

Professional Writing Standards

Eller College of Management, Business Communication Program

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CRITERIA	Critical Thinking	Logic and Reasoning	Structural Coherence	Information Design	Error interference
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audience • Purpose • Context • Frame • Strategic approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Logical units of discourse • Claim or assertion • Idea unity and integrity • Supporting evidence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coherent “whole” • Internal logic • Section unity & integrity • Transitions • Language use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Format and channel • Visual design • Readability/accessibility • Professionalism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disruptive errors • Credibility errors • Etiquette errors • Accent errors
Exceeds Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates sophisticated understanding of audience, purpose, and context through framing and strategic approach, including, not limited to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. purpose statement that is articulate, coherent, overreaching, encompassing higher view; 2. forecasting that provides structural cohesion and unity and acknowledges and informs audience of guiding structure; 3. professionalism that acknowledges relational value and confirms audience status and knowledge base. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates exceptional logic and reasoning through <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. claims/assertions that are logically sound, clear, credible, valid, and substantiated; 2. unity, integrity, and thoroughness of ideas and reasoning provided to support claims and assertions; 3. supporting evidence, information, and data that are accurate, concrete, explicit, relevant, well explained, varied, and engaging. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates integrity of structural coherence through <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the development of a meaningful “whole”; 2. well-structured, logical flow of ideas; 3. cohesive development within sections (sections can “stand alone”); 4. seamless transitions; 5. precise, concise, and accurate language patterns. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates mastery of information design through <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. optimal format and channel choice; 2. sophisticated visual design strategy; 3. compression of complex information into clear visual patterns for rapid intake and high skim value; 4. enhanced reader comprehension of complex material through clear, concise, visual and verbal elements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No etiquette or credibility errors. Although minimal disruptive or accent errors may be present, no error interference. <p style="text-align: center;">Document is client-ready and professional.</p>

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Meets Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates clear understanding of audience, purpose, and context through framing and strategic approach, including, not limited to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> purpose statement that is clear and coherent; forecasting that provides basic structural unity (often as a list); professionalism that employs established protocol for specific audience and context. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates clear logic and reasoning through <ol style="list-style-type: none"> claims/assertions that are explicitly stated, logical and credible; evident ideas and reasoning provided to support claims and assertions; supporting evidence, information, and data that are relevant and varied. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates clarity of structural coherence through <ol style="list-style-type: none"> an overall sense of meaning evident in the text; general flow of ideas; clear section development; effective transitions; clear language. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates effective information design through <ol style="list-style-type: none"> appropriate format and channel choice; professional visual design strategy; use of common strategies (bullets, headings, graphics) to promote clarity and readability; improved reader comprehension of complex material through clear, concise, visual and verbal elements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimal etiquette or credibility errors. Although occasional disruptive errors and frequent accent errors may be present, there is no serious error interference. Document needs minimal revision before submission to client.

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Does Not Meet Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates rudimentary understanding of audience, purpose, and context through framing and strategic approach, including, not limited to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> purpose statement that is awkward or absent; forecasting that is absent or irrelevant to the message; lack of professionalism that results in erratic and inappropriate statements or language use. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates poor logic and reasoning through <ol style="list-style-type: none"> claims/assertions that are vague, inadequate, unsubstantiated or incomplete; underdeveloped or absent ideas and reasoning provided to support claims and assertions; insufficient, irrelevant, vague, or absent evidence, information, and data provided to back claims. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates lack of structural coherence through <ol style="list-style-type: none"> lack of coherence, unity and cohesion in the text; inconsistent flow of ideas; erratic section development; design strategies (i.e. lists, visuals) used as compensation for lack of cohesion, logic, and meaning; poor transitions; imprecise, unclear language. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates ineffective information design through <ol style="list-style-type: none"> inappropriate format and channel choice; unpolished visual design strategy; interference or absence of clarity and readability through use of common strategies (bullets, headings, graphics); reader comprehension of complex material is impaired by visual and verbal elements of the text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Errors damage message comprehension and writer credibility. <p>Document needs substantial revision before submission to client.</p>

Error Interference Definition:

Disruptive Errors: Disruptive errors can be recognized in unintelligible sentences, omitted words/phrases, unclear pronoun references, incorrect verb forms, run-on sentences, wrong words. This type of error tends to make the reader's task more difficult, even intruding on the reading process. Disruptive errors may also interfere with communication, preventing the reader from comprehending what the writer means.

Credibility Errors: Credibility errors can be recognized in faulty subject/verb agreements, some punctuation errors, spelling errors – while these do not usually disrupt communication they tend to reflect negatively on the writer's credibility, reducing the readers' confidence in what a writer has to say. Credibility errors become serious if they cause the reader to judge a writer's character or management ability by the frequency of mere presence of certain violations of Standard English.

Etiquette Errors: Many readers (but not all) hardly notice etiquette errors, especially if reading quickly for the moment. Etiquette errors include: substituting "I" for "me" after prepositions; substituting "someone left their report" instead of his/hers; misplacing apostrophes (team's /teams'); confusing it's and its; excessive use of passive voice. However, etiquette errors can reduce the writer's credibility, especially with those readers who are concerned about professional image or those who believe that critical thinking is reflected in the observance of grammar rules.

Accent Errors: Commonly found in the writing of non-native speakers – (which are nearly impossible for non-native speakers to correct in the short term) – these are often overlooked and ignored by readers, particularly if they are cognizant of the status of the writer. Accent errors rarely interfere with communication, and they usually do not seriously damage the writer's credibility. These include missing or incorrect articles, wrong prepositions, or incorrect use of idioms.