Practical Assessment Task

Computer Applications Technology

Self-study Guide for doing the PAT
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The purpose of this self-study guide

The purpose of this document is to guide teachers and learners through the PAT process. It will help them to produce a Practical Assessment Task of high quality that meets all the requirements.

It could also be used to revise or to teach important information management content and skills.

How to use this guide

This guide should be used as a resource for teachers and learners. Teachers should refer to the guide for clarity seeking issues regarding information management and the PAT process. The guide should be used in conjunction with all other resources and the Practical Assessment Task set by the Department of Basic Education.

Computer Applications Technology

Practical Assessment Task – Self-Study Guide for doing the PAT

What is the PAT?

The PAT is a project in which you should demonstrate your Information Management skills by investigating a matter, writing a report in which you present your findings, make recommendations or propose your ideas using the application programs that you have studied.

It is a single, continuous project, done in phases. Each phase builds on the previous one and a subsequent phase informs a previous phase. The task defined in the first phase is the task completed in the final project.

The PAT uses a structured process that teaches good principles that help you to stay focused. It brings together the skills learnt in CAT. The PAT is the way in which the work taught in CAT is applied in an integrated fashion.

Overview of the PAT:

Phase 1

Define the task
Set questions to guide you towards the correct information and data that you will need to do your investigation
Find, access, collect and evaluate the information

Phase 2

Use the information and data
Plan the investigation and report
Process and analyse information and data

Phase 3

Use the information and data
Put it all together
Write the report
Present the findings and recommendations
Preparing for the PAT

Where to begin and what to do first – some brainstorming

- Read the scenario
- Write down information given and required
- Write down initial thoughts
- Identify a possible topic/focus area within the scenario
- Write down possible sub-topics
- Do you have a clear overview?

- Consider whether you will be able to do it:

  **Scope?**
  
  *Too wide:* You will have trouble of what to include, have to deal with too much information, might not be able to complete in time
  Narrow down by focusing on only one or a few limited aspects
  *Too narrow:* The chances are that you will not find enough to write about to fill the pages or to present a meaningful report

  **Information?**
  
  Will you be able to find the information required, considering available sources?
  Is it doable? Will you be able to use a spreadsheet (Grade 10 – 12) and a database (Grade 11 & 12)?

**Self-evaluation**

Check your decision against the information given above
Checkpoint

Ask one or two of your peers to check your topic and ideas
Also, ask your teacher to check these.

Ask one or two of your classmates to check your intended topic and ideas
Ask your teacher to check your intended topic and ideas

Name:

Do my topic and ideas make sense?
Will it be doable?

Checked by:

Strong points
What do you like? What is clear?

What is missing?
What is not clear?
Areas to develop

Prepare file structure
- Create folders and subfolders for saving relevant documents and evidence
- Label the main folder or briefcase using your surname and name
- Create a subfolder for each phase

Create folders and subfolders within each folder as necessary to organise your documents
Planning – start preparing your documents for Phase 1

**Assignment:**

**Today’s date:**

**Due date:**

**Tasks necessary to completion**

**Phase 1**

**Task Definition**

- Describe what needs to be done in your own words, taking into account what the problem is that you need to investigate and what the investigation would be about, by starting with the phrase: *I am going to...*

**What I need to do**

**I am going to...**

Do not provide any solution or make any recommendations here (that is done in the final report in Phase 3)

You first need to investigate to find the solution or to make recommendations

**I am going to...**

Investigate...
What? - What is the problem and what the investigation would be about?
How?
Tools
What will I present? How? To whom?
What will the final product be?
You must show that you are sure about the job you have to do
Main Question:

- Write down your main question by determining the essence and focus of the investigation and putting that into a question format:

  Write down your main question

  It should tell the reader about exactly what your investigation will be and what you will focus on. It should keep you from getting lost or off-track when asking other questions. Keep it simple and clear.

Factors to consider when you formulate your main question:

- Will you be able to investigate it?
- Is it of a manageable scope?
- Can it be done in the time available?
- Would you be able to do it with the resources that you have access to?

