



Multimedia Distance Learning (MDL) Courses

2012

Cranefield College

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Cranefield's Multimedia Distance Learning (MDL) Courses

1. Introduction: The 2012 MDL Courses

Registration for Cranefield's first two international MDL courses opened towards the end of 2007, and there are now many students who benefit from this convenient and efficient learning method. Anyone in any part of the world with access to the Internet can register at any time for the MDL course(s) of his or her choice. Apart from the original short courses in Project Management and Professional English, three further courses have been available since the beginning of 2009: Advanced Writing Skills, and fast-track versions of the Project Management and Professional English courses, which are designed for teams of two to six students.

The general international fee for each course is charged in Pounds Sterling (GBP). In line with the vision and mission of Cranefield College (as reflected in the full Cranefield Prospectus), in order to support development in Africa, persons based in Africa may generally pay a lower fee, which is charged in Rand (ZAR). The 2012 African and further international fees for each course are indicated below.

Looking further towards the future, it is anticipated that a number of integrative continuing professional development (CPD) courses in **Law and Management**, **Law and Psychology**, and **Medicine and Law**, will be launched in September 2013, spearheaded by Dr Roche Steyn.

2. Project Management: Perspective, Planning and Implementation (Individual Course: 2 to 4 months)

2.1. Introduction

This course not only comprehensively covers the fundamental tools and techniques of project management, but also provides perspective on general principles of management that can be applied to most professions. The course is designed for professional project managers and also for other professionals who wish to master the essentials of management for the purpose of applying these in their particular work contexts. The course is open to anyone who is interested in acquiring essential knowledge and skills in project management, regardless of his or her profession.

Apart from basic English proficiency, no other specific admission requirements are set. However, prospective students must be mindful of the fact that they will be required to apply themselves at first-degree level (bachelor's degree). Apart from its

value as an independent course, the course also means that the student will be credited (20 credits) with the first module of the Advanced Diploma learning programme (Module Alpha), which is the first step toward the Master's Degree in Project Management.

2.2. Timing, Duration and Fees

The course is available to any person in any country. MDL courses can be commenced at any time. Materials are dispatched on the next available dispatch date after receipt of the fee (normally within one to two weeks). The general international fee for 2012 is £635.00 (this includes all materials, online support, assessments and examination, and courier to the student's door). Persons based in Africa may pay the lower all-inclusive fee of R5845.00. Regardless of where the student is based, the course should take around two to four months to complete.

2.3. Study Materials, Syllabus and Support

Course materials include:

- 1) two prescribed textbooks, 'Project Management Techniques' and 'Effective Project Management' (the first by a British author, and the other by American authors, so as to provide broader perspective),
- 2) a lecture DVD set,
- 3) a detailed step-by-step study guide.

The lecturers are available online (via email) to answer any specific questions that a student might have about the work. The student will also complete assignments involving baseline planning and critical analysis of practical case studies, which will be formally evaluated.

A broad outline of the contents of the course is as follows:

1) General Principles of Management: An Introduction

- A. Leadership
- B. People
- C. Communication
- D. Strategy
- E. Customer focus
- F. Employee empowerment and decentralised decision-making
- G. Continuous improvement
- H. Systems thinking
- I. Common mistakes and problems in organisations

2) Project Management Overview

- 1 Attributes of a project
- 2 Project life-cycle
- 3 The project management process
- 4 Benefits of project management
- 5 Preparing a request for proposal
- 6 Developing a winning proposal
- 7 Proposal contents
- 8 Pricing considerations
- 9 Proposal submission and follow-up

3) The Project Manager, Teams and Organisations

A. The Project Manager and Team

- 1 Responsibilities of the project manager
- 2 Skills of the project manager
- 3 The new-economy functions of management
- 4 Leading, creating, implementing and improving in the project life-cycle
- 5 Project team development and effectiveness
- 6 Conflict on projects
- 7 Problem-solving
- 8 Project communication and documentation
- 9 Personal communication
- 10 Reports

B. Types of Project Organisation

- 1 Functional-type organisation
- 2 Project-type organisation
- 3 Matrix-type organisation
- 4 Advantages and disadvantages

4) Project Planning, Monitoring and Control

A. Planning the Work:

- 1 Project objective
- 2 Feasibility
- 3 Estimating
- 4 Work Breakdown Structure (WBS)
- 5 Organisational Breakdown Structure (OBS)
- 6 Linear Responsibility Charts (LRCs)
- 7 Developing the network plan
- 8 Role of project management software
- 9 Critical path method
- 10 Schedule barcharts
- 11 Cumulative budgeted cost (CBC)

