Tutorial Letter 102/3/2018

Communication Research

COM3706

Semesters 1 and 2

Department of Communication Science

This tutorial letter contains important information about your module.

BARCODE

Define tomorrow.

UNISA university of south africa

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Dear Student

1 INTRODUCTION

By this time, you should have familiarised yourself with the requirements of this module and know that **this tutorial letter has to be used when doing both assignments 01 and 03**. We attempt to provide guidance and do not address all the issues mentioned on the mark scheme. Some of the criteria are explicit and precise.

This module is not difficult, but students who do not

- start in time, well in advance of closing dates
- spend enough time on the module
- understand the concepts and their application in communication research
- approach lecturers in advance for assistance and clarification, or
- participate on *my*Unisa
- have a positive attitude, cooperate and
- accept responsibility for their lack of cooperation and accountability,

struggle to understand and know what has to be done.

If you follow the guidelines, advice and use some answers which we offer, if you use and work according to the mark schemes, then there is no reason why you cannot pass the module and even get a distinction.

It is exceptionally important that you not wait and start with Assignment 01 or the portfolio in the week before they are due. Academics are there to assist you as you work, but please bear in mind that we are all involved in other modules where students also require our attention; that we have other academic and administrative requirements which we have to attend to, deadlines to meet, training to attend, et cetera. The sooner you start with the module, the more regularly you can liaise and interact with the lecturers and get answers to questions or clarification on concepts and other related matters, and the sooner you can hand in both Assignment 01 and the portfolio.

The frequently asked questions may bring clarity on many uncertainties and issues that you may have. The information contained in this tutorial letter relates to all tasks in the study guide.

2 GUIDELINES

Where or how to start

The following pointers may assist you in approaching and completing assignment 01.

- read through Tutorial Letter 101 and acquaint yourself with the content and terminology;
- use a marker to highlight important detail and to clearly distinguish between different assignments;
- consult the index of the prescribed book, find applicable concepts and study them to become acquainted with what each concept is and entails;

- work through the guidelines and advice in your tutorial letters. Also go through the *my*Unisa discussions;
- consider the headings and mark scheme applicable to both Assignment 01 and the portfolio. This will help you understand how assignment 01 and the portfolio fit together;
- study the relevant chapters and sections in the study material in order to understand the concepts, their application, and the research methodology;
- contact the module coordinator immediately if you are uncertain or need help or clarification of concepts and research terminology.

The items listed under each heading on the mark scheme should guide the answers required per heading. Any person looking at the answers which you have provided in your assignments should know what you are going to work with without having to ask questions.

No other material (apart from three other sources) is required and all material studied needs to be interpreted and related to your own work. No marks are awarded for quotations, but you will be rewarded if quotes are interpreted and if you indicate how they were applicable to your own research.

Formulating the main issue

Your research problem has to relate to organisational communication. A communication audit measures **internal** communication, in other words, communication that takes place within the organisation **amongst employees**. Refer to Section 6.7 to make sure you understand the focus of a communication audit.

If you consider that your research had to focus on the current versus ideal situation, does the word *compare* not come to mind? Refer to page 53 in the study guide for assistance on how to formulate a problem containing all the criteria.

Extent

The extent of the problem requires that you indicate where the research will be done (which organisation, where?), when (dates) it will take place (give reasons why that specific time was chosen). Why did you not choose to do the research between 25 December and 5 January?. You also need to indicate what the nature of the time dimension is (substantiate why the research is cross-sectional).

Population

Distinguish between the target and accessible population by indicating who/what each population will consist of. Your understanding of the difference between the two must be illustrated. If the target and accessible populations are the same, indicate it and explain why you make that claim. Population parameters (characteristics of the accessible population) have to be provided and you have to spell out who/what the units of analysis would be. Since people would be involved (respondents who fill in the questionnaire), individuals are the units of analysis. Refer to Du Plooy (Section 2.2.2 and the Index of the book) in this regard.

Once you had selected the four domains/topic areas (see Du Plooy Section 6.7.3) on which your audit will focus, you should have formulated an assumption for each domain and a sub-issue relating to each assumption. You were requested to list the selected four domains/topic areas upfront under this heading so that the assumptions and sub-issues can be evaluated against your chosen domains/topic areas.

The assumptions and sub-issues formulated should address the selected four domains.

An example of an assumption is:

Because the most appropriate communication channel is used in the organisation, everyone clearly understands what is expected.

An applicable sub-issue could be *do all employees understand what is expected simply because the most appropriate communication channel is used in the organisation?*

Assumptions, sub-issues, goal, objectives and research questions all have to be logically linked. A possible research question related to the example used in the preceding paragraph could be:

Is the communication channel that is being used in the organisation the most appropriate communication channel?

Another example:

Assumption — *the amount of information personnel currently receive by means of different channels of communication in order to do their work, differs from the amount of information they need to receive.*

Sub-problem — *does the amount of information that personnel receive via different channels of communication relate to what they need to be able to do their work.*

Research questions — *which channels of communication do not currently provide enough information? Which channels of communication are preferred by staff? Are there differences between the amounts of information received now by means of specific channels, versus the amount of information that personnel need to receive by means of specific channels? What are these differences?*

This example demonstrates how two or more research questions are usually formulated in order to accept/reject one assumption.

Goal and objectives

Du Plooy (Section 2.2.1) is relevant. Apart from identifying the nature of each aspect, you also have to substantiate what you claim to be their natures and indicate why your study will address that/those specific goal and objectives. What is the nature of your goal and why? You have to be specific by indicting what exactly will be explored and what precisely will be described in terms of your research.

The effectiveness of internal communication in an organisation is again **not** stated in terms of any causal relation, but specifically with reference to the current experiences or opinions, versus the ideal. The objectives are in others words to explore and describe the current experiences versus the ideal, or what is needed (**not explanatory** objectives to measure cause-and-effect relations).

Research questions

You had to formulate research questions related to each of the selected four domains. These research questions should differ from the sub-issues. There has to be a logical link between the research questions, assumptions, goal, objectives and the sub-issues. Study Du Plooy (section 2.4—2.4.4, and Du Plooy 2009:369) to familiarise yourself with questionnaire items.

An example of research questions (depending on the domains that you have selected) could for instance be:

If the organisation makes use of e-mail in the distribution of messages, does every employee have access to e-mail?

Theoretical approach

The theoretical approach required that you discuss theories relevant to your research. It is important to remember with which sub-disciplines of communication science you are dealing. When doing a communication audit, you are dealing with organisational communication and interpersonal communication. Thus, the theory you identify as being most relevant to your investigation should fall within one of these sub-disciplines. As a third-year student, you should by now be able to draw on a broad body of knowledge on applicable and relevant theories.

Do your own searches on the Internet, visit a library or source relevant books, and consider prescribed study material that you have used for other modules since they can be useful in deciding on a theoretical approach (you have to incorporate the detail of three additional sources in both assignments 01 and 03). The Systems theory is a typical example of a theory that could be discussed under this heading and should be linked to your four selected domains.
You must also define/explain concepts used or related to the domains you selected, such as communication channels, interpersonal communication, e-mail, timeliness, and performance management.

Research design

The research design can either be qualitative, quantitative or a combination of both. Study the questionnaire and open-experience forms in Du Plooy (2009:369-388) and see whether you can determine why the research design for this audit is both qualitative and quantitative. What kind of data would the questionnaire versus open-experience forms provide and how do these differ? Also see Du Plooy (section 2.5.2 and 2.5.3) for the characteristics of each design and indicate how they are applicable to your own research.

Data collection methods and techniques

When discussing the research method, discuss the nature of questions used. You may use the questionnaire in the prescribed book provided that you acknowledge the author and the publication. NO acknowledgement means marks are awarded and you are committing plagiarism. Ensure that you not simply copy text from that questionnaire. The question will also arise as to whether or not you have actually conducted this research because your respondents should have questioned terms used in the questionnaire that do not apply to their organisation.

If you draw a sample of 20 and only 12 return the questionnaires (the realised sample) then it becomes a silly exercise to calculate and report percentages. For example, if four of the respondents are men, it is meaningless to report that 50% of the men (that is two respondents) agreed with the first assumption. Study the prescribed book and study guide section 3.2.2 regarding the difference between a sample drawn and a realised sample.

Data analysis

Consider the following information:

How did you calculate the frequency distribution of the current situation and of the ideal situation? How did you compare the current with the ideal? How did you analyse the responses to the open-experience forms? Did you interpret these responses by linking them to specific items in the questionnaire, or to the person to whom the experience is primarily related; or to the quality of the experience? Did you categorise and group the experiences in relation to any specific topics or themes?

Findings

Your questionnaire investigates four topic areas. Your findings, therefore, have to address these topic areas. Your questionnaire contains four open-experience forms. The findings thus have to refer to these responses.

With regard to the recommendations based on your findings: You can consider something like:

What can management of the organisation do to rectify the interpersonal communication problems which you identified? In which of the selected topic areas can management consider changes to improve organisational communication?

A table that summarises the findings of Task 6.9

If any of your assumptions, sub-issues and research questions address population parameters (or characteristics) such as gender, age, first language preferences or newly appointed employees versus those who have been employed for 5 or more years, then you **must operationally define these concepts in the theoretical section** of your portfolio. These concepts, will influence the **type of sample** that you will draw and such information **must be asked in the questionnaire** in order **to report** on such variables in the tabulated findings.

Of the 8 topic areas or domains in the self-administered questionnaire used in a communication audit, domains 1, 2, 3, 4 and 8, require a comparison between respondents’ current experience versus what is needed or required. Herewith an example of a table that summarises the responses of 20 respondents with reference to one item of the first domain.

The key for the 5-point scale is as follows (see Du Plooy 2009:371):

1 none
2 little
3 average
4 more than average
5 enough

Amount of information I receive now						Amount of information I need to receive				
1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
1										5
		3								5
	2								4	
1									4	
	2									5
	2							3		
	2						2			
1									4	
	2									5
		3				1				
	2								4	
1										5
1										5
1									4	
	2									5
	2								4	
1									4	
1										5
1									4	
	2					1				
9	9	2	0	0		2	1	1	8	8

Totals (counted by you in the last row).

