

**Guidelines for the production
of scientific and technical reports:
how to write and distribute
grey literature**

Version 1.0

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Grey Literature International Steering Committee

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1. Statement of purpose

1.1. About the Guidelines

These Guidelines refer to the production of scientific and technical reports, precious documents included in the wider category of Grey Literature (GL), defined – in the International Conferences on GL held in Luxembourg (1997) and in New York (2004) – as:

Information produced on all levels of government, academics, business and industry in electronic and print formats not controlled by commercial publishing i.e. where publishing is not the primary activity of the producing body.

These Guidelines were presented during the 7th International Conference on GL held in Nancy (France) on 5-6 December 2005 as a proposal by the Istituto Superiore di Sanità (ISS) (Rome, Italy) for the adoption of uniform requirements for the production of GL.* The initiative was discussed at the Round Table on Quality Assessment by a small group of GL producers, librarians and information professionals who agreed to collaborate in the revision of the document proposed by the ISS.

The group approving these guidelines – informally known as the “Nancy Group” – has been formally defined as the Grey Literature International Steering Committee (GLISC).

These recommendations are adapted from the *Uniform requirements for manuscripts submitted to biomedical journals*, produced by the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) and better known as “Vancouver style” (updated February 2006, available from <http://www.icmje.org/> and now adopted by more than 500 biomedical journals), and also took into consideration the basic principles of ISO standard *Documentation – Presentation of scientific and technical reports* (ISO 5966/1982) withdrawn in 2000. The ISO 5966, in fact, does no longer meet the requirements of ITC (Information Technology Communication), but it still provides useful hints for a correct report preparation.

These Guidelines will be periodically updated by the GLISC.

GL producers that agree to use the Guidelines are encouraged to state it in their recommended instructions to authors for the preparation of technical reports or other types of GL and cite this document. GL producers that wish to be listed on www.glisc.info as producers that follow the Guidelines should contact the GLISC Secretariat office.

1.2. Potential users of the Guidelines

The Guidelines are created primarily to help authors and GL producers in their mutual task of creating and distributing accurate, clear, easily accessible reports in different fields. The goal of the Guidelines is, in fact, to permit an independent and correct production of institutional reports in the respect of the basic editorial principles.

The Guidelines include ethical principles related to the process of evaluating, improving, and making available reports, and the relationships between GL producers and authors. The latter sections address the more technical aspects of preparing and submitting reports. The GLISC believes the entire document is relevant to the concerns of both authors and GL producers.

1.3. How to use the Guidelines

The Guidelines state the ethical principles in the conduct and reporting of research and provide recommendations relating to specific elements of editing and writing.

Authors and GL producers will find it helpful to follow the recommendations in this document whenever possible because it will improve the quality and clarity of reporting, as well as the

* De Castro P, Salinetti S. “Uniform Requirements” for grey literature: proposal for the adoption of “Nancy style”. *Publishing Research Quarterly* 2006;22(1):12-7.

ease of editing. At the same time, every GL producer may add editorial requirements uniquely suited to its purposes. Authors therefore need to become familiar with the specific Instructions to authors and should follow them.

2. Ethical considerations

2.1. Authorship and contributorship

2.1.1. Authors

An “author” is generally considered to be someone who has made substantive intellectual contributions to a study, and authorship continues to have important academic, social, and financial implications. In some cases personal authors do not appear on the byline, because the document is issued under the entire responsibility of the organization. This is case of reports including, for example, the annual activity of an institution or official data.

Some reports contain detailed information about the contributions of each person named as authors. Issuing organizations are encouraged to develop and implement an authorship policy to identify who is responsible for the integrity of the work as a whole. This will also help improving quality of each report.

Authorship credit should be based on both: 1) substantial contributions to conception and design, or data acquisition, analysis and interpretation; 2) document drafting or critically revising for important intellectual content.

When a group has conducted the work, if the authorship is up to the group, the group should be clearly and formally defined as such identifying each member and, once established, the group name must be used unchanged. Otherwise all individuals having direct responsibility for the manuscript and fully meeting the criteria for authorship should be stated as authors and the other members of the group should be listed in the acknowledgements.

The order of authorship on the byline should be a joint decision of the co-authors. Authors should be prepared to explain the order in which authors are listed.

Some documents containing contributions of different authors (i.e. conference proceedings) may be edited by one or more individual persons that are responsible for the document as a whole (editors).

2.1.2. Contributors listed in acknowledgments

All contributors who do not meet the criteria for authorship should be listed in an acknowledgments section. Examples of those who might be acknowledged include a person who provided purely technical help, writing assistance, or a department chair that provided only general support. Financial and material support should also be acknowledged.

