



## SkillSoft Business Skills Curriculum Review

### INTRODUCTION

In order to assist faculty find their way through the Business Skills curriculum, the Center for Teaching and Learning has identified a list of useful Skillsoft business courses. These courses have been evaluated based on these five areas: Content/presentation logic, Visual appearance, Media use, Assessments, and Timeliness. The review includes the course title, number, components, duration, comments, description, date evaluated, and overall rating.

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## COURSE EVALUATION RUBRIC

Each course is rated by an overall number (between 1 and 5), which evaluates the course in five areas: Content/presentation logic, Visual appearance, Media use, Assessments, and Timeliness

<b>EVALUATION RUBRIC</b>	
5 (Best)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very strong, logical content presentation</li> <li>• Clean, exciting graphical interface</li> <li>• Very easy to navigate</li> <li>• Highly interactive and engaging for the learner</li> <li>• Likely to include audio</li> <li>• Assessments are varied and fully test learners' knowledge</li> <li>• Deals with very recent product information (within 3 years)</li> </ul>
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong, logical content presentation</li> <li>• Simulations and interactive features in most areas</li> <li>• Clean, exciting graphical interface</li> <li>• Very easy to navigate</li> <li>• Very interactive and engaging for the learner</li> <li>• May include audio</li> <li>• Assessments are varied and test learners' knowledge</li> <li>• Deals with very recent product information (within 3 years)</li> <li>• Very interactive and engaging for the learner</li> </ul>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Logical content presentation</li> <li>• Simulations and interactive features are common</li> <li>• Clean graphical interface</li> <li>• Easy to navigate</li> <li>• Often interactive and engaging for the learner</li> <li>• May include audio</li> <li>• Deals with recent product information (within 3-5 years)</li> </ul>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adequate content presentation</li> <li>• Limited simulations and interactive features</li> <li>• Unexciting graphical interface</li> <li>• Sometime difficult to navigate</li> <li>• Not very interactive or engaging for the learner</li> <li>• No audio</li> <li>• Assessments inadequately test learners' knowledge</li> <li>• May deal with outdated product information (more than 5 years)</li> </ul>
1 (Worst)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor and/or illogical content presentation</li> <li>• No simulations or interactive features</li> <li>• Unattractive/crowded graphical interface</li> <li>• Difficult to navigate</li> <li>• Not interactive or engaging for the learner</li> <li>• No audio</li> <li>• Assessments fail to test learners' knowledge</li> <li>• May deal with outdated product information (more than 5 years)</li> </ul>

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Name of Course: **An Essential Guide to Giving Feedback** (COMM0521)

Course Description: The performance of any business depends upon the performance of everyone within the organization. To ensure that all staff are meeting their potential it is essential that there is a culture which enables feedback to be given and received. This course enables you to become familiar with the key aspects of giving candid, constructive feedback about performance. The purpose of this course is to enable you to enhance your skills in giving feedback. The course starts by exploring the nature of feedback, and it then develops a practical approach to the feedback process. Giving feedback is not always straightforward however, and so the final part of this course looks at barriers to giving feedback and strategies for dealing with situations where your feedback is challenged.

Overall Impressions (quality of instructional content as well as graphics and layout and design): This course clears up misconceptions regarding the terms 'negative' and 'positive' feedback. Feedback is classified as 'reinforcing' or 'corrective'. It is clear that the purpose of feedback is to improve performance. A five step feedback model is presented. Extensive examples demonstrate the importance of clear communication, good interpersonal skills, and an understanding of the needs of the adult learner. The appropriateness of time and place are also considered. All of the concepts presented in this class can be easily applied to an educational setting. It is likely that doing so would improve student performance. This course easily bridges the gap between the boardroom and the classroom. Time to complete course: 2.5 hours

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Name of Course: **The Impact of Culture on Communication** (COMM0021)

Course Description: Everything you say is influenced by culture. You operate with a set of invisible beliefs, values, and assumptions that become apparent to other people in the way you behave. Culture is important to the way you communicate, even though it is often hidden. Understanding more about culture can be a real bonus when working as part of any global organization. Showing your customers and coworkers in different countries that you are in tune with them, and that you appreciate and value the differences between you, can help get your working relationships off to a flying start. In this course, you'll examine what culture means and what it doesn't, and look at some of the barriers relating to culture. You'll also consider different cultural theories including Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Model and Edward T. Hall's Model of Culture. You'll go on to learn more about direct and indirect communicators, and different communication styles.

