

# Technical Report Writing

Many people find report writing a daunting task. How do they gather all the information, decisions, facts and strategies into one report? This course was developed as long ago as 2001 and has stood the test of time across many market sectors, including engineering, project management, administration and finance. It teaches that the critical decision is not what you put in, but what you leave out.

## Learning Outcomes:

- Teaches both the generic format and specific formats for reports, including the six main sections of any report.
- Teaches how to create an effective introduction.
- Provides the best practices for compiling technical reports.
- Provides critical skills and confidence for non-English speakers
- Shows the critical difference between scope, need and purpose in the introduction.
- Teaches ways of brainstorming and categorizing to achieve the best structure.
- Details the different sections of the introduction, body and executive summary.
- Teaches the newest formats and styles.
- Provides models for constructing the body of the report.
- Teaches how to justify the conclusions of the report through use of example, statistics, facts and information.
- Shows the correct and most appropriate use of tense and grammar in a report.
- Teaches how construct an effective title for a technical report.
- Shows how to avoid the pitfalls of poor punctuation.
- Corrects all existing errors in punctuation.
- Shows effective and acceptable ways of using bullets and numbers in reports.
- Formats – where to put the graphs, charts and tables
- Matching the data with the flow of the report



## 1. Report formats and structures - best practices

- Establishing the title, introduction and body of the report
- Formulating an executive summary
- Establishing premises, sections and flow of the argument
- Compiling conclusions and recommendations
- The difference between a glossary and definition of terms

## 2. First impressions - the six subsections of a powerful introduction

- Background, context and method – what should you write?
- The critical difference between purpose and need
- Specifying how you got your information and how you analysed it

## 3. How to construct an effective title for the report

- First impression of any report - few people realise how important this is
- Effective power words to use in your title
- The use of a subtitle - when to use it
- Abstracts and synopses

## 4. Using the technical data in the report

- The essential elements of using data to support the main premises
- How to refer to data
- Where and how to embed the tables, graphs or matrices and other tools
- The power of scope

## 5. Working with statistics – the art of justification

- How to use statistics optimally to make sure that they support the main premises
- When less is more – selectivity with data
- Referencing techniques - how to cite and reference statistics

## • The three phases in compiling a report

- Planning – making your information make sense with brainstorming technique
- First draft – putting the pieces together

## • Unpacking the body - thud factors

- Different models: problem, cause solution, chronology, advantages and disadvantages, etc.
- Correct writing techniques
- One statement, one bullet - when to bullet and when not to bullet
- Survival kits – the 13 errors all South African business writers make
- Development of the argument – writing with effect
- Audience profiles

## • Final touches – editing and proofreading

- Body beautiful - some effective models to help you construct a good body
- Learn to choose the correct model and then apply it – make your report look good
- Appropriate formats – latest trends

## • Knitting it all together

- Cleaning up all the pitfalls of poor punctuation – using punctuation correctly and creatively
- List of best practices in the formulation of an executive summary
- Measuring the temperature of your writing – using an effective readability index to improve your text flow
- Nasty conventions – punctuation, white space, listing technique and others – address it once and for all