

Addendum D  
**Sample Report Outline**

**Title Page:** On a separate sheet of paper, provide the title of project, name, course, and date. Keep appearance uncluttered and businesslike. [1 page]

**Acknowledgements.** Give credit for personal assistance provided, stimulating and influential ideas, and permission to quote from unpublished work. [1 page]

**Table of Contents:** On a separate sheet of paper, list report contents chronologically by page number. Sectional titles should be reader-friendly and informative. [1 page]

**Section 1: Introduction** [approx. 2 pages]

Give the reader a basic orientation to the topic and an appreciation of your research motives and methods. Respond to the following “wh-” questions:

- *What* is the general topic? What *specific question* did you seek to answer?
- *Where* did you investigate it?
- *Why* did you consider the topic worth investigating? (What personal and/or public policy significance does the topic hold for you?)
- *How* did you actually carry out your study? What methods did you use to answer your research question? For example, did you participate in a community organization that addresses the issue? Regularly observe behavior? Take part in relevant events? Examine scholarly documents on the issue? Interview persons? How did you record your information (e.g. field notebook and/or digital recorder)?
- *Who* did you interview by category (e.g. type of group member, grassroots organization staff, government officials, etc.)? (Place actual list of interviewees in an appendix.) *How many* interviews did you conduct over what period of time?

**Section 2: Group Context** [approx. 2-3 pages]

- Describe the local context of the study group. What specific information does the reader need to have about the larger social context (e.g. country or city), the group’s history and numbers, areas of concentration, socioeconomic level, and general conditions in order to put the research question in a broader perspective?

**Section 3: Presentation of Research Findings** [approx. 10-15 pages, equally divided between “description” and “interpretation”]

This is the main body of your research section, and the foundation for any conclusions that you will reach. In qualitative studies, the material presented in this section will be based mainly on participant observation and in-depth interviewing. Review your fieldnotes and audio recordings. Then report all evidence relevant to the research question, abiding by space limits. Divide the presentation of data into two sections:

**DESCRIPTION**

1. What kinds of information did your observations, interviews, and other sources yield? What ideas did different informants express that inform your research question? Sort information by themes and organize them under creative sub-headings.
2. Illustrate repeated ideas from informants with verbatim quotes and select stories that capture their experiences, perceptions, and opinions. Note responses that were exceptions to repeated information (themes) in order to illustrate a minority opinion.

**INTERPRETATION**

1. Stand back from the repeated ideas and themes reported in the “description” section. What does this information tell you about the phenomenon? What broad generalizations can be drawn from your findings?
2. Do your findings *reinforce* or *contradict* the ideas/findings from other researchers? It is imperative that you compare and contrast your results with the results of prior studies. What factors or sources of error might explain discrepancies in findings?

**Section 4: Reflections and Applications** [approx. 3 pages]

1. How did *who* you are shape *what* you found out? How did your research alter the way you experience the problem or study topic? Specifically, how did your perceptions and opinions of the topic change from the time you began the project?
2. Re-state, clearly and concisely, three or four of the most significant findings. These should be firm, unqualified statements summarizing the findings and inferences of the sections of the main text. No new ideas should be introduced at this point.
3. What relevant questions are left unanswered? What new questions have been raised? What would be the next step in this study?
4. How might the results be “returned” to the community? In what formats, by whom, where, and how?

## **Section 5: Self-Evaluation and Sustainability** [approx. 2 pages]

1. *How well have I answered my research question?* Evaluate your level of satisfaction with the amount and quality of information gathered. If you are less than satisfied with your results, offer some explanation.
2. *How well did I perform in my research capacity?* Evaluate how successful you were in working independently, securing a project guide, finding informants, and recruiting an interpreter to conduct interviews? What prior skills did you use in doing the research? What new skills and knowledge did you acquire? What areas of competence need improvement (e.g. setting goals, taking initiative, managing time and energy, meeting deadlines)?
3. *How has the project affected me?* What about yourself and your own circumstances have you begun to reexamine? What does it lead you to want to do next?

## **Section 6: Back Matter**

1. *Reference List.* List all works referenced in your research report using the American Psychological Association (APA) style: <http://www.apastyle.org/apa-style-help.aspx>
3. *Appendices*
  - *Informants.* List the full names and roles of those who served as primary informants and research assistants in your inquiry (e.g., “Susan Imende – Deputy Assistant Director of Fisheries, Western Kenya).
  - *Interview guides.* List the questions actually used with informants.
  - *Photographs and illustrations:* Display photographs, line drawings, artistic renderings, etc. that illustrate the research project. Label each with either your name or a photo/artist credit, and provide a brief explanatory caption. (Photographs and illustrations can be distributed throughout the report or grouped together in an appendix.)
  - *Project plan (final draft)*

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> According to data reported by Bernhard Streitwieser at Northwestern University, approximately half of all education abroad programs offer an independent study or directed field study option. Strong research components are included, for example, within programs run by the School for International Training (SIT), the School for Field Studies (SFS), and CIEE. (See Bernhard Streitwieser, "Undergraduate Research During Study Abroad." Ch 23 in *The Handbook of Practice and Research in Study Abroad*, p. 399-419.]

<sup>2</sup> Undergraduate student research conducted on education abroad programs is highlighted by the Forum on Education Abroad in special issues of its journal *Frontiers* <http://www.frontiersjournal.com/issuesvol14index.htm>, and by the digital collection of independent study projects produced through the School of International Training (SIT): [http://digitalcollections.sit.edu/isp\\_collection\\_program/](http://digitalcollections.sit.edu/isp_collection_program/)

<sup>3</sup> General codes of ethics for education abroad, inclusive of undergraduate research activities, have been produced by the Forum on Education Abroad <http://www.forumea.org/standards-index.cfm>. Ethical guidelines specific to conducting field research are provided through the Social Research Association <http://www.the-sra.org.uk/guidelines.htm>, the Association of Social Anthropologists of the Commonwealth [http://www.theasa.org/ethics/Ethical\\_guidelines.pdf](http://www.theasa.org/ethics/Ethical_guidelines.pdf), and the American Sociological Association: <http://www.asanet.org/about/ethics.cfm>

<sup>4</sup> Questionnaires or surveys are widely used in psychology, nursing, economics, and political science to collect numerical data that can be analyzed with the aid of computer software. Other projects will use features of both qualitative and quantitative designs. H. Russell Bernard's *Research Methods in Anthropology, 4th ed.* (AltaMira, 2006) is a particularly helpful "mixed methods" text. See especially his discussion of questionnaires (chapter 10), sampling (chapter 6), and scales and scaling (chapter 12).

<sup>5</sup> The built-in Table function of Microsoft Word acts as a database where information can be dropped in from a fieldnote document and modified for coding purposes. Rows and columns can be added to the table structure. Portions of text can be searched by codes using the "Find" function, or sorted using the Word "Table Sorting" function.

<sup>6</sup> Professional associations with student sections tend to have a standard presentational format. The Forum for Education Abroad, through its Undergraduate Research Awards, provides opportunities for international research to be presented at the Forum on Education Abroad International Conference, and for some papers to be published in a special issue of *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*.