

# Tutorial Letter 202/1/2018

Practising Workplace English

**ENN1504**

**Semester 1**

**Department of English Studies**

**IMPORTANT INFORMATION:**

**Feedback Tutorial Letter for Assignment 02**

BARCODE

Dear Student

In this tutorial letter, we provide information relating to Assignment 02 and guidelines relating to the May/June examination. You are advised to read through this tutorial thoroughly and use the feedback given constructively to improve on your performance in report writing. A good point of departure would be to use the feedback given in this tutorial, as well as the comments in your marked assignment, to identify key areas that need attention and amend your report writing skills accordingly.

At the outset, you had to familiarise yourself with the context of the respective reports in order to answer these questions with sufficient details. Although there was a strong emphasis on the content details; areas that needed serious attention were the correctness of formal register, tense usage, consistency in format and structure.

In light of our general observations, we believe that you will find the following comments and sample answers useful in preparing for the forthcoming examinations. Please note that the sample answers are by no means definitive solutions to the assignment questions. Furthermore, each response is marked on its own merits, provided it consistently fulfils the required criteria for report writing in the workplace.

## **SECTION A**

### **QUESTION: INVESTIGATIVE REPORT**

*The purpose of this question is to establish whether you know how to write an investigative report. This requires you to do the necessary preparatory reading so that you can answer the question adequately.*

*Work through unit 3 in the study guide and learning unit 3 in the workbook before attempting to answer this question.*

### **BACKGROUND**

You are employed as the Human Resource Manager at Radical Solutions. At a recent management meeting, the increasing number of complaints received from the staff, about their health and safety risks in the workplace, was raised. Management was concerned that these alleged claims could have impacted on the morale, attendance and productivity of the staff in the company.

You were commissioned to investigate the working conditions of employees at Radical Solutions. Possible areas suggested for the investigation included health and safety risks related to staff allocation and working hours; the use of available office space. Equipment and available amenities; staff attendance and resignations. The report should also include recommendations to the Executive Management Committee. A complete and comprehensive formal report should be submitted to the Chief Executive Officer by 30 April 2018.

## **INSTRUCTIONS**

1. The formal investigative report should include a clear and concise title.
2. Use the following sub-headings:
  1. Terms of Reference
  2. Procedures
  3. Findings
  4. Conclusions
  5. Recommendations
  6. Compiler's details and date of submission

## **GUIDELINES**

1. It is important that you read Study Units 1 and 3 in the study guide and learning units 1 and 3 in the workbook. You may also consult recommended books and related additional resources to establish a sound understanding of how to write an investigative report, using the appropriate content, structure, language and style. Use your resources meaningfully to create your own response. Do not plagiarise.
2. Ensure that the information in the different sections of the report is presented in a logical and coherent sequence. Provide important and specific details that are readily accessible at any given time when the report is read.
3. Note that the report is a factual legal document.
4. The report should not exceed THREE pages in length.

5. Edit and proofread the report before submission. You should ensure that the report reflects originality and resourcefulness in providing relevant information that is complete and concise.
6. Include your signed declaration form as part of your submission.

**TOTAL: 100 MARKS**

## **ASSIGNMENT FEEDBACK**

It was encouraging to note that some of you presented detailed reports with particular emphasis on relevant content, correct structure, appropriate register and style through the use of strictly formal language. There was also strong evidence of your ability to apply your content knowledge and competencies in report writing to meet most of the assessment criteria in clearly defined sections of the report. For example, in the title of the report the issue under investigation and the name of the company were explicitly stated; the terms of reference included the names and designations of the relevant persons as well as the closing date of submission for the report. There was also a strong correlation between the procedures, findings, conclusions and recommendations. Credit was given when there was evidence of editing and proofreading. These reports were well structured, informative and objective with minor errors in grammar and expression.

Unfortunately, we received many superficial reports that were poorly structured and lacked the crucial grammatical correctness that is required in formal business writing. The tendency to use content from the study guide, the workbook or other relevant sources resulted in such responses being fragmented. You were also penalised for the use of informal and subjective reporting, examples of which include the use of abbreviations, contractions, colloquial language and pronouns such as “I” and “we”. The importance of editing and proofreading your work before submission cannot be overemphasised. This final process of writing is crucial in eliminating careless errors in spelling, punctuation, tenses and sentence construction. Consistency in the format and structure are equally important.

**TITLE:** The title must capture all the important aspects of the topic or the project. Note that one conducts a report **on** an investigation **into** or **of** something. The company’s name was often omitted.

