formal and informal English language structures in written and spoken communications.

Key Learning Points

- Exploring our differing use of language with reference to everyday situations; how we speak to our friends versus how we speak to a doctor/child's teacher/bank manager/government official.
- Distinguishing between formal language used in business and informal language used when communicating with friends or people to whom we are close.
- Outlining the key differences between formal and informal language structures, to include:
    - Short and simple sentences versus longer and more complex sentences.
    - Contractions (can't versus cannot).
    - Use of first, second or third persons.
    - Use of second person pronouns (you or your as opposed to one, one's, the owner's).
    - Use of abbreviated words such as TV.
    - Use of active voice versus passive voice ('we have noted' versus 'it has been noted').
    - Use of imperative voice ('remember to' versus 'please refer to').
    - Use of cliché.
    - Use of slang and colloquialisms.

Learning Outcome 3: Compile a key business and job-specific vocabulary.

Key Learning Points

- Business vocabulary/dictionary associated with:
    - Meeting and greeting.
    - Reception and phone use.
    - Describing oneself and one's skills.
    - Attending meetings and meeting minutes.
    - Making bookings and reservations.
    - Placing or taking simple orders.
    - Market sectors such as manufacturing, agriculture, retail, information technology, hospitality, and so on.
    - Business departments and their responsibilities.
    - IT and technology.
    - Customer service.
    - Human resources.
- Using a dictionary and thesaurus to confirm the meaning and spelling of words and terms.
- Identifying a particular job area that is of interest and brainstorming areas/aspects of that job for which one can compile a job-specific vocabulary, to include job titles, certificates and qualifications relevant to this area, tools and technology used, products and services, and key documents used.
- Business terminology used in newspapers, trade magazines and other business articles.

Learning Outcome 4: Use spoken language effectively and appropriately in a range of business contexts, to include initiating and responding to business telephone calls, booking services, making appointments, and dealing with enquiries from the public.

Key Learning Points

- Using appropriate company salutation/greeting when taking or making calls.
- Preparing to make phone calls.
- Conveying key information in face-to-face and telephone conversations.
- Verbally demonstrating the use of language appropriate to effectively handle enquiries from public: clarifying key information, using repetition and summarising to check understanding, clarifying what will happen next.
- Concluding conversations or phone calls.
- Verbally demonstrating the use of language appropriate to booking services and making appointments.
- Verbally demonstrating the use of language appropriate to dealing with colleagues and clients in a corporate environment.
- Avoiding emotive language that may exacerbate difficult or challenging situations, such as dealing with an irate client or resolving conflict with a colleague

Learning Outcome 5: Compose a range of communications for business purposes accurately and concisely, using appropriate tone and vocabulary, to include letters, memoranda and electronic communication.

Key Learning Points

- Describing the importance of having clear objectives in communications.
- Outlining the importance of clear and uncomplicated language in business letters and other communications.
- Being aware of the importance of avoiding ambiguity in communications.
- Describing the features and layout of a business letter: letterhead, date, addressee, references, salutation, opening paragraph, body or message, concluding paragraph, sign-off, and enclosures.
- Describing the features of a memo: date, subject, recipient, salutation and sign-off.
- Distinguishing between formal and informal tone
- Identifying appropriate tone for various communications.
- Avoiding the use of inappropriate jargon or abbreviations.
- Composing formal letters and semi-formal memos in response to written and verbal instructions.

Learning Outcome 6: Draft a range of documents for business purposes, to include notices and agendas, advertisements or mail shots, and press releases or company-related articles.
Key Learning Points
- Identifying the objective and intended audience of business documents.   - Identifying the information that must be included in specific documents in order for them to be effective.   - Drafting internal business notices from written or verbal instructions.   - Drafting agendas for business meetings from written or verbal instructions.   - Creating an advertisement of appropriate tone and content with reference to a written brief.   - Drafting a simple press release.   - Drafting company-related articles.

Learning Outcome 7: Proofread a range of business documents accurately, to include spelling, punctuation, grammar and syntax, vocabulary, correct usage, tone and register, and style.
Key Learning Points
- Using spellcheck tools to check for spelling, punctuation and grammatical mistakes.   - Checking tone and formality.   - Evaluating tone and register in the context of the purpose of the document.   - Evaluating whether complexity of language used is appropriate to intended audience and content.   - Evaluating whether style of language used is appropriate to intended audience and content.   - Evaluating correct usage of words and usage of jargon.

Assessment Specification

Award Title	Business English
Award Type	Minor
Framework Level:	4
Award Code:	4N1108
Credit Value:	5

Assessment	Duration	Assessment Details	Weighting	Stage at which assessment commences
SD1	Duration of module	Creating business documents.	45%	On module commencement
SD2	45 minutes	Distinguishing between internal and external documents, and formal and informal language.	10%	On completion of LO1 and LO2
SD3	30 minutes	Using spoken business English.	30%	At the end of the module
SD4	Duration of module	Business and job-specific vocabulary dictionary.	15%	On module commencement

Award Classifications

Grades	Standards
Pass Merit Distinction	50−64% 65−79% 80−100%

Suggested Learning Methodologies

- Classroom activities
- Classroom exercises
- Facilitated discussions
- Role-play exercises
- Textbooks and handouts
- Instructor-led lessons

Specific Module Requirements

The following list is a recommended list. The list is not definitive as some of the items listed may not be essential in order to run the course. Items other than those listed may also be acquired for the module at the discretion of the Manager.

- Computers with Internet, and word-processing software
- Printer
- Access to telephone system

Recommended by: _____
                      Manager, Training Policy Development and Support

Approved by: _____
                      Director, Training Policy Development and Support