



The Institute of Administrative Management

Project report guidance



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Introduction

A Project Report enables a student to focus on an issue within an organisation related to Administrative Management, and write a report regarding this issue. Project Reports are advantageous in that students are getting to know an organisation in more depth and they are real life situations. Students can also use this to investigate something that they might not have otherwise been able to. The Project Report is an integral part of the IAM Certificate in Administrative Management. Project Reports can also be produced instead of Case Studies 1 and 2, in the IAM Diploma and Advanced Diploma in Administrative Management.

Please read the following documentation carefully as the information will help completion of the Project Report.

1. Aims

The Project Report aims to:

- Improve candidate's critical analysis skills
- Help students apply the knowledge gained during studying an IAM programme
- Help apply experience in developing solutions for the project.

2. Learning Outcomes

On completion of the Project Report, students will have demonstrated ability to:

1. Apply analytical skill in recognising and specifying objectives and critically appraising information given, so as to arrive at a practical and reasonable evaluation of the issues.
2. Employ creativity, together with the ability to apply knowledge and experience, to develop a number of workable solutions, which need to meet economic, social and technical demands.
3. Use judgment to select the best solution in the circumstances and support this choice by local argument using the appropriate facts and figures.
4. Understand the subject areas covered in the syllabus and in particular the interrelationships of those subject areas.
5. Communicate ideas in the most effective manner using diagrams and charts, as well as the written word.

3. Requirements

- Project Reports must be agreed by the tutor at the centre or (if independent students) by the IAM, using the pro forma in appendix 1.
- Students who are not at a workplace should find an organisation who will allow them to complete this project or produce a project from a more theoretical perspective.
- Projects should be useful to the organisation and students should try to find something that they would have to work on at some point in the near future.
- Projects should endeavour to make an improvement in the organisation
- Any project should demonstrate that your knowledge and abilities are up to the standards demanded by the Institute of its students for the appropriate award.
- The project should be in the form of a written report to senior management and should, therefore, be presented in the correct format for the audience.
- Research methods must be clearly stated in the Project Proposal Form.
- The Project Proposal Form should be submitted to the tutor before detailed work begins.
- Projects should be submitted, to the tutor or (for independent students) to the IAM, with the proposal form attached to the front.
- Marks for Level 3 Project Reports can only be given after centres submit at least 10% of Projects and Learning Diaries to the IAM for moderation.
- All centres entering students for Level 4 and 5 Project Reports must include all Project Report entries on the exam entry template, along with any exam entries for that exam series.
- Centres must submit **all** Level 4 and 5 Project Reports to the IAM for marking. Level 4 and 5 Project Reports must reach the IAM no later than one week after the end of the exam week for that exam series.
- Marks for Level 4 and 5 Project Reports are published, together with the Level 4 and 5 exam results, on the specified results publication date following each IAM exam series.

4. The Project Report

4.1 Writing a Good Assignment

Writing an assignment or project can be quite daunting. This section is intended as a practical guide to writing, addressing some of the issues adult learners often face.

Academic writing requires a number of skills. These skills are developed by:

- Practice
- Tutor feedback
- Researching different writing styles

There are a number of questions you should ask yourself before starting to write:

1. Who am I writing for?
2. Do I understand the assessment criteria for the work?
It is worth taking time before writing to understand what the assessment is looking for. If there is anything you do not understand, you need to obtain clarification before you start.
3. Do I understand the question to be answered?
This might sound an odd question to be asked, but experienced tutors will tell you how distressing it can be when someone has spent a lot of time and effort on an assignment and not really answered the question which has been set!
4. How can I plan this work?
See section on organisational skills
5. What critical analysis and reflection needs to take place?
Once you have your question, analyse it.
6. What are the key words in it?
7. What do these words mean?
8. Do I need to be explicit about these definitions within my work?

4.2 Audience

In some cases the audience is defined within the title. For example, 'Make an analysis of the procurement process within your department and develop a report for you line manager.'

Your audience is also your tutor. You need to know the expectations of the tutor. These expectations will be those of the IAM and the assessment criteria. Adult learners are often not aware that accredited awards have strict criteria for marking and tutors will be working within these. Marking will be moderated to ensure that there is consistency amongst tutors

Your audience might determine whether your assignment is an essay or a report. Be clear about this as they have slightly different formats

The following format is suggested by Smith, P (2000)

REPORT SECTION	POSSIBLE MATERIAL
Introduction/aims/objectives	A brief clear statement of the purpose and aims/objectives of the project/activity/investigation.
The organisational context	A description of the organisational context and how the project is influenced by the contextual factors.
Implementation	The project/investigation itself; steps undertaken; the evidence gathered.
Evaluation	Assessing the extent to which the aims of the project were achieved and the evidence used to make this evaluation.
Explanation	A discussion of the factors influencing the success of the project/activity/investigation.
Conclusion	A critical reflection on the project with recommendations for future practice.

