Recommendation Assignment

# Overview

In a technical writing course, the recommendation report is the final link in a chain of documents that began with the proposal and continued with a progress report. This recommendation report is a final report in which you propose multiple potential solutions/courses of action to your topic and make a recommendation informed by research and evidence.

In this assignment, you will work in teams of 2-3 students to write a recommendation report. Your report will aid a reader in solving a problem by presenting the results of research and your evaluation of the significance of the findings. The recommendations will suggest specific actions to solve the problem. Your research methods will probably include library (or secondary) research, but since the problem is particular to a time and place, you might also conduct research by “primary” means of information gathering. The report will highlight criteria for decision making in its structure.

Based on your topic, your report will likely answer one of the following questions:

• Will X work for a specific purpose? (feasibility study)

• Is X or Y better for a specific purpose? (comparative analysis)

• Why does X happen, and what can be done about it? (cause-effect analysis)

• What should we do about Problem X? (problem-solving model)

# Format and Length

Your report will include the following elements:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| • title page   * executive summary   • list of visuals (if you have more than two)  • glossary (if necessary)  • introduction  • discussion section organized according to criteria for decision making | • conclusions, recommendations  • appropriate documentation, according to the style used in your field  • appropriate supplements (e.g., copies of research instruments, such as survey forms)  • visuals (tables, graphs, drawings, photos); at least two visuals are required |

The *body of the report*, including introduction and conclusions, will probably run about 4-7 single-spaced pages in 12-point type. The preliminary and supplemental pages will be additional.

Number the pages, use a running header, and use headings in the report text.

# Evaluation Criteria

The recommendation report is worth 40 points. The reports will be evaluated according to these expectations:

The **executive summary** reflects the entire report concisely. Introduction, findings, conclusions, and recommendations are covered. Significant factual information is present. Sentences are efficient, and the summary does not exceed one page.

The **introduction** states a problem (with “who-what-when-where-why-so what” information), identifies a research question, explains methods, and forecasts the rest of the report.

The **body sections** reflect criteria for decision-making. Headings are parallel. Each body section is a mini report, with an introduction, findings, and conclusion. The introduction defines the issue and explains its significance. The findings report what you have discovered through research. The "conclusion" (just on that issue) tries to define the significance of the findings for the research question and to reconcile any conflicts.

The **conclusion section** for the entire report weighs the results from all the criteria and answers the research question. All the criteria should be accounted for. The conclusion does not introduce any new criteria. The section includes interpretive (not just factual) statements: words like “more important because...” or “a more immediate need” or “long-term benefits outweigh short-term costs.” You put the findings for each criteria in relation to one another. You justify and explain your answer to the research question. The conclusion answers the research question: An explicit statement will say something like “A is the better choice” or “X is not feasible at this time.”

The **recommendations** direct specific action (without explanation or justification). The recommendations may (but do not have to be) in list form. If there is a list, the verbs may be “command” verbs (imperative mood). Items in the list are in parallel form.

All the **report parts** are present (title, table of contents, executive summary, report, illustrations, references etc.). Illustrations support the argument (they highlight important information that would be harder to understand with words alone), and they are constructed and labeled according to conventions. Format reveals the structure. Headings show main divisions. A running head and page numbers help readers find their place. Preliminary pages are numbered with Roman numerals. Sentence style emphasizes strong verbs. Grammar and mechanics are correct. References are complete and accurate. The citation style is the one used by the writer’s discipline (e.g., APA for social sciences, business, and social work; MLA for English. Technical writing can use APA or Chicago-author/date).

**Finally:** The problem is significant, research is good, reasoning is sound. The report is convincing and important.