

Progress report for PHY 4006

Objectives of the progress report

The purpose of these reports is (i) to show what work you have done in the first three months of your project, (ii) to show that you understand clearly the purpose of addressing your project or “problem” in the way you have, and that you know what remains to be done to complete your project in the winter semester, and (iii) to give you practice and feedback on report writing, in advance of your final report in April.

Content of the progress report

As an example, your progress report could take the following format, to meet the objectives stated above. However, do not be afraid to deviate from this outline if you feel the objectives of your report on your specific project can be better met otherwise. You should consult your supervisor regarding the planned contents of your report, before you write it.

In an *Introduction*, you can (i) describe what your project is and why it is useful to do it. You will have done some reading to address these questions for yourself already, while learning about or defining your project. It can be useful to *briefly* convey the essential points to give the reader some of the perspective that you now have. (ii) In addition, you should state exactly what *your* work is in the overall research project.

In a *Methods* section, you should describe how you are addressing the research problem of your project. The methods could be experimental, involving certain measurement techniques, equipment, or materials preparation; the methods could be theoretical, involving analytical methods of derivation, or perhaps involve computer programming to implement a particular algorithm in a computational problem, for example. In any case, it must be made clear how you actually did it, and why you did it this way.

Your *Results* at this stage will depend greatly on the type of project you have undertaken. Your results so far could be a partially constructed piece of equipment or computer program, for example, or perhaps preliminary data or simulation results that you are using to test aspects of your methods or apparatus. Or you may have measured data that you will analyze in the winter.

In the *Discussion*, you should address what has been accomplished so far, and what explicit tasks remain to be done to complete the project in the winter. Keep in mind the course schedule - by March you will be preparing your oral presentation and final report. The main points can be stated succinctly in your *Conclusions*.

Note: You should write the report so it can be understood by someone with a B.Sc.

background in physics, such as your colleagues, and not just by your supervisor. This means an appropriate introduction, definition of specialized terminology, etc. This does *not* mean a loss of precision or omission of essential steps in a logical argument.

Presentation format

Please note that the clarity and legibility of your report are important, but its typographical beauty is not. Don't forget to cite accurately any article, book, thesis... that you refer to.

The length of your progress report depends on many factors. For a rough perspective, past progress reports have been about 15 pages in length, with double-spaced typing and figures included where useful.

Appendix: How your time was spent

To give me a better appreciation of the different aspects of your project and how your time was spent, I am asking for a *brief* statement describing the type of work you did related to your project each month this fall. This will consist of one short paragraph (of two or three short sentences, not more) for each month, i.e. September, October, and November.