Groups of persons who have contributed materially to the paper but whose contributions do not justify authorship may be listed under a heading such as “participating investigators,” and their function or contribution should be described – for example, as “scientific advice”, “critical review of the study proposal”, or “data collection”.

2.2. Issuing organization

The issuing organization plays the role of editor of technical reports. It is responsible for quality and costs of distribution; it shall guarantee that the documents are reliable and readable, produced with due respect for the stated aims and mission of the institution. The institution establishes and maintains the editorial policy for GL and may be supported by an internal editorial advisory board or service.

2.3. Peer review

Unbiased, independent, critical assessment is an intrinsic part of all scholarly work, including the scientific process. Peer review is the critical assessment of manuscripts submitted to journals by experts who are not part of the editorial staff even if it may be sometimes biased. Peer review, however, is a relevant point under discussion for GL and may be a future challenge also in consideration of Open Access to GL documents. GL, for example, may deal with security issues or contain sensitive data which might be not properly used by malevolent readers: this is why special attention must be placed before diffusion to make authors aware of the potential risks of spreading hazardous information. A careful editorial revision of the text or other review or peer review procedures will help to check the opportunity of the circulation of such data.

2.4. Conflicts of interest

As in journal literature, also in GL it may be necessary to include a declaration regarding conflicts of interest as specified by ICMJE Committee:

Conflict of interest exists when an author (or the authors institution), reviewer, or editor has financial or personal relationships that inappropriately influence (bias) his or her actions (such relationships are also known as dual commitments, competing interests, or competing loyalties). [...] Financial relationships (such as employment, consultancies, stock ownership, honoraria, paid expert testimony) are the most easily identifiable conflicts of interest and the most likely to undermine the credibility of the journal, the authors, and of science itself. However, conflicts can occur for other reasons, such as personal relationships, academic competition, and intellectual passion.

GL producers may use information disclosed in conflict of interest and financial interest statements as a basis for editorial decisions. They should publish this information if they believe it is important in judging the manuscript. Potential conflicts of interest may be related to:

- *Individual authors commitments*
Authors are responsible for disclosing all financial and personal relationships that might bias their work. To prevent ambiguity, they must state explicitly whether potential conflicts do or do not exist.
- *Project support*
Authors should describe the role of the study sponsor(s), if any: in study design; in the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data; in the writing of the report; and in the decision to submit the report for dissemination. If the supporting source had no such involvement, the authors should so state. Biases potentially introduced when sponsors are directly involved in research are analogous to methodological biases of other sorts. Some GL producers, therefore, will choose to include information about the sponsors' involvement and may also choose not to issue the report.
- *Commitments of producers or reviewers of GL*
While GL is subject to some form of review process, it is usually not the peer review process in its strictest sense. Yet, if any, reviewers or other members of the staff involved in the editorial process should disclose to producers any conflicts of interest that could bias their opinions of the report, and they should disqualify themselves from reviewing specific documents if they believe it to be appropriate.

2.5. Privacy and confidentiality

Producers should guarantee the respect of privacy and confidentiality of data contained in any GL document concerning study participants (no identifying detail should appear and informed consent should be obtained if there is any doubt). In case of peer review of GL all ethical principles (anonymity, confidentiality, dishonesty or fraud, etc.) should be considered.

3. Publishing and editorial issues

3.1. Copyright

Issuing organizations should make their position on copyright clear to authors and to others who might be interested in using editorial content from their documents.

Copyright laws may be different from Country to Country. Yet, the copyright of an institutional report usually belongs to the issuing organization. In this case, it must be clearly identified in the report with the symbol © followed by the name of the issuing organization and the year of publication. It is generally placed in the back of the title page (see 4.2.1.3).

The existence of copyright does not imply that the document may not be freely reproduced, but it represents a declaration of intellectual ownership (the employees of an organization are as authors the voice of their institution). The issuing organization may decide that information contained in a report is of public domain, and declare it in the report, only in this case it is possible to reproduce the document or parts of the document without asking for permission.

The copyright may also be held by a funding organization. In this case, it should be mentioned clearly in the funding contract.

A non-exclusive rights agreement may offer an alternative to copyright. It provides a guarantee to the publishing body that the content is not in breach of earlier copyright, while at the same time it allows the authors to use other means of publication and distribution for their work (e.g. institutional repositories, federated repositories, etc.).

3.2. Correspondence

The inclusion of an e-mail address or any other useful institutional contact with the author(s) is recommended. It may appear preferably in the back of the title page or elsewhere in the report (see 4.2.1.3).