From above totals you can conclude that the 9 respondents (45%) **currently** receive no information and 9 respondents (45%) receive little information about how well they are doing their work in their sections. In contrast, 8 respondents (40%) **need** more than average information and 8 respondents (40%) need enough information about how well they are doing their work in their sections. This discrepancy is an indication that management (eg head of section) ought to communicate more information to employees about how well they are doing their work in their sections.

Above coding procedure is then repeated for **each item** on the questionnaire.

In cases where the majority of the respondents indicate that they **currently** receive “more than average” (option 4), or “enough” (option 5) information, versus **need** to receive “none” (option 1), or need to receive “little” (option 2), this **lack** of discrepancy indicates that the item in that topic area is not problematic.

When a questionnaire consists of a 5-point scale and has a middle point (“average”) as in this example, you could (in the final coding, in order to report your findings) do the following:

- combine responses to options 1 and 2
- ignore responses to option 3 (average)
- combine responses to options 4 and 5.

Your findings could then read as follows (for this item): 18 respondents (90%) **currently** receive no or little information about how well they are doing their work in their sections. In contrast, 16 respondents (80%) **need** more than average or enough information about how well they are doing their work in their sections.

The other domains (5, 6 and 7) do not require above comparison.

Open-experience forms

Each of the topic areas or domains is followed by an **open-experience form**. The first three sections are closed-ended items in which respondents have to:

- identify to whom the experience primarily relates
- rate their experience
- link the experience to one of the items in the questionnaire.

The fourth section of the open-experience form **is an open-ended item** in which respondents can describe:

- the communication experiences
- the circumstances leading up to the experience
- what the person did, and
- the results or outcomes of the experience.

Your interpretations of written responses are **not** tabulated because the data are **qualitative** descriptions given by respondents. Your interpretations have to be recorded in the form of (qualitative) narrative descriptions of the topics, themes, issues or subjects reflected in respondents' written responses.

For example:

In the topic area (or domain) of *Communication and work satisfaction* you **may** find that all the respondents address one of three topics, namely their salaries, promotions possibilities and recognition of outstanding performance. Remember that the purpose of asking an open-ended question is to obtain in-depth information from the perspective of the respondent.

The purpose of an open-end question is **not** to quantify or calculate percentages. However, if a specific topic is addressed by more than one respondent then you can:

- count and calculate a percentage, and
- turn back to the previous closed-ended items to determine whether there is a pattern.

The following are examples of findings applicable to the open-ended item in the open-experience form related to *Communication and work satisfaction*:

For example:

52% of the respondents address salaries, of which 100% link the experience to the *Head of section*, rate the experience as *negative* and link the experience to *item 104*.

Or, for example:

52% of the respondents address salaries and there is no clear pattern to whom the experience is related, nor a clear pattern of the experience being positive of negative, nor one specific item being identified.

Or, for example:

30% of the respondents addressed salaries, 28% addressed promotion possibilities and 42% the recognition of outstanding performance. The majority (80%) linked these experiences to the *Head of division*, for 100% the quality of the experience is rated a negative; and their experiences were primarily related to items 104 (30%), 105 (28%) and 106 (42%).

If the same theme or topic is not repeated more than twice (that is not more than two respondents address the same topic) then simply describe those diverse topics. If no pattern can be related to the other three closed-ended items, then report that such a pattern cannot be established.

You could also apply above examples of the formulation of findings to domains 5, 6 and 7.

In the case of domains 1, 2, 3, 4 and 8, you have to clearly identify any discrepancies between respondents' **current experience** versus **what is needed or required**.

When interpreting the responses to the open-ended item in the open-experience form in the case of domains 1, 2, 3, 4 and 8, you can also check whether the topics addressed by the respondent relate to those items in which there is a discrepancy between respondents' current experiences versus what they require.

For example in domain 2 (*Sending information to others*) you may find a discrepancy in item 31 (*About reporting what I am doing in my work*) between the amount of information that respondents currently send versus the amount of information that they need to send in order to do their work proficiently. You should in this case check whether (and if so how many) of the respondents address this subject in their written responses in the open-experience form.

Discrepancies between the current experiences and what is needed are the problem areas that you need to report and to which the management of the institution should attend. One would therefore expect that **if** such discrepancies are found in the tabulated findings of the closed-ended items, that **these** topic(s) would be addressed in the open-ended items. If they are addressed, then this correspondence must be reported, or if they are not addressed in the written responses then the absence of the link between the closed-ended items and the written responses in the open-ended item must also be reported (and questioned).

3 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

In this section we deal with the most frequently asked questions and enquiries which we received in the past, and in anticipation of you raising similar points, we share these enquiries and our feedback (to those students) with you.

It is possible that you may find questions and answers relating to tasks that are not currently applicable. You can take note of the feedback since it may be applicable to some of the current tasks. Detail relates to different tasks in the study material.

3.1 Study material, closing dates, examination, and general enquiries

I don't have all the study material

Student:
I have not received all of my study material and cannot do Assignment 01.

Feedback:
You can access the study material on *my*Unisa under *Study Material.* All the guidelines for the assignments and the portfolio are in Tutorial Letter 101.

No prescribed book

Student:
I am struggling to get hold of the prescribed book. Can I do the assignments and portfolio without it?

Feedback:
No, you need the prescribed book in order to do both the assignments and the portfolio. Please contact the publisher (JUTA) and ask them for a speedy delivery.

Closing dates of assignments and the portfolio

Student:
When are the closing dates for the assignments and the portfolio?

Feedback:
All the closing dates per Semester (together with the unique assignment applicable to each assignment and the portfolio) are listed in Tutorial Letter 101. We even provide the closing date for the supplementary/aegrotat examination as well. Please note that we do not have any additional examination opportunities other than the official closing dates as stipulated in Tutorial Letter 101.

No venue-based examination? What then?

Student:
I hear that we do not have a venue-based examination in this module. How are we then assessed for examination purposes?

Feedback:
That is correct because in this module you have to physically conduct research on the topic addressed in Tutorial Letter 101, compile a portfolio, and present that as evidence of the work done. Assignment 01 forms the first part of the portfolio (and addresses the planning phase; or the theoretical phase of the actual research to be done for the portfolio). You also have to use the mark scheme made available and present Assignment 01 and the portfolio according to these headings. Each heading has a number of criteria listed which are each worth 5 marks. That means the information provided under each heading has to be related to your research and be of such magnitude that it will get you five marks per sentence (under each heading) starting with a capital letter. Your portfolio which has to be submitted, replaces the venue-based examination.

Examination opportunities

Student:
It is believed that students get two examination opportunities. Is that correct?

Feedback:
If a student meets the minimum requirement of the subject in terms of admission to the examination (submitting assignment 01 before the due date) that student is eligible to hand in the portfolio for the assessment at the end of the Semester in which the student is registered.

If you fail the module, you are entitled to a supplementary examination if you qualify for one (meet the sub-minimum requirement as stated and applicable to COM3706).

You will be granted a supplementary examination if the requirements are met, but do note that a fee is payable for supplementary examinations.

Students who are granted an aegrotat examination will also be able to utilise the second examination opportunity. Please note that it is not about the number of times you actually wrote an examination but about the consecutive examination opportunities granted by the university. If you fail the module in the supplementary (or aegrotat) examination (in other words after two consecutive examination opportunities), you will have to re-register for the module for the next Semester and pay the full registration fee applicable.

Examination date

Student:
I do not find the examination date listed in the University time-table. Where do I find the examination date(s)?

Feedback:
The examination dates are not listed in the University's time-table, because in this module you are doing what is called a non-venue linked portfolio examination.

In other words, you do not go to an examination centre to sit and write and examination. (Examination dates listed in the University's time-table are those that are venue linked and for which UNISA has to reserve dates, times and venues in advance). Your closing date for the submission of your portfolio for examination purposes (in each Semester) is printed in Tutorial letter 101.

Aegrotat and special examination

Student:
What happens if I am ill prior to or on the day when the portfolio has to be submitted?

Feedback:
That is unfortunately bad since you should have started working on the portfolio at least two months prior to the examination date. You then have to hand in whatever of the portfolio has been completed. In the event of something serious, such as being hospitalised or a death in the family, you have to submit the necessary documentation to the Examination section and request a supplementary examination.

Aegrotat /supplementary examination and study material

Student:
I qualify for an aegrotat/supplementary examination but have received no study material from Unisa. How do I know what to do?

Feedback:
Students who qualify for an aegrotat/supplementary examination do not receive any study material from Unisa. There is also no formal communication from Unisa in this regard. You have to use the study material of the previous Semester (your last registration). All the requirements and closing date for submission of the portfolio are stated in Tutorial Letter 101, and the content of the portfolio which has to be revised, is the same as that which you failed.

I don’t know where to start or what to do

Student:
I have no clue what to do in this module or where to start.

Feedback:
It is suggested that you read through Tutorial Letter 101 on more than one occasion. Make a distinction between administrative information and academic information. Then distinguish between (1) the assignments; (2) the portfolio; (3) the relation or link between assignment 01 and the portfolio. Use a different highlighter for each of these topics and make sure you know what each entails, requires, mean or contribute, AND when their respective closing dates are. By the third time you read through the tutorial letter, you focus on Assignment 01 ONLY. Make sure you know what is required, what assistance is provided in each of the documents, understand the concepts, and get a mental picture of what has to be done.

Some students may want to complete one assignment at a time; others may have a different pattern. Apply the same principle for assignment 02 and the portfolio. Please bear in mind that the portfolio is an “extension” of Assignment 01 and you need to see what the portfolio entails and requires before you do Assignment 01. Most importantly: ask the lecturers for help the moment you get stuck.

When to start

Student:
When is a good time to start with the assignments and portfolio? I have never registered for normal modules and portfolios in one Semester. Do they require the same amount of time and work?

