

Student A

**Meeting 1**

You are the company CEO. Your company provides all its top management and sales staff with luxury cars. In order to cut costs, there is a proposal to replace these with smaller electric cars. You can see the argument for replacing the sales teams' cars, but you don't think this is a good idea for the morale of the management team. Meet the Sales Manager and the CFO to discuss your ideas and reach a decision. You chair the meeting.

**Meeting 2**

You are the Human Resources Manager. Your company is thinking about relocating to new, larger offices outside the city centre. You don't think this is a good idea because you live near the city offices, like many of your colleagues, and the transport links to the proposed location are very bad. Meet the Production Manager and the CEO to discuss your ideas and reach a decision.

**Meeting 3**

You are going to share a new office with your two colleagues. There is only one desk by the window and you think you should have it. Talk to your colleagues and try to reach a decision.

Writing: layout and structure of reports

G

Complete the report-writing tips below with the words in the box.

draft errors headings layout plan readers register rewrite

Report-writing tips

Read a similar report first. Write a¹ or outline, and then your first². Always write with your³ in mind.

Edit your draft report for style and⁴, e.g. formal language, passive or active forms.

Proofread your report for typical⁵, e.g. subject-verb agreement, prepositions and punctuation.

Organise the⁶ and structure. Use an appropriate title,⁷ and sub-headings.

Revise and⁸ your report in order to improve it if necessary.

Take a break for a few hours and re-read your report before finalising it.

H

Discuss these questions. Then check your answers on pages 146–147.

- What is the logical order of these headings in a report? In what order would you write these parts of a report? Why?
 - Recommendations
 - Conclusions
 - Executive summary
 - Introduction
 - Findings
- What is the difference between an introduction and an executive summary?
- What other sections might be found in a report?

I

Work in pairs. Look at the plan and recommendation report on pages 152–153. Re-organise the report so that the information is in a logical order.

Reports

Tips

A report should be well organised, with information in a logical order. There is no set layout for a report. It will depend on a) the type of report, and b) the company style. The format used here is suitable for most formal reports:

- title
- executive summary
- introduction
- findings
- conclusion
- recommendation(s)

The executive summary

is a summary of the main points and conclusion of the report. It gives the reader an overview of the situation.

The **introduction** shows the points that will be looked at.

Lists and bullet points make a longer report easier to read.

The **findings** are the facts discovered.

Headings and sub-headings help to make layout and organisation clear.

Formal language such as the passive form is generally used in reports.

Use short paragraphs in reports, ideally with one idea per paragraph.

E-MAIL POLICY REPORT

Executive summary

E-mail is essential to our business. It is a highly cost- and time-effective method of communicating with clients, customers and colleagues. However, incorrect use of e-mail can reduce staff productivity and cause problems for our e-mail and other office systems.

Currently, the company has no written rules governing e-mail usage. I have been asked by the Human Resources Manager to investigate the need for a company e-mail policy. My research shows that there is a need for a formal policy, which I have outlined in this report.

Introduction

This report will look at:

- the issues associated with current usage of the e-mail system;
- the reasons why an e-mail policy is needed;
- the recommended content of our e-mail policy.

Findings

1 Incorrect e-mail usage

In interviews and meetings with managers and staff throughout the company, a number of issues have been raised:

- a) Firstly, staff in many departments complain about the amount of time they spend reading unnecessary e-mails that have been copied to everyone.
- b) Several people mentioned that chain messages are regularly circulated around the company.
- c) Some employees spend time on personal e-mails, non-work-related websites and social networking sites during working hours. Managers find it difficult to tackle this issue with their staff, as there is no e-mail policy to refer to at present.

2 Security issues

- a) Access to the e-mail system is password protected. However, some staff have their passwords written on yellow Post-it Notes which are left on the computer screen, which defeats the purpose of having a password.
- b) The IT team would like to make it a requirement for everyone to have a password change every 30 to 60 days.
- c) Furthermore, the IT team believes that staff need to be shown how to create secure passwords for themselves.
- d) In some cases, unauthorised software has been downloaded onto our computer system.
- e) The IT staff expressed concern about the risk of software viruses from unauthorised software and e-mail attachments that could corrupt our e-mail system and, indeed, other office systems.
- f) The computer system is often slowed down by the circulation of large attachments.
- g) Staff do not clear out their in-boxes regularly.

3 Legal considerations

- a) Most employees who are using the company's e-mail system inappropriately are not doing it intentionally. They generally do not understand that e-mails are not private documents, and that inappropriate use of the system can open both the company and the individual to embarrassment and loss of reputation.
- b) Moreover, e-mail has the same standing in law as any other document. Therefore sending discriminatory, harassing, offensive or other illegal or improper e-mails can potentially leave the company and/or the individual employee open to

The **conclusion** is what you think about the facts and how you interpret them.

Recommendations are practical suggestions to deal with the situation and ideas for making sure future activities are carried out more successfully.

Modal auxiliaries are used for emphasis in the recommendations of a report, e.g. *should/must*, etc.

Additional information not essential to the main report can be included at the end in the **appendices**.

Conclusion

It was generally felt that staff productivity is being reduced as a result of bad usage or misuse of the e-mail system. Furthermore, there are some important security and legal issues to be resolved.

These findings would indicate that an e-mail policy is a vital legal document that this company needs. It would set out our company's definition of acceptable use of the e-mail system for our employees, and help to solve many of the issues highlighted in the findings.

