

EXAM CODE **256**

CATALOG NUMBER **BUSx220**

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Workplace Communication with Computers

CREDIT
HOURS

3

LEVEL

LOWER

PUBLISHED FEBRUARY 2021

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SECTION ONE

Preparing for the Exam

Before You Choose This UExcel Exam

Uses for the Examination

- Excelsior College, the test developer, recommends granting three (3) semester hours of lower-level undergraduate credit to students who receive a letter grade of C or higher on this examination.
- Other colleges and universities also recognize this exam as a basis for granting credit or advanced standing.
- Individual institutions set their own policies for the amount of credit awarded and the minimum acceptable score.

Examinees who have applied to Excelsior College should ask their academic advisor where this exam fits within their degree program.

Examinees **not enrolled** in an Excelsior College degree program should check with the institution from which they wish to receive credit to determine whether credit will be granted and/or to find out the minimum grade required for credit. Those who intend to enroll at Excelsior College should ask an admissions counselor where this exam fits within their intended degree program.

For more information on exam availability and actual testing information, see the [Exam Registration and Information Guide](#).

Examination Length and Scoring

This examination consists of 100 multiple choice and other type questions. You will have two (2) hours to complete the exam. Your score will be reported as a letter grade. Questions are scored either correct (1) or incorrect (0). There is no partial credit. Each credit-bearing exam contains pretest questions, which are embedded throughout the exam. They are indistinguishable from the scored questions. It is to your advantage to do your best on all the questions. Pretest questions are being tried out for use in future versions of the exam.

The UExcel exams do **not** have a fixed grading scale such as A = 90–100%, B = 80–90%, and so forth, as you might have seen on some exams in college courses. Each UExcel test has a scale that is set by a faculty committee and is different for each exam. The process, called standard setting, is described in more detail in the [Technical Handbook](#). Excelsior puts each exam through a standard setting because different test questions have different levels of difficulty. To explain further, getting 70% of the questions right on the exam when the questions are easy does not show the same level of proficiency as getting 70% of questions correct when the questions are hard. Every form of a test (a form contains the test questions) has its own specific grading scale tailored to the particular questions on each exam form.

Please also note that on each form, some of the questions (referred to as pretest questions) count toward the score and some do not; the grading scale applies only to those questions that count toward the score. The area with percentage ratings on the second page of your score report is intended to help identify relative strengths and weaknesses and which content areas to emphasize, should you decide to take the examination again. Your grade

is **based on only the scored questions**. Therefore, the percentage ratings do not necessarily reflect the total percentage that counted toward your grade.

For the best view of the types of questions on this exam, see the sample questions in the back of this guide. Practice, practice, practice!

Score Reporting

For most of our examinations, based on performance, an examinee is awarded a letter grade of A, B, C, or F. A letter grade of D can be given, but credit is awarded for A, B, and C letter grades only. The letter grades reported to examinees indicate that their performance was equivalent to the performance of students who received the same letter grade in a comparable, on-campus course.

More specifically, the letter grade indicates the examinee's proficiency relative to the learning outcomes specified in the exam content guide. Following are general descriptions of examinee performance at each level:

Letter Grade Description

- A Highly Competent: Examinee's performance demonstrates an advanced level of knowledge and skill relative to the learning outcomes.
- B Competent: Examinee's performance demonstrates a good level of knowledge and skill relative to the learning outcomes.
- C Marginally Competent: Examinee's performance demonstrates a satisfactory level of knowledge and skill relative to the learning outcomes.
- D Not Competent (no credit recommended): Examinee's performance demonstrates weak knowledge of the content and minimal skill relative to the learning outcomes.^①
- F Fail (no credit recommended): Examinee's performance demonstrates no knowledge of the content and no skill in the subject relative to the learning outcomes.

Credit is transcribed by Excelsior College for examinees who achieve letter grades of C or higher.

We encourage colleges and universities to use the Excelsior College letter grades of A, B, and C as acceptable standards for awarding credit.

^① In general, two-hour exams do not award a D letter grade.

See page 24, at the back of this content guide, for a sample UExcel Grade Report for Examinations.

Excelsior College Bookstore

The Excelsior College Bookstore offers recommended textbooks and other resources to help you prepare for UExcel exams.

The bookstore is available online at (login required): www.excelsior.edu/bookstore

Excelsior College Library

Library services are available to students enrolled in a degree program at Excelsior College. Created through our partnership with the Sheridan Libraries of The Johns Hopkins University, the library provides access to journal articles, books, websites, databases, reference services, and many other resources. To access the Excelsior College Library, visit www.excelsior.edu/library (login is required). Access to the library is available 24/7.

Take Charge of Your Own Learning

At Excelsior College, independent, self-directed study supported by resources we help you find is not a new concept. We have always stressed to students who take exams that they are acting as their own teacher, and that they should spend as much time studying for an exam as they would spend in a classroom and on homework for a corresponding college course in the same subject area.

Begin by studying the content outline contained in this content guide, at its most detailed level. You will see exactly which topics are covered, and where chapters on those topics can be found in the Recommended Resources. You will see exactly where you might need to augment your knowledge or change your approach.

The content outline, along with the learning outcomes for this exam and recommended textbooks, will serve as your primary resources.

How Long Will It Take Me to Study?

Study for a UExcel exam is comparable to an equivalent college-level course. As an independent

learner, you should study and review as much as you would for the same subject in a campus-based college course. If you already have a background in the subject, you may be able to pass the exam successfully with fewer hours of study. It depends upon the learner as well as the subject, the number of credits (for example, a 6- or 8-credit exam will require more hours of study than a 3-credit exam), and the length of the exam. We strongly encourage you to create a long-term action or study plan, so that you have a systematic approach to prepare for the exam. We've included guidelines for creating such a plan.

How Can I Create an Effective Long-Term Study Plan?

