



Writing a Business Report

Study Development Factsheet

The purpose of a business report may differ depending on your discipline, but it usually analyses an issue and provides evidence-based recommendations. Your business report should also be persuasive to influence policy makers. For instance, a new start-up may want you to examine its marketing reach, and report on how to improve it, or you may evaluate the implementation of a new HR policy, and provide further recommendations. Therefore, a business report holds significant practical value, as it may be required in various professional roles.

Writing a business report for assessments can differ from a traditional essay. Business reports are typically formatted with subheadings to guide the reader through various sections, and often include visuals like tables or graphs to present data. The discussion is based on your own findings and includes recommendations for future actions. The main goal is to present a well-structured, logical argument that demonstrates in-depth subject knowledge and offers evidence-based recommendations.

Read your assessment brief to determine your target audience as the report may not only be intended for your tutor but also for an 'imaginary' reader, such as a business or client. The audience can shape the perspective and approach of your report, so consider their expectations and plan this according to their requirements. For instance, if you must write a report based upon a company's CO₂ emissions, an environmental agency would have different expectations compared to the CEO.



Business Report structure

Please read your assignment brief to understand the required structure for your assessment. However, the basic structure of a business report comprises:

Title

This should specify your focus concisely, and inform the reader of the nature of your report. For example:

“Strategies towards achieving low carbon and high-value added from the economic sectors in North Yorkshire”

Huaccho Huatuco, L. D., Zevallos Porles, G., Candia Jorquera, J. R., & Christine Mathew, R. (2022)

Executive Summary

This section provides a summary of the entire report, and is best written after the main report is finished. Its purpose is to give the reader a brief overview of the content. Additionally, it helps the reader determine if the full report will be valuable to them. See our guide on how to write an Executive summary.

Table of contents

Include a contents page to list all the sections and subsections of your report. Ensure page numbers are provided for easy navigation, as it allows the reader to locate specific sections. Microsoft Word can automatically generate a contents page based on your headings. Visit our Digital Training Team’s guide on [Word essay skills \(for Dissertation or other long documents\)](#).

Introduction

This section provides the reader with the context and rationale behind the report. It outlines your aims, objectives, and the scope of the report. You may also include a summary of recommendations



or discuss any limitations and constraints. Depending on the requirements of your assessment, you might reference the commissioner of the report or explain its relevance to a particular organization.

Literature review

In this section, you demonstrate the knowledge that informs your business report; you should evaluate theoretical concepts and current research, but include only materials that are directly relevant to your topic and explain how they relate to your report's objectives. Visit our [Writing Literature Reviews](#) factsheet for detailed information.

Methodology

This section outlines how you collected the data for your report, and your methods will vary depending on the initial brief. You should include reference to your chosen research method, such as questionnaires, focus groups or interviews, and discuss how you selected your sample. To strengthen your findings, justify your chosen method by referring to relevant research methodology. A key objective of the methodology section is to ensure that readers can replicate your study clearly and accurately. To achieve this, write in the past tense and use objective, impersonal language. Using a passive voice can be effective for this purpose, or signposting terms like 'firstly', 'next', 'afterwards', and 'finally' to guide the reader through your methodology.

Additionally, consider addressing any ethical considerations that arose during the course of your research. You may include the details of the institutional approval here.

Results

This section is solely to present your results or findings; do not analyse your data as this will be covered in the 'discussion' section. Aim to present any data concisely, and choose the most accessible way to illustrate it to your reader. This could be through descriptive text, graphs or tables; ensure all figures have a title, and label any graphs. If any data is supportive, it can be situated in the appendix rather than the results section. Book in with our [Digital Training team](#) for guidance on



creating figures. If you have quantitative data (numerical), visit our [Maths Success webpage](#) for help with maths and statistics skills.

Discussion

This is where you refer directly to your results, and how they relate to your previous aims. This section may be the longest part of your report, and you are expected to critically analyse your findings. For help with critical writing, [visit our factsheets](#).

Some key areas are:

- Summarise your findings.
- Analyse how your results relate to your initial aims.
- Assess reasons for the results.
- Explain the impact of your results on the report brief.
- Compare how your results fit into your literature research.
- Assess the accuracy and reliability of your results.
- Acknowledge any limitations of your results or methodology.

Our factsheet on [Writing Skills: Paragraphs](#) can help you structure your arguments.

Recommendations and Conclusion

This is your final opportunity to summarise your findings. To ensure cohesion through your whole report, link your final thoughts to your initial aims outlined in your introduction. Do not bring up anything new you haven't already mentioned in your report.

Depending on the brief, you may be required to provide recommendations in this section, such as improving a business' practice, or solving a problem. These recommendations must not be based on your personal opinion, but rather informed by the evidence gathered in your research. Consider your audience to make sure your recommendations are feasible and relevant. You may also give suggestions for further research, and the benefits of this. You may also provide strategies which stemmed from your research to address the business problem.



Any sources you have referred to in your report are acknowledged here. Please check the required referencing style listed on your assessment documentation, and then visit our [referencing guide](#) for information. Also contact the [Academic Liaison Librarian](#) for your subject area.

Appendices

Material that may be too long for the main report, but provides additional information, goes here. Items may include tables, raw data, questionnaires or charts. Only include items you have referred to in your report, and only select materials that add value. Make sure to label them so you can refer to them in your main text, e.g. 'See Appendix A'. Lay out your appendices in the order you mention them in your report, so that your reader can navigate them easily.

Further reading

CIPD (2024) How to write a persuasive business report. Available from <https://www.cipd.org/uk/learning/support-for-students/currently-studying/business-report-writing/>.

Support: Study Development offers workshops, short courses, 1 to 1 and small group tutorials.

- Book a tutorial or join a workshop on the [Study Development tutorial and workshop webpage](#) or search 'YSJ study development tutorials.'
- Access our Study Success resources on the [Study Success webpage](#) or search 'YSJ study success.'