

Method Course for *Praxis der Forschung*

Why Reports and What Are They For?

Publish or perish!



Foundations
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Progress Reports
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Final Reports
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Your Own Documentation Options
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Outline

1. Foundations of Reporting

2. Progress Reports

3. Final Reports

4. Your Own Documentation Options

5. Summary

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Progress Reports



Final Reports



Your Own Documentation Options



Summary



Reports in Research

Science thrives on communication:

- Communicating the results to other scientists for further research
- Feedback on own research from experienced researchers



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Reports in Research

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Why, why, why?



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Reports in Research

Science thrives on communication:

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Why, why, why?

- Project progress and results hard to grasp
 - ⇒ Document explicitly and bundled
 - ⇒ Reflection on the results when documenting
- Make accessible to third parties
- Help with scientific classification and evaluation
- Benefit from reflection yourself and readjust



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How?

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Reports in Research

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How?

- Adapt to the context (and supervisor)
- Here, we only present some options



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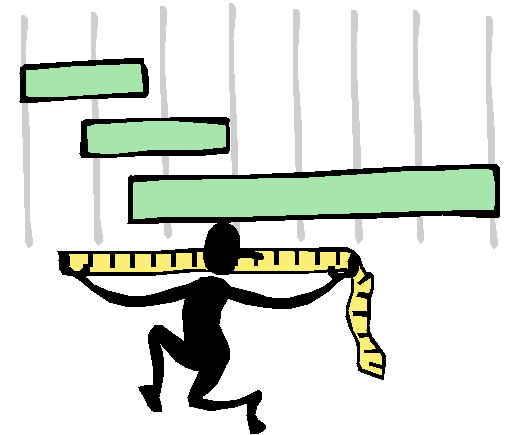
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Progress Reports

Establish reference to proposal

- Closer to your research goals?
- Research questions answered?
- Work packages completed?
- Milestones reached?
- Kept the time schedule?
- Planning adapted? (What happens next?)
- Risk management implemented?



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Progress Reports

Report on Progress of a Project

- Documents **what** has been achieved
- Sometimes also what was **not** achieved
- Less, but still, **how** and **why** it was (not) achieved
- Also (sometimes) informs other **project participants**
- However, main addressee is usually the **project administrator**

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Proposed Outline

Progress Report

1. Brief Introduction
2. (Summary of Relevant) Goals
3. Results
 - 3.1 Result 1
 - 3.2 ...
4. Further Procedure
5. Summary
6. Documents in Appendix and References

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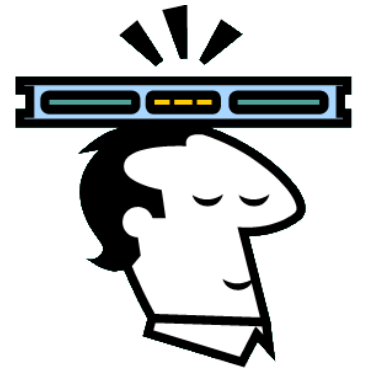
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Quality Check Progress Report

Third parties must understand without further documents

- **What** has been achieved
- **How** has it been achieved
- **Whether** the goals from the proposal have been achieved
- **Which consequences** result from this for the further course of the project
- **How** the progress is **to be assessed**



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Guidelines by DFG (DFG Preprint 2.01-8/11)¹



General information on the report

- Institute / chair
- Topic of the projects
- Reporting period, total funding period

¹“DFG-Vordruck 2.01-8/11 Verwendungsrichtlinien” 2011.

