



**DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGY
UNIVERSITY OF MALTA**

CRITERIA USED IN ASSESSMENT OF PRACTICAL REPORTS

Version 27-2-14

Your report shall be assessed according to the following criteria:

Organisation, language & presentation This refers to logical flow of ideas, accuracy and efficacy of graphical presentation and appropriate presentation of results. It does not refer to the ability to apply fancy fonts or novelty borders round pictures. Students should be aware that all graphs and histograms should be presented as 2-D images rather than as eye-catching 3-D diagrams with a false third dimension. In summary equivalent weighting would be given to: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Layout of report2. Appropriate use of keys, in text citations and legends accompanying figures (including graphs) and tables.3. Proper use of the English language (i.e. vocabulary, grammar, sentence structure)	15%
Precautions taken and Sources of Error Criteria to look for: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Clear explanation of steps taken to ensure minimisation of errors2. Clear reasons for the precautions taken are given3. Real precautions (precautions which were not taken should not be mentioned as such). Precautions which should have been taken but were not would then be potential sources of error	10%
Accuracy in calculations and precision of results It is expected that calculations would be carried out using computer software. As such, the accuracy of results is dependent on accuracy in data entry. Students should ensure that any results that do not seem to make sense, that are illogical or that defy the laws of physics are double checked. Results of calculations should be expressed to a suitable number of decimal places (usually two); avoid long and meaningless mantissas that have been copied and pasted	10-15%

straight from your spreadsheet program. Also how easy it is for the grader to understand what the student actually did. Marks allocated (10 or 15%) depend on how intensive the results and calculations are.	
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<p>Discussion of results and conclusions</p> <p>Use your skill as a scientist, as a biologist, to make sense of your observations and calculations. Your interpretation does not have to match mine but they do need to be defensible. Ensure that any predictions that you make are testable. Make sure that the content is comprehensive, accurate and updated. All relevant points are treated. The method and results should be critically appraised.</p>	30%
<p>Evidence of further reading</p> <p>This practical exercise should be viewed in its wider context and it is expected that your output is not merely a regurgitation of the material presented to you. Includes relevant use of theory in the introduction and discussion. In the ideal case all material would be derived from primary sources or specialist secondary sources. The subject matter should also be comprehensively covered.</p>	15-20%
<p>Referencing</p> <p>This is essential. Any statements of fact that you make need to be substantiated with a reference. Use the APA style sheet for in text citations and list of references. Refer to instructions concerning its use at http://home.um.edu.mt/biology/12_links.htm</p> <p><i>Remember that web pages are also to be referenced.</i></p>	5%
<p>Participation</p> <p>Based on level of contribution and behaviour during the practical session itself where the average performance grade is taken to be 7. Evidence of previous reading and understanding of the procedures is also important.</p>	10%

NB: Assessments of Practical Reports which are drawings only:

Organisation and Presentation including accurate use of systematic nomenclature.	20%
Accuracy of drawings (to real life specimens). Includes noting of specific areas of interest according to the theme of the practical.	50%
Labelling/ annotating based solely on form and function. Marks deducted for under/over labelling and annotation.	20%
Participation.	10%