

## Writing sub-test: Assessment criteria and level descriptors

Band	Purpose	Band	Content	Conciseness & Clarity	Genre & Style	Organisation & Layout	Language
3	Purpose of document is immediately apparent and sufficiently expanded as required	7	Content is appropriate to intended reader and addresses what is needed to continue care (key information is included; no important details missing); content from case notes is accurately represented	Length of document is appropriate to case and reader (no irrelevant information included); information is summarised effectively and presented clearly	Writing is clinical/factual and appropriate to genre and reader (discipline and knowledge); technical language, abbreviations and polite language are used appropriately for document and recipient	Organisation and paragraphing are appropriate, logical and clear; key information is highlighted and sub-sections are well organised; document is well laid out	Language features (spelling/punctuation/vocabulary/grammar/sentence structure) are accurate and do not interfere with meaning
		6	Performance shares features of bands 5 and 7				
2	Purpose of document is apparent but not sufficiently highlighted or expanded	5	Content is appropriate to intended reader and mostly addresses what is needed to continue care; content from case notes is generally accurately represented	Length of document is mostly appropriate to case and reader, information is mostly summarized effectively and presented clearly	Writing is clinical/factual and appropriate to genre and reader with occasional, minor inappropriacies; technical language, abbreviations and polite language are used appropriately with minor inconsistencies	Organisation and paragraphing are generally appropriate, logical and clear; occasional lapses of organisation in sub-sections and/or highlighting of key information; layout is generally good	Minor slips in language generally do not interfere with meaning
		4	Performance shares features of bands 3 and 5				
1	Purpose of document is not immediately apparent and may show very limited expansion	3	Content is mostly appropriate to intended reader; some key information (about case or to continue care) may be missing; there may be some inaccuracies in content	Inclusion of some irrelevant information distracts from overall clarity of document; attempt to summarise only partially successful	Writing is at times inappropriate to the document or target reader; over-reliance on technical language and abbreviations may distract reader	Organisation and paragraphing are not always logical, creating strain for the reader; key information may not be highlighted; layout is mostly appropriate with some lapses	Inaccuracies in language, in particular in complex structures, cause minor strain for the reader but do not interfere with meaning
		2	Performance shares features of bands 1 and 3				
0	Purpose of document is partially obscured/unclear and/or misunderstood	1	Content does not provide intended reader sufficient information about the case and what is needed to continue care; key information is missing or inaccurate	Clarity of document is obscured by the inclusion of many unnecessary details; attempt to summarise not successful	The writing shows inadequate understanding of the genre and target reader; mis- or over-use of technical language and abbreviations cause strain for the reader	Organisation not logical, putting strain on the reader; or heavy reliance on case note structure; key information is not well highlighted and the layout may not be appropriate	Inaccuracies in language cause considerable strain for the reader and may interfere with meaning
		0	Performance below Band 1				

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Criterion	Description
<b>Purpose</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Helps the reader get a quick and precise sense of what is asked of them</li> </ul>	<p>Due to time constraints, health professionals want to understand the purpose behind a written handover document (e.g. referral letter) very quickly and efficiently. This criterion therefore examines how clearly the writing communicates the purpose of the document to the reader.</p> <p>The purpose for writing should be introduced early in the document and then clearly expanded on later (often near the end of the document). The purpose should be easily and immediately identifiable to the reader, so there is no need to search for it.</p>
<b>Content</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Considers necessary information (audience awareness: what does the reader need to know?)</li> <li>Considers accuracy of information</li> </ul>	<p>The content criterion examines a number of aspects of the content:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All key information is included</li> <li>Information is accurately represented</li> <li>Audience awareness is key here. The writing needs to be appropriate to the reader (and their knowledge of the case) and what they need to know to continue care.</li> </ul>
<b>Conciseness &amp; Clarity</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Considers irrelevant information (audience awareness: what doesn't the reader need to know?)</li> <li>Considers how effectively the case is summarised (audience awareness: no time is wasted)</li> </ul>	<p>Health professionals value concise and clear communication. This criterion, therefore also considers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>whether unnecessary information from the notes is included and how distracting this may be to the reader, i.e. Does this affect clarity? Is there any information that could be left out?</li> <li>how well the information (the case) is summarised and how clearly this summary is presented to the reader.</li> </ul>
<b>Genre &amp; Style</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Considers the appropriateness of features such as register and tone to the document's purpose and audience</li> </ul>	<p>Referral letters and similar written handover documents need to show awareness of genre by being written in a clinical/factual manner (e.g. not including personal feelings and judgements) and awareness of the target reader through using professional register and tone.</p> <p>The use of abbreviations should not be overdone thereby assuming common prior knowledge. If written to a medical colleague in a similar discipline, then judicious use of abbreviations and technical terms would be entirely appropriate, but if the medical colleague was in a totally different discipline, or a letter was from a specialist to a GP, more explanation and less shorthand would be desirable. If the target readership includes the patient, the information must be worded appropriately, e.g. minimising medical jargon.</p>
<b>Organisation &amp; Layout</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Considers organisational features of the document</li> </ul>	<p>Health professionals value documents that are clearly structured so it is easy for them to efficiently retrieve relevant information. This criterion examines how well the document is organised and laid out.</p> <p>It examines whether the paragraphing is appropriate, whether sub-sections within the document are logically organised and whether key information is clearly highlighted to the reader so that it is not easily missed. The criterion also considers whether the layout of the document is appropriate.</p>
<b>Language</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Considers aspects of language proficiency such as vocabulary, grammar, spelling, punctuation</li> </ul>	<p>Health professionals are concerned with linguistic features only to the extent that they facilitate or obstruct retrieval of information. This criterion examines whether the language is accurate, used appropriately and whether it interferes with reading comprehension or speed.</p>