

Report Writing Guide

Sustainable City Year Program

About SCYP Report Writing

Your role is to synthesize all the work that was produced in your course into a single, coherent report. SCI staff can help you decide how the report should be structured, and your professor may have ideas as well. Compiling this synthesized final report is a critical component of the SCYP process. For students, this paid position is a great opportunity to be a lead author on a complex document that will be published with your name on the cover. This project will look great on a résumé, and it's something tangible that can be shown to potential employers. The SCI Report Editor provides supervision and guidance throughout the preparation of the document, and the SCI Graphic Designer will manage the aesthetics of the final report.

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Logistics

Employment Paperwork:

You will be required to complete and submit your timesheet accurately and expediently. If you have not worked for the UO recently, some additional paperwork may be required; please contact our office for more details if you have not already received your personalized timesheet from Katie Coffin (AA&A Fiscal Services). You cannot start work until you receive this timesheet. Time sheets are due on the 10th of each month. Fill yours out, sign it, and deliver it to 204 Pacific Hall before 2PM on the 10th of each month. For those of you not on the main UO campus, please find a way to sign the time sheet, scan it, and send it to SCI via e-mail. Recording your hours is extremely important, so please keep track of all time spent working on the reports. Unless otherwise discussed, you may not work more than 30-hours a term on your report. If you approach 20 hours, please let the SCYP Report Editor know.

Collaboration:

You will be given access to the SCI Google Drive where your report folder will be located. You will also be able to access templates, helpful documents, and examples of past reports here.

You will meet with the SCYP Report Editor before Week 1 of the term. The SCYP Report Editor will establish check-ins, deadlines, and other project logistics with each writer to provide personalized support while ensuring completion of the project.

Make a backup of the report as you are working on it. We will be saving work to Google Drive and editing in Google Docs. However, it's always a good idea to regularly save a backup to your personal computer, flash drive, or another storage device.

Good communication is vital to the report writing process. Please contact the SCI Report Editor with any questions or issues you may have. It is also important that you email the SCI Report Editor once you complete each draft of the report so that they will be able to make edits in a timely fashion.

Timeline

Report writing is an 11-week process, outlined below. This process starts immediately after the term ends for your SCYP course. For example, if you took the SCYP course in Fall term, then you will start writing in Winter term. In many cases, it is easier to start gathering information from your peers and professor(s) before your class ends; for example, you may want to download shared files from Canvas, collect student names and majors, or collect final products (such as InDesign Files, presentations, or reports) from individual students or student groups.

SCI can be flexible regarding due dates if you communicate early. If you experience trouble during any part of this process, do not hesitate to reach out to the SCI Report Editor.

Before Week 1:

- Gather high-quality images and other digital files from students in your course. See instructions below in “Gathering Student Work.”
- Begin draft outline using the provided outline template located in your Google Drive folder.

Week 1:

- **Outline due.** Do not start writing a rough draft of your report until your outline is approved by the SCYP Report Editor.
- Continue to gather images and other files from classmates or teachers.

Weeks 2-3:

- Work on rough draft of report using the provided report template located in your Google Drive folder. Use text placeholders for figures as needed (images, tables, and other graphics). Do not worry about any formatting issues.

End of Week 3:

- **First Draft due.** Please notify the SCI Report Editor once you’ve completed this draft.

Week 4:

- SCI staff will proofread the reports. If the report is far enough along, we will send the report to your professor for comments.
- Receive edits in an email from the SCI Report Editor.

Week 5:

- Incorporate feedback from SCI staff and your professor.
- Finish up any sections that were incomplete.
- **Second Draft due (all images must be included in this draft).**

Weeks 6-7:

- The SCI Graphic Designer will format your report into InDesign.

Weeks 7-8:

- After a review of the formatted document, the SCI Report Editor will send drafts to city staff partners for review and feedback.

Week 9:

- Receive compiled feedback (from city staff, SCI staff, and professors) from the Report Editor.

Week 10:

- **Final Draft due.**
- Final report published.

Gathering Student Work

Gathering work from the students in your course is critical to the report writing process. You will need native files to ensure high-quality resolution if your report contains graphics. You will want to collect Word documents and editable versions of other original documents. Encourage classmates to upload all their high-quality images and other digital files to the course folder or a Google Drive or OneNote folder, so you can use them in the final report. You can use the Discussions, Chat, or People features on Canvas to contact students. Please contact students and your professor for help getting materials before the SCYP term ends. This will speed up the process and can be more difficult to do after the term has ended. Please reach out to SCI Report Editor if you encounter any issues gathering materials.

