

# The Business Continuity Institute

# Academic Syllabus

**2005**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

This syllabus has been prepared in response to a growing number of requests to the BCI from Educational establishments for guidance on the creation of Business Continuity courses.

The syllabus may be used in a variety of situations:

- a stand-alone course on the whole subject
- use of part of the syllabus to supplement a courses on an associated subjects (such as risk or emergency management)
- as a module in a general Business or Management course

### ***Qualifications***

The BCI syllabus provides for three levels of qualification, which will ultimately lead to a formal professional academic award - The Diploma in Business Continuity Management.

The 3 defined levels are: **Foundation, Certificate, and Diploma**

Business Continuity is a new and emerging discipline and is not well covered in Higher and Further Education. There is therefore a need for a basic programme (Foundation), ongoing professional development in the first year as a practioner (Certificate) and a further, more advanced qualification for the more experienced practioner (Diploma).

With the Diploma the candidate should be equipped with the knowledge to manage a Business Continuity project or undertake a specialist Business Continuity Management role. The factoring in of relevant experience should also be considered because an academic course on its own is of only partial value for a professional qualification. It should be possible to identify which standards are most appropriate at each level or alternatively the knowledge expectation for each standard at each level. For example, BCM programme management issues would seem to fit best at the Diploma level when the candidate is being prepared for a management role.

Descriptions of each level follow:

#### Foundation

The aim of the foundation is to provide a newcomer with an introduction to business continuity management. Entry criteria would need to be set but the purpose would be to focus upon the fundamental concepts and terminology of business impact analysis, plan maintenance and exercising existing business continuity plans. These skills should enable the candidate to work alongside other professionals effectively and gain practical experience to supplement the learning programme.

#### Certificate

The certificate should be aimed at those with at least one year's experience in BCM. It should provide understanding of the methods in the areas of business impact analysis, risk evaluation, and maintaining and exercising business continuity plans, ideally drawing upon practical experience. At this level candidates should be introduced to the areas of developing business continuity strategies, designing comprehensive plans and preparing

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awareness training programmes. Such training should sit alongside professional experience.

### **Diploma**

The aim is to produce a BCM professional with the knowledge and experience to manage a business continuity programme through all its stages through the practical exercise of techniques. This level should build upon the first two but focus upon the higher level tasks of programme management, media handling, raising business awareness and co-ordination with other agencies. Many of these tasks require maturity and experience that is unlikely to be found in those at the foundation and certificate level. A professional with Diploma status would be required to maintain awareness of BCM issues and keep current with BCM practices as they evolve in the future.

### ***Summary***

This syllabus is designed to provide a basic academic framework for the Art and Science of Business Continuity.

It is not intended to be a training course to learn practical BCM skills nor a replacement for experience, but its aim is to support those working in the field of Business Continuity to develop and reflect upon their role and to provide the appropriate requirements for BCI membership.

## **SYLLABUS FRAMEWORK**

Although membership of the BCI should not be entirely dependent upon the achievement of the academic programme, it is envisaged that the three levels are likely to equate to: affiliate (Foundation), ABCI (Certificate), MBCI (Diploma).

When a student subsequently applies for membership at ABCI, SBCI or MBCI, it would be expected that course attendance would provide the training points required in all certification standards for the scored assessment but that proof of practical experience will also be required through the scored assessment process.

### **Awarding Credits**

Credits could be awarded to candidates who have covered certain components of the BCI syllabus on other courses. For example, programme management forms part of many undergraduate and post-graduate business and technical degrees. Other candidates may have qualifications in the areas of crisis management, risk evaluation or media studies - some of which would overlap with our syllabus. Colleges may wish to award exemptions to candidates with evidence of earlier previous learning that is relevant.

It may also be possible to award credits gained from the examination syllabuses of other Institutes such as Risk Management and Auditors.

### **Course content**

The suggested contents of the units are outlined in the next section and are cumulative ; that is the contents of the Certificate course should include those for the Foundation, and the Diploma course should cover topics listed under Certificate and Foundation.

The table that follows suggests weighting for each unit at the appropriate level. An appropriate balance of content across the course is viewed as being as important as the content of each module. In the teaching timetable it is not necessary to follow the order of units suggested here, though it is suggested that the order of units 2 – 8 does follow an obvious progression.

### **Activity Logbook**

It is suggested that a BCM Activity Logbook be formally included at the Diploma level. We believe BCM to be a practical subject and consequently it is important to give significant weighting to a piece of work demonstrating the practical application of the techniques learned. This record should fit with the BCI Scored Assessment scheme to support a subsequent application for membership.

