B2 English for Engineering Syllabus

General learning outcomes:
The course extends students’ ability to comprehend and produce spoken and written English to B2 level, focusing particularly on texts on topics related to civil, environmental, architectural and industrial engineering, as well as cross-disciplinary topics such as health and safety, presentations and job interviews.

The course is particularly targeted at students aiming to take the CLA B2 English test for engineering students, but can also be used by students who have already obtained a B2 certificate and who wish to revise and to extend their vocabulary by learning frequently used vocabulary in a variety of technical areas.

Prerequisites:
Students are required to have passed the B1 level.

Students who obtained their B1 level on the university admission test should be aware that this tests only the passive skills of listening and reading. Students whose writing or speaking skills are not up to B1 level are recommended to take a B1 course before proceeding to a B2 course.

Course content:
The blended mode course consists of 24 speaking lessons, delivered in two blocks of 12 lessons consisting of 36 academic hours each (Type 1 and Type 2), in addition to online work on listening, reading, writing, grammar, vocabulary and exam practice. Students are expected to spend at least 3 hours per week completing online work.

Work on the online part of the course should continue for the whole duration of access to the course, as it should be recognised that to progress from one CEF level to the next (e.g. from B1 to B2) normally takes approximately 200 hours of guided learning.

The self-study mode course offers the same online material as the blended course.

Writing:
The writing content of the course is delivered and monitored online.

Material is provided to help students understand the typical content of the following text types. Students have the opportunity to practice these genres and receive feedback. The blended course includes 4 writing tasks of different genres in each 12-week cycle.

- Reports (both internal and to outside organisations)
- Progress reports
- Informational reports (+ recommendations)
- Scientific/technical/lab report

Emails: to ask for or give information.
Data description: graphs, tables
Websites: information on a product/service/project
Instructions: simple clear instructions
Materials are provided to help students develop their awareness of the following sub-skills of writing.

- Organising a text in paragraphs
- Using topic sentences to show the organisation of a text
- Use of linking words
- Formal and Informal style
- Considering the audience
- Essential punctuation

Listening:
The listening skills component of the course is delivered online.

At B2 level students should be able to get the main ideas and significant details from texts that are not produced for language learners, while not understanding every word that is spoken. The course therefore contains a large number of listening tasks based on authentic material (e.g. Youtube videos) on a range of topics. Most tasks are constructed to aid, rather than simply test, students’ understanding. The blended course includes one listening task per week but extra material is available for students who need more practice in this area. Over the course students will have practice in a range of listening sub-skills:

- predicting content
- listening for gist
- understanding the function of discourse markers
- understanding connected speech
- understanding specific information
- listening for detailed comprehension
- understanding main ideas
- inferring meaning

Participants in the blended course will also have ample practice of listening as part of pair, group and class interaction.

Reading:
The reading skills component of the course is delivered online.

At B2 level students are expected to be able to deal with texts written for the real world, rather than for language learning purposes. Tasks in the course are therefore based on a range of text types and are constructed to aid students’ understanding of the texts. The blended course includes one reading task per week but extra material is available for students who need more practice in this area. A range of reading sub-skills are covered in the course:

- skimming for gist
- scanning for specific information
- deducing meaning from context
- reading for detailed information
- inferring meaning
- prediction
- understanding discourse markers
- understanding pronoun references

Participants in the blended course will also have practice at extracting information from online sources, involving skimming, scanning and reading for detailed information.

Speaking:
The speaking skills component of the course takes place in the classroom, as part of the blended mode course. Speaking skills are not covered in the Self-Study mode.

At B2 level students should be able to easily interact with a native speaker, producing stretches of language without noticeably long pauses, while maintaining a generally high degree of grammatical and lexical accuracy so that mistakes do not cause misunderstanding.