Overall Impressions (quality of instructional content as well as graphics and layout and design): UMUC has a presence in the US, Asia and Europe. Its distance education program attracts and connects students and teachers from all over the world. We are a university on a global scale. This course will help instructors to understand the impact of cultural differences on communication. The course covers the basic building blocks of culture. Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Model and Edward T. Hall's Contextual Model of Culture are presented. The role-playing scenarios in the class are quite complex so taking notes as you work through the first two sections of the course is recommended.

Time to complete course: 2.5 hours

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Name of Course: **The Process of Interpersonal Communication** (COMM0001)

Course Description: It is almost impossible to be productive in today's business environment without being an effective communicator. This is particularly true if achievement of your goals depends on your ability to influence others. You need to be able to communicate your ideas, instructions, thoughts, and feelings accurately. This is not as easy as it may seem, and ineffective communication is often at the core of a high proportion of the errors, misunderstandings, and conflicts that occur in the workplace. This course is designed to give you an understanding of the prime causes of poor communication, and, more importantly, the skills required to minimize their impact.

Overall Impressions (quality of instructional content as well as graphics and layout and design): This course builds a solid background in Communication theory. It describes the stages of the communication process and introduces steps needed for effective communication. The real value of this course comes in recognizing the differences involved when communicating with auditory learners, visual learners, and kinesthetic learners. Specific recommendations on tailoring your communication to each learning style are presented.

The feedback portion of this course is similar to but less detailed than the information presented in "An Essential Guide to Giving Feedback", Course Number COMM0521.

Time to complete course: 4.5 hours

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Name of Course: **Working with Negative People and Procrastinators** (COMM0163)

Course Description: Don't you hate it when people say they'll do something, but when the deadline is up, it turns out they somehow never managed to get around to doing it? Or what about people who whine all the time? You might come in to work in the best of moods, but after ten minutes of someone complaining nonstop while you're waiting to fill your coffee cup, your day is shot. If you're tired of putting up with negative people or people who leave you "holding the bag," then you're going to love this course. It describes ways you can triumph over the negative and negligent attitudes that some of your co-workers, employees, or bosses might display.

Overall Impressions (quality of instructional content as well as graphics and layout and design): The real value in this class has to do with the strategies for coping with procrastinators. The top four reasons why people procrastinate are presented. Procrastinators are then broken into three groups based upon their behavior. Strategies are presented for identifying and dealing with each type of procrastinator. The class includes role playing exercises.

Time to complete course: 3 hours

Name of Course: **The Role of the Facilitator** (MGMT0271)

Course Description: Tired of wasting time at meetings that take too long and get too little accomplished? Learn to facilitate meetings that are both productive and time efficient. In this course, you will explore the foundations of the art of group facilitation. You will define the role of a facilitator, so that you can easily differentiate between facilitated groups and democratic or autocratic groups. Identifying the skills, attitudes and emotions needed to facilitate groups will help prepare you for taking on the task of changing your work group structure. Understanding the responsibilities of the facilitator will help establish the boundaries of what you can and cannot control when working with groups. Finally, you will learn ways to measure your successes through self-assessment.

Overall Impressions (quality of instructional content as well as graphics and layout and design): The role of instructor vs. facilitator has been described as "Sage on the stage" vs. "guide on the side". This course will help faculty explore the role of facilitator or guide. While the examples in the course related to business meetings, the styles of facilitation and group dynamics discussed can be applied to a learning environment.

Time to complete course: 5 hours

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Name of Course: **e-Learning** (ABC0111)

Course Description: Today's careers are more demanding than ever. What is cutting edge today may well be obsolete tomorrow. Professional development and job skills training have become a normal part of most people's careers. But, how do you find the time to perform the duties and obligations associated with your job when you are trying to stay on top of your skills with ongoing training and other professional development activities? There is a solution. Organizations are discovering the advantages of e-learning to meet these demands. e-learning, although still a relatively new service for career-minded employees, has already demonstrated its value in promoting solid performance gains and career enhancements. This course focuses on the basic question, "What is e-Learning and what can it do for me?" In this course, you'll find out how you can use this essential training tool to maximize your learning experiences, keep up-to-date with the latest and greatest content, and evaluate, plan, and implement what you have learned.

