7.4 Weekly Progress Reports

From the Course Manual

7.6 Weekly Progress Reports

The Weekly Progress Report is an internal communication that updates your Faculty Advisor, team members, and related personnel on the status of your investigation, in particular, the work recently carried out and work upcoming. Progress reports start in the third week of the course. The report for your team should be sent out weekly no later than 24 hours before the meeting with your Faculty Advisor; it should be emailed as an attachment to the team email address. The report is due even if the meeting is canceled for any reason. Although the Recorder is responsible for writing the report, all members of the team should contribute to the content.

Brevity and conciseness are strongly preferred. Your Faculty Advisor will review these brief weekly reports for writing quality, content, and effectiveness. It may be returned to you with comments at the discretion of your faculty advisor. CI instructors will also see these weekly reports and make comments at their discretion.

The Weekly Progress Report should be prepared in a format that best suits the needs of your Faculty Advisor and team members.

When the Weekly Progress Report is not accompanied by aface-to-face meeting, it is common to use a memo format, such as the one shown in Figure 7.3. The memo serves as a written record of your activities and the results of those activities, as well as a planning document of your forthcoming activities and rationale for pursuing them. Memos are written in prose style, with tables and/or graphics as appropriate to illustrate a point. Memos should be single-spaced, and only as long as necessary to cover the relevant progress; do not repeat information covered in previous memos, and use your judgment to determine what is important enough to include. Alternatively, when the Weekly Progress Report is used as part of the regular weekly meetings with the Faculty Advisor, some teams have found it more effective to use a presentation format, in which the same information that would be included in the memo (Figure 7.3) is instead captured in a slide deck, with bulleted lists, tables and figures as appropriate. Be sure to confer with your Faculty Advisor in your first meeting to determine which format is preferred.

Weekly Progress Reports are valuable tools to measure and convey progress, and to assess where you stand on the project. The Team Leader should prepare the Team Activity List (part of the Work to be Done section) for the coming week in consultation with team members. This list should include each task for the week in lab, written reports, and preparation for oral presentations, assigned by name and with the estimated time indicated. Include explicit deadlines as appropriate. As the semester goes along, it is useful to compare your progress with that which you projected in your proposal, to gauge whether some mid-term correction may be necessary in the

proposed work plan. The Recorder is responsible for writing the Weekly Progress Reports and for seeing that they are distributed on time.
Figure 7.3. Format and content guidelines for Weekly Progress Report assignment.

Memorandum
To: From: CC: Date: Subject: Title:
Clark Colton [Faculty advisor] John Smith [Your name] Team No. _ [Your team number]
2/21/12 [Today's date]
Progress Report No. 1 for Week of 2/16/12 [Number sequentially] Kinetics of Cell Death [Project Title]

1. Introduction: Identify the overall scope of the project and any changes in the scope or direction since inception of the project. (Early in the term, you can use your mission statement if a more specific scope has not yet been developed.) This section should be one paragraph unless major changes in scope or direction are underway.

2. Work Carried Out: Cover the period since the last progress report and include subsections that summarize the following: a. Meetings held: Summarize substantive issues and problems discussed, ideas and strategy developed, and decisions reached. b. Tasks accomplished and milestones reached: The tasks refer to what you did. The milestones refer
to major points of achievement identified, for example, in your proposal or other documents. c. Data: Summarize important laboratory data and any analysis from theory. Use figures or tables as
appropriate. Identify any conclusions that can be drawn from your data and their significance. d. Problems: Describe (1) resolution or status of previously reported problems, (2) new problems or issues to be resolved and your strategy for doing so, and (3) any problems you anticipate in the future. Will any of these require a change in scope or direction of your project?

3. Work to be Done: Describe action plans for tasks that will be carried out in the next reporting period (usually one week). Include a Team Activity List, in which tasks are explicitly assigned to teach team member, along with an estimate of time required for each task.

4. Team: Describe any issues or problems related to functioning of your team that should be brought to the attention of the team coordinator and your faculty advisor. Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of your team and how you plan to rectify the weaknesses. Indicate any communication problems within your team or with 10.26/27/29 personnel. Please indicate what team life cycle your team is and describe why you feel that your team is in this stage of the team life cycle. (refer to Sec. 3 of this Course Manual for further information)

5. Summary: A summary is appropriate if there is considerable content in your report.

Briefly summarize the status of the project; take a larger view in evaluating progress or lack thereof; and highlight problems and suggested changes.

