Technical and Business Writing (SS2012)

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Course Instructor(s)

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Final Exam

Total Time (Hrs.):	3
Total Marks:	80
Total Questions:	5

Roll No   Section   Student Signature

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Attempt all the questions on the answer sheet. Do not attach the question paper.
Do not copy text from the question, rephrase and write in your own words. Only lifting text from the question will lead to a 0.5 marks deduction for each segment. This rule applies to all questions.

Q1: Write an Informal Report on the given task:

[20]

You are working as a Junior Consultant at Green Space Solutions, a Lahore-based firm that combines smart technology with eco-friendly design to develop sustainable outdoor environments for schools, universities, and corporate campuses. Your team uses data-driven planning and digital tools (e.g., CAD modeling, environmental sensors, and project management software) to design practical, cost-effective, and user-friendly solutions.

Your company has been contracted by Gateway Preparatory Academy, a private college in Lahore, to investigate ongoing complaints from students about the outdoor study and break area. This space is intended for informal study, relaxation, and after-class social activities. The college administration is concerned about student dissatisfaction and has asked for a preliminary report.

As part of the consulting team, you visited the site to assess the situation and gather information. Your technical observations include: uneven ground, missing formal seating, shading structures, or lack of greenery, which contributes to high surface temperatures and a lack of visual appeal. During summer, the area becomes too hot for use; in winter, it becomes muddy due to poor drainage. These environmental and usability issues have led to low student engagement and frequent complaints.

You have been asked to prepare a brief, informal problem analysis report addressed to the Director of Facilities and Campus Planning, Ms. Rukhsana Khalid. Your report will serve as an internal document to inform further planning and development phases.

Write an informal memo report that does the following:

- Identify and explain the current problems with the outdoor space, using clear, concise language and technical observations where appropriate.
- Analyze how these issues affect student well-being, academic focus, and the school's operational and reputational goals.
- Propose at least two practical, technology-informed, and cost-conscious recommendations to improve the space. (For example: low-cost sensor-based shading systems, modular seating, or smart drainage solutions.)

Q2: Read the following job posting published on the company's website. Then, write a professional cover letter tailored to the job, company, and role. Your letter will be assessed on how effectively you communicate your suitability in a professional tone, indicating the understanding of workplace correspondence conventions.

[15]

Your letter must be addressed to: Mr. Shahid Ahmed, HR Manager, TechnoSoft, Faisal Town, Lahore
Length: Around 250–300 words (1 page max)
Format: Proper business letter structure (with greeting, paragraphs, closing, etc.)
Content: Highlight your relevant skills, education, and motivation for applying.

Job Posting – Junior Software Engineer at TechnoSoft

Position Title: Junior Software Engineer
Company: TechnoSoft
Location: Faisal Town, Lahore (Hybrid: office + remote)
Employment Type: Full-time, Entry-Level (0–2 years of experience)
Salary: Competitive, negotiable based on qualifications

About TechnoSoft
TechnoSoft is a Lahore-based technology company that provides cutting-edge software solutions and reliable IT support services. Known for its innovation, collaborative team culture, and fast-paced environment, the company works on a variety of projects that include software product development, IT optimization, and enterprise system design.

Responsibilities
- Collaborate on software development projects
- Contribute to coding, testing, and feature implementation
- Debug and maintain existing code
- Communicate and work with cross-functional teams

Qualifications & Skills
- Bachelor's degree in Computer Science or related field
- Knowledge of programming (e.g., Java, Python, or similar)
- Basic familiarity with version control (e.g., Git) and cloud platforms
- Good communication and collaboration skills

Q3: Read the case study and answer the questions that follow:

[15]

Case Study: The Impact of Weak Presentation Skills

Sarah Khan, a graduate student in Business Administration, is preparing for the final defense of her capstone project titled *"Consumer Behavior in Online Shopping."* The audience for her presentation includes a panel of professors, a few industry professionals specializing in digital marketing and consumer psychology, and some fellow graduate students. The outcome of this presentation will determine whether she qualifies for graduation.

Sarah has dedicated several weeks to collecting data, designing slides, and rehearsing her talk. Despite her efforts, she faces a range of challenges that may compromise the effectiveness of her communication:

1. **Audience Mismatch**: Her audience is multidisciplinary. While some are well-versed in data analytics and behavioral science, others have only a general understanding of the topic. Sarah struggles with how much technical detail to include and how to explain complex concepts without overwhelming or alienating parts of her audience.

2. **Slide Design Issues**: Sarah's slides are text-heavy and visually inconsistent. Multiple slides are crowded with bullet points, dense tables, and overly detailed charts. Her use of bright red and yellow as accent colors distracts rather than highlights key points, and her inconsistent font sizes reduce visual clarity.

3. **Delivery and Public Speaking Challenges**: During rehearsals, Sarah often hesitates, repeats phrases, and shows discomfort when speaking about quantitative data. She appears visibly nervous and is unsure how to handle silence or signs of disengagement. She also realizes she hasn't adequately prepared for questions from the panel.

