

Preparation Instructions for FTA Final Reports

Those completing reports on behalf of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) are no longer responsible for the final design of their reports because of a recent shift in process. Final design is now the responsibility of FTA. FTA will produce these final reports in PDF format and will place them on the FTA website at http://www.fta.dot.gov/about/research_reports_and_publications and at other locations on FTA's website.

The following formatting instructions provide guidance to contractors, grantees, and others responsible for preparing and delivering final research reports to FTA in electronic format. The purpose is to foster *uniformity* in FTA reports for ease of information retrieval, technical merit, clarity of writing, quality control, and processing in information systems, as well as for assuring permanent access and delivery of FTA reports and documents.

Compliance with these formatting instructions is **required**. In addition, all final reports must be compliant with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (described in more detail below).

To further promote efficient spending in the Federal Government, Executive Order 13589 directs agencies to provide written information electronically and limit the publication and printing of hard copy documents. If it is determined that a report will also be printed, printing is the responsibility of the FTA project manager or the author, but FTA will provide the design and files necessary for printing if requested at the time of final report submission.

General

Reports must be submitted electronically in two formats: one file using Word 2007 or later and one file as a PDF.

- Spelling, definition, and compounding of words should follow *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th Edition.

- Measurements may appear in both SI (metric) and U.S. customary units, with the measurement unit of the original research followed by the equivalent conversion in parentheses.

Order of Appearance

Reports must include each of the following elements in the following order:

- Title Page
- Report Documentation Page (Standard Form 298), submitted in a separate Word file, as found at http://www.fta.dot.gov/research/program_requirements
- Table of Contents
- List of Figures
- List of Tables
- Foreword (optional)
- Acknowledgments
- Abstract
- Executive Summary
- Main body of text, separated into titled sections and subsections as appropriate; numbering should not be used for subsections
- Appendices (if needed)
- Glossary of Terms (if needed)
- References

Text

- Layout: 8.5" x 11", portrait orientation
- Margins: 1" on top, bottom, left, and right
- Font: Arial, 11 pt
- Alignment: Left, one column
- Spacing: Single
- Paragraph indents: None
- Headers/footers: None (other than page numbering)
- Headings:
 - First-Level Head (bold type, capitalize each word, on separate line)
 - **Second-level subhead** (bold italics type, only first word capped, on separate line)
 - *Third-level subhead* (italics type, only first word capped, on separate line)

Tables & Figures

Tables and figures should be included within the text and appear immediately after the paragraph in which they first are indicated, when possible. Titling should be as follows:

- **Table 5-1 Example of a Table Title**
Title above table; bold type; capitalize each word; numbering corresponds to section/chapter (5-1, 5-2, etc.); no punctuation after number or at end of title
- **Figure 3-1 Example of a Figure Title.**
Title below figure; bold type; capitalize each word; numbering corresponds to section/chapter (3-1, 3-2, etc.); no punctuation after figure number; period at end of title

Illustrations, Photographs & Videos

- Each chart, figure, photo, illustration, video, and table must have a distinct title.
- Each image requires Section 508-compliant alternative text.
- All charts, tables, and graphs must be submitted separately in Microsoft Excel file containing the data points used to create each chart, table or graph.
- **Illustrations and photographs must be submitted separately in an image file format** (TIF, JPG, AI, or EPS) and must include all sources and written permissions for use.
- Images must have at least 72 ppi (pixels per inch), and it is strongly preferred that they be 96 ppi at the size they will be displayed on the page (i.e., if the final display image will be 4"x6", it needs to be 96 ppi at 4"x6"). As a general rule, images found on the Internet should not be used, as these are typically of lower resolution and quality. **For reports that will also be professionally printed**, all images MUST have a minimum of 300 ppi at the size the image will be displayed on the page.
- Illustrations and photographs to be used for the cover page must be representative of the report's content and with no writing on the image. The image must be in color with a resolution of at least 300 ppi, measure 8"W x 6"H, and include all sources and written permissions. Please indicate the correct accreditation for the image.
- Videos must be submitted separately in a video file format (MPG, MOV, WMV, or AVI) and must include all sources and written permissions for use. A written script of any video(s) must be included for 508 compliance purposes.

References

- Footnotes should appear at the bottom of the page on which they are cited (not as endnotes).
- References should be numbered sequentially in order of their appearance in the text, in brackets with an Arabic numeral, e.g., [22]. References should not be denoted with superscripts.

