



Writing Effectively for the ILO

Course Guide - Printable

Introduction

Welcome to the course *Writing Effectively for the ILO*.

This course focuses on the principles and strategies that underpin effective workplace communication:

- clarity of purpose
- meeting of readers' needs
- appropriateness to context

This is how it works. You will explore principles and strategies of effective writing for the ILO written communication needs. You will apply them through a series of self-marked, ILO-related writing activities, and be assessed through a number of practical work-based tasks that will need to be performed to specified standards.

You will have a personal tutor to help you throughout the course. In addition to helping you with any problems with learning materials and learning approaches, your tutor will assess your assignments and give you detailed, individualized feedback. You will communicate with each other by e-mail.

Course outcomes

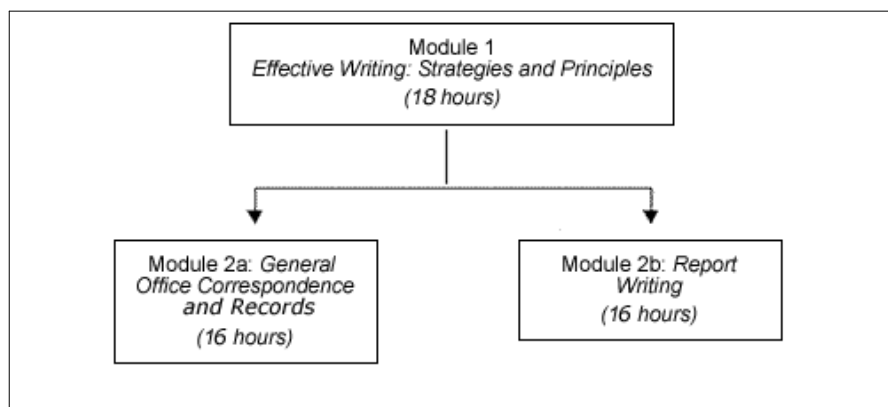
On completion of the course, you should be able to:

- solve problems requiring the application of skills in written communication;
 - produce work-based writing that is clear, concise, appropriate, accurate, and informative;
 - produce work-based writing in an acceptable format and style.
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Course outline

Writing Effectively for the ILO is in modular format so that you can select those modules most relevant to your needs. Once you have successfully completed Module 1, you can take either of the second-level modules. Both second-level modules will assume knowledge of the strategies, principles, and skills covered in Module 1.

Below is an estimate of the amount of time it may take to complete each module.



Note: hours required to complete each module may vary depending on your available time to work on the course.

Module contents

[Module 1: Effective writing: strategies and principles](#)

This module operates as a foundation to the course. The skills and strategies learned here are applicable to all work-based writing tasks. It covers:

- defining your statement of purpose;
- analysing your audience;
- overcoming barriers to effective communication;
- adopting a writing strategy, framework, and timeframe:
 - prewriting
 - organizing
 - drafting
 - macro- and micro-editing
 - proofreading
- writing coherent sentences;
- writing well organized paragraphs.

[Module 1 assignment](#)

The assignment has two parts:

- analysing your strengths and weaknesses in writing based on a self-selected writing sample
- redrafting a set of written extracts from ILO documents

[Module 2a: General office correspondence and records](#)

This module gives you guidelines for, and practice in, writing everyday office correspondence and records. It covers:

- trends in office correspondence
- types of office correspondence:
 - memoranda
 - letters
 - e-mails
- types of meeting records
 - mission reports
 - minutes of meetings
 - notes for the file
 - reports of meetings and discussions

[Module 2a assignment](#)

You will compile a portfolio of model office correspondence.

[Module 2b: Report writing](#)

This module takes you, step by step, through the process of writing a report. It covers:

- an approach to writing reports
- skills required by report writers:
 - writing introductions
 - writing conclusions
 - writing recommendations
 - writing executive summaries
 - using graphics
- writing to ILO specifications (e.g., style guides, report templates)

[Module 2b assignment](#)

You will produce a short work-based report, including an executive summary.

Features of the study materials

The aim of this learning package is to challenge you to relate its contents to your own experience and workplace. As a result, this course challenges you with relevant and ILO-focused information about written communication that is designed to improve your professional writing skills in that workplace. The course aims to encourage you to reflect on your current work-related writing practices and to help you make decisions about how you will approach them from now on.

