



**COR160**  
**Essential Academic Writing Skills**

**Tutor-Marked Assignment 01**  
**July 2016 Semester**

## TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT 01

This tutor-marked assignment is worth 45% of the final mark for COR160 Essential Academic Writing Skills.

**The cut-off date for this assignment is [2355hrs on 26 August 2016](#).**

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Submit your solution document in the form of a *single* MS Word file on or before the cut-off date shown above.

### Additional instructions:

1. You will need to indicate clearly on the front page your name, student ID, course title and assignment number. Note also the following:
  - ✓ Spacing (between the lines): 1.5 or double spacing
  - ✓ Font style: Arial or Times New Roman preferred
  - ✓ Font size: 12 preferred (min 11 and max 13)
2. Summarise using your own words as much as possible. You must document all information that you use from another source, or you will be penalized severely. You must acknowledge these by using the APA documentation style. This includes both **in-text citations** and **end-of-text referencing**.
3. If you copy from the work of another student, regardless of the course or programme, **you will be severely penalized**. You are **not permitted** to re-use material from past assignments whether in part or in full. All of the above actions can result in your **failing the TMA**.

\*Remember that **accurate** and **proper** documentation of information from secondary sources is essential because UniSIM takes a very serious view on **plagiarism**. All information from secondary sources will be detected by the Turnitin software that your assignment will be put through in Blackboard and anything that is not acknowledged and properly documented will be taken as an instance of plagiarism and your assignment may be failed.

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### Scope

You will find Chapters 3 (Critical Reading), 7 (Summary, Paraphrase, Quotation), 8a (Synthesizing), 8b (Synthesizing Sources) and 9 (Locating, Mining and Citing Sources) in your COR160 textbook useful. Refer also to the relevant on-line study units.

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**Learning outcomes**

- Cite sources in writing using the proper citation and referencing style.
- Evaluate information critically from various sources to respond to a task.
- Synthesise information from various sources in writing in response to a given task.
- Develop a rhetorical structure of an essay.

**Question 1**

On 25/02/2015, then Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Finance and Chairman of the SkillsFuture Council, Mr Tharman Shanmugaratnam announced in the Budget Speech 2015 Singapore's plan to develop Singaporeans into lifelong learners. Below is an extract of parts of the speech:

**Lifelong Learning: Our Next Phase of Development**

We will build on these foundations to create a new environment for lifelong learning. It is critical to our future. It will develop the skills and mastery needed to take our economy to the next level. More fundamentally, it aims to empower each Singaporean to chart their own journey in life, and gain fulfilment at work and even in their senior years.

We have called this development effort 'SkillsFuture'. It marks a major new phase of investment in our people, throughout life:

- It starts in school, where all students will receive education and career guidance to help them discover the various pathways available, and make informed choices about their future.
- They will be able to engage in deeper and more structured internship programmes, particularly in our Institutes of Higher Learning, to excite them about possible career pathways.
- Once in the workforce, Singaporeans will be able to acquire deeper skills relevant to their jobs, as well as renew themselves by going back to education in the course of their careers.
- We will support these continuous engagements in learning. We will provide enhanced subsidies for courses, as well as special support through SkillsFuture Study Awards, and SkillsFuture Fellowships for those pursuing mastery in their fields.
- These specific initiatives will be underpinned by a lifelong SkillsFuture Credit which every Singaporean will receive. This will be topped up at regular intervals with credits that they can use to help pay for courses of their choice. Every Singaporean can use the SkillsFuture Credit to take charge of their own learning over the course of their lives.

- It will involve new modes of learning – such as short modular courses, weekend workshops, and learning online through Massive Online Open Courses (MOOCs). It will include executive and specialist development programmes, and on-the-job training both in individual firms and ‘industry campuses’.
- It will also involve new types of educators and trainers, including industry practitioners, besides our academics. Developing this new landscape of learning will take time and resources, but we must put full effort into this. MOE and WDA will enhance existing accreditation frameworks for this purpose for courses within the education and training industry.
- We must make it possible for every individual to decide on his or her own learning journey: when to go for fresh infusions of skills or knowledge, and whether it should be in specialised professional training, acquiring soft skills, or developing a new interest.

