Final Report Guidelines

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The Final Report

The final report is a complete discussion of the project's objectives, significance, methodologies, results, and recommendations/accomplishments. It should reflect the team's ability to articulate in writing: the problem, the relevant literature, the scope of work, the analytical approaches, the results, any recommendations or conclusions, and how the work is related to larger issues. Teams must demonstrate that they can create original interpretations of others' work and/or generate original data that leads to original interpretations.

Drafts

Teams should expect multiple revisions and iterations with the project advisors and community partners before they submit their final report. We recommend that one team member serve as the editor to review all sections of the final report to verify that the report is presented in a single, professional voice. Do not submit a draft report of cobbled-together sections created by different team members.

Due Dates

April 4 – Rough Draft Part 1: Project Objectives/Research Questions and significance, Literature Review, Methods
April 18 – Rough Draft Part 2: Results, Discussion, Conclusion
May 2 – Full Rough Draft
May 23 – Final Report
June 10 – final approval granted, Final PDF submission to Coordinator & Committees

Submission

After approval from Project Advisors, each team will submit an electronic copy (PDF format) to the Project Coordinator (Courtney Hunt), MCRS Steering Committee, and community partners. The final report may be posted to the MCRS website unless an NDA restricts public sharing.

FORMATTING

- Document Structure: use headers and sections to structure your document in a way that aids navigation and comprehension
- Clear and legible font used (i.e., Times New Roman, Arial)
- 8.5" x 11" pages
- 1-inch margins
- Left-aligned (not justified)
- Page numbers placed 0.75 inches from the bottom edge of pages
- Double spaced
- 12 point font for text, 10 point font for footnotes and captions (8 pt for text in figure axes etc.). Use of standard font recommended (e.g., Arial).
- Length must not exceed 40 pages (not including figures and references)
- Free of typographical, formatting, and editing errors.

- References in consistent, accepted citation format (e.g., MLA, APA, Chicago), and cited consistently throughout the document.
  - Just because you copied it from Google Scholar or Zotero doesn't mean it's correct! You HAVE to proofread your references.

Figures and Tables
- High resolution figures with text 10 pt font
- All referenced in text, numbered in order they appear
- Tables should follow MLA or APA guidelines and no text smaller than 10 pt, numbered and referenced in the text
  - https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/tables-figures/tables
- Rough Drafts: Figures and Tables at the end of the document
- Final Draft: Figures and Tables embedded in document (final draft only)

Section List (in order)
1. Title page
2. Acknowledgments
3. Table of Contents
4. Abstract (not to exceed 200 words)
5. Keywords
6. Executive Summary (not to exceed 4 pages)
7. Project Objectives/Research Questions and significance
8. Literature Review
9. Methods
10. Results
11. Discussion
12. Conclusions
13. References
14. Appendices (optional)

Guidelines for specific sections:
1. Title Page (NOT same as prospectus)
   a. Title of the team project
   b. Master of Conservation and Restoration Science
   c. University of California, Irvine
   d. Names of all team members (alphabetical order recommended) and Capstone Advisors (Project Advisors & Science Advisors)
   e. Month and Year project is signed by Capstone Advisors (June 2022)
2. Acknowledgements:
   a. The final report should also acknowledge individuals or organizations that have provided significant support for the project. Students should get permission to include such an acknowledgement; supporters have the right to not be publicly associated with the final report.
3. Table of Contents
   a. Must include separate sections for:

i. Major headings & subheadings,
        ii. Figures
        iii. Tables
    b. See past reports for examples of Figure and Table ToCs
    c. Both Google Docs and MS Word have tools for automatically generating tables of contents – plan to need to spend some time fixing it!
4. Abstract (not to exceed 200 words)
    a. You must include an abstract, which can be no longer than 200 words. An abstract summarizes the major aspects of the report. Include:
        i. the overall purpose of the project and the research problem investigated;
        ii. the basic design of the project;
        iii. the major findings or trends found as a result of your analysis; and
        iv. a brief summary of your conclusions and recommendations.
5. Keywords
    a. Select up to 10 keywords to describe the project to help it show up in search engines.
    b. Some suggestions: https://methodsblog.com/2015/12/18/seo/
6. Executive Summary (not to exceed 4 pages)
    a. The executive summary is a short section that summarizes the longer report in such a way that readers can quickly become familiar with the work. It should include background information and recommendations. The summary should be text only (no graphs or photos) and be no more than four pages in length.
7. Project Objectives/Research Questions and Significance
    a. Goals and objectives: What are the overarching goals of the proposed project? What are the concrete and achievable objectives? What is the scope of the work?
    b. Specific research questions: What are the science or management questions that are answered by the project?
    c. Significance: What is the context for this work? Why is this work important? Who is the target audience/partner? Which other people (besides the partner) benefit from the results of this work?
    d. Background: Where is the project location? In general, how did the problem arise? What has been done to date, if known?
8. Literature Review
    a. What is already known about this topic? How does the literature pertain to the proposed problem/project? Does the literature provide supporting documentation of the existence of the identified problem? Does the literature support the methodology or solution selected to address the problem? Does the literature point to major gaps the project can fill? Are there published reports by others who have already done similar work? If so, critique this literature and discuss how the project improves/expands/builds on it.
9. Methods

a. Structure your methods section so that the study design, data collection and analytical methods for each goal/objective/question are described. Make clear which data were collected by you, and properly attribute any other data.
   b. Describe the study/experiment/field survey design (include a diagram) and include a table of the species or variables of interest.
   c. Describe data collection methods both for data provided by partners and collected by your team in enough detail so that someone could repeat the work
   d. Describe the statistical tests used to analyze the data.
   e. A statement describing how data/reproducible analyses can be accessed, including a Dryad DOI.

10. Results
   a. What were the results of the data analysis? Describe, and include figures or tables.

11. Discussion
   a. Explain how the results inform the adaptive management plan.
   b. Connect your results to the broader literature and discuss your findings in context.
   c. How do the results inform next steps?
   d. Unsupported claims and/or opinions not based on data in the final report is not appropriate.

12. Conclusions
   a. Summarize your project findings, deliverables and accomplishments and restate their significance
   b. Explain how the work is related to larger issues.
   c. What recommendations do you have as an outcome from the project?

13. References
   a. See Formatting section above.

14. Appendices (optional)
   a. Teams may choose to include additional information at the end of the report in an appendix. This might include:
      i. large tables or supplementary data
      ii. Information/analyses of data that were not worth discussing in the body of the paper (insignificant results, etc.), but might be useful to future researchers
      iii. Documentation or deliverables (e.g. detailed methods, datasheets, educational materials)
   b. Each separate item should be labeled Appendix A, B, etc. and included in the table of contents, and may be marked in place with a title page or page header.