# COMM1101

## Formal Information Research Report

**Purpose:** You will write a formal research paper on a business topic. Using your thesis/topic, prepare an information-based research report. After forming a research question(s), you will conduct a literature review on the topic. Your literature review and the discussion (critical analysis of the findings) will be used to answer your research question.

**Grading:** Refer to the Rubric

**Format:** This guideline refers to the NAIT Style Guidebook (Formal Report) for formatting instructions. They were included in this document for easier reference.

## Guidelines

**Document**

1. Word processed and printed on one side only on white 8.5 x 11-inch paper.
2. Double space this document. This paper will end up being minimum 10 pages including front and back matter.
3. Set Top, Bottom, Left, and Right margins at 1”.
4. Staple pages together in the top left corner of the report (no folders please); printed on one side (not duplexed); transmittal letter signed and not stapled to report.
5. Limit the type throughout the document to only two typefaces:
   1. Choose **one** sans serif typeface for all titles, headings, subheadings, and headers (such as Arial, Calibri, Franklin, Helvetica, Gill Sans, or Verdana).
   2. Choose **one** serif typeface for all text, paragraphs, in-text and reference citations (such as Cambria, Times New Roman, Garamond, Baskerville, Bookman, Palatino, or Century Schoolbook).

**Front Matter**

Attach a Letter of Transmittal, Title Page, Table of Contents, and Executive Summary in that order.

1. Formal Letter of Transmittal or transmittal letter
   1. Printed as a separate document from the report. This is not stapled to the report. It follows the Business block format guidelines.
   2. There is no page number.
   3. This is a personal note from the report writer to the person who assigned the report.
   4. Business block format: flush left/ragged right, paragraph spacing, no indents.
   5. Single spaced 12-point serif font and signed on the hard copy.
   6. Free hand signature in blue ink.
   7. Introduce the report and its purpose, and possibly preview the conclusions.
   8. Acknowledge who assigned the report and the nature of the assignment.
   9. Express appreciation for being given this opportunity to exhibit your skills in research and writing, and for any contributions or assistance you may have received from others.
2. Title Page has 4 blocks of type centered horizontally and evenly spaced vertically on the page, including top and bottom spaces.
   1. course name and number, your name, your section, instructor’s name, and due date (in upper and lower case 14-point serif type), horizontally and vertically centered on page.
3. Table of Contents includes all subsequent headings and subheadings.
   1. TABLE OF CONTENTS title should be centered, all caps, 14-point sans serif
   2. Report headers and footers begin on this page
   3. List of headings separated by period leader from the column of page numbers.
   4. 12-point serif font.
4. List of Figures includes the figure number and title of any tables, illustrations, graphics, photos, logos, and graphs.
   1. List must match the style and tab settings of the table of contents
   2. It may be placed on the same page as the table of contents if there is room.
   3. Copyrighted images, images on a copyrighted page, or images with a watermark may not be used without permission.
   4. Registered trademarks and logos may be used only to represent the entity for which they are registered. They may be resized but must not be stretched, squished, or in any way distorted in proportion.
5. Executive Summary contains a short summary of all significant points in the report.
   1. Title 14-point sans serif centered in all caps
   2. Summary text 12-point serif
   3. Summary includes the purpose of report, the findings, and the conclusions.
   4. Half page single spaced

**Report Body**

1. Headings. The following are all Heading 1 and must be included in the final Research Paper. Use Word to label the headings accordingly to generate the Table of Contents.
   1. Thesis (**Centered, Boldface, Uppercase and Lowercase Headings**)
   2. Introduction (**Centered, Boldface, Uppercase and Lowercase Headings**)
   3. Problem Statement (**Centered, Boldface, Uppercase and Lowercase Headings**)
   4. Rationale for the Research (**Centered, Boldface, Uppercase and Lowercase Headings**)
   5. Hypothesis (**Centered, Boldface, Uppercase and Lowercase Headings**)
   6. Areas of Investigation and Scope (**Centered, Boldface, Uppercase and Lowercase Headings**)
   7. Research Methods (**Centered, Boldface, Uppercase and Lowercase Headings**)
   8. Literature Review (**Centered, Boldface, Uppercase and Lowercase Headings**)
      1. This section will be broken down further into Heading 2’s. It will move from a general, wider view of the literature being reviewed to the specific focus of the research (**Left-aligned, Boldface, Uppercase and Lowercase Heading**). Heading Level 3 is optional and dependent on how specific the topic becomes (**Indented, boldface, lowercase heading with a period.** )
   9. Discussion of Finding (Centered, Boldface, Uppercase and Lowercase Headings)
2. Headers and footers
   1. 10 or 9-point size sans serif font
   2. Includes report title and author’s name and section #.
3. Appropriate section breaks with headings and subheadings.
   1. Headings may include introduction, background, history, findings, conclusions, recommendations, or other appropriate short phrases.
   2. Major headings centered, all-capitalized, 14-point sans serif font
   3. Subheadings upper-and-lower-case 14-point sans serif aligned left.
4. Short single-themed paragraphs (not every paragraph needs a heading).
   1. 12-point serif font
   2. Double spaced for marking purposes
   3. No indents, 8-point extra spacing between paragraphs.
5. All figures (graphic, photo, statistical graph, table, or chart).
   1. Must have an introduction in the text prior to the occurrence of the figure.
   2. Must be labeled with a figure number above the figure.
   3. Must be titled (if it doesn’t come with a title, give it a descriptive one).
   4. Must have the word Source: followed by the in-text citation information underneath the figure.

