



TECHNICAL REPORT WRITING

TARGET PARTICIPANTS

Staff involved directly with the production of technical reports.

OUTLINE OF COURSE CONTENT - TECHNICAL REPORTS

INITIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Considerations of statistical significance in advance of the report.
- Reader profile considerations in advance of the report.
- Appropriate lengths.
- Avoiding pitfalls in statistical support, including replication and bias.

DEVELOPMENT OF FOCUS FOR THE TITLE.

- Questions or hypotheses.
- Expressing ideas in testable form.
- Formulating a title and subtitle.
- Action verbs to use for an effective title.

DEVELOPMENT OF STRUCTURE

- Brainstorming and categorizing.
- Establishing premises, sections and flow of the argument.
- Sequencing of premises based on Cartesian and De Bono models.
- Mindmapping.

DEVELOPMENT OF A POWERFUL INTRODUCTION.

- Background and context.
- The critical difference between purpose and need.
- Method.
- Specifying origins and analysis of information.
- Scope and limits.
- Definition of key terms.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARIES AND ABSTRACTS

- Best practices for executive summaries, including position, formats and structure.
- Listing and bullet technique.
- How to word an abstract.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Clarity in reference to premises.
- Basing conclusions on evidence.
- Best formats for the conclusion.

ESSENTIALS FOR A GOOD BODY

- Some effective models for construction of a body:
 - Cause and Effect
 - Problem, Cause, Solution
 - Negatives and Positives
 - Chronology
 - Advantages and Disadvantages
 - General and Specific
 - Priority
- Discussion of results.
- Where and how to embed the tables, graphs or matrices and other tools.
- Working out which data is essential and which data is peripheral.
- Best practices. Correct syntax, punctuation and styles to use.
- Ensuring authenticity with careful attention to precision, bias and accuracy.

APPENDICES

- Correct referencing techniques.
- Glossaries.
- Bibliography.
- Raw data.

THE REVIEWING PROCESS

- Editing - best practices.
- Proofreading.
- Choice of reviewers.

PUNCTUATION AND GRAMMAR

- Essential elements of punctuation - comma, semi-colon, colon, dash, apostrophe
- Concordance- how to make sentences balance and agree.
- Tense - ideal tenses for reports. What to avoid.

FINAL TOUCHES - MAKING IT GILT-EDGED

- Best fonts, sizes.
- Use of white space.
- Justification.
- Graphical representation in the body.
- Creative use of punctuation and sentence construction.