

Final Project Assignment

Introduction: For this assignment, you will be writing a formal report. Sometimes words like *informal*, *formal*, *report*, *proposal* and many others are used by business writing experts and the definitions can get a bit confusing. The text we are using for class indicates that *informal* reports are short and usually internal while *formal* reports are documents like business proposals and annual reports which are often (but not always) directed outside an organization. Regardless of whether you are a part of the organization to which you are directing your report, it is still *formal*.

Goal: The goal for this assignment is for you to submit a ten page formal proposal to solve a problem outlined in one of the topics below:

1. Imagine that I'm the chair of a department committee whose charge is to look at the content of this course, ENG 250 Professional Communication. We're wondering if the content, especially on-line, needs to be revised to include more technology to current and future business communication practices such as blogging, Zoom, social media, and online professional networks, among others. The problem in this situation is that the current course may not adequately reflect current trends, so I'm "hiring" you, as a professional communication on-line student to ascertain what is happening now, research current trends, and then propose to the committee what practices should be added to the class and propose how those practices might best work in an on-line environment such as this.
2. Imagine that the business for which you work has an outdated code of ethics in its policy manual. Because of the ever-changing nature of businesses today and growing diversity in the workforce, you have been asked to help to update the company's code of ethics. To do this, analyze other companies' codes of ethics to determine what your company's policy manual should include and what it should not. Based on your analysis, you will offer recommendations to your management team.
3. A *U. S. News & World Report* article described physically disabled workers as "[t]he overlooked labor force." Given the need for skilled knowledge workers, this population might solve some employment needs. Imagine that you have been asked to write a proposal addressing the feasibility of hiring physically disabled employees to your current (or fictional) company.
4. The librarian of your company library needs to add business periodicals to the library subscription list. He is unfamiliar with all specialized magazines in the fields related to your company and has asked help from the various company divisions. You've been assigned to recommend four or more print or online periodicals in your particular specialty. In your report describe the readership, the contents, and the scope of each periodical. Inform the librarian about who will use your choices and how your selections benefit your department.

5. Students at every college, in every degree program have to follow a specific course of study. The required list of courses always includes requirements outside of a student's specific major because a college education does more than train students for specific job—it prepares them to be contributing members of the democracy in which we live. For this topic, imagine that you have been asked to examine the degree requirements for your specific major and make recommendations to the academic department that houses the major regarding the existing requirements.
6. According to a 2019 report, “The Rust Belt city of Rochester in upstate New York has the most economically segregating school district border in the country, walling off the high-poverty education system from its affluent neighbors next door.” Because school funding is drawn from property taxes, schools in low income areas have significantly less funding than those in higher income areas. For this assignment, imagine you have been hired by Monroe County to solve this problem.
7. Create your own topic that is related to your current work, school, or community situation. You must have this approved by me to ensure it will work for this assignment.

Details: make up whatever details you need to address the situation. Each proposal must have a specific audience (company, organization, school district, etc), address the problem, include the relevant research, and make recommendations to solve the problem.

Organization: your project should include the following parts (see chapter 18 for additional details on the different sections, p. 326):

Front Matter:

1. *Cover page*-- includes title of the report, the business to whom it is being submitted, name of the submitter, date, and other relevant information. This does NOT count in your page requirement.
2. *Letter of transmittal*-- explains what the report is about, concretely and specifically summarizes the report's recommendations, provides suggested further steps (if necessary), and offers additional information if needed. If you are IN the organization to which you are submitting the report, use the *business memo* format; if you are NOT in the organization, use the *business letter* format. This does NOT count in your page requirement.
3. *Table of contents*-- includes each major section, appropriately organized, and paginated (see page 327 for which pages get which types of numbers). This does NOT count in your page requirement.
4. *Executive Summary* -- follows organization of the report and includes a brief background of the topic, an abbreviated version of the data, and a short version of the conclusions and recommendations. While this section is still in Roman numerals, it DOES count in your page requirement.

Body (this whole section counts in your page requirement):

5. *Introduction*— provides background of the report, why it is being written, and what problem it will solve. This is where you provide the details about the purpose and scope of the report.
6. *Description*-- addresses how the proposal will address the problem or issue, explains why the project is feasible, describes expected benefits and potential consequences of not doing so if applicable, and potential implementation challenges --*this is the most significant part of the proposal and includes the research you conducted for support*. This section might have subtitles as appropriate.
7. *Conclusion*-- provides a detailed discussion of what you concluded from the research you conducted, explains what you are proposing, and why it is feasible and desirable
8. *Recommendations*-- includes the conclusions at a glance in bullet format—these should begin with action verbs

Back Matter:

1. References in MLA format—MLA format uses “Works Cited” and only lists the sources that you cited in the report itself. This does NOT count in your page requirement.

Other:

- Your project *may* include a timeline or budget if appropriate—if you have them, they would be placed between the description and conclusion.
- If you have charts or tables, they must be large enough to be readable, and they must be included on the Table of Contents page as “List of Figures/Charts”. They should be numbered and titled both on the Table of Contents and in the report itself.
- You should use only third person or first person plural (if you are referring to yourself as the writer).

Attach: your assignment as a word doc or a pdf

Grading: the assignment is worth 300 points. See the rubric following the assignment for grading details.

Grading Rubric: Final Project

	Excellent	Average	Approaching Average	Failing
Format and Structure	-format with appropriate spacing, numbering, and headings are employed without error -front matter, body, and back matter are included in order without error	-format with appropriate spacing, numbering, and headings are employed with minimal error -front matter, body, and back matter are included in order with minimal error	-format with appropriate spacing, numbering, and headings are employed with multiple errors - front matter, body, and back matter are included in order with multiple errors	-does not employ appropriate format -does not include front matter, body, and back matter as required
Content	-cover page, letter of transmittal, table of contents, executive summary, introduction, description, conclusion, recommendations, and reference sections include all relevant ideas and details -expresses all information expertly -organization is logical and purposeful -uses transitions appropriately	--cover page, letter of transmittal, table of contents, executive summary, introduction, description, conclusion, recommendations, and reference sections include all relevant ideas and details though may not be expressed as clearly as excellent example -organization is logical	--cover page, letter of transmittal, table of contents, executive summary, introduction, description, conclusion, recommendations, and reference sections include some ideas and details, but some may be irrelevant, missing, or confusing -organization is confusing or absent	-missing significant content -organization prevents understanding
Language	-uses professional and formal language throughout -demonstrates control of the conventions with no errors	-uses professional and formal language throughout -demonstrates basic control exhibiting occasional errors that do not hinder comprehension	-language is informal or inappropriate -demonstrates emerging control, exhibiting frequent errors that make comprehension difficult or indicate a lack of understanding of conventions of grammar	-language is informal or inappropriate -demonstrates minimal or no control of conventions