With the implementation of the full package of measures under SkillsFuture, we estimate that spending on continuing education and training will increase from about \$600m per year over the last five years, to an average of over \$1 billion per year from now to 2020.

I will also top up the National Productivity Fund by \$1.5 billion this year to partly meet this increase in expenditure.

### **SkillsFuture Credit**

We will create a SkillsFuture Credit for all Singaporeans. NTUC and several Members of Parliament previously have suggested a scheme of this nature.

Each Singaporean 25 years old and above will receive an initial credit of \$500 from 2016. We will make further top ups to their SkillsFuture Credit at regular intervals. These credits will not expire, but can only be used for education and training.

We have decided to spread out the top-ups over the course of a person's life for two reasons.

- First, there is no need for anyone to rush to use their credit. While some may use their initial \$500 immediately for a short programme, others may want to accumulate credits to engage in more substantial training later in their career.
- Second, we need time to develop quality offerings in our SkillsFuture landscape that are relevant to jobs and individuals, and that employers find relevant.

The SkillsFuture Credit can be used for a broad range of courses supported by government agencies. These will include courses offered by our Institutes of Higher Learning and accredited education and training providers, as well as a range of courses that are funded by the WDA.

To complement this, every Singaporean will be given an online Individual Learning Portfolio – a one-stop education, training, and career guidance resource to help them plan their learning starting from their time in secondary school.

**SkillsFuture Earn and Learn Programme**

To cater to fresh graduates from our Polytechnics and ITE, we will launch a SkillsFuture Earn and Learn Programme in 2015. It will give them a head start in their careers.

The graduates will be matched with suitable employers. They will start working and undergo structured on-the-job training and mentorship, while they study for an industry recognised qualification.

Both trainees and employers who sign up for this programme will receive substantial support from the Government. This will be done in a phased way, eventually covering up to one in three polytechnic and ITE graduates.

**Support for Mid-Career Singaporeans**

We will enhance subsidies for mid-career Singaporeans.

First, education and training subsidies for all Singaporeans aged 40 and above will be enhanced to a minimum of 90% of training costs for courses funded by MOE and WDA.

This additional support from the Government recognises the opportunity costs that mid-career Singaporeans face when they go for education and training.

These subsidies are significant:

- For a part-time undergraduate course such as a Bachelor of Engineering, which is already subsidised, the total fees payable by a student will be reduced by 60%, from about \$17,000 to \$6,800.
- Second, Singaporeans will now be able to enjoy multiple subsidies from MOE for modular courses and at all levels, and regardless of age. This flexibility of modular, continuous learning will help individuals, who will often have to balance family and career together with their learning.

We will implement these enhanced subsidies in the second half of this year.

**Targeted Support for Career Progression**

Beyond the SkillsFuture Credit and these broad-based subsidies, we will provide special support for Singaporeans seeking to develop deep skills in particular fields.

First, we will introduce SkillsFuture Study Awards. They will support individuals who wish to develop the specialist skills required for our future growth clusters. For example, they may include software developers, satellite engineers or master craftsmen. The awards can also support those who already have deep specialist skills and wish to develop other competencies such as business and cross-cultural skills. At this stage, we are not setting a cap on the number of study awards, but it should eventually be about 2,000 per year. We will introduce the SkillsFuture Study Awards in phases, starting this year.

Second, we will introduce SkillsFuture Fellowships, to develop Singaporeans to achieve mastery in their respective fields. We will award about 100 fellowships a year, which can be used for a range of education and training options, in both craft-based and knowledge-based areas. It will be funded from the SkillsFuture Jubilee Fund, which will be funded by

voluntary contributions from employers, unions, the public and the Government. Their involvement signifies everyone being a stakeholder in this. The SkillsFuture Fellowships will be introduced from 2016.

The SkillsFuture Study Awards and Fellowships will be mainly used to develop deep skills and mastery in the growth clusters of the future. But we will be open to those who want to develop themselves in fields that they are really passionate about. Take individuals like Edwin Neo, for example. He was trained in interior design, but developed a passion for making high quality European-style shoes. He went to train under a master shoemaker in Budapest and came back to found his own company. He is doing well, selling both ready-to-wear shoes and upmarket bespoke creations.