1. Determine the time you will require to complete your preparation for this exam. If you have not studied the subject before, you should plan to budget approximately 45 hours of study time for every credit: 135 hours for 3 credits, 180 hours for 4 credits, 270 hours for 6 credits, and 360 hours for 8 credits. These hours are rules of thumb based on expectations for a student taking a course in the subject; it may take you more or less time, depending on how familiar you are with the material and how easily you absorb the information studying on your own. Aside from the content review, you should then factor in time to search for and use other resources, and to complete any projects and assignments in the study materials that will clarify your understanding of the topics in the content outline (that part in the content guide where the specific areas of study are spelled out). Spend more time on concepts and areas in which you feel you are weak. Totaled, this is approximately the amount of time you should expect to devote to a three-credit, campus-based course. The actual amount of time you require depends on many factors, and will be approximate. If your background is weak, you may need to set aside substantially more than 135–150 hours. If your background is strong, you may budget less time.

Take a few minutes to review the content outline to assess your familiarity with the content. Then, in the space below, write the number of hours you will allocate to complete preparing for the exam.

Hours Required =

2. Determine the time you will have available for study.

In self-study, you need structure, as well as motivation and persistence, and a methodical approach to preparation. There is no set class to keep you on task. You have to do that yourself. Construct a time-use chart to record your daily activities over a one-week period. The most accurate way to do this is to complete the chart on a daily basis to record the actual amount of time you spend eating, sleeping, commuting, working, watching television, caring for others and yourself, reading, and everything else in an adult's life. However, if your schedule is regular, you might prefer to complete the chart in one sitting and, perhaps, by consulting your appointment book or planner.

After you have recorded your activities, you will be ready to schedule study periods around these activities or, perhaps, instead of some of them. In the space below, write the number of hours you will be able to set aside for study each week.

Hours Required =

3. Divide the first number by the second number.

This will give you the number of weeks you will need to set aside for independent study. For example, if you think you will require 170 hours of study and you have 10 hours available to study each week, divide 170 hours by 10 hours and you will get 17. This means that you will need about 17 weeks to complete this course of study. However, you will also need to allow about a week for review and self-testing. Moreover, to be on the safe side, you should also add two weeks to allow for unforeseen obstacles and times when you know you will not be able to study (e.g., during family illnesses or holidays). So, in this case, you should allot a total of 18 to 19 weeks to complete your study.

4. Schedule your examination to coincide with the end of your study period.

For example, if you plan to allow 18 weeks for study, identify a suitable examination date and begin study at least 18 weeks before that date. (The date you begin study assumes that you will have received all of your study materials, particularly textbooks, by that time.)

5. Format a long-term study plan.

You will need to use a calendar, planner, or some other tool to format and track your long-term study plan. Choose a method that is convenient and one that keeps you aware of your study habits on a daily basis. Identify the days and exact hours of each day that you will reserve for study throughout your whole independent study period. Check to see that the total number of hours you designate for study on your long-term study plan adds up to the number of hours you have determined you will need to complete this course of study (Step 1).

6. Record in your long-term study plan the content you plan to cover during each study period.

Enter the session numbers, review, and examination preparation activities you will complete during each study period. While it is suggested that approximately 160–170 hours of study is required for this exam, each and every student may require different timelines based on their comfort with, and comprehension of, the material.

You now have a tentative personal long-term study plan. Keep in mind that you will have to adjust your study plan, perhaps several times, as you study. It is only by actually beginning to work systematically through the material, using the content outline, that you will be able to determine accurately how long you should allow for each unit.

What Learning Strategy Should I Use?

The following guidelines are intended to help you acquire the grounding in the knowledge and skills required for successful completion of this examination.

1. Approach learning with a positive attitude.

Most students are capable of learning subject content if they devote enough time and effort to the task. This devotion will give you a positive edge and a feeling of control.

2. Diligently complete the exact work you specified in your study plan.

Your study plan is being designed for the specific purpose of helping you achieve the learning outcomes for this exam.

3. Be an active learner.

You should actively engage in the learning process. Read critically, take notes, and continuously monitor your comprehension. Keep a written record of your progress, highlight content you find difficult to grasp, and seek assistance from someone in your learning community who can help you if you have difficulty understanding a concept.

4. Be patient: you may not understand everything immediately.

When encountering difficulty with new material, be patient with yourself and don't give up. Understanding will come with time and further study. Sometimes you may need to take a break and come back to difficult material. This is especially true for any primary source material (original letters, documents, and so forth) that you may be asked to read. The content outline will guide you through the material and help you focus on key points. You will find that many concepts introduced in earlier sessions will be explained in more detail in later sessions.

5. Apply your learning to your daily life.

Use insights you gain from your study to better understand the world in which you live. Apply the learning whenever you can. Look for instances that support or contradict your reading on the subject.

6. Accommodate your preferred way of learning.

How do you learn best? Common ways to learn are reading, taking notes and making diagrams, and by listening to someone (on video or live). Others learn by doing. Do any of these descriptions apply to you? Or does your learning style vary with the learning situation? Decide what works for you and try to create a learning environment to accommodate your preferences.

Study Tips

Become an active user of the resource materials. Aim for understanding rather than memorization. The more active you are when you study, the more likely you will be to retain, understand, and apply the information.

The following techniques are generally considered to be active learning:

- **preview or survey** each chapter

- **highlight or underline text** you believe is important
- **write questions or comments** in the margins
- **practice re-stating content** in your own words
- **relate what you are reading** to the chapter title, section headings, and other organizing elements of the textbook
- **find ways to engage** your eyes, your ears, and your muscles, as well as your brain, in your studies
- **study with a partner or a small group**
- **prepare your review notes** as flashcards or create recordings that you can use while commuting or exercising

When you feel confident that you understand a content area, review what you have learned. Take a second look at the material to evaluate your understanding. If you have a study partner, the two of you can review by explaining the content to each other or writing test questions for each other to answer. Review questions from textbook chapters may be helpful for partner or individual study, as well.

Study smart for your UExcel exam! Success starts with establishing a relationship with your advisor.

Using UExcel Practice Exams

The official UExcel practice exams are highly recommended as part of your study plan. They can be taken using any computer with a supported web browser such as Google Chrome.

