Eliciting and Writing Effective Requirements

Course Summary

Description

Successful projects are built on the foundation of clearly defined requirements but according to PMI's August 2014 Pulse of the Profession® report, 47% of unsuccessful projects still fail due to poor requirements management practices and a majority of companies are not valuing requirements management as a critical competency for their projects and strategic initiatives.

With elicitation serving as a major component of the requirements process, it is imperative that business analysts maintain high competency levels in elicitation practices and technique use to help organizations overcome the requirements related challenges faced on projects. Regardless whether you are a practitioner just starting off your career in business analysis or whether you have been performing the role for some years, this course will provide insight into the latest thoughts on elicitation and writing effective requirements and present a number of current techniques that are being applied on projects across industries today.

You will revisit the foundational concepts of business analysis and discuss the importance of requirements to project success. A deep exploration of requirements and requirements categories is provided. You will learn how to perform a deep exploration of your stakeholders as a starting point to the requirements process. You will be presented with guidance and helpful instruction for planning and preparing for elicitation and documentation. A number of popular and common elicitation techniques are explored. The best practices for writing and documenting requirements are shared. A thorough presentation of requirements and solution validation is provided.

This course is compliant with IIBA's Business Analysis Body of Knowledge (BABOK® Guide) version 3 standard in business analysis and is aligned with and upholds the practices as discussed in PMI's Business Analysis for Practitioners: A Practice Guide.

Objectives
At the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Understand the role of the business analyst and core competencies for performing successfully
- Discuss the criticality of business analysis and requirements for successful project outcomes
- Understand the main professional associations and standards supporting business analysts in the industry
- Discuss the common problems with requirements and explore approaches to address these issues
- Obtain a clear understanding of the various requirements types and the significance for eliciting each type
- Demonstrate your ability to identify stakeholders
- Explore various methods for understanding and analyzing stakeholders
- Discuss and apply good planning practices to requirements elicitation efforts
- Obtain knowledge and understanding of over 15 current and commonly applied elicitation techniques
- Understand how to progress from elicitation to analysis to documentation
- Write well-formed and validated requirements
- Gain understanding of the best practices for writing quality requirements
- Learn the technical writing techniques that apply directly to writing requirements documents
- Discuss writing pitfalls, risks that impact requirements, and how to address them
- Learn best practices for communicating and collaborating with stakeholders, sharing the results of elicitation and the resulting documentation
- Learn approaches for validating requirements
- Understand the difference between validating requirements and validating the solution

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Course Summary (cont'd)

Topics

- Review of Foundational Concepts
- Understanding Requirements
- Discovering Stakeholders
- Preparing for Requirements Elicitation
- Conduct Requirements Elicitation

- Write Effective Requirements
- Confirm and Communicate Elicitation Requirements
- Evaluate the Solution
- Wrap up and Next Steps

Audience

This course is intended for beginner to intermediate business and requirements analysts who are looking to improve their elicitation and requirements writing and documentation skills. This course is also a great fit for technical writers, product and software testers, project managers, product owners who work closely with business analysts or who perform some form of business analysis themselves.

Prerequisites

This course is suitable for both novice and experienced practitioners who desire to improve their skills at eliciting and writing effective requirements. It is recommended that participants complete the Business Analysis Essentials course prior to enrolling or have equivalent experience.

Duration

Three days
21 PDUs

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Course Outline

I. Review of Foundational Concepts
A. Definition of a business analysis
B. Definition of business analyst
C. BA role vs. PM role
D. Business analysis competencies
E. Benefits of business analysis
F. Purpose for having a BA standard
G. IIBA's BABOK® Guide and PMI's Practice Guide in Business Analysis
H. Business analysis core concepts
I. Discussion:
   1. Project challenges

