

# Change Skills

**Graduate Certificate in Change Management**

AGSM MBA Programs

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## **Change Skills**

### **Course overview**



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# Session 1, 2009 Calendar

## Graduate Certificate in Change Management

### Change Skills

Abbreviations: LP = Learning Partner; M = Mentor.

Week no.	Week begins	Unit	Contacts	Assessment due (% weighting)	Online activities	Other activities
0	2 February		LP M		Opening dialogue	Introductory activities
1	9 February	1	LP		Online activity 1	Teleconference 1
2	16 February	2	LP M		Online activity 2	
3	23 February	3	LP		Online activity 3	
4	2 March	4	LP		Online activity 4	
5	9 March	5	LP M			
6	16 March	6		Assessment 1 due 17 March (15%)		Teleconference 2
7	23 March	7	LP			
8	30 March	8	LP M		Online activity 5	
9	6 April	9	LP		Online activity 6	
Session Break						
10	20 April	10	LP M	Assessment 2 due 21 April (25%)		
11	27 April	11	LP		Online activity 7	
12	4 May	12	LP M	Assessment 3 (Online activities 1-10) (30%)	Online activity 8	Teleconference 3
13	11 May			Assessment 4 due 16 May (30%)		

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# Course outline

Welcome to *Change Skills*.

In this opening section of the Course Overview, we will say something about the aims and structure of the course. In later sections of the Overview, we will outline:

- The action learning cycle that you will be using in the course to develop your skills as a change agent
- The learning resources that are available in the course to support your skills development
- The dialogue process that we will use in the online activities
- The schedule of contacts that you will have during the course with your learning partner(s), your tutor and your mentor
- The Change Skills audit, which you will use to evaluate your skills as a change agent and to obtain feedback from others about your skills
- The course assessments.

## Course aims

*Change Skills* focuses on the development of your skills as a change agent. The aims of the course are to enable you to:

- Analyse and critique your approach to skills development
- Strengthen your skills development process
- Identify a range of core skills required for leading, managing and facilitating change
- Deepen your understanding of these core skills
- Assess your competence in each skills area – recognising your strengths and identifying skills that you need to strengthen in order to be a more effective change agent
- Formulate action plans to develop your skills, building on your strengths and strengthening skills that need to be further developed
- Implement your skills development plans.

## Course structure

The course consists of 12 units.

*Unit 1* examines the skills and processes required to manage your development as a change agent, and outlines the selection of core skills that are covered in the course.

*Units 2 to 4* examine some core change agent skills:

- self-management skills
- diagnostic skills
- communication skills

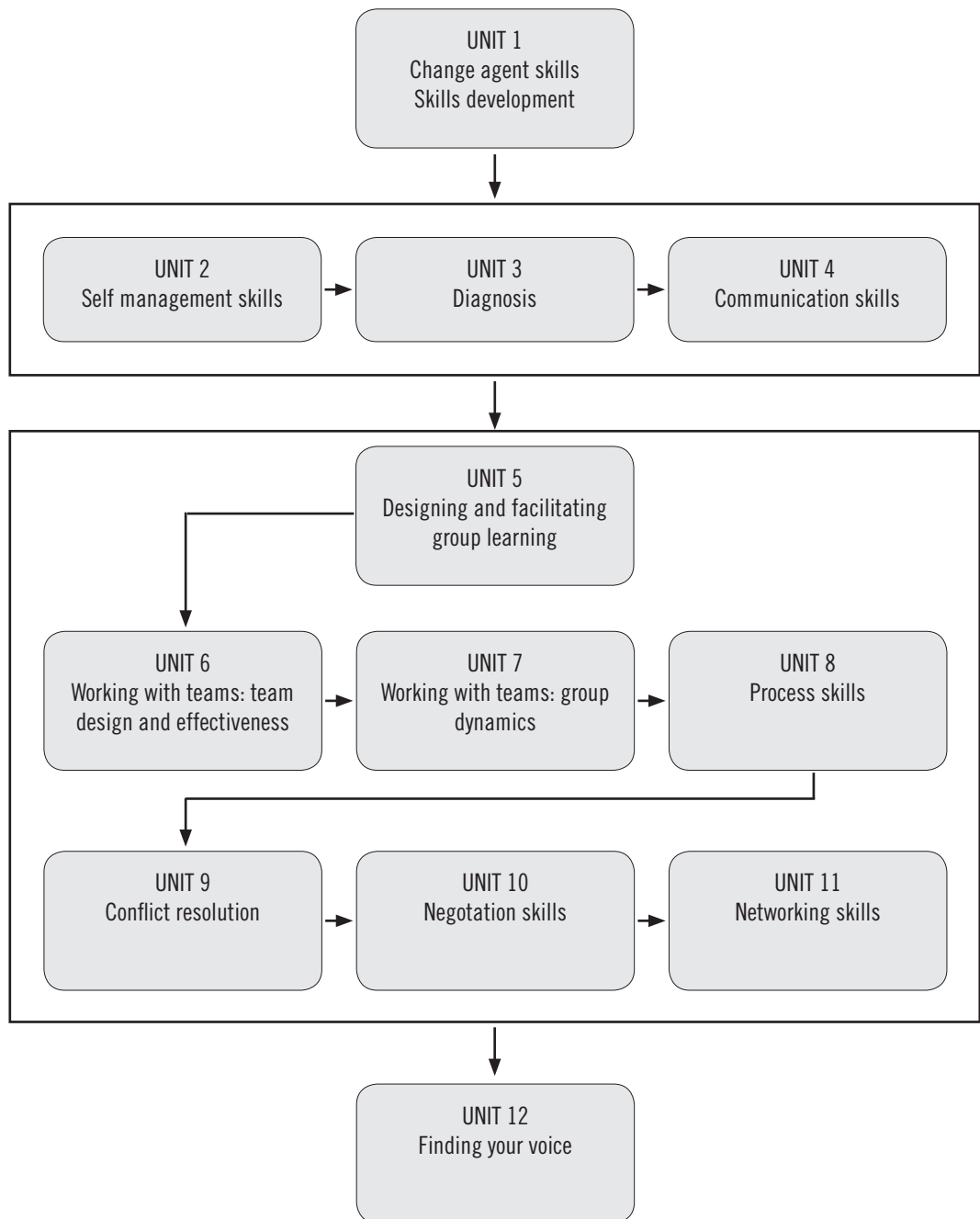
*Units 5 to 11* consider the ways in which the core skills examined in Units 2–4 can be combined and sequenced to tackle particular challenges:

- facilitating group learning and skills development
- working with teams
- improving interpersonal processes in organisations
- conflict resolution
- negotiation
- networking

*Unit 12* examines some ideas about how we can find our voice as change agents.

