



FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

SCHOOL OF LINGUISTICS AND APPLIED LANGUAGE STUDIES

**WRITING PROGRAMME
WRIT 202: WRITING FOR BUSINESS
20 POINTS**

TRIMESTER 2 2013

Important dates

Trimester dates: 15 July to 17 November 2013

Teaching dates: 15 July to 18 October 2013

Mid-trimester break: 26 August to 8 September 2013

Last assessment item due: 11 October 2013

Withdrawal dates: Refer to www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/payments/withdrawalsrefunds

If you cannot complete an assignment or sit a test or examination (aegrotats), refer to www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/exams-and-assessments/aegrotat

Class times and locations

Workshop CRN11049: Monday 2:10pm – 5pm in Von Zedlitz 107

Workshop CRN11816: Monday 2:10pm – 5pm in Von Zedlitz 108

Workshop CRN19726: Wednesday 2:10pm – 5pm in Von Zedlitz 107

Workshop CRN19727: Wednesday 2:10pm – 5pm in Von Zedlitz 108

Names and contact details

Course Coordinator:

Derek Wallace

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Office hours: Friday 1pm – 2pm

Course Administrator:

Dayna Taramai

Office: Von Zedlitz 210

Phone: (04) 463 – 5255

Email: Dayna.taramai@vuw.ac.nz

Office hours: Monday – Friday, 9am – 4.15pm

Communication of additional information

Additional information will be communicated through e-mail and Blackboard, www.blackboard.vuw.ac.nz

Prescription

WRIT 202 focuses on the knowledge needed to produce effective documents in business and government. The course provides training in areas of writing in the professions, and explores genres such as investigative reports, proposals, and journalistic feature articles. 100% internal assessment.

Course content

WRIT 202 focuses on the thought processes and writing skills needed to produce high-impact, quality documents in the business, government and corporate world. The course provides practical training in areas of writing that will assist you as a student of management, business or marketing, and as a working professional from any disciplinary background. We will look at the planning and composing of such documents as investigative reports, proposals, public relations documents, advertising and web site design.

The course covers the writing styles and document formats currently used in international business contexts. Through guided and regular practice, it will assist you to communicate effectively in different written formats, in a variety of professional contexts, and using different styles. In particular, the course encompasses the following themes:

- Analysis of the requirements for successful communication at management level
- Consideration of the role of writing within the context of professional communication
- Description and analysis of the different document types used in contemporary business contexts
- Practical training in writing an effective document, from sentence structure and style, to formatting and design
- Demonstration of the processes and conventions for planning, researching and writing proposals and investigative reports.

Course learning objectives (CLOs)

Students who pass this course should be able to:

1. Compose documents to inform, analyse and persuade
2. Apply skills of logical and critical analysis in reading and writing a variety of texts
3. Select, analyse, and synthesise reliable sources to meet task requirements
4. Understand the differences between print and digital media and make informed decisions on their use
5. Communicate technical knowledge to non-specialist readers

Teaching format

WRIT 202 has writing workshops. Students are expected to participate in class discussions, practical writing activities and analyses of texts.

Mandatory course requirements

In addition to achieving an overall pass mark of 50%, students must:

1. Complete all assignments by their due dates (unless you have formal permission from your instructor to submit late)

2. Attend all workshops unless prevented by illness, injury, bereavement, or some other circumstance that the course coordinator agrees is exceptional (see statement immediately below).

Attendance

Attendance at all workshops is expected. It is understood that absence is sometimes unavoidable through illness, etc., but wherever possible you should alert your tutor in advance. Students who miss more than two workshops without prior approval of the course coordinator may receive a fail grade.

Workload

The expected workload for a 20 point course is 200 hours spread over the trimester, including the mid trimester break.

Assessment

The assessment in WRIT 202 consists of three assignments, and one in-class test.

Assignment One: Workplace Communication analysis

This assesses your ability to understand the rhetorical context of a workplace writing task and assess the requirements for effective communication

Due Date: Week beginning 12 August

Credit: 20%

Length: 1,000-1,200 words

Learning objectives: 1 and 2 are particularly relevant

Assignment Two: Proposal

This assesses your ability to analyse a problem logically and persuasively.