B. Working the Plan:

- 1 Project monitoring and control
- 2 Trade-off analysis

3 Cost-benefit analysis (scope changes)

5) **Scope Management**

- 1 Effective change control systems
- 2 Managing change
- 3 Post-project evaluation

6) **Procurement**

- 1 Procurement Schedule
- 2 Procurement Cycle

7) **Project Accounts**

- 1 Determining Actual Cost
- 2 Determining the Value of Work Performed
- 3 Cost Performance Analysis
- 4 Cost Forecasting
- 5 Cost Control
- 6 Managing Cash Flow

8) **Resource Planning**

- 1 Resource Considerations
- 2 Resource-Constrained Planning
- 3 Planned Resource Utilisation
- 4 Resource Leveling
- 5 Resource-Limited Scheduling

9) **Project Risk Management**

- 1 External risk
- 2 Internal risk

2.4. Assessment and Awarding of Certificates

Assessment takes the form of a practical examination assignment (based on two or more case studies), which can be undertaken on the last Thursday of every month (except December). The student then has around 17 days to complete and to submit the assignment (submission deadline on the third Monday after that Thursday).

A certificate is awarded upon successful completion of the course. The certificate states that the student has successfully completed **the MDL Short Course in 'Project Management'**, and, should he or she achieve a distinction, this will be so indicated on the certificate.

3. Professional English (Individual Course: 2 to 4 months)

3.1. Introduction

Sharpening your command of English will contribute in a variety of ways to your professional (and personal) development. The Professional English MDL short course is designed to enable the busy professional to master the essentials of accurate and correct English. The central aim is to promote effective and efficient communication in the professional context, focusing practical and technical precision. The course aims to equip people with essential knowledge and skills in formal written and spoken English, and to cultivate an orientation of developing these in everyday practice.

The course is modified depending on the country in which the student is professionally active. In the American and Canadian contexts, for instance, 'American English' (rather than 'British English') must be consistently used. In the context of all the Commonwealth countries, on the other hand, 'British English' must be consistently used.

The benefits of enhanced English skills in the professional context are numerous and significant:

- 1) Effective and efficient communication (most importantly).
- 2) Preventing negative perceptions due to grammatical errors and/or inappropriate tone or usage.
- 3) Enhancing the overall quality of oral presentations and written reports/documents.
- 4) Depending on your particular professional context, professional credibility could be promoted through your command of language in your oral and written communications (also applying the appropriate tone and register/'pitch').
- 5) Finally, in the academic context, language and writing skills are indispensable in producing quality assignments, dissertations and theses.

3.2. Study Materials and Support

Study materials include a two-disc DVD set (with practical exercises) and a detailed step-by-step study guide, guiding the student through the syllabus and the practical assignments. Aspects covered in the course syllabus (in relation to the benefits enumerated under 3.2.2.1 above) include:

- 1) Understanding basic parts of speech and constructions to improve overall command of the language.
- 2) Avoiding mistakes that are commonly made in real-world contexts.
- 3) Refining vocabulary (selected misused/misunderstood words).

4) Practical writing and editing skills.

5) Advice on writing assignments and dissertations/theses.

The DVD set for this course provides perspective on the essential knowledge and skills quickly and conveniently. The student has the opportunity to complete optional practical exercises (following the step-by-step study guide), before undertaking the final examination assignment.

The course lecturers are available online to evaluate the practical exercises, and to provide feedback. The student is expected to sharpen skills in daily practice (implementing the knowledge gained through the course) in his or her particular professional context.

3.3. Timing, Duration and Fees

The course is available to any person in any country (provided that he or she is already basically proficient in English). As is the case with all MDL courses, anyone may register online at any time, and materials will be dispatched on the next available dispatch date after receipt of the full fee.

The general international fee for 2012 is £345.00 (this includes all materials, online support, assessments and examination, and courier to the student's door). Persons based in Africa may pay the lower fee of R2845.00 (but a further amount is added for courier outside South Africa, depending on the country).

3.4. Assessment and Awarding of Certificates

Final assessment takes the form of a practical examination assignment, which can be undertaken on the last Thursday of every month (except December). The student then has around seventeen days to complete the assignment.

A certificate is awarded upon successful completion of the course. The certificate states that the student has successfully completed the MDL short course in 'Advanced Professional English'. Should he or she achieve a distinction, this will be so indicated on the certificate.

Note:

The Project Management and Professional English short courses (2. and 3. above) may be taken concurrently.

