

Report writing checklist

1. Title page

Does this include the:
title?
author's name?
module/course details?

2. Acknowledgements

Have you acknowledged all sources of help?

3. Contents

Have you listed all the main sections in sequence?
Have you included a list of illustrations?

4. Abstract or summary

Does this state:
the main task?
the methods used?
the conclusions reached?
the recommendations made?

5. Introduction

Does this include:
your terms of reference?
the limits of the report?
an outline of the method?
a brief background to the subject matter?

6. Methodology

Does this include:
the form your enquiry took?
the way you collected your data?

7. Results and findings

Are your diagrams clear and simple?
Are they clearly labelled?
Do they relate closely to the text?

8. Discussion

Have you identified key issues?
Have you suggested explanations for your findings?
Have you outlined any problems encountered?
Have you presented a balanced view?

9. Conclusions and recommendations

Have you drawn together all of your main ideas?
Have you avoided including any new information?
Are your recommendations clear and concise?

10. References

Have you listed all references?
Have you included all the necessary information for locating each reference?
Are your references accurate and consistent?

11. Appendices

Have you only included supporting information?
Does the reader need to read these sections?

12. Writing style

Have you used clear and concise language?
Are your sentences short and jargon free?
Are your paragraphs tightly focused?
Have you used the active or the passive voice?

REPORT WRITING

What is a report?

A report is a more highly structured form of writing than say, an essay, and is designed so that it can be read quickly and accurately; though reports are not necessarily read from beginning to end. Structure and convention in written reports stress the process by which the information was gathered as much as the information itself. Reports should be organised for the convenience of the intended reader. Reports are written on a wide range of subjects for a wide variety of reasons.

Before writing any report you should identify the objective and the preferred conventions of structure and presentation. This is as true for reports you write at university as it is for reports written in employment. All reports attempt to communicate findings for one reason or another, whether to inform decision makers, change public opinion or maintain a record of development. Whenever you write a report you must bear in mind why you are writing and who you are writing for. All reports have an intended reader. Put yourself in his/her position. What does he/she need to know?

This study advice sheet highlights common features in written reports and makes recommendations for clear presentation and adherence to convention

Stages in report writing

The following stages are involved in writing a report:

- planning your work;
- collecting your information;
- organising and structuring your information;
- writing the first draft;
- checking and re-drafting.

Draw up an outline structure for your report and set the work within a sensible time scale for completion by the given deadline. One common structure is based on the 4 P's: position, problem, possibilities, proposal. This means you outline the current position, describe the problem, examine the range of possibilities and decide on a proposal (Hemingway, 1993). Some of the most time-consuming parts of the process are collecting and selecting your information, and checking and revising your report.

- Clarify your terms of reference – what brief are you working to?
- Decide on the main sections of your report – what instructions have you been given ?

Structuring your report

Check with your tutor to find out what your report should include and how it should be presented. The following elements are however common to many reports:

- title page,
- acknowledgements,
- contents,
- abstract or summary,
- introduction,
- methodology,
- results or findings,
- discussion ,
- conclusion and recommendations
- references,
- appendices.

All study advice sheets are also available to view and download on the following website:
<http://www.lboro.ac.uk/services/library/students/learningsupport/adviceandplanningsheets/>



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