Due Date: Week beginning 9 September

Credit: 20%

Length: 1,000-1,200 words

Learning objective: 1, 2 and 3 particularly apply

Assignment Three: Investigative Report

This assesses your ability to select, analyse and synthesise sources of information, composing a clear and coherent document appropriate for management communication.

Due Date: week beginning 7 October

Credit: 35%

Length: about 2,000 words

Learning objective: 1, 2, 3 and 5 particularly apply

In-Class Test

This assesses your overall comprehension of the course content.

Week beginning 23 September

Credit: 25%

More information on assignments, such as marking criteria, submission guidelines and suggested topics, will be handed out in the first class.

Submission and return of work

All assignments are to be submitted in class or in the slot next to the Von Zedlitz, Room 210 door.

Penalties

Assignments submitted late without permission are penalised by 2% per late day, including weekends. An assignment that is more than two weeks late will be refused a grade.

Materials and equipment and/or additional expenses

- Writing material, such as a writing pad, a pen and a pencil (for editing activities)
- A folder to keep hand out material

Set texts

Marsen, S. (2007). *Professional writing: The complete guide for business, industry and IT*, 2nd edition Basingstoke: Palgrave.

The book also has a website, available at <http://www.palgrave.com/studyskills/marsen/students.aspx>

Other reading materials to be distributed in class.

vicbooks website: www.vicbooks.co.nz

Recommended reading

Bazerman, Charles and Paradis, John (Eds) (1991) *Textual dynamics of the professions*. Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press.

Peeples, T. (2003) *Professional writing and rhetoric: Readings from the field*. New York: Longman.

Alred, G. J., Brusaw, C. T. and Oliu, W. E. (2000) *The business writer's handbook*. 6th ed. New York: St Martin's press.

Bargiela-Chiappini, F. and Nickerson, C. (Eds). (1999) *Writing business: Genres, media and discourses*. London: Longman.

Dias, P. et al. (1999) *Worlds apart: Acting and writing in academic and workplace contexts*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Dwyer, J. (1997) *The business communication handbook*, 4th ed. Sydney: Prentice- Hall. Flower,

L. and Ackerman J. (1994) *Writers at work: Strategies for communicating in business and professional settings*. Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace.

Harty, K. J. (Ed.) (1999) *Strategies for business and technical writing*, 4th ed. New York: Allyn and Bacon.

Johnson-Sheenan, R. (2002) *Writing proposals: Rhetoric for managing change*. New York: Longman.

Kirkman, J. (1992) *Good style: writing for science and technology*. London: Spon.

Kolin, P. C. (1998) *Successful writing at work*, 5th ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Kostelnick, C. & Roberts, D. D. (1998) *Designing visual language: Strategies for professional communicators*. New York: Allyn and Bacon.

Sides, C. H. (1999) *How to write and present technical information*, 3rd ed. Phoenix: Oryx Press.

Class representative

The class representative provides a useful way to communicate feedback to the teaching staff during the course. A class representative will be selected at the first lecture of the course. Students may like to write the Class Rep's name and details in this box:

Class Rep name and contact details:

Other important information

The information above is specific to this course. There is other important information that students must familiarise themselves with, including:

- Academic Integrity and Plagiarism: www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism
- Aegrotats: www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/exams-and-assessments/aegrotat
- Academic Progress: www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/academic-progress (including restrictions and non-engagement)
- Dates and deadlines: www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/dates
- FHSS Student and Academic Services Office: www.victoria.ac.nz/fhss/student-admin
- Grades: www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/exams-and-assessments/grades
- Resolving academic issues: www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/avcacademic/publications2#grievances
- Special passes: www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/avcacademic/publications2#specialpass
- Statutes and policies including the Student Conduct Statute: www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy
- Student support: www.victoria.ac.nz/home/viclife/student-service
- Students with disabilities: www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/disability
- Student Charter: www.victoria.ac.nz/home/viclife/student-charter
- Student Contract: www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/enrol/studentcontract
- Turnitin: www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/index.php/Turnitin
- University structure: www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about
- VUWSA: www.vuwsa.org.nz



***School of Linguistics and Applied Language
Studies***

WRIT 202: WRITING FOR BUSINESS

STUDENT GUIDE

Trimester 2, 2013

WRIT 202: WRITING FOR BUSINESS

Introduction to the Course

In this course we look at the forms and functions of written communication in international professional contexts. We examine situations that require the production of documents, as well as the styles and formats in which these documents are written.

