FEEDBACK TUTORIAL LETTER

2nd SEMESTER 2019

ASSIGNMENT 1

Occupational Health and Safety
(OSH420S)
Dear Students

This letter serves as feedback to Assignment 1. The information below will give you an indication of how you have performed as a group:

- # of students that submitted their Assignments = 43
- # of students passed: 31
- # of students not successful: 12
- Group Average: 56%

The highest grade obtained is 87% and the lowest grade obtained is 17%. For those that did not do so well, please read through the feedback below to improve.

*The section below will give you an overview of the common mistakes that you made in the assignment, starting with the Introduction.*

**The Introduction and objectives of the Assignment: (3 Marks)**

You were expected to give a short introduction to the content of the assignment and to also write the objectives in the Introduction. Many students indicated the objectives in their Introduction and repeated it again in the next part of the Assignment. Please note that it is not necessary to write it again, if you have already indicated in the Introduction.

The Introduction is usually an introduction to the topic. The topic was about Occupational Health and Safety in the workplace. The introduction introduces the topic to the reader/audience. You could have explained the meaning of Occupational Health and Safety and why it is important. For example:
Occupational Health and Safety refers to the safety of the employees at work. OSH aims not just to protect the co-workers but also family members, employers and every person influenced by the workplace environment. The purpose of this assignment is to discuss OSH in the workplace and its importance. This discussion will also highlight the rights of the employees in the workplace and if not fulfilled, accidents can happen and lives might be lost too.

Question 1: (15 Marks)
As an employer of a large company, you are responsible for the health and safety of the employees working for you. In the beginning of the year, 10 new young employees were appointed in your company. During the induction period of these new employees, before they commence with work, important issues needed to be discussed. One of these issues is Occupational Health and Safety. You arranged a meeting with the 10 new young employees, regarding OHS. From your own perspective explain to them the term ‘Occupational Health and Safety’ and the importance thereof in your company. Also, explain to them their responsibilities as employees regarding OHS in your company.

Many of you failed to explain the importance in your company and this made lose marks unnecessarily. Please note that the mark allocation usually determines the number of answers that you must write. In other words, 15 answers will guarantee 15 marks.

Below are tips on how you could have answered this question.

Start with an explanation of the term Occupational Health and Safety, followed by the importance of OSH and thereafter the responsibilities of the employees.

1. Explain the term Occupational Health and Safety
Occupational Health and Safety also known as Occupational Safety and Health is a field that is concerned with the health, safety and welfare of the people at work. (1) One can also say it is the protection of employees at the work place. (1) The reason for all Occupational Safety and Health plans is to raise a safe working environment. (1)

2. The importance of Occupational Health and Safety
By law, employers are required to provide employees with a safe and healthy working environment. (1) In Namibia the OHS is administrated by the Labour Act Nr 11 of 2007 in combination with Regulation 156, ‘Regulations Relating to the Health and Safety of Employees at work’. (1) OHS is a concept that affects every organisation, and it is very important for every employee to understand what Occupational Health and Safety is (1). This knowledge will prevent you from hurting yourself and will also prevent workplace hazards, injury as well as illness in the workplace. (1)

The major aim of Occupational Health and Safety is to promote and enhance the health and safety of employees at the workplace as well as to improve the working environment of employees to become conducive to health and safety. (1) OHS is very essential for each and every employee in any organisation for the reason that all the workers need to work in a safe and secured environment. (1) OHS also encourages the wellness of both employees and employers. (1) It is therefore the obligation and ethical responsibility of the company to look after the employee’s safety. According to the Labour Act Nr 11 of 2007, employees have three rights: (i) the right to work in a safe and secured environment, (ii) the right to participate in OSH activities and (iii) the right to refuse to take part in unsafe activities. If these rights are not fulfilled, accidents can occur and the employer can be charged by Law which could further result in occurring costs, i.e. medical and insurance claims, death claims, etc. (1)

