Feedback Tutorial Letter

DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT
DRM721S

Assignment number 1
Dear Student,

Let me take this opportunity to thank you for submitting your first assignment for Disaster Risk Management. The purpose of this feedback tutorial letter is to give you feedback on the outcome of marking of your assignments. Therefore, this feedback tutorial letter highlights important issues that have arisen during the marking of your assignments. I have made in-text comments as well as a voice comment in your respective assignments. The comments are meant to help you understand what was expected from you and how you were you supposed to write the assignment. Please read and ensure that you understand these comments; and if you do not understand, do not hesitate to contact me. Additionally, these comments are meant to help you in your academic journey and to ensure that you learn and at the same time pass this course and eventually graduate.

I’m going to reiterate that for you to pass this course, you need to be fully committed and work hard. You need to read and understand the question asked and search for the relevant information to answer the question. It is important that you acknowledge all sources used in completing your assignment. Furthermore, it is vital that you paraphrase (read and understand what others have written (especially the idea) and rewrite that in your own words) instead of copying and pasting. Copying and pasting is plagiarism and an offence according NUST’s rules and regulations. Replacing synonyms is also plagiarism and tend to make your assignment hard to comprehend and vague. Instead of replacing similar words, please try to understand the main idea of your sources and rewrite them in your own words. Finally, ensure that your assignment is edited and proofread to ascertain that you have answered the question asked and that there are few errors.
Let’s now look at the assignment question.

Assignment 1 question

The World Health Organisation declared Covid-19 a pandemic on 11th March 2020. Covid-19 has affected so many aspects of life in all countries worldwide; be it economic, political or social. Given this, conduct a thorough research to establish the impact of Covid-19 on the education sector in Namibia; with special emphasis on tertiary education. Make use of any institution of higher learning as a case study in your discussion. Furthermore, suggest possible measures based on your findings.

First and foremost, ensure that you understand the question and what is required from you. The question asked about the impact of COVID-19 on the education sector in Namibia, specifically, the tertiary education sector. You then needed to use an institution of higher learning as your case study. You were also required to suggest possible measures based on your findings. For the purpose of this feedback, I’ll use Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST). However, I will also make reference to other universities.

An overview of Covid-19 in Namibia

You could have started with a general background or overview of how Covid-19 has affected the education sector in general. As you are well aware, most countries have implemented the lockdown measures to curtail the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic. All non-essential services as defined by the respective countries’ lockdown measures were closed. In the Namibia case, only people providing critical services were supposed to go to work. As per the Covid-19 regulations, schools and institutions of higher learning were not providing critical services and there were therefore supposed to work from home or stay at home. According to NUST internal memo, only certain functions were supposed to operate during the lockdown period to maintain the institution key facilities. These functions included security services, ICT services to maintain the server and those maintaining physical facilities such as electricity and water services.

Impact of Covid-19 on education

In Namibia, the first lockdown period started on 28 March 2020. Since then, schools and institutions of higher learning remained closed. This means no education was taking place for both schools and universities. As, a result, like most of the universities, the Namibia
University of Science and Technology, for example adopted the remote teaching, learning and assessment approach (online learning) on the 11th May 2020. The first semester of 2020 therefore has been extended to the 3rd of July 2020. All NUST students except for practical courses were supposed to attend online lectures.

Online learning has its fair share of challenges. Some students could not attend online learning due to lack of equipment such as smartphones and laptops, and internet connection. As a result, NUST arranged face-to-face classes in August 2020 for students who were not able to attend online classes for the first semester. These classes took place over a period of two weeks, after the online classes have ended. These classes took another strain on the staff given that they had to work double, online and also on face-to-face basis.

According to the report on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), published by the National Planning Commission (2021, p.17), Covid-19 forced educational institutions to close and revert to virtual learning. The same report states that this will likely reduce the quality of education due accessibility and affordability issues. Some students are from poor background and don’t have money to afford the equipment needed to access online learning and materials. This led to some students cancelling their studies and as a result universities revenue decreased. Several universities including NUST addressed this challenge by arranging for face-to-face classes as stated above.

