

Business Skills – Fall 2025 – Course Outline

1. Course Information

Course	MDA9160-01	SS4960F/AS9860	MDA9160-02
Location	NCB 284	UCC 66	NCB 284
Day/Time	Tues - 12:30 to 3:30 pm	Thurs - 12:30 to 3:30 pm	Fri - 9 am to Noon

List of Prerequisites

Undergraduate Students: Registration in 4th year of an Actuarial Science, Data Science, Statistics or Financial Modelling module.

Graduate Students: Registration in a graduate program offered by the Department of Statistical & Actuarial Sciences, or the Master of Data Analytics program.

Unless you have either the prerequisites for this course or written special permission from the Department of Statistical & Actuarial Sciences to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course, and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees if you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

2. Instructor Information

Instructors	Email	Office	Office Hours
Ashley McAlpine	ashley.mcalpine@uwo.ca	WSC 274	Thurs - 9:30 to 11:00 am
TA for MDA9160-01 (Tues): Raushan Zhumanova (rzhumano@uwo.ca)			
TA for SS4960F/AS9860 (Thurs): Sahab Zandi (szandi@uwo.ca)			
TA for MDA9160-02 (Fri): Shi Yu (Dora) Cao (scao85@uwo.ca)			

Email

Students must use their Western (@uwo.ca) email addresses when contacting their instructor. If the instructor's office hours do not work with your class schedule, send an email to your instructor to arrange another time to meet.

3. Course Syllabus, Schedule, Delivery Mode

This course aims to develop important business skills that are often not emphasized in the formal education of quantitative financial professionals. The course focuses on these main topic areas:

1. How businesses work & financial statement analysis
2. Oral and written communication skills
3. Leadership and people management

This course partners with the Careers & Experience Team at Western to offer students an ‘Industry Project.’ This project brings together all the topics covered in the course through hands-on experience with a local company facing a real business challenge. Students will gain insight into the company’s operations, analyze relevant data (such as revenue and cost projections), and work in teams to understand the problem and develop solutions. At the end of the project, students will present their analysis and recommendations to the company’s management team.

Lecture Schedule:

Week	Topics	MDA 9160-01 (Tues)	SS4960F/ AS9860 (Thurs)	MDA 9160-02 (Fri)
1	Intro to course Business Framework Assigned: CliftonStrengths Assessment	Sept 9	Sept 11	Sept 5*
2	Due: CliftonStrengths Assessment Southwest Case, SWOT & Financial Ratio Analysis In-class Writing Assignment	Sept 16	Sept 18	Sept 12
3	Introduce Industry Project – Industry Partner Visits Class Assigned: Stats Topic Presentation & Peer Feedback	Sept 23	Sept 25	Sept 26
4	Guest Speaker – CliftonStrengths Intro & Survey Results Debate Industry Project Groups Assigned	Sept 29** WSC248	Oct 2	Oct 3
5	Due: Stats Topic Presentation & Peer Feedback Project Management Assigned: Role-play	Oct 7	Oct 9	Oct 10
6	Due: Role-play Guest Speaker – Strengths-based Workplace Practices	Oct 14	Oct 16	Oct 17
7	Due: Industry Project Progress Report Guest Speaker – Presentation Skills Assigned: Business Pitch Competition Time to Work on Industry Project	Oct 21	Oct 23	Oct 24
8	Guest Speaker – Power BI TRACOM Social Style Model & Plane Crash Exercise Industry Partner provides feedback on Progress Report	Oct 28	Oct 30	Oct 31
9	Reading Week (Nov 3 – 9)			
10	Due: Business Pitch Competition Time to work on Industry Project	Nov 11	Nov 13	Nov 14
11	Time to work on Industry Project Field Trip: Morrisette Institute for Entrepreneurship Guest Speaker – Design Thinking	Nov 18	Nov 20	Nov 21
12	Due: Industry Project Presentations Due: Final Deliverables for Industry Partner	Nov 25	Nov 27	Nov 28
13	Guest Speaker – Reflection In-class Reflection Paper	Dec 2	Dec 4	Dec 5

* No class on Sept 19 due to Vector Institute’s AI Summit & Career Fair, so starting one week earlier.