Recommendations

Therefore, I would like to make the following recommendations:

- 1 Employees should be made aware that while the company accepts their right to privacy, the company does have the legal right to open and read their e-mails if an employee is thought to be misusing the system.
- 2 The e-mail policy should be short, clear, concise and easy to understand. It is best to keep it to one side of A4, otherwise it will probably not be read.
- 3 The company should distribute this e-mail policy to all employees, and ask them to confirm that they have received, read, understood and agree to abide by the rules.
- 4 The policy should include these points:
 - a) **Personal e-mails**
It should be clear that the company e-mail is primarily for business purposes. While some personal e-mail may be acceptable, overuse or misuse is not. For instance, sending offensive jokes or chain letters must be prohibited.
 - b) **Sending e-mails**
We should restrict the general distribution of circulated material when only certain groups of people need to receive it.
 - c) **Passwords**
All employees should receive information on how to choose a secure password and should renew their passwords every 60 days. The IT team can set this up automatically.
 - d) **Attachments**
Large files should be transferred, wherever possible, at times of minimum usage out of office hours. Alternatively, the company should provide facilities for sharing data in larger files via an intranet, shared folders or file-compression programs.
 - e) **Housekeeping**
Staff should regularly delete unwanted messages and archive those that need to be kept. The IT department will automatically advise staff members when their account is getting too full.
- 5 Since the e-mail policy is a legally binding document, it is important that it is drafted or checked by a lawyer.
- 6 Employees should also receive guidelines outlining the preferred format and style for writing e-mails. For instance, how to write in a clear, concise, professional tone. For a suggested list of 'dos and don'ts' of e-mail etiquette, see Appendix A.
- 7 The e-mail policy should be closely monitored and reviewed at regular intervals. This should be done by the Human Resources Department in collaboration with the IT team.

Longer and more technical reports may include some of the following sections, although no report would probably use all of these:

Beginning	Middle	End
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Title page • Foreword • Preface • Acknowledgements • Contents page • Summary or Abstract 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main body including methods/procedures and detailed findings, organised into sub-sections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conclusions • Recommendations • Appendices • References • Bibliography • Glossary

3 Energy, Business skills, Exercise I, page 27

Plan

Working title: relocation and transport concerns

Introduction

- The background to the report
- Who requested the report and why
- What the report aims to do

Findings

- What data was collected and how (transport and staff survey)
- Interpretation of the research results
- Refer readers to details in the appendices

Conclusions

- Review the main issue(s) in the findings
- Highlight the need for action

Recommendations

- Link to the conclusion and findings
- Recommend favoured options
- Mention cost/benefit to company and staff

A

How staff plan to travel

The data for this research was gathered by way of a written survey. Follow-up interviews were conducted with staff who did not know how they will travel to the new location.

A total of 310 staff will be based at the new premises. The following chart is a summary of the findings. More details are provided in Appendix 1.

Travel to existing premises

Walk or cycle	Bus	Train	Car, motorbike or car share	Total
70	101	64	75	310

Travel to Sunnydale Business Park

Walk or cycle	Train and cycle	Car, motorbike or car share	Don't know	Total
20	20	172	98	310

B

The main aims of the report are to find out how many staff will be adversely affected by the relocation, investigate transport links to the new premises and make recommendations in order to help staff get to and from Sunnydale Business Park.

The research indicates that more staff will be using private vehicles to get to work at the new location: 172 as opposed to the current figure of 75. The main reason for this is that the public transport options are very limited. There is no bus service, and the nearest train stations, Havington and Pachett, are six and four kilometres away respectively. Furthermore, the train services are not very frequent.

The findings also show that almost a third of staff (98) at all levels in the company do not know yet how they will travel to the new location. The main reasons for this were that they did not have use of a private vehicle (26) or did not know how they would travel between the train station and the business park (72). For more details, see Appendix 2.

D

Given the high cost of office space in the city centre, the company will be relocated to the new Sunnydale Business Park on the outskirts of the city in January next year. This move will provide more spacious facilities.

Despite these benefits, a major issue is the lack of public transport links to the business park. Therefore, I was requested by senior management to investigate this issue.

E

Car-sharing scheme

Due to the fact that many staff will now be using their cars to get to work, I would also recommend that the company provides staff with some incentives to set up a car-sharing scheme. This would be a very cost-effective, flexible option for many staff.

Both these solutions should be closely monitored and reviewed after three months in order to evaluate their effectiveness.

In light of these findings, these are my recommendations:

Taxi or shuttle bus service at Havington station

Given the distance from the train stations to the business park, the company could provide a morning and evening shuttle bus or taxi service to and from Havington train station.

The timetable would be integrated with the train times from the station. A similar service at Pachett station would be less useful, as the train service is less frequent.

G

Transport options to the new location

This data is based on my experience of travelling from the city in my car, and on online research and telephone interviews with the local council and train and bus companies.

Car and private transport

The Sunnydale Business Park is approximately 30 kilometres from the city centre. The location has easy access by motorway to the city centre, although there is heavy traffic at rush hours.

Train services

The nearest train stations are in Havington and Pachett. Havington is six kilometres away. Mainline trains run every 30 minutes to this station at peak hours and every hour off-peak and at weekends. Pachett is only four kilometres away, but the service is less frequent, with trains stopping once an hour.

Bus services

There are currently no bus services from the city centre to the new premises.

H

The fact that almost a third of staff (98) do not know how they will travel to the new location is a major concern for them and the company. It can be concluded that the company will need to