Feedback:
It is strongly recommended that you start with the reading and preparation for Assignment 01 and the portfolio as soon as you receive the study material. Semester modules with a venue-based examination are totally different from modules which comprise of a portfolio. Portfolio modules generally take much more time, have more reading to do, and one very often has to do background reading in order to understand scientific research concepts and research methodology before being able to apply them successfully (especially if one has not been exposed to them before).

Help at regional centre?

Student:
Thank you for replying to my previous e-mail. At the moment I am feeling very despondent and am struggling with both the assignment and the portfolio. Is there someone at the Cape Town UNISA centre that can help me?

Feedback:
Unisa unfortunately does not offer additional classes. Please join the E-tutor group to which you have been assigned online. You are also strongly advised to approach a lecturer and to send an e-mail in which you indicate what help is required. That is why we teach and we cannot assist anyone if we do not know who is struggling with what. Also remember to read the discussions on the different forums on *my*Unisa regularly. You will be surprised to see how actively and well our students participate.

_my_Unisa access problems

Student:
I cannot access *my*Unisa at all. What now?

Feedback:
Send an e-mail to mylifehelp@unisa.ac.za as soon as possible as academics do not have access to that system and cannot assist you in this regard. Ensure to have ONLY your student number in the *Subject* field. Your enquiry will then receive attention immediately. Put the problem forward in a concise manner.

How soon can we expect a response on _my_Unisa?

Student:
If I make a posting on *my*Unisa, will I get an immediate response?

Feedback:
That depends on when the posting was made. We try to access *my*Unisa on a daily or weekly basis (student participation very often dictates the interaction). If you urgently need an answer to a question posted on *my*Unisa, please send an e-mail to a lecturer.

No response to enquiries

Student:
I have sent an e-mail enquiry to a number of lecturers but have to date had no response. Who can now assist?

Feedback:
Please do not send the same enquiry to more than one lecturer. Only the recipient whose name appears first will and should respond. Are you sure that the e-mail address is correct, and that you have contacted the correct lecturer? Please check the relevant detail in the tutorial letters.

If you contact a lecturer and receive no response within a week, please send an e-mail to the module coordinator. If the module coordinator does not respond within five days, you can contact the head of the department.

Afrikaans and English language

Student:
I am Afrikaans-speaking, but find it easier to use English terms, such as “sampling”. Can I use both Afrikaans and English in the portfolios?

Feedback:
No, please use one language in your reports. The current policy is that English is the language of tuition.

This is my last outstanding subject

Student:
I have failed the module and need only this module in order to graduate. Can someone please assist me to pass this module and graduate?

Feedback:
If you have only this module outstanding and it prevents you from graduating, you are known as a F1 student. Read *What to do if I fail the* module in Tutorial Letter 101 as soon as possible after the examination and follow those guidelines.

You will note that you are required to revise and improve the same portfolio (under guidance of a lecturer) and that you have to contact a lecturer with this detail as soon as the examination results are released. A one-on-one system will come into effect where Individualised assistance and feedback is provided. You are required to utilise this option as early as possible after release of examination results to ensure you complete the revised portfolio well in advance of the re-submission date.

Please also consider the fact that some of you may want to register for other modules in the next Semester, or even for Honours. You CANNOT register for Honours if your degree has NOT been completed, and we do NOT compromise standards. If you want to graduate, you have to meet the minimum requirements applicable to the module and pass the module with 50%.

Cancellation of the module

Student:
Due to unforeseen circumstances I want to cancel my registration and re-register in the next Semester. What do I do? Will the tasks for the next Semester be the same because I would like to work on the tasks in the mean time?

Feedback:
Please inform the Registrar (Academic), PO Box 392, UNISA 0003 that you will not be submitting your examination portfolio for COM3706, together with your personal details, especially your student number. You should also use the my Studies @ Unisa brochure and send an e-mail in this regard to the section dealing with admissions.

The tasks for this Semester may be different in the next Semester. As you are living abroad, keep in mind that the moment a tutorial letter is sent to UNISA’s Departments of Production/Despatch it is also placed on *my*Unisa. Therefore, if you have access to the Internet and *my*Unisa, you can access the contents of tutorial letters electronically and need not wait until the printed copy reaches you via the postal system.

Why do I still fail?

Student:
I used the same headings as provided in Tutorial Letter 101 for both my Assignment 01 and the portfolio and I have still failed the portfolio. That is despite getting 80% for my Assignment 01. Please help, I do not understand.

Feedback:
This comment is heard annually, and when a student has to revise the portfolio, we sometimes find that the ones making these claims re-do the same document and thus not meet the minimum requirements! There could be many reasons why you pass the assignment but fail the module.

Some could include

- that some students do not add the headings applicable to the portfolio to those of Assignment 01. They only submit headings 1–9 and regard that as the portfolio
- some students do not pay attention to any comment made by a lecturer, nor do they make any corrections to Assignment 01
- some students hand in the same document which they handed in and failed in the previous Semester, WITHOUT adjusting or improving previous information!
- that you had two opportunities (with extensive guidance and feedback as well as answers up-front) to do well in Assignment 01. Answers to the portfolio headings differ from one person to another, and we provide generic guidelines and answers to assist you with the portfolio
- did you use all the guidelines and advice provided in the Semester when doing the portfolio?
- have you taken note of the important detail relating to the portfolio which we have posted on *my*Unisa?
- did you address all the aspects listed under each heading and provide enough information to warrant five marks per bulleted heading?
- do all the answers relate to the ONE theme of the main research issue?

You need to remember that

- only 80% of the marks obtained for the portfolio, contribute towards the final mark of the module. That means you have to have a very good Semester mark from Assignment 02, and obtain at least 60% in the portfolio to pass the module
- the lecturers use the mark scheme, discussion class notes and the extensive feedback which we provided in Tutorial Letter 202 (and posted on *my*Unisa) when we do the assessment of portfolios.

A good mark in Assignment 01 does not guarantee that you will pass the module. Please look at the headings on the mark scheme which are applicable to the portfolio. More than half of the marks awarded for the portfolio relate to the headings applicable to the last part of the portfolio.

Semester mark

Student:
What is a Semester mark and how or why does it benefit me?

Feedback:
The Semester mark consists of 20% of the mark you obtain for Assignment 02. That portion of the 20% mark contributes towards your final mark for the module (50% needed to pass the module), and the other 80% needed consists of the mark obtained for the portfolio. That means that 20% of the mark obtained for Assignment 2 PLUS your mark out of 80% obtained for the portfolio are added together to get your final mark for the module at the end of the Semester.

It needs to be recorded that a Semester mark is very important because it can make a difference between failing and passing the module. It is well worth doing Assignment 02, even if you do not do as well as you would like. A few marks can make that difference.

Sub-minimum

Student:
What is the sub-minimum?

Feedback:
There is a 40% sub-minimum mark applicable to this module. That means you HAVE to get at least 40% in the portfolio in order for your Semester mark to be added to your final mark. The same principle applies if you fail the module (in order to become eligible for a supplementary examination).

Online marking

Student:
We have been told that Unisa uses online marking. What does this mean?

Feedback:
It means that you can submit assignments via *my*Unisa in MSWord or pdf. Format. These assignments and portfolios are sent to academics via computer, assessed electronically and returned to you electronically. Once the assignment has been marked, it is returned to the Assignment section which records the mark on *my*Unisa and it is returned to you electronically. You are thus able to see the document, mark and comment in the assignment on *my*Unisa.

3.2 Assignments

Submitting assignments via *my*Unisa

Student:
How does one submit assignments via *my*Unisa?

Feedback:
There are a number of steps to follow when submitting an assignment via *my*Unisa.

Please ensure that you follow them all and receive the Assignment Submission report.

- Go to *my*Unisa
- Log in with your student number and password
- Select the module from the orange bar
- Click on assignments in the left menu
- Click on the assignment number you want to submit
- Follow the instructions.

The following information has been made available by the Assignment section and can only be used by students who have registered as users on *my*Unisa.

Find the course code

1 Find the course code of the assignment your want to submit in the **Course** column
2 Find the corresponding number of the assignment, e.g. 2 in the **Ass. No.** column
3 To save time online, you should have the answers to your assignment ready beside you (and preferably have a hard copy as well)
4 Click on the **Submit** link in the **Action** column next to the assignment number.

Step 1:
Enter the total number of questions required for the assignment

Enter the **total** number of questions for your assignment in the **Number of Questions** field
Click on the **Continue** button.

Step 2:
Fill out multiple-choice question answers

5 The number of questions requested in the previous step will now be displayed with five answer options next to each question. Please note that **each row** represents a question in your assignment.
6 Click on the **radio button** [the small circle] that corresponds to your answer for that question
7 Click on the **Continue** button to move to step 3
8 If you want to restart the assignment, click on **Clear Form** to remove all your selections and start from new.

Step 3:
Verify the answers to your multiple-choice assignment

This screen presents a summary of all your answers. Use it as a final **check**.

9 Click on the **Continue** button to submit your assignment. If you do not click Continue, no submission action will take place
10 If you want to redo the answers to the assignment, click **Back** to go back to the previous step.

Step 4:
Assignment submission report

This is your **proof** that your assignment was submitted. It is advisable to **print** this page for your record purposes.

11 Click on the **Return to Assignment List** button to go back to the Assignment overview screen.

If the Assignment section requests you to resubmit a MCQ assignment, you need to take note of the following and then follow these steps:

Conditions for resubmission of an assignment

1 The resubmission process now replaces the previous “cancellation request” process
2 Only assignments that were submitted online can be resubmitted. Assignments placed in assignment boxes or mailed to Unisa, **do not** qualify for online resubmission
3 You will only be allowed to resubmit an online assignment if that assignment has not been processed for marking. Also, be aware of the due date for each assignment
4 Resubmission of an assignment **replaces** your previous file. You **cannot** revert back to a previous assignment submission
5 There is a limit on the number of times you will be able to resubmit the same assignment.