The practice exam package comes with two sets of questions. Please be aware that there will be fewer questions on the practice exams than there will be on the exam you take for credit. Generally, the practice questions will not be the same as the ones you will see when you take the actual exam for credit. They are intended to expose you to the types of questions you'll encounter in the actual exam. Practice questions are a tool, and do not provide a full exam experience. For example, the practice question sets do not have time limitations. Begin with the Content Guide, especially the detailed content outline. Memorizing specific questions and answers on the practice sets is not as effective as using the questions to practice, along with the content outline, to see which concepts you may need to study further. To register for the practice exam, visit www.excelsior.edu and log into your MyExcelsior

account. **Please note: You must be registered for the corresponding credit-bearing exam before you can register for the practice exam.**

Practice exams are not graded. Rather, they are intended to help you make sure you understand the subject and give you a sense of what the questions will be like on the exam for credit. Ideally, you would check any questions you got wrong, look at the explanations, and go back to the textbook to reinforce your understanding. After taking both forms of the practice exam, you should feel confident in your answers and confident that you know the material listed in the content outline.

Practice exams are one of the most popular study resources. Practice exams are typically shorter than the credit-bearing exam. Since the questions are drawn from the same pool of questions that appear on the credit-bearing exam, what you will see when you sit for the graded exam will be roughly the same. Used as intended, these practice exams will enable you to:

- Review the types of questions you may encounter on the actual exam.
- Practice testing on a computer in a timed environment.
- Practice whenever and wherever it is convenient for you.

Take two different forms of a practice exam within a 180-day period. (We highly recommend that you take the first form of the practice exam as a pretest, early in the study period. Use the results to identify areas to further study and carry out a plan. Then take the second form as a post-test and see how much you have improved.)

Although there is no guarantee, our research suggests that exam takers who do well on the practice exams are more likely to pass the actual exam than those who do not take advantage of the opportunity. Note that since the practice exams are not graded (calibrated) the same way as the scores on the credit-bearing exam, it will be hard for you to use the practice exams as a way to predict your score on the credit-bearing exam. The main purpose of the practice exams is for you to check your knowledge and to become comfortable with the types of questions you are likely to see in the actual, credit-bearing exam.

About Test Preparation Services

Preparation for UExcel® exams and Excelsior College® Examinations, though based on independent study, is supported by Excelsior College with a comprehensive set of exam learning resources and services designed to help you succeed. These learning resources are prepared by Excelsior College so you can be assured that they are current and cover the content you are expected to master for the exams. These resources, and your desire to learn, are usually all that you will need to succeed.

There are test-preparation companies that will offer to help you study for our examinations. Some may imply a relationship with Excelsior College and/or make claims that their products and services are all that you need to prepare for our examinations.

Excelsior College does not endorse the products and services of any tutorial or test preparation firm. We do not review the materials provided by these firms for the content or compatibility of their material and resources with UExcel® exams or Excelsior College Examinations®. No test preparation vendor is authorized to provide admissions counseling or academic advising services, or to collect any payments, on behalf of Excelsior College. Excelsior College does not send authorized representatives to a student's home nor does it review the materials provided by test preparation companies for content or compatibility with Excelsior College examinations.

To help you become a well-informed consumer, we suggest that before you make any purchase decision regarding study materials provided by organizations other than Excelsior College, you consider the points outlined on our website at www.excelsior.edu/testprep.

Exam Preparation Strategies

Each learner is different. However, all learners should read the content outline in the exam's Content Guide and ensure that they have mastered the concepts. For someone with no prior knowledge of the subject, a rule of thumb is 135 hours of study for a 3-credit exam—this number is just to give you an idea of the level of effort you will need, more or less.

Content Guides

This content guide is the most important resource. It lists the outcomes, a detailed content outline of what is covered, and textbooks and other study resources. It also has sample questions and suggestions for how to study. Content guides are updated periodically to correspond with changes in particular examinations and in textbook editions. Examinees can download any of the latest free UExcel content guides by visiting the individual exam page or from the list at www.excelsior.edu/contentguides.

Using the Content Outline

Each content area in the content outline includes the most important sections of the recommended resources for that area. These annotations are not intended to be comprehensive. You may need to refer to other chapters in the recommended textbooks. **Chapter numbers and titles may differ among textbook editions.**

This content outline contains examples of the types of information you should study. Although these examples are many, do not assume that everything on the exam will come from these examples. Conversely, do not expect that every detail you study will appear on the exam. Any exam is only a broad sample of all the questions that could be asked about the subject matter.

Using the Sample Questions and Rationales

Each content guide provides sample questions to illustrate those typically found on the exam. These questions are intended to give you an idea of the level of knowledge expected and the way questions are typically phrased. The sample questions do not sample the entire content of the exam and are not intended to serve as an entire practice test.

Recommended Resources for the UExcel Exam in Workplace Communication with Computers

The resources listed below were selected by the faculty members on the examination committee for use in developing this exam.

Resources listed under “Strongly Recommended” were used by the committee to verify all the questions on the exam. Please refer to the Content Outline to see which parts of the exam are cross-referenced to these resources.

Resources listed under “Optional” provide additional material that may deepen or broaden your understanding of the subject, or that may provide an additional perspective on the exam content. Textbook resources, both Strongly Recommended and Optional, may be purchased from the [Excelsior College Bookstore](#).

You should allow ample time to obtain the necessary resources and to study sufficiently before taking the exam, so plan appropriately, with an eye towards your own personal learning needs. See the sections in this guide on the Excelsior College Bookstore and the Excelsior College Library, and under Reducing Textbook Costs, to help you secure the Strongly Recommended resources successfully.

Textbook Editions

Textbook editions listed in the UExcel content guides may not be the same as those listed in the bookstore. Textbook editions may not exactly match up in terms of table of contents and organization, depending upon the edition. However, our team of exam developers checks exam content against every new textbook edition to verify that all subject areas tested in the exam are still adequately available in the study materials. If needed, exam developers will list additional Strongly Recommended resources to ensure that all topics in the exam are still sufficiently covered. Public libraries may have the textbooks you need, or may be able to obtain them for you through interlibrary loan to reduce textbook costs. You may also consider financial aid, if you qualify, to further help defray the steep cost of textbooks. A section on open educational

resources (OER) has been included in this guide to help you locate additional, possibly free resources to augment your study.