### **Contact time**

Each Unit weighting point should equate to approximately 6 hours formal teaching and 6 hours non-contact learning. This is based on similar programmes elsewhere and should provide a sound basis for the programme.

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**SUGGESTED TIMETABLE**

	<b>Module title</b> 1 unit = c.6hrs teaching time	Foundation	Certificate	Diploma
		6 Units	10 Units	20 Units
	<b>Introduction to BCM</b>	1	1	3
1	<b>Initiation and Management</b>	0.5	1	2
2	<b>Business Impact Analysis</b>	0.5	1	2
3	<b>Risk Evaluation and Control</b>	0.5	1	1
4	<b>Developing Business Continuity Management Strategies</b>	1	2	2
5	<b>Emergency Response and Operations</b>	0.5	1	2
6	<b>Developing and Implementing Business Continuity and Crisis Management Plans</b>	0.5	1	2
7	<b>Awareness and Training Programmes</b>	0.5	1	1
8	<b>Maintaining and Exercising Business Continuity and Crisis Management Plans</b>	1	1	2
9	<b>Crisis Communications</b>		0.5	1
10	<b>Coordination with External Agencies</b>		0.5	1
	<b>BCM Activity Logbook</b>			2
	<b>Assignment</b>			5
	<b>UNITS</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>20</b>
	<b>TEACHING HOURS</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>90</b>

## **SYLLABUS CONTENT**

### **INTRODUCTION to BCM**

**The objectives of this module are for the student to :**

- Understand the nature and role of BCM
- Understand the features of an appropriate Business Continuity Management programme for a variety of organisations
- Understand the external factors relevant to the implementation of a Business Continuity Management programme within a business or service context, including governance and compliance issues.

**Module content should cover the following key areas:**

#### *Foundation*

- The nature of BCM and how it relates to other management disciplines - especially risk management and information security
- The nature of organisational incidents and disasters
- Lifecycle concepts and components

#### *Certificate*

- Alternative BCM management models (GPG, Maturity etc.)
- Understanding business benefits of BCM
- Statutory and regulatory requirements (local)
- Resilience / Relocation and Efficiency

#### *Diploma*

- Historical context
- The role of the Executive
- How to secure commitment to the BCM programme
- Ownership of BCM
- Stakeholder analysis
- Statutory and regulatory requirements (international)
- Cultural issues
- Latest research

**The following General themes should be introduced and also developed throughout the rest of the programme:**

- The explanation of BCM terminology
- The use of BSI's PAS 56 and GPG (2005)
- Regulation and standards - appropriate to regions and sectors
- Case studies examining BCM issues in Public, Private and not-for-profit sectors
- Case studies illustrating differences in approach between different sectors
- Cultural and geographical differences
- Historical and future perspectives of BCM
- Sources of information and further reading

**1. INITIATION and MANAGEMENT**

**The objectives of this module are to provide:**

- An understanding of BCM programme management

**Module content should cover the following key areas:**

*Foundation*

- Establishing the need for BCM with management
- How BCM programmes are planned and managed

*Certificate*

- Budgeting for BCM programmes
- The role of the BC Manager and team

*Diploma*

- The BCM Policy
- Criteria for selecting BCM and Team Members
- Links to Change Management

## **2. BUSINESS IMPACT ANALYSIS**

**The objectives of this module are for the student to:**

- Understand the key role of a BIA in establishing the impacts resulting from disruptions
- Understand how to identify time-critical functions, their priorities and inter-dependencies

**The objectives of this module at certificate and diploma levels are to:**

- Prepare the practitioner for handling the process of managing the collection and analysis of data
- Introduce alternative methods of conducting a BIA
- Enable the practitioner to select, critically, from the range of tools and techniques available.

**Module content will cover the following key areas:**

### *Foundation & Certificate*

- Identify data sources and representatives
- Understand the concepts of maximum tolerable outages and recovery point objectives
- Build a BIA interview template
- Identify the information requirements of recovery resource analysis
- Present criteria to management for approval

### *Diploma*

- Project management of the BIA
- Alternative BIA techniques - workshops, questionnaires
- Reporting findings

### **3. RISK EVALUATION AND CONTROL**

**The objectives of this module are for the student to:**

- Understand the concept of Risk Evaluation and Control in BCM
- Be introduced to the tools and techniques of Risk Management

**Module content will cover the following key areas:**

*Foundation*

- Understand the limitations of risk analysis techniques in protecting the organisation from major incidents

*Certificate*

- Definition of Threats, Risks, Vulnerabilities & Countermeasures
- Understand the situations appropriate to Risk Avoidance, Risk Reduction, Risk Transfer and Risk Acceptance measures.

