Business Report Format

* Make your cover page as spectacular as you like
* Remember your name and student number
* This is not the same as the assignment coversheet. That goes on top of this page.

# Executive Summary

An executive summary is not always required in a formal report for the School of Computing and Information Systems, but if it is required, it will follow the cover page.

Your executive summary will summarise the entire report, including the findings. Your marker – or your boss – should be able to read the executive summary and understand the entire report without having to read the entire report.

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# Introduction

This is where you give a brief introduction to the project and introduce the business.

You may also use this section to introduce the other sections in the report. Keep your introduction to a paragraph or two.

Your introduction is not the same as your executive summary.

# Voice

Always write in the third person. Talk about the writer or the author, but not I. For example, “The writer found that developing a useful template for business reports was more difficult than he expected.”

Your report should NOT include a section called ‘Voice’. This is providing you with information. Your report should have headings that are relevant to your report.

# Headings

You will use headings to identify the different parts of your assignment. It is clever to align the headings with the questions/marking criteria because that will make it easier for your marker to read your document and mark your document. It is a good idea to make it easy for your marker.

It also ensures that you are meeting the requirements for the assignment.

## Subheadings

Sometimes it will be useful to break your assignment into subheadings to improve readability.

### Sub Subheadings

Sometimes it is even necessary to go further than sub headings. Remember that it’s all about meeting the requirements of the assignment and making your paper readable.

## Numbered Headings

You may have noticed at this point that the headings are numbered. That is intentional. Numbering headings allows the reader and the writer to quickly cross-reference different parts of the report. See section 3.2.1 for more information.

You will notice that the Executive Summary is not numbered. Numbering should begin with your Introduction and end with your Conclusion. Your references heading and any appendices should not be numbered in this way, although your appendices will be numbered separately.

### Cross -Referencing

Sometimes you will feel that it is necessary to reference a part of your report that you have written previously or that will appear later on in the document. Modern word processors offer excellent tools for this sort of referencing, and as you edit the document, those internal references can be automatically updated.

In Word, this is called Cross-Reference and is available in the References ribbon.

It is often better to use a cross-reference than to re-write large portions of text.

# Styles

Styles are a powerful feature in modern word processors that allow you to identify various paragraphs in a piece of text and format them in the same way.

This document uses Styles for all of the headings. You will notice that each level of heading has a slightly different style. This is a very powerful and useful tool to have.

This document has been prepared using only slightly modified versions of the standard Office 2010 styles. You can use the Change Styles menu in the Home ribbon to change all the styles in your document to a different theme.

## Table of Contents

Using Styles enables you to use the Table of Contents tool. Your formal report should include a table of contents.

Your table of contents will appear after the Executive Summary, but before the Introduction.

You can access the Table of Contents tool within the References ribbon.

# Numbered Pages

Your pages should be numbered. This helps if you drop your printed report. It also helps reference different parts of your report.

Strictly speaking your cover page should not be numbered. Any pages before the Introduction should be numbered with Roman Numerals. Your introduction page should be page 1.

# Headers and Footers

Choose something appropriate. If you have numbered the bottom of your page, perhaps your name or the name of the report should go at the top of your document.

Your cover page should not have a header or footer.

# Referencing

Referencing is super important. It is what raises a student above the plagiarists. So, when you use an idea that is not your own, you must provide an appropriate reference.

In the School of Computing and Information Systems, we use the Harvard method of referencing. All of the specifics for Harvard referencing can be found here: <http://utas.libguides.com/content.php?pid=27520&sid=199808>

Remember that this is not an English unit. The writer is reliably informed that quoting venerated text is appropriate in English units; after all, each word has been carefully selected and crafted into sentences. Here in CIS it is much more important to show that you have read and understood the content by putting it into your own words. If the quotation is short and could not be more effectively put into your own words, then quote it, giving the reference and the page number. However if you can usefully put the idea into your own words, paraphrase the text, include a reference, but not a page number ([Springer 2013](#_ENREF_1)).

You will notice that there are Styles available for various types of quotation. Use them if it helps get the message across ([Springer 2013, p. 6](#_ENREF_1)).

These two references to Springer 2013 were created for this purpose and are not genuine references, but they are excellent demonstrations of how to use references. You will see that the full citation is presented in the References section.

## Endnote

Endnote is a program for managing your references. You use the program for putting the references into your document, and Endnote will automatically generate the references list at the end of the document.

And Endnote library is an excellent resource that will build throughout your time studying and will ensure that you never lose marks for referencing incorrectly.

The writer used Endnote for the referencing in this document.

The University provides Endnote to all students for free. You download it from this link: <http://uconnect.utas.edu.au/software.htm>

Information on how to use Endnote is available here: <http://utas.libguides.com/endnote>

The referencing style (Harvard 2002 utas) as required by the University can be downloaded, to be installed in Endnote from here: <http://lgdata.s3-website-us-east-1.amazonaws.com/docs/377/111134/Harvard%202002%20utas.ens>

## Some Useful Resources

* UTAS Library: <http://www.utas.edu.au/library/>
* Business Source Premier: <http://ezproxy.utas.edu.au/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?authtype=ip,uid&profile=ehost&defaultdb=buh>
* Proquest: <http://ezproxy.utas.edu.au/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/?accountid=14245>

# Spell Check

Think you have finished? Not until you have run a spell check. The spell check should be the second last thing that you should do before you submit your document.

# Proof-Read

This one is serious. Your markers know immediately if you have not proof-read your document. Proof reading your document will find spelling errors that the spell checker cannot see. It will also correct your grammar and any formatting errors. Proof reading your document could be worth five or 10 per cent to your overall mark.

# Conclusion

In your conclusion you should explain what your report found and finish the report.

This report example has provided you with a template that you can use for your reports. Make sure that you change the details to appropriately reflect the requirements of your assignment.

# References

Springer, M 2013, 'So, You Need a Reference', *Journal of Hard Knocks*, vol. 1, no. 15, p. 6.

# Appendix 1

This is where appendices would appear if they were required.