3.3. Electronic publishing and institutional repositories

Most institutional reports are now distributed in electronic as well as print versions, and some are published in electronic form only. Electronic availability (which includes the Internet) means publishing. In the interest of clarity and consistency, all institutional information published online should follow the recommendations contained in this document whenever possible.

The nature of electronic publication requires some special considerations, both within and beyond this document. At a minimum, websites should indicate the following: names, appropriate credentials, affiliations, and relevant conflicts of interest of editors, authors, and contributors; documentation and attribution of references and sources for all content; information about copyright; disclosure of site ownership; and disclosure of sponsorship, advertising, and commercial funding.

Electronic publication is an area that is in flux. GL producers should develop, make available to authors, and implement policies on issues unique to electronic publishing. These issues include archiving, error correction, version control and perennial access. Many documents put on a website are no longer accessible after a short time. GL producers are encouraged to use stable or permanent sites for the diffusion of their production.

In no instance should a producer remove a report from its website or archive. If a report needs to be corrected or retracted, the revision should be clearly identifiable.

Preservation of electronic report in a permanent archive is essential for the historical record. Access to the archive should be immediate and it may be controlled by a third party, such as a library, instead of the GL producers. Deposition in multiple archives is encouraged.

When a report is included in an institutional repository, information on the status of the document should be added (submitted, validated, revised, etc.)

3.4. Advertising

Many journals carry advertising, which generates income for their publishers. While it may not be advisable for use in institutional reports, other types of GL may choose to include advertising for cost-recovery purposes. In such cases, a policy should be established and made available. In any case, advertising must always be independent of messages contained in the document.

GL producers should ensure that citation of specific products or equipment or machinery used in a study should be avoided unless they directly influence its results.

4. Report preparation

4.1. Instructions to authors

GL producers and users appreciate reports that are easy to edit as well as easy to read and understand. Therefore producers are strongly recommended to issue instructions to guide authors in the production of a formally correct document – ready to be distributed – containing indications for formats and styles, illustrations, etc.

Reports may be produced at different levels, in some cases inside the institution there is an editorial office dealing with publications in general and therefore also with GL, in other cases reports are issued without editorial support.

Instructions to authors should provide a standard report structure.

Issuing organizations may also provide a checklist to help authors in the production of a correct document (Are all the essential elements included? Are all the references complete? Are all the tables cited in the text? Are all units of measure standardized? etc.).

4.2. Report structure

The report is generally divided into 3 parts: Front matter, Body of report and End matter. It should be based on the following scheme:

- *Front matter*
 - Front cover
 - Title page
 - Back of the title page
 - Table of contents
 - List of abbreviations, acronyms or terms
 - Preface
- *Body of report*
 - Introduction
 - Core of report
 - Conclusions
 - Acknowledgements
 - List of references
- *End matter*
 - Appendix A
 - Appendix B, etc.
 - Indexes
 - Back cover

Producers are encouraged to create a model file that automatically activates the correct styles and formats (in Word this file has the extension “.dot”). This will help authors in manuscript

preparation by automatically applying the correct style for each level of titles and text: a proper structure will also contribute to an easy usability and availability in the Internet. The structure to be applied to the Body of report and also to Appendices (if any) may be defined by numbers (numeric hierarchy) or different font sizes and styles (typographical hierarchy); the recommended numbering should not exceed the 3rd level; Introduction and Conclusions are not numbered (see Figure 1).

