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Overview

Course Description

General Appraiser Report Writing and Case Studies focuses on the communication of the appraisal report and meets the new AQB “report writing” content requirement for certified general appraisers. The format for the course consists of lecture, group discussion, individual writing assignments, and homework assignments.

Communicating the results of an appraisal is a critical skill. An appraisal report is an argument in support of an opinion of value that reflects the appraiser’s competence in applying the valuation process. A poorly written report diminishes the credibility of even the most competent research and analysis.

The course begins with a review of report writing requirements and the format of a traditional narrative appraisal report. Effective image-based communication formats such as charts, graphs, tables, and photographs are examined. Trends in narrative appraisal communication are analyzed in light of the traditional narrative format and in light of professional reporting standards.

Organizing, analyzing, and concluding are the steps that result in a coherent communication model. This course uses that model with an emphasis on enhancing participants’ understanding and appreciation of the interconnectedness of the parts of an appraisal report. Using the organization model along with a conceptual understanding of how the parts of an appraisal fit together yields a consistent and effective appraisal writing process.

Extended writing assignments focus on common appraisal writing challenges including clarifying complex concepts, describing comparable data, identifying and describing relevant property characteristics, explaining the derivation and application of quantitative adjustments to comparable sales, communicating data-dense analysis, communicating highest and best use, writing an effective and appropriate scope of work discussion, and writing a convincing reconciliation of an overall capitalization rate.

Several writing assignments are to be completed during class time; a few are completed as homework. Writing assignments are displayed anonymously on the projection screen for discussion by the class. To facilitate this learning activity, participants write the assignments on laptop computers. Familiarity with word processing and spreadsheet software is required for the course.

Learning Enhancements

The course has been designed with a variety of elements to enhance your learning experience.

- **Preview.** A Preview page begins each part. Included on the Preview page is a brief overview of the content, learning objectives to consider as you move through the content, and learning tips that will assist you in understanding the information you're about to learn.
- **Learning Objectives.** Each learning objective covers essential information you need to know to fully understand the concepts in the course. Look them over before the part begins so that you have a frame of reference as you move through the material. At the end of each part, reread the objectives. Are you able to do what is stated? Do you understand each objective? If not, this is the time to ask your instructor for help or review the concepts that you do not understand.
- **Examples.** Supplementing the discussions, we've included examples to help you visualize and practice what you are learning.
- **Discussion Questions.** Discussion questions provide you with additional ideas to consider as you absorb what you are learning.
- **In-Class Exercises.** A number of short exercises are scattered throughout the course handbook to reinforce essential concepts and skills.
- **Case Study Exercises.** These exercises are worked by participants individually or in groups after a brief introduction by the instructor.
- **Extended Writing Assignments.** To provide real-world writing practice, we've included eight writing assignments that will be critiqued anonymously in class. Each of these assignments uses different property types to give you experience with a variety of assignments. These writing assignments focus on common appraisal writing challenges.
- **Review.** Each part concludes with a review that includes the learning objectives, key terms, and concepts that have been covered. Also, we've provided recommended readings from textbooks that will reinforce what you have learned in class.
- **Review Quizzes.** Short review quizzes are included at the end of some parts. The true/false, short-answer, or multiple-choice questions test how well you know the information covered in that part.
- **Practice Tests.** Practice tests are included at the end of each section. The questions are similar to those you might find on the exam.
- **Suggested Solutions.** Solutions are provided in a separate Solutions Booklet, which is part of the course materials. This component contains solutions to the discussion questions, review quizzes, practice tests, and exercises. During study times, you will derive more benefit from the class if you are self-disciplined and work through the questions, quizzes, and exercises before reviewing the answers in the Solutions Booklet.

- **Digging Deeper.** Digging Deeper information goes beyond the scope of the course and is not intended to be covered in class. It is not tested on the course exam; however, appraisers preparing for the comprehensive exam should be familiar with it, as well as all other material contained in the course handbook, whether or not it is presented in class.

Classroom Guidelines

To make the learning environment a positive experience for everyone attending, please follow these guidelines when class is in session.

- 100% attendance is required. No exceptions.
- Limit use of laptops to classroom projects.
- Communicate with business associates during break time instead of class time.
- Put away reading materials such as newspapers and books that are not used in class.
- Please silence cell phones and other communication devices.
- Please do not record the lectures. Recordings are not permitted.
- Refrain from ongoing conversations with those seated near you and other distracting behavior.

General Information

- **Laptop computer, word processing software, flash drive, and spreadsheet program required.** All participants are expected to have a laptop with word processing software and Microsoft Excel 2007 loaded on it. This course includes writing exercises and an Excel spreadsheet. Participants may use other spreadsheet programs/versions of Excel, but those programs will not be demonstrated in class.
- The Excel spreadsheet, Part 14 Leasing Status Exercise Student Version must be downloaded during registration. Please be sure to bring this download to class.
- **Calculators.** A financial calculator is required. The accepted model used in the course is the HP-12C. Other calculators may be used if participants know how to operate them. No class time will be used to cover the operation of other calculators. For additional help, go to the “Using a Financial Calculator” section of the Appraisal Institute’s website: www.appraisalinstitute.org/education/education-resources/using-a-financial-calculator.
- **Important Note:** Laptops, cellular phones, tablets, iPads, wearable technology (smart watch, Apple Watch, Google Glass, etc.) and other devices that can store data or connect to the Internet are **NOT** permitted during the exam. In addition, all watches, wallets, bags, and purses must be removed and stored out of reach prior to taking the exam.

- **Breaks.** There will be two 10-minute breaks during the morning session and two 10-minute breaks during the afternoon session unless noted otherwise by the course sponsor. The lunch break is one hour.
- **Attendance sheets** will be distributed during class to verify your attendance during the morning and afternoon sessions.
- **Certificates of completion** may be downloaded after completion of the course, and attendance during the entire course is required.

USPAP References

All references to the Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice (USPAP) are taken from the 2020-2021 edition (Washington, D.C.: The Appraisal Foundation).

Recommended Texts

- *The Appraisal of Real Estate*, 15th ed. 2020
- *The Dictionary of Real Estate Appraisal*, 7th ed.
- *The Appraisal Writing Handbook*, Alan Blankenship, PhD, 1998
- *Style: The Basics of Clarity and Grace*, 12th ed. Joseph M. Williams and Joseph Bizup, 2017
- *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 17th ed. 2017