

Considerations and Guidelines for Preparing a Report for Approval

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Organization: Logical structure; agreement among and use of consistent terminology throughout title, contents, major headings, purpose, abstract, summary.

Title: Reflects major headings in contents; includes geographic location and years of study.

Abstract: Informative; highlights most important findings and conclusions; concise; based on summary/conclusions; indicates how purpose met; emphasizes relevance of work.

Body of report: Readable; good topic sentences; clear; grammatically correct; no spelling errors; no jargon; written to level of audience.

Introduction: Includes problem/background statement, purpose and scope, previous investigations, acknowledgments.

Purpose and scope: Purpose is purpose of report, not study; scope sets limits on steps taken to meet purpose.

Acknowledgments: Statement of cooperation with funding source; mention significant contributors who are not co-authors.

Summary/conclusions: Brief reiteration of main findings and conclusions; restates problem and possible solutions found; is specific and quantitative.

References: Includes references for all citations in report; may include additional references also.

Tables: Logically constructed; clear; stand-alone title; consistent with body of report.

Maps: Appropriate base; uncluttered; legible; latitude/longitude; scale; base and data credits; explanation; caption; consistent with body of report.

Graphs: Clear; uncluttered; legible boxed in with ticks on all sides of box; axis labels and values; explanation; caption; consistent with body of report.

Policy check: Impartiality, objectivity, integrity; no criticism of others; don't use "must", "should", or "need to"; no speculation.

Verification check: Consistent and appropriate use of abbreviations, units of measure, acronyms, citations, heading rank and wording, map and graph captions, table titles, table and illustration numbers, page numbers, etc.