# Module Descriptor

**Module Code and Title:**    ACS101 Academic Skills

**Programme:**                      University-wide module

**Credit:**                            12

**Module Tutor(s):**                   Dr S. Chitra, Chimi Nangsel Dorji, Sangay Choden,

Mr. Tshering Samdrup

**Module Coordinator:** Sherubtse College

**General Objective**

The module employs a process-based approach to skill students in the application of a range of academic tasks undertaken for study at the university level. Students will be honed in effective verbal and written communication through various academic reading, writing, listening, presentation, and note-taking exercises. Students will also become adept at referencing and citation, enabling them to write assignments following dated academic conventions. It will further enhance their learning throughout their studies at the university and beyond through close reading, discussions, and critiquing of academic materials through the exercises.

**Learning Outcomes**

On completion of the module, students will be able to:

1. utilise reading strategies to extract information from academic texts.
2. plan academic presentations effectively.
3. deliver academic presentations effectively.
4. lead group discussions effectively.
5. contribute meaningfully to group discussions.
6. apply academic writing conventions to produce clear written work.
7. evaluate credibility and relevance of various resources.
8. cite references following dated APA conventions.
9. employ a process approach to essay writing.
10. synthesise in a written format information and arguments from a number of sources.
11. use effective digital note-taking skills.

**Learning and Teaching Approach**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Type** | **Approach** | **Hours per week** | **Total credit hours** |
| **Contact** | Facilitation and discussion | 1 | **60** |
| In-class exercises and writing | 1.5 |
| Group work | 0.5 |
| Presentations | 1 |
| **Independent study** | ePortfolio | 1.5 | **60** |
| Academic essay writing | 1.5 |
| Self-study | 1 |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Total** | 8 | **120** |

**Assessment Approach**

The assessment will be carried out on a continuous basis through the following approaches:

1. **Mock Presentation (5%)**

Each student has to make a 5-minute presentation on a topic of their choice using Microsoft PowerPoint or similar ICT tool. Firstly, the presentation will be delivered and workshopped in their respective groups of 4-5, facilitated by the tutor. Then, the improved presentation will be delivered to the class. This will allow them to acquire the skills necessary for conducting effective oral presentations during the course of their university study.

The mock presentation will be assessed out of 15 marks based on the following criteria, and scaled down to 5%. This will include qualitative feedback as well.

**Mock Presentation Assessment Criteria**

2 marks Central message: *Central message is compelling (precisely stated, appropriately repeated, memorable, and strongly supported.)*

3 marks Organisation*: Specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material and transitions is clear and consistent, with cohesive content*

4 marks Supporting materials: *Variety of explanations, examples, visuals, statistics, analogies, authoritative quotes, etc., and make appropriate reference to information or analysis that significantly supports the presentation, establishes presenter's credibility/authority on the topic*

2 marks Language: *Language choices enhance the effectiveness of the presentation and is appropriate to the audience and context*

4 marks Delivery: *Techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, pronunciation) make the presentation compelling, and preparedness and confidence of the speaker*

1. **Final Presentation (15%)**

Each student has to make a 5-minute presentation on a topic of their choosing using Microsoft PowerPoint or similar ICT tool. Students will also be required to include an executive summary of 250-300 words in the final slide.

The final presentation and executive summary will be assessed out of 20 marks based on the following criteria, and scaled down to 15%. This will include qualitative feedback as well.

**Presentation Assessment Criteria**

2 marks Central message: *Central message is compelling (precisely stated, appropriately repeated, memorable, and strongly supported.)*

3 marks Organisation*: Specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material and transitions is clear and consistent, with cohesive content*

4 marks Supporting materials: *Variety of explanations, examples, visuals, statistics, analogies, authoritative quotes, etc., and make appropriate reference to information or analysis that significantly supports the presentation, establishes presenter's credibility/authority on the topic*

2 marks Language: *Language choices enhance the effectiveness of the presentation and is appropriate to the audience and context*

4 marks Delivery: *Techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, pronunciation) make the presentation compelling, and preparedness and confidence of the speaker*

5 marks Executive summary criteria: *Summary clearly and succinctly expresses the presenter’s intent and overview of the presentation*

1. **Process-oriented Essay (5%)**

Each student has to write an essay between 800-1000 words as part of a collection of ongoing class exercises, following the rules of academic standards, essay writing, and APA referencing. The process writing will be assessed out of 25 marks using the following criteria and will be converted to 5%.

**Essay Assessment Criteria**

3 marks Thesis statement: *clearly states the topic, author’s stance, and sub-topics*

4 marks Introduction: *specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material and transitions is clear and consistent, with cohesive content*

3 marks Topic sentences: *clearly states the topic and controlling idea*

12 marks Body paragraphs: *provides at least two supporting evidences and examples that are correctly cited, accurate, and relevant*

3 marks Conclusion: *clearly restates the thesis statement, summarises points, with a concluding remark*

1. **Draft Essay (10%)**

Each student has to write a draft essay between 800-1000 words following the rules of academic standards, essay writing, APA referencing and mechanics of language to practise and develop academic writing skills at the university level. The draft essay will be assessed out of 25 marks using the Essay Assessment Criteria above and will be converted to 10% which includes qualitative feedback as well.

**e. Final Essay (20%)**

Each student must write a final draft of an academic essay between 800-1000 words following the rules of academic standards, essay writing, APA referencing and mechanics of language to practise and develop academic writing skills at the university level. The final essay will be assessed out of 25 marks using the Essay Assessment Criteria above and will be converted to 20%.

1. **ePortfolio (25%)**

Each student has to maintain an ePortfolio containing a series of exercises based on homework, classwork, and additional notes. This is to focus on digitisation and use of online tools in keeping with the growing need for 21st century skills. The ePortfolio will be assessed based on the criteria below and will include qualitative feedback as well.