*Diploma*

- Evaluate, select and use appropriate risk analysis methodologies and tools
- How BCM and Risk Management complement each other
- Regulatory requirements of risk management
- Understanding of the impact of business change upon risk
- Cost/benefit analysis techniques
- Challenge of the assumptions that underpin many approaches to risk management.

#### **4. DEVELOP BUSINESS CONTINUITY MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES**

**The objectives of this module are for the student to:**

- See how the results of the BIA define appropriate recovery strategies for the organisation.
- Understand the different types of strategy available
- Understand the process for selection of appropriate BCM strategies for recovery of business and information technologies within the recovery time objectives.

**Module content will cover the following key areas:**

*Foundation*

- Choosing appropriate strategies from BIA results
- Available alternatives, their advantages and disadvantages

*Certificate*

- Mitigation as a recovery strategy
- Alternative methods/examples of identifying viable recovery strategies
- Resilience at various scales versus 'efficiency'
- Supply chain strategies
- Human Aspects
- Information security strategies

*Diploma*

- Detailed identification of alternative facilities and off-site storage requirements
- Costing of viable options
- Preparation of a detailed recovery strategy
- How to consolidate diverse tactics to form a coherent strategy
- Presentation to senior management of all available alternatives, their applicability and where policy changes may be needed
- Procedures for selection of recovery services - in-house and 3rd party

## **5. EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND OPERATIONS**

**The objectives of this module are for students to:**

- Consider the development of procedures for responding to and stabilising the situation following a disaster or serious incident
- Understand the management of an Emergency Operations Centre which can be used as a command centre during a crisis
- Understand the human issues that need to be addressed in an emergency such as stress, psychology, trauma and communication. The practitioner is NOT expected to become an expert in these disciplines but to have a full awareness of how they will impact the ability to successfully implement a BCM recovery strategy
- Examples of emergencies and the responses needed (e.g., fire, hazardous materials leak, medical)

**Module content will cover the following key areas:**

### *Foundation*

- How to identify and validate the existence of appropriate emergency response procedures including evacuation and containment
- Examples of "best-practice" emergency response procedures
- Dealing with people post-disaster
- Salvage and Asset Recovery
- Working with insurance companies, brokers and loss adjusters

### *Certificate*

- How to integrate disaster recovery / business continuity procedures with emergency response procedures
- How to ensure emergency response procedures are integrated with the requirements of public authorities and conform to appropriate legislation
- Design of an Incident Escalation procedure to identify emerging issues

### *Diploma*

- The parameters for command and control facilities needed to manage an emergency
- The roles, authority, and communications processes for managing an emergency
- The types of emergencies that exist and the appropriate responses needed (e.g. fire, hazardous materials, chemical contamination, medical alert)
- Awareness of warning signs of staff experiencing stress
- Awareness of impact of stress upon decision making and team processes
- Potential consequences of common problems upon recovery viability
- The latest research in post-disaster trauma counselling
- Specific techniques for asset recovery of electronic data, paperwork, works of art and manuscripts.
- HR procedures & practices following a disaster
- Easement of financial and procurement policies following a disaster

## **6. DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING BC & CM PLANS**

### **The objectives of this module are for students to:**

- Understand how the results of the BIA and Risk Evaluation & Control can be used to design a properly structured Business Continuity Plan
- Understand methodologies available for plan development (paper based, software, templates)

### **Module content will cover the following key areas:**

#### *Foundation*

- Hierarchy and roles of CM, BC and BU plans
- Components of documented BC Plans (teams, missions, tasks, procedures, resources, time-scales) and how they inter-relate
- Tools and techniques for plan building

#### *Certificate*

- Links between plans - escalation and command
- Understand the process for selection of appropriate techniques for plan development and the implications on future plan maintenance
- Examples of "best-practice" documented BCP's
- Checklists

#### *Diploma*

- How to secure resources for the plan building activities
- Matching BCM structure to organisational culture
- Ownership of their plans
- Team Concepts
- Use of technology for plan distribution
- Document control

## **7. AWARENESS AND TRAINING PROGRAMMES**

**The objectives of this module are for students to:**

- Understand the importance of internal communications about BCM and its business implications
- Understand the alternative means of communication and how an organisational culture can influence the success of each method
- Understand the role played by external bodies such as suppliers and customers and how their awareness can be improved
- Have an understanding of the concept of organisational culture and how change may be achieved.