Note: Rather do something simple and do it right, than try to go overboard.

Checkpoint

Ask one or two of your peers to check your task definition and your main question. Also, ask your teacher to check these.

Do my task definition and main question make sense?
Do they show a clear path?

Ask one or two of your classmates to check your task definition and main question
Ask your teacher to check your task definition and main question

Name:

Do my task definition and main questions make sense?
Do they show a clear path?

What is missing?
What is not clear?
Areas to develop

Strong points
What do you like? What is clear?

Copyright reserved
Identify the main aspects
- Look at your initial brainstorming
- Determine the sub-topics that you are going to address

Factors to consider when you identify headings / sub-topics:
- Do these relate to my task definition and my main question?
- Will I be able to investigate it?
- Should I reduce the number of sub-topics?
- Would I be able to find information for these with the resources that I have access to?

Note: Your main question and sub-topics should keep you from getting lost or off-track when asking other questions or when looking for information
Setting questions

- Write down questions that will help you do your investigation
  - You can write questions under each sub-topic or
  - simply write down questions and arrange them under each sub-topic at a later stage.
  - You may even identify a new sub-topic/heading at this stage when writing down your questions or find that some sub-topics/headers might not work
- Try to have questions starting with phrases such as:

  Level 1: Questions that can be answered explicitly by facts, e.g. questions starting with words such as What? When? Where? Who? How many? etc.

  Level 2: Questions that will help you to examine, explore, query, e.g. questions starting with words such as Why? How? etc.

  Level 3: Questions that will help you to adjust alter or predict, e.g. questions starting with words such as If? What if? etc.

  Level 4: Questions that will help you to make a judgment, critique, review or find meaning of some sort, e.g. questions starting with words such as Would it be better if? What recommendation? How can I determine? What would be the best way? etc.

Rationale behind questions

- Indicate for each question how answering that question will help you to conduct the investigation by finding relevant information and data for processing – i.e. do not just add any question, make sure that you need it for your investigation

Factors to consider when you set questions:

- Will the questions help me find the information that I need?
- Quality of questions - do my questions reflect different levels of thinking?
- Will they give me enough information or data to process to complete the task?
Sources
- Identify a possible source for each question
- Consider the different sources / tools.

Note about surveys and interviews
You will also need a survey/questionnaire or want to do an interview
You will need to set questions for your questionnaire/survey or your interview

Remember:
- ‘Closed’ questions are better for a questionnaire/survey, e.g. questions with only one answer or where people can select an answer from a list provided – open ended questions are sometimes difficult to analyse
- Try do do a trial run before doing a survey to make sure it can be analysed (calculations, graphs, etc.)
- You will have to decide what questions to ask in the interview and decide how you will use these answers.
You should now

- have decided on your sub-topics
- have questions for each sub-topic
- have reasons for asking the questions
- have identified a possible source for each question
- have set questions for your questionnaire / survey / interview
- create your questionnaire / survey form
- be ready to access the sources and find the information you need

Factors to consider when you determine sources / tools:
- Do I need a survey/questionnaire?
- What questions will I include in the questionnaire / survey form? Will I be able to process this information? Will it give me an answer or show me a trend?
- Will I need to interview people to find some answers? What questions will I ask them? How will I use these answers?
- Will I need access to the Internet?
- How will I conduct my search?
- Is the source reliable?
You could use the following table to write down what you have done so far:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-topic</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Rationale (Why did I ask this question?)</th>
<th>Possible Source (Where will I find the information?)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Checkpoint 3
Ask one or two of your peers to check your questions, reasons and your sources
Also, ask your teacher to check these.

Strong points
What do you like? What is clear?

Do my questions make sense? Reasons? Sources?

What is missing?
What is not clear?
Areas to develop

Do my questions lead me to the information and data that I will need for my investigation?
Should some questions be rephrased?
Should I add some questions?
Should I delete some questions?
Do they cover all aspects that I want to address?
Do you understand the reason for asking this question?
Am I likely to find the information in the source identified?
Find, access and collect the information

- Use the information finding strategies from previous steps to find, access and collect the information and data that you will need, e.g.
  - Hand out questionnaires / survey forms and collect after completion
  - Conduct interviews
  - Access Internet and other sources and collect relevant information – make notes
- Save documents and evidence electronically in the Phase 1 folder created

Engage with information

Read, read, read...