Strongly Recommended

Bovée, C.L., & Thill, J.V., (2018). *Business communication today*. (15th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

The study materials may be purchased from the [Excelsior College Bookstore](#).

Optional Resources

The examination development committee did not identify any specific Optional resources for this exam. If you would like to explore topics in more depth, we encourage you to refer to available Open Educational Resources (OER).

Reducing Textbook Costs

Many students know it is less expensive to buy a used textbook, and buying a previous edition is also an option. The Excelsior College bookstore includes a buyback feature and a used book marketplace, as well as the ability to rent digital versions of textbooks for as long as students need them. Students are encouraged to explore these and the many other opportunities available online to help defray textbook costs.

Open Educational Resources

There are many resources available online free of charge that may further enhance your study for the exam. Known as Open Educational Resources (OER), these may be textbooks, courses, tutorials, or encyclopedias. Any additional OER that you find independently should be used to augment study—not as replacements for the Strongly Recommended resources.

Most sites for university-based OER can be searched through www.ocwconsortium.org and/or www.oercommons.org.

Sites that specialize in web courses designed by college professors under contract with the website sponsor, rather than in web versions of existing college courses, include:

www.education-portal.com

www.opencourselibrary.org (abbreviated as OCL)

We have included specific courses that cover material for one or more UExcel® exams from the sites in the listings above. It's worth checking these sites frequently to see if new courses have been added that may be more appropriate or may cover an exam topic not currently listed.

Sites like Khan Academy (www.khanacademy.com) and iTunes U feature relatively brief lessons on very specific topics rather than full courses. Full courses are also available on iTunes U (<http://www.apple.com/education/ipad/itunes-u/>). We have chosen a few courses and collections for this listing.

Open Online Textbooks

BookBoon

<http://bookboon.com/en/textbooks-ebooks>

Flatworld Knowledge

<http://catalog.flatworldknowledge.com/#our-catalog>

College Readiness

Khan Academy

<http://www.khanacademy.org/>

Hippocampus

<http://www.hippocampus.org/>

Open Course Library

<http://opencourselibrary.org/collg-110-college-success-course/>

Study Aids

Education Portal

<http://education-portal.com/>

Khan Academy

<http://www.khanacademy.org/>

Annenberg Learner

<http://www.learner.org/>

OpenCourseWare

<http://ocwconsortium.org/en/courses/search>

OER Commons

<http://www.oercommons.org/>

Open Course Library

<http://www.opencourselibrary.org/>

To achieve academic success, rate yourself at Excelsior College's Self-Regulated Learning Lab. Visit the Diagnostic Assessment & Achievement of College Skills site at <https://srl.daacs.net/>

It's free!

SECTION TWO

Content Outline

General Description of the Examination

The UExcel Workplace Communication with Computers examination is based on material typically taught in a one-semester lower-level course in workplace communication with computers. The content of the examination corresponds to course offerings such as Business Communications, Workplace Communications, Introduction to Communication Technology for Business, and Managerial Communications.

The examination measures knowledge and understanding of business communications principles, including the foundations of communication, effective and ineffective teams, interpersonal communication, and diversity within the business environment; how to write effective business messages; how to select the most appropriate technologies to enhance communication within organizations; how to use various message patterns effectively; how to use visual aids and supporting data to enhance communications; and how to use oral and online presentations to improve business communications.

Those beginning to study for this exam should have basic proficiency in computer use.

Learning Outcomes

After you have successfully worked your way through the recommended study materials, you should be able to demonstrate the following learning outcomes:

1. Describe and/or explain the basic principles of business communication including the foundations of communication, team skills, listening skills, interpersonal communications, and how global markets and diversity impact effective communication within the work environment. (Aligns to GECC 5.1)
2. Describe the processes associated with effective writing within the business environment, including planning your message; choosing appropriate message delivery channels; writing drafts; revising documents, reports, and proposals; and designing resumes and cover letters. (Aligns to GECC 1.2)
3. Analyze the use of the different technologies available to enhance business communications, including mobile computing, social media, e-mail, text messaging, blogging, and collaborative writing and to understand the role of positive, negative, and persuasive messages within the business environment. (Aligns to GECC 1.2)
4. Describe how to plan research and provide sound data in support of your message and the role visuals play in effective communication. (Aligns to GECC 1.2)
5. Discuss the planning and design of oral and online presentations. (Aligns to GECC 1.1)

General Education Career Competencies Addressed in this Exam

GECC-1: Oral and Written Communication: Present oral communication with appropriate content, organization, and delivery for the audience and purpose. Deliver written communication with appropriate content, organization, syntax, mechanics, and style for the audience and purpose.

GECC-5: Global Understanding: Explain how social, political, economic, or cultural forces shape relations between individuals and groups around the world.

Content Outline

The content outline describes the various areas of the test, similar to the way a syllabus outlines a course. To fully prepare requires self-direction and discipline. Study involves careful reading, reflection, and systematic review.

The major content areas on the Workplace Communication with Computers examination, the percent of the examination, and the hours to devote to each content area are listed below.

Content Area	Percent of the Examination	Hours of Study*
I. Principles of Business Communications	20%	27
II. Writing in the Business Environment	25%	34
III. Technology and Message Patterns	25%	34
IV. Supporting Data and Visual Aids	15%	21
V. Oral and Online Presentations	15%	21
Total	100%	

*Approximate: For those examinees who know the topic well, less time may be needed to learn the subject matter. For those who are new to the subject matter, more time may be required for study.

NOTE: Occasionally, examples will be listed for a content topic to help clarify that topic. However, the content of the examination is not limited to the specific examples given.

