

Professional Communication Short Course on Report Writing for CSC3002F

Presented by staff of the Professional Communication Unit (PCU) over Feb/March 2019

Lectures in various breakaway venues in weeks 2 to 5.

Assignment: Do an investigation and write a feasibility study according to the instructions below this table.

Marks **25% course assignments – 75% final report**

Division of 25% as follows:

5% - Mind Map *	8% - Topic Outline*	12% Panel Presentation*	75% - Final Report*
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Length 12 - 15 pages including preliminary sections

Due 11 April

Assignment: to do a feasibility study and write a report on it

Method of investigation:

- Through primary and secondary research investigate a scenario at UCT (minimum of 6 sources)
- Teams choose a setting they are interested in investigating
- Teams do research and produce a draft each week for feedback and refinement
- Teams combine to do **homework assignments** for **combined presentation** in class each week.

Attendance:

- Each double will consist of a lecture as well as breakaway groups for student team presentations (every team member to present at least once. Venues tba.)
- All students attend all four double periods from week 2 to 5 of Semester 1, either Monday or Thursday (sticking to one day or the other)

Background

The higher education sector in South Africa experienced considerable disruption as a result of student-led protests around fees for tertiary education in the period 2015 to 2017. At UCT this had a widespread effect on students; they could not access lecture theatres or computer labs, frequently had limited access to the internet and wi-fi, teaching and examinations were deferred, or a blended mode was adopted and exams were taken under extreme security conditions. Catering services in residences were brought to a standstill forcing a voucher system for students to purchase food at local vendors in Rondebosch and surrounds. Transport services were brought to a halt. This affected the ability of students to succeed academically and had severe consequences on social support systems they relied on and frequently their psychological stability. At the same time faculties, academic departments, research groups, ICTS, Properties and Services, Student Housing and Residence Life, administrative departments, Bremner administration, Campus

Protection Services, maintenance, and cleaning departments among others had to find ways to continue with providing service to the university and students. Professional bodies such as ASSA and SAICA also had to adapt the ways that they communicated with and examined students doing professional exams at universities.

Out of the protest period a great deal of pressure has also come to bear on the university to improve the lives of students, transform the curriculum, decolonize the university 'space' and advance access for students to expand their chances of success. This has been a sustaining driver of change in how to provide infrastructure and find solutions for technical problems.

You are tasked to investigate the technology-based solutions that the university devised in response to protests and to improve their response to the challenges around access and success.

Select a department or course or service that interests you. Through consultation with staff and students involved in this space, using a minimum of six sources of information (personal interviews, articles, websites of other universities, polls of students on campus, possibly even drawing on your own experience), do a **feasibility study**. Aim to assess solutions based on criteria and ultimately recommend an innovative means of improving the services or facilities they offer.

Address the study towards the department or service etc. whose solutions you are investigating, ultimately making recommendations for them to improve. [Do not copy the terms of reference below verbatim; rather adjust for your particular scenario]

Your specific terms of reference from your project partner are to:

1. Devise a set of criteria to assess the feasibility and likelihood of success of a technology-based solution under the social and technical challenges described in the background to this investigation.
2. Investigate such a solution that **(chosen department, faculty etc)** implemented to deal with the impact of protests.
3. Research alternatives to these using your expertise in computer science, or through examining the responses of other universities in comparable situations. Include costs as far as possible.
4. Draw Conclusions by evaluating both the departmental solution and those that you have investigated, using the criteria in section 1 above.
5. Make Recommendations to the department etc. as to what they should do to change, maintain, develop or enhance the approach they are/were using.

Draft assignments weekly

Through the course you are required as a team to generate a **mind map, a topic outline and 'pitch'** (presentation with embedded simulation a la Dragon's Den) in weeks 3 to 5 respectively.

- These will be presented to one of three lecturers and fellow teams in break-away groups for feedback and refining of your concepts and further planning, in weeks 3 and 4.
- The final presentation of your work at an advanced stage including the pitch will be for a panel comprising academics and management on the course in week 5.

These will be marked and will make up the 25% of the total mark for this course.

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| • Mind Map Presentation | 5% - | either 25 Feb /28 Feb |
| • Topic Outline Presentation | 8% - | either 4 March/ 7 March |
| • Interim Report Presentation | 12% - | either 11 March/14 March |

Your final report will be marked using the marking bands and rubric below and will constitute 75% of the total mark.

Note on disclaimer and plagiarism

Submitting this report signifies that it is each member who vouches that this is his/her unaided work.

MARKING BANDS

Fail: If one or more of the following is evident

- Format is completely inappropriate for report
- Too much information provided is inappropriately positioned
- Too much information provided is irrelevant to report
- It is incomprehensible, i.e. you cannot make sense of what is written
- Poor spelling/ -grammar throughout

50% - 59%: If there is evidence of increasing ability in the following

- There is an attempt to use appropriate readability techniques; numbering, headings, labels etc
- The work is of a level that can be understood, i.e. you can make sense of what the students are wanting to say
- There is a clear attempt made to populate different sections with appropriate language style; i.e. objective/neutral for Findings, value laden, subjective for Conclusions, imperative for Recommendations
- Acceptable spelling/ -grammar

60% - 69%: If there is evidence of increasing ability in the following

- The assignment shows a level of coherence and organisation, a logical progression of ideas.
- Correct sections in the correct sequence with largely appropriate information in each section.
- Attention to how the assignment is constructed, i.e. layout, formatting
- Headings are clear, simple and informative
- Numbering is generally correct
- The different sections are written in appropriate styles

70% and above: If there is evidence of increasing ability in the following

- The assignment is clearly written and is easy to read
- There is appropriate information in all sections
- Each section is well constructed, excellent informative headings, excellent numbering, spacing etc.
- Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations are written using clearly appropriate language
- It shows creativity in thought and construction
- A "Distinction" (80%+) will be awarded to students who perform exceptionally well in all of these areas.

MARKING RUBRIC: REPORT ASSESSMENT SHEET Csc3002F/PCU

Team No:		Team members:	
Part of report	Mark		Justification for mark
Preliminaries		5	
Summary		15	
Introduction		10	
Findings		30	
Conclusions		25	
Recommendations		15	
TOTAL		100	