**Module content will cover the following key areas:**

### *Foundation*

- The role of training and awareness in a prepared organisation

### *Certificate*

- Choice and design of a communication scheme/programme that meets the need of a specific organisation

### *Diploma*

- Establish objectives and components of communications programme
- Develop awareness and communications programme
- Establish objectives and components of training programme
- Develop awareness of barriers to change
- Identify functional training requirements
- Identify and evaluate external training opportunities
- Evaluate success of training and awareness programme

## **8. MAINTAINING AND EXERCISING BC & CM PLANS**

**The objectives of this module are for students to:**

- Understand the need to keep BCP's current and accurate at all times
- Understand the need to regularly rehearse and exercise the plan
- Consider various approaches to exercising (e.g. drills, desk-tops, walkthroughs, component tests etc.) with the circumstances in which each is appropriate
- Ensure plan exercise results are incorporated in the plan maintenance cycle

**Module content will cover the following key areas:**

### *Foundation*

- The role of exercising in maintaining readiness
- Types of exercises

### *Certificate*

- Exercise programme development
- Co-ordination of plan maintenance – integration with change control
- Basic plan audit principles

### *Diploma*

- Pre-planning of and budgeting for exercises
- Setting exercise objectives and scope
- Co-ordination of the exercises
- Evaluation of the exercise and post-test reviews
- Exercise reporting
- Linking exercises to strategic directions of the business
- Establishing an audit programme for BCM

## **9. CRISIS MANAGEMENT & COMMUNICATIONS**

**The objectives of this module are for the students to:**

- Understand the role of Crisis Management within the Business Continuity strategy.
- Learn how to develop, co-ordinate, evaluate, and exercise plans to handle the media during crisis situations
- Learn how to develop and exercise plans to communicate with employees and their families, key customers, critical suppliers, owners/stockholders, and corporate management during crisis situations
- Understand how all stakeholders should be kept informed

**Module content will cover the following key areas:**

*Foundation  
(None)*

*Certificate*

- What is a crisis
- Escalation
- Principles of Crisis Management
- Understanding the media
- A broad outline of crisis communication strategies
- An evaluation of case study material
- National issues

*Diploma*

- Developing a crisis management and communications strategy
- Creating a crisis management plan
- Fitting the strategy to different stakeholder needs for information
- Exercises involving preparation and evaluation of post-disaster Press Statements
- The development of media handling plans
- International differences

## **10. CO-ORDINATION WITH EXTERNAL AGENCIES**

This module concerns applicable procedures and policies for co-ordinating continuity and restoration activities with local authorities while ensuring compliance with applicable statutes or regulations

**The objectives of this module are to:**

- Understand the importance for effective communications with statutory agencies
- Consider ways in which external co-ordination could be made most effective
- Prepare the practitioner for working in conjunction with emergency response organisations both (pre-disaster) in agreeing plans and (post-disaster) in implementing them

**Module content will cover the following key areas:**

*Foundation*  
(None)

*Certificate*

- Practical issues in dealing with public authorities
- Local laws and regulations concerning emergency procedures
- Examples drawn from variety of sectors

*Diploma*

- The role and influence of organisational structure upon emergency response capabilities
- Structures to help integrate business continuity procedures with emergency response imperatives
- The potential threat or stress and trauma affecting key staff
- How to maintain and test arrangements with external agencies
- Case studies of crisis inter-organisational co-ordination
- International laws and regulations concerning emergency procedures

***BCM ACTIVITY LOGBOOK***

It is suggested that a BCM Activity Logbook be formally included at the Diploma level and optionally at the Certificate level. This should reflect the type and quality of relevant work undertaken by the candidate before or during the course. The BCI believe BCM to be a practical subject and consequently it is important to give high weighting to a practically oriented piece of work ; implementation of an aspect of BC or a piece of research on a BC theme would be appropriate subjects for the workbook.

The contents of the BCM Activity Logbook cannot be rigidly defined as it must reflect the opportunities available to the candidate for day to day BCM work. If the candidate's employer is new to BCM then opportunities may arise for BCM Project Management to be included in the Activity Logbook. If, however, well-established plans are already in place, the candidate may need to provide evidence of his/her involvement in testing, training or maintenance elements of the BCM programme.

This practical section would look for evidence that candidates have experience and competence in preparation and delivery of presentations, report writing and interviewing techniques.