

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS

**Cambridge International Diploma in Office Administration
Standard Level**

Scheme of Work

5166
Interpersonal Business Skills
Optional Module



UNIVERSITY *of* CAMBRIDGE
International Examinations

Introduction

The module Interpersonal Business Skills, being 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 employment 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. With a pro-active subject area like starting up a business, it would help if a guest speaker or two could be encouraged to come in and talk about their personal and practical experiences of going into business. Equally visits to some small and medium size enterprises (SMEs) would be of value.

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). *Please do not overlook your own role in providing stimulus material* e.g. task related to a current business event, photocopy of an article coupled with a discussion topic.

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 Interpersonal Business Skills. Activities or activity suggestions are included in the scheme but there may be more than you can use. Please keep in mind that 5166 is **not** an examined module in that students will not sit a two-hour written paper *but they will be judged by the submission of a final assignment*. As you work your way through the module you should assist the students to focus on building up their portfolios of supportive material, identifying a business idea, and completing the business plan.

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 and demonstrate a range of basic communication skills
- understand and demonstrate the principles of assertive behaviour in specific situations.
- communicate effectively in groups
- communicate effectively one to one
- communicate effectively with customers
- make a presentation and produce a written report

Tutors should introduce this module by stressing the importance of interpersonal skills in all aspects of students' personal and business lives. Tutors could give examples of the problems people can face if they are not aware of how they relate to others or if they are unable to interpret the way people relate to them. In this way students can see the purpose of making a formal study of a subject that they may feel they already have expertise in. Because students will be practising their interpersonal skills as a natural part of their life, tutors should encourage students to share their experiences and practical knowledge of the topics covered in this module.

By the very nature of the subject, interpersonal skills need to be taught in a practical way - involving students in sessions by drawing on their real life experiences and engaging them in discussion, role plays and case studies. To be prepared for the final assignment, students should also practise their report writing, listening and presentation skills throughout the course.

Scheme of Work

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

1.0 Understand and demonstrate a range of communication skills

Session Plan One

Competence Criteria	Skills and Knowledge
<ul style="list-style-type: none">understand and demonstrate effective listening skills (1.1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">listening skillsbarriers to listeningactive listening

Notes on delivery and activities

Tutor to explain barriers to effective listening, such as, technical noise e.g. poor telephone connection, physical noise e.g. people talking or traffic noise; social noise e.g. prejudice against others because of age, gender or social class; psychological noise e.g. a person's hostile attitude to the message. Other barriers could be information overload e.g. where too much information hinders concentration; language e.g. where another language or dialect are not understood, perceptual bias e.g. where listener makes assumptions, prejudices and selects what they want to hear.

Tutor to explain how to 'actively concentrate', by being open minded, by checking understanding through asking questions and by taking brief notes.

Tutor to put students in groups of three or four with one person discussing a social event they attended or the plot of a film they have seen, while the rest of the group practise their listening skills. The listeners then need to discuss what they heard and compare the results of the listening task.

Resources:

- Mackay, I Listening Skills. Management Shapers Series

Session Plan Two

Competence Criteria	Skills and Knowledge
<ul style="list-style-type: none">understand and demonstrate effective questioning skills (1.2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">questioning skillsdifferent types of questions and their purpose

Notes on delivery and activities

Tutor to consider the following types of questions and ask students to think up alternative questions for each question type that could be used in a recruitment interview.
An open question: "How do you feel you are progressing in your new role?"
A closed question: "Are you able to access information effectively from the new database?"
A leading question: "So you seem happy with your new responsibilities - is this correct?"
A hypothetical question: "If you were promoted to the role of office manager, what would you do about the problem of staff absence?"

Resources:

- Sayers-Cowpe, G. Interviewing and Questioning Skills

Session Plan Three

Competence Criteria	Skills and Knowledge
<ul style="list-style-type: none">identify and understand non-verbal communication (1.3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">role of non-verbal communication (N.V.C.) in communicationtypes of N.V.Cinterpreting N.V.C

Notes on delivery and activities

Tutor to discuss how the following types of N.V.C. can be used in the workplace to
(i) create a positive impression
(ii) recognise other people's true feelings and read situations better.
a) Eye contact, b) posture, c) gestures, d) facial expression, e) the physical setting created (e.g. sitting behind a big desk to show authority) and even the use of personal space (i.e. the invisible line that surrounds people which can be encroached if people stand too close or make inappropriate physical contact)