Find the course code

6 Find the course code of the assignment your want to resubmit in the **Course** column
7 Find the corresponding number of the assignment, e.g. 1 in the **Ass. No. No.** column
8 To save time online, you should have the answers to your assignment ready beside you (as well as a hard copy thereof)
9 Click on the **Resubmit** link in the **Action** column next to the assignment number
10 If the Action link has changed to **Closed** you will **not be able** to resubmit the assignment.

Step 1:
Enter the total number of questions required for the assignment

11 Enter the **total** number of questions for your assignment in the **Number of Questions** field
12 Click on the **Continue** button.

Step 2:
Fill out multiple-choice question answers

The number of questions requested in the previous step will now be displayed with five answer options next to each one. Please note that **each row** represents a question in your assignment.

13 Click on the **radio button** [the small circle] that corresponds to your answer for that question
14 Click on the **Continue** button to move to step 3
15 If you want to restart the assignment, click on **Clear Form** to remove all your selections and start from new.

Step 3:
Verify the answers to your multiple-choice assignment

This screen presents a summary of all your answers. Use it as a final **check**.

16 Click on the **Continue** button to submit your assignment. If you do not click Continue, no submission action will take place
17 If you want to redo the answers to the assignment, click **Back** to go back to the previous step.

Step 4:
Assignment submission report

This is your **proof** that your assignment was submitted. It is advisable to **print** this page for your record purposes.

18 Click on the **Return to Assignment List** button to go back to the Assignment overview screen.

In the event of your experiencing problems with the submission of assignments via *my*Unisa, please send a SMS to 43582 and ask for assistance, or send an e-mail to mylifehelp@unisa.ac.za. Please read the information in the box above Section 2 in this tutorial letter.

The post office is on strike!

Student:
I posted my assignment to Unisa before the closing date, but the post office is on strike. Am I going to be penalised if my assignment reaches Unisa too late?

Feedback:
This is precisely why we advise NOT to use the post office for any submissions. Apart from the strike, it is also a HUGE risk to submit assignments through the post office because if the post office does not deliver your assignment to Unisa and you have no proof of submission, what then? Rather submit the assignments and portfolio via registered mail (and obtain a track-and-trace number) or via *my*Unisa. Please read the detail on Unisa and partnerships and make use of one of those possibilities. Just get physical evidence of submission (such as name of institution, official stamp with date of submission).

Feedback on assignments

Student:
Will we get feedback on assignments?

Feedback:
Yes, on the assignments, but not on the examination portfolio.

Feedback not received or received too late

Student:
I did not receive my feedback on Assignment 01 in time and cannot start with my portfolio. Am I going to get an extension on submission of the portfolio?

Feedback:
You can start with the portfolio without the feedback on assignment 01. Use the mark scheme with requirements in TL 101, the additional notes in TL 102 and the extensive feedback in TL 202 (or as posted under Discussions on *my*Unisa). All study material is also available electronically under *Study Material*.

We strongly advise students to use the documents and information which we provided while waiting for the marked assignment with comment to be returned to you. Do the portfolio as soon as possible after completing Assignment 01, and once you receive the marked assignment, see what still needs to be updated and make the minor changes. This way of working will allow you ample time to ask questions and seek assistance and clarification if needed. It will also ensure that you are able to spend enough time on COM3706 to get the portfolio done.

Delays come with assignments posted to Unisa because they are retuned by normal post and Unisa can unfortunately not accept responsibility for any postal delays or strikes. You cannot wait until you receive the marked assignment back and then start with the portfolio.

When will I get my assignment marks?

Student:
I submitted my assignments well before the closing date and I still have not received my marks. When can they be expected?

Feedback:
As soon as an assignment has been marked, it is sent to the Assignment section so that they can record the mark and return the marked assignment back to you. These two actions take place simultaneously. Check *myU*nisa regularly and make sure Unisa has in fact received the assignment.

Extended submission date for Assignment 01

Student:
Unisa has extended the date for submission of Assignment 01 yet in Tutorial Letter 101 we are urged to hand Assignment 01 in by the closing date listed there. Which date should we adhere to and why?

Feedback:
Our closing dates as per Tutorial Letter 101 have all been planned to ensure that you get the marked assignments back in time to use the comment in them when starting with the portfolio (and to leave enough time for you to do the portfolio and ask for help). We urge you to please submit on or before our published dates as per Tutorial Letter 101.

These published dates have also been determined in conjunction with closing dates for other modules which we are involved in, to fit in with our teaching programme, to ensure we pay equal attention to all the modules and students allocated to us, and to enable us to finish all our marking of assignments in each module as scheduled and in time. If you hand Assignment 01 in later than the dates published in Tutorial Letter 101, there is NO guarantee that you will get the feedback before the portfolio is due, and we cannot accept responsibility for that delay.

Addenda to Assignment 01

Student:
I am attaching my survey and letter of approval to conduct the research to Assignment 01 so that you can see whether I am on the right track.

Feedback:
NO, please do not do that. There are NO attachments applicable to Assignment 01, and we can only award marks for the criteria as listed on the mark scheme made available to you. You have to include the relevant addenda as required on the mark scheme for the portfolio.

Keeping duplicate copies

Student:
Why do we have to keep duplicates of all documents submitted, especially if we submit electronically?

Feedback:
Anything can go wrong and if no copies are available on request, Unisa will not be able to assist you, and you will not be allowed to redo and re-submit the portfolio. It is essential and necessary to keep copies of everything submitted to the university.

Apart from that, if you fail the module and have to revise the portfolio, you are supposed to use the same portfolio submitted (for revision and improvement) and the same survey.

Good assignment mark but failing the portfolio

Student:
I received a very good mark for my assignment 01 (76%). Despite this, I still failed the portfolio. I thought that if I do well in the assignment I will pass the portfolio fairly easily. Why not?

Feedback:
Well, if you look at the marks and number of headings and sub-headings applicable to the portfolio (totalling 65 marks), you will note that more than half of the marks on the portfolio mark scheme are awarded for the data-collection, data analysis, findings, and conclusions.

The theoretical information in assignment 01 also has to relate to the detail provided in the portfolio headings, and there has to be evidence of research actually being done. If there is no logical link between all the issues listed on the mark scheme and the main issue, your marks will reflect that.

You cannot take it for granted that a good mark in assignment 01 will ensure that you pass the portfolio. One can see why the portfolio headings carry the highest marks and you need to remember that you only have one opportunity to do the portfolio headings, and that you do not receive any feedback or comment on your attempt (as with Assignment 01) before we assess the portfolio.

Furthermore, you must also remember that only 80% of the mark you obtain in the examination (for the portfolio) is applicable, since the other 20% comes from the Semester mark. With assignment 02, 20% of the mark that you are allocated for the assignment is your Semester mark.

3.3 Portfolio

Format and presentation of the portfolio

Student:
Is there a standard format as to how the portfolio should be set out?

Feedback:
Yes, the document has to be submitted according to the headings provided in the mark scheme. Tutorial Letters 101 and 102 contain all the requirements. The mark scheme is in TL 101 and the additional detail, such as guidelines, acceptable document format, the font type and typography, length and size of the document, as well as no zip files allowed, are in TL 102.

Format and presentation of the portfolio

Student:
If I use my individuality with regard to the **presentation** of the portfolio, will I be penalised?

Feedback:
Yes, please refer to the criteria on the mark scheme as well as the requirements relating to the technical requirements as set out in TL 102. Your portfolio represents a scientific document and we have used scientific headings applicable to writing a report of this nature. We can only award marks for that which is asked on the mark scheme.

Format and presentation of the portfolio

Student:
In a previous e-mail to me, you mentioned that abbreviations of the word “advertisements” (ads) cannot be used, and if it is, will I have marks deducted? Are there any other points that I should keep in mind with regards to the **technical presentation** or any other aspect?

Feedback:
You will be penalised because contractions and *home-made* abbreviations are not acceptable as an academic writing style. Refer to section 7.5 in the prescribed book, where requirements are addressed. Also refer to the criteria for the technical presentation, as set out in TL 102 and CMNALLE.

Format and presentation of the portfolio

Student:
I would like to know whether you will allow me to proceed with **handwritten** assignments and material for the portfolio examination, since I do not have typing or computer facilities.

Feedback:
You are welcome to present your portfolio tasks (and assignments) in handwritten form. Please make sure that your handwriting is legible. Take note of the technical requirements differing for handwritten as opposed to typed documents as well as the maximum length of the portfolio.

Paper used for portfolios

Student:
Must I use the assignment paper provided by UNISA, or can I use other A4 paper?

Feedback:
Either can be used.

The length of portfolios

Student:
I am concerned about the magnitude or ideal length (pages) of each task. Please enlighten me in this regard.

Feedback:
A maximum of 35 typed pages (addenda included) and 40 hand-written pages (addenda included) per portfolio is permitted.

Please note that length or size does not matter in this regard: quality does. What you write as answer under each bulleted heading is of importance, not how much you write, quote or repeat text.

Submission date

Student:
I live in London and I received the study material late. Can I please have extended time for the submission of my portfolio?

Feedback:
An examination date cannot be moved. We can therefore not give any extension for submission of the portfolio. One main reason for this is because all the examination results have to be released by a specified date which implies all the marking and administration related to the examination also has to be completed by a pre-determined date.

Table of contents

Student:
I am not sure how to compile a table of contents for the portfolio for examination purposes.

Feedback:
The headings that you use have to reflect those used on the mark scheme.

The headings in your portfolio are reflected in the ToC (table of contents), for example:

Task 5.10

We recommend that you not number sub-headings, but that you use bullets for these headings in-stead. One reason why we make this recommendation is to limit the length of the ToC. Please note that DECLARATION is the first entry on the ToC and it requires a page number.

Submission of portfolios

Student:
Can I submit my portfolio via electronic mail?

Feedback:
Not electronic mail (such as e-mail) but electronically, yes. You should use *my*Unisa. Scan all addenda before including them in your portfolio. Also read the detail on *my*Unisa with regard to re-sizing your document. Everything has to be submitted as ONE document, meeting the 10MB size restriction.

Submission of portfolios

Student:
I have submitted an incomplete portfolio and want to re-submit.

