

McMaster Chemical Engineering (McChem Inc.)

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To: Colleagues in Chemical Engineering 4N04
cc: Alicia Pascall, Yasser Ghobara
Date: 11 September 2012
From: Kevin Dunn
Subject: **Two issues: cover documents and group norms**

Covering Documents

As mentioned at the start of this course, we will require cover documents for all formal work submitted in this course. This document is itself an example of a cover letter whose format you are free to reuse.

For example, each assignment should be submitted with a cover letter, including assignment 1. In that assignment you should assume that myself, your manager, does not know much about personal finance and retirement planning. Summarize your assignment submission in the cover letter, making sure you do not fall into the common trap of listing all activities that were performed.

For more guidance, please see the materials in tab 1 of the course pack for 2012.

Group norms

The groups have now formed. The TAs and myself were pleased to see good group interaction in the first tutorial, and we hope this continues for the duration of the next 3 months.

To encourage clear communication between groups we will require each group to establish their group norms. Please use the following questions as guidance for your document, it is not a complete list:

- What are our goals for this course?
- How will we ensure we are prepared?
- How will we distribute work equitably?
- How will we proceed if a group member is absent with an excuse (at a tutorial, assignment, or group meeting); without an excuse; and what is a reasonable excuse?
- How will we handle feedback amongst our group: what will and will not be considered constructive criticism?
- The role of chairperson must be rotated equally throughout the term. How will your group achieve this? (Please read material in tab 2 on your own time.)
- How to deal with one or more people that have a low motivation to get work completed, or a person that is not contributing.
- How will we deal with a failed grade in a tutorial or assignment?
- Will we have a process for counteracting “groupthink”?
- How will we document our group decisions, without creating excessive paperwork?
- How will we ensure quality control on our work?
- How will we make sure our group time is enjoyable?

If you and your group are open and honest, and clearly communicate your concerns, then the better you should be able to handle the issues and anticipated pitfalls described above. Not everyone in your group will have the same expectations as yourself when it comes to challenging situations.

Please submit a 1 to 2 page document (no more), by Tuesday, 18 September before 11:30 that describes your group norms. There is no need to address every point separately, but you must cover them in your group discussions.

There is a secondary aim with this submission: for the TAs and myself would like to check whether submissions via Google Docs is a reasonable approach to use for the rest of 4N4, and for other courses. Once you are ready to submit your norms, please click "Share" in Google Docs, and share it with the following addresses:

- kgdunn@gmail.com
- pascall.alicia@gmail.com
- yghobara@gmail.com

Use the following name for your document: *Group ZN - Norms*, where Z is either **A** or **B**, and N is your group number. **Please make sure the sharing permission is "Can comment"**. Your group norms submission should be in the form of a cover document only.

The TAs and myself will provide general feedback to the class on the submissions in another letter in about 2 weeks time. We will only comment if something particular is required.

Sincerely,

Kevin Dunn