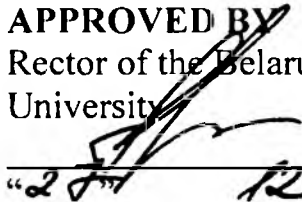# EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION
"BELARUSIAN STATE ECONOMIC UNIVERSITY"

APPROVED BY
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BUSINESS WRITING
Academic Programme for the Master's Course
for the Major in: 1-26 80 03 "Business Administration"

2019

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EXPLANATORY NOTE

The modern world is open to people who speak foreign languages. This is more an urgent need than a hobby. The cooperation of entrepreneurs from different countries does not surprise anyone. In the world of business people, it is not enough just to be an expert in your business, it is important to know the rules of conduct and be able to build relationships in the business environment. The search for partners and maintaining contacts is facilitated by the ability to conduct business correspondence.

Obviously, the ability to write official letters in English is an important skill for companies working with foreign partners. Fluency in language, knowledge of business ethics and paperwork can be the determining criteria for selecting a candidate for a vacant place in an organization.

Business writing is one of the main communication tools in any business. A well-written business letter will help create a positive impression of the company while a single illiterate letter can destroy one's entire reputation. It is considered to be an art to be able to express one's ideas in a business letter in a coherent, competent and structured manner. To learn the art of business correspondence means to find a balance between a dry official language from boring textbooks and simple human communication. Learning not to annoy the interlocutor, but to take care of him and, as a result, obtain everything necessary from them.

The key difference between business correspondence and other methods of communication is that it is formal, that is, official, in nature. Business letters are designed in a simple style and are noticeably different from friendly correspondence. Below we outline some points that are important to consider when writing business letters.

The main function of business correspondence is informative. This means that the goal is to clearly, succinctly and concisely state all the necessary facts, not deviating from the main topic of the letter. When writing business letters, it is important to remember that they should be impersonal. In no case should a sender ask questions that are not directly related to work. If you are not personally acquainted with your foreign partner (or you started to work with him quite recently), it will be extremely inappropriate to ask them any personal questions.

Humour in business writing is a taboo. It is necessary to try to be as consistent and serious as possible. What is good when communicating with friends and relatives is not always suitable for more serious situations. Business etiquette does not imply excessive expressiveness. One should avoid exclamation points, comparisons, and other means of verbal expressiveness. The simpler the better. Do not strive for embellishment! Before sending a business letter, one should check it for errors. This is a very important point. One can be a very talented specialist in their field, but

writing with mistakes in English will still speak eloquently of one's incompetence. Formal letters are the realm of clichés. Corresponding words and phrases are constantly used in business correspondence. Do not try to be original, write in the format most suitable for such letters. All business letters in English have a clear structure. Perhaps this is the most important point.

In order for a letter to sound convincing, it is advisory to master all the grammar tenses, study why and in which cases articles and other seemingly insignificant but incredibly important aspects are used. Particular attention should be paid to modal verbs, conditional and causative constructions - they are often found in official business documents. To freely express your thoughts, it is necessary to know the appropriate words. If you speak English at a good enough level, try using the English-English dictionaries. When checking a word in a dictionary, one should opt for vocabulary marked formal or neutral. To make it easier for you to remember established expressions, read more literature on this topic. It is not always possible to memorize all phrases. In order not to make a lot of annoying mistakes, write down the most useful expressions and words and always have them at hand in your workplace. To learn more about writing letters, you need to write a lot of letters. You can imagine a virtual addressee from London / New York and have one-way business correspondence with him. After practising to write 15-20 business letters at home, it will become much easier and faster to write them in the workplace.

The approach adopted here, generally speaking, is an action-oriented one in so far as it views users and learners of a language primarily as 'social agents', i.e. members of society who have tasks (not exclusively language-related) to accomplish in a given set of circumstances, in a specific environment and within a particular field of action. While acts of speech occur within language activities, these activities form part of a wider social context, which alone is able to give them their full meaning. We speak of 'tasks' in so far as the actions are performed by one or more individuals strategically using their own specific competences to achieve a given result. The action-based approach therefore also takes into account the cognitive, emotional and volitional resources and the full range of abilities specific to and applied by the individual as a social agent.