I. Principles of Business Communications

20 PERCENT OF EXAM

Bovée & Thill

Ch. 1, Professional Communication in a Digital, Social, Mobile World

Ch. 2, Collaboration, Interpersonal Communication, and Business Etiquette

Ch. 3, Communication Challenges in a Diverse, Global Marketplace

A. Foundations of communication

1. Why communication is important
2. The global environment

3. An audience centered approach
 4. Communication models
 - a. Basic
 - b. Social
 5. Technology and business communication
 6. Ethical and legal considerations
- B. Team skills/interpersonal communication**
1. Effective teams and group dynamics
 - a. Advantages and disadvantages of teams
 - b. Characteristics of teams
 - c. Group dynamics
 2. Team technologies
 3. Productive meetings
 - a. Preparing
 - b. Conducting/contributing
 - c. Meeting technologies
 4. Listening skills
 5. Nonverbal communication
 6. Business etiquette
 - a. In the workplace
 - b. In social settings
 - c. On line
- C. Dealing with diversity**
1. Global markets and cultural diversity
 - a. Opportunities/challenges
 - b. Cultural competency
 2. Differences
 - a. High and low context
 - b. Legal, ethical, nonverbal, age, gender, religious, ability differences
 3. Intercultural communication
 - a. Other cultures
 - b. Other languages
 - c. Writing clearly
 - d. Speaking/listening clearly
 - e. Translation issues

II. Writing in a Business Environment

25 PERCENT OF EXAM

Bové & Thill

- [Ch. 4, Planning Business Messages](#)
 - [Ch. 5, Writing Business Messages](#)
 - [Ch. 6, Completing Business Messages](#)
 - [Ch. 14, Planning Reports and Proposals](#)
 - [Ch. 15, Writing and Completing Reports and Proposals](#)
 - [Ch. 18, Building Careers and Writing Résumés](#)
 - [Ch. 19, Applying and Interviewing for Employment](#)
-

A. Planning your message

1. Planning and audience analysis
2. Choosing the media
 - a. Oral
 - b. Written
 - c. Visual
 - d. Electronic
3. Organizing your material

B. Writing (drafting)

1. "You" focus
 - a. Audience needs
 - b. Bias-free language
 - c. Building relationship with audience (including credibility)
2. Word choices and mechanics
 - a. Controlling style and tone
 - b. Choosing the right words
 - c. Creating effective sentences
 - d. Creating strong paragraphs
 - e. Plain language

C. Completing (editing, proofreading, readability)

1. Revising (clarity, conciseness, readability)
2. Producing (formatting, editing, proofreading, distribution)

D. Reports and proposals

1. Analytical and informational reports
 - a. Comparison of planning processes
 - b. Appropriate uses of these reports
 - c. Importance of executive summaries
 2. Collaborative report writing (wikis)
- E. Resumes and cover letters**
1. Building your resume
 - a. Know your audience
 - b. Mechanics of a resume
 2. Cover letters

III. Technology Choices and Message Patterns

25 PERCENT OF EXAM

Bové & Thill

Ch. 7, Digital Media

Ch. 8, Social Media

Ch. 10, Writing Routine and Positive Messages

Ch. 11, Writing Negative Messages

Ch. 12, Writing Persuasive Messages

- A. Technology choices**
1. Mobile computing
 2. Social media
 - a. Compositional modes
 - b. Creating content
 - c. Managing communication
 3. Social networks
 - a. Uses of social networking
 - b. Business strategies
 - c. User-generated sites
 4. E-mail
 - a. Planning
 - b. Writing
 - c. Completing
 5. Instant/text messaging
 6. Blogging and podcasting

7. Collaborative (see IB2 “Team technologies” above)
- B. Positive messages**
1. Strategies including goodwill ending
 2. Types of positive messages
 - a. Routine requests
 - b. Claims and adjustments
 - c. Good news
 - d. Letters of recommendation
- C. Negative messages**
1. Strategies
 - a. Direct vs. indirect
 - b. Goodwill ending/respectful close
 2. Types of negative messages
 - a. Routine
 - b. Rejecting suggestions
 - c. Refusing a claim
 - d. Layoffs and firings
- D. Persuasive messages**
1. Strategies
 2. Types of persuasive messages
 - a. Sales and marketing (for example: AIDA)
 - b. Promotional messages for social media
 3. Legal and ethical concerns

IV. Supporting Data and Visual Aids

15 PERCENT OF EXAM

Bové & Thill

Ch. 9, Visual Media

Ch. 13, Finding, Evaluating, and Processing Information

- A. Research**
1. Planning your research
 2. Supporting your message with reliable information (primary vs. secondary)
 - a. Secondary research

- 1) Evaluating information validity
- 2) Locating sources
- 3) Documenting sources
- b. Primary research
 - 1) Using surveys
 - 2) Using interviews
- c. Quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing
- d. Analyzing data
- 3. Applying findings
 - a. Summarizing research
 - b. Drawing conclusions
 - c. Making recommendations/
managing information

B. Visuals in communication

- 1. Visual design
- 2. Ethical considerations
- 3. Types of visuals
 - a. For presenting data
 - b. For information, concepts, and ideas
- 4. Producing and using visuals
 - a. Creating visuals
 - b. Integrating with text
 - c. Verifying quality

- 2. Developing presentations
 - a. Adapt to audience
 - b. Compose presentation
- 3. Delivering presentations
 - a. Presentation method
 - b. Practice and preparation
 - c. Overcoming anxiety
 - d. Handling questions
- 4. Incorporating technology
 - a. The back channel
 - b. Online presentations

B. Slides and other visuals for presentations

- 1. Planning visuals
 - a. Selecting types
 - b. Verifying designs
- 2. Types of slides
 - a. Structured
 - b. Free form
 - c. Designing slides
 - 1) Design elements (color, artwork, typeface, consistency)
 - 2) Effective slides (text, tables, graphics, animation)
- 3. Supporting materials and handouts
 - a. Navigation and support slides
 - b. Effective handouts

V. Oral and Online Presentations

15 PERCENT OF EXAM

Bové & Thill

Ch. 16, Developing Presentations in a Social Media Environment

Ch. 17, Enhancing Presentations with Slides and Other Visuals

A. Planning and designing presentations

- 1. Planning presentations
 - a. Analyzing situation
 - b. Selecting medium
 - c. Organizing presentation

SECTION THREE

Sample Questions

The sample questions give you an idea of the level of knowledge expected in the exam and how questions are typically phrased. They are not representative of the entire content of the exam and are not intended to serve as a practice test.

