



# Business Report Writing

- Be sure to focus on what the reader needs to know, making clear, feasible recommendations.
- Remember to support your ideas with facts and to explain short and long term results.
- In an objective report only use personal pronouns (I, we, you) in the covering note. You need to show that you have investigative skills, can interpret results and write with conviction.
- Although there are various styles of report writing, the following sections should be incorporated into a report.

## BASIC DEDUCTIVE REPORT STRUCTURE:

1. Covering Letter or Memo
2. Title Page
3. Executive Summary
4. Acknowledgements
5. Table of contents
6. Introduction
7. Conclusions  
(Recommendations)
8. Discussion
9. References
10. Appendices

### 1. TITLE PAGE:

This example illustrates appropriate layout.

**Salary Increments for Tutors  
At Victoria University  
(22.06.2001)**

By: S.J. Westpac  
To: Dr R. Richardson  
Paper: F Com 110  
Exploitation in Business

## 2. Executive Summary:

Here you set out the theme of your report and briefly summarise the content and conclusions. The reader should be able to rapidly grasp the key objectives and information. If the report is an action plan, the main recommendations should be outlined.

## 3. Acknowledgements:

In some reports it will be appropriate to acknowledge support given by people or organisations during the report preparation.

## 4. Table of Contents:

This should clearly show how the report is organised and indicate its scope and emphases.

### A Well-presented Table of Contents:

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## **5. Introduction:**

Your introduction should include the following:

- An identification of the subject and context.
- A description of relevant background material or problems or issues to be reported on.
- The report objectives.
- The overall solution to the query explored in the report.
- The scope or extent of investigation of the report.
- The limitations of the report and any assumptions.

## **6. Conclusions:**

Your conclusions must relate to the objectives set out in your Introduction. They should be listed as significant problem areas for the readers' consideration. When writing your conclusions be sure to:

- Number your points.
- Write the major conclusions first.
- Be brief and specific.
- Follow the facts in the Discussion logically.

## **7. Recommendations:**

These are only included in reports outlining a future course of action. They are your own personal views. They should include issues such as costs, location and acceptability with regard to standard policies or practises. Some of your recommendations should be able to be actioned straight away.

Recommendations should:

- Be numbered and arranged in order of importance.
- Be brief, feasible and action oriented.
- Be consistently connected to the Discussion and Conclusions.

## **8. Discussion:**

Here you present your research findings for the reader's consideration.

- Your discussion should be divided into numbered logical units with informative headings.
- Your Discussion should explain why certain issues have been identified as problems, show your preferred solutions and consider the short and long term benefits of your Recommendations.
- Your opinion about the data should not be expressed in this section of the report. It is advisable to link theories with practical issues to give weight to your analysis.

## 9. References:

Note that if references have been used but not cited, they need to be listed in a separate section headed Bibliography.

## 10. Appendices:

These should be attached to the end of the report.

They may contain letters, graphs, maps or material, which illustrates some complex or detailed aspect of the report.

Be sure to number your appendices, provide detailed explanations and ensure they are related to the aims of the report.

References: Emmerson, L. (Ed.), (1995). *Writing Guidelines for Business Students*. Palmerston North, N.Z: Dunmore Press.

Rountree, K. (1991). *Writing for Success: A practical guide for NZ. Students*. Auckland, NZ: Longman.