

## Syllabus: Essential skills

**Course:** Essential Skills

**Dates:** 30/10/17-26/1/18

**Credits:** To be determined by each institution

**Type:** On line International Course

### Course rationale

**Essential Skills (soft skills) are interpersonal skills such as leadership, teamwork, communication, negotiation, expectations management, problem solving, decision-making etc.** Essential skills are largely intangible, not associated with a deliverable or a concrete output, and are generally employed without the use of tools or templates.

In the current global and dynamic market, university graduates are expected to be skilled in communication, critical thinking and entrepreneurial attitude.

Hard skills, in comparison, are specific, teachable abilities that can be defined and measured, such as typing, writing, math, reading and the ability to use software programs and generally involve the creation of a tangible deliverable. These skills are more technical in nature and they often incorporate the use of tools such as scheduling software, modelling tools, and a myriad of deliverable templates available.

Business leaders are becoming more and more concerned with what they call the “skills gap” in today’s graduates. They are concerned that today’s generation does not have all of the necessary “soft skills” to succeed in today’s workplace.

Learning soft skills while in graduate school is a pillar for a successful career and personal development

Essential skills are usually offered only to managers in the industry and rarely in higher education institutions. Management students will learn those skills as theories without the ability to experience, practice and evaluate their skills. The industry demands that graduates will have such soft skills while entering the work places.

In recent years, following the project-based learning approach (PBL), students are required to work in teams similar to development teams in the industry. The students’ work is self-managed: they are authorized and responsible for making decisions regarding planning, scheduling and task allocation among the team members, as well as professional decisions, which are part of the process.

The following course aims to let the students experience and practice their soft skills in a learning environment. They will practice these skills on a given project while working on a shared target with a virtual project team. The course is built on four modules with one leading into the next. Subsequently, evaluation of the course will be take place at the end of each module and an overall evaluation will take place at the end of the course.

### Course Description

The course is designed to be interactive and collaborative. By participating, you will be working together online in an international team and (hopefully) learn new skills by taking part.

We want students to work together collaboratively from across all the institutions, to share ideas and to help each other.

We want you to experience and get feedback on your own soft skills while working on a shared target in a virtual project team.

The course modules: Critical & Reflective Thinking, Team Work, Leadership, Creative Thinking, Problem Solving. An optional (not mandatory) module is about coaching skills.

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You will be managing your own learning through, collecting evidence of your learning journey both as an individual and as part of a group into an e-portfolio, and this will form the basis of your assessment. The course has both individual sessions, which you can do in your own time, as well as group sessions to be completed together online.

We will begin the first module with a reflective thinking exercise that will provide you with the know-how to reflect on all the following modules.

### Course Content

Week No	Topics
<b>Week 0</b> 30/10-5/11	<b>F2F meetings</b> held at individual institutions: Introducing the overall course /people responsible/ technical guidelines.
<b>Week 1</b> 6/11-12/11	<b>Reflective Thinking</b> Introduction- main principles of reflective thinking and their application
<b>Optional</b>	<b>Part B - Coaching Skills</b> Introduce <b>Coaching Skills</b> and how to work with a peer throughout the course
<b>Week 2</b> 13/11-19/11	<b>Team Work (part A)</b> Getting to know group members
<b>Week 3</b> 20/11-26/11	<b>Team Work (part B)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Effective team work</li> <li>Theoretical and conceptual analysis of the teamwork process.</li> </ul>
<b>Week 4</b> 27/11-3/12	<b>Personal Leadership</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What does leadership means to me?</li> <li>Effective leadership or resonant leadership</li> </ul>
<b>Week 5</b> 4/12-10/12	<b>Creative Thinking:</b> Introduction to theories and relevant tools
<b>Week 6</b> 11/12-17/12	<b>Problem Solving:</b> Introduction to theories and toolkit methods
<b>Break</b> 18/12-7/1	Carrying out the <b>Problem Solving</b> tasks
<b>Week 7</b> 8/1-14/1	Presenting outcomes for <b>Problem Solving</b> tasks
<b>Week 8</b> 15/1-26/1	<b>Summary of the course</b> through reflective thinking principles

### Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this course, the students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate understanding of main theories of essential skills introduced in the course.

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2. Communicate and collaborate effectively in cross-cultural teams in an online environment.
3. Apply critical, creative and reflective thinking and problem solving skills for their own personal development through the creation of a leadership development portfolio.
4. Demonstrate awareness and sensitivity of cultural differences.

### Course deliverables

1. E-portfolio that will include all the outcomes and reflections.
2. An integrated reflective summary based on the sum evaluations.

### Grading:

- 20% Teamwork
- 20% Leadership
- 20% Problem Solving
- 20% Creative Thinking
- 20% Reflective Thinking in the summary of the course

### Bibliography

#### Mandatory

1. Cunliffe, A. L., (2002). *Reflexive Dialogical Practice in Management Learning*, Management Learning 33(1), pp. 35-61.
2. De Bono, E. (2007). *How to have creative ideas: 62 exercises to develop the mind*. London: Vermilion.
3. Feser, C., Mayol, F., & Srinivasan, R. (2015). *Decoding leadership: What really matters?* Mckinsey Quarterly, January, pp. 1-4.
4. Goleman, D. (2000). *Leadership that gets results*. Harvard Business Review, March-April, pp. 75-90.
5. Tarricone, P. & Luca, J. (2002). *Successful teamwork: A case study, in Quality Conversations*, Proceedings of the 25th HERDSA Annual Conference, Perth, Western Australia, 7-10 July 2002: pp. 640- 646.

#### Enrichment

1. Goleman, D., Boyatzis, R., & McKee, A. (2001). *Primal leadership: The hidden driver of leadership*. Harvard Business Review, December, pp. 42-51.
2. Goold, A., Craig, A. & Coldwell, J. (2008). *The student experience of working in teams online*. In Hello! Where are you in the landscape of educational technology? Proceedings ascilite, Melbourne 2008. <http://www.ascilite.org.au/conferences/melbourne08/procs/goold.pdf>.
3. Kumar, (2013). *101 Design Methods: A Structured Approach for Driving Innovation in Your Organisation*. Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons.
4. Mioduser, D., & Dagan, O. (2007). *The effect of alternative approaches to design instruction (structural or functional) on students' mental models of technological design processes*. International Journal of Technology and Design Education, 17(2), pp. 135-148.
5. Walker, D.J., Dagger, B.K.J. and Roy, R. (1991). *Creative Techniques in Product and Engineering Design – A Practical Workbook*. Cambridge: Woodhead Publishing Ltd.