



## Advanced Decision Writing

April 25 – 26, 2019

### PRE-PROGRAM PREPARATION

Participants will be asked to submit electronically a decision they have written (8 to 15 pages in length, featuring more than one issue) by 12:00 pm on Monday, April 15, 2019. Facilitators will review the decision, using a template of the key learning objectives, in order to provide feedback to each participant, and to help participants prepare to revise the decision during the course.

In the workshops participants will mostly be working on revisions to the decision they submit. For that reason, they are strongly encouraged to bring their submitted decision on a laptop or tablet they can use to make revisions during the sessions. They are also asked to bring one copy of their decision printed out, for use during the first exercise.

### Day 1: Thursday, April 25, 2019

**8:30 a.m. Registration and Continental Breakfast**

**9:00 a.m. Introduction to Program**

**Pamela A. Chapman**, Program Director, Legal Educator & Consultant

**9:15 a.m. Refresher on Key Principles**

**Pamela A. Chapman**, Program Director, Legal Educator & Consultant

- Audience-focused writing
- Cognitive clarity
- Context and 'point first'
- Key context tools

**10:00 a.m. Workshop: Reverse Outline**

- Introduction of facilitators and participants in small groups
- Each small group will contain a maximum of 7 participants, and will work with 2 facilitators – one an educator, and the other a tribunal adjudicator/counsel, all with significant experience in teaching decision-writing
- Participants will do a reverse outline of the decision they submitted, and the group will discuss what this reveals about the structure and clarity of the decisions

**11:00 a.m.**

**Refreshment Break**

**11:15 a.m. Organizational & Analytical Clarity**

- Identifying the 'deep' issue
- Issue-driven structures
- Transitions & signposts
- Strategic organizational choices

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**12:00 p.m.**

**Lunch**

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**12:45 p.m. Workshop: Context & Point-First in an Issue-Driven Structure**

- In the first half hour, participants will create an issue-driven outline for their decision, using a template if they wish, and revise their introduction to reflect that structure
- For the rest of the session (one hour), participants will begin to revise their decision to conform with the best principles discussed during the day, including issue-driven structure, context & point-first, transitions & signposts
- While revision is underway, participants will take turns meeting with individual facilitators for 10 minutes each, to discuss their outline and planned revisions, and receive suggestions from facilitators based on their pre-program review of the decision submitted

**2:15 p.m. Continuity & Flow: Guiding the Audience Through the Decision**

**Virginia McRae**, Sessional Professor, University of Ottawa

- Writing powerful paragraphs
- Clear transitions
- Flow that drives the analysis
- Rhythm and structure to focus attention

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**3:00 p.m.**

**Refreshment Break**

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**3:15 p.m. Writing for the Court: Judges' Panel**

- The needs of legal audiences
- How much is required
- Common sufficiency errors
- Special challenges: complex legal issues, credibility findings, etc.

**4:15 p.m. Discussion of Program for Day 2**

**4:30 p.m. End of Day 1**

## **OUT-OF-PROGRAM PREPARATION – THURSDAY, APRIL 25, 2019**

Participants will be asked to consider the suggestions discussed with facilitators during the afternoon workshop and develop a plan for further revision of their decision. If desired, participants can do further revision on their own time.

### **Day 2: Friday, April 26, 2019**

**8:30 a.m. Registration and Continental Breakfast**

**9:00 a.m. The Writing and Editing Process**

**Caroline Mandell, HPARB; Mandell Coaching**

- Choosing a process that will work for you
- Organizational and analytical tools
- Revising in layers
- Best practices for editing

**9:45 a.m. Workshop: Revision of Drafts**

- Participants will continue to revise their decisions to conform with the best practices discussed, including continuity and flow
- While revision is underway, participants will take turns meeting with individual facilitators for 10 minutes each, to discuss their progress on the revision, and receive suggestions from facilitators

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**10:30 a.m. Refreshment Break**

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**10:45 a.m. Workshop: Review & Discussion of Drafts**

- In the second half of the morning workshop, facilitators will lead a group review and discussion of the decision drafts, focusing on the best practices discussed during the program
- Short passages and/or outlines will be projected so that the entire group will benefit from the discussion and suggestions made by facilitators

**11:30 a.m. Best Practices for Quality Decision-Writing: Tribunal Roundtable**

- Pre-hearing and hearing management practices to support effective decision-writing
- Preparing to write your decision before and during the hearing
- Templates and other tools for speed and consistency
- Review of decisions
- Privacy protective best practices

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**12:30 p.m. Lunch**

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**1:15 p.m. Sentences & Words that Work**

**Barbara Morris**, Program Coordinator & Professor, Humber College

- Writing effective sentences
- Avoiding passive voice and nominalizations
- Techniques of persuasion and animation
- Choosing an effective voice

**2:15 p.m. Workshop: Paragraph & Sentence Revision**

- Participants will select one page of their decision to revise at the paragraph, sentence and word level, working with a checklist of best practices
- In the second half of the session, participants will share examples of effective revision, and facilitators will moderate a discussion of how best to improve clarity at this level

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**3:15 p.m.**

**Refreshment Break**

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**3:30 p.m. Building Credibility Through Tone & Voice**

**Pamela A. Chapman**, Program Director, Legal Educator & Consultant

- Choices for the start
- Reflecting procedural fairness
- Revealing your role and thinking
- Concerns about tone

**4:15 p.m. “Puzzlers & Dazzlers”**

- The program will end with a reflective exercise in plenary and the review of some key take-aways, including checklists and self-evaluation tools

**4:30 p.m. End of Day 2**