**ePortfolio Assessment Criteria**

5 marks Design: *design choices (font, colours, layout) are consistently appropriate and support the content*

3 marks Organisation: *organises contents systematically and thoughtfully*

10 marks Content: *contains content relevant to the subject matter*

2 marks Language: *uses language that is appropriate and free of errors’*

5 marks Extra Material: *Includes at least three extra materials relevant to the content*

1. **Class Test (20%)**

Students have to write one class test towards the end of the semester. The test will check their understanding, interpretation, and application of skills learnt in each unit.

**Overview of the assessment approaches and weighting**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Continuous assessment** | **Areas of assignments** | **Quantity** | **Weighting (%)** |
| **A (Theory)** | 1. Class test | 1 | 20 |
| **B (Practical)** | 1. Presentation | 2 | 20 |
| 1. Essay | 3 | 35 |
| 1. ePortfolio | 1 | 25 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Total** | **100** |

**Pre-requisites:** None

**Subject Matter**

**Unit I: Academic Standards**

* 1. Introduction to academic standards
  2. Academic skills for listening, speaking, reading and writing (LSRW)
  3. Academic integrity
     1. Academic integrity at the Royal University of Bhutan- collusion, commissioning, duplication, false declaration, falsification of data, and plagiarism
  4. Intellectual property in university learning and teaching- copyright and patent
     1. Intellectual property infringement and its consequences

1.5. Ethical use of AI

1.5.1. Good academic practice when using AI across different course components

1.5.2. Additional guidance on use of AI for written assignments

**Unit II: Presentations**

* 1. Basics of presentations
  2. Structure and organisation
  3. Strategies for preparing an effective presentation
  4. Signposting- linking words and phrases
  5. Presentation aids- tips to prepare presentation aids
  6. Executive summary

**Unit III: Academic Reading**

* 1. Introduction to academic reading
  2. Organisational aids- titles, headings, subheadings, table of contents, footnotes, Glossary, appendix, and index
  3. Reading strategies
     1. Effective reading way
     2. Skimming and scanning
     3. Method (Survey, Question, Read, Recite, and Review)
  4. Paraphrasing- paraphrasing tips and steps to paraphrasing
  5. Summarising- steps for writing a summary

**Unit IV: Academic Writing**

* 1. Introduction to academic writing
  2. Purpose of academic writing
  3. Types of academic writing- academic essays, research papers, literature reviews, journal articles, dissertation/theses and proposals, reports, lab reports, case studies, exam responses
  4. Features of academic writing - formality, structure, logic, evidence, objectivity, precision
     1. Tips for writing objectively and formally
  5. Academic argument
     1. Facts, opinions, beliefs

**Unit V: APA Referencing Style**

* 1. Introduction to referencing
     1. Using source material
     2. Critical evaluation of sources- authority, purpose, publication and format, relevance, documentation
     3. Referencing and academic Integrity- understanding plagiarism and its consequences
  2. Using source material for in-text citation
  3. Referencing styles
     1. Types of referencing style- APA, Harvard style, CBE, Chicago (Turabian), MLA, Oxford, Vancouver, British Standard
     2. APA-style referencing
  4. APA in-text citation- direct voice, indirect voice, quotation, images, books, journals, magazines, newsletters, newspapers, eBooks, YouTube videos
  5. Basic rules for writing references
  6. Digital tools for referencing and citation- Zotero, Mendeley, EndNote Basic, BibTeX, Cite This For Me

**Unit VI: Academic Essay**

* 1. Introduction to academic essay
  2. Understanding written assignment- BUG (Box, Underline, Glance back) method
  3. Writing process- Prewriting, drafting, revising, editing or proofreading, and publishing
  4. Essay format
     1. The introduction- the thesis statement
     2. Process-writing in action
        1. The body - the features of topic sentences and supporting details of a body paragraph
        2. The conclusion

**Unit VII: Note-taking Methods**

* 1. Introduction of note-taking- benefits of note-taking
  2. Tips to take notes
  3. Types of note-taking methods
     1. Cornell method
     2. Digital note-taking method- advantages and disadvantages of digital note-taking
  4. Listening and note-taking

**Reading List**

**Essential Reading**

American Psychological Association. (2020*). Publication manual of the American Psychological Association 2020: The official guide to APA style* (7th ed.). American Psychological Association.

Department of Academic and Research. (2024). *ACS101 Academic skills: Student Materials*. Royal University of Bhutan.

Department of Academic and Research (2024). *ACS101 Academic skills: Tutor* *Materials*. Royal University of Bhutan.

Gillet, A. (2021). *Using English for academic purposes (UEFAP): A guide for students in higher*

*education*.<http://www.uefap.net/>

Pitura, J. (2003). Digital note-taking for writing. *Digital writing technologies in higher education*. https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007/978-3-031-36033-6.pdf

**Additional Reading**

Bailey, S. (2018). *Academic writing: A handbook for international students* (5th ed.). Routledge.

Butler, L. (2007). *Fundamentals of academic writing*. Pearson Longman.

Gillet, A., Hammond, A., & Martala, M. (2009). *Inside track successful academic writing.* Pearson Education.

Hogue, A. (2007). *First steps in academic writing.* Pearson Education ESL.

Oshima, A., & Hogue, A. (2006). *Introduction to academic writing* (3rd ed.). Pearson Longman.

Oshima, A., & Hogue, A. (2005). *Writing academic English* (4th ed.). Pearson Education.

Ramsey-Fowler, H., & Aaron, J. E. (2012). *The little brown handbook* (12th ed.). Pearson Longman.

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