**TERMS OF REFERENCE:** Essential, specific details such names and positions of person(s) who commissioned the report and who compiled the report, as well as dates, were frequently omitted.

**PROCEDURES:** There were too few responses clearly defined procedures. Specific details regarding when, how and why each procedure was undertaken to collect relevant information to ensure that the investigation covered key aspects of the investigation are important. The procedures should aim at investigating different types of health and safety risks experienced at Radical Solutions. Merely listing procedures is inadequate. A minimum of 3 procedures was expected. The purpose of each procedure should also be included and relate to the reasons given in the question.

**FINDINGS:** You were expected to record your findings in close alignment with the previous section (procedures). Many of you wrote findings that were either fragmented or insubstantial or irrelevant. Credit was given to those students who showed evidence of integrating specific findings with the aforementioned procedures, for example, using percentages to reflect responses to the questionnaire or the use of tables or graphs to reflect statistics gleaned from the site inspection or audits of records.

**CONCLUSIONS:** Conclusions involve analysing your specific, factual findings into a logical summary. A few useful phrases used in this section included; "The major health and safety risk was..." OR "Most of the complaints were unfounded, except..."

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** The conclusions should lead to logical, relevant recommendations for the investigation. Make use of verbs such as "should", "suggest" and "propose" instead of "must", "will" and "would".

The **SUBMISSION VERIFICATION** section comprises the compiler's signature, initials and surname, designation and date of submission. Many of you ignored this important section that legalises the report. Do not end with a complimentary close such as "Yours sincerely", "Yours faithfully" or "Kind regards".

Responses that merely repeated the contents of the question without elaboration through the provision of specific were penalised. Marks were also deducted for repetitive content that indicated difficulties in differentiating between findings, conclusions and recommendations.

## **POSSIBLE ANSWER**

# **REPORT ON THE HEALTH AND SAFETY RISKS OF EMPLOYEES AT RADICAL SOLUTIONS**

## **1. TERMS OF REFERENCE**

On 2 February 2018, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Mr B Patlane, commissioned the Human Resource Manager, Ms R Peterson, to investigate the health and safety risks that the employees experienced at Radical Solutions. A comprehensive report, including recommendations, was to be submitted to the CEO by 31 April 2018.

## **2. PROCEDURES**

### **2.1 Interview**

An interview was held with Mr D Ntuli, the Risk Management Officer, to discuss health and safety policies and challenges in implementation.

### **2.2 Questionnaires**

Questionnaires were distributed to all employees to establish their concerns regarding their health and safety in the workplace.

### **2.3 On-site Inspection**

Random on-site visits of the factory were done during 19-27 February 2017 to identify possible safety hazards during working hours.

### **2.4 Audits**

Task teams were delegated to scrutinise the following records (July 2017-January 2018) to verify concerns raised by staff and management regarding health and safety risks at Radical Solutions:

2.4.1 Incident Reports.

2.4.2 Staff Attendance and Resignation Records of Human Resource Management.

### **3. FINDINGS**

#### **3.1 Interview**

The interview with Mr Ntuli revealed the following:

3.1.1 Each employee was required to be compliant with the Health and Safety Policies. This document was discussed and signed as part of the induction programme, which was compulsory for all staff.

3.1.2 The maintenance of the factory machinery was outsourced to Speedy Operations. The contractual obligations of servicing the machines once a month were not met. The machines broke down at least once a month, decreasing the hours of production.

#### **3.2 Questionnaires**

**Responses to the questionnaires revealed the following:**

3.2.1 80% of employees complained about having to work overtime to compensate for loss of production due to staff being injured at work or to machinery that was faulty.

3.2.2 70% of the factory employees were not aware of the compulsory rules of compliance to wear safety gear when operating machinery.

3.2.3 60% of the factory staff felt threatened by and frustrated with operating faulty machinery to complete their scheduled production quota. The delay in repairing reported faulty machinery impacted negatively on their levels of productivity.

#### **3.3 On-site Inspections (19 - 27 February 2017)**

3.3.1 60% of the staff did not wear the required protection gear when operating the machinery.

3.3.2 On two occasions the factory workers were not under supervision as the factory supervisor had to attend management meetings.

3.3.3 There were two serious injuries during this period but the required safety procedures, according to the handbook, were not followed. This delayed the process of emergency medical attention and disrupted production time.

