

## **TYPES OF REPORTS**

There are many different types of reports. The basic format and elements remain the same but they vary in terms of the purpose and extent of formality. We will discuss some common types in this section.

### ***Introductory reports***

As the name suggests, these report introduce some topics but do not delve deep into any aspect. They just skim the surface of the issue, to give the audience a preliminary feel of it. Therefore, these are short reports and do not need subsections and subdivisions. The contents are brief and to the point.

**Progress reports**

These reports give regular updates about the progression of a particular ongoing project. It states the expected or set deadlines and then describes the work done till the date of writing the report. In case of delay, it specifies the reason for it and the support that can be provided to finish the work. For instance, in the case of a construction project, a progress report can help in keeping the track of the progress. Progress report format can vary as per the project undertaken. It can be very formal in case of the report on the progress of the building or it can be informal in case of students' thesis work progress and if the report is through email to the supervisor. In some situations it has a pro forma to be filled out.

**Incident reports**

These reports look more like an article than a report. It is used to describe an event or an accident without distorting the facts to a person who could not witness the scene. It is very important to maintain accuracy and truthfulness. The order of presentation of information is important. In general, the events constituting the incident are presented in chronological order.

**Feasibility reports**

While undertaking a new project or starting an establishment, the possibility of launching it should be assessed. The pros and cons of it and the cost, gains, glitches should be thoroughly studied. The report studies the problem, opportunity, and plan for taking action. The conclusions are very important as they indicate whether the project being considered is feasible, not feasible, or partially feasible, and hence directly helps decision-making.

**Marketing reports**

These reports are persuasive in nature and begin with marketing objectives, stating the available resources, plan of action, and goals. It is similar to feasibility report in terms of style, length, and content. This report is prepared by the marketing department while promoting or launching the product or while assessing the effectiveness of existing strategies. It contains the details about segmentation, targeting, and positioning. A market report can be about the global, domestic, or regional market. It would also include the customers' perspective about a particular product vis-à-vis-competition. The report should also include the effectiveness of the promotional, pricing, and distribution strategies.

**Laboratory test reports**

These reports document the various experiments conducted in the laboratory. The observation, calculation, and results sections of these reports must be prepared with utmost accuracy and precision. These reports have the following sections:

- Aim
- Theory
- Apparatus
- Procedures
- Observation
- Calculations
- Results
- Conclusion
- Discussion
- Inference
- Possible sources of errors
- Precautions

### **Project reports**

A project can be defined as a sequence of unique, complex, and connected activities having one goal or purpose and that must be completed by a specific time, within a budget and according to specification. At the end of a project the person or the team who has accomplished it writes a report explaining the details. For instance, as a part of their curriculum, students of technical and professional courses may undertake some projects of theoretical or practical nature under the guidance of professors. While some projects may last for a semester, some others may be completed in fifteen days or one month. But only when they submit their project reports their project is considered as complete. A student carrying out a project on the topic 'Effective use of Internet on campus' may conduct a survey among the users of Internet on campus, interpret, and analyse the data collected and suggest some measures to improve upon the effective use of Internet on campus. When he/she prepares the project report, he/she will choose appropriate elements and write the report. Such reports generally include the title page, certificate, acknowledgements, contents, abstract, the main body consisting of three or four sections, appendices, references, glossary, etc.

## **WRITING THE REPORT**

Any project or study ends with a report. After deciding and formulating a topic, the writers carry out various activities such as data collection, analysis, discussions, etc. Then they start writing the report. So this process is the culmination of all the hard work put forth by the report writers. As the report is the only tangible evidence for their efforts, they need to take utmost care of its structure, layout, and style. They need to understand clearly the elements to be included and in what order, which parts have to be drafted first, how much background material to be included, etc. For instance, most writers prepare the main body of the report first and then the other parts. In academic or research reports which include references or bibliography, the writers prepare these parts while writing the main body. Even experienced writers may not be able to write their reports in one attempt. Generally, reports go through at least two or three drafts.

### **First Draft**

Once the work is completed, the writer starts preparing the first draft of the report. Writing the first draft is a step between the preparation and the editing of the report. As already mentioned, a writer generally prepares the main chapters of the report, then the introduction and finally the other parts of the report. Once the main chapters (topics) are written, the writer can get a comprehensive view of the main chapters and then he/she can write the introduction and abstract. Even at this stage any modification in the outline can be made and once he/she freezes the outline, it can appear as the contents page in the report. Given below are certain guidelines in preparing the first draft of a report.

- Start writing Chapter 2 and go on till the concluding chapter. Then write the Introduction and the Abstract
- Prepare the references/bibliography as and when you prepare the main topics. Refer to Chapter 22 for the correct format

- Prepare the prefatory parts and the appendices, if applicable
- Keep in mind the elements of effective writing discussed in Chapters 14 to 16
- Ensure that the analysis on all main topics has been included; the trends discussed and suitable illustrations have been added at appropriate places (Refer to Chapter 3)
- Refer to the characteristics of each element of the report discussed in the previous sections of this chapter while writing your first draft

### **Revising, Editing, and Proofreading**

After completing the first draft of the report, it should be reviewed carefully. The type of the report, its utility, the time available, and also the effectiveness of the first draft determine the amount of revision needed.

The first draft is reviewed for the following:

- Accuracy of facts
- Clarity of expression
- Overall organization
- Adequacy and appropriateness of the contents to meet the set objectives
- Suitability and conformity of illustrations
- Effectiveness in expression
- Grammatical accuracy
- Correctness of layout

Editing is the same as revising because its purpose is to correct and improve the