** No class on Sept 30 for National Truth & Reconciliation Day

The intent for this course to be delivered in person. Should any university-declared emergency require some or all of the course to be delivered online, either synchronously or asynchronously, the course will adapt accordingly. The grading scheme will **not** change. Any assessments affected will be conducted online as determined by the course instructor.

4. Course Materials

The following resources are required to be purchased for this course:

- **Ivey Coursepack - \$58.10**
 - Purchase using this link: <https://www.iveypublishing.ca/s/ivey-coursepack/a1ROF000004NgPG2A0> (you will need to create a student account)
 - This provides you an e-version of the articles.
- **CliftonStrengths Assessment - \$20.00**
 - Purchase using this link: <https://leadershiplearning.purplepay.uwo.ca/cliftonstrengths/cliftonstrengths-top-5-assessment-code>
 - It can take up to 5 business to receive your access code.

Students are responsible for checking the course OWL site (<http://westernu.brightspace.com/>) on a regular basis for course material and updates. This is the primary method by which information will be distributed. If students need assistance with the course OWL site, they can seek support on the [OWL Brightspace Help](#) page or contact the Western Technology Services Helpdesk by phone at 519-661-3800 or ext. 83800.

5. Methods of Evaluation

The course grade will be calculated as listed below:

Class Attendance	5%
Class Participation	15%
Writing Assignment	5%
Stats Topic Presentation & Peer Feedback	15%
Role Play	5%
Business Pitch Competition	10%
Industry Project	45%
(i) Project Progress Report - 5%	
(ii) Final Deliverables to Industry Partner - 20%	
(iii) Presentation - 15%	
(iv) Reflection Paper* - 5%	
<hr/> Total	100%

*Graduate students will have an extra component required for this assessment, in comparison to undergraduate students.

Use of Generative AI Tools

Generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Copilot, Gemini) can be used for brainstorming ideas. AI tools **should not** be used for writing final reports, presentations, or presentation dialogue.

This course places a strong emphasis on developing the ability to think critically and communicate effectively in real-time settings—skills that are essential for success in interviews, business meetings, and other professional contexts where AI support is not available.

General information about missed coursework

Undergraduate Students:

Students must familiarize themselves with the *University Policy on Academic Consideration – Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs* posted on the Academic Calendar:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration_Sep24.pdf,

This policy does not apply to requests for Academic Consideration submitted for **attempted or completed work**, whether online or in person.

The policy also does not apply to students experiencing longer-term impacts on their academic responsibilities. These students should consult [Accessible Education](#).

For procedures on how to submit Academic Consideration requests, please see the information posted on the Office of the Registrar's webpage: https://registrar.uwo.ca/academics/academic_considerations/
All requests for Academic Consideration must be made within 48 hours after the assessment date or submission deadline.

All Academic Consideration requests must include supporting documentation; however, recognizing that formal documentation may not be available in some extenuating circumstances, the policy allows students to make one Academic Consideration request **without supporting documentation** in this course. However, the **Industry Project** assessment is excluded from this, and therefore always requires formal supporting documentation.

When a student *mistakenly* submits their one allowed Academic Consideration request **without supporting documentation** for the assessment listed above or those in the **Coursework with Assessment Flexibility** section below, the request cannot be recalled and reapplied. This privilege is forfeited.

If you are granted Academic Consideration for missing a deadline, your instructor will decide whether to offer a make-up opportunity or if your course grade will be reweighted. This is determined on a case-by-case basis.

If you are not granted Academic Consideration for missing a deadline, a late penalty of 20% per day will be applied. Work that is submitted 5 or more days late will not be graded.

Graduate Students:

If you are unable to meet a course requirement due to illness or other serious circumstance, please follow the procedure below.

1. For medical absences, get a Student Medical Certificate (SMC) signed by a licensed medical or mental health practitioner.

2. For non-medical absences, get appropriate documentation to prove the absence.

Note that in all cases, students are required to contact their instructors within 24 hours of the missed assessment or deadline.

If your instructor concludes that you had a valid reason for missing a deadline, your instructor will decide whether to offer a make-up opportunity or if your course grade will be reweighted. This is determined on a case-by-case basis.

