# Writing for projects and dissertations

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| **Section** | **Suggested content** | **Notes (add your own)** |
| **Abstract** | This is the way the world is  This is what is wrong with the world (problem statement)  Here is my idea/innovation/insight  This is what I did and found |  |
| **Introduction** | Provides the reader with an explanation of what the report will contain (overview and structure) | Why the report is worth reading! |
| **Background** | Explains the context of the work  Literature review – existing work, and existing methods/methodology  Review of any software to explain motivation  Note: you may refer back to this section during your discussion/conclusion/future work | Papers still exist, so you refer to these in the present tense |
| **Method** | An account in the past tense of what you did to create the artefact.  An account of any testing/evaluation of work with user evaluation if relevant  Provides evidence of the development process. | Fully document the steps you followed ideally with reference to your use of recognised approaches and methodologies  Written in the past tense – you did the work! |
| **Discussion** | A step by step review of the achievements itemised in method  An evaluation of the work as a whole in the context to the literature review and background research  A reflective review of the process of working on the project  Analysis on any evaluation and testing regime |  |
| **Conclusion** | Claims for achievements of the system as a whole. Highlight any key findings  Suggest possible future works and developments | Good idea to itemise your achievements  Do they match your stated objectives?  Do you need to revise your stated objectives? |
| **References** | List of all the citations from the text |  |
| **Bibliography** | Any general sources which were used | e.g. general books on writing, surveys etc. which you used but which you did not explicitly cite in the text |
| **Appendices** | Evidence of all the claims you are making in the text |  |

Always refer to the mark sheet for exact requirements, however in ECS you can typically expect marks to be spread across six broad categories:

* **Management**
  + formal evidence is provided via a project plan and milestones, and discussion as to how you kept to plan. Can include a risk analysis, the plan may have been revised
  + Implicit evidence– the amount of progress you have achieved, and by implication your management of the task will be evident from a range of items including the claims and evidence of your work, the completeness of the text, the organisation, the balance between the sections
* **Technical approach** – demonstrate this in ways appropriate to the focus of the task; e.g. with robust statistics, clearly described theory/methods, or good software engineering, clear statement of methodology, evidence of any technical/intellectual decisions you needed to make and justification.
* **Testing and Evaluation** – again, as appropriate evidence that you took a rigorous approach to testing and evaluation by an appropriate method e.g. logical reasoning, statistical testing, software testing (mostly in method and discussion section)
* **Achievement** – aim to show what you have achieved; e.g. new knowledge or insights, new methods, new artefacts
* **Writing** – well structured, free of errors, appropriate use of diagrams, tables etc. References cited and correct use of reference protocols
* **Understanding** – report shows that you understood what you are doing and the extent of your achievements