Alternatively, rather than profiling categories of communicative activities, one may wish to assess a performance on the basis of the aspects of communicative language competence. To assess spoken performances one focuses on different qualitative aspects of language use: range – accuracy – fluency – interaction – coherence. Course goals:

• comprise several components: linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic;

• have a sufficient range of language to be able to give clear descriptions, express viewpoints on most general topics, without much conspicuous searching for words, using some complex sentence forms to do so;

• show a relatively high degree of grammatical control;

• initiate discourse and help the discussion along on familiar ground confirming comprehension, inviting others in, etc.;

• use a limited number of cohesive devices to link utterances into clear, coherent discourse.

On completing a course in "Business Writing" the master's student should

KNOW:

• how to account for and sustain the opinions in discussion by providing relevant explanations, arguments and comments;

• how to explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options;

• how to construct a chain of reasoned argument;

• how to develop an argument giving reasons in support of or against a particular point of view;

• how to take an active part in informal discussion in familiar contexts, commenting, putting point of view clearly, evaluating alternative proposals and making and responding to hypotheses;

• how to initiate discourse, take his/her turn when appropriate and end conversation when he/she needs to, though he/she may not always do this elegantly.

BE ABLE TO:

• plan and organise a message;

• formulate a linguistic utterance;

• articulate the utterance;

• organise and formulate the message;

• maintain attention to the presented information;

• co-operate effectively in pair and group work;

• organise and use materials for self-directed learning;

• learn effectively (both linguistically and socio-culturally) from direct observation of and participation in communication events by the cultivation of perceptual, analytical and heuristic skills;

• explain a problem and make it clear that his / her counterpart in a negotiation must make a concession;

• speculate about causes, consequences, hypothetical situations.

BE SKILLED IN:

• interaction with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without imposing strain on either party;

• sustaining relationships with native speakers without unintentionally amusing or irritating them or requiring them to behave other than they would with a native speaker;

• correcting mistakes if they have led to misunderstandings;

• planning what is to be said and the means to say it, considering the effect on the recipient/s;

• understanding in detail what is said to him/her in the standard spoken language even in a noisy environment.

The total hours of the course for the major in 1-26 80 03 "Business Administration" is 108, including 28 hours of lecturing and 28 hours of seminars of the total of 56 classroom hours. The form of assessment at the end of the semester is an exam.

COURSE CONTENTS

Unit 1. Structure and Presentation

Title; sender's address; inside address; references; date; attention line; privacy notice; destination; salutation; heading to the text; body of the letter; letter close; signature; copies of the letter.

Unit 2. Content and Style

Length; order and sequence; planning; formal and informal style and language; clarity; accuracy.

Unit 3. Electronic correspondence

Advantages and disadvantages; forms; layout; style; abbreviations.

Unit 4. Business Correspondence Functions

Referring; giving reasons; giving good/ bad news; requesting action/ information; apologizing; warning; making a complaint.

Unit 5. Types of Letters

Enquiries; replies and quotations; orders; payment; complaints; credit; insurance; transportation; contracts.

Unit 6. Miscellaneous correspondence

Reservations; appointments; hospitality; special occasions.

Unit 7. Writing Resumes/ CVs and Covering Letters

Layout; style; power words.

Instructional Chart of "Effective Presentation Techniques"