Determine which information is relevant - will answer your questions and which is irrelevant or inappropriate

Determine which information will need to be manipulated and processed

Which data can be processed into meaningful information? How could it be presented?

Will the information complete the puzzle / provide the answers?

Cross reference the data/information with the questions

Engage with info...

Keep details of all bibliographic information to use when compiling your final report

Which information would I be able to combine or rework to give me new knowledge and insights

Cross reference t...

Colour tags
Comments
Highlight
Hyperlink
Bookmark

Make notes, summarise

Determine...

Read, read, read...
Evaluate sources

- Check if the information is trustworthy
- Evaluate the sources

- Can the source be trusted?
- Accuracy: Is it accurate? Can it be verified somewhere else?
- Objectivity: Are there any bias? Is it someone's opinion? Commercial information?
- Coverage: How well does it cover the topic?
- Authority: Who wrote the information? Is it an expert? What does the URL tell you?
- Currency: Is the information up-to-date? Does it matter if it is not?
Check if you have done all that is required before you hand in your document for Phase 1. Also, ask a peer to check these.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Self</th>
<th>Peer</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Task definition?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makes sense?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>According to scenario?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main question?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makes sense?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Focused?</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Directs investigation?</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sub-topics?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Questions**

| Makes sense?                |      |      |         |
| According to topic/heading? |      |      |         |
| Labeled according to level? |      |      |         |
| Reason?                     |      |      |         |
| Possible source?            |      |      |         |

**Sources and information**

| Evaluated?                  |      |      |         |
| Bibliographic information?  |      |      |         |
| Answer questions?           |      |      |         |
| Variety?                   |      |      |         |

**Tools, e.g. questionnaire/survey?**

| Available?                  |      |      |         |
| Hyperlinked / cross referenced? |  | | |
| File structure?             |      |      |         |
| Well organised?             |      |      |         |

**Hand in**

- Finalise your document to be handed in for Phase 1

You could expand your table to provide for all the information:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Heading / sub-topic</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Rationale (Why did I ask this question?)</th>
<th>Possible Source (Where will I find the information?)</th>
<th>Is this information trustworthy? Write motivation</th>
<th>Evidence of information (Hyperlink, screen dump, reference, etc) and bibliographic information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- Insert a screenshot of your folder structure
  Provide a list of evidence.
Planning / overview Phase 2

- Get a clear overview of the following step in the process and due dates

Assignment:

Tasks necessary to completion

Today’s date:

Due date:

Phase 2

Use information
Plan which information will be used
Plan how it will be used
Plan report
Create spreadsheet and process data
Create database and process information

Complete by:
Phase 2

Use information – Planning the report

- Create a framework to show how you are going to use the information and data in your report
  - Which headings and sub-headings will you use? Refer to sub-topics in phase 1.
  - How and where will you use the answers to the questions?
  - How will you integrate the different packages?
  - Which evidence will you use to support your findings and recommendations?
  - How will you use the evidence?
  - What will the order be?

Knowing who you’re writing for helps determine word choice, order, level of detail and tone.

Introduction

What does the reader need to know first? This might be background information, purpose, etc.

Body

What discussions should come in here? Headings and Sub-headings?

Conclusion

Recommendations New ideas / knowledge

What information, data and evidence does your report need?

What is the order of information?