Structure of the Report

If you look at past reports (<https://scholarsbank.uoregon.edu/xmlui/handle/1794/10380>) you will see many sections in addition to the main body of the report. Your report will contain each of the following sections, in the order listed below. **The SCI Report Editor will provide a working template to use in your Google Drive folder.** Before you begin using this template, you will need to complete an outline (a template for this is also provided in your Google Drive folder). Use the style guide at the end of this document when writing your first and second drafts.

Cover Page:

The cover page needs a report title, your name and department affiliation, and your professor's name and department. Your Google Docs document should also identify a high-resolution image or images to use on the cover. Images should take up approximately the top half of the cover page (about 6x6 inches).

Acknowledgements:

Make a brief statement of your gratitude to the people who helped you with your project. This list of people should include all participating city staff and other project partners from the city, interested residents, people you interviewed, and faculty who participated in reviews of student work. It is important to acknowledge any non-student participants because they made it a priority to help your course. You may need to ask your professor for help with this list. Do not include SCI employees in this list.

SCI Directors and Staff, About SCI, About SCYP, About the Partner City:

SCI's Report Editor or staff will provide these sections. You can leave them out of your draft.

Course Participants:

A roster of the students who were in the class, and their majors. For a few classes, not all the students in the class participated in the SCYP project. In that case, list only the participants in the SCYP project. See below for how to list these students and their departments. This information can be difficult to get after the term is over, so make sure you get this information before the SCYP term ends.

Table of Contents:

This will be generated automatically, so you do not have to include it. You can include one in your draft if it helps you organize.

Disclaimer:

The following statement appears below the table of contents, at the bottom of the page, without quotation marks. "This report represents original student work and recommendations prepared by students in the University of Oregon's Sustainable City Year Program for the City of _____. Text and images contained in this report may not be used without permission from the University of Oregon."

Executive Summary:

A short (about 300-500 words) summary of the entire report. Everything that appears in the Executive Summary should appear somewhere in the report. It should have a statement describing the city's goals for the project, how the class addressed the goals, and a brief set of findings and recommendations that emerged from the class's research. It can be easier to write this section last, after the rest of the report is done.

Introduction:

Somewhere in your introduction, describe the city's goals for the project, the city's initial problem statement, and how the students and faculty worked in partnership with the city ("collaborated with city staff" is a good phrase to use) to explore and expand the scope of inquiry. If you do not have the city's original goals and problem statement in a written form, let the SCI Report Editor know and they will send you the "scope of work" document that SCI and the city developed for your project. The Introduction may also contain background information about your project site or situation. It should not contain any original work that was done in the class, such as analysis, designs, or recommendations.

Body sections:

These two to five sections will vary based on the structure of your course. See previous reports to get an idea of what people did for classes like yours. You, your professor, and I can talk about the best way to structure the body sections of the report. The body sections should include all the original work that was done in the class, including findings and recommendations. All section headers, including subheadings, should use capitalization for all words except small words (e.g. Section about Important and Meaningful Things).

Conclusion:

This can be brief. Look at previous reports to get an idea of what can be included in the Conclusion. The Conclusion should contain common themes, findings, and recommendations that emerge from the individual or group projects in the course.

Appendix/Appendices:

Appendix materials should be referenced in the body of your report. If an Appendix is not referenced in the report, consider whether it is useful to the reader. You can discuss this with the SCI Report Editor if there are any doubts. If in doubt, keep the material in your report for now, and we'll discuss to figure out where it should go. If you have multiple Appendices, use letters to denote them (e.g. Appendix A, Appendix B).

References:

Keep track of all bibliographic references in as complete a citation format as you can. In the text, use parenthetical references, like this: (Smith 2007). The References and/or Bibliography will go at the end of the report, not at the end of each section, and not in footnotes (unless otherwise discussed). Depending on the structure of your report, it may make sense to have a section in the References for each section of the report. For example, if your report consists of five separate projects that are described in five distinct sections, it may make sense to split your References section accordingly so that the reader can find the references more easily. If you would like assistance managing references the SCI Report Editor can provide support.

SCI recommends that you follow the Chicago Manual of Style's author-date format, which is a straightforward system.

http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html

Click on the "Author-Date" tab on the above page to see examples of the Author-Date format that you should use in parenthetical references and in a References section at the end of your paper. You may omit page numbers in the parenthetical references. For more details about citing specific kinds of documents, click through the links to Chapters 14 and 15 on the above page. For these SCYP reports, don't worry about adding information to the references (like page numbers, or "date accessed" for URLs) that you don't already have.