Some of the questions that will guide our progress through the course are:

- What is a professional attitude in communication and how does it differ from other types of communication (such as personal or academic)?
- How do you know what your readers want and need?
- How can you make your writing persuasive and compelling?
- What style and approach will help you to promote a product or idea?
- How do you structure and organize information in different documents so as to meet requirements and expectations?
- What are the differences and similarities between printed, digital, and oral communication?

Workshop Guide

In the workshops we discuss issues of written communication, analyse and evaluate texts, and plan the content of assignments. This is a **flexible** outline of the topics that we cover in the next twelve weeks. It is intended to give a general direction to the course and to indicate the major content areas. Since the course is dynamic, we may modify the order or other aspects of this overview to address issues that may arise during the development of the course.

The reading refers to the course book, Marsen, Sky (2007) *Professional Writing: The complete guide for business, industry and IT*, 2nd edition, Palgrave, which is the textbook for the course. In addition to the textbook, reading material will be distributed throughout the course and posted on Blackboard.

WEEK ONE

1. Introduction to the course
2. Writing in work situations: what is professional writing?

WEEK TWO

1. Understanding audiences
2. Gathering and evaluating information

Reading: Marsen Chapter One and Two

WEEK THREE

1. Understanding the communication context

Reading: To be distributed in class

WEEK FOUR

1. Understanding the mechanics of writing: sentence structure issues

Reading: Marsen Chapter Three and Appendix

WEEK FIVE

1. Formal business writing: document formats
2. Specialist style of writing
3. Writing a proposal

Reading: Marsen: Chapter Six, pages 154-168, and Chapter Eight

WEEK SIX

1. Balancing objectivity with persuasion: the role of critical thinking in leadership

Reading: Marsen Chapter Seven

WEEK SEVEN

1. Report types
2. Style and cohesion in reports

Reading: Marsen Chapter Six

WEEK EIGHT

1. Report outlines
2. Sectioning and organizing information

Reading: Marsen Chapter Six

WEEK NINE

1. In class test

Reading: Revision

WEEK TEN

1. Revising and Editing
2. Executive summaries and recommendations

Reading: Marsen Appendix

WEEK ELEVEN

1. Revising the investigative report
2. Writing job applications

Reading: Marsen Chapter Ten

WEEK TWELVE

Wrap-up

ASSESSMENT

The assessment in WRIT 202 consists of three assignments and one in-class test:

Assignment One: Workplace communication analysis

Deadline: 12 August

Credit: 20%

Length: 1,000-1,200 words

Assignment Two: Proposal

Deadline: 9 September

Credit: 20%

Length: 1,000-1,200 words

Assignment Three: Investigative report

Deadline: 23 September for outline and 14 October for final

Credit: 35%

Length: about 2,000 words (excluding front and end matter)

In-class test

Date: Week beginning 23 September

Credit: 25%

REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL ASSIGNMENTS

1. Allow enough margin on both sides for comments.
2. Number all pages, and use title header or footer on each page with your name and document title.
3. Attach two drafts to the hard copy: one of your planning and another of your first document version.
4. Include word count on all assignments.
5. Submit all assignments by due date. If you need an extension, consult with the instructor before the deadline. Assignments submitted late without permission are penalised by 2% per late day, including weekends. An assignment that is more than one week late may be refused a grade.
6. Practice safe computing: make a back-up of all your files.

You must submit digitally and in hard copy. When submitting your digital copy, attach your document as a Word file, titled with **your surname** and **assignment number** (for example, Marsen2.doc). The whole document should be in one file. Attach drafts in one separate file or hand in hard copy in class.

ASSIGNMENT TOPICS

Assignment One: Communication Analysis

Identify a real workplace communication situation that requires, or required, the production of a written text. If you have workplace experience, this could be a situation in which you were (or are) involved (not necessarily as the writer). If you have not had relevant workplace experience, you will need to interview someone who does have such experience. This can be someone you know, such as a friend or relative.

The assignment has two parts, both of which form parts of your paper.

1. Your first task is to carry out a *rhetorical survey* of the communication situation you have identified and report this fully in your assignment paper. This task will be explained and illustrated in class.
2. Based on the analysis, offer in-depth advice to the writer on how he/she (you or somebody else) should go about constructing the text concerned; or, if the text has already been written, how it could be improved to take better account of the communication environment to which the text is a response.