Think about your audience. To whom do you write? What do they need to know first? Second? Third? Is there any specific or logic order in which the information should be presented?
- Plan each section and each paragraph
Report Outline

1. Main Heading {Heading 1}
2. Introduction {Heading 2}
   State purpose, give overview / background, give context of report
3. Body
   Paragraphs
   - Topic 1 {Heading 2}
     Key words of information regarding this topic that will go here
     Supporting evidence that will go here, e.g. graph
   - Topic 2 {Heading 2}
     Key words of information regarding this topic that will go here
     Supporting evidence that will go here, e.g. query
     - Sub-topic {Heading 3}
       Key words of information regarding this sub-topic that will go here
     - Sub-topic {Heading 3}
       Key words of information regarding this sub-topic that will go here
       Supporting evidence that will go here, e.g. graphic
   - Topic 3 {Heading 2}
     Key words of information regarding this topic that will go here
     Supporting evidence that will go here, e.g. graph
     - Sub-topic {Heading 3}
       Key words of information regarding this topic that will go here
4. Conclusion {Heading 2}
   Key notes

Checkpoint
Ask one or two of your peers to check your planning. Also, ask your teacher to check these.

Did I plan my report well?
Organising and flow?
Information?
Evidence?

Name: _____________________________
Checked by: _______________________

Strong points
What do you like? What is clear?

Did I plan my report well?

- Headings / sub-topics?
- Is the information well organised?
- Is the flow logic?
- Will the planned information answer the questions?
- Will the information answer my main question?
- Will the evidence support or explain my information? Make it clearer?

What do you miss?
What is not clear?
Areas to develop
Use information – Process and analyse information and data

Create spreadsheet
- Type in data from survey, transfer or import data gathered elsewhere
- Use functions and formulae to process the data into meaningful information – to help answer the questions and support your findings
- Make summaries
- Create meaningful graphs – to help answer the questions and support your findings/recommendations

Create database
- Type in, transfer or import information gathered
- Create meaningful queries – to help answer the questions and support your findings/recommendations
- Create meaningful reports – to help answer the questions and support your findings/recommendations

Use information and data

Manipulate

Examine

Calculate

Analyze

Extract info

Find the pieces of the puzzle

Find the answers to your questions and the key to answer your main question

Gain new knowledge and insights

Change into useful information

Come to a conclusion

What are these telling me?
What ‘story’ is unfolding?
Checkpoint
Ask one or two of your peers to check your processing. Also, ask your teacher to check these.

Will my processing and analysis provide me answers and supporting evidence?
Will it help me to draw conclusions and make recommendations?

Strong points
What do you like? What is clear?

What do you miss?
What is not clear?

Areas to develop

Ask one or two of your classmates to check your processing and analysis and ask you some questions about this.
Ask your teacher to check processing and analysis and ask you some questions.

Spreadsheet:
Is the spreadsheet easy to read and interpret?
Are the calculations correct?
Are the calculations meaningful?
Are some calculations unnecessary?
Shouldn't more calculations be done to give me answers or support my findings?
Does the processing show some trends and patterns?
Is information appropriately summarised?
Will some results be better presented in a graph?

Database:
Is the database easy to read and interpret?
Are the queries meaningful?
Are the reports meaningful?
Can I find trends or see patterns?
Will the queries and reports give me answers or support my findings?
**Checkpoint**

Check if you have done all that is required before you hand in your document for Phase 2. Also, ask a peer to check these.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Self</th>
<th>Peer</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Planning</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Each section?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Body</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Headings / sub-headings?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Paragraphs?</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Key notes on what will be in each paragraph?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How questions will be answered?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How packages will be used?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Where supporting evidence will be placed?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organisation?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Analysis</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Spreadsheet</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Calculations (formulae and functions)?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Graphs?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Easy to interpret?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meaningful?</td>
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<td>Provides answers?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Easy to read and interpret?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Database</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Design?</td>
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<td>Table – number of records?</td>
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<td>Queries?</td>
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<td>Reports?</td>
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<td>Calculations?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meaningful?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provides answers?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Hand in:**

- Planning document with the report outline and information
  - on how you intend to use the information
  - where you intend to use it
  - how it will be organised
- Completed spreadsheet where you processed and analysed the information and data
- Completed database where you analysed the information and data
Planning / overview Phase 3

Assignment:

Today's date:

Due date:

Tasks necessary to completion

Phase 3

Put everything together
Write report
Prepare presentation (optional for Grade 10)

3 Phase 3

Complete by:
Phase 3: Use information – Put it all together, complete the puzzle

- Write the report
- Use the outline and write the report using the information, data and supporting evidence from previous phases.