1-26 80 03 "Business	Name of study units, topics	Number of classroom hours				Supervised independent study			Other	Academic performance assessment
		Lectures	Practicals	Seminars	Laboratory practicals	L	P	Lab		
	Business Writing									
1.	**Structure and Presentation** Title; sender's address; inside address; references; date; attention line; privacy notice; destination; salutation; heading to the text; body of the letter; letter close; signature; copies of the letter.	4		4					Internet; 1,2,3,6	Discussion, Writing Practice
2.	**Content and Style** Length; order and sequence; planning; formal and informal style and language; clarity; accuracy	4		4					Internet; 1,2,3,6	Discussion, Writing Practice
3.	**Electronic correspondence** Advantages and disadvantages; forms; layout; style; abbreviations.	2		2					Internet; 1,2,3,6	Discussion, Writing practice
4.	**Business Correspondence Functions** Referring; giving reasons; giving good/ bad news; requesting action/ information; apologizing; warning; making a complaint.	4		6					Internet; 1,2,3,6	Discussion, Writing practice
5.	**Types of Letters** Enquiries; replies and quotations; orders; payment; complaints; credit; insurance; transportation; contracts	8		6					Internet; 1,2,3,6	Discussion, writing practice
6.	**Miscellaneous correspondence** Reservations; appointments; hospitality; special occasions.	4		2					Internet; 1,6	Discussion, writing practice
7.	**Writing Resumes/ CVs and Covering Letters** Layout; style; power words	2		4					Internet; 1,6	Discussion, writing practice
	Total	28		28						

TEACHING AND LEARNING RESOURCES

Instructional guidelines on the organisation of the students' individual work in the discipline "Effective Presentation Techniques"

The social order of society makes alterations in the system of education which became oriented on self-development, self-education and self-realization of a personality of future specialist. Therefore, in the system of higher education it is necessary to pay special attention to students' training for active creative independent activity. In modern concept of foreign language training the multicultural language personality becomes one of the key categories. Based on the development of language personality, the aims of learning a foreign language are formed from the point of view of language user as a subject of intercultural communication. One of the most important features of language personality is his ability and readiness for independent (autonomous) conscious language studying and mastering foreign language culture. Independent work of the students gains the special importance in non-linguistic institutions where there is not enough time for foreign language learning, and that's why there is a tendency to reduce auditorium studies. Skills in independent searching activity are an important factor for further self-education of a specialist. Consequently, one of the main challenges of foreign-language teaching in higher institutions is the development of students' readiness for independent work of creative type.

At present independent work can be classified according to the following guiding principles. Briefly, we consider the most commonly used among them are:

Independent work (IW) according to the time and control form:

1. short-term, completed directly in auditorium conditions or at the moment of preparation for the classes with current or intermediate control;

2. long-term, connected with independent search, high activity level of students, requiring more continued preparation (e.g. project activity) using intermediate and final control.

IW according to the form of students' organization:

1. individual;

2. pair;

3. group.

It is very important to provide more time for the organization and conduct of group IW as the group is the exact surrounding that motivates and stimulates the students. Methodologists have proved that group interaction enriches knowledge and skills, special and general educational actions, serves for formation of self-control and self-appraisal.

IW according to the place of fulfilment:

1. during auditorium classes;

2. at the laboratory;

3. outside the university.

IW according to leading needs and priority-driven objects of mastering:

1. work on the language means with the purpose of language material accumulation;

2. work on foreign language text as a product of linguistic culture;

3. training work on the language means;

4. independent speaking practice.

IW according to the form of the teacher's participation:

1. personally controlled by the teacher;

2. controlled by the teacher indirectly (using instructions, rules, study aids etc.);

3. uncontrolled by the teacher (by personal initiative of the students).

IW according to interaction between the teacher and the students:

1. uncontrolled, where the teacher determines the level of linguistic competence and background for IW skills development, the students act according to the "trial-and-error" method;

2. imaginary, when the teacher uses strict control technique. The students act determinedly within the strict framework of a task;

3. fragmented, when the teacher uses strict and flexible control techniques. Students act combining independent and suggested actions;

4. relative, when the teacher gives the task in the most general form and the students act independently and freely.

Individual work content in the discipline "Effective Presentation Techniques"

Classification of IW according to the level of independence is the most important paradigm. There are three types of IW:

1. IW of copying type which is done according to the example. Independence of the students has a reproducing character and appears mainly in replacing of some language means, shortening or extending of sentences. Herewith such actions like independent choice and language units' combination do not take place. That is why the students' level of independence and creativity in the process of creation of a language composition is very low. The main result of IW of copying type is gaining the following skills:

- understanding of teaching objective;
- comprehension of sequence of tasks' completion;
- accumulation of basic facts and activity types;
- rational task performance;
- adequate assessment of activity results.

