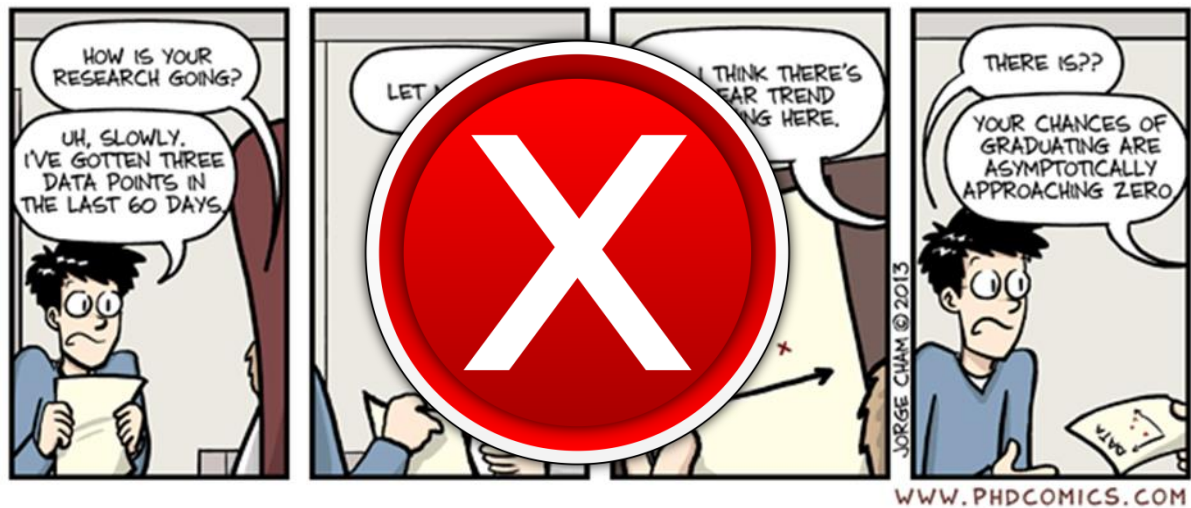




Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

Consultancy Project

Producing the Report: Key Considerations



Preparing your consultancy project report



Reminder – The Project's key stages

- Bid for work
- Ethical approval (Form E3)
- PID agreed (and signed)
- Feedback
- Plan research methods in detail
- **Undertake research**
- **Analyse findings**
- **Brainstorm with client**
- **Present findings and informed ideas**
- **Report**
- **Action!**
- **Feedback/analysis**
- **Does the project achieve the PID goals?**



Writing up the research: considerations & contents

Aim:

To introduce the student to the key considerations, conventions and requirements in the process of writing up research & preparing reports

Objectives are to:

- discuss the main considerations involved in writing up research
- identify the conventions to which writers should adhere
- outline the structure and format of the document
- consider the purpose and contents of the different sections
- identify the components of different types of documents



Material adapted from: Denscombe, M (2008) The Good Research Guide 3rd ed OUP Maidenhead

Writing up the research

‘Writing up’ is an integral part of the research process. It is not something which is tagged on at the end.

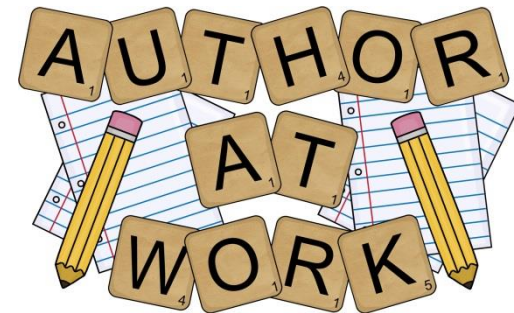
Nor is it a straightforward, simple task.

Far from it, writing up is skilful.

It involves a blend of interpretation, craft and convention aimed at producing a formal record of the research that can be evaluated by others.’