Each unit includes exercises to apply course ideas and learnings to your work as a change agent, and one or more readings. You are expected to complete one unit each week.

The unit structure is summarised in the following diagram.



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# The action learning cycle

In each of the units in the course, we encourage you to reflect on your work as a change agent, devise ways to develop your skills and improve your performance, and begin implementing your development plans. These processes are part of the *action learning cycle*.

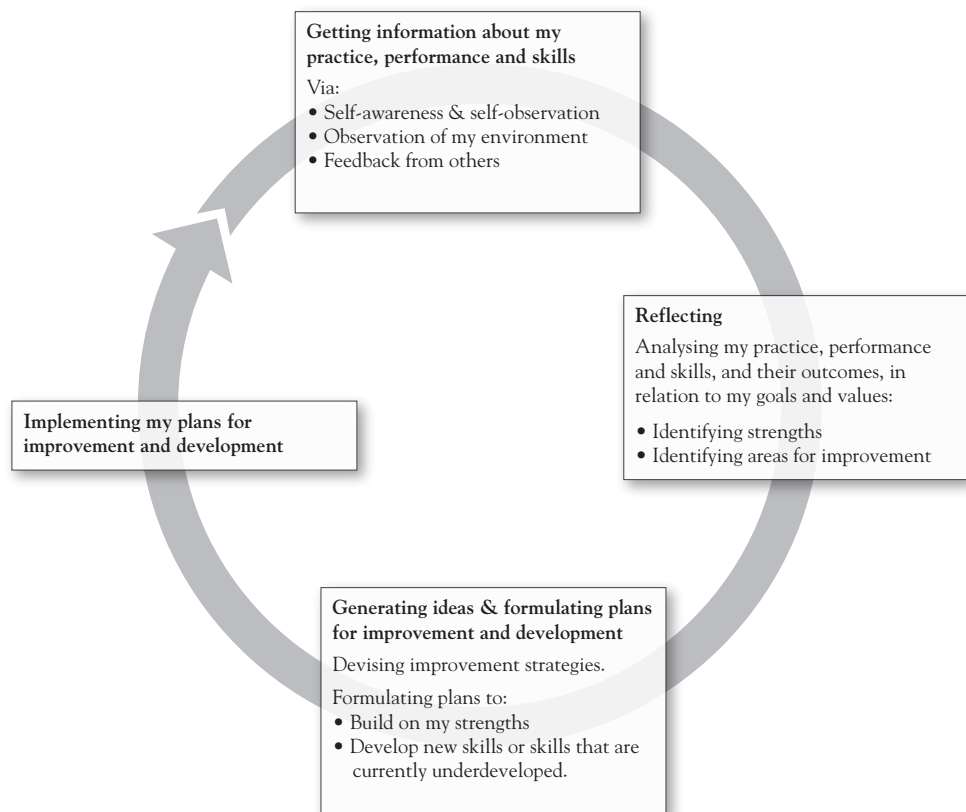
In the action learning cycle, you use information – gained from self-awareness, self-observation, observation of your environment and feedback from others – to reflect on your practice, performance and skills as a change agent. In your reflections, you aim to identify:

- what you do effectively as a change agent and the strengths that enable you to be effective
- areas of your work where there is a need or opportunity to improve your effectiveness.

You then generate ideas about ways to develop your skills and improve your performance and you formulate development plans. In the implementation phase of the cycle, you take the steps outlined in your plans.

The cycle is summarised in Figure 1 below.

**Figure 1** *Using action learning for skills development*



In action learning, we can focus on how we handled a particular incident or challenge e.g. the way we reacted defensively at a particular point in time to someone who was resisting a change. Or we can focus on a pattern in the way we have handled a particular type of incident or challenge over a period of time.

In what follows, we look at the action learning cycle in more detail. We will use the example of Susan who is reflecting on her responses to people who resist change. Susan is considering the possibility that she has sometimes reacted defensively to resistance and that these defensive responses have not been effective. How could Susan use the action learning cycle to develop more effective responses to resistance?

### **Drawing on experience**

The experience on which Susan draws in her reflections could include:

- Her observation of her behaviour and the outcomes
- Her internal experience of the thoughts and feelings behind her behaviour
- Feedback from others e.g. colleagues who have observed her behaviour in this kind of situation.

### **Reflecting**

In reflecting on her response in a particular situation, Susan could consider:

- Whether and how her response was defensive;
- The perceptions, thoughts and feelings behind her behaviour – in particular, how she experienced the situation as threatening;
- What it was in the situation that ‘triggered’ her reaction;
- The effects of her defensive responses on others and on the change process;
- Whether the effects of her defensive responses aligned with her goals and values as a change agent.

In this phase of the action learning cycle, it could be helpful for Susan to use concepts and theories about defensive reactions to interpret and analyse her responses.

### **Devising ways to improve performance**

In this phase of the action learning cycle, Susan would generate ideas about improved ways of responding to resistance.

If she has identified ways in which her defensive responses have been appropriate and effective, she could consider ways of building on these strengths.

If she has concluded that her defensiveness has sometimes undermined her effectiveness as a change agent, she would consider alternative non-defensive responses and the skills that would be required in order to respond non-defensively. For example, she might conclude that she needs to exercise self-management skills to control feelings of impatience or irritation, or that she needs to use listening skills to understand the concerns behind the other person's resistance.

In this phase of the cycle, concepts and theories about constructive responses to resistance could help her come up with developmental ideas.

Susan would then formulate a plan identifying the steps she will take in similar future situations to respond to resistance more constructively. For example, the steps might include ways of managing her emotional responses and ways of communicating more effectively.

Her development plan could also include steps she could take to develop the necessary skills e.g. by taking training courses, enlisting the help of a coach or mentor, etc.

### **Implementing development plans**

In this phase of the cycle, Susan would implement the steps in her development plan.

### **Reiterating the cycle**

Susan would then reiterate the action learning cycle. She would gather information about the implementation of her development plan – through self-observation, observation of the outcomes of her new approach, and feedback from others. This information would be used as the basis for further reflection.

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# Learning resources

In *Change Skills*, the following resources are available to assist you in your action learning and skills development:

- The text, exercises and readings in the units
- Feedback on your skills via a skills audit
- Your tutor
- Your learning partner(s)/study group
- Your mentor
- Online dialogues
- Teleconferences
- Written assessments

## The units

As noted above, the units are intended to provide concepts, theories and frameworks to help you reflect on your skills and devise plans to improve your effectiveness as a change agent.