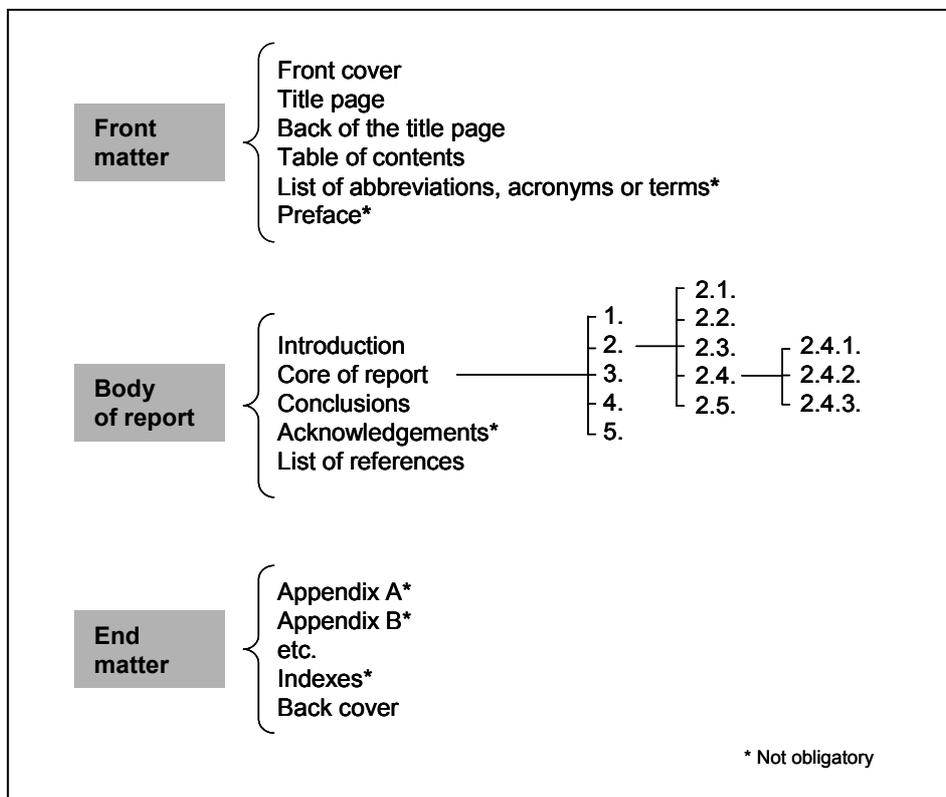


Figure 1. Recommended structure of a report

A structured document may be easily converted into XML to allow advanced search facilities in specific parts of the document such as introduction, conclusions, and citations. Since we are moving from printed to electronic grey literature, metadata become of the utmost importance, not only to retrieve articles but also to establish rights and measure the productive output of an institution. Issuing organizations may include in their Instructions to authors specific recommendations to fill metadata forms. Data to be entered in the metadata form are mentioned under 4.2.1.2 and 4.2.1.3.

4.2.1. Front matter

4.2.1.1. Front cover

This part represents the first presentation of the report to the reader, therefore it shall contain the basic bibliographic information to identify the document (see Title page: 4.2.1.2); yet, for economy, the title page often stands for the front cover, above all in the Internet versions.

4.2.1.2. Title page

The Title page of any document is the first recto page of a report and the preferred source of bibliographic information required for efficient document processing and retrieval. Each report should include a title page carrying the following information:

- *Full name of the issuing organization and its logo*
- *Title of the report*
Titles must be descriptive and may include subtitles, if any. Concise titles are easier to read than long, convoluted ones. Titles that are too short may, however, lack important information. Authors should include all words in the title that will make electronic retrieval of the report both sensitive and specific. Abbreviations in the title should be avoided.
- *Authors names and institutional affiliations*
Christian and family names of the authors shall be included to avoid any possible ambiguity; the affiliation (i.e. the place where the author works or worked when the report was written) shall be stated according to the official name of the institution.
- *Report identifiers*
They are unique alphanumeric designations that may identify the responsible organization, the report series/collection and the individual report (i.e. *Rapporti ISTISAN 05/2* stands for a report of the series *Rapporti ISTISAN* produced in the year 2005 and it is the second report of the year).
- *ISSN/ISBN and other codes*
ISSN is the International Standard Serial Number that is assigned on request by the ISSN Authority (www.issn.org) for reports that are produced in a series; the ISBN is the International Standard Book Number that is assigned on request by the ISBN Authority to each single issue (www.isbn.org). The report may also have other codes, such as DOI (Digital Object Identifier), which may be obtained on request by each authority. More than one code may appear in a report.
- *Place and date of publication*
It is important to include the place and date of publication, both for bibliographic identification and priority concerns. This information may appear in the title page or in the back of the title page.

4.2.1.3. Back of the title page

The Back of the title page should include information also appearing in the Title page (report title, authors, etc.) and the following items:

- *Abstracts and key words*
An abstract should always be included in a report; in the scientific field, two abstracts are recommended: one in English and one in the original language of the report (the translated abstract should be preceded by the translated title). Length and structure of abstracts may vary according to the rules of the issuing organization. Some producers may require structured abstracts or extended ones. The abstract should provide the context or background for the study and should state purposes, basic procedures, main findings, and principal conclusions. It should emphasize new and important aspects of the study or observations. Because abstracts are the only substantive portion of the report indexed in many electronic databases, and often the only portion many readers read, authors need to be careful that abstracts reflect the content of the report accurately. Key words are also recommended to facilitate information retrieval and assist indexers in cross-indexing.
- *Name and e-mail address of the corresponding author*
It is recommended to facilitate contact and requests of information on the report.