Rationales for the questions can be found on pages 17–19 of this guide. In that section, the correct answer is identified and each answer is explained. The number in parentheses at the beginning of each rationale refers to the corresponding section of the content outline. For any questions you answer incorrectly, return to that section of the content outline for further study.

1. Which action is an example of a team-maintenance role?
 - 1) diverting
 - 2) controlling
 - 3) compromising
 - 4) procedure setting
2. When are communications breakdowns most likely to occur within teams?

When teams work

 - 1) across cultures, countries, or time zones
 - 2) between organizations, states, or regions
 - 3) between conflict groups, participants, or agendas
 - 4) with local, state, or federal agencies
3. Provided a meeting is necessary, what is the last of the four planning tasks for that meeting?
 - 1) Set the agenda.
 - 2) Select participants.
 - 3) Identify your purpose.
 - 4) Choose the venue and the time.
4. Which intercultural communication skill is improved by forgoing the use of humor or references to popular culture?
 - 1) writing clearly
 - 2) speaking and listening carefully
 - 3) helping others adapt to one's culture
 - 4) respecting preferences for communication style
5. What is the first step in planning a message?
 - 1) Select strong words.
 - 2) Establish credibility.
 - 3) Analyze the situation.
 - 4) Choose a layout for the message.
6. A team at a small company that has been developing a new product for the company's product line selects one of the teammates to present their ideas to company staff now that their ideas are ready for outside input. What would be the best communication method to use in this situation?
 - 1) electronic
 - 2) oral
 - 3) visual
 - 4) written

7. Which statement best exemplifies the use of the “you” attitude?
 - 1) You failed to complete the report on time.
 - 2) We are not able to find you a replacement part until next week.
 - 3) Once again, you caused another employee to walk off the job.
 - 4) Your purchase order should be submitted by 3:00 PM today if you would like the product by Tuesday.
8. Mindful business writers use the words chairperson, executive, or flight attendant to avoid what type of bias?
 - 1) age
 - 2) disability
 - 3) gender
 - 4) race
9. What should be included in an executive summary?
 - 1) headings and visual aids
 - 2) a prose-based table of contents
 - 3) a synopsis or abstract of the report
 - 4) an appendix
10. What is the term for the Web presence that a firm owns and controls?
 - 1) hub
 - 2) microblog
 - 3) brand community
 - 4) user-generated content site
11. Which suggestion is most important to address when planning a business e-mail?
 - 1) Use a conversational, informal tone.
 - 2) Write detailed e-mails to avoid misunderstandings.
 - 3) Choose the first few words carefully to get the reader’s attention.
 - 4) Use capitalized letters, bolding, and italics to emphasize specific points.
12. How are public good news announcements most often communicated?
 - 1) in a blog
 - 2) in a press release
 - 3) through a newsletter
 - 4) through a social networking site
13. What type of routine message must be written carefully to avoid potential legal problems for employees, such as defamation of character?
 - 1) press release
 - 2) adjustment letter
 - 3) condolence letter
 - 4) recommendation letter
14. In a bad news correspondence, avoiding negative conclusions, offering sincere statements, and expressing optimism about the future are used when writing which type of statement?
 - 1) buffer
 - 2) refusals
 - 3) positive close
 - 4) crisis communication
15. When conducting primary research, one should use what common research tools?
 - 1) ReferenceUSA
 - 2) class textbooks
 - 3) surveys and interviews
 - 4) Google and Bing searches
16. What term best defines the link between cause and effect when examining two factors?
 - 1) median
 - 2) causation
 - 3) correlation
 - 4) cross-tabulation
17. Which term best describes the logical interpretation of the facts and information in a report?
 - 1) conclusion
 - 2) primary research
 - 3) recommendation
 - 4) summary

18. What presentation medium involves an online presentation that combines a webinar with a back channel?

- 1) screencast
- 2) tumblr
- 3) twebinar
- 4) webcast

19. What would be the best way of holding an audience's attention during a highly technical informative speech to a lay audience?

- 1) restating your main points
- 2) asking if anyone has questions
- 3) involving the audience by soliciting opinions
- 4) explaining the relationship between technical concepts and familiar concepts

20. What methods are used to arouse audience interest during a presentation?

(Select the 4 that apply.)

- 1) Read directly from your notes.
- 2) Tell a story.
- 3) Use a monotone voice.
- 4) Ask a question.
- 5) Share an intriguing statistic.
- 6) Use humor.

SECTION FOUR

Rationales

1. (IB1)

- 1) Diverting refers to focusing the team on topics when the individual, and not the team, is getting off task.
- 2) Controlling is dysfunctional to the team.
- *3) Members in compromising roles assist in team maintenance by being willing to yield on a point in order to reach a mutually acceptable decision.**
- 4) Procedure setting is the task-facilitating role of suggesting productive decision-making procedures.

2. (IB1b)

- *1) Breakdowns in communication occur most commonly across cultures, countries, or time zones as these categories encompass the differences of how individuals would work and contribute best in conflict resolution situations and other relational understanding situations central to team building.**
- 2) Typically, organizations and even states or regions can negotiate the needed skills such as conflict resolution needed for effective teams.
- 3) Conflict groups, agendas, and participants are all parts of what makes up effective teams, but not what contributes to breakdowns in team communications.
- 4) Typically, while there is sometimes a breakdown in communications when dealing with bureaucratic agencies, breakdowns are much more likely to occur across cultures and between cultures.

3. (IB3a)

- *1) Setting the agenda is the last of the four planning tasks required for planning a required meeting.**
- 2) Selecting participants is the second of the four planning tasks.
- 3) Identifying your purpose is the first of the four planning tasks.
- 4) Choosing a venue and time for the meeting is the third of the four planning tasks.