The exercises in the units encourage you to continually apply the course ideas to yourself and to your work as a change agent, and to explore their practical implications for your development.

## Feedback on your skills

The Change Skills audit outlined later in this Course Overview will provide a systematic way for you to evaluate your skills and seek evaluative feedback from others about your skills.

The feedback will be processed by Leaderskills Group Pty Ltd and results will be available to you from the beginning of Week 1.

## Your tutor

Your main contact with your tutor will be in the online dialogues in the dialogue areas of the elearning website. Your tutor will post dialogue topics and facilitate the dialogue process.

For personal or confidential matters, you can contact your tutor by email within the elearning site. Feedback on your written assessments will be sent to you via email.

In the Introductory Activities for the week before Week 1 (accessed from the elearning Homepage), you are invited to send an email to your tutor introducing yourself and outlining your reasons for undertaking the course.

## **Your learning partner(s)**

Your learning partner/study group is a critical ingredient of the GCCM learning process.

It is best to find a learning partner/study group in your geographic area so that you have an opportunity for face-to-face contact with fellow students during the course.

Learning partners/study groups normally meet once a week. These meetings provide an opportunity to discuss:

- The week's unit and the exercises in the unit
- The feedback you have received in the skills audit and its implications for your skills development
- Your progress in implementing your skills development plans during the course

Details of possible topics for discussion are given in the schedule of contacts later in this Course Overview.

In forming your learning partnership/study group, it will be helpful to use the Profile section of the General Dialogue page, where members of your class will post introductory details during the week before Week 1.

Once you have selected a learning partner/study group, it would be good to clarify the arrangements for meeting, your learning goals for the partnership/group and the ways you will be working together.

Remember that you are a learning resource for your learning partner(s) – a source of support, insight and challenge. It would be good to reflect on the contributions you can make as an effective learning partner.

## **Your mentor**

Your mentor's role is to assist you in linking your learnings to the workplace. You could have the same mentor through all the GCCM courses or find a different mentor for each course.

After the initial contact with your mentor, five mentoring sessions are recommended over the duration of the course, with specific activities suggested for each session (see the Schedule of contacts, later in this Course Overview).

The GCCM Mentor's Handbook outlines the mentor's role. The following excerpts from the booklet will give you an idea of what might be expected from a mentor. This may influence your decision about whom to approach.

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### **Who should be a GCCM mentor?**

An effective GCCM mentor will be someone who is currently working as a change agent and who has significantly more experience in this field than the student.

It is important that you as a GCCM mentor see clear benefits for yourself in taking on this role. This is what will sustain your commitment to the student for the duration of the course. The mentor-student relationship should be reciprocal so each party is able and willing to learn from the other.

#### **The role of the GCCM mentor**

The learning philosophy of the course is based on the action learning approach. The course draws on the students' experiences in the workplace, and provides concepts, theories and activities to help them reflect on those experiences and learn from them. The learning then gets translated back into their practice at work.

Each student in the GCCM will need a mentor to assist them in making the link from their learning on the course back into the workplace. This mentor may be constant for the duration of the course, or may change from course to course.

As a mentor, you will carry out this role by conducting mentoring sessions with a student enrolled in the GCCM. Each mentoring session will be aimed at assisting the student with one of the course activities. Specific activities have been designated as appropriate for discussion with mentors.

#### **What level of commitment will be required?**

As a GCCM mentor you will be required to make the following commitment:

- dedicate at least 30 minutes to the mentoring session for each student you are mentoring
- spend no more than 30 minutes preparing for each mentoring session
- conduct the mentoring sessions (ideally face-to-face but alternatively by phone) at a time and place convenient to both of you, but which enables the student to meet course deadlines
- nurture and develop the student by taking a personal interest in their progress throughout the course
- assist the student in resolving any conflicts between their work and study commitments
- assist the student to identify suitable learning experiences at work
- maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality as agreed with the student.

### **As a GCCM mentor:**

You will not be required to:

- read the course materials
  - be an expert in each and every aspect of the course materials (that is the role of the tutor)
  - be in the same geographic location as the student (although this would be ideal).
- 

In summary, the characteristics of an effective mentor are:

- experience in the field of change management
- an interest in change management ideas
- an openness to learning
- availability and willingness to spend time with the GCCM student
- good listening skills
- coaching and developmental skills, e.g. giving feedback, providing encouragement, empathy.

When you approach someone to be your mentor, please provide him or her with a copy of the Handbook,

In your initial contact with your mentor, you will need to discuss your arrangements for further meetings and what you expect from him/her. You should also discuss your mentor's expectations for the mentoring relationship. This is a learning opportunity for them too and an opportunity to discuss the latest thinking about change management with you. In return for the wisdom, guidance and support your mentor provides, make sure that he/she receives intellectual stimulation from you.

## **The online dialogues**

There are eight assessable online dialogues in *Change Skills*. These provide opportunities to discuss:

- The concepts, frameworks and theories in the course and their application to your work as a change agent
- Your analysis and evaluation of your skills, on the basis of your skills audit results
- Your development plans and your progress in implementing them during the course

The Introductory Activities in the week before Week 1 provide guidance about the elearning website and an opportunity to explore the dialogue process before the first assessable dialogue in Week 1. The Introductory Activities can be accessed from your elearning Homepage.

Each online dialogue is an important forum for sharing your ideas, experiences and learnings with fellow students and with your tutor.

The eight dialogues together count towards 30% of the grade, each dialogue counting equally.

Later in this Overview, we provide more advice about your contributions to the online dialogues. Further advice is given in Section 2 of *Managing Your Learning*, which can be found in Resources on your Homepage.

## Teleconferences

There will be three teleconferences with your tutor during the course, with about 6 participants in each teleconference. The first teleconference in Week 1 will provide an opportunity to clarify course requirements, learning processes and resources.

## Written assessments

The three written assessments are designed to assess your understanding of the course and to stimulate the practical application of the course to your work as change agents.

The first assessment asks you to analyse and evaluate your self-management skills and to outline a plan for the development of your self-management skills.

The second assessment is a report on a skills development workshop that you will design and facilitate during the course. The instructions for this assessment are in the Assessment section later in this Course Overview. Unit 5 provides guidance in the design and facilitation of the workshop.

The final assessment, due at the end of the course, has two components: an analysis of your skills development during the course; and a comprehensive skills development plan for the future.

The final assessment is in lieu of an examination. There is no examination in *Change Skills*.

