

Tool 13. Checklist for constructing a research or advisory report

Title page: entices and informs the reader	Comment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choose a compelling title and a business-like subtitle 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include the name of the institution and author(s) 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include the version number and date 	
Foreword: describes the context and the people involved	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The foreword is optional, and its purpose is to thank people or to explain the research context 	
Management summary: presents a brief outline of the results (max. of 1 A4 page)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction: what does the company / institute / organisation do, rationale, objective, and basic research steps / techniques 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Main part: short and concise description of the research results 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conclusion: the main conclusions and recommendations and reflection on objective 	
Table of contents: presents the structure at a glance	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give your table of contents a clear layout and structure; avoid subsections 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leave the table of contents itself and the foreword out, and do not number appendices as chapters; give appendices a title too 	
Introduction: explains the significance and necessity of the research	
Use the plan of approach as a point of departure. Describe:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What the company does in a few sentences 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The rationale and problem summary¹ 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The objective 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The central questions (sub- and research questions can be incorporated in the appendices) 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The research methods and techniques² 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading guide 	
Body: describes the path followed to achieve the goal	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begin each chapter with an introduction; explain the necessity of the chapter (e.g. by including a link with the objective) 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make proper use of the body text and the appendices; an advisory report preferably consists of approximately 30 pages (body text) 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choose a structure and compare the structure with the sub- and research questions, because they are supposed to run synchronously³ 	
Conclusions: are drawn from the results	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not present anything that has not yet been mentioned in the report. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make sure your conclusions are clear and concise 	
Recommendations: follow from the conclusions and are concrete and practicable	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Go beyond the mere listing of the solutions 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give an insight into the question of “how to move forward” and are concrete 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are often accompanied by a time-based (implementation) plan 	
Appendices: to support the body of the report	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include references to the appendices in your text 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make sure that the appendices are explained and can be read independently from the main document 	
Grammar, style and sources: ‘Make or Break’ the report	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the active voice where possible. Check language and style! 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number figures and tables (for each chapter separately, if appropriate) and give them titles. In your text, include references to the figures and tables. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compile a correct list of sources and use correct literature references (see APA standard) 	

¹ Tip: refer to, for instance, an appendix with the 6 Ws

² Methods and techniques **MUST** be linked to research questions, work this out carefully in the body text or in an appendix substantiating the choices

³ The following structure is common in research: current situation, troublespots and analysis (quantify as much as possible), improvement proposals (linked to troublespots), detailed description of improvement proposals (including cost-benefit analysis) and implementation steps