



Making Roads Safer

## Road Safety Trust Guidance for Report Writing

# Large Grants

## Introduction

**This guidance document has been prepared to help The Road Safety Trust grantees to produce the Final Project Report. It is based on guidance developed by the University of Leeds. Funded projects are expected to adhere to this guidance when producing reports or discuss alternative formats with their Grant Manager.**

As a general rule, we would expect any large or main theme grant or strategic priority grant reports to be no more than 30 pages (not including appendices).

## Audience

It is important to consider who you are writing the report for. Keep the audience in mind as you write your report, think about what they need to know. While maintaining a focus on the main audience type it can also be vital to make the content accessible to a larger, more diverse group. This means, for example, limiting the use of specialist technical language and where statistics are used explaining findings in plain English. More detailed technical aspects of the report should be made available through a link to a technical report in an annexe. Examples of audiences for RST reports are: road safety practitioners, academics, transport policy makers, transport or manufacturer industry stakeholders, the general public.

# Report structure

Where possible, break the report down into sections, each with their own headings and sub-headings. These sections may include bullet points or numbering as well as more structured sentences. Shorter paragraphs are usually more effective for report writing. Report structures can vary but a suggested and common structure includes:

- **Title page**

The title page needs to be informative and descriptive, concisely stating the topic of the report. It can also include the report authors and organisations involved in the project and their logos. Please include The Road Safety Trust logo on all your reports and outputs where appropriate, this can be requested from your Grant Manager.

- **Table of contents**

Readers will use this table of contents to identify which sections are most relevant to them. You must make sure your contents page correctly represents the structure of your report.

- **Acknowledgments**

Please acknowledge all funders and key project partners.

- **Project Summary**

This serves as a concise, high-level overview of the context, aims and objectives, methods, important findings and conclusions of the report, covering any key recommendations.

In a long and complex report, a project summary can be particularly powerful as it is intended to give the reader an overview of the report enabling them to decide if the contents are relevant and of interest to them and whether they want, or need to, read the entire report. Since not everyone who reads the summary will read the entire report, this section must represent a stand-alone piece that can be fully understood independently from the report. While it should only contain information found within the report itself it should not be “cut and pasted” from other parts of the report. Instead, it should read like an original, condensed overview of all the key elements of the project. It is often a good idea to write this section last.

- **Introduction**

The introduction should include information about the background and/or context to your project, the aims and objectives, and the need for the project. You can also refer to the main literature or statistics in this section; reporting what is already known about your research question or topic, and if there are any gaps.

- **Literature Review**

If a literature review was part of the project please include the summary as a section in the report, with the stand alone Literature Review included as an appendix.

- **Project design and activities**

A description of the main activities and methods that were undertaken to deliver the objectives and measure the intended road safety outcomes, in chronological order. This section should provide an accurate description of the procedures used and any materials so that others could replicate the method you conducted. This should include the procedures or methods that you used to gather data and information to measure the benefits.

- **Results/Findings**

This section should be an objective summary of your findings, which can use tables, graphs, or figures to describe the most important results and trends. You do not need to attempt to provide reasons for your results (this will happen in the discussion section). Detailed statistical results should be included in an appendix.

- **Discussion**

In the discussion you should critically evaluate your findings. You may need to re-state what your report was aiming to establish or understand and whether this has been achieved. You should also assess the accuracy and significance of your findings and show how they fit in the context of previous studies or projects.

- **Learning and next steps<sup>1</sup>**

We are interested in understanding the difficulties and enablers that were encountered during project delivery. Please list or discuss:

- Things that went particularly well.
- Things that didn't quite go to plan or what you would do differently if you did it again.
- The plans for the project going forward. Will it be continued or rolled out?

- **Conclusion and recommendations**

Your conclusion should summarise the outcomes of your report and make suggestions for further research or action to be taken where necessary. You are also encouraged to include a list of specific recommendations to improve road safety as a result of your project findings to enable stakeholders to identify and apply any lessons learned. However, these need to be well supported by the project's findings. You should also highlight areas for improvement and learning for similar projects in future.

- **References**

The references are a list of any sources or literature you have used in your report. Your report should use consistent referencing. Consider using standard referencing guidelines such as Harvard, Numeric, OSCOLA etc.

- **Appendices**

You should use appendices to expand on points referred to in the main body of the report. You can use appendices to provide backup information, usually data or statistics, but it is important that the information contained is directly relevant to the content of the report.

The order they appear at the back of your report is determined by the order that they are mentioned in the body of your report. You should refer to your appendices within the text of your report, for example 'see Appendix B for a breakdown of the questionnaire results'. Don't forget to list the appendices in your contents page.

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<sup>1</sup> As well as this Final Project Report, RST may ask you to complete a Project Briefing (e.g. policy, practice or evidence briefing). This document has been designed to facilitate implementation of practical road safety initiatives or policies that provide benefits for road users.