Assignment Two: Proposal

Write a proposal in response to one of these briefs. For the first two business proposals, you may choose an actual or a fictional company. Note that these two proposals assume you have some existing expertise in the areas referred to, or you are prepared to do some research to become informed in these areas. If you choose option 3, you must use an actual organization you have worked for. Option 4 is intended for students who have very limited or no experience of working in a company. As an appendix to the proposal, add a brief description of the company or organization (about 200 words, not included in the word count).

Business proposal topic one: *You are Human Resources Manager in X company. Your company has no staff induction or staff development program, and you believe this is detrimental to staff effectiveness and morale, and company reputation. You want to create a new policy that would cater for the induction of new staff and the professional development of existing staff. Write a proposal to the Managing Director (MD), persuading him/her that this is a problem that needs to be addressed for the benefit of the company, and outline how you would go about designing and implementing an induction and development plan. Explain what resources and funding would be needed for this plan to be (1) developed and (2) implemented. Do not design an actual plan.*

Business proposal topic two: *You are Marketing Director in X company. You want to update your public relations and advertising documents, and/or your website, to renew your company image and maintain competitive edge in the market. Write a proposal to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) explaining the reasons that your company needs this PR overhaul, and describe some of the likely characteristics of the new documents or website that you propose to develop. Persuade*

the CEO that your proposal will benefit the company's interests. Give an estimate of the costs that would be involved in completing the project.

Proposal Option Three: *You are an employee of a commercial or professional or governmental organization. You have become aware of an aspect of the organization that is not functioning as well as you think it could. Write a proposal that (1) outlines the problem you have identified and its implications or consequences for current organizational practice; and (2) describes your suggested procedure for identifying a solution for the problem (but do not actually provide or report any solution). Give an estimate of the cost (in people time and any other resources) of carrying out your suggested procedure. **Note that this option can only be taken up if you are basing your proposal in a real existing company.***

Proposal Option Four: *As a student in a particular university course that you have completed prior to this trimester, you have concerns about the course content or teaching approach that you think limit the effectiveness of the course. Write a proposal that (1) outlines the problem you have identified and the reasons why you think it's a problem; and (2) suggests a method or procedure for developing a revised course. Do not actually describe a new course. That would be the outcome of the procedure you are proposing and would take the form of a report. **Note: this option should only be taken up if you have had no employment experience that would allow you to take up one of the other three options.***

Marking Criteria

Your proposal should show:

- knowledge of the standard conventions for organizing a proposal
- a clear and credible persuasive strategy
- evidence of analytical and critical thinking
- appropriate formal style
- thorough revision and proofreading to prevent grammatical, spelling and punctuation errors

Assignment Three: Investigative report

Undertake an investigation and write a full analytical report in response to the following brief. All the required readings will be available on Blackboard, and **you must refer to all of them.**

You are a communications expert. The International Association of Business Communicators (IABC), 'a global network of communication professionals committed to improving organizational effectiveness through strategic communication' (<http://www.iabc.com>), has commissioned you to investigate the role of faulty communication in organizational crises and failures.

Write a report to the Chair of IABC, Marilyn Keyes, that

- describes the prominent causes of miscommunication,
- assesses some specific risks of miscommunication,
- recommends a set of actions that member organisations can take to make their internal and external communication more effective, and

- provides advice on how best the IABC can communicate these recommendations to its members in order to ensure that they take notice of them

Draw examples from the case studies provided in your readings to support your analysis.

Your report should include:

- a letter of transmittal
- an executive summary
- a table of contents and list of figures
- at least one original visual display of information
- a list of recommendations
- in-text references to all the distributed sources, using APA style

Marking Criteria

Your report should show:

- knowledge of the standard conventions of report writing, from title page to references
- ability to identify, describe and analyse problems and to propose suitable solutions
- integration of research with suitable referencing, using APA style
- objective reasoning in the analysis of complex issues
- logical and clear organization of information in sections and sub-sections
- appropriate development of paragraphs
- specialist and clear style of expression
- appropriate audience dynamics
- grammatically correct language and punctuation

appropriate use of visuals and polished formatting and presentation