Short Report (Summative Assessment)

Professional Communications OER: Writing

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## Introduction

For this assignment you will need to prepare a short report following methods you have learned about in the Writing Module. You may also want to research more detailed information on how to develop a short report. The Internet, suggested readings, and resources included in the module eText are good places to start, but also ask your instructor for guidance.

Your first step is to choose one of the scenarios listed below, or perhaps your instructor will assign one to you. The scenario will form the basis or purpose of your report, so please read it carefully. Once you have analyzed the scenario, determine the main function of the report and then choose the appropriate type of short report required based on how these concepts were presented in the module eText. Three different types were outlined in the module eText: progress, recommendation, and summary reports.

Next, start thinking about the main point of the scenario and identify key factors that you need to address. Plan what information will go into each section of the report as you do this.

Research and compile the necessary details, evidence, statistics, etc., that will support your work. Your report cannot simply be what “you” believe is a good response. The information in your report needs to be verifiable by including valid, reliable, and credible details. Remember to use proper citation when necessary.

Create and format your report following the structure outlined in your learning. Remember that some report sections may not apply or be required. Look for clues in the scenario or ask your instructor for guidance.

## Short Report: Instructions and Guidelines

* Pay particular attention to writing mechanics so that your report is of a high quality. You will find details on writing mechanics in several of the initial sections of the module eText.
* Your report needs to be professionally presented, structured correctly, and must include all relevant sections. You may want to review the section on short reports in the “Writing Workplace Documents” chapter of the eText for guidance. Details on what to include in various report sections is also provided in the “Information Literacy” chapter of the eText.
* The information you provide in your report needs to be factual and authentic; therefore, research will be required. You may need to cite information sources in your report. Review the eText chapter “Information Literacy” for help on techniques for conducting research and citing sources correctly.
* Remember to follow proper rules of ethics when using works from other sources in your report, as outlined in the “Ethical Guidelines for Writing” chapter of the eText.
* Before submitting your work, take some time to review and revise it. When working on a report over a period of time, it can be challenging to be objective and clearly see obvious faults or deficiencies. You may want to review the chapter on “Revising Workplace Documents” in the eText, paying particular attention to the section on the stages of revision.

## Required

* Create a short report using the correct type based on the scenario.
* Ensure you have adequately responded to the purpose of the scenario.
* Design your report following common conventions as outlined in your learning.
* Include only those sections in your report that are relevant, and format them correctly.
* The length of your report should be no more than 5 pages, excluding the cover page and appendix.
* Since this will be a short report, a table of contents and abstract are not required.
* Use customary margins, font, and font size that is consistent with the style and format for reports.
* Include page numbers appropriately positioned.
* Ensure your report is professional, grammatically correct, properly punctuated, and easy to read.

## Grading

Your report will be assessed on several factors which have been divided into three main areas:

1. Structure and Presentation
2. Clarity and Conciseness
3. Writing Mechanics

For more details on each of these factors, please review the grading rubric.

## Submission

Due dates and other submission requirements will be outlined by your instructor.

## Scenarios for Short Report Assignment (6)

**Scenario #1**

You are the executive assistant to John Ross, the Information Technology Manager at ABC Company. A meeting has been scheduled for all company managers where they will discuss the development of a new policy governing email usage by non-management staff. To prepare for the meeting, Mr. Ross has tasked you with creating a short report that he can present and discuss with other managers at the meeting. You are not asked to provide a recommendation for this report.

He would like you to research and include details on the following key elements:

* The two most critically important considerations of such a policy. What seems to be common in such policies at other firms?
* What are some of the pros and cons of implementing such a policy? For example, how has this been received by employees at other firms.
* What is the best method to successfully implement such a policy? What factors might lead to success or failure?
* What is the best method of enforcing such a policy? Are there privacy or other regulations that may apply here?

**Scenario #2**

Your company, which prides itself on being equitable and inclusive in its hiring practices, is concerned about fairness and ethical conduct within the organization. You are tasked with researching and providing helpful information about the training, policies, and codes of conduct that other organizations have used successfully. Your report will be used in guiding the revision of your company’s current policies.

**Scenario #3**

You work in the HR department of a company, and much of your work involves employee relations. Ken Vernon, the department senior manager, has asked you to prepare a report focusing on promoting the company from within. He indicated that research shows that respect in the workplace—at and between all department levels—as well as adequate compensation packages help to retain employees. In the past, the department has had challenges finding qualified people even when unemployment is high. Therefore, Ken wants to keep the talent that exists.

Prepare a report with recommendations on how to implement a process of promoting the company internally. To support your recommendations, provide good ideas and best practices that other companies use for self-promotion. Include evidence that Ken can use to make informed decisions on how to proceed with a plan of action.

**Scenario #4**

The Mitz Group is a software development and consulting firm. The software products Mitz provides to its clients include end-user documentation. A recurring complaint from clients is that the documentation is not very user-friendly. Some find it hard to understand, while others say finding what they need about software features is difficult or confusing.

John Ward, the documentation manager for Mitz, is aware of the problem. He wants to develop a process for creating user documentation as the software projects are being completed. He feels that working on the documentation during the software development stage can help address some of the complaints. His plan is to strike a user documentation team that will work with software developers to create user-friendly documentation, ensuring that it is thorough, orderly, and complete.

John understands that to be of any value, the documentation needs to have certain key characteristics. He has heard far too often that software documentation can be hard to read and follow and that, in many cases, the documentation appears to be written more for technical people rather than end users.

John asks you to research the most important qualities of good user documentation for any product or purpose. He wants you to filter through the research and come up with three to five key recommendations that you believe would add quality and usefulness to the documentation. He expects that you will provide clear evidence to support your recommendations.

## Scenario #5

At the last management meeting, an idea was floated about having employee participation in management decision making. Some managers bristled at this notion, while others seemed more curious on the practicality of such a process.

There was enough interest in the idea, so the general manager, Malcolm Hortz, has tasked you with preparing a report that will be the basis for another more thorough discussion on the topic. He would like you to include information on methods or models currently used by other firms, as well as important criteria to evaluate these models.

You are not asked to provide a recommendation, but Mr. Hortz would like you to identify the most common or popular methods and provide reasons why they are popular.

**Scenario #6**

You work for a medium-sized company that has three physical sites within the city. There is usually a significant amount of internal emailing going on every day, and much of it consists of quick comments or responses to questions posed by staff to other staff. Even though the email system is fast, there can be delays in responding. You are convinced that an instant messaging (IM) system would be a good option to get quicker responses. You don’t want IM to replace email but feel it would be a great enhancement and add to productivity.

You have expressed this idea to others in the company and even dropped a note about it in the suggestion box. To date, there has been no action. You decide to compile a short report on how IM could be used as part of the internal communication system and the costs involved. You also plan to include credible information that proves your point that IM would benefit the company. You plan on giving your report to Janice Jones, the head of information systems at your company.