The classroom lessons in the blended course focus principally on speaking, with a focus on developing fluency. Students work in pairs and groups to research and present information to each other (e.g. presentation, poster, video); to brainstorm, discuss and evaluate ideas; and to ask for and give opinions. In addition to increasing fluency and receiving feedback on accuracy, students work on sub-skills and functional language including:

- paraphrasing
- dealing with misunderstandings
- giving opinions
- agreeing and politely disagreeing
- emphasizing key ideas

Materials are provided online to focus on commonly mispronounced words.

**Grammar and vocabulary** are fundamental requirements for performance in all four skills. Grammar and vocabulary explanations and exercises are provided online.

**Grammar:**

Students at B2 level are expected to be able to use a range of different forms in speaking and writing. Complete mastery is not required but errors should not obscure the intended meaning and basic forms should be adequately controlled. The course therefore covers a range of grammar explanations and exercises:

- **Tenses:** present perfect vs simple past, present perfect simple and continuous, past perfect, past continuous, used to, future forms, future in the past
- **Modal verbs:** necessity, speculation, regret, refusal, past habits
- **Functional language:** expressing ability, certainty, comparing, and sequencing; making suggestions; explaining technical concepts in everyday terms
- **Linking expressions:** contrast, cause and effect, purpose, condition, addition, precaution, simultaneous actions
- **Sentence structure:** defining and non-defining relative clauses, participle clauses, cleft sentences
- **Other:** Passive structures, impersonal passives, compound adjectives, gradable and non-gradable adjectives, phrasal verbs, revision of first and second conditional, third conditional, wish.

**Vocabulary:**

At B2 level students should have a range of general vocabulary, be starting to distinguish between different levels of formality, and have a range of vocabulary related to their areas of personal interest and study or work. The material in the course should therefore be used selectively. Some topics will be of interest to more than one discipline. Understanding of a wide range of vocabulary is also an important component of listening and reading comprehension.

Word lists of frequently used vocabulary on a range of topics are provided as reference material. Active learning exercises are provided on:

- **General B2 level vocabulary:** frequently used verbs, frequently used adjectives, prepositions, phrasal verbs, commonly confused verbs, verbs ending in -en, and prefixes and suffixes.
- **More specific technical vocabulary:** energy production, the design process, materials and recycling, verbs for robot movement, the Falkirk wheel, floods and landslides, recyclability, **materials** and their properties, smart systems, manufacturing verbs, performance and suitability, sensors, site selection, describing interesting buildings, geometrical shapes, tools and electrical plugs, green building techniques and materials, forces, the 4 industrial revolutions, solid waste management, wind turbines, bridge components.
Cross-disciplinary topics: language for presentations, personal protective equipment, explaining devices and processes in everyday terms, describing graphs and data, vocabulary for reports, dimensions and measurements, imprecise quantities, and job interviews.

Exam practice:
The course includes Exam Reading Practice and Exam Listening Practice sections, each with a number of questions and covering a range of the task types in the CLA B2 exam for engineering students.

Teaching methods:
Blended course: Students are required to participate actively in pair, group and class work. Lessons are mainly task-based, requiring students to research and then exchange or present information to each other. Other activities include discussions, interviews, collaborative writing, or vocabulary exercises. A set of recommended exercises is provided for homework, to provide a guided path through the language and skills materials available. Teacher support is provided for the online homework.

Self-study course: Students select which materials to use. Teacher support is provided.

Assessment:
Blended course: To pass the course students are required to
- attend a minimum of 75% of the lessons
- complete a minimum of 60 quizzes in the online part of the course (excluding Wordlists and Evaluation tasks)
- pass 3 out of the 4 listening evaluations, 3 out of the 4 reading evaluations and 3 out of the 4 Writing Tasks (assessed at B2 level on the CEFR).

It should be noted that passing the course does NOT provide credits. The course is offered as preparation for the B2 English exam for engineering students.

Self-Study course: Students can assess their own level in relation to the B2 level required in the exam by using the Exam Practice listening and reading quizzes, and the Writing Tasks.

Texts:
All material is provided on the CLA Moodle platform.