Resources:

- Furnham, A Body Language at Work
- Ribbens, G and Thompson, R Understanding Body Language in a Week

2.0 Understand and demonstrate the principles of assertive behaviour in specific situations

Session Plan Four

Competence Criteria	Skills and Knowledge
<ul style="list-style-type: none">understand the principles of assertive behaviour (2.1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">comparison of an assertive manner with passive and aggressive behaviour

Notes on delivery and activities

Tutor to devise a range of scenarios where people act in passive, aggressive and assertive ways and to ask students to identify different approaches in each scenario. One example might be how people can passively agree to do work when they are already overburdened, or how some people can be aggressive in the process of refusing to do extra work or how others manage to strike the right balance by being assertive.

Resources:

- Back, Kate and Back, Ken Assertiveness at Work: A Practical Guide to Handling Awkward Situations
- Eggert, M Assertiveness Pocketbook

Session Plan Five

Competence Criteria	Skills and Knowledge
<ul style="list-style-type: none">understand and demonstrate how to receive praise and criticism (2.4)understand and demonstrate how to refuse requests assertively (2.5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">making requests assertively and refusing requests assertively

Notes on delivery and activities

Organise students into groups where they will role play making requests assertively by being clear, keeping it short, explaining why, not apologising, not flattering/manipulating. For example, "I need this month's figures for the meeting next week. Could I have them by Friday." Tutors should encourage students to listen to the response they get and, if necessary, seek a compromise if possible. Similarly they should practise refusing a request to stay late after work. Use phrases such as "I prefer not to" or "It's not possible" or even examine alternatives that suit you, such as, "I could do it tomorrow" in contrast to agreeing to stay late, or waffling about why you can't 'really' stay late or even apologising when you're not sorry.

Resources:

- Back, Kate and Back, Ken Assertiveness at Work: A Practical Guide to Handling Awkward Situations
- Eggert, M Assertiveness Pocketbook

Session Plan Six

Competence Criteria	Skills and Knowledge
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• understand and demonstrate how to give constructive praise and criticism (2.2)• understand and demonstrate how to receive praise and criticism (2.3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• giving constructive praise and criticism and receiving it

Notes on delivery and activities

Organise students into pairs where they take on the role of office manager and office junior. In the first role-play the office junior has updated all the files correctly as instructed. Tutor should explain the importance of giving specific, descriptive and immediate praise. The person receiving the praise should practise acknowledging the praise and their achievement.

In the second role-play the office manager must make constructive criticism of a mistake made by the office junior in sending letters out late. Tutor should explain the importance avoiding personality related comments e.g. "Now who's got a bad memory?" or "You couldn't care less about getting jobs done on time". It is important to explain that criticism should be given in private and as soon after the event as possible. Also that it is important to be specific about what was incorrect and the problems it caused. In addition it is useful to ask open questions such as "Do you wish to say anything" or "How did this happen?"

In the light of a valid excuse then the response may be modified but the aim should be agreement that the mistake was made and discussion of how to avoid mistakes in future.

The person receiving the criticism should acknowledge the mistake and the criticism.

Resources:

- Fear, R.A. and Chiron, R.J. Evaluation Interview
- Kreiswith, M. and Carmichael, T. Constructive Criticism

3.0 Communicate effectively in groups

Session Plan Seven

Competence Criteria	Skills and Knowledge
<ul style="list-style-type: none">make presentations to small groups (3.1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">making presentations to small groups

Notes on delivery and activities

Tutor should focus on the theory behind making presentations. Tutors need to provide guidance about the planning of presentations using the PASS framework (purpose, audience, structure, style) to help set objectives, to decide on a logical flow of the major points to be made, to estimate the length of the presentation and to design visual aids, if relevant. The link to non-verbal communication should be made so students consider what would be good and bad N.V.C. during a presentation. Finally it is important to provide guidance about what students should do in the event of a mistake, such as, drying up or losing their place in their notes

Resources:

- Bradbury, A Successful Presentation Skills
- Jay, A and Jay, R Effective Presentation
- Rotondo, J and Rotondo, R Presentation Skills for Managers
- PowerPoint 2000 - Getting Professional Results

Session Plan Eight

Competence Criteria	Skills and Knowledge
<ul style="list-style-type: none">make presentations to small groups (3.1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">delivering presentations

Notes on delivery and activities

Tutor should provide an opportunity for students to practise making a presentation on a topic of their choice to the rest of the group. They should be reminded to structure their presentation with a beginning (telling the audience what they are going to tell them), the middle (telling the audience the information) and the end (telling the audience what they have told them). Feedback should be given by tutors and members of the group (link with session plan six).

