FAQs  Progress Reports

What a progress report is
• A summary and evaluation of progress made towards completing a project
• A proposal and plan for remaining tasks

Why write a progress report
• To provide an update on a project currently in progress
• To evaluate completed work against project objectives
• To put forward a proposal for future work
• To assist with contingency planning (unforeseen events)

How to prepare a progress report
1. Identify and evaluate current progress towards completing a project against project objectives
2. Document future objectives and plan for how and when these objectives will be met
3. Predict potential obstacles to progress and put contingency plans in place
4. Organise and write your ideas in a logical and coherent way

What structure to use
A simple way to structure a progress report is
• State the purpose of the report, provide necessary background and outline the way the report is organised
• Discuss what has been achieved and what tasks remain
• Summarise and evaluate the current status of the project and provide a forecast for completion

A progress report may look like this

Typical questions
Introductory paragraph
What is the purpose of the report?
What is the context of the project?
What is the project plan? What does the report cover?

Body paragraphs: Project status
Tasks completed
Task 1 (2, 3, etc) What was this task? What was the original time estimate for this task? What was accomplished? How long did it take? What problems were there?

Tasks remaining
Task 4 (5, 6, etc) What is the task? What is the time estimate for this task? Have you begun this task? If so, is it running to schedule? If not, are there any problems you can foresee? What will your approach be?

Concluding paragraph
What is the current status of the project? How does current progress compare to original expectations? What is the current forecast for completion? Who should be contacted for more information?

Typical language
Introductory paragraph
This report outlines progress made towards…. This project…. Tasks include …. This report reviews tasks completed, and then sets forward a proposal for future work.

Body paragraphs: Project status
Language will vary. Use past tense for tasks completed and present and future tenses for tasks remaining.

Concluding paragraph
Overall, the project is…. In comparison to initial expectations…. Tasks remaining are forecasted to take…For more information on this project, contact...
How to effectively report on progress towards a project

Think of the progress report as clearly and honestly explaining your achievements towards and plans for a project to someone who requires detailed information

- Introduce the report, the project and the project plan
- Provide an update on what has been achieved, discussing and evaluating each task that has been completed in turn
- Give your best estimate of what will be required to complete the project, outlining and explaining each remaining task in turn, and setting out contingency plans for any challenges that may impede progress
- Summarise the project status and provide a forecast for completion and your contact details should further information be required

How to incorporate critical thinking into your progress report

- Determine what the central tasks for completing your project are
- Develop a detailed plan that outlines
  - Who will do what
  - When
  - Where
  - Why
  - How
  - What if (don’t forget to think about what to do in case of setbacks!)
- Monitor and evaluate your progress as your project proceeds
- Adjust and modify your plans as required

Using STUDY Smarter resources

This resource was developed by the STUDY Smarter team at UWA Student Services for students enrolled at the University of Western Australia. The team would like to thank Dr Brad Stappenbelt from the Faculty of Engineering, Computing and Mathematics for his input into this resource.

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LS.010.2008 CRICOS Provider Code: 00126G