

GAC006 Business, Science, Social Science and Psychology I: Communication Skills

GAC Study and Communication Skills

What this module is, and how it is marked

GAC006 is the communication module every Level I student takes, whatever specialisation they go on to. Three units cover understanding yourself and others, working in groups and teams, and the life skills that follow from both.

It is assessed by performance rather than by paper. A typical set is an **individual role play** 个人角色扮演, a **group role play** 小组角色扮演, an **in-class test** 课堂测验, a **logbook** 记录本 kept through the semester, and **coursework** 平时作业.

- A role play is marked on what you *do* — listening, adapting, resolving — not on how fluent the English is.
- The logbook records insights from class activities and discussions. Like the GAC003 journal, it is built weekly and cannot be written at the end.

Understanding self and relationships with others

The module starts from the observation that people differ in stable ways, and that knowing this changes how you work with them.

A **personality trait** 人格特质 is a consistent pattern in how someone thinks, feels and behaves. Traits are tendencies, not rules, and they describe rather than excuse.

- **Introversion and extraversion** 内向与外向 describe where attention and energy go. An introvert is not shy; they recover attention alone rather than in company.
- **Self-awareness** 自我认知 is knowing your own tendencies, including the inconvenient ones. It is the first thing the module assesses because everything else builds on it.
- **Values** 价值观 are what a person treats as important. Two people can agree on a goal and still disagree about the route, because their values rank differently.
- **Empathy** 同理心 is understanding how a situation looks from someone else's position. It is a skill you can practise, not a personality you either have or lack.
- △ A personality label is a starting point, not a verdict. Using one to predict what a specific person will do is where it stops being useful.

The skills of effective communication

Communication is assessed as a set of observable behaviours.

- **Active listening** 积极倾听 means showing that you are following: eye contact, short confirmations, and a summary in your own words before you reply.
- **Non-verbal communication** 非语言沟通 — posture, distance, gesture, expression — carries a large part of the message, and it differs between cultures.
- **Open questions** 开放式问题 invite an answer with content (*What went wrong with the plan?*); **closed questions** 封闭式问题 get a yes or a no. Use open ones to learn, closed ones to confirm.
- **Assertiveness** 自信表达 is stating your position while respecting theirs. It sits between **passive** 被动 (saying nothing and resenting it) and **aggressive** 攻击性 (winning at the other person's expense).
- **Feedback** 反馈 works when it is specific and about the work: *the second slide had no units on the axis* is usable; *your slides were bad* is not.

Worked example. A teammate has missed two deadlines.

Passive: say nothing, do their part yourself, and complain to the others.

Aggressive: “You’ve done nothing for this project and you’re letting everyone down.”

Assertive: “The survey was due Monday and we don’t have it yet, so the analysis can’t start. What’s blocking it, and what can we move so it lands by Thursday?”

The assertive version names the fact, states the consequence, and asks a question that makes a solution possible. That structure — fact, effect, request — is what the role play is marked against.

Understanding groups and teams

A group becomes a team when the members depend on each other for a shared result.

- Teams pass through stages: **forming** 组建期 (polite, unsure), **storming** 磨合期 (disagreement about direction), **norming** 规范期 (rules settle), **performing** 执行期 (work flows). Storming is normal, and a team that never storms is usually avoiding a real decision.
- **Team roles** 团队角色 differ from job titles. Someone generates ideas, someone finishes things, someone keeps the peace. A team of only idea-generators produces nothing.
- **Leadership styles** 领导风格 suit different moments. **Autocratic** 专断型 decides alone and is right when time is short; **democratic** 民主型 decides together and is right when commitment matters; **laissez-faire** 放任型 leaves people alone and works only with experts who already agree on the goal.

- **Ground rules** 基本规则 agreed early — how you meet, how you decide, what happens when someone is late — prevent most conflict.
- **Conflict** 冲突 about the task is productive; conflict about the person is not. The skill is keeping it on the task.

Life skills: culture, and working with difference

The final unit is about diversity, and it is assessed by how you behave in a mixed group.

- **Culture** 文化 is the shared assumptions of a group: what is polite, how directly people disagree, how time is treated. Most of it is invisible until it is broken.
- **Cultural diversity** 文化多样性 in a team is a resource. A group whose members notice different things sees more of a problem than a group that agrees on everything.
- A **stereotype** 刻板印象 applies a group generalisation to an individual, and it is wrong twice: about the person, and usually about the group.
- **Directness** 直接程度 varies. In some cultures *that could be difficult* is a refusal; in others it is an invitation to solve the difficulty. Ask rather than assume.
- **Adapting** 调整 is not abandoning your own norms. It is choosing a shared way of working deliberately rather than defaulting to your own and assuming it is neutral.

Worked example. A group of four is presenting together. Two members answer questions immediately; two wait to be invited and so never speak.

A group that reads this as “two people did not contribute” loses two members’ worth of preparation. A group that reads it as a difference in turn-taking adds one line to its plan — each member owns two of the eight likely questions — and all four contribute. Noticing the difference, and designing around it, is exactly what this unit assesses.