As you can see the structures overlap, but you should be clear at the outset the format of your writing.

Each document should contain:

- A title page
- A table of contents
- Numbered pages and diagrams
- A summary of the report including reasoned conclusions and recommendations
- A bibliography
- Appendices if appropriate.

4.3 Main Points

Plan: this is perhaps the most important part of the process. You may find it useful to begin by brainstorming ideas and sources of information essential for successful completion of the assignment with other students. It is always useful to receive feedback on the initial plan from your tutor.

Read: you are expected to show evidence of reading relevant texts and journals to support your arguments and demonstrate an awareness of appropriate sources of information.

Experience: the significant practical element of your assignment should be informed by drawing on your own experience, expertise and opinions.

Debate: it is vital that your assignment is not merely descriptive. You will need to: debate any theory you introduce, reflect on your methods of gathering and analysing evidence to draw out findings, and discuss any impact on your practice.

Style: your writing style should be clear, accurate and succinct. The style of writing should flow and paragraphs should be linked. You may choose to use appendices if inclusion of data in the main text would disturb the flow of the report. The presentation of the assignment should be of a high standard with accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar. The use of relevant tables, diagrams and charts is encouraged, and these should be correctly labelled and numbered.

References and bibliography: any references to books, journals, articles or web research should be referenced accurately and included in a bibliography using the Harvard system.

Review criteria: you will find it very useful to re-check your assignment against the criteria to ensure that you have included everything that will be assessed.

5. Referencing and Bibliographic Notation

Remember to back up any claims you make by referencing.

When starting to word process your work, type in the title and introduction. On the next line type in bibliography. By doing this your reference section is always underneath your typing. You can then easily get into the habit of putting your reference in here each time you quote within the text. This saves you the frustration of having to look up references when you have completed the work.

The Harvard system is used for referencing. Examples of bibliographic notation and how they should appear referenced in the text or in the bibliography at the end of a piece of work are set out below.

5.1 Referencing

Citing in the Body of the Text

When reference is made in the text to a particular document, the author or editor, compiler or translator, individual or organisation with the year of publication inserted in brackets

This concept is discussed by Jones, B (1998).

Quotations

Short quotations may be run into the text with name and date following the quotation. Singe, P (1990) p5 said that "Learning organisation is possible"

Longer quotations

Should be separated from the rest of the text by means of indentation and optional size reduction

"Learning organisations are possible because, deep down, we are all learners. No one has to teach an infant to learn. In fact no one has to teach infants anything. They are intrinsically inquisitive, masterful learners, who learn to walk, speak, and pretty much run their households all on their own."

Senge P. (1990) p5

Note in all cases the page number(s) should appear after the date in the text.

5.2 Book References

Author(s) and Editors

Surname first, followed by first name(s) or initials (be consistent) Senge P.

Year of publication

If not known use n.d. or if unsure put a question mark by date (1997?).

Title

Capitalise the first letter of the first word and any proper nouns. Use bold, italics or underline but be consistent.

Edition

Only include if not first edition.

Place of publication and publisher

Use a colon to separate these elements.

If not given use: s.l. (no place) and s.n. (no publisher)

Page numbers

Include if referring to a specific quotation.

Senge, P. (1990) **The Fifth Discipline**: The Art and Practice of The Learning Organisation: Century Business London

Sections/Chapter in book edited by another

Notes above are relevant but there are additional elements

Author(s) of section

Year of publication

Title of section use normal type followed by 'In'

Author/Editor of whole book

Title of whole book

Place of publication and publisher

Page number of section

Dobbins, H. (1992) **The Cost of Software Quality**: p5: In Schulmeyer, G. Mcmanus, J. (1992) **Handbook of Software Quality Assurance** (Second Edition): Van Nostrand Reinhold: New York.