- *Source(s) of support in the form of grants*
If the study described in a report has been funded, information on grants shall be included (at least the name of the funding organization and possibly the contract number).
- *Copyright*
The copyright of the issuing organization shall be clearly indicated preceded by the symbol © followed by the name of organization and year of publication.
- *Date of submission*
In some cases, it may be useful to include the date of submission for priority concerns.
- *Place and date of publication*
It is important to include the place and date of publication, both for bibliographic identification and priority concerns. This information may appear in the Title page or in the Back of the title page.
- *Other editorial responsibilities*
All other editorial responsibilities – such as legal requirements, name and address of the printing office, editorial staff names, if any, etc. – shall be indicated.

4.2.1.4. Table of contents

A Table Of Contents (TOC) is essential to provide an immediate understanding of the content of the report and facilitate the online input and use of each part of the document.

TOC shall be placed immediately after the Back of the title page and contain the titles of the main headings and sub-headings of the report including appendices, if any, together with the number of the pages in which they appear. The structure of TOC (title levels) depends on the type of report (e.g. a handbook of technical procedures shall require a more detailed TOC to help readers in information retrieval). TOC can be automatically created by using a word processor (such as Word) when styles are applied to each title level; therefore, when Instructions to authors include a model file they should envisage the use of styles.

4.2.1.5. Lists of abbreviations, acronyms or terms

When a report contains many abbreviations or acronyms, they may be listed with their definitions before the body of the report, even though they must be explained in the text when first appearing unless they are standard units of measurement. Only standard abbreviations shall be used since non-standard abbreviations can be extremely confusing.

4.2.1.6. Preface

A Preface may be included or not. If necessary, it shall be placed immediately before the body of the report, and shall contain a preliminary comment on the content of the document and may be signed by a person different from the authors of the report.

4.2.2. Body of the report

The Body of a report shall be structured according to its content and complexity.

4.2.2.1. Introduction

Reports may start with an Introduction that provides a context or background for the work described (i.e. the nature of the problem and its significance) pointing out specific purposes of the study not including data or conclusions from the work being reported. The Introduction shall not be numbered.

4.2.2.2. Core of report

The Core of report represents the main part of the document and shall permit the reader to easily understand its content (theory, methods, results). Topics shall be presented in logical sequence. The structure of the Core depends on the type of the document itself (handbook, research protocol, progress report, etc.). The Instructions to authors shall envisage different levels for titles but it is up to the author to decide how to organize the text.

Figures and tables essential to the understanding of the text shall be included in the core of the report, but when information is too detailed (i.e. many tables or figures on the same subject) as to interrupt the flow of the text, it shall be presented in Appendices, which may contain also extra or supplementary materials. The text shall not repeat all the data included in the tables or illustrations.

4.2.2.3. Conclusions

Conclusions represent a clear presentation of the deductions made after full consideration of the work reported in the Core of the report. They may include some quantitative data, but not too many details. They may also contain recommendations for further actions deemed necessary as a direct result of the study described.

4.2.2.4. Acknowledgements

It is possible to acknowledge help given in the preparation of the report, but it is not usual to acknowledge minor assistance, routine checking or secretarial work. Major contributions give the right to be included as author of the entire report or of an appendix, if it is the case.

4.2.2.5. List of references

All sources of information directly used to prepare the text shall be listed at the end of the Core of report. It is not correct to cite secondary sources of information.

Citations in text may be indicated by:

- *numbers*
References are numbered consecutively in the order in which they are first mentioned in the text. References in text, tables, and legends are identified by Arabic numerals in parentheses. They are numerically listed at the end of the Core of report.
- *author/year*
References are reported with the name of the first author followed by *et al.* (if they are more than two) and the year of publication; in case of two authors, both shall be cited with “&” between the two. The references are alphabetically listed at the end of the Core of report.

The style of references in the list shall be recommended by the issuing organization in the Instructions to authors and may be different according to specific fields of knowledge or traditions. In some fields recommended standards already exist as they were created to be used in open literature (such as “Vancouver style” for the biomedical field, “APA style” for psychology; other widely used styles are “Chicago” and “Harvard”). Citing rules in GL are not different than in open literature. Therefore, GLISC recommends the use of already existing styles.

To minimize errors in references, authors should verify them against the original documents.

“Personal communication” shall be avoided unless it provides essential information not available from a public source, in which case the name of the person and date of communication should be cited in parentheses in the text.

In general each reference shall include all the bibliographic elements required to identify unambiguously the source. In synthesis the following items shall be considered for:

- *Journal article*
author, title of the article, journal name, year of publication, volume, issue and pages.

- *Book (or report)*
author/editor, title of the book, place of publication, publisher (or issuing organization), year of publication, report series and/or report numbers.
- *Chapter in book*
author, title of the chapter, editor, title of the book, place of publication, publisher (or issuing organization), year of publication and pages of the chapter.
- *Conference paper*
author, title of the paper, editor, title of the proceedings, conference date and place, place of publication, publisher (or issuing organization), year of publication and pages of the paper.