Overall Impressions (quality of instructional content as well as graphics and layout and design): This course is appropriate for two populations:

1. Faculty who are scheduled to teach their first online class. This course covers content delivery methods, appropriate course design, course objectives and learning outcomes, informal and mastery evaluation techniques.
2. Faculty planning to take Skillsoft courses who want direction in choosing them. This course helps to identify short and long-term goals to gather specific job skills or to further general knowledge. Strategies for building an e-learning transcript are presented.

Time to complete course: 3 hours

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Name of Course: **Managing Time** (PD0113)

Course Description: "Do not squander time, for that is the stuff life is made of," so said Benjamin Franklin. Therefore, making every moment count is the surest path to living the good life. In this course, the third in the series "Achieving Balance in Your Professional and Personal Life," you'll begin by recognizing many of the everyday activities, interruptions, and attitudes that waste your time and, in turn, eat away at the very thing you should value most. With your time savings account thus enriched, you will then learn to hone your time-management skills and achieve much greater results for the same effort.

Overall Impressions (quality of instructional content as well as graphics and layout and design): Whether collegiate or adjunct, faculty members have to deal with extreme demands on their time. Those teaching online classes may find the time pressure even greater as it involves meeting students' needs in a relatively new medium. This course teaches time management skills to make efficient use of the time available. The sections covering perfectionism and burnout are particularly useful for anyone who feels driven to perform.

Time to complete course: 2.5 hours

Name of Course: **Enhancing Your Listening Skills** (COMM0154)

Course Description: Have you ever been taken by surprise by an unexpected deadline? Have you ever left a meeting unsure about what was decided? Have you ever asked a supervisor for advice, only to later forget what your supervisor told you? You can avoid problems like these by using effective listening skills. Effective listening helps you to know what's going on in your organization, get cooperation from your co-workers, solve problems, and be successful in your work. However, most people don't listen very well. This course will help you to improve your ability to listen to others. You will learn the skills you need to understand what people say, read their unconscious nonverbal messages, and get others to want to listen to you. You also learn how to apply these skills in a variety of business situations such as interviews, business meetings, and negotiations.

Overall Impressions (quality of instructional content as well as graphics and layout and design): This course will help faculty members become more effective listeners when communicating with students and colleagues. Faculty members will also learn specific ways to get others to listen to them in both conversational and confrontational circumstances. Best practices for listening effectively to lectures and presentations are included. The role playing scenarios in this course are very useful. While business oriented, many transfer well into an educational setting.

Time to complete course: 3 hours

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Name of Course: **The Manager as Coach and Counselor** (MGMT0113)

Course Description: "The ripest peach is highest on the tree." "A man's reach should exceed his grasp." How do you motivate employees to go after "the ripest peach," or reach for the skill level that seems beyond their grasp? You do it by coaching. Coaching is what cultivates employee growth, not to mention employee loyalty. In *The Manager as Coach and Counselor*, you'll learn to take people from adequacy to excellence. And as you build their self-esteem, confidence, and competence, you'll be building on the bottom line. This course explores four coaching styles, and the methodology to use them all. You'll also discover techniques to overcome employee resistance. Another key learning module is designed to get your workers past the confusion or mistrust that comes with having a new kind of boss. After all, if you are suddenly "coach," as opposed to supervisor, they'll need thoughtful dialogue as to why you've changed your approach, and what you hope to accomplish. After this course, you will be able to develop a workplace filled with high achievers.

Overall Impressions (quality of instructional content as well as graphics and layout and design): Each time a student signs up for a course, he or she is buying into an Instructor's teaching style and classroom management techniques. This course will introduce four types of coaching that can be used to encourage and motivate students. This could be particularly useful in a distance education setting where success depends upon keeping students motivated.

Time to complete course: 5 hours

Name of Course: **Presenting to Succeed** (COMM0301)

Course Description: There are a number of basic types of presentations, but all presentations have four things in common: a presenter, an audience, a venue, and a message. This course concentrates on showing how each of these vital elements has to be taken into account when preparing a presentation. Presenting is a skill that needs to be learned and practiced, starting with how you prepare, and you will be shown a simple but powerful method for selecting the right content, and then structuring it. Controlling nerves is an important part of preparing, and this course helps you to remove anxieties in the presentation environment by making sure that the venue is set up correctly, and ensuring that you rehearse appropriately.