Journal References

Author

Year of publication

Title of article

Title of journal (use bold, italic or underlined – as for complete books)

Volume number

Issue number and/or date

Page number

Stone, K (2005) **Influential People in 'Manager'** The British Journal of Administrative Management. June/July 2005 p15

Web Page References

Author of the page if known (use the first few words of the page title if not known)

As far as possible use the same information as you would provide for a print reference (author, date, title)

Web address

Date retrieved

Abolish Politicians Website (no date) Retrieved on 30th August 2000

Grassian, E (1999). Thinking Critically about World Wide Web Resources. Retrieved on 18th August 2000 from the World Wide Web: / stop <http://www.libray.ucla.edu/librariad/college/instruct/wev/critical.htm>

5.3 Plagiarism

"To appropriate (ideas, passages, etc) from another work or author." Collins (1991)

Increasingly academic institutions have been concerned with plagiarism in students' work. There is a growing amount of literature related to this subject (Stefani and Corroll (2001), Burkhill, S. and Franklyn-Stokes, A. (2004) Errey, L. (2002) Kilner, A. (2004) Stefani, L. and Carroll, J. (2001) Walker, J. (1998). Educational bodies in the United Kingdom such as the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) and the Qualifications and Curriculum Agency (QCA) give guidance on good practice and specifically charge institutions with the need to ensure that assessment decisions are reliable and can be robustly defended QAA (2000).

When writing assignments, you need to be aware that you can quote from other texts and reference where you have obtained these quotes. However, intentional use of other people's work without providing references is classed as plagiarism. Plagiarism is a form of cheating. Examiners are well aware of this issue and they are experts in their subject matter. Therefore they are very likely to recognise any extensive passage which has been taken from a book or journal. There are also a number of computer programmes that can detect plagiarism.

It could be argued that the biggest issue with plagiarism is that students who do this are denying themselves the opportunity to better themselves. By using other people's work, they are not developing themselves as reflective learners. From a tutor's point of view, this is very frustrating as their job is to help students to become analytical and reflective learners, not cutting and pasting experts.

5.4 Research

When researching for an assignment or project report, you will be looking at books, journals, and articles and using the internet. You need to ensure that the work you use has credibility. As you complete the work, in this unit you will have become aware of many of the names related to Business and Administration. Work completed by these people has credibility.

Internet

The internet is a useful tool in research, but you need to think carefully about the sources you use. As you progress with your research, you will begin to recognise authors who are prominent in the field of administration. You will also begin to understand which internet sources are the most reliable. This is not to say that you cannot use other sources; however you need to ensure that the information is valid.

Methods of recording

There are a number of different methods of recording:

- Making notes
- Putting information in a card index
- Putting pieces of paper or stickies on the relevant pages

Each learner need to find the best method for themselves.

5.5 Other Issues

Sensitivity of studying whilst working

The programme involves analysis and reflection on issues of a personal nature. You need to see these as learning areas and be sensitive to the people you are working with or studying with.

Sensitivity of data collection

Any data collected as part of your assignment may only be used with the consent of the people/person involved. This data should be made anonymous and the original data files destroyed on completion.

Choosing a Project

The issue of your project is very individual to you and your organisation. When considering a project you should be relating it to the areas of study covered in the programme.

Examples of projects that have taken place are:

- Critical Analysis of the Organisation's Structure
- Review and update the Organisational Appraisal System
- Analyse the Systems of Communication used within an organisation
- Establishing a Purchase and Inventory Control System
- Introducing a Project Planning System and Establishing Standardised Work Procedures
- Implementation of a Centralised System - for Reception and Delivery of Facsimiles, Internal Documents and Incoming Parcels
- The Effect of Investors in People on Communications with Support Services
- An Investigation into Lifting and Handling Accidents leading to Staff Litigation Cases and their Possible Reduction
- The Provision of Staff Training at (name of company)
- An Investigation into the Contract Monitoring Procedures
- Administrative Needs and the Development of Access for Basic Skills Students
- Critical Assessment of Base Information Available to the Parks and Contracts Division of the Leisure Services Department
- Communication of Patients Notes between Departments at the Hospital
- Reviewing the function an Administration Section
- Effective Schools Liaison
- To Review the Referrals System of a Busy Social Services Childcare Department from an Administrative Viewpoint
- Review of the Change Management Process.

5.6 Project Report Assessment

Projects will vary in length. You will need to discuss this with your tutor. Certificate Projects should be between 2,000 and 2,500 words in length. Diploma and Advanced Diploma Projects should be between 3,000 and 4,000 words in length. Appendices are not included in the word count.