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Guidelines by DFG (DFG Preprint 2.01-8/11)

Content of Work and Result Report

- Initial questions and objectives of the project
- Development of the performed tasks
 - Deviations from the original concept
 - If applicable scientific failures
 - Problems in the organization or technical implementation
- Presentation of the results achieved and discussion with regard to the relevant state of the art
- Possible application perspectives and follow-up studies
- Contributors: Cooperation partners, project members, and so on
- Maximum 10 DIN A4 pages
- Generally understandable summary of the most important scientific advances

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Guidelines by DFG (DFG Preprint 2.01-8/11)

Notes

- Must be understandable without consulting further literature
- Access to enclosed documents is optional for reviewers
- Labeling the work of others and explaining your own work
- The report text is the sole basis for evaluation

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Principles of Scientific Practice²

The following must be observed for project work and reports

- Work according to the rules of the art (lege artis)
- Document results
- Consistently question all results yourself
- Strict honesty in contributions from cooperators, competitors and predecessors
- Backup and storage of primary data
- Originality and quality always take precedence over quantity

²DFG Preprint 2.01-8/11

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Progress Report Template by BMBF³



Bundesministerium
für Bildung
und Forschung

³“BMBF-Vordruck 0361b/09.05 Allgemeine Bestimmungen für Forschungs- und Entwicklungsverträge” 2005a.

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Progress Report Template by BMBF³

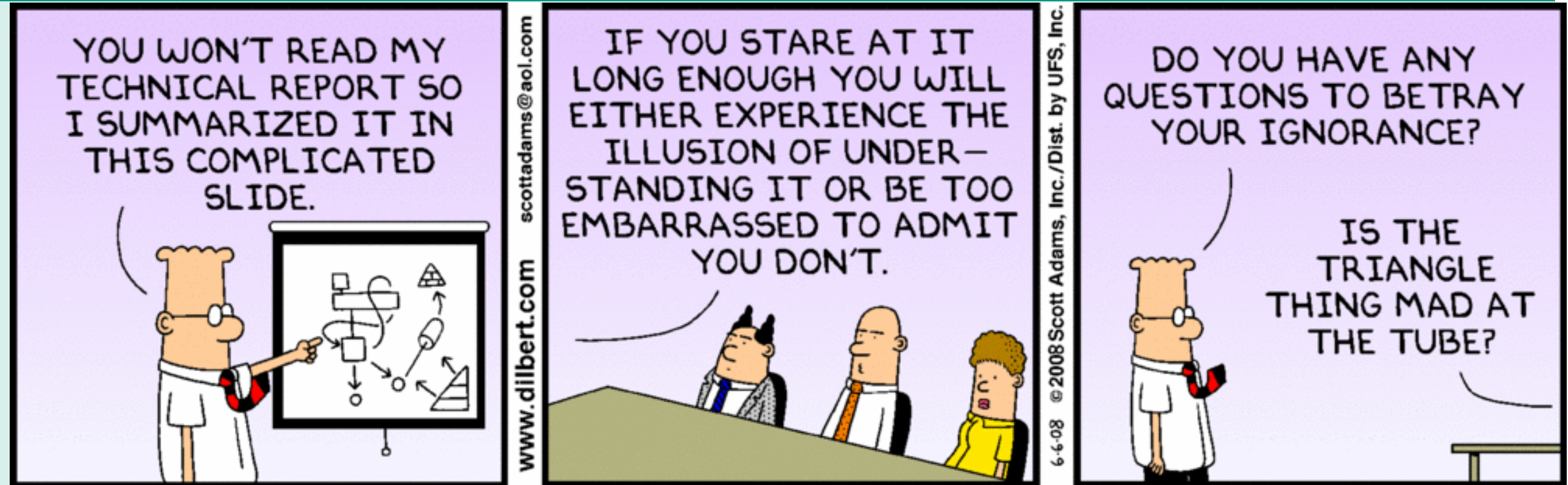
Summarized information on

- Report period
- Most important scientific and technical results
- Comparison with last work and time planning
- If necessary, justified change in the prospects of achieving the objectives
- If applicable, changes to the objectives
- Relevant third-party results that have become known in the meantime?
- Next necessary innovatory steps
- Scientific and/or technical prospects of success after end of project
- Scientific connectivity

³“BMBF-Vordruck 0361b/09.05 Allgemeine Bestimmungen für Forschungs- und Entwicklungsverträge” 2005a.

Balancing Act of Progress Report

Not too complicated ...



