Course guide
270191 - APSS - Academic and Professional Speaking Skills

Last modified: 11/07/2025

Unit in charge: Barcelona School of Informatics
Teaching unit: 756 - THATC - Department of History and Theory of Architecture and Communication Techniques.

Degree: BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN INFORMATICS ENGINEERING (Syllabus 2010). (Optional subject).

Academic year: 2025 **ECTS Credits:** 6.0 **Languages:** English

LECTURER

Coordinating lecturer: ANTONIA SOLER CERVERA

Others:

PRIOR SKILLS

In order to carry out academic and professional activities in English, students are recommended to have acquired B1 level of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEF) or higher.

DEGREE COMPETENCES TO WHICH THE SUBJECT CONTRIBUTES

Generical:
G3. THIRD LANGUAGE: to know the English language in a correct oral and written level, and accordingly to the needs of the graduates in Informatics Engineering. Capacity to work in a multidisciplinary group and in a multi-language environment and to communicate, orally and in a written way, knowledge, procedures, results and ideas related to the technical informatics engineer profession.

TEACHING METHODOLOGY

Class session combine content presentation by teacher, extensive practice and students' participation. Students' participation and involvement are critical for the development of course activities
The work on the course contents is based on the development of tasks.
The activities are based on problem-solving tasks with practical exercises and analysis of samples

LEARNING OBJECTIVES OF THE SUBJECT

1.To understand and apply the principles of academic and professional communication in engineering
2.To recognize oral genres in English in academic and professional contexts
3.To recognize the importance of pronunciation in professional and academic communication
4.To identify basic segmental and suprasegmental aspects of English phonetics in order to improve pronunciation skills
5.To develop active-listening skills in English to improve listening comprehension
6.To understand and interpret information from oral sources and to use information efficiently
7.To develop speaking fluency and to use the correct kind of language for different communicative functions in English
8.To exchange technical information orally and to discuss topics related to computer science appropriately
9.To participate in academic and professional situations effectively using the correct kind of language and level of formality: a seminar, a job-seeking interview
10.To plan an oral presentation for academic or professional purposes, using a problem-solving approach
11.To deliver an oral presentation, using appropriate language, signposting and body language
12.Evaluating an oral presentation according to planning and delivery criteria, making comments and suggestions for improvement

STUDY LOAD

Type	Hours	Percentage
Hours medium group	30,0	20.00
Hours large group	30,0	20.00
Guided activities	6,0	4.00
Self study	84,0	56.00

Total learning time: 150 h

CONTENTS

Fundamentals of academic and professional communication in engineering

Description:
Problem-solving and genre. Academic and professional oral genres. Communicative function and strategy

Guidelines for effective pronunciation

Description:
The importance of pronunciation for intelligibility. English phonetics: basic aspects about the English sound system, stress and intonation. Strategies for dictionary use and for improving pronunciation

Strategies for effective listening comprehension and speaking practice in computer science

Description:
Techniques for active listening. Understanding lectures: semantic markers and signposting. Note-taking practice. Listening and speaking practice: spoken academic English in computer science

Interaction in communicative activities: language functions and usage

Description:
Levels of formality. Communicative function and language usage to participate in academic and professional activities effectively: telephoning, giving technical explanations and instructions, discussing and negotiating

Speech organization and genre: skills to participate in academic situations

Description:
International seminars: academic discussion. Oral presentations: the process of designing an oral presentation (planning, delivery and evaluation). Strategies and techniques for effective presentation. Visuals, signposting and body language

Speech organization and genre: skills to participate in professional communicative situations

Description:
Job-seeking skills: a CV and a job interview. Strategies for successful interaction

ACTIVITIES

Understanding the principles of technical communication

Description:
Becoming familiar with problem-solving approaches for communicative purposes and genre. Analyzing examples of oral genres in academic and professional contexts and the general communicative strategy used

Specific objectives:
1, 2

Related competencies :
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Full-or-part-time: 10h
Self study: 6h
Theory classes: 2h
Practical classes: 2h

Recognizing the importance of pronunciation for oral interaction in English

Description:
Identifying features of English pronunciation in contrast to Spanish and Catalan pronunciation

Specific objectives:
3, 4

Related competencies :
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Full-or-part-time: 8h
Self study: 4h
Theory classes: 2h
Practical classes: 2h

Practice in recognizing and pronouncing the sounds of English and some features of English stress and intonation

Description:
Recognizing basic phonetic transcription. Becoming familiar with word stress and sentence stress. Recognizing tones

Specific objectives:
3, 4

Related competencies :
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Full-or-part-time: 11h
Self study: 6h
Theory classes: 3h
Practical classes: 2h