Feedback:
That is unfortunately not possible. You are allowed only ONE submission per assignment number. Please make sure that you submit the correct document and only one document before pressing the final button (if submitted electronically), or before you send the document via registered mail.

Submission of portfolios

Student:
I forgot to include my addenda and want to send them afterwards but cannot do it via *my*Unisa.

Feedback:
It is extremely important that you ensure that you have included the addenda before making the final submission on *my*Unisa. It is impossible for us to link any documents once you have made a submission, and Unisa systems do not make provision for submission of more than one document per assignment number. Please check that you have included everything before you submit the final document.

Submission of portfolios

Student:
My portfolio is too large to submit via *my*Unisa. What do I do now to submit the document?

Feedback:
Unisa systems allow documents up to 10Mb in size. If your document exceeds that size, you will have to revise and scale down. Delete all unnecessary texts (quotes) and spaces in the document; check the letter type used, remove all colour and blocks around any text. You should be able to submit the document with the addenda with relative ease once all this has been done.

Submission of portfolios

Student:
I have been unable to complete my portfolio before the due date as a result of work commitments. My company has sent me to India during the Semester and I do not have enough time now to do the portfolio and pass the module. Is it possible to transfer my studies to the next Semester?

Feedback:
It is unfortunately not possible to transfer your studies from one Semester to another. If you cannot complete the portfolio and hand it in on or before the due date, you will unfortunately have to re-register for the module for the next Semester and pay the applicable registration fee again. Your academic record will also reflect *Absent from examination*.

In Tutorial Letter 101 we suggested that you draw up a schedule reflecting important dates and deadlines for all the modules which you have registered for. Planning is unfortunately part of studying and we cannot assist in that regard.

Submission of portfolios

Student:
I had to complete my portfolio for another subject and am not able to do the COM3706 portfolio. What now?

Feedback:
You will have to re-register for COM3706 for the next Semester. It is with sadness that we look at a message such as this one because it indicates that our module is less important than another one. What a pity, because we put in a huge effort to ensure that you get all the advice, assistance, even answers and enough guidance before submitting the portfolio. We also feel that we provide ample guidance and numerous requests for students to work diligently and ensure that they get the portfolio done and out of the way. There are of course students who do not pay attention to any requests or warnings. They leave Assignment 01 and the portfolio until last, and then discover they are not familiar with the concepts, research terminology or methodology. By that time it is too late to be successful, and these students label COM3706 as being a "difficult module."

xxx on *my*Unisa after submitting the portfolio

Student:
I have submitted my portfolio but now xxx appears in the column where the mark should be reflected. What does this mean?

Feedback:
Once the Assignment section receives a portfolio, it has to be recorded electronically. The xxx means the mark is not available yet and it will change once the Dean has signed off the marks (once we have completed the marking), and as soon as Unisa has recorded and releases the examination results.

Posting of portfolio tasks

Student:
I would like to find out if I can use the UNISA assignment boxes to send through my COM3706 portfolio?

Feedback:
We recommend that you **NOT** do so. In the past a number of portfolios "went missing" in the postal system. Rather **submit via *my*Unisa** or **register** your **examination portfolio** (send it via registered mail and obtain a track-and-trace number at the post office) so that you have an official record of its submission. Please (always) keep a copy of all and any documents sent to Unisa.

SMS stating assignment or portfolio has been cancelled

Student:
I have received an SMS indicating my assignment/portfolio has been cancelled. Why and what does this mean?

Feedback:
Academics do not receive copies of any SMS messages sent to any student, nor are we informed that or why they are sent. If you receive such an SMS, you need to contact the Assignment section immediately (012 429 2986). Academics do not have access to those administrative systems and cannot assist you.

Submitting duplicate documents

Student:
I want to make double sure that Unisa has received my portfolio and have therefore submitted a copy via *my*Unisa, but I have also posted another copy. Please mark the posted copy.

Feedback:
Please **do NOT** submit more than one copy of a document (irrespective of how it is done). We mark the first copy received and can unfortunately (with the current system in use) not search for documents which have already been distributed to markers. Duplicate copies are not marked as Unisa only registers one document submitted per assignment number.

Has Unisa received my document?

Student:
How do I know that Unisa has received my assignment or portfolio?

Feedback:
You can check that on *my*Unisa. If the PROCESSED column has a date in it, that date represents the date when Unisa received your document. If you did submit a document and there is no date recorded in this column, you have to take the matter up with the Assignment section as soon as possible. You can send them an SMS or e-mail. Their contact detail appears in *my Studies @ Unisa*.

If you submitted your assignment or you posted it to Unisa, you need to see the red light and hear our warnings as to why the assignment and portfolio should not be posted or submitted in a Unisa post box.

Examining portfolios

Student:
Another area of concern is that if the different lecturers have different ideas as to what is expected, one lecturer might fail a portfolio, which another lecturer would probably not. Is this a realistic concern?

Feedback:
All the examiners use exactly the same mark scheme, discussion class notes and the tutorial letter 202 with the extensive feedback. All these documents have been made available to you. Apart from that, the module coordinator does training with markers in every Semester, irrespective of how long they have been marking. During the Semester all the issues which students bring to the attention of the module coordinator are discussed with the markers. In some instances a student may even be requested to send the module coordinator a scanned copy of a marked assignment. This enables the module coordinator to take matters of concern up with the responsible marker, and to use that document when training other markers. Any student who has an issue with regard to consistency of marking is welcome to approach the module coordinator.

The module coordinator does moderation at random as the examination process proceeds. A sample of portfolios marked by each lecturer is drawn and assessed in order to verify that the assessment is reliable and if you were to fail, we would therefore be able to motivate how marks were allocated.

In addition to your portfolios being examined by a panel of first examiners, a second external examiner, (expert from another university) re-examines a representative randomly drawn sample of portfolios from the lowest to the highest marks obtained (an equal number of marked portfolios from each examiner is drawn and submitted to the external examiner). These randomly selected portfolios are also assessed by the module coordinator prior to being presented to the external examiner for assessment. This means that the assessments done by the module coordinator are also under scrutiny of the external second examiner.

Portfolio failed as a result of plagiarism

Student:
It has come to my attention that I failed the portfolio in the previous Semester. I cannot understand this, because we were four in a group who worked together and ensured that all our information was the same, met the requirements and were complete. Despite all our efforts, I learnt that I was marked down because of plagiarism. Why was this done?

Feedback:
If you work in a group (which we do encourage), please ensure that you do **not** submit “group” portfolios (in which exactly the same topic is being researched and reported in exactly the same way). The work done by each individual has to be unique, your own work and words. We cannot award marks to students who represent the same detail, or who quote and not acknowledge sources.

Please be very careful and pay specific attention to all warnings related to plagiarism–especially with regard to Internet plagiarism. Students tend to think they will not be caught out, but academic institutions use computer programmes which can detect Internet plagiarism.

Severe disciplinary action will be taken if your work is the same as that of another candidate, or if you commit plagiarism and do not acknowledge all the sources used in any and all of your studies. Such action will not only be detrimental to your current studies, but also to the possibility of future registrations as a student. If you are found guilty of plagiarism, you can be suspended from continuing your studies at any academic institution anywhere in the world. It is simply not worth it.

Portfolio returned

Student:
I want my portfolio back after the examination please.

Feedback:
That is unfortunately not possible since the Department of Education requires that Unisa store all portfolios for at least three years. You can, however, approach the Examination section, pay the applicable fee and ask them to make you a copy of the portfolio. Please note no marks; comment or mark scheme is included in that copy.

We ask that you keep a copy of all submission made to Unisa. Please keep more than one copy (especially if you work electronically) since anything can go wrong with your computer or storage device.

3.4 General subject-related enquiries

Research issue — "effects" or "effectiveness"

Student:
I was criticised for using "effects" or "effectiveness" in the formulation of my research issue. Why?

Feedback:
If you used the terms "effects or "effectiveness" in your issue formulation you would have had to formulate cause-and-effect research issue, with the objective of measuring the effectiveness of X on Y.

In general these formulations demonstrate that students do not understand the implications of wanting measure the "effectiveness" of an independent variable (or variables) in relation to a dependent variable (or variables). In other words, students do not realise that these implications include conducting pre- and post-tests as a research design; formulating explanatory objectives (not exploratory or descriptive objectives); formulating hypotheses (not research questions); and that the time-dimension would obviously have to be longitudinal (not cross-sectional). In other words, when using terms, such as "effectiveness' (or effects, or impact, or influence) you are addressing cause-and-effect relationships which can only be researched over a long period of time.

The term "effective" is used in Tasks 2.3 and 6.9 (previously available as an option), but in neither instances are they formulated in cause-and-effect relations. If you turn to the study guide page 52 you will read the following: "The research issue is that we are not sure of the effectiveness of the course — that is, whether it meets teachers' needs and whether it should be revised".

The following is specified on page 53, at the top:

“Please note that, in view of the fact that independent and dependent variables are **not** being tested in our example, they are not included in our issue formulation”.

The objectives are in other words to explore and describe effectiveness in terms of teachers' needs (**not explanatory** objectives to measure cause-and-effect relations).

In the case of Task 6.9 (which may not be applicable each Semester) the effectiveness of internal communication in an organisation is again **not** stated in terms of any causal relation, but specifically with reference to the current experiences or opinions, versus the ideal. The objectives are in others words to explore and describe the current experiences versus the ideal, or what is needed (**not explanatory** objectives to measure cause-and-effect relations).

Issue statement (no specific task)

Student:
What is the difference between

- a problem statement that identifies issues, methods and where applicable actions, and
- the problem statement that meets the criteria of relevancy, researchability, feasibility and ethical acceptability?

Feedback:
When formulating the main issue, the nature, time-dimension, action, issue and method of the proposed research should ideally be reflected in the formulation. That tells the reader what is to be researched and how. That complete statement, containing all five the criteria, give a once-off overview of everything to be done in your research. The examiner will immediately know what is to be done, why, when and how.

Research takes place within the boundaries of a particular subject or domain. Our research is in Communication Science and we need to explain how the issue under investigation relates to our discipline (Communication Science). Think of the type of media and the type of messages which creative concepts convey. Publications are known as mass media and the messages are of a persuasive nature.