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Balancing Act of Progress Report

...yet also not too simple



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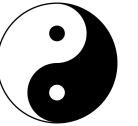
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Balancing Act of Progress Report

Conflicting objectives for progress reports

- Reference to proposal and previous progress reports
- Comprehensive information
- Document real/actual progress

- Independent document and time gap
- Formulate comprehensibly and concisely
- Satisfy clients, demonstrate success



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Final Reports

Report on the completion of a project

- Is a special progress report
- Can merge several progress reports
- Even stronger focus on results
 - Justification no longer necessary
 - Plan adjustment / countermeasures no longer possible
- Fundamental and further outlook
 - For follow-up projects
 - For other researchers



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Final Report Template by BMBF⁴

Brief description of

- Task definition
- Conditions under which the project was carried out
- Project planning and process
- Scientific and technical state of the art, which was followed up on
- Cooperation with other organizations

⁴“BMBF-Vordruck 0361b/09.05 Allgemeine Bestimmungen für Forschungs- und Entwicklungsverträge” 2005b.

Final Report Template by BMBF⁵

In-depth presentation of

- Achieved results
- Expected benefit / usability of the results
- Progress made by third parties during implementation
- Contribution of the results to the funding policy objectives
- Secondary results and significant experiences gained
- Work that has not led to a solution
- Presentation options for potential users, if applicable
- Adherence to cost and time planning

Separate one-page brief summary

- Key technical content of the final report

⁵BMBF Preprint 0361b/09.05

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Before and in-between the reports

Science thrives on communication

Own Documentation

- Reports are summaries of a longer period of the research process
- Hence the need to document your own progress
- ⇒ numerous possibilities
- ⇒ agree on one option in the group

Only two possibilities are presented here as examples

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“Research Diary”

Diary-like character

- Process-oriented
- Chronological sequence (regularly)
- No progress log in which only processes or content are reproduced

(Exemplary) Content

- Date
- Research question that has been worked on
- Short summary of how the question was processed
- Questions that arose in the process
- (Partial) results and discussion points
- Decisions that were made (and also why)

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“Portfolio”

Collection character

- Topic-centred
- Collection of documents on the various topics
- Red thread and explanations of the documents

(Exemplary) Content

- Cover page, table of contents, general introduction if applicable
- Documents always with title and page number
- Introduction to each topic (research question) with
 - Presentation, delimitation and justification, follow-up questions if applicable
- Documents (e.g., papers, etc.) with comments, description and conclusion for your own work/topic
- At the end: Overall conclusion

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“Portfolio”

Description of documents in Portfolio

- Type of document
- From where does the document stem/originate?
- Essential statements of the document

Conclusion

- How did I work with this document?
- Why did I choose this document?
- Most important findings from working on/with the document?

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Use

What can the portfolio/research diary be used for?

- As notes for discussions with the group members and supervisors
- As a reminder for explanations and explanations in the reports and the publication on the various topics
- For differentiation of your own work from the work used (especially portfolio)

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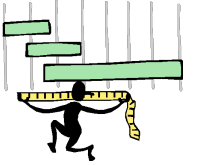
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Summary

Progress Report

- What, how, why achieved?



Final Report

- Final assessment, classification and outlook



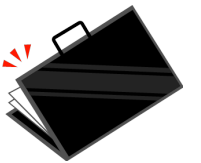
Research Diary

- Personal reflection on the research process and research successes



Portfolio

- Targeted, reflective collection of documents



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References

- 📄 “BMBF-Vordruck 0361b/09.05 Allgemeine Bestimmungen für Forschungs- und Entwicklungsverträge”. In: 2005. Chap. Muster für Zwischenbericht nach § 11 Abs. 1.
- 📄 “BMBF-Vordruck 0361b/09.05 Allgemeine Bestimmungen für Forschungs- und Entwicklungsverträge”. In: 2005. Chap. Muster für Schlussbericht nach § 11 Abs. 2.
- 📄 “DFG-Vordruck 2.01-8/11 Verwendungsrichtlinien”. In: 2011. Chap. Leitfaden für Abschlussberichte und Regeln guter wissenschaftlicher Praxis.