Finally, we will work with companies to grow Singaporean corporate leaders under the SkillsFuture Leadership Development Initiative. This initiative will provide support for companies who commit to developing a pipeline of Singaporeans to take on corporate leadership roles and responsibilities in the future.

### **A New Industry Collaboration**

A key challenge in SkillsFuture is to help uplift a significant base of our SMEs, and involve them in this process of skills development. This will not happen naturally – many of our SMEs lack their own training capacity and are unable to plan for the future.

To uplift the broad base of companies, and to help Singaporeans develop their careers across our economy, we need new forms of industry collaboration.

We will strengthen collaboration between training institutions, unions, Trade Associations and employers to chart out future skills needed, and plan systematically to develop these skills in our people. Training may take place in our educational institutions, in our lifelong learning institutes, at industry campuses, or on the job. We will work with all stakeholders to develop and implement these comprehensive Sectoral Manpower Plans (SMPs) in all key sectors by 2020.

We will also work with our industry partners to develop a shared pool of SkillsFuture Mentors. These will be people with specialised, industry-relevant skills, which SMEs can tap on. They will help SMEs overcome the constraints they face in training capabilities and capacity. We will start rolling out this scheme this year for industry mentors in sectors that are more ready, such as the Retail, Food, and Logistics sectors.

- Adapted from the SkillsFuture website <http://www.skillsfuture.sg/speeches.html/lbudget-speeche-2015.html>

There has been much discussion in the media with regard to SkillsFuture. Many issues in relation to SkillsFuture have been debated in the discussions. The two articles provided below reflect some of the discussions regarding this issue in Singapore.

In **about 750 words**, write a synthesis essay on the *SkillsFuture*. You will need to narrow this broad topic. You must formulate a thesis about this issue and provide evidence that will support your thesis. The thesis for this TMA01 is a viewpoint that does not have to be persuasive – that is, it is the conclusion you arrive at based on summarising and synthesising the information you researched on this topic. Relevant information for you to gather would be:

- Issues (economic, social, educational and etc.) surrounding SkillsFuture
- Evidence for SkillsFuture
- Evidence against SkillsFuture
- Improvements to existing measures

(100 marks)

### Guidance Notes

1. Use process writing to develop a rhetorical structure for your essay.
2. Strengthen your thesis with relevant **examples and illustrations**.
3. You may include any additional but *relevant* information to the ideas that have already been given in the scenario and articles.
4. You should use **at least 5 research sources** to help you write your essay. The given articles are considered as a separate research source each and can count towards the 5 research sources. Synthesise information from these various sources in your writing.
5. You are to use credible and reliable sources to help you write this essay. Evaluate information critically from various sources in your response. **Marks will be deducted for non-credible and unreliable content.**
6. Remember to use accurate grammar, correct sentence structures and a tone appropriate to academic writing. Cite sources in your writing using the proper citation and referencing style. **Marks will be deducted for poor English.**

**Article 1:****A good range of schemes to enhance lifelong learning**

Section: OPINION

By: CALVIN YANG

Publication: **The Straits Times** 21/03/2016

Page: A20

No. of words: 546

**The Singapore Perspective**

Be it career counselling advice for students hoping to chase their dreams or subsidies for mid-career Singaporeans looking to pick up new skills, a range of initiatives has been rolled out under **SkillsFuture**.

The number of schemes introduced is assuring for those who want to fulfil their aspirations. Here are just a few of them.

**EDUCATION AND CAREER GUIDANCE**

Education and career guidance will be available for students as well as adults. Individuals will, among other things, discover their passions and abilities. From primary schools to universities, institutions have adopted measures to help students make decisions on such matters.

**EARN AND LEARN PROGRAMME**

The Earn and Learn scheme, designed for fresh polytechnic and Institute of Technical Education (ITE) graduates to work and gain qualifications at the same time, is gaining traction.

Since last April, the scheme has been rolled out in phases – starting with sectors such as food manufacturing and logistics.

In the programme, participants get job training, work on projects or even go on overseas attachments for 12 to 18 months.