**In-text Documentation**

Demonstrate the use of APA documentation style within the paper including direct quotes, summarizations, paraphrases, ellipses and brackets. Failing to do so results in possible plagiarism.

1. Every paragraph containing summarized or paraphrased research data must have at least one correctly formatted in-text citation. Multiple sources require multiple citations. The colour code is for pattern recognition only: **Who**, **When**, **What**, and **Where**.
   1. (Author’s last **name** only, **year**, **p. or para. #),** in parenthesis **before** the period or other punctuation.
   2. If no known author, use the **“first two or three”** words from the title of the work in quotations. It **MUST** match the first words in the Reference!
   3. If no known date, use **n.d.**, to match the second section in the Reference!
   4. If the document is not have page numbers, you must count down the paragraphs for single-page, scroll-down online documents.
2. Every quotation must have a correctly formatted in-text citation including page or paragraph number (**Author**, **year**, **p. #**) or (**Author**, **year**, **para. #**) **immediately** after the quote and before the period or other punctuation.
3. You must indicate any edit or alteration of quotes.
   1. By ellipses . . . for deleted words (space period space period space period space).
   2. Or [square brackets] for substituted or inserted words.
4. Each source listed on the reference page must have at least one in-text citation.
   1. The last **name** of the **author(s)** in the in-text citation must exactly match the alphabetical listing by author’s last name on the reference page.
   2. If the author is unknown, the **“first two words”** of the title (not counting an article, “The” or “A”), must exactly match the alphabetical listing by **work title** on the reference page.
   3. The **year** or **n.d.** must match the date section on the reference page. 21. For further details see In-text Citations, pp. 9-14 of Nait’s style guidebook.

**Style**

Use objective (third-person) style throughout the report (No “I” or “you”).

**Source**

In order to maintain credibility, it is important to obtain information from a variety of sources. Use information from a minimum of five different sources, including at least three library database sources. Sources must be current, and could include books, magazines, internet sites, company literature. For all others, consult with your Instructor.

Ensure the web sites used are either Canadian or American sites. Acceptable web sites include .edu, .org, .gov, .ca etc. Limit the use of site domains such as .com, .net, or .biz because these are commercial sites and information can be biased. It is best to balance these .com sites with sites from other locations. Pamphlets and corporate sites are to be used at a minimum. Do not use Wikipedia.

NOTE: Research papers handed in without documentation (in-text citations and or References page) will be returned. With an automatic deduction of 10%, the student will have 24 hours to correct and resubmit the document. If the document is not returned within the 24 hours, the document will receive a zero.

**Back Matter**

1. References should start on its own page.
   1. REFERENCES section title should be centered 14-point size sans serif type face
   2. Each reference should be 12-point type single-spaced serif type face (with 6- point line space between each)
   3. References must be in **alphabetical** order
      1. By first **author’s last name**
      2. Or if the author is unknown, by the first word in the “**title of the work**” in quotation marks (the articles, A or The, do not count when alphabetizing)
   4. All citations must use **hanging indents** so the first words stick out on the left
   5. Reference syntax answers **Who**, **When**, **What**, and **Where** in that order, each section separated by periods:
   6. **Who**: author(s) by last name, and initials. Last author after an ampersand &. If there is no known author, the “Name of the work” comes first in quotation marks. Each reference must have a unique beginning to which the in-text citations can exclusively match.
   7. **When**: (year, month spelled out, day). Date is always second and in parenthesis. If the date is not known use (n.d.). Do not use the date you retrieved the information. If the name and date of two or more references are the same, differentiate them by adding a, b, c, etc. to the date to differentiate them.
   8. **What**: Title of article or web page in sentence-style capitalization. Book or periodical or website title in italics, Volume # in Italics (issue # in parenthesis) first and last pages #- # separated by a dash if these numbers are available.
   9. **Where**: City: Publisher (if a book), doi: or Retrieved from what URL (if electronic source). Add retrieval date if the source is subject to regular or frequent changes. The URL is always last. An unidentified URL is not a citation.
   10. For further details see Reference Citations, pp. 6-9 of the NAIT style guidebook.
2. Appendices
   1. An appendix may be necessary for related documents that are not part of the report or assignment, such as related documents, personal e-mails, permissions to use copyrighted images, oversized images (full page), or statistical tables from which figures in the text are derive