## Week 2 Student Tutorial Sheet

**A systematic and analytical approach to professional communications**

**DESCRIPTIONS**

This tutorial is designed to provide students with an opportunity to observe how a systematic and analytical approach to professional communications can be applied, and in so doing students will be writing a cover letter for a sample job advertisement in a group of three or four.

As will be discussed at the beginning of the tutorial, the primary purpose of a written job application is to secure an interview. In so doing, your task is to make a very strong case for your suitability for the role, and addressing the key selection criteria is essential. The following activities will guide you through the process of designing a piece of communication, i.e. a cover letter in this instance. *Please note that the cover letter is to be assessed as part of the eFolio.*

**OBJECTIVES**

By the end of the tutorial, the students will:

1. understand how to systematically design a piece of communication in an analytical manner,
2. identify from the sample job advertisement key transferable skills to address in a cover letter,
3. understand and apply how to compose a standard cover letter for job application,
4. have their cover letter presented, shared and critically evaluated in class through discussion.

**Activity 1: Identifying the key selection criteria – finding out what you need to tell**

1. Individually read through a sample job advertisement (to be found on the next page), and identify three or four transferable skills and/or attributes you will need to address as key selection criteria if you were to apply for the job.
2. Consider as a group of three or four what kind of experience you would be able to use as ‘evidence’ that you possess those skills and/or attributes.
3. Discuss in class; tutors will lead the discussion.

**Activity 2: Writing a cover letter – considering how you need to tell**

1. Using the template provided at the end of this document, write a cover letter in the same group you formed for the previous activity that addresses the key transferable skills identified above.

**Activity 3: Getting feedback from others – hearing how others would read and think of your writing**

1. Share your group’s cover letter on the screen, so that other classmates can see your deliverable.
2. Discuss each other’s work; what’s working well, and what can be improved? Tutors will lead the discussion.

**Activity 1: Identifying the key transferable skills**

Student Internship

(Part-time, 6 months)

An exciting opportunity is available at Monash IT Consulting for those currently pursuing an undergraduate IT degree at an Australian university. Monash IT Consulting is an IT consulting firm based in Melbourne CBD, and its five Departments (Consulting, Security, Web, Digital, Development and Applications) are constantly looking for passionate and talented individuals who would like to make important contributions to the communities through their IT expertise.

WHAT YOU'LL GAIN FROM THE OPPORTUNITY

During the six months that you are here, you will learn valuable problem solving, technical and cross-collaboration working skills. Assist in solving the challenges our clients face within a supportive, diverse team with great mentors.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED TO GET GOING

To be part of it you'll need to be a current degree student enrolled at an Australian university.

You'll also be a rational decision maker, a solid communicator and exhibit the kinds of abilities that show true leadership potential.

The work-level here is fast and varied, so you'll need to be able to thrive in high intensity environment.

Internships commence July 2019.

To apply, please forward to internship@mitc.com.au your CV and a cover letter outlining your suitability to this role. Please quote Reference No. 1009682 in your application.

**Applications close on 16th March 2019**

**Note that the text is based on a real job advertisement.**

What kind of transferable skills and/or attributes would you need to address? And what kind of experience would you use as ‘evidence’? Fill in the spaces below with your group’s responses; you will be sharing these with class later.

***Skill/attribute 1: Being decisive***

Your ‘evidence’ for the skill/attribute 1:

Being an events director for a case competition event,

***Skill/attribute 2: Being a good leader***

Your ‘evidence’ for the skill/attribute 2:

I am a sub-committee member for Engineers without Borders. Being a sub-committee member means that I am responsible for giving guidance to others when delivering presentations, given the unique nature of the presentations being delivered to high school students and younger. I have demonstrated good leadership while being able to inspire others to deliver confidently. Moreover, in the workshop where there is an activity in addition to the presentation, I have to be able to delegate tasks to the other members in a fast paced 1 hour window to make sure that we finish on time.

