

## **Progress Reports**

A **progress report** is a written record of what has been done and what is left to do on a project. That is, it is a report of the progress that has been made on the project, which is why it is named a progress report.

When a company initiates a new project, it needs to be aware of how the project is progressing, what findings and decisions are being made by the project team, and what needs to be improved. In order to provide the company's supervisors with such information, progress reports are usually written. Generally speaking, a progress report is an update on a project's status. A well-written progress report is beneficial both for the company and for you.

### **Progress Report Functions**

Progress reports serve following four functions.

1. They can reassure the recipients that progress is being made (or inform them of delays in a project)
2. Progress reports can also be used to establish and formalize duties of team members.
3. It ties down a work schedule for a project.
4. Discuss possible problems in the project or its timeline.

### **Types of Formats**

Progress reports can come in many different forms, but there are three primary formats that most people use for their progress reports:

1. **Memo:** Often, a short memo is all that is needed for a progress report that is shared within an organization. For example, Jonah's progress report is going to his boss, and he'll also give copies to all the project members. Since all of them work at the same company, he might choose to write the progress report as a memo.
2. **Letter or email:** Sometimes, instead of a memo, people choose to write progress reports as letters or, more commonly today, emails. Like memos, these types of progress reports

are generally short. However, unlike memos, letters and emails are reports that can be shared either within or outside of an organization. So if, for example, Jonah needed to share the progress report both with his boss and with his company's client, he might choose a letter or email.

3. **Formal report:** Both memos and emails are pretty informal. But the third common format is a formal report. This is a longer document, and it is often bound in a binder or presentation folder. Formal reports are usually used for progress reports that are shared outside of an organization. For example, if Jonah were writing a progress report for the client, he might choose to share in a formal report.

## **Content**

As with format, progress reports vary slightly in what information is included.

However, a good, general structure for a report includes five elements:

### **1. Introduction**

In the introduction includes a summary of the project and the project goals. If he were writing a formal report for his client, he might go into some detail here, but since it's an internal report, and he feels confident that everyone understands the project and goals, he will probably make this summary brief, perhaps even just a couple of sentences.

### **2. Work Completed**

The 'progress' in 'progress report' is what work has been completed. He will want to include all the team's accomplishments so far, to show how much progress they've made. He'll want to make the list specific.

### **3. Work in Progress:**

He will want to demonstrate that everyone is still working hard on the project. He'll want to include a list of work items that have been started but not yet finished.

### **4. Project description:**

In most progress reports, include a project description to review the details of your project for the recipients

## 5. Conclusion:

The final paragraph or section usually reassures audiences that all is going well and on schedule. It can also alert recipients to unexpected changes or problems in the project.

### **Steps for Writing a Progress Report**

1. Write the heading of your progress report. This usually contains the date, when the report was submitted, the name and the position of the recipient, the writer's name and position, and the subject of the report.
2. Compose the introductory section. In this part, you must brief about the project. Then, you should provide readers with information about the project's purpose, clarify its timescale.
3. Write the "work completed" section. In this section, you must describe what work has already been done. One of the best ways to do this is to order the completed tasks chronologically. Make two columns. In one of them, specify dates and in another one, specify tasks you and your team were working on. Information about key findings should also be included in the "work completed" section.
4. In the next section, specify the problems your team encountered while working on the project. Provide explanations of how you solved them or how you are planning to do it. Also, describe any changes caused by these problems and state whether any assistance on the project is required.
5. Provide your supervisors with information about how you are planning to move forward with the project. Make an outline of future tasks that need to be accomplished during a certain period. Specify dates that will be deadlines for the tasks.
6. Summarize your progress report. In the summary section, you should only give the most essential details about the completed and to-do work. Also include a short description of problems your team encountered and recommendations for their correction.

## **Revision Checklist for Progress Reports**

As you reread and revise your progress report, watch out for problems such as the following:

- Make sure you use the right format. Remember, the memo format is for internal progress reports; the business-letter format is for progress reports written from one external organization to another. (Whether you use a cover memo or cover letter is your choice.)
  - Write a good introduction-in it, state that this is a progress report, and provide an overview of the contents of the progress report.
  - Make sure to include a description of the final report project.
  - Use headings to mark off the different parts of your progress report, particularly the different parts of your summary of work done on the project.
  - Use lists as appropriate.
  - Provide specifics-avoid relying on vague, overly general statements about the work you've done on the final report project.
  - Be sure and address the progress report to the real or realistic audience-not your instructor.
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