3. The roles and responsibilities of the employees:

It is not just the employer (company) that should promote and maintain OSH in the workplace, but also the employees. Each and every employee is required to follow all the safety procedures in their workplace. (1) One should follow instructions from the employer on all matters and attend all trainings on occupational health and safety. (1) You need to report hazards and defects that you observe in the workplace. (1) It is your right to a safe and healthy workplace (1) and to decline work that puts you in instant danger of serious injury (1). But before you refuse unsafe work, make sure that you have asked your employer to remove the hazard and emphasise that you will not accept another assignment. (1) The OHS regulation only protects you if the danger can be proven to exist. (1) If you refuse to work because you believe a condition is hazardous, but are proved wrong, the Law will not protect you. (1)

Question 2 (5 marks)

Young employees are more at risk in being involved in workplace accidents than employees that are longer in the workplace.” Do you agree/disagree with this statement? Defend your answer.
There were those students that did not agree with the statement made. This is correct as long as you have motivated your answers. Some students made assumptions and marks were deducted. An assumption is when you assume that it is the case and when you cannot proof the answer. For example, “young people only drink, they don’t care, they are late for work every day, etc. Please note that it is important that you do take existing literature to proof/motivate your answer.

Answers such as lack of experience, lack of physical and mental maturity, lack of skills, training, attitude of ignorance, etc. are valid. But, most importantly, do not forget to motivate your answers.

**Question 3 (7 marks)**

**Explain the role of the workplace Health and Safety representative in an organisation.**

An important role of the workplace Health and Safety representative is prevention. The representative officer must ensure that the safety policies are implemented. Workplace health and safety representative roles include but is not limited to:

- Give proactive employee training and protecting workers from potential hazards by communicating about hazardous accidents, should they occur;
- Inspection of reported machinery failure and ensure prompt response to occupational accidents as well as investigation of reported accident;
- Provide technical support for all parties concerned in occupational health and safety such as educational materials for campaigns and promotion;
- To accompany an inspector on site visits to the workplace;
- To seek resolution of any OHS issue;
- Control and monitor of imports such as machinery and equipment;
- Assist employees to set up representative and safety committees.

**Question 4 (5 marks)**

Do you agree with the following statement “Occupational Health and Safety goes beyond the workplace because employees are part of the community”? Defend your answer.
This question required you to speak about the impact of the industrial activities in the community. Answers had to be motivated.

A sample answer below:

I strongly agree that Occupational Health and Safety goes beyond the workplace. Both employees and employers are part of the community. One need to be safe every time and anywhere, be it at home, workplace, shopping or simply just taking a walk. Healthy workers are productive and raise healthy families, thus healthy workers are a key approach in overpowering poverty. Safe workstations add to the sustainable development. The processes of protecting workers, surrounding communities and the environment for future generations have important common elements, such as pollution control and exposure reduction. Protect yourself at work and at home and spread the skills and knowledge on safety unto the society.

As a secondary effect, it may also protect co-workers, family members, employers, customers, suppliers, nearby communities, and other members of the public who are impacted by the workplace environment.

**Question 5 (3 marks)**
Workers in Namibia have three basic rights when it comes to Occupational Health and Safety. What are these three rights?

I. By law, employers, must provide employees with a safe and healthy working environment.

II. By law, every employee has the right to participate in workplace healthy and safety activities.

III. By law all employees have the right to refuse to unsafe work.

**Question 6 (5 marks)**
Accidents in the workplace are expensive to employers, employees and even communities. Discuss some of these costs incurred by employers as a result of workplace accident.

This question required you to discuss some of the costs incurred by employers as a result of workplace accidents. Many of you only mentioned the costs. Please note that the purpose of a discussion is to interpret and describe the significance of your findings in light of what was already known about the topic.
A sample answer below:
Accidents in the workplace are very expensive to employers because the employer stand the risk to lose on productivity. They also stand the risk to lose business opportunities, i.e. most recently Sunshine Tours transported the learners of the Gymnasium school and the bus overturned. Many schools now do not wish to do business with Sunshine Tours. As a preventive and control measure, Sunshine Tours had to put into extra safety measures so that the same does not happen again. Drivers had to be reminded and trained again on road safety.

