Outcomes

Review:

- the different types and purposes of reports
- the general structure and style of reports
- how to approach writing a report
What is a report?

A report presents specific information, evidence and analysis to a particular audience for a clear purpose.

The information is presented in a clearly structured format using sections and headings, so that the information is easy to locate and follow.
Why write a report?

Reports are written for different purposes.

The purpose of any report is determined by:
- the question or problem that has been asked
- the audience the report is to be written for

All reports require the **gathering, evaluation and analysis of information** in order to draw conclusions or make recommendations. Such information should be presented in a logical and coherent manner.

Reports are different from Essays


**Reports**
- Present information  
  – often in tabular or graphical form
- Can be scanned quickly and out of order  
  – headings and sub-headings make this possible
- Contain short, concise paragraphs and in some cases dot points
- May make recommendations

**Essays**
- Present arguments
- Need to be read in their entirety  
  – there are generally no headings and sub-headings
- Contain longer, connected paragraphs
- Rarely make recommendations
The structure of a report depends on the type of report that is to be written, but in general a typical report includes:

- A title page
- An abstract
- A table of contents page
- Acknowledgements, if required
- Introduction
- The discussion or body – the content
- Conclusions
- Recommendations, if required
- An Appendix or Appendices
- References
Formatting

- Separate title page
- Separate Table of Contents page
- Numbered headings and sub-headings
- Numbered pages
- Table and figures
  - are often included in reports, either in the body of the report, or in the Appendices.
  - refer to pages 5 & 6 of the Curtin Referencing Guide for referencing guidelines and examples
- Separate References page
- Separate Appendices pages

Read your task instructions carefully. Ask questions of your tutor, lecturer, or unit coordinator to clarify any instructions that are not clear.
Writing your report

Steps for writing a successful report:

1. Understand the task instructions
2. Brainstorm the task
   – use it to write a draft outline of the report
   – use it to focus your research
3. Research and select information and data
4. Organise, evaluate and analyse the information
5. Write a first draft
6. Use a checklist to review your draft
   [Link](http://studyskills.curtin.edu.au/better-writing/report-writing/checklist/)
7. Edit and proofread until you are ready to submit
Introduction

An introduction:

- outlines background information relevant to the study
- states the purpose of the report
- indicates the scope, including limitations
- outlines the methods to gather information
- clarifies key terms
- reviews the literature to justify the hypothesis
- explains the relevance of the experiment
- states the aim and hypothesis
Example Introduction

Provides background and relevant literature

There has been a significant increase in the use of personal mobile phones over the past five years and there is every indication that this will continue. According to Black (2002) by 2008 almost 100% of working people in Australia will carry personal mobile phones. Black describes this phenomenon as ‘serious in the extreme, potentially undermining the foundations of communication in our society’ (2002, p 167). Currently at UniLab, 89% of staff have personal mobile phones.

Recently a number of staff have complained about the use of personal mobile phones in meetings and asked what the official company policy is. At present there is no official company policy regarding phone use. This report examines the issue of mobile phone usage in staff meetings and small team meetings. It does not seek to examine the use of mobile phones in the workplace at other times, although some concerns were raised. For the purposes of this report a personal mobile phone is a personally funded phone for private calls as opposed to an employer funded phone that directly relates to carrying out a particular job.

Scope and limitations

Defines key terms
The Body - Content

The content of the report will depend on its purpose.

The body:
- details the methods used to gather information
- outlines and explains the findings of the report
- contains headings and sub-headings to separate key ideas and concepts
The conclusion:

- summarises the key points
- articulates the significance of the main findings
- contains no new information

Example

Conclusion
The use of mobile phones in staff meetings is clearly disruptive and they should be switched off. Most staff feel it is not necessary to receive personal phone calls in staff meetings except under certain circumstances, but permission should first be sought from the team leader, manager or chair.
The recommendations:

- are an action plan for how to resolve or improve the issue
- are ordered according to priority
- identify how the recommendations might be achieved

Example

Recommendations

It is recommended that Unilab develops an official policy regarding the use of mobile phones in staff meetings. The policy should recommend:

- mobile phones are banned in staff meetings, and
- mobile phones may be used in exceptional circumstances but only with the permission of the appropriate manager or chair.

Finally, the policy needs to apply to all staff in the company.
The Executive Summary or Abstract summarises the entire report. It enables the reader to decide whether they will read the report in its entirety.

The Executive Summary or Abstract should be written last.
Consider the purpose:

The aim of this report was to investigate UniLab staff attitudes to personal mobile phone use in staff and team meetings. A staff survey on attitudes towards the use of mobile phones in the team meetings was conducted. The results indicate that the majority of staff find mobile phone use a major issue in staff meetings. The report concludes that personal mobile phones are disruptive and should be turned off in meetings. It is recommended that UniLab develops a company policy banning the use of mobile phones except in exceptional circumstances.
Example Executive Summary

Consider the verb tenses:

The aim of this report was to investigate UniLab staff attitudes to personal mobile phone use in staff and team meetings. A staff survey on attitudes towards the use of mobile phones in the team meetings was conducted. The results indicate that the majority of staff find mobile phone use a major issue in staff meetings. The report concludes that personal mobile phones are disruptive and should be turned off in meetings. It is recommended that UniLab develops a company policy banning the use of mobile phones except in exceptional circumstances.
Reports often contain information in tables or figures.

Tables and figures should be:

- included in the body or the appendices if large, complex or not essential to the main body
- numbered and labelled
- referenced correctly if they are not original
Appendices

Appendices contain additional information not essential to the main body of the report; e.g. maps, large images, long calculations, photographs, questionnaires.

Appendices should be:

- labelled and numbered
- referred to in the body of the report
- on separate pages
- after the References list
Style

- Reports should be clear, concise and well-structured
- The writing style is objective (academic), direct and economical.
  - Make every word count.
- Full sentences with correct grammar and spelling are required.
  - Only use bullet points if the task instructions specifically state you may.
- Paragraphs should develop a single idea and be presented in a logical sequence in each section of the report.
- All sources must be correctly referenced.
### Your report outline

Consider the following report outline (headings and sub-headings):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Introduction</th>
<th>Introduction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interpret</td>
<td>Interpretation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety and Serviceability</td>
<td>Safety and Serviceability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan of Duplicate</td>
<td>Duplication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**How can it be improved?**
1.0 Introduction
2.0 Section 1 (Load Path)
3.0 Section 2 (Serviceability and Safety Limit)
   a) Serviceability Limit State
   b) Safety Limit State
4.0 Solutions to Prevent Failure of Truss
   a) Comparison of Different Truss
   b) Comparison of Truss and Portal Frame
5.0 Conclusion
6.0 Reference List
Exemplars

https://www.monash.edu/rlo/assignment-samples
Summary

Reports present information:

- concisely
- so it is easy to access
- so it is easy to understand

Before writing a report ensure you:

- understand the task question and instructions and the formatting requirements
- are aware of the purpose and the audience