When citing electronic material the bibliographic elements are always the same, but the type of electronic source shall be included (e.g. CD-ROM) and the Internet address shall be added for each online material preceded by “available from” and the date of the last visit. Preference should be given to persistent links/addresses to the cited documents (citations of general websites should be avoided).

The GLISC recommends the adoption of “Vancouver style” in scientific GL for its simplicity of use and as it has been already generally adopted in the biomedical field.

Vancouver style for references is available from the US National Library of Medicine (NLM) providing detailed samples of different reference citation formats in its website at http://www.nlm.nih.gov/bsd/uniform_requirements.html.

Vancouver style has established rules for punctuation to be followed in citations. Yet each issuing organization can decide the preferred typographical style for references (i.e. italics for journals, bold for issues, etc.).

Here follow some references taken as examples from Vancouver style for:

- ***articles in journals***
(including standard journal article, organization as author, no author given, etc.)

Examples

Halpern SD, Ubel PA, Caplan AL. Solid-organ transplantation in HIV-infected patients. *N Engl J Med.* 2002 Jul 25;347(4):284-7.

Diabetes Prevention Program Research Group. Hypertension, insulin, and proinsulin in participants with impaired glucose tolerance. *Hypertension.* 2002;40(5):679-86.

- ***books and other monographs***
(including book with personal author, editor or organization as author, chapter in a book, conference proceedings, conference paper, scientific or technical report, dissertation, patent, etc.).

Examples

Murray PR, Rosenthal KS, Kobayashi GS, Pfaller MA. *Medical microbiology.* 4th ed. St. Louis: Mosby; 2002.

Gilstrap LC 3rd, Cunningham FG, VanDorsten JP, editors. *Operative obstetrics.* 2nd ed. New York: McGraw-Hill; 2002.

Royal Adelaide Hospital; University of Adelaide, Department of Clinical Nursing. *Compendium of nursing research and practice development, 1999-2000.* Adelaide (Australia): Adelaide University; 2001.

Meltzer PS, Kallioniemi A, Trent JM. Chromosome alterations in human solid tumors. In: Vogelstein B, Kinzler KW, editors. *The genetic basis of human cancer.* New York: McGraw-Hill; 2002. p. 93-113.

Harnden P, Joffe JK, Jones WG, editors. *Germ cell tumours V. Proceedings of the 5th Germ Cell Tumour Conference; 2001 Sep 13-15; Leeds, UK.* New York: Springer; 2002.

Yen GG (Oklahoma State University, School of Electrical and Computer Engineering, Stillwater, OK). *Health monitoring on vibration signatures. Final report.* Arlington (VA): Air Force Office of Scientific Research (US), Air Force Research Laboratory; 2002 Feb. Report No.: AFRLSRBLTR020123. Contract No.: F496209810049.

- ***other published material***
(including newspaper article, audiovisual material, legal material, etc.)

Example

Chason KW, Sallustio S. Hospital preparedness for bioterrorism [videocassette]. Secaucus (NJ): Network for Continuing Medical Education; 2002.

- ***electronic material***

(including CD-ROM, journal article and monograph on the Internet, database on the Internet, website, etc.). If the type of document is not obvious, it should be added in square brackets, e.g. [project website].

Examples

Anderson SC, Poulsen KB. Andersons electronic atlas of hematology [CD-ROM]. Philadelphia: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins; 2002.

Aboud S. Quality improvement initiative in nursing homes: the ANA acts in an advisory role. Am J Nurs [serial on the Internet] 2002;102(6):[about 3 p.]. Available from: <http://www.nursingworld.org/AJN/2002/june/Wawatch.htm>; last visited 12/8/2002.

4.2.3. End matter

4.2.3.1. Appendices

Appendices are not essential in every report. They shall be identified by consecutive letters (Appendix A, Appendix B, etc.). They are used to present material that is necessary for completeness, but would interrupt the flow of reading if inserted in the Core of report or material that is not of interest for the general reader, but only for a specialist in the field.

Possible types of appendix are supplementary illustrations or tables, description of equipment, techniques, questionnaires used for surveys, raw data collected during the study, etc.

References in Appendices are treated independently of those reported in the Body of report and are listed separately at the end of each Appendix.

4.2.3.2. Indexes

An index is a list of the main contents or items appearing in a report (such as personal or geographical names, or other topics) arranged in alphabetical order. It is a useful tool for long reports or texts that can be also consulted not in sequence. The choice of index depends on the type of document (e.g. in conference proceedings it is recommended to include an authors' index, in a handbook an analytical one). Indexes represent an added value for the best exploitation of the document and shall be carefully organized. Word processing programs offer today a valid support for index making, but they never replace the intellectual activity behind the creation of any index.

