

THE SAULT COLLEGE OF APPLIED ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY  
SAULT STE. MARIE, ON



COURSE OUTLINE

Course Title: Technical Communication

Code No.: CMM2100-3

Semester: Fall/Winter

Program: Engineering Technology and Science and  
Natural Resources

Author: Language and Communication Department

Date: August 2002      Previous Outline Dated: August 2001

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_  
                                    Dean    Date

Total Credits: 3

Prerequisite(s): CMM110

Length of Course: 3 hours/week      Total Credit Hours: 48

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**I. COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course provides training in technical communication. Emphasis is given to memos, letters, forms, and reports. Oral reporting and its importance on the job are also included. The effective use of computers to research and generate technical documents is an essential component of this course. The principles of writing are taught through the writing process.

**II. LEARNING OUTCOMES AND ELEMENTS OF THE PERFORMANCE:**

**A. Learning Outcomes:**

1. Recognize the needs and expectations of various audience levels.
2. Produce accurate, well-organized, technical documents that are college-level quality and address an identified audience and purpose.
3. Employ computers accurately and efficiently to research and produce documents.
4. Research and document materials from various sources using specific formats.
5. Produce an employment package.
6. Deliver a well-organized oral presentation that involves effective visuals.

**B. Learning Outcomes and Elements of the Performance:**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will demonstrate the ability to:

1. Recognize the needs and expectations of various audience levels.

**Potential elements of the performance:**

- Explain the principles of organization
- Identify barriers to effective communication
- Assess the audience's needs and characteristics
- Determine their goal in the communication
- Identify the most effective form of communication
- Anticipate audience response

**II. LEARNING OUTCOMES AND ELEMENTS OF THE PERFORMANCE**  
**(Continued):**

2. Produce accurate, well-organized, technical documents that are college-level quality and address an identified audience and purpose.

**Potential elements of the performance:**

- Identify the audience and purpose for the document
- Identify the uses and types of technical documents
- Determine the most suitable format for presenting technical information
- Create accurate and specific reports using various formats
- Produce accurate, coherent abstracts/executive summaries
- Formulate effective introductory/problem statements
- Use active and passive voice and other emphatic techniques
- Identify the use, format, and content of all components of the formal report
- Incorporate effective graphics into documents
- Draw accurate, supported, logical conclusions and recommendations
- Use research and documentation as support in documents
- Use appropriate technical language and style
- Proofread and edit all work

3. Employ computers accurately and efficiently to produce reports.

**Potential elements of the performance:**

- Adjust and proofread for content
- Incorporate appropriate graphics
- Design clear, easily-read technical documents for specific audiences and purposes
- Proofread and edit work for correctness using spell-check, thesaurus, grammar check, and peer editing

4. Research and document materials from various sources using specific formats.

**Potential elements of the performance:**

- Identify the nature of the information to be researched
- Investigate various sources
- Distinguish primary and secondary sources
- Evaluate bias
- Use appropriate sources to support the document's purpose
- Employ a consistent documentation format

## II. LEARNING OUTCOMES AND ELEMENTS OF THE PERFORMANCE (Continued):

5. Produce an employment package.

### Potential elements of the performance:

- Summarize skills, knowledge, and experience
- Choose a format and create a resume that best presents abilities
- Write a concise, accurate, organized, effective cover letter

7. Deliver a well-organized oral presentation that involves effective visuals.

### Potential elements of the Performance:

- Analyze the audience and the purpose of the presentation
- Gather and organize relevant material
- Determine how to present the material in the most effective manner
- Anticipate and recognize typical audience responses
- Produce effective visual aids
- Rehearse and adapt the presentation
- Deliver a well-organized oral presentation individually or collaboratively
- Field questions effectively

## III. TOPICS:

**Note:** These topics sometimes overlap several areas of skill development and are not necessarily intended to be explored in isolated learning units or in the order below.

1. Principles of Organization and Communication
2. Language and Style in Technical Documents
3. Objectivity in Technical Communication
4. Letters, Memos, and Emails
5. Informal Reports
6. Employment Package
7. Oral Presentation
8. Graphics and Document Design
9. The Formal Report
10. Research and Documentation

#### **IV. REQUIRED RESOURCES / TEXTS / MATERIALS:**

1. Technical Writing: A Practical Approach (2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Ed.), Pfeiffer & Boogerd, Prentice-Hall.
2. Language and Communication Guidelines (provided)
3. Language and Communication Document booklet (provided)
4. Two 3.5 computer disks (dedicated to English)

#### **V. EVALUATION PROCESS / GRADING SYSTEM**

##### **MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS AND TESTING:**

(Refer also to the Language and Communication Guidelines)

The professor will announce which of the following will be completed in class under test conditions (minimum of 20%):

