

Preparing Research Reports for the Idaho Transportation Department

An Overview for Researchers and
Report Editors

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Overview

This document provides answers to a variety of questions you may have about the writing process:

1. Why prepare research reports?
2. Who is the audience for ITD research reports?
3. What are the quality expectations for research reports?
4. Where can I find ITD's report formatting requirements?
5. What guidance does the style guide provide to improve readability?
6. What is the electronic report template?
7. What are the steps in the report writing process?
8. How are responsibilities tracked?
9. Who is responsible for which tasks?

What is the purpose of ITD's research reports?

A written report is required for each ITD research project.

These reports play a critical role in the research process. More specifically, reports:

1. Describe the work performed.
2. Facilitate quality control efforts.
3. Communicate research findings and knowledge gained.
4. Serve as a tool in implementing recommended improvements.



Who is your audience?

Final reports are used by ITD management and staff, as well as by transportation professionals and researchers across the country.

Reports should be understandable to people with differing levels of familiarity with the subject matter.



The audience for ITD reports includes:

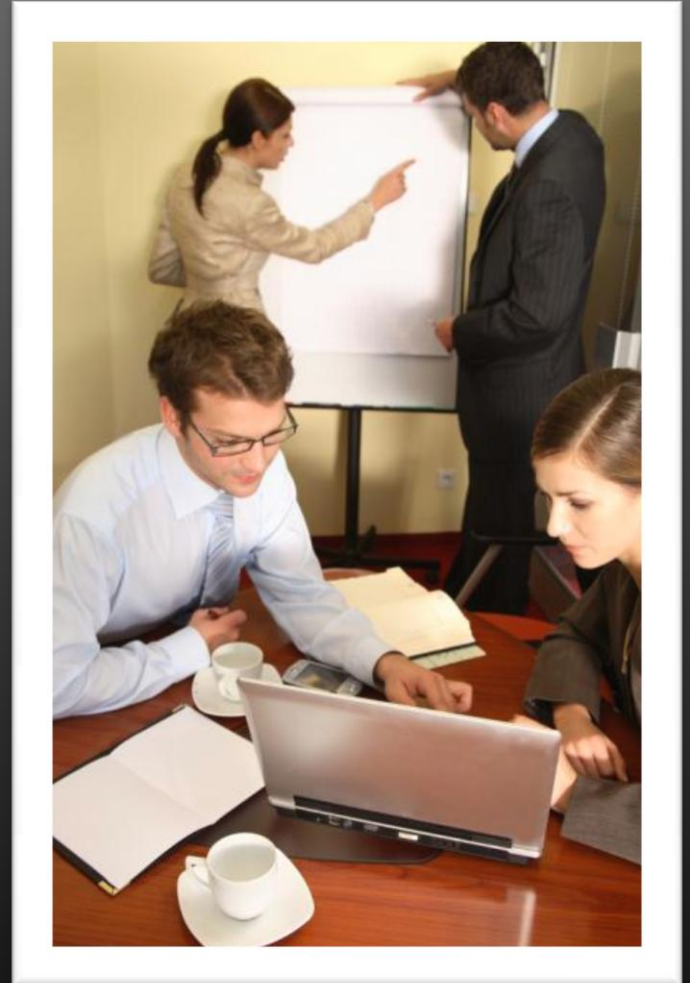
1. Primary readers such as ITD engineering and planning staff .
2. Secondary readers such as department management, lawmakers, and the general public.

What are the quality expectations?

Research reports prepared for ITD should be comparable in quality to a dissertation or journal article.

Reports must be edited for technical accuracy, clarity, and formatting prior to initial submission to ITD.

The Principal Investigator is responsible for report quality.



Where can you find information about ITD's report requirements?

ITD has developed a style guide for its research reports, which spells out requirements such as:

Report Organization

- How should the report be organized?
- What are the required elements that must be included in all reports?

Formatting

- What fonts and type sizes should be used?
- How should chapter and section headings be formatted?

Bullets and Numbered Lists

- How should bullets and numbered lists be formatted?

Tables and Figures

- How should tables and figures be formatted?

Page Numbering

- Is there a particular page numbering schema that should be used?

Citing References

- How should literature be cited in the body of the report?
- How should citations be formatted?

ITD's Report Process and Style Guide can be found at:

<http://itd.idaho.gov/highways/research/>

How can I ensure reports are readable?

The style guide provides guidance on how to make reports more readable.



Be Concise. You are writing for busy readers.

Ensure the information presented flows logically.

Provide an executive summary to highlight key findings and recommendations.

Use headings to help the reader navigate the report.

Use active voice.

Avoid using jargon or undefined terms.

Use consistent language.