## **Administrative support**

If you have any administrative queries, they should be addressed to Academic Affairs.

Academic Affairs  
AGSM MBA Programs  
Australian School of Business  
UNSW SYDNEY NSW 2052

Tel: 61 2 9931 9400

Fax: 61 2 9931 9205

email: [academicaffairs@agsm.edu.au](mailto:academicaffairs@agsm.edu.au)

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# Online dialogue

## Dialogue, discussion and debate

In the second reading in Introductory Activity 2.1, Peter Senge (2006) makes an important distinction between two processes that a group can use to exchange views, ideas and experiences – processes he labels ‘discussion’ and ‘dialogue’. Senge defines ‘discussion’ as a process in which the purpose is to ‘win’, in the sense of ‘having one’s views accepted by the group’ (ibid. p. 223). The extreme version of this kind of process is a debate in which each side seeks to demolish the position of the other. In dialogue, on the other hand, individuals suspend their assumptions and their attachment to their opinions and focus on expanding and enriching a shared understanding of the topic or issue.

Note that Senge does not dismiss the value of discussion as a process. He writes that ‘both are important to a team capable of continual generative learning, but their power lies in their synergy, which is not likely to be present when the distinctions between them are not appreciated’ (ibid. p. 223).

We have labelled our online activities ‘dialogues’ because we wish to encourage a process of dialogue rather than discussion, believing dialogue to be more effective for the learning process in this course. (You will note that the overall heading for the Dialogue Board is ‘Discussions’. This is a feature of the current edition of elearning that cannot be changed.)

Table 2 further unpacks the distinction between dialogue on the one hand and discussion and debate on the other.

**Table 2** *Dialogue, discussion and debate*

<b>DIALOGUE</b>	<b>DISCUSSION AND DEBATE</b>
<b>MINDSET</b>	
Assuming that many people have pieces of the answer or that there a number of 'right' answers	Assuming there is a right answer and you have it
Seeing all sides of an issue	Seeing two sides of an issue
Willing to suspend and test your assumptions	Invested in/committed to your assumptions
Openness to letting your assumptions go	Determined to be right
Willing to play with and try out new ideas and possibilities	Resistant to entertaining alternative points of view
<b>GOALS</b>	
Expanding options and appreciating complexity	Seeking closure by deciding which view is to prevail
Finding common ground and working toward a common understanding: Win-Win	Attempting to show that the other side is wrong and that you are right: Win-Lose
Your view is enlarged and changed	Your view is affirmed
A shared understanding to which all contribute and which is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• greater than the sum of its parts</li> <li>• richer than any single participant's contribution</li> </ul>	Aiming for one view to prevail over others Deciding what is right or Seeking a compromise between alternative views
<b>PROCESS</b>	
Inclusive, inquiring	Exclusive, polarising
Shared collaborative and co-operative enquiry – exploring complexities and options	Competitive and oppositional
Focusing on commonalities and connections	Focusing on differences
Building on others' contributions	Using counterarguments to demolish others' contributions
Sharing your power and using the power of the group	Using your individual power and the power of your argument
Expanding and exploring new options and shared understandings. Keeping the discussion open to challenge and divergent views	Seeking a conclusion that ratifies your position. By creating a winner and a loser, discouraging further discussion
<b>EXPRESSING YOUR VIEWS AND IDEAS</b>	
Presenting your assumptions for examination and testing	Defending your assumptions as the truth
<b>LISTENING AND RESPONDING TO OTHERS</b>	
Listening to understand, find meaning and common ground	Listening to find flaws and construct counter-arguments
Searching for strengths and value in others' positions	Searching for flaws and weaknesses in others' positions
Acknowledging that others' thinking can improve on your own	Defending yourself and your views against others

Sources: Adapted from three sources:

(1) Gerzon, M. 2006, *Leading Through Conflict: How successful leaders transform differences into opportunities*, Harvard Business School Press, Boston, Mass., p. 170.

(2) [www.globallearningnj.org/global\\_ata/a\\_comparison\\_of\\_dialogue\\_and\\_debate.htm](http://www.globallearningnj.org/global_ata/a_comparison_of_dialogue_and_debate.htm)

The table on this website was adapted from a paper prepared by Shelley Berman, which was based on discussions of the Dialogue Group of the Boston Chapter of Educators for Social Responsibility (ESR)

(3) [www.greece.k12.ny.us/instruction/ELA/SocraticSeminars/dialoguedebatediscussion.htm](http://www.greece.k12.ny.us/instruction/ELA/SocraticSeminars/dialoguedebatediscussion.htm)

Dialogue and discussion/debate are probably best regarded as poles of a continuum with a variety of possible processes between the two poles. For our online activities, we encourage you to reflect on the process you are using and to aim at a process as close as possible to the dialogue end of the continuum.

## **Guidelines for online participation**

### **The online dialogue week**

Each online dialogue week runs from Monday to Saturday inclusive, with the week's dialogue concluding at midnight on Saturday. Only postings made during the six days of the online dialogue week are considered in grading your contributions to that week's dialogue

### **Getting started**

If you defer posting until later in the dialogue week, you may find that by the time you attempt to contribute, there is a daunting number of postings to read and/or that most of what you wanted to say has already been said. So the earlier you can start, the better,

If you are new to the GCCM, you might be a little nervous about getting online. Our advice is to take the plunge, begin posting early and then actively build your confidence as you become more familiar with the dialogue process.

### **Reader-friendly postings**

Feedback from students indicates that they find that the following kinds of postings from fellow students are frustrating and time consuming, discouraging rather than encouraging dialogue:

- Long postings that read more like a 'brain dump' than insightful commentary

- Postings that make more than two or three key points. These are often either not read or not responded to. In fact, a reader friendly posting will often make just one point, with a brief supporting example or reason, ending with a question to stimulate further discussion
- Postings that repeat course material in the student's own words
- Postings that do not link back to previous postings (unless, of course, a new dialogue thread is being started). This kind of posting suggests that either the student has not read others' contributions and/or that the student is not engaging in a dialogue
- Postings that repeat points already made by other students.

The implications for you in crafting your contributions are to:

- Keep postings short and to the point
- Read other relevant postings before crafting yours and build on these postings
- Go for quality of insight rather than quantity of material.

The following is one simple template for an effective posting

---

Acknowledge and value previous contributions

Add value via clarification, providing an example, presenting a different view or perspective, asking a question to explore a previous posting, etc.

Invite further responses via a thought-provoking question.

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## Keeping track

As more messages are posted, it is sometimes daunting to try to keep track of everything. Don't worry. You don't have to keep track of everything everyone has said. If you were in a crowded room with everyone talking at once, you would not be expected to keep track of all the conversations.

It will help everyone decide which conversations to join if the dialogues are clearly structured into threads, with the postings in each thread headlined to indicate the topic of the thread.

Your tutor will post some dialogue topics and questions at the beginning of each dialogue week. However, feel free to post on any topics or issues relating to the week's unit. One way of contributing to a lively dialogue is to post interesting questions or examples for discussion.

## **Other suggestions**

The following are some additional suggestions for building a fruitful dialogue:

- Respond quickly to others' postings. It can be off-putting to be out there alone!
- Be polite and look for opportunities to express appreciation and give positive feedback.
- Use inclusive humour and a light touch.
- Acknowledge other participants' contributions before putting forward an alternative perspective.
- Actively invite and encourage contributions from others.
- Use other contributors' first names in responding to their postings.
- Remember that there are no non-verbal cues in an online dialogue, only what's on the screen. So you need to be particularly sensitive about the way in which you put your ideas across and respond to others.
- Have fun and enjoy the process. Enjoy and play a little with the possibilities.

## **eLearning system support**

Should you have any difficulties accessing your course online, contact NetSpot eLearning support services.

Email: [websupport@agsm.edu.au](mailto:websupport@agsm.edu.au)

Toll Free: 1800 730 288

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# Schedule of contacts

## Contact with your learning partner(s)

<b>Week starting</b>	<b>Activities and topics for discussion</b>	<b>Units</b>
2 February	Identify your learning partner(s) Make arrangements for meeting	
9 February	The change process framework (Exercise 2) Your approach to managing your skills development (Exercises 6, 8, 9 and 10): Competing commitments (Exercise 8)	Unit 1
16 February	Managing your work performance (Exercise 4) The corporate athlete (Exercise 6) Building your resilience (Exercise 8) Managing your mindset (Exercises 12 and 13)	Unit 2
23 February	Ineffective diagnosis (Exercise 2) Identifying cognitive biases (Exercise 3) Reviewing your approach to diagnosis (Exercise 4) Your plan for skills development (Exercise 9)	Unit 3
2 March	Models of communication (Exercise 3) Communicating assertively (Exercises 6 and 7) Listening (Exercises 9, 10, 11 and 12) Persuasion (Exercise 14) Your plan for skills development (Exercise 15)	Unit 4
9 March	Facilitation approaches at critical incidents in a workshop (Exercise 2) Your workshop aims (Exercise 3) Your workshop design (Exercise 4)	Unit 5
23 March	The differences between a group and a team (Exercises 3 and 4) Group norms and cohesion (Exercise 2) Assessing your team's processes (Exercise 4) Your plan for skills development (Exercise 5)	Unit 6 Unit 7

<b>Week starting</b>	<b>Activities and topics for discussion</b>	<b>Units</b>
30 March	Three models of consultation (Exercise 3) Your process skills (Exercise 4) Your approach to analysing interactions and diagnosing the reasons for difficulties or blockages (Exercise 6) Your plan for skills development (Exercise 10)	Unit 8
6 April	Analysing and diagnosing a conflict (Exercises 2 and 3) Your approach to conflict (Exercise 5) Choosing the best approach to conflict resolution (Exercise 7) Pitfalls in mediation and how to avoid them (Exercise 8) Your plan for skills development (Exercise 9)	Unit 9
20 April	Matching your negotiation approach to the situation (Exercise 3) Dealing with strong negative emotions (Exercise 4) What if they won't play? (Exercise 6) Trying out new negotiation behaviours (Exercise 7) Your plan for skills development (Exercise 8)	Unit 10
27 April	Who would you go to? (Exercise 5) Analysing and evaluating your networks (Exercise 7) Your plan for skills development (Exercise 9)	Unit 11
4 May	Sustaining your skills development process after the course (Exercise 1) Finding your voice (Exercises 2, 3, 4 & 5)	Unit 12

## Teleconferences with your tutor

Week beginning	Purpose of contact
9 February	Discuss: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your learning goals and expectations of the course</li> <li>• Course requirements, including the assessments</li> <li>• The learning processes in the course, including the online dialogue</li> <li>• Your learning strategies</li> </ul>
16 March	Discuss: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your workshop and Assessment 2</li> <li>• Your key learnings so far in the course</li> </ul>
4 May	Discuss: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your skills development during the course</li> <li>• Your plans for your future skills development</li> <li>• Assessment 4</li> </ul>

## Contact with your mentor

Week beginning	Purpose of contact	Unit
2 February	Make initial contact with your mentor.	Course Overview
16 February	Interview your mentor about his/her self-management techniques. Discuss the contribution of self-management to the effectiveness of a change agent.	Unit 2
9 March	Interview your mentor about how he/she uses communication skills in leading and managing change. Discuss your plans for your workshop.	Units 4 & 5
30 March	Interview your mentor about how he/she uses team and process skills in leading and managing change.	Unit 6,7 & 8
20 April	Interview your mentor about his/her approach to conflict resolution and negotiation	Unit 9 & 10
4 May	Review your skills development during the course Discuss your skills development plans for the future	Unit 12

## Online dialogues

<b>Week beginning</b>	<b>Online Activity</b>	<b>Unit and topic</b>
9 February	Online activity 1	Unit 1: Change agent skills Approaches to skills development
16 February	Online activity 2	Unit 2: Self-management
23 February	Online activity 3	Unit 3: Diagnosis
2 March	Online activity 4	Unit 4: Communication skills
30 March	Online activity 5	Units 7 & 8 Team dynamics Process skills
6 April	Online activity 6	Units 9: Conflict resolution
27 April	Online activity 7	Unit 10 & 11: Negotiation Networking
4 May	Online activity 8	Unit 12: Your skills development Finding your own voice

These eight dialogues comprise Assessment 3.

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# Change Skills audit

The Change Skills audit provides you with an opportunity to evaluate your skills as a change agent and to collect feedback from others who know something of your work. The Change Skills audit questionnaire has been developed by Faculty at AGSM MBA Programs and by Leaderskill Group Pty Ltd.

The survey will be accessed on the Internet. We will provide Leaderskill Group with your name and email address. These are for use with the Change Skills audit only and there is a strict privacy policy regarding all information.

Leaderskill Group will email you with your password and details of how to login to your Participant Control Centre. Through the Participant Control Centre you can:

- fill in your Self questionnaire;
- enter your respondents and email their passwords;
- monitor the completion of questionnaires and send reminders;
- download and print your profile when complete.