Learning objectives

At the beginning of each module, we present you with some specific learning objectives, detailing what we expect you to get out of the module. They are not all-encompassing; you will also have your own objectives. Once you have completed the module, we encourage you to revisit the objectives to reflect on whether or not you have achieved them.

Activities

Throughout each module, you will find two different kinds of tasks. The first, called activities, aim to get you to stop and think about the topics you have been reading about, to give personal responses to the material, to test your knowledge and to analyse case material. When you come to an activity, you will be provided with a specific activity template in which you can type your responses. You should not send your responses to these activities to your tutor (send only completed assignments to your tutor). For each of these activities you will be able to compare your answers with those that we have provided as model answers.

It is most important to complete these activities as you come to them and then to compare your responses with the suggested responses immediately (but not before!). These are not necessarily the only correct responses; they simply model a possible answer. They are, however, a part of the teaching in these modules and should not be skipped. It is also important to actually complete the exercises (that is, type in your answers). It is always a temptation to do them in your head and believe the task presents no challenge for you. Many of the activities in this course look deceptively easy until you actually try to do them.

Without a commitment to completing the activities, you are unlikely to improve your writing skills through this course. Professional growth will take place chiefly through your careful consideration of the activities and transfer of the learning to your workplace writing tasks.

Assignment preparation tasks

The second type is tasks related to assignments. These are called assignment preparation tasks. These, too, need to be done when you first come to them in the learning materials and are possibly even more tempting to leave undone. These tasks help you make progress towards completing your assignment. The tasks are cumulative and result in your assignment being ready to submit by the time you finish each module. You will need to open a folder on your desktop in which you can collect all assignment-related files as you progress through each module.

Progress check

Usually after an assignment preparation task, you will see a page that invites you to contact your tutor with any issues or questions that you wish to raise at that moment. These are simple reminders to contact your tutor as you wish. One of the keys to success in this course is to develop and maintain a momentum. Your tutor can be very helpful in encouraging you to maintain your momentum or for suggesting strategies to work effectively through the course materials.

Assessment: how to pass the course

The activities discussed above provide you with a measure of self-assessment of your progress through the course. In addition, you will receive a formal assessment of your assignments from your tutor.

At the end of each module, you will submit an assignment to your tutor as an e-mail attachment. (Please send only completed assignments to your tutor.) Your tutor will mark the assignment, and provide detailed written feedback on the quality of your work and give advice on any areas needing improvement. Should your initial submission not meet the set performance criteria (listed in each module), you will be given the opportunity to rework your assignment in the light of your tutor's feedback. (You can do this only twice.) At the conclusion of the course, you will receive an overall assessment, based on an ungraded pass system. This means your work will be graded as either pass, insufficient or incomplete. There is no final examination.

To pass the course you must meet the performance criteria for the assignment for both Module 1 and the assignment for one of the second-level modules. You will be awarded a certificate from the Commonwealth of Learning on successful completion of the course.

Scheduling your study

As with any distance-learning course, you have considerable autonomy in the way you organize your method of studying. You can study wherever and whenever you choose, and at whatever pace suits you best, within the five-month time frame of the course.

Inform your supervisor

You should inform your supervisor that you are taking this course and try to gain support for the duration of your

studies. If possible try to organize some regular time away from your work station to work on the course.

Work out a schedule

Distance learning, however, places the onus on you to organize yourself to complete the course in an appropriate time frame. If English is your second language, depending on your fluency, you may need to assign a longer period than indicated.

You will need to schedule your study time carefully, so that you have time to complete the activities, make your own notes and complete the assignments. It is easier if you can manage to work on the course at a set time, for a set period, in the same place.

The entire course is estimated to require roughly 26 hours of study time: 14 hours for Module 1, and 12 hours for either of the second modules. Please note that completion times are bound to vary from learner to learner. Your experience may differ from these estimated times. How you wish to spread your time out is up to you. Some people find it more effective to work in long, uninterrupted periods while others prefer to work at the course a little bit at a time.