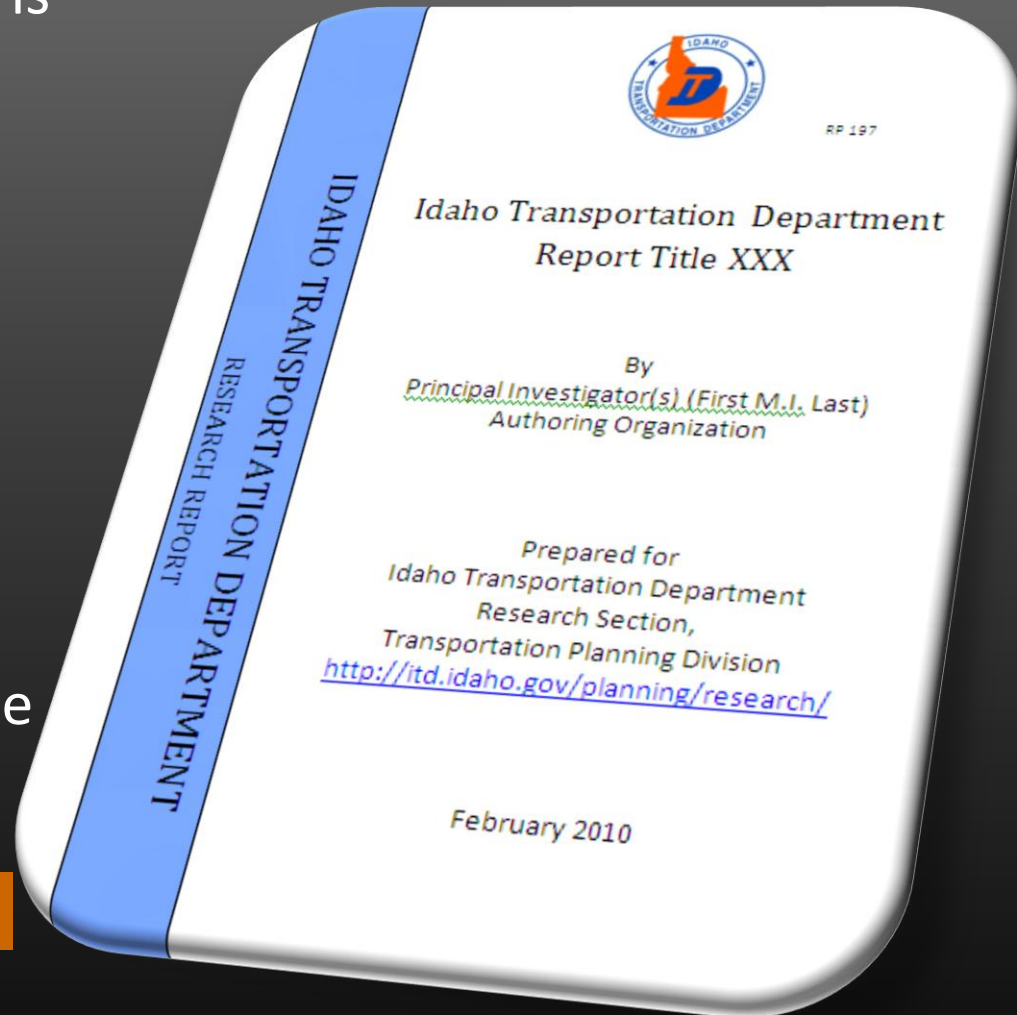
What is the electronic report template?

The electronic report template is a Word document with the appropriate formatting for ITD Research reports.

Researchers should use the template, along with the Style Guide, when preparing report drafts.

This template is available on the Research Program website:

<http://itd.idaho.gov/highways/research/>



What are the steps in the report writing process?

Principle Investigator	Submit outline to ITD for review.
Principle Investigator and ITD Staff	Meet to discuss report outline and identify needed changes.
Principle Investigator and Team	Prepare draft report.
Principle Investigator	Provide draft report to approved peer reviewer(s). Provide draft report to approved editor for review. Revise draft report to reflect peer and editorial review comments. Submit draft report and signed checklists to ITD Research Program Manager for initial review.
ITD Staff	Review draft and provide comments to researchers.
Principle Investigator	Revise draft report to address all review comments. Submit revised draft to ITD.
ITD Staff	Final review of the report.
Principle Investigator	Revise draft to address final review comments and resubmit to ITD Research Program Manager.
ITD Staff	Print and distribute approved final report.

How are responsibilities tracked?

The responsibilities of the key participants in the report development process are detailed in checklists provided in Appendix A of ITD's *Report Process and Style Guide*.

1. Check off each task as it is completed.
2. Submit the completed checklists with your report drafts.

ITD PROJECT MANAGER AND TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

- Review report outline submitted by Principal Investigator.
- Meet with researchers to discuss outline and provide comments on report organization and content (in person or via video is preferable).
- Arrange for an independent peer review of the draft report.
- Review the draft report for technical accuracy and provide comments to ITD Research Program staff within 3 weeks of receipt.
- Hold draft review meetings as needed to discuss needed changes to reports.
- Arrange for additional research if needed (with research staff).