There are four steps to completing the feedback survey.

## Step 1

Read the section 'Ethical considerations', which follows.

## Step 2

Complete the questionnaire yourself. The results of your self-evaluation will be included in your feedback for comparison with the feedback from others.

## Step 3

Identify colleagues from whom you will receive feedback about your skills as a change agent. These colleagues can include your 'Boss', Peers and Staff who report to you.

Once you have entered your colleagues' details, you should monitor whether they have responded until complete.

## Step 4

You will be able to download and print a 'mini-profile' report as soon as you complete your Self questionnaire (this profile can include up to two 'Boss' questionnaires if also completed). Later, when most or all of your

respondents have submitted their questionnaires, you will be able to download your full report with additional respondent data.

From Week 1 onwards, each unit will ask you to reflect on your self-evaluation of your skills and to discuss your self-evaluation in the online dialogue. So you will get most benefit from the process by completing your Self questionnaire right away.

From Week 3 onwards, each unit will also ask you to reflect on the feedback you have received from others and to discuss it in the online dialogue. So it will be important to ensure that your Boss, Peers and Staff complete the questionnaires as quickly as possible – ideally by the end of Week 1 and certainly by the end of Week 2.

## Ethical considerations

We would like you to take note of a number of ethical considerations.

In order for the feedback process to be effective and for everybody involved to be treated fairly and with respect, we suggest the following principles of appropriate disclosure, avoiding conflicts of interest, informed consent and confidentiality are observed.

**Disclosure:** *appropriate disclosure of information gathering and storage processes.* The information you and your work colleagues give will not be disclosed to anybody except you and your course tutor. The database is kept by Leaderskill Group and will not be accessed by anybody other than you. However, an overall statistic of all students is maintained.

**Conflicts of interest:** *the avoidance of conflicts of interest where sensitive personal information might be used for purposes other than the one intended.* Your colleagues have invested time in you by giving their responses. They do this under an agreement of confidentiality. Therefore, when you get your report it is important that you do not use this information for anything other than your own professional development. Complaining to others at work about the feedback from your boss, for example, is not appropriate. Your boss acted in your best interest, and you should respect that by not using it against him or her.

**Informed consent:** *informed consent by all the parties involved.* Everybody who responds to this survey must give their consent for the information to be used in the way it will be. Make sure they are aware of the format of the report that you will receive, and get their acceptance of this. This is particularly important for your boss/bosses if their responses will be individually identifiable.

**Confidentiality:** *the practice of appropriate confidentiality, and assurances of this to all participants.*

## **Complete the Self questionnaire**

Leaderskill Group will email you with details of how to log in to your Participant Control Centre.

You should complete your Self questionnaire as soon as possible. As mentioned above, in each week from Week 1 onwards, you will be asked to reflect on your self-evaluation and to discuss it in the online dialogue. Completing your Self questionnaire early will ensure that you have some data in time for Week 1.

### **Filling in the questionnaire**

Your name will appear at the top of the questionnaire page.

- You can scroll up and down the page and there is a 'clear' button at the bottom of the screen.
- Make sure you have 20 minutes of uninterrupted time. If you are interrupted and 'time out', just login and start the questionnaire again. This feature helps protect your confidentiality.
- None of your input will be sent until you click on the 'Submit' button at the bottom of the screen and see the message: 'Your questionnaire has been sent successfully'.
- You must close down your web browser when you finish. This completes your input and deactivates the 'Back' button.

Should you require further assistance, please contact Academic Affairs on phone 02 9931 9400, or for technical support, contact Leaderskill Group via email ([support@leaderskill.com.au](mailto:support@leaderskill.com.au)) or phone (02 9533 7077).

## **Identify colleagues and distribute questionnaires**

The next step is to identify work colleagues who will fill in a similar questionnaire that asks them questions about your change agent skills. These colleagues can include:

- your Boss (up to two Bosses can be included)
- four to six members of your Staff – current direct reports if possible; if not, recent Staff or indirect reports who work with you enough to be

able to comment

- four to six members of your Peers – associates with whom you work but who do not report to you

When selecting colleagues choose people who know you well enough to be able to respond. Invite both ‘fans’ and ‘critics’!

### **Minimum numbers**

The four categories Self, Bosses, Staff and Peers are shown separately on the profile.

You can include just Staff or just Peers, or you can include both. Note that:

- to show the Staff category in your profile, you must have three Staff (to ensure the confidentiality of their responses)
- to show the Peer category, you must have three Peers (to ensure the confidentiality of their responses)

If you have only three people in a Staff or Peer category you will get a less detailed report. You won’t be able to see the full range of responses and will only get the average of all responses for that category. Four or more in either category will give greater detail in the results for that category.

The inclusion of Boss or Bosses is optional. Note that, since a separate analysis of Boss feedback is presented in the report, it is not possible to preserve Boss anonymity.

You do not need to have colleagues from all of the four categories complete questionnaires. For example, you may have your Boss (you can enter up to two Bosses) and four Staff complete questionnaires, but no Peers. However, we strongly suggest that you get colleagues in all categories to complete the questionnaire since this ensures a fuller and more accurate picture of your change agent skills.

### **Respondent options**

In the absence of enough direct reports, we recommend the following:

- use very recent direct reporting staff
- use current indirect reports i.e. the next level down, but no further
- use very recent indirect reports
- use ‘dotted line’ reports.

Two or less responses in Staff will not show that category. If you can't find enough Staff respondents even using the above, then use only Peers, or arrange with Leaderskill Group to combine Peers with Staff responses.

In selecting the Peers you want to respond, the suggestions are much the same as those for Staff, that is, people who know your style, both fans and critics. Four is sufficient, three is the minimum. And you may have to find very recent associates. If you can't find three Peers, you can use only Staff, or arrange to have Staff combined with Peers.

If you are not able to meet the minimum for Staff or Peers, if you have at least three responses in total, they can be combined into a single category.

### **Briefing respondents**

Aim to brief your respondents face-to-face, or at least by telephone, so you can deal with any concerns and questions at once. Before sending the emails, make sure they know why you are asking them to complete the questionnaire and that they agree to do so.

Ask each colleague if they are prepared to spend some time on the questionnaire in order for you to develop your skills. When talking to them about their participation explain the process and discuss the following:

- They have been chosen because they are familiar with you at work.
- Their responses will be very valuable to you, but only if they are totally honest.
- Their responses are completely anonymous and confidential and you will not be able to see the questionnaire they fill in, nor identify their individual responses on the final report (except for your boss).