4. **Structural and Flow Problems**:
    Although her research is thorough, Sarah has not given attention to the *flow* of her presentation. Her transitions between sections are abrupt, and she frequently reads directly from her slides. As a result, her delivery feels disjointed. She sometimes moves backward through slides, which breaks the narrative rhythm and confuses listeners.

Questions:

[5 + 5 + 5]

1. What specific slide design and visual communication principles should Sarah apply to make her presentation more accessible, visually effective, and audience-friendly, especially considering the diversity of her audience?

2. Suggest practical strategies Sarah can adopt to strengthen her delivery skills.

3. How can Sarah strategically prepare for the Q&A segment? Discuss both pre-presentation preparation and real-time techniques for handling challenging or unexpected questions confidently.

Q4: Read the case study and answer the questions that follow:

[15]

Case Study: Cross-Cultural Communication and Ethics in a Global Tech Team

GlobalTech, a multinational technology firm, has initiated the development of a next-generation collaboration platform designed for enterprise clients worldwide. The core development and strategy team includes four members from different cultural and professional backgrounds:

- Anna (Germany) – Project Manager
- David (United States) – Software Architect
- Hiroshi (Japan) – UX Designer
- Carla (Brazil) – Marketing Strategist

From the outset, communication and workflow challenges emerge due to differing cultural norms, feedback styles, and assumptions about professional behavior.

- In their first meeting, Anna shares a clear agenda and deadline-driven roadmap, emphasizing structure, punctuality, and measurable goals. Carla frequently jumps between topics, advocating for spontaneity and creative freedom, stating that "rigid agendas kill good ideas." Anna becomes frustrated, while David encourages Carla's open-ended style, seeing it as a way to surface innovative insights.
- Hiroshi remains mostly silent during meetings but sends detailed follow-up emails. His tone is polite and indirect, even when raising serious concerns.
- As the project evolves, status updates reveal stark differences:
  - David provides structured, analytical reports.
  - Hiroshi submits brief summaries focused on group effort and context.
  - Carla sends colorful slide decks and upbeat voice notes filled with vague but enthusiastic claims, including statements like "Client interest is surging" and "We're hitting 90% satisfaction."

During a private chat, Carla admits to David that her claims are based on outdated data and assumptions. "The numbers sound right," she says, "and they help get people excited. We'll sort out the real details later." She calls it "positioning," not misinformation. *Subjective + Fabrication.*

In the next meeting, Carla presents her polished slide deck. Impressed by the optimism and numbers, Anna fast-tracks a revised launch timeline. David hesitates to speak up, while Hiroshi silently emails Anna after the meeting with questions about data validity. Later, when Anna gives direct feedback about missed updates, David supports her frankness. Hiroshi appears uncomfortable with the confrontation, while Carla later tells Anna privately to "avoid criticism in public" and to keep the mood positive to "preserve team morale."

Questions

[4 + 4 + 2 + 5]

Q1. According to Nancy Settle-Murphy's cultural dimensions, explain Anna and Carla's communication styles. Identify the relevant key terms and provide a brief explanation with reference to their behaviors in the case.

Q2. Which team members exhibit high-context versus low-context communication styles? Define the concept and explain your answer with two specific examples from the case.

Q3. Compare the feedback preferences of Anna, Carla, David, and Hiroshi. How do they differ in terms of directness, timing, and setting for giving or receiving feedback?

Q4. What ethical issue does Carla's behavior raise in the context of business communication? Discuss what David should do, considering professional integrity, his role on the team, and cross-cultural sensitivity.

Q5: Choose the most appropriate option for each question. Only one option is correct per question. Write the chosen option on answer sheet.

[5]

1. In formal report writing, appendices are typically used to:
   a) Add stylistic elements and design details
   b) Include essential content that must be read first
   c) Provide supplementary or detailed data that supports the main text
   d) Replace sections like the Methodology or Results

2. Which of the following characteristics is not typical of an effective abstract in a formal report?
   a) Objective and self-contained
   b) Includes key conclusions
   c) Written before the report is finalized
   d) Contains detailed charts or tables

3. What is the primary function of an Abstract in a formal report?
   a) To outline the historical background of the topic
   b) To provide a full analysis of the report's data
   c) To give a concise overview of the report's purpose, methods, and key findings
   d) To list all abbreviations and acronyms used in the report

4. Why is it generally inappropriate to include decorative fonts (like script or Comic Sans) in the headings of a formal proposal?
   a) They waste printer ink
   b) They violate reader expectations of standardization
   c) They make headings more memorable
   d) They are often used in academic citations

5. When integrating visual aids into formal reports, which of the following must always accompany the graphic?
   a) A hyperlink to the original source
   b) A watermark
   c) A figure number, caption, and source attribution
   d) A grayscale version for print use