5.7 Marks Awarded

In the light of the above comment, the tutors' marks should be allocated as follows:

Format, language and presentation	10
Description and definition	20
Research and Evaluation	20
Sound argument and feasibility of reasoning	20
Quality of conclusion and recommendations	20
General Impression	10
Total	100 marks

The Projects are marked at the same level as the other units in the programme. The Level 3 Projects are marked by the centre and a sample batch of at least 10% is sent to the IAM for moderation. Level 4 and 5 Projects are marked by the IAM. The work is not returned to students.

5.8 Employer

How can your employer or manager help a student undertaking a project?

- By showing interest and enthusiasm in the selection of a suitable project.
- The project needs to be one that the student has the ability to tackle – employers can help with this.
- By showing continued support and interest during the difficult stages of data collection and building the report
- By acting as a facilitator for the student and helping to obtain the co-operation of others in the organisation in the provision of data and information.
- By acting as a mentor or by appointing someone in the organisation to act in this role to help and guide the student in what will almost certainly be their first investigative, problem solving assignment.
- By providing constructive critical comments on the report together with some indication of likelihood of all or any of the recommendations being implemented.

How can the employer/manager benefit from the student's work project?

Projects that take place within an organisation have been found to have an impact on the organisation or department. Some have resulted in marked increases in productivity and with substantial financial savings.

Probably the most important benefit of all will be the continued development and training of another employee who will have gained considerably in competence and confidence as the result of his/her experience of completing a major problem solving assignment.

Finally although the Institute will always be delighted to publicise the achievements of successful students complete confidentiality of the content of the work project is assured and no publication of any information would ever be contemplated without the expressed permission of you the employer

5.9 Timescales

The Project Report can be started at any time of the year and the results will be sent to students after moderation.

Project Planning

It is important when taking part in a project that you plan your time. You should also let others know about this plan so that they are aware of it. If people know you are doing a project they can be more forgiving during this time.

Possible Plan

Project Planning Chart

Select project, discuss with manager and tutor	week 1
Decide methods of investigation and sources of information	weeks 2-3
Establish terms of reference. Submit to tutor	weeks 2-3
Collect relevant Information	weeks 4-7
Interpret data - analyse data	
Draw conclusions and recommendations	weeks 8-9
Prepare first draft	week 10
Edit and revise	week 11
Prepare final report	week 12
Submit final report to centre	week 12

Project Report Assessment

All Projects are assessed in one of two ways, depending on the level of the qualification.

Level 3 Project Reports

All Project Reports marked by centre
At least 10% sent to IAM for moderation
IAM moderation takes place
Results sent to students

Level 4 and 5 Project Reports

No Project Reports marked by centre
All Project Reports sent to IAM for marking
IAM marking and moderation take place
Results sent to students

5.10 Bibliography

Smith, P. (2000) **Writing an Assignment:** Effective ways to improve your research and presentation skills. How to Books Ltd

Senge, P. (1990) **The Fifth Discipline:** The Art and Practice of The Learning Organisation: Century Business London

Appendix 1 – Project Report Documents

Please find the following documents:

- Level 3 Project Report cover sheet
- Project Report proposal
- Project Report declaration form

Level 3 Project Report cover sheet

Project Report Assessment

The iam will retain a copy of each assessment outcome as part of the Quality Assurance Process

Name of Centre

Membership Number

Student Name

	Marks	Comments
Format, language and presentation	/10	
Description and definition	/20	
Research and evaluation	/20	
Sound argument and feasibility of reasoning	/20	
Quality of conclusion and recommendations	/20	
General impression	/10	
Total Marks as a %		

Marker's Signature

Date

Return to:

Examinations Office, IAM, 6 Graphite Square, Vauxhall Walk, London, UK, SE11 5EE

Fax: +44 (0)20 7091 2619

Email: info@instam.org

For IAM Use Only

Moderation

	Marks	Comments
Format, language and presentation	/10	
Description and definition	/20	
Research and evaluation	/20	
Sound argument and feasibility of reasoning	/20	
Quality of conclusion and recommendations	/20	
General impression	/10	
Total Marks as a %		

Outcome

Moderator's Signature

Date

Project Report proposal

Name of Centre

Membership Number

Student Name

Project Report proposal:

Title of study:

Summarise the subject of your Project Report in a short sentence.

Context:

In a paragraph, summarise why you have chosen this Project. Explain the situation. Outline why this Project is important to the organisation. Identify what you hope will be the benefit to the organisation.

Aims and purpose of the study:

Explain the aims of the Project and how you will achieve this

Action plan:

Put together an action plan showing the main point of your Project.