4. (IC3c)

- *1) International correspondence is often much more clear and understandable if the author avoids the use of humor or references to popular US culture that could easily be misinterpreted by the foreign recipient.**
- 2) See 1).
- 3) See 1).
- 4) See 1).

5. (IIA1)

- 1) Strong words in business terms help to create an effective and efficient message.
- 2) Part of writing and adapting your message to your audience is establishing your credibility.
- *3) The first step is to define your purpose and profile your audience.**
- 4) Choosing a layout is part of the message creation process and it gives your message a professional look.

*correct answer

6. (IIA2c)

- 1) Electronic communication is the best and fastest method to communicate important information quickly, but it is not appropriate for this situation.
- *2) Oral communication is used where you want to see interactions among the members of the audience and watch expressions.
- 3) Visual communication is used to support what the speaker has to say as using a presentation enhances the facts.
- 4) Written communication is a more formal communication method usually used to present important facts and information to people outside the organization.

7. (IIB1a)

- 1) "You" messages should not make some else feel guilty or sound dictatorial.
- 2) The "you" used should reflect a positive attitude.
- 3) The "you" attitude should always maintain standards of etiquette.
- *4) The "you" attitude is best presented when the writer expresses the message in terms of the audience's needs and interests.

8. (IIB1b)

- 1) Age bias refers to how old or young someone is and often implies something about the experience or inexperience of an individual.
- 2) Physical, mental, sensory, or emotional impairments should never be mentioned in business messages.
- *3) Gender bias-free language avoids sexist labels for positions.
- 4) Racial or ethnic bias identifies people by ethnic origin, which is usually irrelevant in the workplace.

9. (IID1c)

- *1) Executive summaries are intended for readers who do not take the time to read the complete text. They often include headings and visual aids, as they are a mini version of the longer report.
- 2) A prose-based table of contents is a synopsis.
- 3) A synopsis or abstract is a brief overview, usually one page or less, and is designed to give the reader a preview of the contents.
- 4) An appendix is not found in the executive summary.

10. (IIIA3b)

- *1) A hub is a combination of a conventional Web site, a blog, and a company-sponsored online community.
- 2) A microblog is a variation on blogging in which messages are restricted to specific character count. Twitter is the best-known example.
- 3) Brand communities are groups of people united by their interest in and ownership or use of particular products.
- 4) A user-generated content site exists when users rather than Web site owners contribute most or all of the content.

11. (IIIA4b)

- 1) Avoid long e-mails, and if the communication is lengthy, write a report. Choose the first few words carefully, as many e-mail programs display the first few words that serve as an extension of the subject line.
- 2) Instant messaging is a better choice for a clarifying conversation after a concise initial message.
- *3) Many e-mail programs display the first few words; consequently, think of the first sentence as an extension of the subject line.
- 4) Typing in capitalized letters is the equivalent of screaming. Use other emphasis very sparingly, as it can be distracting. In addition, some e-mail programs will not display such formatting correctly.

*correct answer

12. (IIIB2c)

- 1) Good news announcements could be discussed in a blog, but it is not the most frequent way they are communicated.
- *2) Good news announcements are most often communicated through a press release.
- 3) Good news announcements could be discussed through a newsletter, but it is not the most frequent way they are communicated.
- 4) Good news announcements could be discussed through a social networking site, but it is not the most frequent way they are communicated.

13. (IIIB2d)

- 1) Press releases share information with the media. They should not routinely lead to legal issues.
- 2) Adjustment letters are written in response to dissatisfaction over a product or service.
- 3) Condolence letters are written to express sympathy when an employee experiences a loss.
- *4) If not handled properly, recommendation letters may cause legal issues, and firms should publish policies as to how they are managed.

14. (IIIC1b)

- 1) A buffer is a neutral, non-controversial statement that connects with the reader.
- 2) Refusals involve turning down a request.
- *3) The closing statement in a bad news correspondence is the last thing its viewer reads; consequently, you should leave them with the impression they were treated with respect.
- 4) Crisis communications are used during serious incidents (crimes, accidents, terrorist attacks).

15. (IVA2b1)

- 1) ReferenceUSA provides secondary, not primary, data.
- 2) Class textbooks provide secondary data.
- *3) Primary data is collected by researchers. The two most common primary research methods are surveys and interviews.
- 4) Google and Bing searches provide secondary data.

*correct answer

16. (IVA2d)

- 1) This is the midpoint of a series of numbers.
- *2) Causation is the link between cause and effect when examining two factors.
- 3) A correlation is the simultaneous change that occurs when measuring two variables.
- 4) Cross-tabulation looks at the relationship of subsets of data.

17. (IVA3b)

- *1) Conclusions are based on the facts and evidence presented in the report.
- 2) Primary research is conducted specifically for a project.
- 3) A recommendation is a suggested course of action.
- 4) A summary is a collection of information presented, but it does not attempt to draw conclusions.

18. (VA1b)

- 1) Screencasts are recordings of activities on computer displays with audio voiceover.
- 2) Tumblr is a microblogging platform and a social networking site.
- *3) Twebinars allow real-time conversations during the presentation.
- 4) Webcasts are online presentations conducted via the web.

19. (VA2b)

- 1) Restating main points can become tedious and is not a good way of holding attention.
- 2) Audiences are unlikely to have questions about topics they know nothing about.
- 3) Audiences are unlikely to have opinions about topics they know nothing about.
- *4) Explaining relationships between technical concepts and familiar ones helps audiences to understand them, which gives them a way to remember and relate to your points.

20. (VA2b)

- 1) Reading directly from notes often just repeats information already presented in those notes. Notes should just remind the speaker of main ideas on which to expand.
- *2) To arouse audience interest, you need to make them feel personally engaged or grab their imaginations. Techniques include stories, questions, humor, and startling details.
- 3) A monotone voice often puts the audience to sleep. Varying tone keeps the audience more engaged.
- *4) See 2).
- *5) See 2).
- *6) See 2).

*correct answer

SECTION FIVE

Taking the Exam

Registering for Your Exam

Register Online

www.excelsior.edu/examregistration

Follow the instructions and pay by Visa, MasterCard, American Express, or Discover Card.