Direct costs of accidents include medical claims, hospital bills, rehabilitation expenses, workers’ compensation payments, and higher insurance premiums or even loss of insurability. Sometimes property and materials will be damaged and that means extra cost to repair and maintain the property after an accident. For example, in the case of Sunshine Tours, the bus had to be repaired and a breathalyzer for each bus driver had to be procured.

Some of the costs incurred by employers as a result of workplace accident can be, loss in earning power; damage to tools, equipment, and other property; lost time by supervision; economic loss to injured worker’s family and loss of production.

Conclusion – 3 marks
There should be a conclusion with every assignment, unless otherwise instructed. Some of you did not do the conclusion and as a result lost 3 marks whilst some concluded the Assignment with what you have covered in the Assignment and /or what you have learned in the Assignment.

Note: A conclusion is generally, a brief summary of the topics that was covered in the Assignment. You are therefore required to highlight the different topics and conclude your topic. For example:

Prevention is better than cure. OHS is the protection of both employees and employers in the workplace. Young employees need education and awareness on OHS in the workplace because if they are aware, less accidents can happen. OSH goes beyond the workplace, because employees are part of the community at large. By law, Namibia has rights for the employees when it comes to OSH. Lastly, it is important by all
means to avoid getting involved in accidents, because it can cost the employer a lot of money during and after an accident in the workplace.

**Referencing – 2 marks**

All sources used in the Assignment must be listed in the Reference List. The Reference List must be done according to the APA Referencing Style. You can get a copy of the APA Referencing Style in the NUST Library.

**Language and Grammar – 2 marks**

Many students copied from their Study Guide and other sources. Please note that copy and paste will not result in learning. Copy and Paste tells the reader that you do not have an understanding of the subject matter at hand. Copy and paste should be avoided at all times. Also note that copy and paste is a punishable offence. In other words, you will lose marks or you can receive a zero (0) grade.

Secondly, please do a spell and grammar check at all times and/or ask someone to assist you with your English writing. Do not write long sentences and use punctuation marks. Write to the point and so that everyone can understanding your writing. In short, avoid using high vocabulary. You will stand the risk of going off topic and may lose marks for this. Your arguments must be presented in such a way that it is coherent, logic and flowing.

You are also required to do academic writing in your assessments. Academic writing is done by scholars for scholars. It includes reading, thinking, arguing, reasoning and writing according to academic parameters. Follow these parameters. Academic writing is an important skill that you should have and it will become a must as you progress with your studies.

**Academic Writing Checklist**

- Follow requirements as outlined by the tutorial letter
- Use a professional and respectful tone
- Ensure that language is appropriate for the audience
- State the opinion/argument clearly at the beginning of your Assignment
- Edit for Grammar and spelling errors
• Paraphrase as far as possible. Alternative, put quotation marks and cite all information according to the APA Referencing Style


Tips for Assignment 2 and future assessments:
• Use this feedback together with the feedback of Test 1 to prepare yourself adequately for future assessments. I have also provided notes during the Vacation School that can assist you. These notes are also available on COLL’s website under COLL Vacation School Notes, OSH420S.
• Study your topics thoroughly. Ask questions, if you are not clear about a topic. I am always available on my cellphone: 081 728 2687 / email at bcloete@nust.na / bernadetteclt@gmail.com
• See Guidelines for presentations in your Tutorial Letter.
• Do a spell and grammar check before you submit your Assignment.
• Write in the 3rd person.

As always, some advice - please write all your tests. The highest grade obtained for a test will replace the lowest test mark. Remember, not submitting an assignment is a missed opportunity.

Best of luck with your future assessments. I believe that you all can pass if you study hard enough.

Regards

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