(Denscombe, 2007:136)

Material adapted from: Denscombe, M (2008) The Good Research Guide 3rd ed OUP Maidenhead

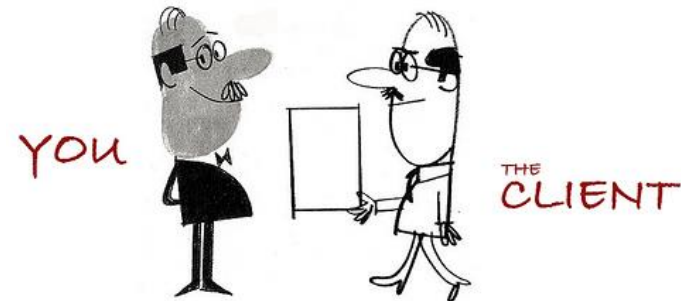


Material adapted from: Denscombe, M (2008) The Good Research Guide 3rd ed OUP Maidenhead

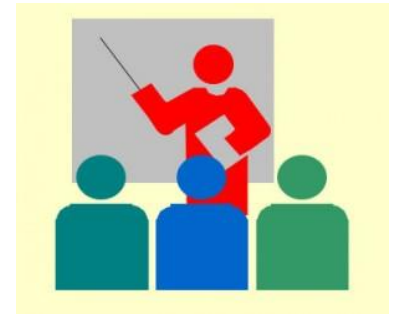
“Writing up in essence, calls on researchers to exercise skill and judgement”

Writers need to:

- Produce an **account** of the research
- Tailor the material to suit the needs of **their particular audience – your client/sponsor**
- Use an appropriate **writing style** and **adhere to certain conventions**



Considerations:



1. Who is your audience?

Different audience expect different things so the document and information must be tailored to their requirements e.g.:

Academic report e.g. undergrad project, post-grad dissertation, PhD will be assessed on 'detail, rigour, coherence and originality'

Workplace report - reader will be looking for some thing which is 'succinct, easy to digest and strong on practical outcomes'

