4th year Projects: Progress (or Preliminary) Report

At the end of the first semester of your project work, you usually need to present a report of your progress to date. You also need to present the plan of the work you will do to complete the project in the second semester. This plan is sometimes very similar to the plan that you presented in your Project Proposal at the beginning of the project; at other times you will need to revise the plan based on the first semester work.

Requirements

Different departments have different requirements for the progress report, so that the guidelines presented here are general in nature. You must always check the particular requirements of your department so that you can then apply these guidelines successfully.

The length of the Progress Report varies from department to department. For example in Mechanical Engineering, the length is about 2000 words, while in Civil Engineering the preliminary report is a maximum of 5,000 words. In some departments you may be required to prepare a poster presentation rather than a report to outline your progress during the first semester.

Purpose

The purpose of the progress report is:

- to summarise the work you have already completed in the first semester, and
- to outline in detail the work you will carry out during the second semester in order to realise the objectives of the project.

Format

The format of the Progress Report is formal report format. Typical sections in a progress report and their contents are outlined below.

Summary - provides a brief overview of the report, summarising the topic of your project, the work already completed and the work planned for the second semester.

Table of Contents – lists the contents of your report with clearly set out, numbered sections and subsections with their corresponding page numbers.
**Introduction** - is similar to the introduction of the Research Proposal. It provides the background to the investigation, defines the topic or the research problem and clearly states the aims of the research.

**Project Work completed in first semester** - presents a report of your progress to date. You need to describe the work that you have done (for example, the first stages of a design; a preliminary literature review; some experimental work). You then need to discuss the outcomes of your investigation so far. This section may include headings such as literature review, preliminary experimental work, design calculations, data analysis, case studies, and findings to date.

**Project Plan for the second semester** - is similar to the Project Plan that you submitted in your Project Proposal. However, based on the work completed in Semester 1, you can provide a more detailed and more focussed plan of the work which needs to be done in order to achieve the aims of your project.

Possible subheadings in this section are:
- Aims
- Project Plan
- Timetable
- Resources

**Conclusions** - briefly summarises the main information in the report.

**References** - lists only those sources which you have consulted and referred to in the text of the report. The suggested format is (author, date, page numbers if appropriate) which is placed in the text next to the cited information. All the references with relevant details should be listed alphabetically by author's surname at the end of the report. Consult the online referencing resources or the online tutorials on the library website about proper referencing styles if necessary.

**Appendices** - can be used to provide additional information to the reader about the details of, for example, the calculation procedures, the design features of a particular piece of equipment, the raw data collected in the laboratory or in the field, etc. You must refer to each appendix in the text of the report.