Make sure you cite rigorously. If you use anything that is not original work from your course, such as images, tables, charts, or information, cite it. Always cite quotes or information with in-text citations and cite figures directly below or in footnotes.

How to Structure the Body Sections

The report writers main task is to figure out how to synthesize all the work done in your course into a single set of body sections. The SCI Report Editor can help brainstorm structure, and your professor may have ideas as well. The first step is to read and review all the material that was generated in your course, including reports, posters, images, models, and PowerPoint presentations. Make notes about common themes and recommendations that emerge from the individual projects. These themes should be included in a Conclusions section and in the Executive Summary, and they can help determine a good structure for the body of the report. For reports with many proposed design scenarios or solutions to problems, it is better to pick two to three different good solutions for a given problem than to include many examples for every item. We want to be concise and provide a brief set of our best recommendations; we do not want to provide a comprehensive set of options that requires the reader to sift through a massive report to find the best ideas.

Other Elements of the Reports

Page count:

500 words is about the maximum that can fit on a page with no images. The reports typically range from 20 to 70 pages of material, including the Appendices. This means that image-rich reports could be as short as 6,000-8,000 words, and text-rich reports could be as long as 20,000-25,000 words. These numbers can give you a rough idea of how long your report could be, based on the text that you are currently working with and how image-heavy your report is. If your report looks like it will be much longer, some cutting will be necessary. The SCI Report Editor can help with those editing choices.

Pull quotes:

If you come across short pieces of text, maybe a sentence or two, that would be good to highlight as a “pull quote” in a box next to the text, make a bracketed note in the body of your text, e.g. [use the previous sentence as a pull quote]. You’ve seen pull quotes in magazines and newspaper articles -- check Wikipedia for a definition if you’re not sure what this is. The SCI Graphic Designer will format them in the final report in a way that highlights them. Pull quotes should be text that already appears in the body of the report.

Sidebars:

Similarly, if there is a section of text (usually explanatory text, or an example or case study) that doesn't fit in the flow of your text, but you want to include it, this could be added on the page as a sidebar or a separate box. Make a note in your text where you have paragraphs or sections that might fit this model. An example of this: A report is recommending affordable housing in a neighborhood and explaining how it might work. The authors of the report have a case study example of similar housing in another city. We decided that it would probably work to create a sidebar containing the case study. That way, it's in the right location within the report without interrupting the flow of the text.

Figures:

When you are writing your draft in Google Docs, note where you would like figures inserted. Use the image's file name in your document to indicate which image you want to use at a given location in the text. It also helps the SCI Graphic Designer if you indicate approximately how large you think the image should be, e.g. "full page", "half page", "three images in a single row". That will help the SCI Graphic Designer lay out something that makes sense. It helps our graphic designer if you clearly indicate the pieces of text that are instructions for her. I recommend using square brackets, like this: [Insert image from Group-1-Report.pdf, bottom of page 7. Image should be half page]. Or like this: [Insert Jane Doe First Floor Plan.jpg].

Add original image files that you want to use in the document to the Images folder in your Google Drive folder. Make sure the file name in that folder matches the file name that you use in the Google Docs document. This will make it possible for the SCI Graphic Designer to lay out the document easily.

If you wish to include images in your report that were not generated by students in your class, **make sure to keep track of source information for these images.** We need to provide proper credit for all non-student images used in the reports. Also, try to find images that are high-quality enough to look good in a printed report (for example, a 25KB jpeg file will not look good if you try to use it at any size larger than a square inch or so). If you are using images from web sites, try to download the highest-quality image that is available.

Table Titles; Figure Titles and Captions:

Provide captions for all images. They can be brief. Each caption should look like this: "Figure X: View of the project site from the north." Each caption should have a period at the end. Use normal sentence capitalization in figure captions. Do not use a period at the end of a figure or table title.

How to Deliver your Draft Report to SCI for Review

Create your draft in the template provided to you in your Google Docs folder. This template includes all the proper formatting for the report. Using this will make it easier for the SCI Graphic Designer to complete the final formatting in InDesign.

Spell-check your report before sending it to the SCI Report Editor. Proofread for basic problems like missing words and awkward phrases. The best way to proofread is to read the document aloud once you've finished writing. This may seem like it will take a lot of time, but makes a clear difference in the quality of the final product.