3.3.4 The three available medical kits were not completely equipped as per regulatory requirements.

### **3.4 Audits of Records (July 2017- January 2018)**

3.4.1 The incident reports reflected that there was a 15% increase in the number of health and safety risk incidents recorded. Although proper records were maintained, there were no records of remedial measures to minimise the health and safety risks of employees.

3.4.2 The records of Human Resource Management revealed that:

3.4.2.1 20% of the employees were absent from work due to injuries sustained during working hours.

3.4.2.2 10 employees were absent from work for a period longer than 2 months due to injuries they had sustained while working in the factory.

3.4.2.3 Of the 20 employees who had resigned, 10 justified their resignation with health and safety risks they had experienced in the company.

## **4. CONCLUSIONS**

From the above findings, the following conclusions were made:

4.1.1 The major contributory factors to the non-compliance of health and safety practices by both staff and management were inadequate supervision and the lack of knowledge of safe practices.

4.1.2 The poor maintenance of machinery and extended working hours impacted negatively on the employees' levels of morale and productivity.

4.1.3 The health and safety risks of employees contributed to the increase in the rate of absenteeism and resignations. This resulted in a decrease in production levels.

## **5. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that:

5.1 An urgent intervention training programme should be structured to ensure compliance with the Health and Safety Policy. This should include emergency drill practices for both staff and management at least twice a year.

5.2 Alternative companies should be consulted to assess all the machinery and provide quotations for replacements and maintenance.

*RPeterson*

R Peterson  
Human Resource Manager  
30 April 2017

## SECTION B

### EXAMINATION GUIDELINES

#### ASSESSMENT

Evaluation of your answers to examination questions will be carried out in much the same way as for assignments. Your marks will be determined by considering the four broad areas reflected in the following table:

<b>ASSESSMENT CRITERIA</b>			
<b>CONTENT AND CONTEXT</b>	<b>STRUCTURE</b>	<b>LANGUAGE</b>	
		<b>LANGUAGE ACCURACY AND EDITING</b>	<b>STYLE AND REGISTER</b>
<p>The revision of the text as a whole in order to improve the content through the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identification of the main purpose and audience</li> <li>• selection of relevant details</li> <li>• omission of irrelevant details</li> <li>• inclusion of additional relevant details</li> </ul>	<p>The revision of the text as a whole in order to improve the structure and the organisation of the information.</p>	<p>Technical writing skills in using correct language / grammar structure.</p>	<p>The appropriate level of formality and tone to establish purpose and audience.</p>
<p>Criteria to be considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• correctness (relevancy &amp; accuracy)</li> <li>• completeness</li> <li>• coherence</li> <li>• conciseness</li> <li>• clarity</li> </ul>	<p>Criteria to be considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• correctness of format</li> <li>• logical sequencing/ paragraphing/ subheadings/ visuals (if applicable)</li> <li>• handwriting/ typesetting/ layout</li> </ul>	<p>Criteria to be considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• grammar (vocabulary)</li> <li>• spelling</li> <li>• punctuation</li> <li>• sentence structure</li> <li>• expression</li> </ul>	<p>Criteria to be considered :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• usage of words/ phrases</li> <li>• sentence structures</li> <li>• punctuation aimed at supporting appropriate style and register</li> </ul>

Ensuring compliance with the 5Cs of good business writing skills should always culminate in the following tasks:

- editing of your revised content, structure, language usage and business writing style;
- proofreading to correct minor mistakes that might distract attention from what you are communicating to the reader.

## **EXAMINATION GUIDELINES**

Your answers must meet the specific requirements of each question. Although we do not require that you show your planning or drafts, you need to carefully consider the instructional key words of each question. Questions and instructions are often complex, and need to be analysed step-by-step. You will be tested partly on your ability to interpret the questions correctly and to provide well-planned responses to specific instructions.

Remember to make your answers as realistic as possible by including sufficient 'factual' information. You may invent (i.e. make up) relevant and appropriate necessary details.

If you need to do some rough work, use the back pages of your answer book and rule a line through it so we can see it is not to be marked. Be sure that you have enough time to complete all the answers. But, you should also try not to rush so much that you do not use all of the time available to you. Depending on the mark allocation, you should be able to estimate how much time you can spend on each question. You will write a 2-hour paper worth a total of 100 marks.

Note that your examination mark will contribute **60%** of your final mark; the remaining **40%** will come from your semester mark as derived from your assignments. However, if you get less than 40% in the examination itself, your assignment marks will not be considered at all.

The ENN1504 team wishes you all the best in the forthcoming examination.

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