Despite these differences the material and format may be similar

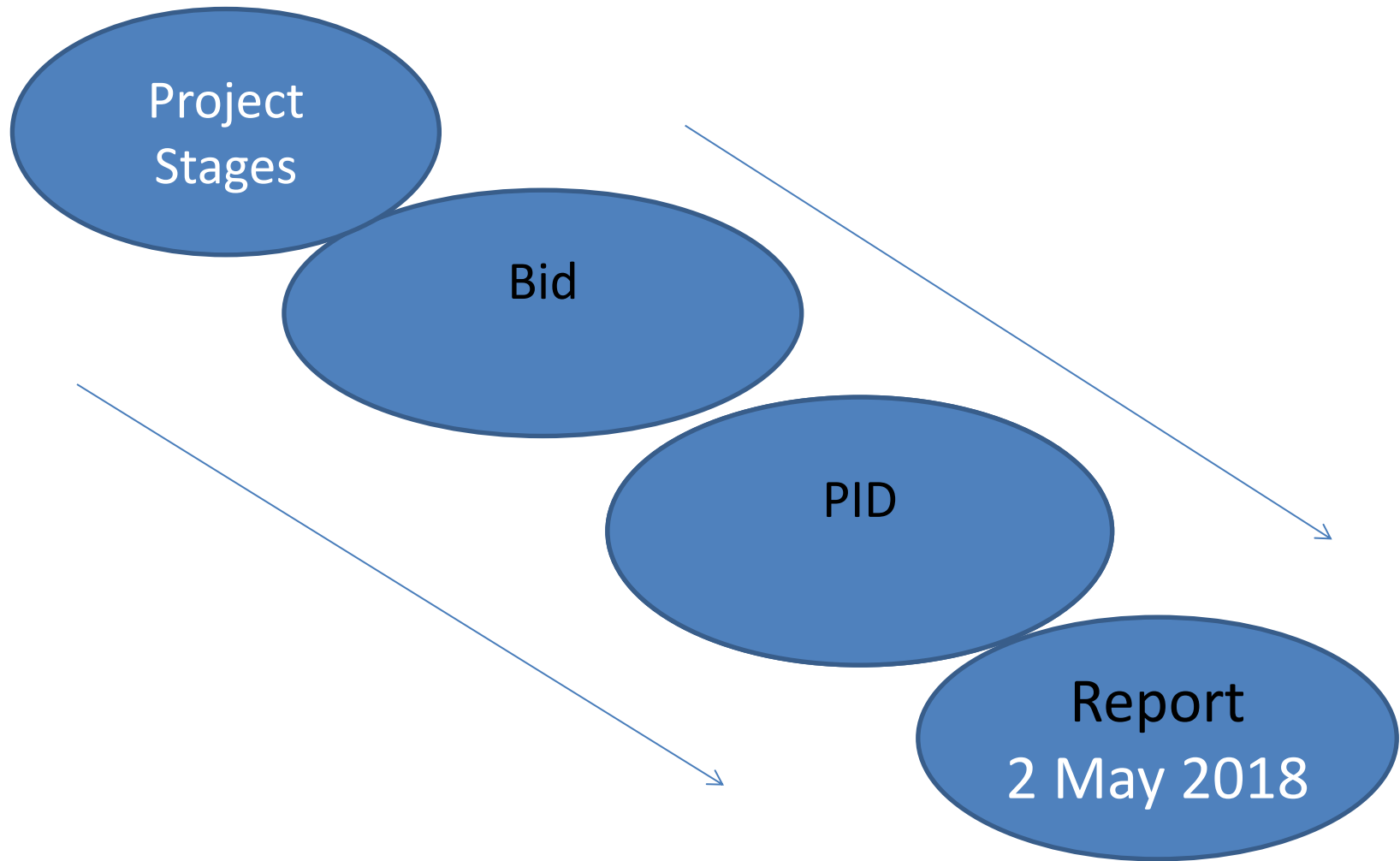


2. Careful planning is needed

Successful report writing depends on careful planning;

- ***Decide on the purpose of the report.*** Is it for describing a situation, recommending changes, providing facts, recording progress, producing some form of plan – or a mixture of these? AIMS & OBJECTIVES!!!
- ***Be selective*** – don't take the approach 'I've collected all this stuff so they can have the lot whether they want it or not'!
- ***Consider the brief and what is needed*** – don't be too hasty about making decisions/ reaching conclusions. Allow time to prepare an initial draft and re-vamp it if necessary

Follow the feedback provided!



Which will your report be?



- A sloppy report suggests a 'couldn't care less approach'
- Make it attractive & interesting to the client!
- Graphics should only be used to illustrate or justify your analysis

3. Producing the goods



It's impossible to produce a 'literal account of the research process' so researchers need to:

- 'provide an edited version of the totality'. Consequently decisions need to be made about *what will* and *won't be* included
- have regard for the need for *reliability** and *validity** and to confirm that *triangulation** has occurred

* These concepts were discussed earlier in the year when considering the research process. Review with a textbook!

Conventions

Writers should adhere to various conventions when writing up research:

- ✓ **Referencing** follow the Harvard referencing system, sources are also needed for work place reports where relevant
- ✓ **Layout of document & order of material** – follow guidelines; a conventional report format should be followed
- ✓ **Writing style** - use the third person, past tense & correct grammar & spelling. Check work manually e.g. to avoid their/there, an/at & ensure work makes sense!
- ✓ **Presentational issues** – link sections logically, use headings/subheadings, consider page layout, main sections numbered, sub sections point numbered, adopt a consistent style for graphs & charts



Settling down to the writing

When you start writing bear in mind:

1. The original reasons for the report (aims & objectives)
2. What you actually did
3. What you found out
4. What you've made of your findings
5. The conclusions you've reached
6. Your recommendations



Report structure

“A report is a statement of the results of an investigation or of any matter on which definite information is required”