Overall Impressions (quality of instructional content as well as graphics and layout and design): Instructors make presentations all the time. These may be to motivate, to inform, to persuade or to promote discussion. This class offers tips on preparing and presenting content, on interacting with the 'audience', and on controlling anxiety. This information may be useful to newer instructors who are not yet familiar with presenting information in face to face classes. The information is less useful for those teaching asynchronous online classes.

Time to complete course: 4.5 hours

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Name of Course: **Coping With Stress** (PDO114)

Course Description: "You don't get ulcers from what you eat, but from what's eating you," said Albert Cliffe. There's no way to avoid having stress in one's life, but there are techniques for combating it. Are you your own worst enemy when it comes to stress? This course, the fourth in the series "Achieving Balance in Your Professional and Personal Life," will help you discover ways to manage self-induced stress. Perhaps it's your work that makes you feel pressured. You'll explore ways to anticipate for stressful situations in order to reduce their disruptions on your life. Sometimes it's just our own negative thinking that creates anxiety in our lives. In this course, you'll employ time-tested methods of diffusing these negative thoughts. By the time you're finished integrating these lessons, you'll have the tools to keep stress in check.

Overall Impressions (quality of instructional content as well as graphics and layout and design): These days life is fast-paced. Both instructors and students have multiple demands on their time stemming from school, work, and family needs. This course covers techniques for recognizing and dealing with stress. The course may be useful to instructors looking to reduce their own stress. It may also be useful to instructors who want to help students cope with stress in their lives thereby improving their performance in class.

Time to complete course: 3 hours

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Name of Course: <b>Ethics in Business Simulation</b> (PD0170)		
Course Description: You are a sales manager at the Gray & Becker tool company. The company makes and distributes consumer- and contractor-grade power tools to retail outlets. G&B has always been a leader in the tool industry and has maintained an impeccable reputation for quality, reliability, and safety. The latest tool produced by G&B is a rechargeable, cordless, and high-powered nailer designed for roofing and framing contractors. The new nailer is enjoying quite a bit of initial success. Word of mouth has been great, users are extremely pleased with the product, and the nailer promises to be a star in G&B's overall tool offering, barring unforeseen complications. In this simulation, you will test your ability to promote ethical behavior and to balance this behavior with social responsibility and the company's bottom line. This simulation is based on the SkillSoft series Ethics in Business, and has links to the following courses: PD0171, PD0172, PD0173, and PD0174.		
Date(s) Evaluated: July 9, 2007	Course Components: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Simulation <input type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Other: self-test questions, dynamic text	
Overall Impressions (quality of instructional content as well as graphics and layout and design): The simulation offers the learner an opportunity to walk through several issues requiring them to make ethical decisions based on a list of options. The review of selected choices at the conclusion of each scene was useful for analyzing decisions made. Overall the simulation graphics and interactive features will keep the interest of the users. The interface is user-friendly. An understanding of the ethics is perceived.		
Overall Rating: 1-5 (5 being the highest) 3	Time to complete Course: 30 minutes	

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Name of Course: <b>Managing Cultural Divides</b> (COMM0601)		
Course Description: Did you know that if you whistled on the streets of Russia you'd be violating a forbidden practice or that in Madagascar pregnant women may not sit in doorways? If you naively thought that language would be your only barrier to striking up that red hot deal in Italy, you're in for a culture shock. When engaging in international business, there are many cultural barriers to successful negotiations that can, if violated, land you back on the airplane to home. This course will help you understand the critical importance of developing skills in cultural understanding before you get on the plane. Learn to navigate barriers of communication and negotiation and to form a synergistic alliance that will leave both parties feeling they've accomplished their goals and developed strong, new relationships that will give you the best of both worlds.		
Date(s) Evaluated: July 15, 2007	Course Components: <input type="checkbox"/> Simulation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Other: self-test questions, dynamic text	
Overall Impressions (quality of instructional content as well as graphics and layout and design): The course presentation of Cultural Learning, Intercultural Communication Skills, Cross-cultural Negotiation Skills, and Creating Cultural Synergy was informative and brings forth a wealth of knowledge needed for developing productive multi-cultural relationships. The interactive components, self-test questions and a test at the end of each section assist with reinforcing the content covered in the course; however I experienced some difficulties when trying to select the hotspot buttons on several of the interactive slide. The interface is user-friendly.		
Overall Rating: 1-5 (5 being the highest) 3	Time to complete Course: 3 hours	

