BBA WRITING PROGRAM

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UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
BUSINESS SCHOOL
Ann Arbor, Michigan
What is the BBA Writing Program?
The BBA Writing Program is a two-year training program in business writing. The first year, students will write three papers, which will be evaluated and scored. The second year, students will take a communication course—either LHC 360—Business Communication or LHC 320—Written Business Communication.

What are the objectives of the Writing Program?
The primary objective of the Writing Program is to provide students with training in business writing for their future jobs. The first year of the program will assess the strengths and weaknesses of students’ writing, and the second year will provide classes that teach on-the-job oral and written communication.

What three papers will I write in the first year?
Your first paper is a Timed Sit-Down Assessment, given during Orientation. For those who cannot take the test at that time, there will be a make-up Writing Assessment a few days later.

How do I turn in my papers to the Writing Program?
The First Writing Assessment will be a sit-down, timed writing exercise that will be collected by the proctors. The two remaining papers will be turned in directly to the Writing Program Director.

What about the other two papers?
By early November, you will receive from the Writing Program Director a letter reminding you about your two remaining papers. Attached to this letter will be four assignments, one each from BE, OB, CIS and Marketing. These assignments have been developed by your core course coordinators along with the Writing Program Director. These assignments are required papers in your BE, OB, CIS, and Marketing courses. You must choose two of these assignments to turn in to the Writing Program.

When are these papers due?
Your two remaining portfolio papers are due in early January. Students will deliver them to the Assistant to the Writing Program Director, Margaret Oberle, located on the 3rd floor, Area 3B of the business school. Your November letter will tell you the due date.

Who evaluates the BBA Writing Program papers?
The BBA Writing Program papers are evaluated by University of Michigan Business School Writing Consultants. All Michigan consultants have advanced degrees in writing, professional writing experience, and take Michigan’s training in writing assessment. Some also have special expertise in information technology.
How are the BBA Writing Program papers evaluated?
The three papers are evaluated together as a portfolio. Criteria for this evaluation are developed by core course coordinators along with the Writing Program Director. In general, the criteria cover the four areas shown in the following chart:

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<tr>
<th>Audience Adaptation</th>
<th>Content Development</th>
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<td>recognizes &amp; addresses reader concerns</td>
<td>develops 2 or more points or arguments that support the thesis statement</td>
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<tr>
<td>structures &amp; develops arguments that lead to the desired response</td>
<td>uses both general and specific data</td>
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<tr>
<td>uses appropriate tone</td>
<td>uses appropriate amount of data to support points</td>
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Organizational Strategy
- chooses an organization that is logical for message
- has a clear beginning, middle & end
- has a position statement, clearly stated, often in or close to the 1st paragraph
- shows cohesion; has transitions between paragraphs and between sentences
- includes material relevant to the points presented; avoids digression

English Usage
- writes in a style appropriate to the reader & message
- makes appropriate word choices
- shows mastery of sentence structure
- displays competence in grammar, spelling, and punctuation

How are the papers graded?
The Portfolio Assessment will be scored on a scale of 1-3, with 3 high, 2 middle, and 1 low. Pluses and minuses are used also. A low score is 2- or below. Papers are read by at least two evaluators and are often read by up to eight. Consensus is always reached regarding scores.

How do I find out my Writing Program score?
The Portfolios are evaluated in January and February of the Winter term. After the Portfolio evaluations are completed, you will receive a letter telling you the category of your score: high, middle, or low. This letter will come in mid-March. After you receive your letter, you may make an appointment with a Business School Writing Consultant to look at your papers and review your score.

How do I make an appointment with a Business School Writing Consultant?
University of Michigan Business School Writing Consultants are located in room K1325, on the first floor of Kresge. Sign-up sheets for BBA consultations are posted on the bulletin board outside K1325.

What communication course do I take during my second year at the Business School?
All BBA students are required to take a communication course their second year. Two courses are offered: LHC 360--Business Communication and LHC 320--Written Business Communication. Those who receive low scores on their Portfolio Assessment are required to take LHC 320—Written Business Communication. All others may choose either LHC 320 or LHC 360. Students only have to take one communication course during their second year.
Program Summary

First Year
Fall Semester:
- Timed Assessment during Orientation
- Receive OB, BE, CIS, and Marketing Assignments: choose 2 for portfolios

Winter Semester
- Turn in 2 papers for portfolio evaluation in January from OB, BE, CIS, or Marketing.