We also need to explain why we think our research is feasible, why the issue warrants research and is researchable and even more importantly, we need to indicate how we will meet the ethical requirements in terms of our research to be done.

Please consult Du Plooy (Section 2.2), and study-read the study guide, Activity 3, plus the feedback that follows Activity 3.

Research issue and research questions (no specific task)

Student:
I am getting very confused between a research issue and research questions. Are research questions those things in a study that actually appear in question form? I thought my understanding of this concept was clear, but for some reason I am becoming very confused.

Feedback:
Please keep in mind that the main research issue need not be a “problem”, it could also be a research “issue”. We prefer to use issue because a problem needs a solution and all research conducted does not necessarily result in a solution.

The logical process that one follows is to formulate the research issue → population / population characteristics → sub-problems → assumptions → research questions.

The main research issue is usually a statement which contains the five criteria. These criteria indicate the nature of your research design (qualitative or quantitative or both), the time dimension (cross-sectional or longitudinal), the applicable action to be performed in the research (explore and describe in our case); the issue (identifying creative concepts with a view of describing their characteristics), and the method (content analysis) to be used in the research (these could be conducting interviews, observations, content analysis, or conducting a survey).

Research questions develop from or are guided by the sub-problems and assumptions which have been formulated. The purpose of research questions is to get an answer to the main research issue, and the sub-issues support the research questions. That is why we make such an issue to claim that assumptions, sub-issues and research questions need to be logically linked and they all need to relate to the main issue under investigation.

One would formulate hypotheses when testing cause-and-effect explanatory relationships between independent and dependent variables, or one would formulate research questions, when the objective is exploratory or descriptive. Revise the **examples** given in the prescribed book and study guide.

Quantitative versus qualitative approaches (no specific task)

Student:
Can you please again explain the differences between a quantitative and a qualitative approach to communication research?

Feedback:
These two approaches are dealt with in detail in study unit 1, please revise. Our feedback is therefore brief.

A quantitative approach concentrates on **counting** whatever is being investigated. For example, if you wanted to investigate the agenda-setting function fulfilled by a newspaper, you would count the number of times in which a particular topic (theme, incident, issue, institution, person) is reported over a period of time. In other words a **quantitative** approach does **not** give one the depth of meanings, or the nature of meanings (positive, neutral, negative) of whatever one investigates.

A qualitative approach concentrates on determining the **quality** of whatever is being investigated. Taking the same example as above, instead of (or ideally in addition to) counting the number of times specific topics are reported, you would analyse **how** the reporting is done. For example, the way in which the 11 September attacks are dealt with could be negative, treating them as acts of terrorism. In contrast, a press report could take an opposite argument, criticising USA's past actions and arguing that what took place on 11 September was justified.

Also consult our comments numbered (10), (11), and (12) as feedback on Activity 8 in the **study guide**.

Extent of the research issue (no specific task)

Student:
I am not sure what is meant by "the extent" of the research issue.

Feedback:
The extent of a research issue can have different meanings, depending several variables, such as the nature of the issue, the objective(s), whether hypotheses or research questions are formulated and even the size and type of sample drawn. For example, if you conduct a pilot study (that is a study on a small scale) among 20 respondents in an organisation that has 4 000 employees, then the extent will be limited to those 20 people and your results cannot be generalised to a wider population — therefore lacks external validity. Extent can also refer to a limited geographic area, such as investigating a research issue in one particular community or one province and not an entire country.

Lastly, extent is directly linked to the time dimension. Section 2.5.4 in Du Plooy (2009) deals with the factors that serve as threats to the validity of the research design and which are directly linked to the extent of a research study (being either cross-sectional or longitudinal).

A hypothesis versus a research question

Student:
What is the difference between a hypothesis and a research question and when does one use them?

Feedback:
A hypothesis is (1) a tentative statement about the relationship between two or more variables that (2) predicts an experimental outcome. This relationship between two or more variables can differ, and as a result the type of hypothesis that you want to formulate will depend on the type of relationship that you want to measure. **Types of hypotheses** and **types of relationships** are discussed in Du Plooy (Section 2.4.4) and in the study guide, pages 32—42.

A research question is a tentative question concerning the relationship between two or more variables. There are various reasons for formulating research questions, rather than hypotheses (listed in **section 2.4.3** in the prescribed book). One of the main reasons that will apply in your tasks is being unsure of the extent or nature of the research issue (relationship between two or more variables) and/or where your objectives would be to mainly explore, rather than to describe or explain cause-and-effect relations.

Deductive versus inductive reasoning

Student:
How does deductive reasoning differ from inductive reasoning and when is such reasoning appropriate?

Feedback:
Deductive reasoning begins with a general assumption and derives a conclusion about particular instances within the initial generalisation. For example, if you were conducting a readership study of viewers of soap operas your deductive reasoning would be based on theoretical assumptions about viewers' interaction with soap operas.

An example of deductive reasoning would read as follows:

Interdependent relationships exist between readers and texts.
Soap operas are texts.
Therefore soap operas represent interdependent relationships.

Inductive reasoning is applied when analysing the responses of respondents or participants to confirm theoretical assumptions. Such reasoning begins with particular instances (specific responses from individual respondents) and infers general conclusions.

The reasoning would be appropriate when you use **deductive** reasoning when discussing the theoretical approach to your task and **inductive** reasoning when interpreting data or responses and drawing conclusions.

Inductive reasoning (no specific task)

Student:
With reference to pages 82 and 83 (or pages 86–90), the two references to inductive reasoning are not the same. Please comment.

Feedback:
Please learn to use the correct reference techniques. Where does one find these pages 82 and 83 or pages 86–90?

"Inductive reasoning begins with a literature review of primary sources ... which will guide the observations in our study" (Du Plooy, Section 2.5.2) ... "based on specific assumptions" [in other words guided by the literature review] "one would start with observations and end with descriptions of what was observed, or continue to formulate a theory that explains what was observed" (Du Plooy, Section 2.5.3).

We think it will become clearer if you focus on the words printed in bold below:

Inductive reasoning **begins** with a literature review ... but it does not end there. Induction implies a **process** of building theory. In other words a researcher collects evidence and then develops new concepts or specifies relations between concepts (based on that evidence). During the process the evidence is therefore generalised. However one has to start somewhere and that starting point is a literature review.

The process could be summarised as follows:

Do a literature review → collect the data → develop concepts or specify relations among data → formulate general abstract statements (theories) about the evidence.

In contrast, **deduction** involves testing general ideas (theory), by asking whether abstract relationships (propositions) apply to realistic, concrete communication contexts. For example, one of my Master's students investigated whether Afrikaans first language teenagers (the consumers of tomorrow) watch SABCTV2; what their preferences are, why these preferences, et cetera. Although this is a "new" research study (not done before in South Africa) the theoretical approach which was appropriate is the uses and gratifications approach. Many research studies have been conducted using this approach over the years. He therefore had to do a literature review, become familiar with the theoretical assumptions, adapt (improve) on the theoretical model (to make provision for South African viewing conditions, the use of Internet and the influence of globalisation). From this (improved and adapted) theoretical model he compiled a self-administered questionnaire, collected the responses from a sample of teenagers, and in so doing he tested whether the theoretical assumptions realistically apply (among teenage television viewers).

Measuring instrument (no specific task)

Student:
Please give me a simplified definition/explanation of the meaning of a "measuring instrument" (Du Plooy 2009:72).

Feedback:
In nursing sciences a thermometer is used as a measuring instrument to measure a patient's temperature. In social sciences, including Communication Science, we make use of other instruments to measure behaviours, attitudes, opinions, content of messages, et cetera. Thus a short "definition" would be *that which we use to investigate (observe; measure) the data*.

For example, self-administered questionnaires and interview schedules are used in survey research; a moderator guide and pre-coded observation schedules are used in field research, and a content analysis is used to analyse content of documents. Please refer to the marginal note in Du Plooy (2009:68) for a description.

Self-administered questionnaire (no specific task)

Student:
What is a self-administered questionnaire?

Feedback:
It is a type of questionnaire where the participants sit either at home or in a group with the researcher present and they use a pen/pencil to answer the items listed on the questionnaire. Self-administered refers to them completing the questionnaire by themselves as opposed to, for example, the researcher conducting interviews and making the notes.

Likert scale (no specific task)

Student:
What is a Likert scale?

Feedback:
Please refer to the *Index* at the back of the prescribed book and refer to the page references listed for **Scaling, Likert scale**. A Likert scale relates to type of items that can be used in questionnaires.

Types of questions (no specific task)

Student:
What is the difference between an open-ended and a closed-ended question?

Feedback:
Please consult the *Index* at the back of the prescribed book and consult the page references listed under **questions**. With open-ended questions people may provide their thoughts as answers by filling in on the dotted line. Closed-ended questions usually have pre-determined answers in boxes and the respondent simply makes a tick in the most appropriate box as an answer.

Research questions and questions in the questionnaire

Student:
Is there a difference between research questions and questions of a questionnaire?

Feedback:
Yes, for sure. A questionnaire contains items and not necessarily questions.

If you are going to make use of a questionnaire in your research (to collect the data), you will formulate different items that need to be answered by those you drew as a sample from the accessible population. Open-ended questionnaires ask questions and the participants have to provide their own answer by writing something in the space provided. Closed-ended items in a questionnaire are for instance when a questionnaire asks your gender and then has two options (Male/female) and you have to mark the correct option with an X. Another example is when a list of aspects is made and one has to select the appropriate option or place them in a chronological order. Please note that when these items are used, the rules applicable to the scale that is used must be adhered to. If, for example, a Likert scale is applicable, you have to have a statement above the list, not a question.

An example of a Likert scale item can be when one wants to determine the uses and gratifications experienced by readers. Your item may look something like this:

Instruction to completing the item: Please consider the statement below and mark your applicable option with an X in the box provided in the list.

I read the daily newspaper because it satisfies my need for … .