(Oxford English Dictionary)

All reports have a similar format or structure

Although the structure may vary slightly depending on the intended audience and complexity of the material there will be:

- a. a preliminary section
- b. the main text
- c. the end matter



A. Preliminary section will contain:

- a. ***Title page*** containing report title, author's name, date, P number, classification e.g. private/confidential; client's name/job title and contact details email address
- b. ***Acknowledgements***
- c. ***Executive summary*** i.e. synopsis of research & findings – last thing to be written. Should be short, sharp, to the point & contain main details of the WHOLE report.
- d. ***Contents page*** - lists each section with page numbers, may also list sub-sections
- e. ***List of tables and figures*** - with locations





B. Main text (body of the work) will contain:

- a. ***Introduction*** - remember – *this report is for your client*
 - **Work place** – terms of reference, situational details, statement of problem, how information was collected

- b. ***Research Methods*** - What form did the project take? Data collection methods e.g. questionnaires/interviews/focus groups/observation/other. Measurements, selection, analysis?

NB include reasons for any deviations from your PID (plan)

- c. ***Findings*** – present the data & show what the research has uncovered plainly & simply. Use graphs, pie & bar charts, diagrams but be selective, don't cloud the issue

B. Main text (body of the work) will contain:

- d. **Discussion & analysis** – findings are scrutinised, discussed, analysed & interpreted. SWOT & PESTLE if add value.
- e. **Conclusions** - draws together the threads of the research & arrives at conclusions. If the case has been reasoned effectively then the readers should already be following your train of thought.

Use your aims and objectives as sub-headings here to summarise what you found for each

- g. **Recommendations** - should be brief points only & relate to the main conclusions. Should include recommendations/guidelines for moving forward & **maybe identify new avenues for further consultancy research (your next job?)**



C. The Final Section will contain:

- a. *Appendices*** i.e. supplementary material which supports the information in the body of the report e.g. data, copy of questionnaire / interview questions, memos, minutes of meetings, technical specifications. **Ensure the material is relevant.**

- b. *References/Bibliography*** - essential to show sources & avoid accusations of plagiarism.



Components of a Marketing Plan

Main sections:

- Executive summary
- Current marketing situation
- Objective & issues
- Target market
- Marketing strategy
- Marketing programmes
- Financial plans
- Implementation controls

Description:

- Brief outline of plan's highlights & objectives
- Summary of environmental trends: situational analysis (internal & external) plus SWOT analysis
- Objectives identified plus potential issues
- Explain segmentation, targeting & positioning decisions & analyse market & segments to be targeted via strategy
- Outlines strategy for achieving objectives
- Outlines programmes for supporting strategies i.e. activities, schedules responsibilities
- Details revenues, expenses & potential profits
- Identifies how progress will be measured & adjustments will be made to stay on track

Components of a Business Plan

- Introduction
- Executive Summary
- Business Opportunity i.e. organisational info, products and services
- Marketing Strategy
- Operational Plan
- Management
- Financial Plan
- Conclusions
- Recommendations
- Appendices

Previous examples

- Good reports!
- Anonymised

Reminder – The Project's key stages

- Bid for work
- Ethical approval (Form E3)
- PID agreed (and signed)
- Feedback
- Plan research methods in detail
- **Undertake research**
- **Analyse findings**
- **Brainstorm with client**
- **Present findings and informed ideas**
- **Report**
- **Action!**
- **Feedback/analysis**
- **Does the project achieve the PID goals?**



Your client's involvement

- Submit report for marking
- Send copy to client
- Brief your client I will be seeking their input as part of the assessment process
- Put their contact details on report front cover
(email, phone & address)



Any Questions

?



1-1 Tutorial slots:

Wednesday 28 March 10-1
(PID feedback; A1 marks)

Wednesday 25 April
(Review draft reports)

Book via moodle

Then

Report due in by

2 May 10am

(worth 50%)





KEEP
CALM
AND
GOOD
LUCK