They may work for four days a week and devote a day to studies. At the end of the programme, an ITE graduate gets a diploma and a polytechnic graduate receives an advanced or specialist diploma.



**ENHANCED INTERNSHIPS**

Institutions such as the polytechnics and ITE have started sending students on longer and more structured internships. These have clear learning outcomes and better mentorship and are part of their full-time diploma courses, Nitec, or Higher Nitec courses.

Unlike in the past, internships now allow students to take on more meaningful activities such as projects with their attached firms. All polytechnic and ITE courses will have enhancements to their internships by 2020.

**SKILLSFUTURE CREDIT**

More than two million people can now use \$500 in credit each to pay for skills-based classes. Over 12,000 courses are available to Singaporeans aged 25 and above. The credits do not expire and will be topped up at various intervals, so they can be accumulated for more expensive courses.

**SKILLSFUTURE STUDY AWARDS**

Early to mid-career Singaporeans can tap on the awards for fee subsidies for courses to develop skills needed by future growth sectors. The awards, worth \$5,000 each, are bond-free and can be used on top of existing Government course subsidies. Up to 2,000 awards will be handed out yearly.

**Article 2:****Singapore Business Review****COMMENTARY**

HR &amp; EDUCATION | CONTRIBUTED CONTENT, SINGAPORE

PUBLISHED: 06 JAN 16

**Can SkillsFuture boost your mid-career employability?**

BY ADRIAN TAN

Many Singaporeans, including myself, had been waiting fervently for 2016. Because this is the year SkillsFuture credits would kick in.

In case you have been living under a rock since 2015 budget announcement, SkillsFuture is "a national movement to enable all Singaporeans to develop to their fullest potential throughout life." SkillsFuture will enable you to take advantage of a wide range of opportunities – to help you realise your aspirations and attain mastery of skills.

This is made possible via SkillsFuture credits which individuals could use to offset approved training courses. Study awards are also provided for "strategic growth areas" to further encourage adoption. And you have the Earn-And-Learn initiatives which the government polytechnics are playing catch up on announcing.

Excitement has been building since the announcement in February 2015. SkillsFuture appears to be the next big thing since the introduction of Productivity and Innovation Credit (PIC).

Similar to PIC, the amount of monies invested in it is in the billions. From 2016 to 2020, a total of SGD5 billion would be pumped into this initiative. That is a lot of money.

**SkillsFuture for mid-career professionals**

Many discussions have been centred on earn-and-learn programs for diploma and ITE undergrads. We are looking at functions from accountants to information systems developers to hoteliers.

That is all good. Our younger generation would need all the help they can get to navigate the unfamiliar job market. But what about the mid-career segments?

According to the labour force 2014 report by Ministry of Manpower, the number of unemployed residents from the 30 years and above is standing at 52,200. To provide some perspective, the next measured group of 15 to 29 is at 29,500.

I am unsure why they start from 15 in the first place. I would think a 20 to 29 would be a better means of comparison.

Anyway, here are the exact segments used by MOM:

- 15 - 29
- 30 - 39
- 40 - 49
- 50 & over

Specifically for the ones from 40-years-old and above (36,700 unemployed), there is a new Mid-Career Enhanced Subsidy. This is similar to the pre-existing WSQ program but the funding level is raised from 70% to 90%, subject to you being 40 years old and above.

The interesting bit is it appears you could even apply this over degree and post-graduate programs. Of course, these are not exclusive to unemployed. Employed residents could also tap on them.

Although I have my reservations how many gainfully employed mid-career PMEs with taxing job roles, financial obligations to fulfil, and (some) parenting duties could afford to find time to take a full-fledged degree and diploma program.

And it seems paradoxical to even consider that path since the whole purpose of SkillsFuture is for all of us to focus on skills and not qualifications.

### **The 5 billion dollar question: Can it boost your employability?**

I believe it can but it comes with caveats. Firstly, you CAN certainly boost your employability with the right degree.

Let's be honest here. For decades, we have been brainwashed to study hard and become graduates. The late Mr. Lee Kuan Yew even mooted the idea of assortative mating amongst graduates to produce more intelligent offspring.

A newly minted SkillsFuture initiative isn't going to reverse the mindset. Even some government bodies and statutory boards are still emphasising degree as the first line of requirements.

