
How to Write a Report

Candidates are required to produce reports for AS portfolio units 2, 3, 7 and 8.

This information is provided as guidance for writing a report, but should not be considered definitive – it is expected that candidates producing reports of an AS standard may not follow the exact format described in this section.

WHAT IS A REPORT?

A report is a document which defines a subject or problem, and gathers relevant information and facts in order to present them as completely and accurately as possible. Reports for this specification will include analysis, judgement, conclusions and recommendations.

A report therefore needs to be:

- concise;
- understandable;
- precise;
- logically structured;
- descriptive;
- aimed at the reader.

Before writing the report...

It is important to consider WHO you are writing the report for and WHY.

Key questions for candidates to ask themselves:

- Who wants the report?
- Why do they want it?
- What are they going to do with it?
- What do they want it to cover? (Refer to the amplification section of the unit specification)
- What will happen as a result of the report?

A report should have a clear objective, i.e. what are you trying to achieve.

A clear objective = a clear focus = easier to write.

Planning

It is important to start off by mind-mapping what you have been asked to do:

- Write down the purpose of the report in the middle of a piece of A4 paper.
- Write down the key ideas/phrases that link to the purpose of the report.
- Group pieces of information under the key ideas, connecting them by links.
- Review the plan, adding or deleting points where necessary.
- Check that you have done what the task requires.
- look for a simple structure, and order the key ideas. These will each make up a chapter of your report (*it is recommended that candidates structure the report using the Assessment Objectives tasks from the banner of the Assessment Evidence Grid*).

Research

- Check existing knowledge, i.e. what you know already, and what you need to find out.
- Record the research methods used.
- Record the sources used.
- Make notes from the sources, and make sure these are referenced as you go along, as this saves time and difficulties later on.
- Order the notes and group together points based on your original plan.
- Check that you have done what the banner requires.

WRITING THE REPORT

Structure

Title page

This highlights the central theme of the report, and includes the unit number/title, title of the report, candidate name, centre name/number, date.

Acknowledgements (optional)

Conveys thanks to those who have assisted the candidate in the preparation of the report, e.g. a care worker/service user.

Contents

Lists the main sections and sub-sections of the report in sequence. The headings should be identical to those used in the report, together with the page number. A list of illustrations and appendices should be detailed. It is better to complete this section after writing the report, e.g.

Section	Title	Page no.
1	Introduction	1
	1.1 Aims and Objectives	
	1.2 Review of literature	1
2	AO1 evidence that you...	2
3	AO2 applying knowledge and...	8
4	AO3 relevant research...	14
5	AO4 evidence of...	18
	etc.	

List of Illustrations

Figure 1	Graph showing...	3
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Appendices

Appendix A	Title
Appendix B	etc.

Introduction

This sets the scene and should include the following:

- Why the report was written/background?
- Terms of reference – determines the scope or parameters of the report, and what it is candidates are trying to do (objective, purpose and use).
- Method of investigation
- Resources available
- Sources used
- Limitations (not for AS level)
- Structure of report

Main text

This is the main substance of the report, covering AO1 through to AO4. It consists of data candidates have found, and what they have found out from it. It should not include opinions, conclusions or recommendations. This is the longest section of the report.

Conclusion

This should link the terms of reference (what candidates are trying to do) with the findings to assess the facts. It draws together the main points of the report, presents an overview, and looks at future consequences. No new data should arise here. A conclusion will include recommendations, if these are requested in the assessment evidence grid.

Recommendations

These should follow logically on from the conclusion, and be specific, measurable and achievable. They should propose how the situation/problem could be improved by stating the action to be taken. Ideally, recommendations should be numbered.

Appendices

These will consist of supplementary information not required for the main body of the report.

References

These should list bibliographical details of all the materials mentioned in the text, or extracts quoted. We recommend the British Standard or Harvard method of referencing.

Bibliography

Includes bibliographical details of all the materials mentioned in the references, plus other materials used but not referred to in the main body of the report. This is not always necessary, particularly if the Harvard referencing system has been used.

Glossary (optional)

Only useful if the report uses a lot of technical vocabulary to give definitions or acronyms.

Style

- Match the style to the reader – the key is to keep the report concise and simple.
- **Sentences:** Keep them short, no longer than 25 words.
- **Paragraphs:** Concentrates on one theme; the first sentence should summarise the topic of the paragraph. Paragraphs should be connected with link words so that they carry the reader along.
- **Tense:** Reports are normally written in the past tense and in the third person, i.e. it is recommended that... However, candidates could use 'I' if it is appropriate (for conclusions, recommendations, etc.).
- **Illustrations:** Only include these in the main body of the report if fundamental to the text, or referred to several times. Otherwise, candidates should place them in the appendix (clearly indicate where this can be found within the text).
- **Summarise:** each section of the report with one or two sentences to form a short conclusion.
- **Writing order:** Main body, conclusion, recommendations, introduction, then (appendices, glossary, references, bibliography, contents – in no particular order), summary and title page.

After Writing the Report

Check the report for:

- Completeness.
- Accuracy.
- Layout.
- Spelling (proof read manually, not just spell-check).
- Numbering of sections.
- Page numbering.
- Illustrations.
- Check that the report follows the plan (if applicable), and addresses the banner of the assessment evidence grid.