

Literature Review Template

By 'Author Name'

Affiliation (MSc Profile or Track) & Study no

General remarks

- You should not be focused on solving a problem, but rather on adding to the body of knowledge.
- Points are awarded for spelling/grammar and flow.
- As with all reports, link sections to one another, there should be no standalones.
- Make sure that you make clear why you have made the choices that you have, while these might be obvious to you, your understanding of the specific topic is likely to be a lot better than that of other readers of your report.
- Use sources to back up points that you are trying to make. For example, the choice for a particular approach is a lot stronger if you have references to back you up.

Abstract

Say very briefly, 1) what the review is about, 2) what the main content is, 3) what the main aim or objectives are, and 4) what the main findings are. End with a strong sentence that highlights the significance of the work presented in the review and any envisioned long-standing contribution to the body of knowledge.

1. Introduction

Introduce the general area of interest that the contents of the review deal with, setting out any advancements and challenges of interest. Then introduce more fully the specific topic addressed in the review and you can then go on to state any main aim or objectives to be met. Say very briefly, what is to come in the layout of the review. Note: the Introduction should include general references to back up the points made.

2. State-of-the-art/Literature Review

This section is an in depth review of a particular area(s) and/or methods that you will require to complete your project. This could, for example, be particular theories, (mathematical) tools or solutions from other related areas that could be used to solve the problem.

Discuss the different solutions/methods, are there disadvantages to using them? Why are they appropriate? What other areas can be used to augment the solutions in order to make them more suitable.

Note: This is the main part of a review and should be highly structured in a consistent manner, in presenting the various works of interest and showing understanding of how it all links together. Ensure you cluster the literature appropriately and that papers are consistently related to each other, avoiding stand alone papers.

In the project proposal the literature review highlights the gap in the knowledge that you have identified. While in this literature review you discuss (an aspect of) what you are going to use in order to fill the gap in the knowledge. What areas are to be combined in order to cover the gap in knowledge. Make sure that you use sources where possible to back up your points.

If your particular topic does not yield enough sources, are there other fields from which you can borrow approaches/tools/methods?

3. Analysis

The analysis is a consolidated theoretical position that uses the main points of the review section so that the link to the work is made more explicit. In other words describe how your work uses and adds to the literature reviewed in the previous section.

4. Discussions and Conclusions

A brief discussion can be presented that leads up to specific conclusions (if the discussion is large it might even become a separate section just before the Conclusions section).

The conclusions should be written in a precise, unique, clear and accurate manner. Always check that they are well supported by the work you presented in the review section. Check them against the main literature so that you can make a statement about the longer-term impact of your work on the body of knowledge.

Lift the most important conclusions into the Abstract and check that both (Conclusions and Abstract section) are consistent, also check this with the Introduction. This is done because the Abstract, Introduction and Conclusion form the key points of entry and exit into the work and make a big impact on accessibility and getting across the relevance!

5. References

List all references consistently, using one of the preferred approaches, for example the Harvard referencing system. A useful link on how to quote and reference properly can be found in the Guide to Harvard referencing from the Anglia Ruskin University Library in the UK: <http://libweb.anglia.ac.uk/referencing/harvard.htm> .

The key thing is that the referred to author is given credit through their earlier work, that this is dated to show the chronological order of developments, and that the reader has enough information to go and find that specific reference. Relative to the latter point: where was the conference or if a journal review what was the volume or edition number and certainly page numbers.

The strongest references are ones that have been reviewed prior to publication (journals for example) and the weakest are web sites and popular publications. Only reputable websites (from a society or major industry player) should be included and the date of access should be noted. Preferably stay away from web references as they are so uncontrolled as sources of information.

Note: web references, technical reports, standard textbooks etc. do not count towards the number of quality references used. The number of quality references should always greatly outnumber the number of general references. It looks unprofessional to refer to the textbooks and templates of this course.