In such a manner the background for tasks of higher level of independence is created.

2. IW of transformation type is reasonably organized in such a manner that educational material provides only general direction of students' independent activity and the control functions are generally conducted with the purpose to give students enough freedom for creative initiative. As practice shows, the most effective exercises for IW of transformation type organization are the exercises with gradual support removal. The main result of IW of transformation type is gaining the following skills:

- making operations of choice, substitutions, extending, transformation, combination etc.;
- working out of ways to solve educational problem.

3. IW of creative type presupposes that the students can choose an algorithm for solving educational problems independently, determine the structure of the statement, combine words and syntactic structures, state personal judgments, personal attitude towards the learned material. The students are supposed to master the skills required for organization of personal educational activity and self-control, namely:

- to determine educational task;
- to choose the material required to fulfil it;
- to perform actions leading to solving educational problem independently;
- to perform self-control and self-assessment of their own actions.

Exactly reaching of this level of independence is one of the primary importance tasks of education on the level of professional foreign-language education.

Instructional guidelines for the seminars in the discipline "Business Writing"

One of the most important types of communication between people in society is business communication. It is impossible to do without it in the field of economic, legal, diplomatic, commercial, administrative relations. The ability to successfully conduct business negotiations, competently and correctly draw up business papers is currently an integral part of a person's professional culture: manager, manager at all levels, referent, and employee. To achieve high performance in almost any type of business, you need to have a certain set of information, knowledge, ideas about the rules, forms and methods of doing business, about the principles of business communication.

Economic and socio-cultural changes taking place in the modern globalized world contribute to the growth of communication, professional contacts between representatives of different countries, and the expansion of cooperation in various international projects. The culture of business communication promotes the establishment and development of relations of cooperation and partnership between colleagues, managers and subordinates, partners and competitors, largely determining their effectiveness: will these relations be successfully implemented in the interests of partners or will they become meaningless, ineffective, or even completely stop if the partners do not find mutual understanding. The success of business communication is determined by the professional competence of a specialist, an integral indicator of which is not only fluency in a foreign language, but also knowledge of various norms of both oral and written communication.

Each of the eight units has two sections — a study section and an activity section. In the study section, students learn the conventions and common expressions of business correspondence and practise these through short exercises and letter-writing tasks. This part of each unit teaches students how to do things in English — such as complain, ask for information, request action and so on.

In the activity section, students are placed in a business situation where different students (normally working in groups) represent different companies. Through a series of role cards at the back of their book (three for each company), students become involved in writing and replying to each other in order to accomplish a business goal — such as ordering some goods or arranging a business trip. When the activity has finished, there is a feedback stage where, with the teacher, students look at what they wrote and the problems they had.

The study sections normally open with a short introduction to a situation, which is then followed by two or three questions and some letters. The questions are intended to give the students a purpose or focus in reading the letters. The questions are of two types: questions about the content (e.g. Why is there a delay in the delivery of the goods?) or questions about the language (e.g. How exactly does the writer apologise?).The questions about the language serve as an introduction to the material' in the rest of the section. This presents the students with various ways on achieving a particular purpose (such as giving reasons, warning, complaining) in business correspondence in English. Each presentation is followed by short practice exercises. The final exercise is normally a letter-writing task, where the students have to draw together the points covered in the section as a whole.

Each activity section opens with some material that introduces a business situation, with questions to focus the students' reading. Then the students are divided into groups and given their role cards. The role cards give some further information and tell the students what they must write and to whom. Most cards also include a 'letter plan' to help them. The students are required to produce neat business letters that are clear in meaning and as correct as Possible in terms of spelling, grammar, vocabulary, phrases and expressions.