***Skill/attribute 3: Valuable problem solving***

Your ‘evidence’ for the skill/attribute 3:

***Skill/attribute 4: Resilience***

Your ‘evidence’ for the skill/attribute 4:

The advertisement has highly emphasised how the job will be a high-pressured with a work level that is ‘fast and varied’. This proves that the individual will need to be

**Activity 2: Writing a cover letter**

*Use the template below as your reference for this exercise, but please delete all the explanatory notes and unnecessary parts before submission.*

*This is one of the relatively conventional business letter formats, and is commonly used in job applications. There are of course so many variants, but the elements included usually remain similar. Anyway, this would be a good start, and you can modify these as you go to suit your purpose.*

*When writing a cover letter, try to keep it to one page while addressing all the key skills/attributes identified in the previous exercise. It will be hard, but it is a skill to make your case in a concise manner. Be specific, precise and concise. Your tutor will of course help you in the course of the tutorial, too.*

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Human Resources,

Monash IT Consulting

26 Lonsdale Street

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Email: [internship@mitc.com.au](mailto:internship@mitc.com.au)

[Note that you could put the recipient’s name with an appropriate title (e.g. Mr, Ms, Dr) if this information is known. If not, you may put ‘Human Resources’ (as in this example) or a relevant work unit as a recipient. If you put the actual person as the intended recipient, make sure you include his/her job title, such as ‘Manager’, together with the work unit’s and the organisation’s details. The recipient’s physical address is a bit of legacy from the past, but still can be used to format a business letter, though this can be omitted in an electronic transaction.]

13th March 2019

Dear Sir/Madam,

[This can be used when the recipient is not known. If you know the recipient, address to this person with an appropriate title, such as ‘Dear Mr Jones’.]

*Subject: [Insert a brief description of the nature of this correspondence, such as ‘Application for…’. Include the exact job title and other details, such as the job reference number here. Remember that the person who collates the applications may well not be the person who actually selects the candidates. These details will help your communication to be effective.] Job Application for*

[You can now start your actual text (phew!). The first paragraph generally clarifies the purpose of the communication (e.g. ‘I am writing to apply for…), followed by a brief description of your motivation (e.g. ‘I would like to develop further my expertise in…’, ‘I would like to further expand my industry experience in…’), and also link back to the specifics of the role (e.g. ‘I’m interested in the role since it would offer me an opportunity to…’). Be concise and precise; the bottom line is that the reader needs to be convinced by the end of this paragraph to think that you have a clear idea about this role.]

[The second and following paragraphs (they should not be too many, though) should make a clear and strong case on your suitability against the key attributes/skills indented in the previous exercise. One approach to do this is to follow the following three steps:

1. Describe your experience, highlighting key points
2. Articulate what kind of skills and attributes the experience demonstrates
3. Relate these to the role you are applying for.

So, overall, it might look something like this:

*While studying at university, I have also been working as a customer service assistant at a local supermarket.* [Step 1] *In this role I am responsible for responding to a range of queries on refunds and other matters from customers at the front counter* […still Step 1]*. In this role I have developed strong interpersonal and communication skills to work with customers with different backgrounds and expectations, while working with other team members and my supervisors.* [Step 2] *I believe that these skills would be particularly relevant to the advertised role, since it would require the successful candidate an ability to communicate and work effectively with others in a collaborative working environment.* [Step 3]

[Note that you do not cover everything in each paragraph. Different examples would highlight different skills and attributes better, so think strategically to see in what way you can best represent your professional self as a whole. Also, remember that no writing is perfect. I (NS) have a habit of writing very long sentences, and I am sure that some would find in the above example sentences that are too long and complex! That is why it is important for you to have someone looking through your application no matter what.

It would also be advisable that you address not only your academic experience but also extracurricular activities, such as work experience and leadership experience beyond university. Some are so obvious, while others require a bit of imagination. Have a think about what examples could be included to make a convincing case.]

[The last paragraph should nicely conclude the entire letter by making a broad case for your suitability (e.g. ‘Overall, with the skills and experience discussed above, I believe that I would make a suitable candidate for…’). Remember to give some specific information for the reader too, such as ‘Please find attached my C.V.’, or ‘I can be contacted either by email or telephone at…’, before you finish nicely by thanking the reader (e.g. ‘Thank you for your consideration, and looking forward to hearing from you soon’). And now you are out!]

Yours faithfully,

[This is called ‘salutation’ that comes after all is said and done. In a business letter, you often use ‘yours faithfully’ when you do not know the recipient. If you know who will be reading this letter, you would use ‘yours sincerely’. Sounds pedantic? I think so too, but some people do care about such things! You can use ‘Kind regards’ or simply ‘Thank you’, but some find it a little informal. It is very unlikely that you will miss out on a job because of this, but your aim is to paint a cohesive picture of your professional self before your reader, so these details do indeed matter…]

[Insert your signature. This again is a legacy from the past. You can insert the actual signature as an image, or simply leave some space. Either way, you are again demonstrating your understanding of and familiarity with certain professional protocols that maintain the cohesiveness of your communication as a whole.]

[Insert your name, typed; so that people will know who actually wrote this letter!]