4. Advanced Writing Skills

There are two versions of the 'Advanced Writing Skills' course: the 'independent individual course' (3 to 6 months) and the 'individual course for master's or doctoral students' (12 to 24 months). The different admission criteria, syllabus structures and fees for these two courses are explained below.

4.1. Independent Individual Course (3 to 6 months)

4.1.1. Admission Requirements and Scope

This course is available to all those who have successfully completed the short course, 'Professional English', achieving a mark of 60% or higher. 'Advanced Writing Skills' gives you the opportunity to apply yourself in attaining higher levels of skill in accurate and correct writing. It is based on practical hands-on development, relying predominantly on the close interaction between lecturer and student.

Most of the assignments undertaken in the 'Advanced Writing Skills' course are similar to those in the 'Professional English' course, but they are more extensive and a considerably higher level of mastery is expected. Aspects of style, register and tone can also be more closely addressed. There are four major assignments (contributing 15% each to the final module mark):

Assignment 1 involves carefully criticising (and correcting) a few pages of your own writing, after the lecturer has provided some guidelines relating to the writing.

Assignment 2 requires accurately editing two pieces of complex writing (provided by the lecturer).

Assignment 3 entails critically analysing extracts from a book on grammar, usage and effective writing.

Assignment 4 involves accurately using a selection of words in a piece of your original writing.

To pass the course, you must also successfully complete a final practical examination assignment (contributing 40% to the module mark). Success will earn you a certificate affirming that you have successfully completed **the short course in 'Advanced Writing Skills'** through Cranefield College.

4.1.2. Timing, Duration and Fees

The course is available to any person in any country. You may register online at any time. The step-by-step study guide is sent to you online (as PDF) upon payment of the full tuition fee. The general international fee for 2012 is £385.00. Persons based in Africa may pay the lower fee of R3485.00. The course should take around three to four months to complete.

4.2. Individual Course for Master's and Doctoral Students (12 to 24 months)

4.2.1. Admission Requirements and Scope

This course is available to all master's or doctoral students (at any higher education institution) who have already successfully completed the short course, 'Professional English'. For MComPM or PhD students at Cranefield College, the course is offered as a further advanced elective (with some exceptions) to ensure the highest standard of writing in dissertations and theses.

The course provides the opportunity for you to apply yourself in attaining higher levels of skill in accurate and correct writing in the specific context of your dissertation or thesis. It is based on practical hands-on development, relying on the close interaction between you and your lecturer.

The assignments undertaken in the master's/doctoral course build on those in the 'Professional English' course, and, if you have already completed the 'Advanced Writing Skills' short course, this course will build further on that as well.

There are four assignments (contributing 15% each to the final module mark), three of which relate directly to the dissertation. With each assignment, improved quality is expected (and assessment will be stricter).

Assignments 1, 3 and 4 involve the same process in respect of different chapters of the dissertation:

- 1) Your lecturer selects two to three pages of complex writing from one of your draft chapters.
- 2) You then make changes to the best of your ability, carefully criticising (and correcting) your own writing.
- 3) Your lecturer then makes corrections and changes (as applicable) in addition to your corrections. He also makes a few brief provisional comments on your criticisms.
- 4) You then explain why any further changes were made.
- 5) Your lecturer finally provides comprehensive oral feedback (in person, via skype).

Assignment 2 involves correcting/editing a prescribed extract (provided by your lecturer).

Your final practical examination requires the submission of the final draft of your dissertation for evaluation. At this stage, the highest quality is expected. Parts of the document that you submit will be randomly selected for examination. Your mark will be based on accuracy and correctness, as well as tone and style. For that particular examination, the draft must contain a signed declaration that you received no further editorial assistance. Note that your lecturer will obviously not edit your whole dissertation for you. You must do this extensively yourself before submitting the draft for the purpose of advanced English examination.

The final examination result contributes 40% to the final module mark. Success will earn a certificate affirming that you have successfully completed the MDL course in 'Advanced Academic Writing' through Cranefield College.

4.2.2. Timing, Duration and Fees

You may register online at any time, and may then start the course upon payment of the full tuition fee. The administration will then provide the contact details of your personal lecturer.

The 2012 fee for master's/doctoral Advanced Writing course for persons based in Africa is R4485.00, and the (non-African) international fee is £485.00. The course duration will vary according to your needs.

