

Course BA110: Essential Skills for the Business Analyst

Course Duration: 4 days

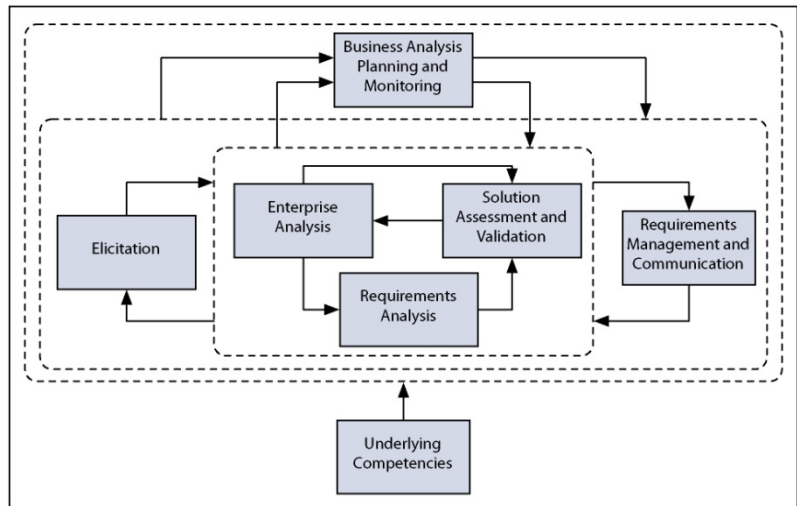
Prerequisite Courses: none

Certification: Earn 28 IIBA™ Continuing Development Units™ (CDUs).



Achieveblue™ is an Endorsed Education Provider™ with the International Institute of Business Analysis™. This course has been officially endorsed as part of Achieveblue’s business analysis curriculum within that program.

This course aligns with and provides topical coverage for all knowledge areas within version 2.0 of the IIBA® Business Analysis Body of Knowledge®.



Course Overview

Intended Audience:

This course is designed for business analysts, systems analysts, or any other project team member involved with requirements. New business analysts will learn the tasks they are expected to perform and why each task is important. Experienced business analysts will learn new techniques and more structured approaches to improve their requirements gathering activities. This course may also be appropriate for individuals who manage business analysts or those who work with the business requirements document and need a more in-depth understanding of the process and documentation.

Prerequisites:

There are no official course prerequisites for attending this course. General prerequisites include business level proficiency in verbal and written English.

Positioning:

The business analyst role requires an extensive inventory of tools and techniques to identify the best solution for the real business need. This skill set includes real-world problem solving skills, requirements analysis, interviewing techniques, and critical thinking skills. As we continue with iterative projects and move toward more agile approaches, these skills become even more critical. Through education and practice business analysts will develop and enhance their analytical skills and provide significant value to projects and the business enterprise.

Topical Outline

Unit 1: Introduction

- What is the role of a business analyst?
- Review the major tasks performed by the business analyst.
- Define the essential skills needed to perform their tasks.

Unit 2: Project Participants and their Roles

- Identify project participants and their roles.
- Discuss how the business analyst interacts with these participants.

Unit 3: Scoping the Project from the Business Analyst's Perspective

- Understand *why* the project is being done. Without this understanding it will be difficult for business analysts to elicit and document the *right* requirements and focus their business analysis work in the appropriate areas.
- Understand the organizational environment. Identify the business stakeholders who will be involved in the project and how they will impact the business area analysis.
- Learn techniques, including the context level dataflow diagram, to identify and document "what is" and, more importantly, "what is not" to be analyzed. This diagram includes interactions with people, other organizations, existing systems, and other software applications.
- Develop a change control process to ensure that once the scope of the project has been approved, all project participants will operate within the scope or formally approve any scope changes.
- Discuss how a business analyst should collect, organize, and maintain project information.
- Workshop - Scope the class case study project.

Unit 4: Defining and Detailing Requirements

- What is a requirement? Why is it important to gather and document requirements? What are the criteria used to judge the quality of "excellent" requirements?
- Learn how software developers use requirements
- Understand the difference between analysis and design or "business" vs. "technological" requirements. Why is it necessary to understand the business problem before deciding on a solution?
- Learn the 5 core requirement components, what they describe, and why they are important.
 - Entities
 - Attributes
 - Process (using system use cases)
 - External Agent (using actors)
 - Business Rules

Unit 5: Documenting Requirements

- Learn the recommended approach to categorizing requirements. Why should requirements be categorized? Who uses each category? Why is it difficult to create distinct categories?

- Business Requirements
- Functional Requirements
- Technical Requirements
- Learn the concept of traceability of requirements.
- Review several documentation formats and analysis techniques. Business analysts should be aware of the documentation options and be trained in the particular techniques preferred by their organization.
 - Textual templates
 - Entity relationship diagram
 - Decomposition diagram
 - Use case diagram and descriptions
 - Workflow diagram
 - Prototyping
- Consider options for packaging requirements and choosing the appropriate documentation techniques for each project.
- Review currently available software tools that can be used to document requirements.
- Workshop - Documenting and presenting requirements

Unit 6: Conducting a Requirements Review

- Learn how to conduct a requirements review: Who should participate? What are the required steps? How is a session conducted? What are the common challenges?
- Workshop - Review a sample requirements package.
 - Identify missing or incomplete requirements.
 - Identify potential test cases.
 - Document issues and develop an approach for going forward.

Unit 7: Validating Requirements

- Introduction to software testing: Why is testing important? What is the business analyst's role in testing? What is the primary objective of testing? What are the phases and types of testing?
- Learn the two main testing documents: test plans and test cases.
- Learn to verify that the business requirements are complete by identifying test cases.

Unit 8: Business Analysis Communication Skills

- Focus on specific communication skills necessary for eliciting requirements:
 - Asking the *right* questions
 - Conflict management
 - Active listening skills
 - Paraphrasing, mirroring, acknowledging
- Learn to use and determine the appropriate elicitation technique:
 - One-on-one interviews
 - Facilitated sessions
 - Surveys
 - Brainstorming
 - Document analysis
 - Focus group
 - Job shadowing/observation
 - Competitive analysis
- Effective communication skills: How should business analysts communicate with users? How should business analysts communicate with the technical team?
- Improve listening skills by recognizing common barriers to listening, understanding verbal and nonverbal messages, acknowledging the message, and responding with appropriate feedback.

- Improve your ability to develop in-depth, detailed questions for business area experts by identifying the appropriate source of information, deciding on an approach, and using clear, consistent language.
- Communicate effectively with remote/virtual teams.
- “Facilitation on the fly” techniques for agile team collaboration.
- Workshop - Conduct an interview.

Unit 9: Eliciting Requirements in a Group Setting

- Conduct highly effective and successful meetings
- Conduct facilitated information gathering sessions: understand the importance of session roles, session agenda, resulting work product, and session rules. Learn the difference between a facilitated session and a traditional meeting.
- Review an approach to group decision making and understand why consensus is preferable to compromise or a majority decision.
- Manage group discussions, manage group participation, work towards consensus, and manage group conflict.

Unit 10: Course Summary

- Review Business Analysts tasks and skills.
- Discussion of next steps for the Business Analyst.
- Student questions/discussion topics.

Appendix: Overview of Application Development Methodologies

- Discuss various methodologies for application development: Waterfall, Information Engineering, Rapid Application Development, Iterative / Agile, Spiral, Unified Process.
- Learn which models are used in each methodology.

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