

**Contextual (Initial) Report Guidance Notes**

The report needs to be between 4000-5000 words in length and should demonstrate the research conducted concerning your chosen area of study and present a coherent argument that shows current thinking and practices. You are required to upload this by the …………..

You may use your project proposal, literature review, research and data gathered over the course of the term as material for your report. Use the information below as a guide to suitable content and layout. Apart from a few report writing rules, write the content as it suits your study and your approach to present a coherent, individual piece of work. Do not simply go through answering the questions given to guide you as if filling in an exam paper! This is your work, your ideas; show us that you own it.

# Guidance on layout

The report should be written with font size 11, Times New Roman, with single spaced lines and should contain the following:

**Title Page**

* Title of project
* Student’s Name and ID
* Supervisor's Name
* Document title (e.g. Contextual or Initial Report)
* Course Title
* Degree Programme
* Date Due
* Word Count

On page 1 you should have an **Abstract** and on page 2 you should have **Acknowledgements**. On page 3 you should have a **Table of Contents** e.g.

1. Introduction
   1. Background Information
   2. Aims and Objectives
   3. Methodology Choice
   4. …
2. Literature Review/Discussion/Definitions

2.1MainDiscussion

2.2 Addressing the problem

2.x Sections

2.x.x Subsections

2.x Conclusion

1. Product Research

3.x…

1. Requirements Analysis
2. References/Bibliography
3. Appendix

# Guidance on content

**Abstract**

This is a brief summary of your contextualising research; it should be no more than 200 words.

## Acknowledgements

It is standard practice to acknowledge everyone who has helped you with this report formally or informally. This could be general or specialist advice or encouragement

## Introduction

Clearly explain the scope of your project with an elaboration into the general intent of your project. A strong introduction, like a strong piece of media will grab the attention of the reader. Place the study area within its broader context.

You should have chosen a specific area of study from a broader area of research; this is the time to explain how your specific area fits within the broader context.

* What is the topic/problem area?
* How have others previously looked into this topic/problem area?
* What is your approach and what are the main objectives of your project?
* What might be the wider purpose of your study?
* What assumptions did you set out with?

You should also be able to justify your research and development method you have opted for.

Your task is to communicate your knowledge in a way that is meaningful but make sure to pitch it an appropriate academic level.

## Main Discussion (use your own headings and sub-headings as appropriate.)

Break this up into logical coherent sections with suitable headings & subheadings. Start with your main arguments. In the introduction you will have introduced the problem your project is addressing. Now you will be researching the background to that problem. What are the main points of view?

As a general rule make sure you can back up all your statements with evidence and be able to justify any claims made. Do not make generalisations. Question points of view you have come across, ensure your sources are varied and valid. Although you are presenting your ideas and your response to the evidence you find you must present them as academic suppositions not personal beliefs. Do not use the first person. You must reference research material in the body of your report using the Harvard style of referencing.

Include summaries of arguments from literature research. Avoid the use of quotes, present what you have learnt from your research not the research itself. If you need a quote make it short and to the point. Present any alternative positions, counter arguments, secondary arguments. For example, different practitioners and theorists may have completely different ideas or ways of working, that are not mainstream, or if your position is not mainstream, this is where you might show your awareness of mainstream practices and theories.

Summarise the evidence for different approaches to your topic area and draw out some conclusions that provide context for your product analysis, primary research and product tests. Present analyses of products within your subject area. Explain and justify your approach to the analysis, why you chose the products you analysed, the criteria you used to analyse them. Then present the outcome and summarise what you have discovered in general terms to support your project. Present the outcome of any questionnaires or focus groups, again explain and justify your approach, how did you chose your respondents, group members, why did you choose the questions you used? Evaluate the outcomes, were they what you expected? Is this because you were looking for particular outcomes? If not what reasons might there be for this? Present the outcome of practical tests. Do not describe the tests in detail but discuss why you did them, why the techniques you used helped to clarify your arguments and ideas and what the outcomes were.

## Conclusion

Provide a brief summary of your problem and how you've addressed it in the main body of your report. Summarise the main arguments. Summarise your evaluation of the arguments and your research findings. Present the significance of your findings. Overall what have you discovered, what new knowledge do you have, were the outcomes expected or unexpected? What conclusions can you draw?

Present any questions that have arisen that you may want to go on to explore to find out more about your subject area. Present your product idea and how it is going to illustrate, prove, add to your area of study based on your report findings. Provide a concluding statement that sets the scene for the rest of the project.

## References/Bibliography

Use the Harvard system to reference your work

Reference authored articles and books first in alphabetical order of the author.

Reference web content using the full url and stating the time and date you last viewed the page For Digital Media Students: Reference products/artefacts, you might want to divide into types;

Films/Games/Music tracks, etc

With as much information as possible, for example:

Film - title, director, Production Company / distributor, release date

Music track – track name, album (if relevant), artist, record company, release date

## Appendix formative

Include your final version of the project proposal.

Include useful illustrations i.e. stills, graphs & tables you refer to in your report. Number them Figure 1, Figure 2 etc; and refer to each figure in the report. Include questionnaires and other primary research responses. Include test documentation.

# Grading Criteria

This report contributes to half of your final report. A grade will be determined to ascertain the work submitted. This is also an excellent chance to get feedback and if need be, then improvise your work for submission into your report. You will be given an indication as to the level of your work by your supervisor(s).

Work that demonstrates a solid knowledge of your chosen topic, a clear and articulate response to your research question(s), clearly and appropriately identifies and addresses problems, broad and appropriate research, reflection and analysis of texts, practitioners and products leading to a logical discussion of your intentions for project completion and reasoning behind them will gain a **first class mark**.

Work that demonstrates a good knowledge of your chosen topic, a clear and appropriate response to your research question(s), identifies and addresses problems, a good level of research, reflection and analysis of texts, practitioners and products leading to a clear discussion of your intentions for project completion and reasoning behind them will gain a **second class mark**.

Work that demonstrates some knowledge of your chosen topic gained over the course of study, some reflection and analysis of texts, practitioners and products leading to a discussion of your intentions for project completion and reasoning behind them, although this may lack some direction and clarity will gain a **third class mark**.

Work that shows a lack of learning and / or a lack of effort and / or a lack of ability to see through a self-managed project to completion, or that lacks any level of critical thinking or self-reflection will result in a **fail.**