Timetable:

Draft a timetable for completing this Project.

Project Report declaration form

I declare that every part of the attached Project Report is genuinely my own work.

I acknowledge that, if the IAM examiners detect any sort of malpractice in relation to this Project Report, the IAM will not award me marks for my work.

Name of Centre
Membership Number
Student Name
Signature
Date

Appendix 2 – Project Report Marking Criteria

Please find Project Report marking criteria documents for the following IAM qualifications:

- Level 3 Certificate in Administrative Management
- Level 4 Diploma in Administrative Management
- Level 5 Advanced Diploma in Administrative Management

Please note: although Project Report marking criteria documents are included for Levels 4 and 5, these are for reference and teaching use only as centres are not responsible for marking Project Reports at Levels 4 and 5. All Level 4 and 5 Project Reports are to be submitted to the IAM for marking.

Level 3 Certificate in Administrative Management

Project Report marking criteria

General Assessment Criteria

The assessment of all work will be based upon the following criteria:

- Knowledge of theoretical concepts relevant to the topics within the module
- Evidence of wider reading
- Problem-solving ability
- Practical application within the workplace

CRITERIA	DISTINCTION 75 – 100%	CREDIT 60 – 74%	PASS 45 – 59%	FAIL 0 - 44%
Use of Literature	Used own ideas and justified them through others literature	Show evidence of wider reading	Has read the study guide and limited further reading	Literature not mentioned or irrelevant to the topic
Concepts	Is aware of wider concepts within the project	Has highlighted the main concepts	Demonstrates some understanding of concepts	Understanding of concepts not apparent
Problem Solving	Able to analyse complex issues to resolve problems	Show use of analysis to solve problems	Able to recognise conflicting information	No evidence of attempt to problem solve
Application of Organisational Examples	Critically evaluates in the context of the question	Answer highlights the main organisational examples	Limited application of organisational examples	Failure to apply organisational examples

Level 4 Diploma in Administrative Management

Project Report marking criteria

General Assessment Criteria

The assessment of all work will be based upon the following criteria:

- Knowledge of theoretical concepts relevant to the topics within the module
- Evidence of wider reading
- Problem-solving ability
- Practical application within the workplace

CRITERIA	DISTINCTION 75 – 100%	CREDIT 60 – 74%	PASS 40 – 59%	FAIL 0 - 39%
Use of Literature	Developed and justified own ideas based on a critical appraisal of sources	Appraised literature from various sources	Application of reading, relevant to the topic	Literature not mentioned or irrelevant to the topic
Concepts	Able to discuss alternative concepts	Concepts presented in a coherent and logical way	Demonstrates understanding of concepts	Understanding of concepts not apparent
Problem Solving	Able to critically analyse complex issues to resolve problems	Able to analyse complex issues to resolve problems	Able to analyse issues and recognise conflicting information	No evidence of attempt to problem solve
Application of Organisational Examples	Critically evaluate organisational examples in the context of the question	Answer refers to appropriate organisational examples	Limited application of organisational examples	Failure to apply organisational examples

Level 5 Advanced Diploma in Administrative Management

Project Report marking criteria

General Assessment Criteria

The assessment of all work will be based upon the following criteria:

- Knowledge of and reflection upon the theoretical concepts underpinning the module
- Evidence of wider reading
- Problem-solving ability
- Practical application within the workplace

CRITERIA	DISTINCTION 75 – 100%	CREDIT 60 – 74%	PASS 40 – 59%	FAIL 0 - 39%
Use of Literature	Thorough and relevant research – developed/ justified own ideas based on a critical appraisal of sources	Appraised literature from various sources, and developed own ideas	Application of reading, relevant to topic	Literature either not consulted or irrelevant / or indication of limited understanding of literature
Concepts	Consistently demonstrates application of critical analysis, and may challenge 'accepted' thought	Clear application of theory through critical analysis/critical reflection on the topic areas	Some evidence of critical thought/critical analysis and rationale for work	Lacks critical thought/ analysis/reference to theory
Problem Solving	Able to use cognitive skills in applying alternative concepts	Consistent understanding of concepts. Material presented in a coherent and logical way	Demonstrates understanding of concepts. Uses a logical approach	Understanding of the concepts not apparent
Application of Organisational Examples	Able to critically analyse complex issues to resolve problems	Able to analyse complex issues to resolve problems	Able to analyse issues and recognise conflicting information	No evidence of attempt to problem solve, or inconsistent attempt to recognise and address conflicting issues