4.2.3.3. Back cover

The Back cover can contain the name, address, telephone, fax, e-mail and website of the issuing organization and/or printer and other relevant information on report availability.

4.2.4. Non textual material

Non textual material generally defined as illustrations (tables, graphs, maps, photographs, flowcharts, drawings, etc.) plays a significant part in the presentation of concepts explained in the text and should be carefully organized. Illustrations summarize and emphasize key points, improve clarity and reduce narrative length. They are both an integral and independent part of the text. They offer a useful visual aid to the reader and are a time-saving writing tool. In the text they may be defined as:

- Tables (logically organized sequences of numbers or words);
- Figures (every illustrative material that is not a table).

The choice between Tables or Figures depends on which elements are intended to be focussed (a table points out results, a graph promotes understanding of results and suggests interpretations of their meaning and relationships; graphs shall be used as an alternative to tables with many entries without duplicating data in graphs and tables).

Non textual material should be limited to that supporting the text and pertinent for the understanding of the study described.

Each item shall be numbered consecutively (Table 1, Figure 1) in the order of its first citation in the text, followed by a brief title. Illustrations shall be cited in the text and placed soon after their citation (and not before) or included in Appendices if they are so detailed as to interrupt the flow of reading.

If data included in illustrations are from other published sources, permission shall be obtained by the copyright owner (except for documents in the public domain) and the original source shall be fully acknowledged.

Use of colours for illustrations should be carefully checked as in many cases GL is still printed in black and white.

4.2.4.1. Tables

Tables are used when the attention of the reader shall be focussed on data and not on trends of data. They capture information concisely, and display it efficiently; they also provide information at any desired level of detail and precision. Including data in tables rather than text frequently makes it possible to reduce the length of the text. Oversized tables should be avoided. A table is a matrix containing rows and columns of data which must be homogeneous. Each column shall have a short heading guiding the reader in understanding the table content; each cell must contain data (in case of missing data it shall be indicated by special marks or letters). Internal horizontal or vertical lines are to be avoided whenever possible and a correct spacing may be used instead. Authors should place explanatory matter in footnotes (not in the heading), which might contain also the explanation of non standard abbreviations.

4.2.4.2. Figures

Figures should include relevant information needed for evidence, efficacy or emphasis. They should be made as self-explanatory as possible using legends, when necessary.

Figures shall be suitable for printing (i.e. either professionally drawn and photographed, or produced as photographic quality digital prints in JPEG or GIF formats).

Although some organizations may help authors of technical reports to redraw figures, in most cases there is no editorial support and authors should be aware that the final printing quality depends on that of their original figures. Letters, numbers, and symbols should therefore be clear and even throughout.

If photographs of people are used, either the subjects must not be identifiable or authors must obtain a written permission to use the photographs.

4.2.4.3. Units of measurement

The use of the International System of Units (SI) for measurements is recommended. Thus, measurements of length, height, weight, and volume should be reported in metric units (meter, kilogram, or litre) or their decimal multiples; and temperatures should be in Celsius degrees.

Non-SI units may also be used when the SI is lacking.

4.3. Revision editing

The technical content of a document is its most important attribute. If it is flawed, it is irrelevant that it looks typographically perfect, has excellent design and page layout and no grammatical errors. Yet, revision is a process that ensures that the technical content of a document is

complete, accurate, and understandable to the intended audience and may largely improve the quality of the report guaranteeing an unsuspected added value.

As GL is not generally peer reviewed, or produced with editorial support, it is fundamental that authors are aware of the importance of a careful revision of their texts before diffusion.

Levels of revision depend on different factors: speed in diffusion, availability of specialized editorial staff, budget, etc.

Issuing organizations shall promote the importance of revision editing for GL and include its basic principles in the Instructions to authors to make authors aware of editorial problems and help them tailor the document.

The system of revision editing, recommended for issuing organization working directly with authors, includes three levels of revision, all of them dealing with technical content of the document as well as editorial concerns (language, grammar, format and style), but attention to details is increased at each level.

4.3.1. Rush edit

Rush edit regards a check on:

- *Policy*
 - organization mission (the document must not be in contrast with aims and scope of the issuing organization);
 - ethical principles (no human or animal rights shall be infringed – privacy, safety, etc.);
 - copyright rules (no copyrighted material may be reproduced without written permission);
 - no endorsements or promotions of specific commercial products or services, unless clearly used in an advertisement, if any.
- *Technical content*
 - coherence of each part of the document (abstract, introduction, and conclusions must not contain contradictory statements);
 - presence of all cited tables and figures (which shall be consistent with the text).
- *Copyediting*
 - typos and spelling errors;
 - garbled passages;
 - missing tables and figures;
 - format inconsistency;
 - dropped lines and words.