Surveillance of the environment	
Enjoyment	
Social integration and interaction	
Personal identity	

Items can be formulated in the form of statements or questions. Examples of statements can be found in Likert scales and semantic differential scales. Items for a questionnaire must not be included in an assignment.

Research questions are asked by a researcher in an attempt to solve the main research issue or to accept or reject assumptions. Look at the headings on the mark scheme and you will see the heading Research questions. These questions relate directly to the main issue which you have formulated and the answer is obtained after you have completed the research and have analysed and interpreted the data.

Page 57 …. "synthesis of existing information relating to the research topic"

Student:
Please explain the meaning of above extract.

Feedback:
Please learn to use the correct reference techniques and please refer to Tutorial Letter CMNALLE/301. Where does one find this "page 57"?

In response to: "synthesis of **existing** information relating to the research topic" — The purpose of doing a literature survey to find material **related** to the **conceptual** focus of the research issue. The last two words that I emphasised above highlight the meaning of synthesising existing information, even if the problem or issue is new.

Let us take the example of **African Renaissance** as a new topic and let us assume that nobody has investigated how the average citizen interprets the messages that have been communicated about the African Renaissance.

Although the topic and issue is "new", I am sure that you will find past research and publications that deal with the abstract construct "African", as well as the abstract construct "Renaissance". Therefore before embarking on one's own investigation, one has to take note of what has previously been published about these constructs.

Variables (no specific task)

Student:
Please explain the distinction between dependent and independent variables and their relation with characteristic variables.

Feedback:
The examples given in Du Plooy (2009:75, paragraph 3), gender, age, educational level, income and language preference, are examples of independent variables which we can**not** manipulate. For example, if you investigate the influence of television viewers' age on their preferences of television channels or stations, then you cannot manipulate (change) their age.

The terms “characteristic”, “attribute” or “organismic” are terms which different researchers use to refer to these kinds of independent variables (which cannot be manipulated).

Section 2.4.4

Student:
With reference to section 2.4.4. What is a multi-step flow?

Feedback:
It means more than one step and is usually associated with studies involving opinion leaders.

Mass communication messages influence opinion leaders who through social contact influence individuals in their community. Read the prescribed book (section 1.4.2), where reference is made to the two-step model as an example of such a multi-step flow.

Section 2.4.4

Student:
Please explain the meaning of “operational”.

Feedback:
I suggest that you consult the Index at the back of the prescribed book and refer to the page references listed under **definitions, operational**. It means that a construct must be “worded” in a definition that will enable one to observe or measure the construct.

For example, **Task 4.5** requires you to do a qualitative content analysis of a fictional television programmes to analyse the occurrence of crime. “Crime” is an abstract construct that has to be defined so that when you and another researcher analyse the same programmes, you both reach the same conclusions. Read our comments in response to Task 4.5 in the **study guide** for further illustrative purposes.

Testable hypothesis (no specific task)

Student:
Please give me an example of a testable hypothesis.

Feedback:

A hypothesis is “testable” if

- the constructs are operationally defined (and valid) — consult validity in this regard; and
- if the researcher can control the manipulation of the independent variable.

For example:

If (X) the broadcast times of violent television programmes are made earlier in the evening on e-TV, then (Y) viewership figures will drop.

In other words, we can control the independent variable (change the times of broadcast) and we can measure the viewership figures **before** and **after** the change.

3.5 Task 6.9 enquiries

Student:
Is it possible for any research (even a mini-communication audit) studying 20 respondents to be valid?

Feedback:
If your population consists of 20 people, yes, because you did not draw a sample. However, in the case of a mini-communication audit involving 20 respondents of, for example, 3 000 employees, the responses are not externally valid because you have not drawn a representative sample. In other words the sample lacks accuracy and an acceptable level of confidence.

Please note that the term “valid” can also refer to the measuring instrument. Therefore if validity tests have been done prior to the mini-audit, then chances are that the **questionnaire** could be treated as valid.

Student:
Is it necessary for me to add a communication experience form together with the closed-ended items in the questionnaire?

Feedback:
Yes, please read the instructions given for this task in tutorial letter 101. Remember that the communication experience form provides you with in-depth information related to employees' experiences for each topic area. Refer to Du Plooy (2009 373—388).

Student:
I am really struggling with the concept “coding”. Please give me an example.

Feedback:
Please revise our comments above under the discussion of **A table that summarises the findings of Task 6.9.**

Typography

Student:
In my first assignment, my table of contents had a note indicating I need to pay attention to the typography. What is typography?

Feedback:
Please see the slide in the discussion class notes. Typography relates to the headings and letter type with fonts specifically applicable to each level of heading. First level headings are the main headings and are in BOLD and capital letters. Second and subsequent level headings are in different letter types and have italics. This is done because one needs to be able to distinguish the different levels of headings.

Please bear in mind that we recommend the use of ONLY three levels of headings. Thereafter you should use bullets (only inside the document). Note that no bullets appear in the table of contents.

A discussion of some important aspects related to typography and other technical detail also appears in this tutorial letter. Please ensure you understand what is required and what is meant in our discussions. If you need assistance or further clarification, contact one of the lecturers.

Acknowledgement of sources

Student:
What is required in the list of sources consulted?

Feedback:
Please refer to Tutorial letter CMNALLE/301for full detail on requirements and how to reference the different sources. It is very important to give attention to the use of italics (name of publications), as well as the use of full stops and commas.

Important note:
If two or more of the same author's books or papers are published in the same year, your **date** would also have to bare a letter of the alphabet, based on the alphabetical arrangement of the title of the publication. Let us illustrate the last point with one hypothetical advertisement that (hypothetically) appeared in three newspapers, namely *City Press*, *Sunday Times* and *Rapport*:

Eskom advertisement. 2014a. *City Press*, 15 February:3.
Eskom-advertensie. 2014b. *Rapport*, 15 Februarie:3
Eskom advertisement. 2014c. *Sunday Times*, 15 February:11.

The "a", "b" and "c" are added to 2014 and they are arranged alphabetically according the "C", "R" and "S" of the newspapers.

This very same principle should be applied when you list the different tutorial letters applicable to a specific year.

Above reference techniques apply to your list of sources consulted given at the **end** of your assignments. Where you acknowledge the source of each publication in the text itselfyou would use the shorter reference technique as demonstrated in CNMALLE/301.

The implication of above, is that you can only finalise your reference techniques (alphabetical arrangements) once you have made your final selection of sources used.

You may now understand why you first have to sort out the referencing in the list of sources consulted (at the end) and then *work back* to the references in the text. Otherwise you have no way of knowing which is ultimately going to be 2004a and which is going to be 2004b.

If you turn to the list of sources consulted in the prescribed book, you will see how the alphabetical convention was applied to differentiate between South Africa (1998a) versus South Africa (1998b), because "Employment" comes alphabetically before "Skills".

Acknowledgement of sources

Student:
I cannot seem to get the list of sources right. Every time I put a list together, there is something missing. What should my list of sources contain please?

Feedback:
The list of sources reflects all the documents that were used when doing the task. That means you have to have the prescribed book, study guide, all the tutorial letters and three additional sources.

Please remember that this list of sources consulted must be alphabetical and you do not need to separate the documents used (as in prescribed book, study guide, papers, web articles, or other publications). You have one list in alphabetical order. Please see the examples in CMNALLE/301 or even at the back of our tutorial letters (and remember the a, b, c, d, distinction after the year of publication for the tutorial letters).

Copy of submitted portfolio

Student:
I need a copy of my submitted portfolio to see where I went wrong and to make corrections.

Feedback:
You were supposed to keep a copy of the submitted document and that copy should be used when revising and improving the portfolio. If you did not keep a copy, you need to contact Examinations in writing and ask for a copy. A fee is payable for the copy as well. Please note that examination documents do not have comment in and the mark scheme will not be provided with the copy.

Copy of mark scheme

Student:
I want a copy of the mark scheme please.

Feedback:
University laws (paragraph 32) indicate that no memoranda for any examination may be made available to any student. This approach and position is justifiable in terms of the Promotion of Access to Information Act.

3.6 E-tutor enquiries

Student:
What is e-tutoring?

Feedback:
Unisa offers online tutorials (e-tutoring) to students registered for modules at NQF level 5, 6 and 7 with effect from 2013. This means qualifying first year, second year and third year modules. Please log on to *my*Unisa to find out if any of the modules that you have registered for falls in this category.

Once you have been registered for a qualifying module, you will be allocated to a group of students with whom you will be interacting during the tuition period as well as an e-tutor who will be your tutorial facilitator. Thereafter you will receive an SMS informing you about your group, the name of your e-tutor and instructions on how to log onto *my*Unisa in order to receive further information on the e-tutoring process. Any module code on *my*Unisa with –E means that is the E-tutor group to which you have been assigned. Assignments and activities posted on these groups are posted by the E-tutor and should not be submitted to Unisa via *my*Unisa. Enquiries about these activities and assignments need to be directed at your E-tutor. Online tutorials are conducted by qualified E-Tutors who are appointed by Unisa and are offered free of charge.

3.7 Enquiries about the module coordinator/lecturers

Student:
I cannot get hold of the module coordinator. What should I do as I urgently need some clarification?

Feedback:
Module coordinators are available either telephonically during office hours or via e-mail (provided they are not involved in meetings, ill or on vacation). It is expected that when ill or on vacation, an out-of-office reply is made available on e-mail. If so, please contact the people designated in that response.

If you continuously call the module coordinator telephonically and fail to reach him/her, you may contact the Chair of the Department (012 429 8264) or via e-mail (mbathbt@unisa.ac.za).

Also read the detail in this tutorial letter dealing with **INTERACTION WITH LECTURERS.**

4 TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

Please pay particular attention to technical requirements since marks are awarded for this aspect as well.

- **Format and size restriction**

ONLY documents created in MSWord are acceptable and all documents (including the addenda in the portfolio) have to be a maximum of 10 MB (electronic documents). Your document may also not exceed 35 pages typed or 40 pages for handwritten documents.

