



**AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE
OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

Mainstreaming Communication Policy

Category: Academic (ACA)

1. Purpose

Communication skills are so fundamental to successful operation as a business leader that they should be mainstreamed through all programs of AIH.

Students will be presented with progressively more challenging communication situations as they move from 100 to 300 level units. This purpose of this Policy is to provide practical indicators that distinguish levels of challenge for communication tasks at each level. It is a guide, not comprehensive, and is intended for use by academics who prepare units outlines and lecturers who deliver the units, as a guide in the construction of rigorous and challenging communication activities.

2. Practical Indicators of Communication Performance Levels:

2.1 Level 100 Communications Skills

At this level assignments and classroom experience are designed to challenge students' ability to build an argument that draws material together from a number of sources. In written form, this suggests written reports of 1000 – 1500 words in length that have an explicit structure of argument leading to a conclusion. At all levels (100-300) case studies need not be as long as essays.

At the 100 level, the essay form requires an introduction which raises key questions and foreshadows the approach to an answer, a body of logically sequenced points of argument and supporting evidence, and a conclusion that shows how the evidence and argument provides the answer to the questions set.

Oral presentation skills include the ability to develop a theme. An appropriate challenge at this level is for students to plan collectively and deliver formal presentations of 10-15 minutes in length, to integrate multimedia aids such as PowerPoint presentation, video and music as appropriate and to tie the content conveyed by these aids to the theme of the presentation.

At all levels (100 – 300) written reports that are associated with oral presentations will vary in length and complexity. Where the presentation is a means of summarizing the results of a major assignment, the length of the written report will depend on the assignment that is the subject of the presentation. Where the primary focus of the assessment is the presentation, such as might be the case where the presentation is based on the topic for the weekly tutorial session, the report may be about 1000 words in length.

At all levels student communications should be sensitive to cultural differences and deal responsibly and positively with conflict.

Where essays are used in examinations, examiners should expect to students to be able to interpret, plan and execute an essay of between 3 - 4 examination script pages per hour of examination time. The answers should be able to deploy material from different parts of the unit within a single narrative form.

2.2 Level 200 Communication Skills

At this level, written assignments should be structured to make an extended argument. The answers should be complex enough to take account of a variety of factors impinging on the question. Implications should be clearly identified. Conclusions should include implications drawn from a variety of perspectives. The length of these assignments is between 1500 – 2500 words depending on the nature of the assignment.

Oral presentations should demonstrate the same capabilities for analysis and structure as presented in the written form. They should also include the capacity to run a group discussion. This may include posing of broad, open questions, which are pitched at the appropriate level to stimulate and engage an audience. Presenters should be able to respond to answers from other students with feedback or development or redirection of the question.

At all levels student communications should be sensitive to cultural differences and deal responsibly and positively with conflict.

Where essays are used in examinations, examiners should expect students to interpret, plan and execute an essay of between 3 - 4 examination script pages per hour of examination time. The answers should be able to utilize material from different parts of the subject matter and arrange that material in a logical sequence that develops a functional argument.

Where short answer questions are used, students should be able to develop responses in a paragraph form, using over one or more paragraphs. The paragraphs should have an internal logic that is well focused on the question being answered.

2.3 Level 300 Communication Skills

At the 300 level both oral and written communication skills should benchmark well against industry practice. For example, students may present reports or briefings, which are clearly and cogently argued and can be acted upon by colleagues, subordinates and more senior management. The assignment length at this level could be between 2000 to 3000 words.

Students should be able to deliver oral presentations as per 100 level skills and run class discussions as per 200 level skills. In addition to this, they should be able to construct meanings out of the disparate contributions of other students. They should be able to draw together implications of what has been put forward in tutorial discussions and present conclusions back to the tutorials that form a synthesis or reconciliation of their own presentation and the responses of the students. By way of further illustration, this communication process should be analogous to the chair of a meeting, drawing together the conclusions that have emerged from diverse perspectives brought to the meeting table. Students should be able to recognise and acknowledge those perspectives that remain irreconcilable. They should be able to recognise ambiguity and show appropriate tolerances for multiple meanings.

At all levels student communications should be sensitive to cultural differences and deal responsibly and positively with conflict.

Students should be able to present coherent written arguments based on the application of concepts under pressure of time and without resort to notes e.g. in class discussion or the examination context.

Where examinations prescribe essays, the appropriate exams would be four essays of 3 – 4 exam script pages in a three-hour examination. The answers should be able to utilize material from different parts of the unit and arrange that material in a logical sequence, and draw implications to develop a persuasive argument that develops a functional argument. The argument should also be able to frame and resolve issues and/or account for alternative perspectives as the occasion may warrant.

Students should also be able to develop responses to short answer questions in a paragraph form that bring together concepts and theories from different parts of the unit being examined.

3. Version Control

Policy Owner:	Executive Dean
Policy Code:	ACA-HE-08
Authorising Body:	AIH Academic Board
Version / Dates:	V1 – 19 August 2008
	V2 – 27 February 2009
	V3 – 1 April 2009
	V4 – 30 April 2009
	V5 – 22 August 2009