5. Essential Project Management (Fast-track, Team-based Course: 3 weeks)

5.1. Scope

The fast-track course covers slightly fewer aspects than the MDL short course in Project Management (please see 2. above), but is much more intensive. The study material is the same as for the short course (except that there is, of course, a different study guide). The most important principles and techniques were selected for the syllabus, and incorporated into a one-day team study session (using the study guide, textbooks and DVDs), followed by a team **exercise** assignment, and a final team **examination** assignment (based on two or more case studies).

Please note that **you must already have assembled your team (of two to six persons) at the time of registering online for the course**. The members of your team must be in the position to **meet personally for your one-day session** and any subsequent case study discussions (although some of this could also be done via email/skype) for the purpose of your practical assignments.

5.2. Duration and Assessment

After two hours of individual preparation time (in the days preceding the one-day session), the student undertakes the one-day full-time session with his or her team. An able facilitator/coordinator nominated from the team has the task of ensuring that discussions run smoothly and within the times stipulated in the minute-by-minute guidance provided in the study guide. Numerous important discussions (relating to the principles and techniques studied) are scheduled throughout the day. Notes made during these discussions are later submitted in a document to the lecturer for his perusal. A practical formative exercise is also started (with step-by-step guidance from the study guide and DVDs) on the day, and the baseline plan resulting from that exercise is submitted to the lecturer for evaluation (in the following week).

The exercise assignment is received in the week before the scheduled one-day session (in communication with the lecturer). The one-day session can be arranged for any day of the week (including Saturday/Sunday). The team has one week (after the one-day session) to complete the assignment. Upon submitting the assignment, the team then receives the final examination assignment (for which the team then has two weeks). An example of the timing is as follows (example from 2009 calendar):

Saturday, 10 January: One-day team session.

Wednesday, 14 January: Submit final baseline planning exercises and notes on the various prescribed discussions (from the one-day session).

Saturday, 17 January: Deadline for submitting the completed case-study exercise assignment.

Saturday, 31 January: Deadline for submitting the completed final examination assignment.

Each student is awarded a certificate upon successful completion of the course. The certificate states that the student has successfully completed **the team-based course in 'Project Management'**, and, should the team achieve a distinction, this will be so indicated on the certificate.

5.3. Availability and Fees

The course is available to any team of two to six persons in any country, and you may register online at any time. Please note that you must **each fill in your own online registration form, and indicate the names of your fellow team members** so that the administration can identify your team. The general international fee for 2012 is £535.00 (this includes all materials, online support, assessments and examination, and courier to the team coordinator's door). Persons based in Africa may pay the lower all-inclusive fee of R4845.00.

6. Essential Professional English (Fast-track, Team-based Course: 3 weeks)

6.1. Scope

The fast-track course covers the same scope as the MDL short course in Professional English (please see 3. above), but has only two exercise assignments and a final examination assignment. It is also, unsurprisingly, much more intensive than the three-month course.

Please note that **you must already have assembled your team (of two to six persons) at the time of registering online for the course.** The members of your team must be in the position to **meet personally for your one-day session** and any subsequent case-study discussions (although some of these could also be done via email/skype) for the purpose of your practical assignments.

6.2. Duration and Assessment

The students start with a full-time one-day study session (using the study guide and DVDs), with no preparation required. On this first day, they start their first exercise assignment (which involves editing a piece of complex writing). The team then has one week within which to submit the completed exercise assignment. (Each member must sign a declaration of participation in the team assignment). The second exercise assignment (which is individualised) is then started and completed in week two; this assignment involves each student's own writing. The team examination assignment is received at the end of week 2. The team then has one week to submit the completed assignment for examination. An example of the timing is as follows (example from 2009 calendar):

Saturday, 10 January: One-day team session.

Saturday, 17 January: Deadline for submitting the completed team exercise assignment. Receive individual assignment.

Saturday, 24 January: Deadline for submitting the completed individual exercise assignment. Receive team final examination assignment.

Saturday, 31 January: Deadline for submitting the completed team final examination assignment.

Each student is awarded a certificate upon successful completion of the course. The certificate states that the student has successfully completed **the team-based course in 'Professionally Applied English'**, and, should the team achieve a distinction, this will be indicated on the certificate.

6.3. Availability and Fees

The course is available to any team of two to six persons in any country, and you may register online at any time. Please note that you must **each fill in your own online registration form, and indicate the names of your fellow team members** so that the administration can identify your team.

The general international fee for 2012 is £295.00 (this includes all materials, online support, assessments and examination, and courier to the team coordinator's door). Persons based in Africa may pay the lower fee of R2485.00 (but a further amount is added for international courier, depending on the country).