- References should use italics, not underlining, where appropriate.
- References should be listed in sequential order at the end of the document using *The Chicago Manual of Style* format.
- References should not include personal communications, telephone conversations, or similar material that would not be available to readers electronically or in printed form in a library or from the originating agency. Instead, cite the author's name and "unpublished data" in parentheses (in both text and References at end).

Alternative Text Guidelines

Alternative (alt) text is text associated with an image that serves the same purpose and conveys the same essential information as the image. In situations where the image is not available to the reader (perhaps because they have turned off images in their web browser or are using a **screen reader** due to a visual impairment), the alternative text ensures no information or functionality is lost.

The following guidelines should be used when writing alt text:

- Alt text should describe all the important information in the image but not every physical detail, only what is important to its meaning and understanding.
- Alt text should not duplicate information provided in the content of the page or in the caption.
- Alt text should begin with the figure number and a word that describes the type of image, e.g., "Figure 5-1 is a graph of ..." or "Figure 2-3 is a photo of...."
- For a simple or decorative image, such as a logo, provide only a brief description. If more information would be useful to convey the meaning of the image, this should be included. Purely decorative images, which add no meaningful information to a page, such as bullets or page dividers, do not require alt text.
- Alt text for images that contain detailed information, such as a technical diagram, chart, or graph, must include all relevant data, unless already described in the page text.
- Images that are linked must include a description of the destination or the purpose of the link.
- Information that would benefit both sighted viewers and those using screen readers should not be included in alt text but should be included in the image's caption. The alt text and caption should supplement each other, with the alt text written for screen readers and the captions written for all readers.

Inserting Alt Text

- *Word 2007*: Right-click on the image, select Size. Select Alt Text and replace the image file name that automatically appears with appropriate alt text.
- *Word 2010*: Right-click on the image, select Format Picture. Select Alt Text, then Description and add the appropriate alt text.

Report Summary

All reports must be accompanied by a 1–2 page summary of the information contained in the report. In the 350–800 words, the summary should include the following information:

- **FTA Report Title**
- **Background:** In 1–2 paragraphs, this section provides information detailing the history of the problem and the rationale for conducting the research or for the content of the report.
- **Objectives:** In one paragraph with bulleted items as needed, this section briefly explains the objectives of the research or content of the report. Specific objectives should be cast under the overall objective(s).
- **Findings and Conclusions:** In 2–4 paragraphs in general and accessible language, this section provides the findings and conclusions of the report and should address the issue(s) raised in the objectives section.
- **Benefits:** In 2–3 paragraphs, this section discusses the value of the findings in terms such as the following: How will the findings be used? Are they already being used? How will they affect FTA business? What are the safety, economic, and/or efficiency benefits?
- **Project Information:** The following language should be included in the summary:

This research project was conducted by *(name of Principal Investigator)* of the *(contracting organization)*. For more information, contact FTA Project Manager *(name of FTA Project Manager)* at *(FTA Project Manager phone #, e-mail address)*.

These instructions can be found at

http://www.fta.dot.gov/research/program_requirements

Questions regarding report formatting guidelines should be directed to your FTA project manager.

FTA Report Preparation Checklist

Report Title: _____

Project Manager: _____

Final Output: PDF ONLY PDF and PRINTED

Required Report Components

- Title page
- Report Documentation Page (in Word)
- Table of Contents
- List of Figures
- List of Tables
- Acknowledgments
- Abstract
- Executive Summary
- Main Body
- Appendices (if needed)
- Glossary (if needed)
- References

Tables & Figures

- Distinct title for each table and figure
- 508-complaint alternative text (for all figures)
- Charts and tables submitted separately and include all data points

Illustrations & Photos

- 508-compliant alternative text for all illustrations and photos
- Illustrations/photos submitted separately in image file format (TIF, JPG, AI, EPS)
- All images 72 ppi or higher (300 ppi or higher if report will be professionally printed)
- Videos submitted separately, with sources and written permissions
- Written script of video
- Cover image at least 8"x6" at 300 ppi with no writing on image
- Sources, permissions, and photo credits for cover image

Report Summary

- 1–2 pages (800 words) max
- Background
- Objectives
- Findings & Conclusions
- Benefits
- Project Info