Examination Administration

Pearson Testing Centers serve as the administrator for all Excelsior College computer-delivered exams.

Accessibility Services

Excelsior College is committed to the principle that every individual should have an equal opportunity to enroll in an Excelsior College degree program, to register for courses or examinations in order to demonstrate their knowledge and skills under appropriate conditions, and to complete a degree.

The Accessibility Services Office at Excelsior College is responsible for considering requests for reasonable accommodations for individuals with verifiable, documented disabilities. If you are requesting an accommodation due to a disability/condition, complete a [Request for Accommodation form](#).

Computer-Delivered Testing

The UExcel exams are delivered by computer. You can take this exam either in a [Pearson VUE testing center](#) or at your home or office with an online proctor. If you are interested in remote proctoring, visit [PearsonVUE OnVUE online proctoring](#).

The system is designed to be as user-friendly as possible, even for those with little or no computer

experience. On-screen instructions are similar to those you would see in a paper examination booklet. You will use either the keyboard or the mouse to submit your answers, depending upon the type of question.

Before taking your exam, we strongly encourage you to go on a virtual tour of the testing center. To access this tour, click the What to Expect in a Pearson VUE test center at the following link: home.pearsonvue.com/test-taker/security.aspx

You also will receive a small, erasable whiteboard if you need one.

Breaks

Breaks are only permitted for exams taken at Pearson VUE Testing Centers, and are not permitted during exams delivered via online proctoring.

Online Proctoring

As of spring 2021, Excelsior is offering an [online delivery option for UExcel exams](#), using OnVUE, Pearson VUE's online delivery and proctoring service.

You must use a personal (vs. an employer's) computer if you want to take the exam online and not in a testing center, so the exam can be effectively delivered to you.

Breaks are not allowed during an exam taken online from home. You may not leave your seat during an online-proctored exam, so be prepared to sit for two or three hours. If you need extra time, the exam will have to be taken at a PearsonVUE Testing Center, and an accommodation formally requested.

NOTE: English Composition, Spanish, Music, and College Writing will NOT be available for online proctoring.

On the Day of Your Exam

Important Reminders

On the day of your exam, remember to:

- dress comfortably: the computer will not mind that you're wearing your favorite relaxation outfit
- arrive at the test site rested and prepared to concentrate for an extended period
- allow sufficient time to travel, park, and locate the test center
- be prepared for possible variations in temperature at the test center due to weather changes or energy conservation measures
- bring your ID, but otherwise, don't weigh yourself down with belongings that will have to be kept in a locker during the test.

Academic Integrity Nondisclosure Statement

- All examinees must agree to the terms of the Excelsior College Academic Integrity Policy before taking an examination. The agreement will be presented on screen at the Pearson VUE Testing Center before the start of your exam.
- Once the examinee agrees to the terms of the Academic Integrity Nondisclosure Agreement (NDA), the exam will begin.

If you choose not to accept the terms of the agreement

- your exam will be terminated
- you will be required to leave the testing center
- you will not be eligible for a refund. For more information, review the Student Policy Handbook at www.excelsior.edu/studentpolicyhandbook.

Student behavior is monitored during and after the exam. Electronic measures are used to monitor the security of test items and scan for illegal use of intellectual property. This monitoring includes surveillance of Internet chat rooms, websites, and other public forums.

UExcel Grade Report

After you complete the exam, you will be issued a UExcel Grade Report for Examinations. See the [sample UExcel Grade Report](#) in this content guide.

Grade Appeals

If you believe that your score grade is incorrect, you may appeal your grade to examcredit@excelsior.edu. Details about the appeals process are in the [Student Handbook](#).

What If I Miss My Appointment?

If you don't cancel or reschedule your testing appointment 24 hours before your test appointment, you will have to pay the full fee of the exam, even if you don't show up.

Late Arrivals

You will also forfeit the exam fee if you arrive to the test center more than 15 minutes late.

Information About UExcel Exams for Colleges and Universities

A committee of teaching faculty and practicing professionals determines the learning outcomes to be tested on each exam. Excelsior College Center for Educational Measurement staff oversee the technical aspects of test construction in accordance with current professional standards. To promote fairness in testing, we take special care to ensure that the language used in the exams and related materials is consistent, professional, and user friendly. Editorial staff perform systematic quantitative and qualitative reviews to ensure accuracy, clarity, and compliance with conventions of bias-free language usage.

Excelsior College, the test developer, recommends granting three (3) semester hours of lower-level undergraduate credit to students who receive a letter grade of C or higher on this examination. The examination may be used to help fulfill a core requirement for Business degrees or as a free elective for all Excelsior College degree programs that allow for free electives. Other colleges and universities also recognize this exam as a basis for granting credit or advanced standing. Individual institutions set their own policies for the amount of credit awarded and the minimum acceptable score.

Workplace Communication with Computers Exam Development Committee

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Sample Grade Report

Excelsior College
GRADE REPORT FOR EXAMINATIONS

Contact ID:

Test Date: 11/21/2020

Letter Grade: C

Examination Code and Title: 210 Statistics

Recommended Credit:
3 Lower Level

Your examination results are expressed as a Letter Grade of A, B, C, or F. Your results are automatically verified when they are received at Excelsior College. If an error is detected, you will be notified immediately.

Recommended Credit is the number of semester hours credit that Excelsior College awards and recommends for your grade. Excelsior College awards and recommends credit for letter grades of C or better.

If you plan to take another examination, you may download free content guides and the User's Guide by visiting our website at www.excelsior.edu/exams/content-guides/.

If you need an Excelsior College Official Examinations Transcript to document the credit you have earned for this examination for another institution, the request can be made online by accessing the Excelsior College website (www.excelsior.edu), logging into your MyExcelsior account, and scrolling down to the For Exams Takers box and clicking on the Request transcripts link. If you do not already have a MyExcelsior username and password, you can obtain one at no cost by accessing the Excelsior College website, clicking the Log In to MyExcelsior button, and then clicking the link "Create a MyExcelsior User Account."



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