



Ontario Professional Planners Institute Workplace Continuing Education Program

Plain Language for Planners

Overview

Planners spend most of their working lives writing reports of all kinds. Yet they often have little training for the particular kind of writing they do. Universities teach graduates how to write academic papers, not planning reports. Generic writing workshops are geared to the needs of industry and business, not to the world of municipal decision-making.

This one-day workshop is designed to help planners improve their writing and organization skills. Plain language writing makes reports more readable and helps make planning documents more useful in decision-making.

This workshop covers:

- organizing information in letters, memos, and reports
- separating background data from arguments
- report formats and presentation: making the format do half the work
- identifying the audience and what they want or need to know
- keeping sentences short
- cutting through jargon and buzzwords
- the art of self-editing and proof-reading: what the spellchecker doesn't find

Participants must provide a minimum of 20 pages of writing two weeks in advance of the workshop, in any form available: letters, memos, reports, etc. This material will be used in class and can be returned to participants. Confidential data can be blacked out. Authors of the material used in class will not be identified.

The ideal number of course participants is twelve.

Costs

On a per participant cost basis, the course is a very cost-effective means of providing continuing education for employees. There is an OPPI fee of \$30 per person per day. This amount includes one-time-only use of the course content and a master copy of the course material. The fee to the course instructor is approximately \$1,000 per day, plus the instructor's travel and accommodation expenses, and the instructor's miscellaneous expenses \$100.

Sample cost: (based on 12 registrants and not including transportation or accommodation for the instructor): \$120 plus GST, per registrant, per day.

Responsibilities

Workplace Responsibilities:

- Contact OPPI to arrange for one-time use of the course.
- After booking the instructor, notify OPPI of course date(s). Provide contact name and mailing address for course material.
- Supply OPPI with a list of participants, including full names, at least one week prior to the delivery of the course.
- Contact instructor to arrange customized delivery of the course, book dates and arrange payment directly to the instructor.
- Arrange all logistical details including classroom space, refreshments, photocopying, registration and production of course materials.
- Use the OPPI name and logo with the course materials.

Instructor Responsibilities:

- Work directly with the workplace in the design and delivery of the course.
- After booking with workplace, notify OPPI of course date(s).
- Keep OPPI apprised of any issues that may affect the image or credibility of the course.
- Contract directly with the workplace regarding fees and expenses.
- Provide OPPI and workplace with a summary of the course evaluations.

OPPI responsibilities:

- Contract with the workplace to permit use of the course.
- Send letter/e-mail confirming course date(s) and workplace responsibilities.
- Provide a master copy of course materials to the workplace.
Invoice the workplace for the OPPI fee.