Set your own assignment submission dates

There are no set dates for submitting assignments. This arrangement is to enable you to work more easily around your various work commitments. This degree of flexibility, however, has its dangers, and successful completion of distance courses requires significant self-discipline and time management skills.

To maintain a steady schedule of study in the course and give yourself the best chance of finishing it, we strongly advise you to set yourself target dates for submitting assignments. You should do this as soon as you have looked over the modules and the assignment requirements. Keep these dates marked in your diary, digital organizer, or whatever means you use to schedule your activities. Please take account of travel, especially busy work periods, and leave, into your planning. Your tutor will ask for your proposed dates for assignment submission early in the course.

Time limit

There is a time limit of five months to complete this course. The Course Administrator will provide a list of critical dates for the cohort in which you are participating.

Support and contacts

Although the course materials are designed to enable you to work alone, sometimes you will need help. A support system has been developed to assist you and fellow ILO course participants with any difficulties that you may experience.

Your difficulties are likely to be of two basic types academic and administrative but you may have queries or problems that can best be solved by contact with an ILO colleague or supervisor.

Academic

If your problem concerns understanding anything in the course learning materials, anything about how to proceed, or anything about assignment requirements, you should contact your tutor by e-mail. Your tutor will be happy to assist you and will reply to you as soon as he or she can. You should ensure that the e-mail to your tutor has a clear subject line indicating the type of problem. Please do not hesitate to ask questions, even if you think the question is too simple to ask; distance-learning courses can be like jigsaw puzzles at the beginning. Your tutor is there to help you find your way through the learning materials and will understand how you are feeling.

Information on your tutor, along with an e-mail address, is supplied separately. Your tutor will contact you early in the course. Please reply promptly so that he or she knows you are in e-mail contact.

If your tutor contacted you before you received this CD ROM, then [now is a good time to let your tutor know that you have got your course materials and are ready to start the course.](#)

Occasionally, you will see an e-mail link for your tutor like the one above. You will notice that there is no e-mail address provided. That is because there are different tutors for this course. However, the link will automatically open your default e-mail program and begin a message with a subject line. You must insert your tutor's e-mail address in the appropriate space to send a message.

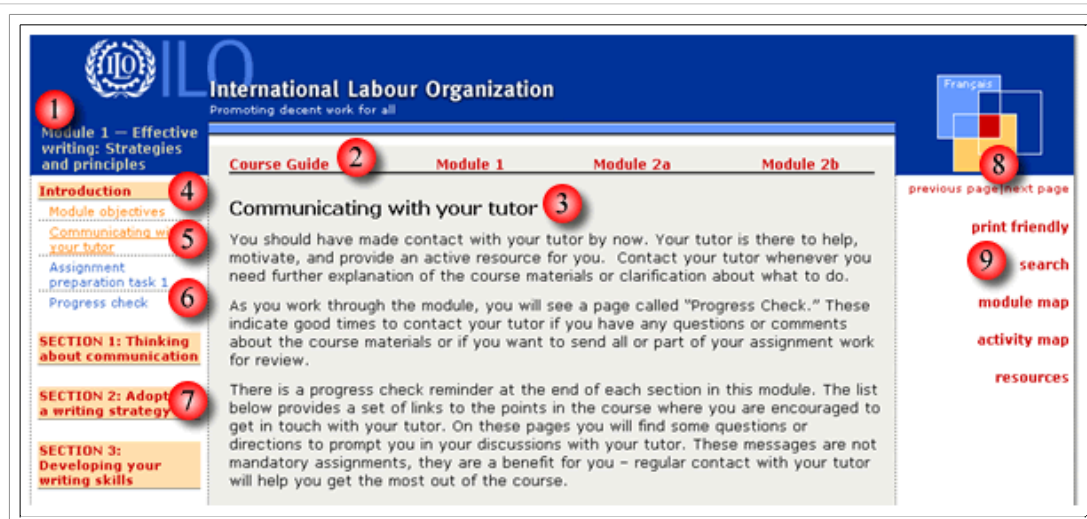
Administrative

You may experience administrative problems that require attention, such as changes in your work schedule or failure to access course materials. For assistance, contact the Commonwealth of Learning Course Administrator (learnersupport@col.org) and ILO's designated contact person as soon as possible. For technical problems, we also strongly recommend that you contact your local technical support.