4.3.2. Standard edit

Standard edit encompasses all the tasks in the Rush edit at a major level of detail adding style considerations. It requires more time and effort, but ensures a better editorial quality. It regards:

- *Policy*

Rush edit considerations *plus*:

 - Written statements may be required for each point included in the Rush edit policy considerations.
- *Technical content*

Rush edit considerations *plus*:

 - Tables may be checked for correct calculations of totals, averages, percentages, etc.; they may also be redesigned to improve comprehension; captions may be improved.
 - Abstracts may be rewritten to better emphasise the important points of the text.
 - Document written by several authors may be reviewed for internal consistency.
 - Punctuations may be verified to guarantee comprehension.

- *Copyediting*
Rush edit considerations *plus*:
 - Language (grammar, syntax, spelling) may be improved.
 - Lists of abbreviations or symbols may be compiled.
 - References may be checked for accuracy and consistency.
 - Use of capital letters may be standardized.
 - Use of units of measure may be checked for appropriateness and consistency.

4.3.3. Professional edit

Professional edit is a much larger undertaking than the Standard edit as the work is more extensive and demanding. It regards Rush and Standard edit considerations *plus*:

- *Hierarchy*
The text is checked for the best organization, the hierarchy of concepts must be logical, and apparent in the structure of the document.
- *Text balance*
The amount of text must be well balanced in the different parts of the document. Unneeded or inappropriate material (text, tables and figures) must be deleted. Material necessary for comprehension by the intended audience may be added.
- *Language*
Language must be fluent and concise; redundancy must be eliminated.
- *Style*
Style must be consistent throughout the document.

The issuing organization shall adopt its own recommended level of revision taking into consideration the requirements of each level in terms of time, resources and applicability. The adopted revision style may include elements of each revision level.

4.4. Sending the report

When preparing a report to be submitted, authors should consult the Instructions to authors of the organization.

Most issuing organizations require now, besides the paper version, the electronic submission of reports to be editorially revised and/or included in the website.

Issuing organizations are recommended to use an authorization form before dissemination to state the responsibility for content and respect of editorial principles; such responsibility is shared by both authors and issuing organization.

Copies of any permission to reproduce published material, to use illustrations or report information about identifiable people, or to name people for their contributions must accompany the manuscript.

5. General information on the Guidelines

5.1. Steering committee

The GLISC participating organizations that formally approved *Guidelines for the production of scientific and technical reports: how to write and distribute grey literature* in March 2006 include:

1. Istituto Superiore di Sanità (ISS) – Rome, Italy
2. Institut de l'Information Scientifique et Technique (INIST-CNRS) – Nancy, France
3. Grey Literature Network Service (GreyNet), Amsterdam – The Netherlands

5.2. Use, distribution, translation and inquiries

The total content of the Guidelines may be reproduced for educational, not-for-profit purposes without regard for copyright; the Committee encourages distribution of the material.

The GLISC policy is for interested organizations to link to the official English language document at www.glisc.info. The GLISC does not endorse posting of the document on websites other than www.glisc.info.

The GLISC welcomes organizations to reprint or translate this document into languages other than English for no-profit purposes. Any translations should prominently include the following statement: “This is a (*insert language name*) language translation of the GLISC *Guidelines for the production of scientific and technical reports: how to write and distribute grey literature*. The (*insert name of organization*) prepared this translation with support from (*insert name of funding source, if any*). The GLISC has neither endorsed nor approved the contents of this translation. The GLISC periodically updates the *Guidelines*, so this reprint/translation prepared on (*insert date*) may not accurately represent the current official version at www.glisc.info”.

The GLISC does not require individuals or organizations that reprint or translate the *Guidelines for the production of scientific and technical reports* to obtain formal, written permission. However, the GLISC requests that such individuals or organizations provide its secretariat with the citation for that reprint or translation to keep a record of such versions of the document. Yet, only translations approved by the GLISC will be available on its website.

Inquiries about the *Guidelines for the production of scientific and technical reports: how to write and distribute grey literature* shall be sent to secretariat@glisco.info.

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Annex. List of institutions adopting the Guidelines

Up to now, the following institutions formally agreed to adopt these Guidelines:

1. Istituto Superiore di Sanità (ISS) – Rome, Italy (2006)
2. Institut de l'Information Scientifique et Technique (INIST-CNRS) – Nancy, France (2006)
3. Grey Literature Network Service (GreyNet), Amsterdam – The Netherlands (2006)



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