Since the responses from your Boss(es) are the only ones that are individually identifiable, you must make sure this is clear to your Boss(es) before he or she agrees to participate.

Be prepared for any of the colleagues you approach to say 'No', in which case you will need to find somebody else.

### **Deadline for completion of the questionnaires**

Each unit from Unit 3 onwards asks you to reflect on the feedback you have received from others and to discuss it in the week's online dialogue. So it will be important to ensure that your Boss, Peers and Staff complete the questionnaires as quickly as possible – *ideally by the end of Week 1 and certainly by the end of Week 2.*

It is very important to make sure that your colleagues are aware of the deadline for completing the questionnaire and that they are confident they can complete it in time.

Thank your colleagues in advance for their time and support.

### **Entering respondents and sending passwords**

Once you have selected your respondents, you need to enter their details through your 360 Facilitated® Participant Control Centre. You will need to select which category (Boss, Peer or Staff) they are responding in, and their name and email address.

Remember that it is best to have four to six respondents in each of the Staff and Peer categories. Only limited feedback can be provided with three respondents in these categories.

By clicking on 'Send Emails', an email will be sent to each of your respondents, including details of how to log in to the questionnaire, and their password.

- You may add any notes or comments at the beginning of the email message.
- Re-check you have correct email addresses for your Boss/Staff/Peers.
- Send emails.

Send emails only to those people who have agreed to respond, and emphasise the importance of keeping them entirely confidential.

### **Monitoring progress and sending reminders**

Through your Participant Control Centre, you can check on the progress of your respondents. The 'Monitor Respondents' page will show you which of your respondents have completed their questionnaires. You can send reminders when required.

### **Printing your profile report**

You will be able to download a 'mini-profile' report directly from your Participant Control Centre as soon as your Self questionnaire is complete (this can include up to two optional Boss responses if also complete).

Later, when more feedback has been submitted, you will be able to download a final report that includes all the received respondent data.

## Using the 360 Facilitated® website

Please do your best to follow the guidelines and everything should go smoothly...

However, unexpected things can happen around the Internet! Here are some tips that could save you time – ‘just in case’!

### **1. Message: ‘URL not found...’**

Check that your web link is correct.

### **2. Message: ‘Name or Password not known’**

It is almost certain that you or a respondent has typed in their password, name or survey title incorrectly. Please try again – ‘copy and paste’ if possible.

### **3. Message: ‘This page cannot be displayed’**

This is usually due to a temporary connection problem somewhere between your computer and the website. Click ‘Refresh’ or ‘Reload’ (and then ‘Retry’ if necessary).

### **4. The questionnaire did not fully load**

Please click on the ‘Refresh’ or ‘Reload’ button, or log in again.

### **5. The wrong questionnaire came up for your respondent...!**

There are various kinds of questionnaire for a survey – e.g. Staff, Peers, Boss and Self (the participant/manager), each displaying the participant’s name. The respondent must respond in the right group to the right participant. Recheck your instructions and password, or email or telephone Leaderskill Group.

### **6. Message: ‘Timed out...’**

Your session has gone over 20 minutes without clicking on a button or hyperlink to another page. Just log in again.

### **7. Running slow?**

There could be a delay anywhere between your computer and the website. Sometimes you have to wait for a screen to open completely. When it has, ‘Done’ will appear at the bottom of your browser.

For further assistance, please email or telephone Leaderskill Group (support@leaderskill.com.au – at any time; or 02 9533 7077, 9am to 5pm Australian Eastern Standard Time) with as much detail of the problem as possible (i.e. what you did and what’s on the screen) so that they can help you with it.

# Assessment

## Assessment policy

The assessment process plays two roles: it provides feedback to you on your progress, and is a means of testing and grading your performance.

More information about assessment criteria/requirements and grading policy can be found in Assessment Information on the elearning website. All information on assessment is provided in the **Policies and Forms** section of the AGSM website. Please refer to these policies for details on how to present your assignments.

Log onto the AGSM website: <http://www.agsm.edu.au/>

1. Go to the MBA (Executive) **Student area**
2. Click **Policies and Forms**
3. Click **MBA (Executive) Policies and forms**
4. Click **Assessment and examination**.

The screenshot shows the AGSM website interface. At the top, there are logos for 'AGSM MBA' and 'AGSM EXECUTIVE PROGRAMS'. Below the logos is a navigation bar with links: 'AGSM', 'News & Events', 'Future Students', 'Students', 'Alumni', 'Executive Programs', and 'Faculty & Research'. A banner image shows several people in business attire. The main content area is divided into a left sidebar and a right main panel. The sidebar contains a 'Students:' menu with items like 'MBA', 'MBA (Executive)', 'Hong Kong MBA', 'PHD program', 'Online Payments', 'Career Services', 'Recruiters', 'Graduation', 'Academic Records', 'Policies & Forms', 'MBA Policies and forms', 'MBA (Executive) Policies and forms', 'Admission', 'Enrolment requirements', 'Program requirements', 'Fee & Refund Policy', 'Assessment & examination', 'Academic Standing', 'Instructors', 'Students' rights & responsibilities', and 'Forms'. The main panel shows the breadcrumb 'Home > Students > Policies & Forms > MBA (Executive) Policies and forms' and the title 'Assessment & examination'. Under 'Assessment', there is a list of links: 'Assessment', 'Individual Items of Assessment', 'Group based assessment', 'Class participation marks', 'Late submission', 'Request for extensions', 'Page count', 'Word count', 'Students' own work', 'Review of a grade for a piece of assessment', 'Final grades', 'Authority for final grades', 'Grade distribution guidelines and moderation of course results', 'Release of course results', 'Final grade review and appeal', 'Marks and transcripts for courses outside the AGSM', 'Weighted Average Mark (WAM)', and 'Special Consideration'. Under 'Examination', there is a list of links: 'Examinations', 'Rules for conduct of on-site examinations', 'Special arrangements', 'Supplementary examinations', 'Additional assessment for potential graduands', and 'Examination scripts'. Four numbered circles (1, 2, 3, 4) are overlaid on the screenshot to indicate the steps: 1 is on the 'Students:' menu, 2 is on 'Policies & Forms', 3 is on 'MBA (Executive) Policies and forms', and 4 is on 'Assessment & examination'.

Since all assessments need to be submitted in a prescribed format, it will be important to check the details of these formatting requirements in the locations mentioned above.

## Summary of assessment requirements

In order to pass this course, you must:

- Achieve an aggregate (overall) mark of at least 50, and
- Achieve a minimum pass grade in the final piece of assessment.