Developing active-listening skills to improve listening comprehension

Description:
Listening for specific information. Understanding the general idea. Listening for discourse markers (signposting) and keywords. Taking notes

Specific objectives:
3, 5, 6

Related competencies :
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Full-or-part-time: 16h
Self study: 8h
Theory classes: 4h
Practical classes: 4h

Practice in gathering and exchanging technical information orally

Description:
Selecting information from oral sources and using the information effectively to discuss a topic related to computer science

Specific objectives:
4, 5, 6

Related competencies :
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Full-or-part-time: 14h
Self study: 8h
Theory classes: 3h
Practical classes: 3h

Mid-term test

Specific objectives:
1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

Related competencies :
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Full-or-part-time: 8h
Self study: 6h
Guided activities: 2h

Interacting in oral communicative activities effectively

Description:
Becoming aware of levels of formality. Adapting English usage to level of formality. Using functions of language appropriately for telephoning, giving technical explanations and instructions, discussing and negotiating

Specific objectives:
6, 7, 8

Related competencies :
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Full-or-part-time: 16h
Self study: 8h
Guided activities: 2h
Theory classes: 3h
Practical classes: 3h

Participating in an international seminar and practicing the appropriate interaction

Description:
Discussing lectures and readings. Participating in academic discussion: supporting views, presenting ideas orally

Specific objectives:
6, 7, 8, 9

Related competencies :
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Full-or-part-time: 10h
Self study: 6h
Theory classes: 2h
Practical classes: 2h

Preparing an oral presentation for academic or professional purposes

Description:
Applying a problem-solving procedure: planning, delivery and evaluation. Devising strategy at the planning stage (informing / persuading). Selecting information and structuring the presentation

Specific objectives:
7, 8, 10

Related competencies :
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Full-or-part-time: 16h
Self study: 8h
Guided activities: 2h
Theory classes: 3h
Practical classes: 3h

Delivering an oral presentation and evaluating it

Description:
Preparing the speech. Designing visuals. Choosing the correct kind of language. Considering signposting. Using body language and gesture. Applying evaluation criteria for oral presentations. Self-evaluation and peer evaluation

Specific objectives:
7, 10, 11

Related competencies :
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Full-or-part-time: 14h
Self study: 8h
Theory classes: 3h
Practical classes: 3h

Participating in a job-seeking interview using the appropriate strategy

Description:
Writing a CV for a job application. Participating in a job interview. Anticipating questions and preparing explanations according to protocol, using the right kind of language and level of formality

Specific objectives:
7, 9

Related competencies :
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Full-or-part-time: 14h
Self study: 7h
Guided activities: 2h
Theory classes: 3h
Practical classes: 2h

Final test

Specific objectives:
2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10

Related competencies :
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Full-or-part-time: 11h
Self study: 9h
Guided activities: 2h

Delivering and evaluating an oral presentation

Description:
Students deliver their oral presentations in class and they evaluate their partners

Specific objectives:
10, 11, 12

Related competencies :
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Full-or-part-time: 2h
Guided activities: 2h

GRADING SYSTEM

Course assessment is based on continuous assessment tasks (course assignments and class participation) and written tests with the following percentages:

-Mid-term test: 25%
-Class participation. Students are expected to complete activities and tasks and bring their answers to class for discussion. They are also expected to work in collaboration with others. 10%
-Oral presentation: 20%
-Speaking activity: 20%
-Final test: 25%

-Students need to complete all the continuous assessment tasks in order to cover all the contents of the course and successfully perform in the exams.
-The average mark resulting from the exams must be a minimum of 3.5 in order to pass the subject. If the exam average is under 3.5, continuous assessment tasks will not be taken into account and the final grade will be the weighted average of the exam marks.
-Students will not get a participation mark if they do not attend a minimum of 50% of the course sessions.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Basic:

- Secció d'Anglès (UPC). Course workbook: academic and professional speaking skills. Cpet, 2012.

Complementary:

- Lannon, J.M.; Gurak, L.J. Technical communication. 15th ed. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2021. ISBN 9781292363646.
- Sweeney, S. English for business communication: a short course consisting of five modules: cultural diversity and socialising, telephoning, presentations, meetings and negotiations. 2nd ed. Cambridge University Press, 2003. ISBN 9780521754514.
- Zeegers, P.; Deller-Evans, K.; Egege, S.; Klinger, C. Essential skills for science and technology. rev. ed. Oxford University Press, 2012. ISBN 9780195576078.
- Ellis, M.; O'Driscoll, N. Giving presentations. Longman, 1992. ISBN 0582064414.