Universities were affected in terms of staff members and students’ morbidity and mortality due to Covid-19. On top of that, most staff members and students lost loved one or were caring for them. NUST has lost about 7 people (staff members and students). The University of Namibia (UNAM) on the other hand, lost 11 staff members and 5 students to COVID-19. Due to the Covid-19 regulations, the conventional mourning could not be done and that made the situation harder as people did not have any shoulder to cry on or receive any physical comfort as it is usually the case. UNAM had to arrange for drive through memorials in honour of their staff members and students who succumbed to Covid-19. Mourning of loved one without the physical support of family members and colleagues also affected people psychologically. Both students and family members were affected. This also affected the quality of education as people were not concentrating on education anymore.

Covid-19 pandemic exposed the inequality in the society. This is what is referred to as the digital divide. Students from well-off families were able to continue with their studies online,
whereas students from poor families, some even dropped out due to the lack of the necessary equipment.

**The financial impacts of Covid-19 on tertiary education**

Universities has lost revenue due to low number of students enrolling. Some students have dropped out due to uncertainty brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic. Some have dropped out because of loss of jobs and revenue. As you are well aware, so many people lost their jobs due to the regulations brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic. There are also reports of salary cuts across industries. Moreover, some students lost their parents, and the parents were paying for their studies. Due to this, universities are not receiving as many students as they use to get. Additionally, universities had to invest in advanced technological equipment to enable uninterrupted teaching and learning online. According to the NUST memo, last year 2020, the university decided to provide transport to hostel students as well as international students to be with their families during the first lockdown stage. That meant money was paid to cater for that. Additionally, the university had to refund students who have cancelled. All these were additional expenditures as they were not budgeted for.

According to the NUST website, the Ministry of Higher Education, Technology, and Innovation, gave N$2.2 million to NUST to upgrade it servers and storage to enable smooth online learning. Additionally, 2000 portable WiFi devices and laptops were given to students. This is money spent that was not budgeted for though it is beneficial to the university and students.

Covid-19 brought with it some positive changes. Due to the physical closure of universities, universities were forced to invest in advanced technological equipment to make online learning a success as stated above.

You were also required to provide recommendations based on your findings. Your recommendations could have been based on what universities and the government can do to make learning a success despite the Covid-19 situation.

Sources I used to compile this feedback tutorial letter are: newspaper articles, the NUST websites and the SDGs implementation review.
Issues that came up during the marking of your assignment

- I have noticed that some students don’t read and understand the question asked. This is very sad and disappointing. You don’t even read the instructions in the tutorial letter to understand what is expected from you. The tutorial letter is an important document and you should read it from the first page to the last page. If you don’t read the tutorial letter you will not know what is required from you. You don’t just jump to the assignment questions, please try to read and understand the information contained in the tutorial letter.
- Please read the first tutorial letter before you complete your second assignment to ensure compliance with the instructions for the assignment.
- I believe you know that you must acknowledge your sources as truthfully and honestly as possible. You only acknowledge the sources you have used in compiling your assignment. You need a minimum of six relevant sources.
- You also need to edit and proofread your assignment to ensure that there are few spelling and grammatical errors.
- And finally ensure that your sentences and paragraphs are organised and structured in a coherent manner.

Guidelines for the comprehensive tests:

The following are the units to be covered in the test:

**First opportunity Comprehensive test**
- Unit1
- Unit 2: Focus on the Act (Functions of different committees).
- Unit 4
- Unit 5

**Second opportunity Comprehensive test**

The following are the units to be covered in the test:
- Unit1
- Unit 2: Focus on the Act (Declaration of Disasters).
- Unit 4
- Unit 6: Focus on the Global update AIDs Report of 2021, Chapter 2, p.82-102
- Unit 7
If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Good luck with your second assignment and the test.

Yours sincerely
Ms. M. Shakela
E-mail: mshakela@nust.na
Tel: 061:2072224
Cell No. 0814184173