If your instructor concludes that you did not have a valid reason for missing a deadline, a late penalty of 20% per day will be applied. Work that is submitted 5 or more days late will not be graded.

Coursework with Assessment Flexibility

Class attendance accounts for 5% of the total course grade. For each class attended on time, students will earn 0.5% (late arrivals will receive 0%). The first class is excluded from grading, which leaves eleven remaining classes. A student can be late or absent for one of the eleven classes and still receive the full 5%. Students who attend all eleven classes on time will earn 5.5%.

Class participation makes up 15% of the total course grade. Students will receive a participation grade after each of the eleven classes (with the first class excluded from grading). The lowest participation grade will be dropped, and the average of the remaining ten grades will determine the overall class participation grade.

Considering the assessment flexibility outlined above, the instructor will deny all Academic Consideration requests for attendance and participation. For instance, if a student misses two classes, one absence will not impact their attendance or participation grade. For the second absence, the student will receive a zero for both attendance and participation for that class, even if Academic Consideration is granted.

Essential Learning Requirements

Even when Academic Considerations are granted for missed coursework, the following are deemed essential to earn a passing grade:

- A passing grade for class attendance
- A passing grade on the Industry Project

6. Additional Statements

6.1 Religious Accommodation

When conflicts with a religious holiday that requires an absence from the University or prohibits certain activities, students should request an accommodation for their absence in writing to the course instructor and/or the Academic Advising office of their Faculty of Registration. This notice should be made as early as possible but not later than two weeks prior to the writing or the examination (or one week prior to the writing of the test).

Please visit the Diversity Calendars posted on our university's EDID website for the recognized religious holidays: <https://www.edi.uwo.ca>.

6.2 Academic Accommodation Policies

Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact Accessible Education, which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The policy on Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities can be found at: https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic_Accommodation_disabilities.pdf

6.3 General Academic Policies

The website for Registrar Services is <https://www.registrar.uwo.ca/>.

Use of @uwo.ca email

In accordance with policy, https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/policies_procedures/section1/mapp113.pdf, the centrally administered e-mail account provided to students will be considered the individual's official university email address. It is the responsibility of the account holder to ensure that emails received from the University at their official university address are attended to in a timely manner.

Requests for Relief (formally known as “appeals”)

Policy on Request for Relief from Academic Decision:

https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/requests_for_relief_from_academic_decisions.pdf

Undergraduate Procedures on Request for Relief from Academic Decision:

https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/undergrad_requests_for_relief_procedure.pdf

Graduate Procedures on Request for Relief from Academic Decision:

https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/graduate_requests_for_relief_procedure.pdf

6.4 Scholastic offences

Policy on Scholastic Offences:

https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_offences.pdf

Undergraduate Procedures on Scholastic Offences:

https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/undergrad_scholastic_offence_procedure.pdf

Graduate Procedures on Scholastic Offences:

https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/graduate_scholastic_offence_procedure.pdf

Use of Electronic Devices During Assessments

In courses offered by the Faculty of Science, the possession of unauthorized electronic devices during any in-person assessment (such as tests, midterms, and final examinations) is strictly prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to: mobile phones, smart watches, smart glasses, and wireless earbuds or headphones.

Unless explicitly stated otherwise in advance by the instructor, the presence of any such device at your desk, on your person, or within reach during an assessment will be treated as a scholastic offence, even if the device is not in use.

Use of Generative AI Tools

Generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Copilot, Gemini) can be used for brainstorming ideas. AI tools **should not** be used for writing final reports, presentations, or presentation dialogue.

This course places a strong emphasis on developing the ability to think critically and communicate effectively in real-time settings—skills that are essential for success in interviews, business meetings, and other professional contexts where AI support is not available.

6.5 Support Services

Please visit the Science & Basic Medical Sciences Academic Counselling webpage for information on adding/dropping courses, academic considerations for absences, appeals, exam conflicts, and many other academic related matters: <https://www.uwo.ca/sci/counselling/>

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western (<https://uwo.ca/health/>) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced sexual or gender-based violence (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at

https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html

To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.

Please contact the course instructor if you require lecture or printed material in an alternate format or if any other arrangements can make this course more accessible to you. If you have any questions regarding accommodations, you may also wish to contact Accessible Education at

http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible_education/index.html