II. Understanding Requirements
A. Common problems with requirements
B. Understand the problem first
C. Define the business need
D. Situation statements and moving to requirements
E. Understanding requirement types
F. Business requirements
G. Stakeholder/User Requirements
H. Solution Requirements
I. Functional Requirements
J. Non-Functional Requirements
K. Assumptions and Constraints
L. Discussions:
   1. Requirement Problems
   2. Business Needs
M. Workshop:
   1. Identifying Non-Functional Requirements

III. Discovering Stakeholders
A. Definition of a stakeholder
B. Stakeholder types
C. Identifying stakeholders
D. Performing stakeholder analysis
E. Stakeholders and requirements
F. Tips for identifying stakeholders
G. Grouping stakeholders
H. Creating a RACI model
I. Tips for analyzing stakeholders
J. Documenting results of stakeholder analysis
K. Workshop
   1. Discovering stakeholders

IV. Preparing for Requirements Elicitation
A. Planning for elicitation
B. Benefits of elicitation planning
C. What do you plan?
D. The elicitation plan
E. Setting objectives for elicitation
F. Determining the scope for elicitation
G. Establishing pre-work
H. Determining the outputs for the session
I. The iterative nature of elicitation
J. Elicitation roles
K. Elicitation planning techniques
L. Discussions:
   1. Who to involve in elicitation
   2. Planning Impacts
   3. Unplanned elicitation
M. Workshop
   1. Planning for elicitation

V. Conduct Requirements Elicitation
A. Elicitation skillset
B. Types of elicitation techniques
C. Using active listening in elicitation
D. Techniques for performing elicitation
E. Benchmarking/Market Analysis
F. Brainstorming
G. Business Rules Analysis
H. Collaborative Games
I. Concept Modeling
J. Data Mining
K. Data Modeling
L. Document Analysis
M. Focus Groups
N. Interface Analysis
O. Interviews
P. Observation
Q. Process Modeling
R. Prototyping
S. Survey or Questionnaire
T. Workshops

VI. Write Effective Requirements
A. Elicitation and Analysis
B. Requirements related issues
C. Implications of bad requirements
D. Elicitation and documentation
E. Writing skillset

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Course Outline (cont'd)

F. Documenting requirements
G. Modeling requirements
H. Defining the project life cycle
I. Impact of project life cycle on documentation
J. Requirements specifications
K. Characteristics of good requirements
L. Guidelines for writing textual requirements
M. Structuring a requirement
N. Writing pitfalls
O. Traceability
P. Requirements attributes
Q. Risks associated to requirements
R. Discussions:
   1. Project Life Cycle
   2. Correcting Poorly Written Requirements
S. Workshops:
   1. Documenting Requirements
   2. Identify Characteristics of Good Requirements

VII. Confirm and Communicate Elicitation Requirements
A. Business analysis communication
B. Requirements communication
C. Communication skills
D. The 7 Cs
E. Timing of communication
F. Planning communication
G. Importance of Collaboration
H. Planning collaboration
I. Documenting communication/collaboration needs
J. Confirming elicitation results
K. Verify requirements
L. Characteristics of good requirements (revisited)
M. Requirements checklist
N. Requirements validation
O. Signing off on requirements

P. Discussions:
   1. Responsibility for Communication
   2. Eliciting Communication Needs
   3. Validation
   4. Signoff
Q. Workshops
   1. Communicating Requirements
   2. Obtaining Signoff

VIII. Evaluate the Solution
A. Business analyst role in solution evaluation
B. Why solutions under perform
C. What we are looking for in solution evaluation
D. When does solution evaluation occur
E. Performing solution evaluation
F. Planning solution evaluation
G. Metrics that might exist
H. Evaluating long term performance
I. Qualitative vs. quantitative measures
J. Tools & techniques used in solution evaluation
K. Comparing expected to actuals
L. When solution evaluation discovers a variance
M. Tools/techniques for analyzing variances
N. Proposing a recommendation
O. Communicating results of solution evaluation
P. Discussion:
   1. Addressing Variance

IX. Wrap up and Next Steps
A. Useful books and links on writing effective requirements
B. BABOK® Guide
C. Business Analysis for Practitioners: A Practice Guide