Until the day they walk the talk, it would take another generation to change the mindset of hiring managers and employers. So that means a graduate degree would still be highly appreciated, not to mention giving you a foot in the door.

Significantly, it is still the best way to future-proof yourself if you could look outside of Singapore as an employment market.

Right after GE2015, I was blasted repeated by 'NewZealandNow' Facebook ads. If you are not aware, 'NewZealandNow' is an initiative by the New Zealand government to attract foreign talents to work and live in New Zealand.

So I went into the site to do some research. Guess what. Just like our S Pass and EP requirements, a graduate degree is one of the key criteria.

By the time Singapore no longer holds any professional future for you (semiconductor industry anyone?), you still have a partial ticket to survive elsewhere on the globe.

Secondly, if you decide to have more control of your time you probably would be taking a course via an online course provider such as Udemy or Coursera.

These have been one of the key surprise inclusions for me. Knowing how WDA operates on WSQ, allowing courses on Udemy or Coursera seems to run against their philosophy on WSQ programs.

Now you do need to realise taking a course on MOOC, much as you have flexibility, is tough. I would say it's tougher than taking a traditional course.

When you are taking a MOOC from the comfort of your home, you have your TV right in front of you and smartphone one reach away.

The dropout rate of MOOC is up to 95%. I tried taking it thrice and failed to complete once.

Even for people with the discipline to complete them, do you think employers would prioritise your 20 completed Udemy courses over one single degree? I don't think so too.

That doesn't mean it's a lost cause. What you need to do AFTER taking those courses is to apply what you learned into a portfolio that you could share in the future.

For instance, I have the intention to take a Writing Comedy for Business course once I get my SkillsFuture Credits. Should this be an area I wish to go into, I would apply this newly acquired skill set by setting up a blog and start writing.

Over time the content would build up, you would get better and you have an impressive portfolio to accompany your job application. That is far more powerful than any basic degree.

### **Practice is the key**

I shared in one of my presentations on designing your future career that any school's objective is to consistently churn out students who are the same. Everyone will be taught the same way, with the same textbooks and graduate with the same certificate.

If you could afford the course with your \$500 credits, so could your next-door neighbour or annoying office colleague.

My prediction (and you read it here first) is we will see a major news article showcasing the number of disgruntled mid-career PMEs who are still unable to secure employment after taking 2 certs, 1 diploma, and a dozen of MOOCs. Because that is how many are viewing SkillsFuture -- the magic pill that will solve your employability issue.

If everyone wears a one-inch heel, it would still make us look similar next to each other even though we are one inch taller than before. When everyone has the magic pill, you can't conjure up much.

### **Attitude is Everything**

I tried tutoring a job seeker for free a few months back. It was during a panel discussion I participated in and he was one of the few that came to the microphone to raise a question.

He had been out of job for 2 years and wasn't pleased with the situation and the lack of results from employment centres. I sympathize with him and thought it would be great if I could help him gain his foot back. He could be my best walking signboard.

Unfortunately, it didn't turn out well. He was resistant to my suggestions and made very minimal effort in making the necessary changes to his resume.

I gave him an example to amend a sentence so he could use that as an example to apply over other sentences. In the end, he only adjusted the original sentence. And this happened many times.

Einstein said, "If you keep doing the same thing over and over again, and expect different results, that's insanity."

It made me realise why he remained unemployed. If you keep using a wooden stick to break a rock, the stick would break first before the rock.

You need to CHANGE your stick to a stick of dynamite. At that point, you only need minimal effort to light the match.

### **Conclusion**

SkillsFuture would only raise your employability only if you want it to. And that means post-training work and efforts to create a portfolio for yourself.

Ultimately employers hire you to solve a problem. Throwing them your stack of certificates won't be able to. Showing them how you have solved a similar problem before is much more appealing to any employer.

### **Adrian Tan**



Adrian has over 11 years of professional recruitment experience. He co-founded 2 recruitment agencies and led one to win two HR Vendors of the Year award. A recipient of HR Entrepreneur of the Year in 2013, he ventured into career training and co-authored the career guide book *Everything You*

*Wish To Ask a Headhunter.*

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