1. Students will write a minimum of five short assignments using technical document formats, such as:

- |   |             |
|---|-------------|
| a) Abstract   |             |
| b) Proposal/feasibility report                                  |             |
| c) Accident/incident/occurrence report                          |             |
| d) Technical Instruction or description                         |             |
| e) Field/trip report  | <b>50%</b>  |
| f) Investigation/evaluation report                              |             |
| g) Progress/periodic report                                     |             |
| h) Lab report   |             |
| i) Problem analysis/recommendation report                       |             |
| <br>  |             |
| 2. Oral presentation  | <b>15%</b>  |
| <br>  |             |
| 3. Job package  | <b>10%</b>  |
| <br>  |             |
| 4. Students must write and submit <b>one</b> of the following:  |             |
| a) A Formal Report  |             |
| The formal report will include a minimum of:                    |             |
| • 8-12 pages (from Introduction to Conclusions/Recommendations) |             |
| • three (3) sources   |             |
| • one (1) visual aid  |             |
| b) an exam (if required by the program area)                    |             |
| featuring a report format, minimum of 2 hours)                  | <b>25%</b>  |
| <br>  |             |
| <b>TOTAL</b>  | <b>100%</b> |

**V. EVALUATION PROCESS / GRADING SYSTEM**  
**MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS AND TESTING (continued):****Notes:**

1. Professors reserve the right to adjust the course delivery as they deem necessary to meet the needs of students.
2. Professors will deduct marks for any grammar and fundamental errors in final submissions.
3. Marking schemes for assignments will vary from professor to professor and from assignment to assignment. This flexibility recognizes that professors need to vary their approaches as they assist students with differing levels of competence to meet the learning outcomes of the course and to respond to program areas.

**METHOD OF ASSESSMENT (GRADING METHOD):**

Students will be assessed on the basis of their short technical assignments, oral presentation, job application package, and formal report and/or report exam.

The following letter grades will be assigned in accordance with college policy and the Language and Communication Department Guidelines:

<b><u>Grade</u></b>	<b><u>Definition</u></b>	<b><u>Grade Point Equivalent</u></b>
A+	Consistently outstanding	(90% - 100%) 4.00
A	Outstanding achievement	(80% - 89%) 3.75
B	Consistently above average achievement	(70% - 79%) 3.00
C	Satisfactory or acceptable achievement in all areas subject to assessment	(60% - 69%) 2.00
R	Repeat - The student has not achieved the objectives of the course, and the course must be repeated.	(less than 60%) 0.00
	CR Credit exemption	
X	A temporary grade, limited to situations with extenuating circumstances, giving a student additional time to complete course requirements	

**NOTE:** Students may be assigned a mid-term grade of "R" for unsatisfactory performance.

## **V. EVALUATION PROCESS / GRADING SYSTEM (Continued):**

### **TIME FRAME**

Technical Reporting CMM2100 involves three periods per week for the semester. One of these hours will be scheduled in a computer lab. Students are expected to attend class and to participate in class activities.

## **VI. SPECIAL NOTES:**

### Mid-Term Grades

At **mid-term** one of the following grades will be assigned:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| S | Satisfactory performance to the time of mid-term grade assignment (does not indicate successful completion of the course)     |
| U | Unsatisfactory performance to the time of mid-term grade assignment (does not indicate unsuccessful completion of the course) |
| R | The course must be repeated; minimal performance has resulted in the course outcomes not being met                            |

### Special Needs

Students with special needs (e.g. physical limitations, visual impairments, hearing impairments, learning disabilities) are encouraged to discuss required accommodations with the professor and/or contact the Special Needs Office.

### Complementary Activities

To meet course objectives, students should expect to match each scheduled class hour with independent study.

### The Learning Centre/The "Write" Place

Students are encouraged to use The Learning Centre (E1101) for drop-in tutorials, peer tutoring, and professor-assisted tutoring.

### Plagiarism

To plagiarise is to "take and use as one's own (thoughts [ideas], writings, inventions, etc. of another); especially to take and use a passage, plot, etc. from the work of another writer" (Gage Canadian Dictionary, 1983, p. 861). This includes using materials downloaded directly from the Internet without proper citation.

Students should refer to the definition of "academic dishonesty" in the "Statement of Students' Rights and Responsibilities" (on-line Intranet for Sault College). Also, in order to collaborate on an assignment, students need prior permission from the professor.

**VI. SPECIAL NOTES (continued):**

Students who engage in “academic dishonesty” will receive an automatic failure for that submission and/or other such penalty, up to and including expulsion from the course.

In order to protect students from inadvertent plagiarism, to protect the material referenced, and to credit the author of the material, it is the policy of the department to employ a documentation format for referencing source material.

**Advanced Standing**

Students who have completed an equivalent post-secondary course must bring relevant documents to the Coordinator, Language and Communication Department:

- A copy of course outline
- A copy of the transcript verifying successful completion of the equivalent course

Note: A copy of the transcript must be on file in the Registrar’s Office.

**Retention of Course Outlines**

Students are responsible for retaining all course outlines for possible future use in gaining advanced standing at other post-secondary institutions.

Substitute course information is available at the Registrar’s office.

**VII. PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT**

Students who have related employment-centered experience should see the Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) Coordinator.

Students who have mastered these outcomes should see the Prior Learning Assessment Coordinator to discuss the availability of a Challenge Test for this course.