Schedule of Weekly Progress Report Assignments Section 4:

In Section 4 please complete the following weekly assignment. if your team is having a specific problem please discuss your problem. Use the Project Management information to describe how your team is dealing with the problem, executing your project and maintaining the team. The list each week includes items expected to be relevant to activities that week. Students should select items relevant to their team as well as any issues not mentioned and fit within length limits we discussed. (250 words – 2 paragraphs about 1 page in length) (Examples are in Module 7.4.a)

Rotation 1

Week 3 - How is your Project Leader managing the team?
Literature Search Ground Rule System
Active Listening
Team Life Cycles

1. Discuss how your project leader is implementing the agendas, activity lists and ground rules with your team.
2. How is your team implementing your literature search ground rules system?
3. What stage of the team life cycle is your team experiencing? Give examples and context.
4. During your the lecture and during your Entrance Conference you performed the active listening exercise. Discuss how your team used active listening to communicate with each other how you are going to implement your project. Discuss how summarizing and clarifying helped the team.

Week 4 - Situational Leadership
Logical Framework

1. Designing a Bridge, Situational Leadership
What Situational Leadership Style did the project leader utilize during the exercise? Did the leadership style match your motivation and level of ability to design the bridge?
2. How did the team organize the Logical Framework to help the team implement their project?

Week 5 - Conflict Management Ground Rules
Team Life Cycle

1. Are there any Changes in your Conflict Management Ground Rule System?
When your team members had to negotiate during a difference of opinion how did your team implement your conflict management system and how effective is it?
2. What stage of the team life cycle is your team experiencing? Give examples and context.

Week 6 Writing the Proposal
Executing the Oral Presentation
Time Management Issues

1. How did your team implement the Proposal Report and Oral Presentation Ground Rules System?
2. Are the systems proving to be effective?
3. Did you have to make changes to these systems? What are those changes?
4. How is the team managing your time management issues?

Rotation 2

Week 7 - How is your Project Leader leading the team?
Mission Statement
Team Life Cycle
Activity Lists

1. Read the Situational Leadership module again and reviews your leader's results from the survey. Report how you will be leading the team in the Transition meeting and in the Weekly Progress Report to the recorder.
2. How is the team utilizing the Mission Statement?
3. What stage of the team life cycle is your team experiencing? Give examples and context.
4. Describe how the activity lists are helping your team to manage your project.

Week 8 - Spring Break

Week 9 - Time Management Issues
Writing the Progress Report Collaboratively
Time Management Issues
Team Life Cycle

1. Report any Time Management Issues and how your team is solving them?
2. What stage of the team life cycle is your team experiencing? Give examples and context.
3. How is the team managing your time management issues?

How did your team implement the Progress Report and Oral Presentation Ground Rules System? Are the systems proving to be effective? Did you have to make changes to these systems?

4. How is the outline for the Oral Presentation being implemented?

Week 10 - TKI Conflict Styles results
MBTI Team results
Dominant Conflict Styles on the Team – Benefits and Weaknesses
Principled Negotiations
Sharing the Team Experience

1. Differences of Opinions: discuss your team's TKI and MBTI using the Action Implication exercise.
2. Are there any Changes in your Conflict Management Ground Rule System?

When your team members had to negotiate during a difference of opinion how did your team implement your conflict management system and how effective is it?

3. List Differences of Opinion and what conflict styles each team member used. Discuss the effectiveness of the styles used.
4. How is your team implementing the Principled Negotiation Model presented in the last lecture?
5. What did your team members learn from the Sharing the Team Exercise?

Week 11 – Individual Strengths and Weaknesses
Time Management Issues
Logical Framework
Team Life Cycle

1. How is your team solving your time management issues?
2. Review the Logical Framework and discuss how you are reaching your milestones using your strengths and weaknesses on the team.
3. What stage of the team life cycle is your team experiencing? Give examples and context.

Rotation 3

Week 12 - Conflict Management Ground Rules
Team Life Cycle

1. Are there any Changes in your Conflict Management Ground Rule System?

When your team members had to negotiate during a difference of opinion how did your team implement your conflict management system and how effective is it?

2. What stage of the team life cycle is your team experiencing? Give examples and context.

Week 13 - Writing the Final Report
Executing the Oral Presentation
Expectations

1. How is your team implementing the Final Report and Oral Presentation Ground Rules System? Are the systems proving to be effective?
2. Is the team meeting everyone's expectations individual members, faculty advisor, teaching assistant, project management coordinator, and industrial consultant?

Week 14 - Project Leader - Writing the Completion Report with the Team
(see Module 13)