Factors to consider in compiling your report:
- Information or material should not be copied from web sites or anywhere else - it should have been reworked, processed or analysed.
- Graphs, queries, should be woven into your report.
- Graphs must have a caption - the caption should not be a 'story' but is a 'heading' for an image.
- Pictures, if used, must be described or referred to in the text - it should support your text, else do not use.
- Page numbers are required - especially when you have a table of contents.
- Check the formatting of headings, etc.
Prepare the presentation

Prepare a summary of the report or create a presentation on any related matter.

- **Outlines**: Make your 1st or 2nd slide an outline of your presentation. Follow the order of your outline for the rest of the presentation. Only place main points on the outline slide - use the titles of each slide as main points.

- **Slide Structure**: Use 1-2 slides per minute of your presentation. Write in point form, not complete sentences. Include 4-5 points per slide. Avoid wordiness; use key words and phrases only.

- **Font**: Use at least an 18-point font. Use different size fonts for main points and secondary points. Use a standard font like Times New Roman or Arial. Only use capital letters when necessary - it is difficult to read.

- **Colour**: Use a colour of font that contrasts sharply with the background - e.g. blue font on white background. Use colour to reinforce the logic of your structure - e.g. light blue title and dark blue text. Use colour to emphasize a point - but only use this occasionally.

- **Background**: Use backgrounds that are attractive but simple. Use backgrounds which are light. Use the same background consistently throughout your presentation.

- **Graphs**: Use graphs rather than just charts and words. Data in graphs is easier to comprehend & retain than is raw data. Trends are easier to visualize in graph form. Always title your graphs.

- **Spelling and Grammar**: Proof your slides for spelling mistakes, the use of repeated words, grammatical errors you might have made.

- **Conclusion**: Use a conclusion slide to summarize the main points of your presentation and suggest action or make recommendation.

Do not...

- Go overboard with animation.
- Use distracting animation.

Show one point at a time...

- Will help audience concentrate on what you are saying.
- Will prevent audience from reading ahead.
- Will help you keep your presentation focused.

Show one point at...

- Don't show too much at once.
- Will help audience concentrate on what you are saying.
- Will prevent audience from reading ahead.
- Will help you keep your presentation focused.

Do...

- Use an 18-point font.
- Use different size fonts for main points and secondary points.
- Use a standard font like Times New Roman or Arial.
- Only use capital letters when necessary - it is difficult to read.
- Use a colour of font that contrasts sharply with the background - e.g. blue font on white background.
- Use colour to reinforce the logic of your structure - e.g. light blue title and dark blue text.
- Use colour to emphasize a point - but only use this occasionally.
- Use backgrounds that are attractive but simple.
- Use backgrounds which are light.
- Use the same background consistently throughout your presentation.
- Use graphs rather than just charts and words.
- Data in graphs is easier to comprehend & retain than is raw data.
- Trends are easier to visualize in graph form.
- Always title your graphs.
- Proof your slides for spelling mistakes, the use of repeated words, grammatical errors you might have made.
- Use a conclusion slide to summarize the main points of your presentation and suggest action or make recommendation.
**Checkpoint**

At this point, you will have to check if you have done all that is required for phase 3. Also, ask a peer to check these.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Self</th>
<th>Peer</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Context of investigation?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear overview?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Body</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Headings and sub-headings?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organisation:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sequence?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supporting evidence?</td>
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Hand in

1. Your final report containing
   - Introduction
   - Body/Paragraphs discussing the task and the recommendations including information, graphics/images, tables, graphs, queries, reports created in Phase 2 to support the discussion, recommendation or findings
   - Conclusion – present your findings, idea or recommendation

   The report should include:
   - Title page
   - Table of contents
   - List of references
   - Hyperlinks to documents/evidence from previous phases

2. Your presentation

   A summary of the report/findings/recommendation or a visual presentation on any related matter using the fourth package that you studied: