

Memo

To: Dr. Jonathan Arnett

From: Kendria Miller

Date: March 4, 2024

Re: Plain Language Assignment

Hello Dr. Arnett, in the memo I will be discussing the overall process of group's plain language revision for KSU's grades appeal policy.

To start, before making any revisions, we needed to identify who the audience was, what the intent is, and so on. Upon reading the policy, it appeared that the guide was trying to appeal to 3 different audiences:

- Undergraduate students
- Graduate students
- Faculty and staff

For the audience confusion, it made more sense to break up the content onto 3 separate pages to accommodate the different audiences.

After identifying the audiences, we tried to use simple diction that would be understandable to everyone. One example would be defining unfamiliar terms in sentences such as EEO officer and Provost and providing brief explanations on what they are.

In an effort to make the document easier to read, we;

- Increased the font size.
- Increased the leading.
- Added transitions between paragraphs.
- Added headings and subheadings.
- Organized the appeal process into a simple table.

Overall, the original document was a chore trying to read through as I kept getting lost between the sentences. The new changes make the topics and appeals process easier to understand and go back and reference if the reader needs to.

After user testing, there were still some issues with the document that weren't fixed. Step 4 still appeared wordy so I tried to rewrite the step again for clarity, "In preparing the written decision, the Chair must consult with the Equal Employment Officer (EEO), or the Chief Diversity Officer, if there is a serious allegation made by the student that had an impact on the grade that was awarded." Another issue was with the consistency of the text as the introduction had smaller font than the rest of the document.

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Some challenges I had during the revision assignment was mainly about how to keep the same meaning for the text while removing the wordy content. And, I was also having a hard time with the tone. The tone seems acceptable to be firm while giving instructions but for a process like grade appeals, how can one make it sound positive? During a grade appeal process, there is a disagreement of some sort, so matching a positive tone with a serious situation was difficult to achieve.

For the overall collaborative process with my teammates, my contributions were rewriting the grade appeals process from sections B through E. Surprisingly, there was more fluff than actual important content, so I was able to condense the information down. Towards the end, I just made some editing changes such as changing the font (or trying to make it look professional), spelling corrections, and so on.

Each teammate made helpful contributions as well. Emily created the document layout and made some editing changes, Makayla helped with the revision of the original content, and Karsyn helped set up the usability test and with the revision of the content, particularly from the introduction in the grade appeals and the additional disclaimer. Overall, they were really helpful and laying the foundation for the document as the project seemed bigger in scope than I was expecting it to be. Moreover, I would say everyone contributed the same amount of work so 100s would be acceptable. I do wish we had a bit more time to do more in-depth usability testing for the rework but receiving the little feedback we got was good enough.

Moreover, the project was a great deep dive into revising my first document and rewriting it for better understandability. My email is kmill218@students.kennesaw.edu and I would love to hear your feedback on our process and more.

Thank you,

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