Second Year
Fall & Winter
- LHC 360-- Business Comm.
- LHC 320-- Written Business Comm.

If I don’t agree with my score, may I appeal it?
The evaluation process includes checks and balances that assure each student a careful, considered evaluation of his or her paper by a minimum of two and up to eight evaluators. Many low scores are the result of a lack of understanding of audience expectations or a misinterpretation of those expectations. If you have special circumstances that might have affected the evaluation of your papers, see the Writing Program Director.

For the portfolio papers, who is my audience—my course instructor or the writing program evaluators?
The Writing Program evaluators are your primary audience for your portfolio papers. The evaluators are familiar with the specific writing assignments offered in BE, OB, CIS, and Marketing and have knowledge of the substantive material required for the written assignments. You will not be penalized for using BE, OB, CIS, or Marketing jargon as long as it makes sense in your paper and is used in ways that indicate understanding of the material.

How many students receive low scores on the three first-year papers?
Typically, almost half of the first-year students receive low scores on their portfolio papers.

The reasons for this are complex. Many entering BBA students have done well in their earlier writing courses. However, writing for business often presents new and unfamiliar perspectives. In addition, the first year of the BBA program is demanding, and students are dealing with new and increased expectations. The University of Michigan Business School views the Portfolio Papers as an opportunity for students to become aware of their strengths and weaknesses in written communication. Because of this awareness, Michigan BBA students enter the workplace with a communication advantage.

What are the personal benefits of the BBA Writing Program?
One of the major complaints of recruiters is that students do not write well. With the BBA Writing Program, students receive personal attention to their writing skills from core course instructors and Writing Program personnel. Students receive Feedback their first year on their strengths and weaknesses in their written communication and training the second year...
in communication classes. During their second year, each student will receive a portfolio containing their three first-year papers. These papers will be discussed and revised during second-year communication classes.

Students sometimes mention the Michigan Writing Program in their application materials, particularly since recruiting companies are usually interested in new hires with strong communication abilities.

What are portfolios?
Portfolios are several things. The Portfolio Assessment combines papers to be evaluated to indicate writing strengths and weaknesses. Portfolios are also collections of documents. The Writing Program staff keep copies of the three documents written by students during their first year in the Business School. These portfolios are given to the LHC 360 and LHC 320 instructors for use in the classes. Portfolio papers are reviewed and revised so that they can provide good examples of students’ written communication skills.

Students take their portfolios with them when they graduate. Sometimes recruiters will ask to see writing samples, and the portfolio papers can provide them.

Important Dates

August/September
BBA Timed Writing Assessment

November:
Letter reminding students to turn in the two final papers for their portfolio assessment.

January:
Portfolio papers due--2 papers chosen from OB, BE, CIS, and Marketing assignments.

March:
Letters to students relating Portfolio scores and required 2nd-year class

BBA Course Descriptions

320. Written Business Communication
(Business School students can only take this course in their senior year; portfolios are a prerequisite. Non-business students must have junior standing.)
This course introduces strategies for dealing with standard business documents based on concepts for written communication skills. Students learn drafting and editing techniques, organizational approaches, and persuasion and argumentation by writing a variety of business documents, including memoranda, letters, proposals, and reports. Short cases are used to present the complexities of addressing reader concerns while achieving writer objectives in various business situations. By the end of this course, students will have learned a number of time-saving strategies and will be comfortable writing standard business documents. In addition to writing documents, students will be required to make oral presentations.
360. Business Communication (Business School students can only take this course in their senior year; portfolios are a prerequisite. Non-business students must have junior standing.)

This course introduces business communication, including oral and written presentations. Students learn to design, develop, and deliver information to achieve specific objectives for interpersonal, presentational and group situations. To sharpen their oral skills and critical abilities, students give and evaluate a series of oral presentations. Several written documents, such as letters, memoranda, and reports are also required. Specialized topics include: communicating credibility, successful persuasion, communication ethics, and collaborative strategies. Some presentations are videotaped for analysis. The course is interactive, requiring student participation.

For more information about the BBA Writing Program contact Ms. Margaret Oberle, Assistant to the Director.
Phone: (734) 647-4914
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Email: maoberle@umich.edu

For information on Communication Programs at the University of Michigan Business School, see the following website:
http://webuser.bus.umich.edu/programs/bmc