Along with your document, you will need to upload your high-quality images in the folder provided for you in your Google Drive folder. Having all the images in one folder will make it easier for our graphic designer to put your document into our standard template. The images can't be pixelated or fuzzy. They must be print quality. If you have been given images embedded in a Word, PDF, or PowerPoint document, just upload the whole document to Google Drive folder, then refer to the file using a note in [brackets] within your Google Docs document, like this: [Insert image from Group-1-Report.pdf, bottom of page 7].

Email the SCI Report Editor immediately after you complete any draft of your report.

Style Guidelines

- **An important note on tone: soften recommendations.** Don't say "should," "needs to," "must," or "it is imperative that". Better: "We suggest", "we recommend", "city staff could", or "the city may choose to". Assume that your course's few weeks of work are not thorough enough to reveal all the complexity underlying the situation you are examining. You're making suggestions to people who have worked full-time for years on the issues you have studied for a few weeks.
- References in the text like "see Figure X" should be in parentheses. Don't worry about numbering the figures in your draft; instead, write "(see Figure X)". We'll assign the numbers when we lay out the document later. Every non-text item, including tables, will be referred to as a "Figure."
- Spell out "Street", "Road", and similar words that are part of street names. Don't use "St" or "Rd". It is OK to abbreviate "SE" or similar geographic designations that are part of the street name.
- Always write "Main Street" or "the intersection of Oak and Main Streets" rather than simply "Main" or "the intersection of Oak and Main".
- Avoid the word "users". Choose a better word, like "pedestrians," "people," "visitors," or "residents." Also, you may want to avoid "citizens" – not all city residents are citizens.
- Choose a high-resolution image, or more than one image, for the cover. At the beginning of your Google Docs document, where you have the report title and author information, include a reference to the image file or files that you want to use on the cover.
- In general, avoid contractions like "don't" and "isn't". Use "do not" and "is not" instead.
- When abbreviating the name of an agency or similar proper name, spell out the agency name, then put the abbreviation in parentheses, like this: "The Portland Housing Authority (PHA) provides housing for 10,000 people. In 1999, PHA added 500 units to its housing stock."
- Spell-check your report.
- Use "and" instead of "&" unless the "&" is part of the official name.
- Use the serial comma. This means that when you have a list of three or more items, use a comma before "and" or "or". This is correct: "apples, oranges, and bananas." This is wrong: "apples, oranges and bananas."
- The Course Participants list should be formatted like this:
John Doe, Architecture Undergraduate
If you have a student in your course who is seeking more than one degree, list her like this:
Jane Doe, Landscape Architecture Graduate, Environmental Studies Graduate
- Every discipline has words that are common within the discipline but that can be confusing to outsiders. Consider synonyms for words like "ideation", "axon/axonometric", "isometric", "cost burden", "moves" (architecture), and other jargon words specific to your discipline but unknown to outsiders.

- If you have dictionary questions, look up the word on m-w.com and go with their recommendation. I often consult the site to get their ruling on whether a compound word should be a single word or two words, e.g. “green space”, “timeline”, “row house”, “townhome”, “right-of-way”, “gray water”, “stormwater”.
- Capitalize “City” or “Department” only if you are saying “the City of Medford” (or another city) or “Albany Parks and Recreation Department.” If you’re just saying “The city has...” or “The department is...” then use lower case.
- Avoid the use of “etc.” at the end of a list. It implies that you didn’t take the time to decide whether the list was complete.
- Capitalize “North” and other directions only when the word is part of a place name, like “North Bend” or “West Salem.” In other cases, use lower case, like “on the north side of the street” or “west of the development site.”
- Avoid words like “great” and “wonderful.” Use a factual adjective instead, or leave out the modifier altogether.
- Avoid words like “impacted,” “changed,” or “affected,” since they don’t tell whether something is getting better or worse. Try “improved” or “degraded” instead.
- Use lower case letters for the names of academic departments: architecture, business, law, journalism.
- In bulleted lists, use periods at the end of sentences when they are complete sentences only.
- Spell out the numbers one through ten; use numerals for any numbers beyond that (i.e., 11, 12, 100, 1,000)
- Use a comma before “which.” For example, “Participants worked in groups to create their ideal community, which often included open space and activities for youth.”
- Do not punctuate titles or captions.
- Capitalize after colons
- Put a space in between 80° F
- Use commas or em dashes, dashes the same length as the letter ‘m’ INSTEAD of parentheses. Unless calling out a figure (Figure X).

We look forward to working with you this term!