

The Introduction.

The introduction states the purpose of the report, gives relevant background information and tells the reader where the information has come from. The introduction defines the scope of the report and explains which topics will be examined and why certain topics are omitted.

The introduction should include:

- the background and purpose of the report
- the method of investigation
- the scope/structure of the report

Health Risks for VDU operators

This report investigates the health risks encountered by VDU operators at work. VDU stands for Visual Display Unit which consists of a keyboard, display screen, and electronic circuit pack and power supply to operate it. Basically a VDU is similar to a computer.

The report looks at health risks such as repetitive strain injuries, musculoskeletal problems, visual and postural discomfort and spontaneous abortions. The report also looks at current research on ways in which VDU operators can avoid these health risks.

The Conclusion

The conclusion summarises or restates the results of the investigation in the body of the report. The conclusion should relate to the purpose and aim stated in the introduction. Some conclusions may be simply a summary of the main points of the discussion, others may evaluate the facts presented or state the results. No new material should be introduced into this section.

The conclusion should include:

- a summary of the findings of your investigation

Do not introduce any new information in this section

Health risks facing VDU operators are now taken seriously by major businesses. This report has shown that time and money is wasted in business and industry when VDU operators are unable to fulfill their duties due to repetitive strain injuries, postural and visual discomfort and occupational stress.

Government agencies have responded to these health risks with recommendations for equipment design especially the design of seats, office layout and lighting. Research in this field indicates that time spent at the keyboard, posture and general fitness of operators must be monitored. Preventive measures are seen as the best way to deal with these health risks.

Case studies in this report show that where preventive measures are taken by Office Managers then health risks for VDU operators have been minimised and time and money saved.

While some VDU operators have suffered spontaneous abortions this report has found no real evidence to link these abortions with poor working conditions.

The report summary is designed to be read by people who will not have time to read the whole report. It should briefly state the problem/background/purpose, the research method and the major findings of the report.

Students often have a problem writing the summary because they find it difficult to differentiate between the content of the summary and the introduction and conclusion. The summary appears to be repeating information contained in both the introduction and conclusion. This repetition is necessary because the summary is a 'stand alone' section of the report. The summary will be the only section of the report that some people will read.

However, although the information in the summary may appear to be repetitive there is a difference in the way the information in the summary, introduction and conclusion is presented.

The summary should include:

- the background and purpose of the report
- the method of investigation
- the major findings - opinion, suggestions, recommendations

A sample of an executive summary and an introduction from a student report on "Health Risks for VDU Operators".

Summary

This report investigates the health risks that VDU operators encounter in the workplace and how they can be overcome.

The report is divided into three main sections. Section one examines repetitive strain injuries, postural and visual discomfort and shows that design of equipment particularly seat design, lighting and hours at the keyboard are important factors in alleviating discomfort.

Section two examines the many factors contributing to occupational stress in the workplace and provides statistics on the working hours lost due to stress. Section three looks at the specific risks of spontaneous abortion that exists amongst VDU operators. Current research indicates that there is inconclusive evidence to support any findings in this area.

The final section discusses the current methods being used to prevent RSI and alleviate occupational stress for office workers. These preventive methods involve careful attention to office design, layout and lighting, selection of furniture, length of time at the keyboard and attention to posture and general fitness of VDU operators.

It is concluded that health risks can be prevented if methods of prevention are provided for, and undertaken by, both employers and VDU operators.