Signature: _____

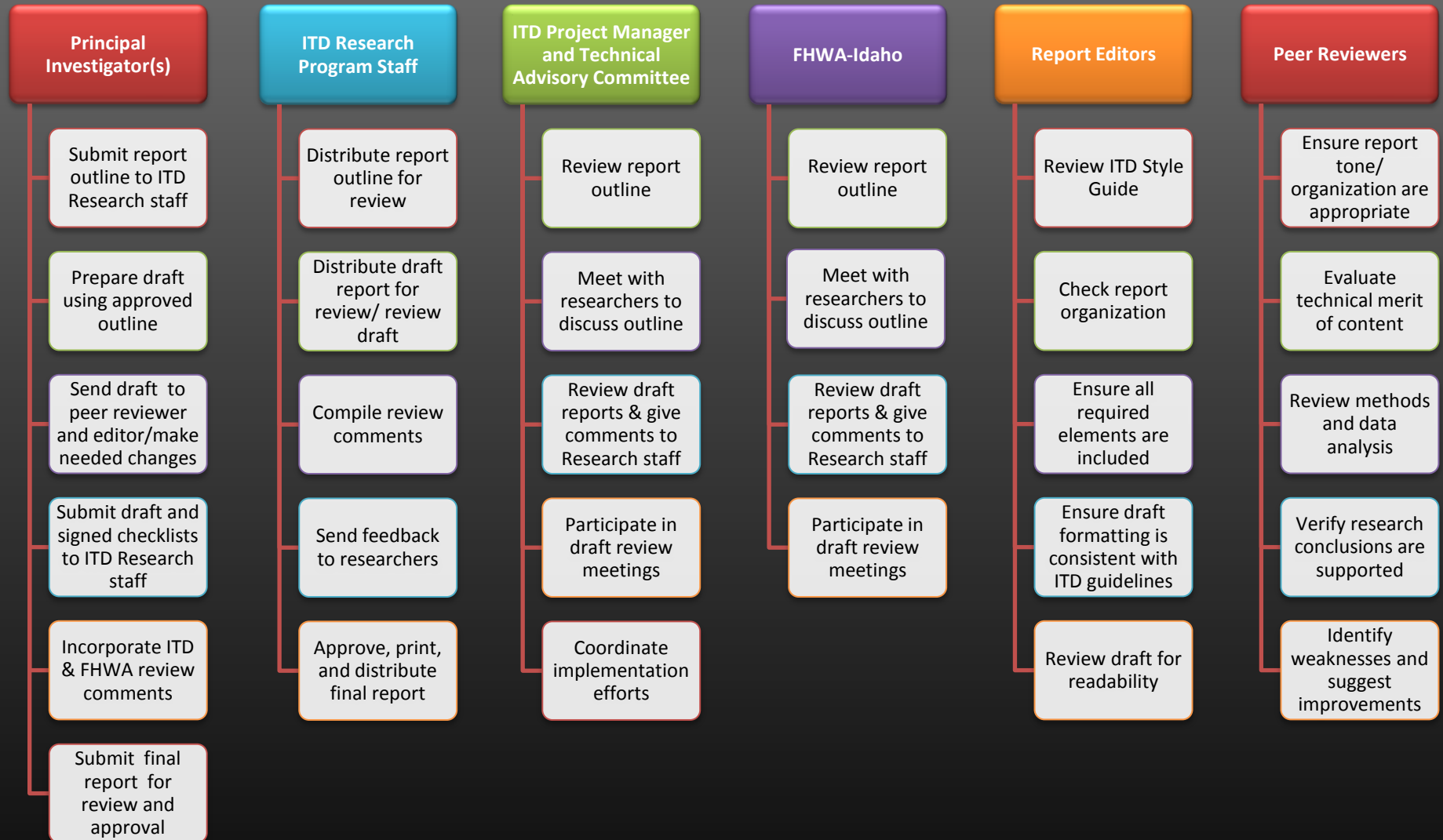
ITD RESEARCH PROGRAM STAFF

- Distribute report outline to ITD project manager, the Technical Advisory Committee, and FHWA Idaho for review.
- Distribute draft report to all stakeholders for review.
- Review draft publication for the inclusion of all required elements.
- Review the draft publication for errors, omissions, clarity, and organization; ensure all FHWA/DOT requirements are met; and verify all literature references cited.
- Address authors' questions.
- Compile all comments from ITD and FHWA stakeholders and return to the Principal Investigator.
- Review and respond to comments from ITD project manager and FHWA-Idaho staff during the review meeting on the publication.
- Review revised report drafts submitted by researchers.
- Approve final report.
- Print and distribute final report.
- Post report on the ITD Research website.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Who is responsible for which tasks?



Have Questions?

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