Resources:

- Bradbury, A Successful Presentation Skills
- Jay, A and Jay, R Effective Presentation
- Rotondo, J and Rotondo, R Presentation Skills for Managers
- PowerPoint 2000 - Getting Professional Results

Session Plan Nine

Competence Criteria	Skills and Knowledge
<ul style="list-style-type: none">take part in small group meetings (3.2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">meetings

Notes on delivery and activities

Tutor should focus on the theory behind effective meetings. Tutors need to make reference to the different type of meetings documentation particularly the notice of the meeting, the agenda and the chairperson's agenda. Tutors should explain how participants should use the agenda or notice of the meeting, to prepare how they will contribute to the meeting and to prepare the questions they will ask. Tutors should explain the importance of listening (link with session plan one) and asking appropriate questions (link with session plan two). Tutor should focus on the role of the chairperson or person leading the meeting with regard to ensuring that participants all make positive contributions (bringing quiet people into the discussion by asking their viewpoint), the importance of encouraging participants to build on other people's ideas and the importance of keeping the meeting to the agreed time scale. Another important skill is the ability to summarise all the discussion that has occurred on an issue and from this, conclude what the general feeling of the meeting is and to put this summary formally to the vote. For example, "It appears that the general feeling is that we need to provide customers with a named contact once they sign up for our services. Is that agreed?" or "We seem to be saying that customers need a named contact once they sign up for our services. All those in favour of this please raise your hand."

Resources:

- Forsyth, P Making Meetings Work
- Gutmann, J Taking Minutes of Meetings
- Hindle, T Essential Managers: Managing Meetings

Session Plan Ten

Competence Criteria	Skills and Knowledge
<ul style="list-style-type: none">take part in small group meetings (3.2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">meetings

Notes on delivery and activities

Tutors should organise a number of role plays where different people take the role of chair and the participants are encouraged to make positive contributions and ask questions in order to have a simulated meeting discussion which results in decisions being agreed or formally voted upon. Suggestions for meeting role plays could include a meeting to agree the training budget for next year, or a meeting to discuss the type of market research the organisation should conduct next quarter or a meeting to discuss ways of saving money for the next financial year.

Resources:

- Forsyth, P Making Meetings Work
- Gutmann, J Taking Minutes of Meetings
- Hindle, T Essential Managers: Managing Meetings

4.0 Communicate effectively one to one

Session Plan Eleven

Competence Criteria	Skills and Knowledge
<ul style="list-style-type: none">understand and demonstrate basic interviewing techniques, focussing on the role of the interviewee (4.1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">interview techniques

Notes on delivery and activities

Tutors need to briefly summarise the different types of interviews that occur such as, market research interviews or selection interviews, or appraisal, grievance, disciplinary and counselling staff interviews. Tutors should also discuss what makes a good interview. They should be structured (with an opening, the middle part and the closure), should entail preparation on both sides i.e. should be used as a two-way communication process and clear conclusions/actions should be decided at the end of the interview. A key component of the interview is the middle part or the core of the interview. Tutors need to revise questioning technique (link with session plan two) and active listening (link with session plan one). Another principle of good interviewing is that interviewees elaborate and explain the point they are making at the same time as remaining concise.

Resources:

- Brause, R Succeeding at your Interview
- Dobson, A Conducting Effective Interviews
- Fowler, A The Disciplinary Interview
- Harvard, B Performance Appraisals
- Neal, J Appraisals - A Guide to Successful Evaluations
- Pfeiffer Training Solutions - Conducting Selection Interviews
- Robinson, K. R. Effective Performance Review
- Warwick, D Interviews and Interviewing
- Wilson, R F Conducting Better Job Interviews

Session Plan Twelve

Competence Criteria	Skills and Knowledge
<ul style="list-style-type: none">understand and demonstrate basic interviewing techniques, focussing on the role of the interviewee (4.1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">interview techniques

Notes on delivery and activities

Tutors should organise the group into pairs in order to conduct a role-play interview. Video recording and playback of the interviews will enhance the exercise, if these facilities could be made available. The purpose of the interview might be an internal staff promotion interview, an external selection interview, or a disciplinary interview. For the role-plays tutors need to write a brief for each interview scenario for example, a brief should be written for the selection interview which describes a hypothetical company, the job vacancy and instructions that the interviewee either plays the role of themselves or should take on an assumed character. Tutors should devise a rating sheet to cover the structure of the interview, the use of questions, their active listening and their non-verbal communication. The groups should listen to the interviews and rate the interviewer and interviewee with regard to the factors on the rating sheet.

Resources:

- Brause, R Succeeding at your Interview
- Dobson, A Conducting Effective Interviews
- Fowler, A The Disciplinary Interview
- Harvard, B Performance Appraisals
- Neal, J Appraisals - A Guide to Successful Evaluations
- Pfeiffer Training Solutions - Conducting Selection Interviews
- Robinson, K. R. Effective Performance Review
- Warwick, D Interviews and Interviewing
- Wilson, R F Conducting Better Job Interviews

Session Plan Thirteen

Competence Criteria	Skills and Knowledge
<ul style="list-style-type: none">understand and demonstrate effective use of the telephone (4.2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">telephone use

Notes on delivery and activities

Students need to know how to make telephone calls effectively. If they are making a call, they need to note down who they wish to speak to, the purpose of the call and any particular points that need to be made. They should be prepared to leave a message on an answer phone.

Tutors should encourage the group to discuss the different 'house styles' for answering the telephone that are used by companies. Usually the person answering the call needs to state their name and department, find out who is calling and ask how they can help. Whatever procedures are set down for staff to follow, it is essential that a friendly and efficient image be conveyed to anyone who contacts the organisation. Some organisations stipulate how quickly the telephone should be answered. It is inappropriate for a caller to be passed around several departments or left waiting on the line. If the caller wishes to speak to someone who is not available, it is vital that a message is taken which indicates the name of the caller, their job title, their company, their number and the nature of the call.

Other general guidance should be provided in relation to speaking clearly, listening carefully, adopting the correct tone of voice (by avoiding monotone and having a 'smile' in your voice) and by being courteous, avoiding jargon and being concise.

Resources:

- Fisher, J. E. Telephone Skills at Work
- Forsyth, P Telephone Skills
- Friedman, N.J. Telephone Skills from A-Z - The Telephone 'Doctor' Phonebook

Session Plan Fourteen

Competence Criteria	Skills and Knowledge
<ul style="list-style-type: none">understand and demonstrate effective use of the telephone (4.2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">telephone use

Notes on delivery and activities

Tutors should ask students to write a transcript which shows a typical incoming telephone call into their organisation. The script should indicate who is speaking and what they are saying. For example: Secretary answers telephone, "Good morning, Technical Support, Rachel speaking, how can I help you?" or Good afternoon, Pie Productions, how can I help you?" The transcript should show what happens when a caller requests information from the company and how this request is dealt with. Students should work in pairs and practise the role-plays.

Resources:

- Fisher, J. E. Telephone Skills at Work
- Forsyth, P Telephone Skills
- Friedman, N.J. Telephone Skills from A-Z - The Telephone 'Doctor' Phonebook

5.0 Communicate effectively with customers

Session Plan Fifteen

Competence Criteria	Skills and Knowledge
<ul style="list-style-type: none">understand and demonstrate customer care skills in communications (5.1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">customer care

Notes on delivery and activities

Customer care relates to four key areas (i) finding out what customers want (ii) providing satisfaction through reliable products/services and a flexible customer friendly service which may involve offering options/alternatives to whatever is being purchased (iii) knowledgeable/courteous staff, and (iv) staff with a positive and proactive attitude. Customer care skills need to be demonstrated when speaking with customers face-to-face or on the telephone. It is important that customers perceive staff to be helpful and welcoming. It is easy for customers to be irritated or annoyed because they feel that their custom is not valued.

Tutors can get students to highlight incidents when they have been displeased with the customer care they have received in relation to the four areas listed above.

In addition tutors can ask students how the following sentences make customers feel.

"Mr Smith is busy today - could you call back tomorrow?"

"There's nothing I can do to help you - it's company policy that we do not exchange sale goods"

"You'll have to give me your account number before I can help you."

Resources:

- Bee, F. and Bee, R. Customer Care
- Forsyth, P Communicating with Customers
- Johns, T Perfect Customer Care
- Wellemin, J Successful Customer Care

6.0 Make a presentation and produce a written report

Session Plan Sixteen

Competence Criteria	Skills and Knowledge
prepare a written report, based on a verbal presentation to a small group following the assignment guidelines (6.1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">reports

Notes on delivery and activities

Reports are a key part of the final assignment so students need to be reminded of report formats, how to write in an objective manner and how to be selective with information.

Resources:

- Forsyth, P How to be Better at Writing Reports and Proposals
- Gravett, S The Right Way to Write Reports

Session Plans Seventeen to Twenty

Notes on delivery and activities

- students to work on final assignment.
- ensure that they are fully aware of the module objectives
- enable the students to check that their assignment covers the competence criteria and provide them with the requirements

Resources:

- copy of the syllabus

Resource List

Tutors can use of the wide variety of textbooks written on the syllabus topic areas as listed below. Do not worry if you cannot access many of these books. As with all resources, they are listed as suggestions, and are not compulsory.

Author	Title	Publisher, date	ISBN	Competence Criteria
Back, Kate and Back, Ken	Assertiveness at Work: A Practical Guide to Handling Awkward Situations	McGraw Hill, 1999	007084576X	2.1, 2.4, 2.5
Bee, F. and Bee, R.	Customer Care	The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, 1999	0852927762	5.1
Brause, R	Succeeding at your Interview	Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2001	0805838562	4.1
Bradbury, A	Successful Presentation Skills	Kogan Page, 2000	0749417498	3.1
Dobson, A	Conducting Effective Interviews	How To Books, 1996	058523924X	4.1
Eggert, M	Assertiveness Pocketbook	Management Pocketbooks, 1997	1870471458	2.1, 2.4, 2.5
Fear, R.A. and Chiron, R.J.	Evaluation Interview	McGraw Hill, 1990	0071377913	2.2, 2.3
Fisher, J. E.	Telephone Skills at Work	Irwin Professional Publishing, 1993	1556238584	4.2
Forsyth, P	How to be Better at Writing Reports and Proposals	Kogan Page, 1997		6.1
Forsyth, P	Making Meetings Work	The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, 1998	0846451069	3.2
Forsyth, P	Telephone Skills	Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, 2000	0852928653	4.2
Forsyth, P	Communicating with Customers	Orion Business Books, 1999	0752821024	5.1
Fowler, A	The Disciplinary Interview	The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, 1996	0846450313	4.1
Friedman, N.J.	Telephone Skills from A-Z - The Telephone 'Doctor' Phonebook	50 Minute Series	1560525800	4.2
Furnham, A	Body Language at Work	Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, 2000	0846450070	1.3
Gravett, S	The Right Way to Write Reports	Elliot Right Way Books, 1998	0716021021	6.1
Gutmann, J	Taking Minutes of Meetings	The Sunday Times, 2000		3.2
Harvard, B	Performance Appraisals	Kogan Page, 2000		4.1
Hindle, T	Essential Managers: Managing Meetings	Dorling Kindersley, 1998	0789424479	3.2

Jay, A and Jay, R	Effective Presentation	FT Prentice Hall, 1999	0273600370	3.1
Johns, T	Perfect Customer Care	Arrow Business Books, 1999	0712659129	5.1
Kreiswith, M. and Carmichael, T.	Constructive Criticism	The University of Toronto Press, 1995	0802006752	2.2, 2.3
Mackay, I	Listening Skills. Management Shapers Series	Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, 1998	0852927541	1.1
Neal, J	Appraisals - A Guide to Successful Evaluations	Neal's Publications, 1999	1882423097	4.1
Pfeiffer	Training Solutions - Conducting Selection Interviews	Wiley, 1996		4.1
Robinson, K. R.	Effective Performance Review	The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, 1983	0852923279	4.1
Ribbens, G and Thompson, R	Understanding Body Language in a Week	Institute of Management, 2000		1.3
Rotondo, J and Rotondo, R	Presentation Skills for Managers	McGraw-Hill, 2000	0071379304	3.1
Sayers-Cowpe, G.	Interviewing and Questioning Skills	Spiro Press, 1999		1.2
Siddons, S	Presentation Skills	The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, 1999	0852928106	3.1
Warwick, D	Interviews and Interviewing	Spiro Press, 1990		4.1
Wellemin, J	Successful Customer Care	Hodder and Stoughton, 1998	0764101277	5.1
Wilson, R F	Conducting Better Job Interviews	Barron's Business Success Series, 1992	0812098935	4.1
	PowerPoint 2000 - Getting Professional Results	Microsoft		3.1