SUMMARY OF STEPS IN RUNNING THE ACTIVITIES

1. Students read the introductory material.
2. Teacher asks questions to check they understand the situation.
3. Teacher divides the class into groups.
4. Students turn to their first role card, write the letter and deliver it to the appropriate group.
5. Students are told their next role card number.
6. Students write and deliver their next letter.
7. Students are told their final role card number.
8. Students write and deliver the last letter. The activity ends.
9. Students are told to look through the letters they received and indicate any problems in understanding the letters and any mistakes in layout, spelling, grammar, etc.
10. Letters are given back to the students. They look over them and try to correct any mistakes.
11. Feedback discussion.

Continuous assessment requirements

Writing in class provides useful opportunities for students to practice skills, required in their working lives, in a non-threatening environment. Students can also demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of issues and their ability to present information and engage with an audience. In addition, specific competencies can be assessed, for instance the use of information and communication technology. Writing Assessment Scale was developed with explicit reference to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). It is divided into four subscales:

• Content

This focuses on how well the candidate has fulfilled the task, in other words, if they have done what they were asked to do.

• Communicative Achievement

This focuses on how appropriate the writing is for the task, and whether the candidate has used the appropriate register.

• Organisation

This focuses on the way the candidate puts together the piece of writing, in other words, if it is logical and ordered.

• Language

This focuses on vocabulary and grammar. It includes the range of language as well as how accurate it is.

Preliminary Level criteria (Band 1) Irrelevances and misinterpretation of task may be present. Target reader is minimally informed. Uses the conventions of the communicative task in generally appropriate ways to communicate straightforward ideas. Text is connected and coherent, using basic linking words and a limited number of cohesive devices. Uses business vocabulary generally appropriately, while occasionally overusing certain lexis. Uses simple grammatical forms with a good degree of control. While errors are noticeable, meaning can still be determined.

Intermediate level (Band 3)

Minor irrelevances and/or omissions may be present. Target reader is on the whole informed. Uses the conventions of the communicative task to hold the target reader's attention and communicate straightforward ideas. Text is generally well organised and coherent, using a variety of linking words and cohesive devices. Uses a range of business vocabulary appropriately, with occasional inappropriate use of less common lexis. Uses a range of simple and some complex grammatical forms with a good degree of control. Errors do not impede communication.

Final level (Band 5)

All content is relevant to the task. Target reader is fully informed. Uses the conventions of the communicative task effectively to hold the target reader's attention and communicate straightforward and complex ideas, as appropriate. Text is well organised and coherent, using a variety of cohesive devices and organisational patterns to generally good effect. Uses a range of vocabulary, including less common lexis, appropriately. Uses a range of simple and complex grammatical forms with control and flexibility. Occasional errors may be present but do not impede communication.

In light of the above review, the following strategies may be helpful for those considering the issues arising from marking written works.

- Assessment and marking criteria should explicitly state the emphasis being placed on content versus performance.
- Where and when possible an additional marker marks all or a sample of written work.
- The layout of the space and rules for writing performance should be discussed and agreed beforehand.
- Students should be given opportunities to practice and to receive formative feedback on their writing skills before summative assessment takes place, and should be given feedback, not just a mark, after written task is completed.
- When and where possible, written works should be kept for future reference.

The ability to compose business correspondence is essential in almost all working environments. However, marking criteria need to specifically address which aspect of written work is being assessed. Practising writing skills can be a fruitful medium for some students who are initially more confident in their written rather than speaking skills.

REFERENCE MATERIALS

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Curriculum approval protocol

Academic subject title to be matched	Name of the Department:	Proposals for changes in the curriculum content of the higher education institution on an academic subject	The decision taken by the department that worked out the curriculum (mentioning the date and the protocol number)

Amendments to the curriculum of the higher education institution
on _____ / _____ study year

Number item	Amendments	Reason

The curriculum is reviewed and approved at the meeting of the department

_____ (protocol number _____ _____ 201_ year).
                 Name of the Department

Chair of the Department

_____   _____
(Academic degree, academic title) (signature) (Initials Surname)

APPROVED BY
Dean

_____   _____   _____
(Academic degree, academic title) (signature) (Initials Surname)