

# A USER MANUAL FOR RESEARCHERS: PROJECT LESSONS LEARNED TEMPLATE

Research Project Management  
<https://research-tools.mun.ca/rpm>

Copyright © 2017 Memorial University of Newfoundland



Introduction.....	3
Instructions.....	5
Lessons Learned Questions.....	6
Project Outcomes.....	7

As part of the Project Management services offered at Memorial University of Newfoundland, Project Management resource packages, consisting of tools and templates, have been designed to aid researchers in the management of research project activities.

This user guide focuses on the **Project Lessons Learned template**. The lessons learned template can be of value to researchers when documenting and communicating key learnings from a project.

Note: Project management definitions outlined within this guide are reference from the Project Management Institutes, Project Management Body of Knowledge, Fifth edition.

The Lessons Learned template package is a Microsoft Office Word file which consists of 3 sections:

1. Instructions
2. Lessons Learned Questions
3. Project Outcomes

The instructions section provides an overview of the template and an introduction to the concept of capturing ‘lessons learned’ from a project.

- *Lessons learned* is the learning gained by carrying out project activities. Often times during a project, valuable learning/experience is gained in the management of an activity, or in your approach to a particular project issue. These experiences may have led to a positive or negative outcome, however regardless of the outcome, the lessons you have learned may be valuable to subsequent research projects that contain similar situations. The purpose of documenting lessons learned is to share and use knowledge derived from experience to:
  - Promote the recurrence of desirable outcomes; and
  - Preclude the recurrence of undesirable outcomes
- It is recommended that these learning experiences be documented and communicated to the relevant project stakeholders at the end of a project. Lessons learned documentation should include the issue, your approach, the outcome, and recommendations for similar situations in the future. It is also recommended that this documentation be carried out during the course of the project to ensure accurate reflection of the project incidents.

Six (6) questions are presented for researchers to consider during the course of their research project (listed below). These questions are of a general nature, however researchers are encouraged to insert project specific questions to aid in the learning of carrying out project activities.

1. What worked well for this project or the project team?
2. What didn't work well for this project or the project team?
3. What should have been done differently? Why?
4. What surprises did the team handle, or what events were not anticipated during the project?
5. Were the project objectives attained? If not, what changes would you recommend?
6. What would you recommend for similar projects in the future?

This Lessons Learned template also contains a 'Project Outcomes' field. Researchers may use this field to help document and summarize key project outcomes. Items may include, # of HQP trained, # of publications, # of Intellectual Property (IP) disclosures, or deliverables completed.

As with the lessons learned questions, researchers can use this section to identify project specific outcomes that may be of value in the future, or to aid in project outcome communications.