

Style Guide

PROFESSIONAL PROJECT REPORT Master's Degree in Urban and Regional Planning University of Wisconsin-Madison

The *Professional Report* is expected to be an informative and persuasive planning document. Both the contents and presentation require careful attention. An effective report is well organized, clearly and concisely written, and potentially supported by statistics and graphics. Graphics – which may include photographs, plans and diagrams, charts and graphs, or tables – should be integrated within the body of the report (rather than placed in an appendix).

Length and Format: The *Report* should be a professional-style* document with a maximum length of 3,500 words (for the Introduction, Main Body of the Report, and Conclusions and/or Recommendations – i.e., sections 5, 6, and 7 of the Sample Outline).

- Manuscripts may be single- or double-spaced; if the document is single-spaced, paragraphs should be placed flush left and separated by a single line space.
- Widows or orphans (single lines of text at the top or bottom of the page) should be avoided.
- Continuous pagination is required from the executive summary through the end of the report.
- Provide “breathing room” between text and any included graphics.
- Choose font sizes and types (e.g., Arial, Palatino, Times New Roman) to enhance legibility.

Tables and Figures: Tables and figures should be integrated into the text and clearly titled, labeled, and sourced.

Titles for Tables

Placed above and even with the left-edge of the table.

Example: *Table 1. Projected Daily Maximum Traffic Volumes for the University Avenue corridor, Madison, Wisconsin.*

Titles for Figures

Placed below and even with the left-edge of the figure.

Example: *Figure 1. Existing Land Uses in the City of Madison's Design District #7.*

Source lines

Appear below the label of all tables, charts, maps, and figures. The source line is smaller type (e.g., 10-point), italicized, and left-justified.

Example: *Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010.*

Notes: If notes are included, use them sparingly, keep them brief, and number them sequentially. Place the list of notes at the end of the text, not as footnotes on each page.

* Examples of “professional-style” reports are posted on the web at: <http://urpl.wisc.edu/people/lagro/courses.php> (see pdf's under URPL 601 and URPL 912).

Sample Outline

PROFESSIONAL PROJECT REPORT
Master's Degree in Urban and Regional Planning
University of Wisconsin-Madison

1. Cover

Title, graphic (e.g., photo or map, as appropriate), student's name, date, and affiliation.

2. Table of Contents

3. List of Tables and Figures

4. Executive Summary

Reviews the problem the report addresses (1-2 sentences), purpose of the research or planning effort (2-4 sentences), methods employed (1-2 sentences), key findings or results (1-2 sentences), and conclusions and/or recommendations (2-3 sentences). The summary should not exceed 250 words.

5. Introduction

A brief problem statement, summary of the project objectives, community and/or regional context, and significance of the planning or policy issue.

6. Main Body of the Report

Typically, includes multiple headings and sub-headings to organize the Report and enhance its clarity. Addresses data sources and limitations, methods of analysis, and results or findings.

7. Conclusions and/or Recommendations

Summary, interpretations, and planning, design, and/or policy recommendations.

8. References or Bibliography

The Chicago Manual of Style offers two basic documentation systems: (1) notes and bibliography and (2) author-date and references. The notes and bibliography style is preferred by many in the humanities, including those in literature, history, and the arts. This style presents bibliographic information in notes (foot and/or end) and, often, a bibliography. The author-date system is preferred by many in the physical, natural, and social sciences. This style cites sources within the text, usually in parentheses, by author's last name and date of publication. Full bibliographic information for each citation is provided in a list of references at the end of the document.

For examples and further guidance, see: www.chicagomanualofstyle.org

9. Appendices

An appendix is not required. In some cases, however, an appendix can provide useful additional project information (e.g., the project's survey instrument, or questionnaire).

Guidelines

PROFESSIONAL PROJECT PRESENTATION
Master's Degree in Urban and Regional Planning
University of Wisconsin-Madison

The student presents and defends the Professional Project Report to a two-member faculty committee. The student's advisor will serve as the lead member of the examining committee. The student will be expected to make a coherent and logical presentation, using appropriate presentation methods, and respond effectively to questions. The presentation of the Professional Project is expected to last about 20 minutes, and no longer than 30 minutes, followed by questions from the faculty committee and others in attendance. The presentation of the Professional Project Report will be open to the campus community. Committee deliberations after the presentation will be in closed session.

March 2026