New Horizons®

BA04 - Eliciting and Writing Effective Requirements

Summary

Length: 24 hours Level: Foundational

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 of 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. This course may earn a Credly Badge.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, you 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

Course Outline

1. **Review of Foundational Concepts**

    Definition of a business analysis
    Definition of business analyst
    BA role vs. PM role
    Business analysis competencies
    Benefits of business analysis
    Purpose for having a BA standard
    IIBA's BABOK Guide and PMI's Practice Guide in Business Analysis
    Business analysis core concepts
    Discussion- Project challenges

2. **Understanding Requirements**

    Common problems with requirements
    Understand the problem first
    Define the business need
    Situation statements and moving to requirements
    Understanding requirement types

Business requirements
Stakeholder/User Requirements
Solution Requirements
Functional Requirements
Non-Functional Requirements
Assumptions and Constraints
Discussions- Requirement problems, business needs, and identifying non-functional requirements

3. Discovering Stakeholders

Definition of a stakeholder
Stakeholder types
Identifying stakeholders
Performing stakeholder analysis
Stakeholders and requirements
Tips for identifying stakeholders
Grouping stakeholders
Creating a RACI model
Tips for analyzing stakeholders
Documenting results of stakeholder analysis
Workshop- Discovering stakeholders

4. Preparing for Requirements Elicitation

Planning for elicitation
Benefits of elicitation planning
What do you plan?
The elicitation plan
Setting objectives for elicitation
Determining the scope for elicitation
Establishing pre-work
Determining the outputs for the session
The iterative nature of elicitation
Elicitation roles
Elicitation planning techniques
Discussions- Who to involve in elicitation, planning impacts, and unplanned elicitation
Workshop- Planning for elicitation

5. Conduct Requirements Elicitation

Elicitation skillset
Types of elicitation techniques
Using active listening in elicitation
Techniques for performing elicitation
Benchmarking/Market Analysis
Brainstorming
Business Rules Analysis
Collaborative Games
Concept Modeling
Data Mining
Data Modeling
Document Analysis
Focus Groups
Interface Analysis
Interviews
Observation
Process Modeling
Prototyping
Survey or Questionnaire
Workshops

6.   Write Effective Requirements

   Elicitation and Analysis
   Requirements related issues
   Implications of bad requirements
   Elicitation and documentation
   Writing skillset
   Documenting requirements
   Modeling requirements
   Defining the project life cycle
   Impact of project life cycle on documentation
   Requirements specifications
   Characteristics of good requirements
   Guidelines for writing textual requirements
   Structuring a requirement
   Writing pitfalls
   Traceability
   Requirements attributes
   Risks associated to requirements
   Discussions- Project Life Cycle and Correcting Poorly Written Requirements
   Workshops- Documenting Requirements and Identify Characteristics of Good Requirements

7.   Confirm and Communicate Elicitation Requirements

   Business analysis communication
   Requirements communication
   Communication skills
   The 7 Cs
   Timing of communication
   Planning communication
   Importance of Collaboration
   Planning collaboration
   Documenting communication/collaboration needs
   Confirming elicitation results
   Verify requirements
   Characteristics of good requirements (revisited)
   Requirements checklist
   Requirements validation
   Signing off on requirements
   Discussions- Responsibility for Communication, Eliciting Communication Needs, Validation
   Signoff
   Workshops- Communicating Requirements and Obtaining Signoff

8.   Evaluate the Solution

   Business analyst role in solution evaluation
   Why solutions under perform
   What we are looking for in solution evaluation
   When does solution evaluation occur
   Performing solution evaluation
   Planning solution evaluation
   Metrics that might exist
   Evaluating long term performance
   Qualitative vs. quantitative measures
   Tools & techniques used in solution evaluation
   Comparing expected to actuals
   When solution evaluation discovers a variance
   Tools/techniques for analyzing variances
   Proposing a recommendation
   Communicating results of solution evaluation
   Discussion- Addressing Variance

9. Wrap up and Next Steps

    Useful books and links on writing effective requirements
    BABOK Guide
    Business Analysis for Practitioners- A Practice Guide

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 for of business analysis themselves.

Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites for this course. This course is suitable for both novices and experienced people who need to elicit and write effective requirements. It is recommended that participants complete the BA01: Business Analysis Essentials course prior to enrolling or have equivalent experience.