We hope you enjoy the course and find it a fruitful learning experience.

Help with navigating through this course

These online course materials have been constructed in a way that allows you to work through activities at your own pace, while also having the benefit of support from an online mentor. To help you with using the course, we have adopted some conventions that should make your learning journey a bit easier to navigate.



The screenshot shows the ILO course interface. At the top left is the ILO logo and the text 'International Labour Organization Promoting decent work for all'. Below this is a navigation bar with 'Course Guide', 'Module 1', 'Module 2a', and 'Module 2b'. The main content area is titled 'Communicating with your tutor' and contains text about contacting a tutor and progress checks. On the left side, there is a table of contents with links like 'Introduction', 'Module objectives', 'Communicating with your tutor', 'Assignment preparation task 1', 'Progress check', 'SECTION 1: Thinking about communication', 'SECTION 2: Adopt a writing strategy', and 'SECTION 3: Developing your writing skills'. On the right side, there are links for 'previous page', 'next page', 'print friendly', 'search', 'module map', 'activity map', and 'resources'. Red circles with numbers 1-9 point to various elements: 1 (Module title), 2 (Navigation bar), 3 (Page title), 4 (Section link), 5 (Active page), 6 (Other page link), 7 (Section link), 8 (Previous/next page), and 9 (Right-side navigation links).

1. This is the module title.
2. Click on the links at the top of each page to navigate to the module of your choice.
3. This is the title of the page you are on within a module.
4. Sections within a module are the left-side links in red text with beige background.
5. The active page (the page you are on) will appear underlined.
6. Clicking on other page links within a section will take you to that page. Visited links appear in beige text; unvisited links are blue.
7. Clicking on a section link will take you to the first page of that section, and will expand the section to show the pages within.
8. Click on **previous page** or **next page** to navigate through the active module page-by-page. This menu also appears at the bottom of each page.
9. On the right side of each page you will find links to:
 - a print-friendly copy (PDF) of the active module
 - a search tool which allows you to perform text searches on the course contents
 - a module map, with links to each section of the module
 - an activity map, with links to the activities within a module
 - a link to important resources for each module.

Tips for searching

- Enter multiple terms with a space between them. The search tool searches for any instance of each term in the list.
- Search terms are not case sensitive. You can enter terms in any combination of upper and lower case.
- Terms may include any of the following characters: **A-Z a-z 0-9 _ - . ' , \$ %**.
- Place a plus sign (+) in front of each word that must appear in the results. For example, if you enter **+briefing +notes +record**, the search tool will find all pages that have all three words in them. Note that the three words may not necessarily be adjacent to each other, but they will be in the same page.
- Place a minus sign (-) in front of words that you do not want to appear in the results. For example, if you enter **+briefing +notes -record**, the search tool will find all pages that have the words "briefing" and "notes" but not "record".
- Common words (a, an, the, etc.) are excluded from the search index.

Storing files

Each module has two different kinds of activities:

- self-marking activities, where you complete a task and then compare your answers with those suggested by the

- module writer;
- assessment preparation tasks, which you complete as you work through the module. You complete these to collect data for the writing of the assignment.

In many cases, you will need to save your work somewhere safe. We recommend that, for each module, you create new folders in your personal folder system: one labelled *Activities* and one labelled *Assignment*. You can then store all of your work as you progress through the module.

Technical requirements

In order to fully experience this CD-ROM, you'll need:

- a World Wide Web browser (Internet Explorer 5 or greater, or Netscape 4.7 or greater), with JavaScript enabled
 - proper screen size settings: at least 800 x 600 (1024 x 768 recommended).
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Acknowledgements

Commonwealth of Learning

The Commonwealth of Learning (COL) is the only international intergovernmental agency that focuses exclusively on using technology to expand the scope and scale of human learning. It operates on the premise that knowledge is the key to individual freedom and to cultural, social and economic development.

COL helps Governments to develop policies that make innovation sustainable and to build systems or applications that expand learning.

It works in partnership with other international and bilateral organizations working on the Millennium Development Goals. These include the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the UK's Department for International Development (DFID), New Zealand's Agency for International Development (NZAID), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD), the African Virtual University (AVU), the regional Development Banks, and the World Bank.

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