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Name of Course: <b>A Manager's Introduction to Business Law</b> (LAW0101)		
Course Description: This course introduces managers to the fundamental concepts of business law. It begins by exposing some prevalent legal misconceptions shared by management and establishes the true role that law plays in society and business. The relationship between business ethics and law is explained and how managers serve as vital role models for demonstrating ethical business practices. This course also presents the basis and structure of the U.S. legal system and introduces relevant areas of business regulation. It outlines management's legal responsibilities and presents practical strategies for researching legal resources, for supporting legal counsel, and for proactively avoiding legal complications.		
Date(s) Evaluated: July 15, 2007	Course Components: __ Simulation __X_ Audio _x_ Other: self-test questions, dynamic text	
Overall Impressions (quality of instructional content as well as graphics and layout and design): The course presentation of business law could benefit any person interested in how to conduct ethical and legal business transactions. The content covered in general is basic and will assist the "student" with developing an understanding of business law. Instructors of the business law course may find this content beneficial for their students. The interactive components, self-test questions and tests at the end of each section assist with reinforcing the content covered in the course; however I experienced some difficulties when trying to select the hotspot buttons on several of the interactive slides. The interface is user-friendly. The only concern for the accuracy of any quoted or referred to laws. How often is this presentation reviewed?		
Overall Rating: 1-5 (5 being the highest) 4	Time to complete Course: 3 hours	

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Name of Course: <b>Crossing the Dateline: Japan, China, India</b> (COMM0605)		
<p>Course Description: If you were to attend a business meeting in Japan and find all of the Japanese sitting side by side at a table staring at a spot on the wall, would you think that strange? In Japan, maintaining eye contact during conversation is considered to be rude. Once you recover from your initial culture shock, you'll notice other customs that might seem very odd to you, but not at all odd to them. In Crossing the Dateline: Japan, China, India, you'll uncover the mysteries of Asian culture. While some elements of culture are common to all Asian countries, some are not. After being introduced to the common cultural elements, you'll tour the cultures and business practices of two powerhouses in the global market; namely, Japan and China. Asian culture is vastly different from American business culture. In fact, even the calmest, most easygoing American businessperson will be viewed as brash, bulldozing, and disrespectful by the gentle, reflective Asian. This course will help prepare you for cultural understanding that is an essential factor in successful business negotiations with your Asian counterparts.</p>		
Date(s) Evaluated: July 16, 2007	Course Components: __ Simulation __X__ Audio __x__ Other: self-test questions, dynamic text	
<p>Overall Impressions (quality of instructional content as well as graphics and layout and design): The course presentation of the Asian culture was informative and can be very useful to persons and/or organizations doing business in the Asian countries. The interactive components, self-test questions and tests at the end of each section assist with reinforcing the content covered in the course. The interface is user-friendly.</p>		
Overall Rating: 1-5 (5 being the highest) 4	Time to complete Course: 2.5 hours	

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Name of Course: <b>An Introduction to Project Management (PROJ0511)</b>		
Course Description: To explain how to create basic presentations using PowerPoint 2003		
Date(s) Evaluated: July 19, 2007	Course Components: __ Simulation __X_ Audio _x_ Other: self-test questions, dynamic text	
Overall Impressions (quality of instructional content as well as graphics and layout and design): The course An Introduction to Project Management gives an overview of PM and the organizational knowledge needed to conduct successful projects. The content is covered in a manner which novice persons can easily understand the concept of project management and the factors that can and will influence over the project(s). Because it is an introductory course it does not cover the steps on how to manage a project. The course refers repeatedly to the PMBOK, the resource guide maintained by the Project Management Institute. The simulations and questions reinforced the content covered within the course. The interface is user-friendly and easy to follow.		
Overall Rating: 1-5 (5 being the highest) 4	Time to complete Course: 160 minutes	

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