- **Declaration**

The declaration to be included in both assignment 01 and the portfolio can be found in Tutorial Letter 301. That specific declaration has to be repeated in your documents, and you have to acknowledge Tutorial Letter 301 in your list of sources consulted.

Your declaration has to make reference to the fact that you have familiarised yourself with the section on plagiarism in Tutorial Letter 301. You have to insert the name of a witness if you do not have a facility to scan in the signature. Marks are allocated for all this information.

Note that declaration is in capital letters and bold, the declaration has to be the first page after the table of contents and it has to be listed in the table of contents as the first item.

➢ **Typography**

A number of writing conventions apply to the presentation of a table of contents, which are illustrated above as well as in your other prescribed study material. These issues/aspects are considered when the assignment and portfolio are assessed, and contribute towards the allocation of a mark for your technical presentation.

➢ **Size and font used**

The convention for the different sizes and font for the lettering is usually as follows:

- **FIRST-LEVEL HEADINGS ARE IN CAPITAL LETTERS AND BOLD (for typed documents).** If a document is hand-written, the first level headings are in capital letters.
- **Second-level headings are in lower case letters and bold (typed document** and simply lower case for hand-written documents**)**
- ***Third-level headings (and headings thereafter) are in lower case italics and bold (*****for typed documents** and lower case and underlined for hand-written documents**)**.

Please do not mix capital and lower case lettering. In other words: Evaluation based on presentation criteria and credibility is **correct**, whereas Evaluation Based on Presentation Criteria and Credibility is **incorrect**. This comment applies to headings in the table of contents as well as headings used inside the document.

➢ **Accuracy of headings**

The only headings to be used are the ones provided on the mark scheme. The headings and sub-headings used in the table of contents **must** correspond with the headings and sub-headings used in the content of your portfolio. Please take note of spelling in both headings and text. You have to use British spelling in your tasks (organisation). American spelling (organization) is not acceptable. Specific words are hyphenated, such as sub-problems, sub-issues, cross-sectional, self-assessment, and self-evaluation.

➢ **Numbering**

The headings **and** the sub-headings are numbered as illustrated in the example of a table of contents, as well as in our own tutorial letters. Please do **not** use letters of the alphabet such as (a), (b), (c) or (i), (ii), (iii) anywhere in the document or have bullets (in the table of contents).

➢ **Accuracy of page numbers**

The page numbers listed in the table of contents must correspond with the actual pages in the content of your portfolio. A page number which appears in the table of contents indicates on which page number the specific heading appears in your document.

➢ **Introduction**

Neither Assignment 01 nor the portfolio has INTRODUCTION as a heading. Everything required is on the mark scheme, and you have to work according to those headings.

➢ **Sources consulted**

The heading "SOURCES CONSULTED" is listed in the table of contents, but is **not numbered**. Also note that sources are listed alphabetically, according to initials of the same author (with more than one publication) as well. All the study material has to be listed in your sources consulted. Please see and use the examples provided in CMNALLE/301.

➢ **Punctuation and underlining**

No full stops are added after any numbering, or after any headings, or after any page numbers. Nothing is underlined anywhere (unless you have a hand-written assignment or portfolio with third-level headings. The names of publications are also underlined in a hand-written document whereas these are in italics in a typed document).

➢ **Self-assessment and self-evaluation**

The purpose of this exercise is reflection. You need to provide answers to the five questions raised in Tutorial Letter 101. These answers have to relate to the research that you have done; to your experience of this exercise. You may be critical and have an opinion, and will not be penalised for that.

This information is analysed and interpreted to determine what our students think of this type of activity and module content. Please be honest when completing the questions. Both assignment 01 and the portfolio need to have a self-assessment and self-evaluation completed and attached.

➢ **Addenda**

Ensure that you meet the two requirements of:

- Obtaining and including an official letter (signed and on an official letterhead) from an institution/organisation in which a senior official declares that you conducted the research at that organisation.
- Including a copy of your questionnaire with the open experience forms in your examination portfolio.

➢ **Correct numbering of documents**

Please ensure that you use the correct assignment number for each of your documents. Turn to the relevant page of Tutorial Letter 101 to see how each assignment needs to be numbered. Documents (assignments, portfolio as well as the supplementary examination portfolio) have specific assignment and unique numbers which have to be used.

We have requested previously that you not re-write the text book or have quotes under each heading. These are not marked because they do not mean anything if you do not interpret them and acknowledge the source. A good illustration of this technique will be under theoretical approach. Here you will insert a sentence indicating that the discussion to follow is based on Du Plooy (2009: 356—388). Any other source used has to be referenced in the same manner. The same principle should be applied elsewhere in the document.

5 TALLYING AND TABULATION OF DATA

Tallying data (such as respondents' responses in Task 6.9,) means that you are **counting** responses.

Before considering the examples that follow below, you need to study the prescribed book (2009:404—407) to become familiar with the conventions and terminology that apply to the formulation of a table.

Please remember:

You may **NOT** refer to majority/minority/most or least. Research is scientific and as such it is specific. Your reporting also has to be specific and you have to indicate what was truly found in the analysis and research.

Take note of the meaning of terms, such as "stub, categories, table, column" and "row". Also take note that the descriptive labels for tables are provided **above** a table, in contrast to figures, where the label is presented **below** the figure.

You should apply the latter conventions in any reports (portfolio) that you write as a student or as an employee in your work situation in which you present findings, or summarise information in the form of tables and figures. Tables are one of the most important formats that researchers use to present **quantitative** data.

Important note:

When assessing your findings, examiners refer back to what you initially formulated as assumptions, sub-issues and research questions and the examiners check whether your findings relate to the latter. In other words, if you did **not** formulate above details in your assumptions, sub-issues or research questions, then obviously such a detailed analysis (of verbal and visual repetitions) need **not** be reported.

6 PORTFOLIO MARK SCHEME

Very important:

- This mark scheme will be used by lecturers when assessing your portfolio.
- Use the headings in bold as headings in your table of contents.
- Each bulleted sentence requires enough information to warrant the marks applicable to detail required under each heading.
- Ensure that you provide evidence and answers from the research done (that means from the analysed survey and open-experience forms) for each of the aspects addressed under each of the headings on the mark scheme.
- If no sources are referred to in the assignment or portfolio, no mark will be awarded for that aspect under technical presentation
- The maximum length of the portfolio is 35 pages typed text or 1 MB (for electronic submissions), or 40 pages written text (addenda included).

You will note that the mark scheme for the portfolio contains the first nine headings which were applicable to Assignment 01 PLUS additional headings. These additional headings after Research Design relate to the actual research done. You have to use the portfolio mark scheme for Assignment 03 and submit a document containing detail related to everything on that mark scheme.

7 *My*UNISA

You are encouraged to participate in *my*Unisa if you have electronic facilities. Important announcements are posted on *my*Unisa and questions about subject matter are answered. You may pose questions on *my*Unisa or indicate which aspects of the tasks and portfolio are problematic. Sometimes fellow-students will be able to assist and provide guidance or the lecturers will interact with you. *my*Unisa should also be used to submit assignments and portfolios. Please note that lecturers have access to same information that you see on *my*Unis*a*.

*my*Unisa also contains all the study material in electronic format. If you do not receive feedback by means of a tutorial letter within six weeks after submitting an assignment, you should view or print the feedback by accessing *my*Unisa. The notes used at discussion classes are also posted here.

It is possible that online marking will result in much more activity on *my*Unis*a* and we invite you to participate and make contributions.

8 SHORT MESSAGE SERVICE (SMS)

Departments, other than the Department of Communication Science, may send you an SMS from time to time. If you have enquiries relating to the contents of any of these messages, you need to contact the person who sent you that specific SMS. We do NOT receive copies of any messages sent to you and also do not have access to the content thereof. As a matter of fact, we are not even aware of any messages being sent to students via SMS except those we send ourselves. Please note that examination information relating to portfolios is NOT made known via SMS.

The messages that we as lecturers send you, will always commence with the module code (COM3706) and we can ONLY answer questions relating to the messages that we send. If we as lecturers send you an SMS, please READ and make sure that you understand these messages before just simply reacting on them.

It is your responsibility to ensure that Unisa has your correct cell phone number. If we have to contact you for a special arrangement with regard to, for instance your examination, we use whatever is available on the database and if we cannot get hold of you by these means, you may lose out. If you do not receive the SMS messages from the department, send an e-mail to mylifeHelp@unisa.ac.za and request your name to be added to the list.

9 INTERACTION WITH LECTURERS

You are welcome to contact the module coordinator responsible for this module at any time during office hours (07:45 – 16:00). If we are not available, your call may be diverted to a cell phone (if possible).

You may also send us an e-mail and we will respond as soon as possible. Please do not send the same e-mail to more than one lecturer. ONLY the lecturer whose name appears first in the address list of your e-mail will answer the enquiry.

Also bear in mind that lecturers have other responsibilities apart from being involved in this module. We may, therefore, not always be available on either of the possibilities listed above, or we may not be in a position to return your call on the same day.

We also have to attend workshops, undergo training or take leave and are sometimes ill. If, however, you do not get a response from the lecturer concerned within five working days, please try another lecturer responsible for this module, or contact the module coordinator. We WILL, however, get back to you as soon as possible if you leave a message.

10 IN CLOSING

We trust that you have realised by now that this subject does need a lot of time and hard work if you are not familiar with research concepts or with research methodology. We have no doubt that you can all pass this module if you follow the steps and guidelines provided, adhere to the requirements, and meet the deadlines. You should also realise that this module differs from other third-year modules because it is a practical module. It poses specific challenges in terms of your time and dedication, and we prepare you for future studies where you will study with much less guidance.

Good luck and best wishes.

THE COM3706 TEAM

SOURCES CONSULTED

Du Plooy, GM. 2009. *Communication research: techniques, methods and applications*. Kenwyn: Juta

Du Plooy, T. 2001. *Only study guide for COM306D: Communication Research*. Pretoria: University of South Africa

University of South Africa. 2018. *Department of Communication Science. Communication Research. Tutorial Letter 101/2018: Semesters 1 and 2*. Pretoria: University of South Africa