### **Assessment 1: Self-management skills analysis**

Due: Tuesday, 17 March, 5.00 p.m. EST  
Weight: 15%  
Maximum length: 7 pages

### **Assessment 2: Workshop report**

Due: Tuesday, 21 April, 5.00 p.m. EST  
Weight: 25%  
Maximum length: 12 pages

### **Assessment 3: Online activities**

Complete online activities 1–10  
Weight: 30%  
Maximum length: A maximum of 200 words per posting

### **Assessment 4: Report on skills development and skills development plan**

Date: Saturday, 16 May, 5.00 p.m. EST  
Weight: 30%  
Maximum length: 14 pages

## **Assessment criteria**

### **Written assessments**

Unless otherwise specified, the following criteria will be applied in assessing your written work:

- attention to the instructions for the assessment topics and focus
- evidence of understanding the concepts, frameworks and theories in the course
- ability to apply these concepts, frameworks and theories to examples from your own experience
- capacity to structure an assessment logically, showing clarity of thought
- degree to which the material submitted for assessment addresses specified assessment requirements relating to referencing, page limit, etc.

A grid giving details of the assessment criteria for each assessment will be posted in the Resources section of the Homepage on the elearning website.

Please note that there is a page limit for each assessment and that all assessments are to be written in a prescribed format. Details of the prescribed format can be found in the Policies and Forms section of the AGSM website.

### **Contributions to online dialogues**

Online assessment criteria relate to both the content of your contributions and to your contributions to the dialogue process. A grid detailing assessment criteria for the online dialogues will be posted in the Resources area of the Homepage on the elearning website.

The word limit for an online posting is 200 words. Please note that an effective online posting can often use considerably fewer than 200 words.

## Assessment 1: Self-management skills analysis

**Due:** Tuesday, 17 March, 5.00 p.m. EST

**Weight:** 15%

**Maximum length:** 7 pages

Analyse and evaluate your current skills in self-management:

- Identify strengths and areas for improvement.
- Support your analysis and evaluation with data, including the data from the Change Skills audit.
- Relate your analysis and evaluation to the challenges you face and expect to face as a change agent.
- Outline a plan for managing yourself more skilfully. Ensure that your plan meets the requirements for a robust implementation plan.

## Assessment 2: Workshop report

**Due:** Tuesday, 21 April, 5.00 p.m. EST

**Weight:** 25%

**Maximum length:** 12 pages

Design and facilitate a three to four hour workshop, with at least six participants, in which the aim is to facilitate participants' skills development in one of the skills covered in this course. Note that you can:

- send a draft plan of your workshop to your tutor for comments and feedback before you finalise your workshop design
- co-facilitate the workshop with another GCCM student, if you wish. However, each co-facilitator will write a separate workshop report.

Write a report on your workshop covering the following topics and issues.

### 1. Workshop goals and design (20%)

- Discuss the rationale for your workshop goals and design, with reference to concepts and reading in Unit 5.

### 2. Workshop process (25%)

- Analyse and evaluate the effectiveness of the workshop activities. Include in this analysis whether you stuck to your design intentions or modified your design, and the reasons for any modifications.

- Analyse and evaluate the group process with reference to concepts from Units 5, 6, 7 and 8.
- 3. Your facilitation of the workshop (15%)**
- Analyse and evaluate your performance as a facilitator.
- 4. Workshop outcomes (10%)**
- Evaluate the workshop outcomes with reference to concepts, models, and theories from Units 5, 6, 7 and 8 – using feedback from the participants and your own observations.
- 5. Your learnings from running the workshop (30%)**
- What are the three key lessons you learnt about designing and running a workshop?
  - How would you change the way you run workshops in the future?
  - What further insights do you have about the skills that were the topic of the workshop?

### **Assessment 3: Online activities**

**Weight:** 30%

**Duration:** a maximum of 200 words per posting

- The grade for this assessment is based on your contributions to ten online activities, in Weeks 1–4, 7–9 and 10–12. Each activity is given the same weighting in arriving at your overall grade.
- After Activities 1 to 4, your tutor will send you some feedback on your contributions to the first four dialogues, with a grade.

## **Assessment 4: Report on skills development and skills development plan**

**Due:** Saturday, 16 May, 5.00 p.m. EST

**Weight:** 30%

**Maximum length:** 14 pages

### **Your skills development during the course (40%)**

Write an analysis and evaluation of your skills development during the course.

- What learnings from the course did you attempt to apply in developing your skills as a change agent and what skills development goals and plans did you formulate?
- How far did you achieve your skills development goals? What explains any discrepancies between your goals and what you actually achieved?
- What processes of skills development did you use and how effective were they? If they were less than fully effective, how could you have managed your skills development more effectively?

### **Your future skills development (60%)**

Outline a plan for your future skills development.

Relate your development plan to:

- relevant data about your skills (including data from the Change Skills audit)
- an analysis of your current strengths and of the skills that need to be developed to increase your effectiveness as a change agent
- current and expected requirements in your role as a change agent.

In outlining your development plan, you may wish to discuss one or more of the following:

- Ways of making more effective use of your strengths and/or further building your strengths
- Ways of developing existing skills where your level of skill needs to be increased
- Ways of learning and practicing new skills.

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# Guide to the course materials

In the printed materials for each week there are several icons which denote different activities in the text.



## **Read**

Indicates a reading contained in the course material that you are required to read.



## **Exercise**

Indicates an activity in the text which provides practice or review of material that you have just covered.



## **Reflect**

Indicates a point to consider the material you have just covered.

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# Acknowledgements

## Course leader



**Geoff Mortimore** M.A (Oxford), B.Phil. (Oxford), B.Sc. (A.N.U)

Geoff Mortimore has received his M.A. and B. Phil. from Oxford and B.Sc. from the Australian National University. He has been teaching for the AGSM MBA Programs since 1993, and currently teaches five courses – *Managerial Skills*, *Managing People and Organisations*, and *Managing Change* in the MBA (Executive) Program; *Change Skills* and *Approaches to Change* in the Graduate Certificate of Change Management.

In 2005, Geoff was awarded the inaugural Marcus Cohen Award for AGSM instructors. The annual award is given to an adjunct faculty member who demonstrates excellence in the classroom and who makes an outstanding contribution beyond the classroom to the development of course materials and his/her colleagues.

He is a Visiting Fellow in the Australian National University where he teaches courses in leadership and management to academic staff as part of the Graduate Certificate/Masters in Higher Education. He also presents courses in the University of Canberra's Professional Management Program.

Through his own consulting business, he provides professional development programs, coaching and conflict resolution services to a wide range of organisations.

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