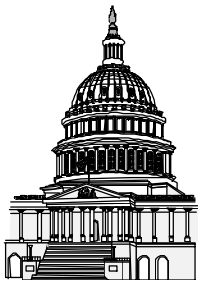

A GUIDE TO USING APA STYLE

N a t i o n a l – L o u i s U n i v e r s i t y

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National-Louis University (NLU), College of Management and Business (CMB), has established standards for writing all course papers and adopted the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (5th ed.) as the official guide in preparing all written student assignments for both undergraduate and graduate programs.

The purpose of this guide is to highlight and index APA style requirements for all NLU course papers. All page numbers below are referenced with the *Publication Manual.* NLU expects students to follow APA requirements unless the course professor requires exceptions. Student papers contain up to five components: title page, abstract (if required), text, references, and an appendix (if required). The narrative outline below includes three sections: APA Style Highlights, Expressing Ideas and Reducing Bias in Language, and an Index of APA Requirements.

I. APA Style Highlights

A. Title Page: A title should be fully explanatory when standing alone. Student papers are submitted as a final manuscript. The requirements for NLU student papers are different from the requirements described in the *Publication Manual* because they are not being submitted for APA publication (Chapter 6, Section 6.01).

Elements: NLU requires six elements on six lines that are double-spaced and centered: 1st line, title of paper; 2nd line, student's name; 3rd line, course name; 4th line, group number; 5th line, submitted to (professor's name); and 6th line, submission date (Chapter 1, Section 1.06, Chapter 5, Section 5.15 and Figure 5.1).

Suggestion: Make a template and use for all papers—update lines 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6 as appropriate.

B. Running Head: An abbreviated title is used as a running head on the title page of published APA articles (Chapter 5, Section 5.15). Not required on NLU student papers.

C. Spacing: Double-spacing is required. Leave one full line blank between each line on the page. Double-space between all lines of the manuscript (Chapter 5, Section 5.03).

D. Pagination: All pages are numbered consecutively in the upper right-hand corner beginning with the title page (Chapter 5, Section 5.06).

E. Page Headers: Page headers are optional on student papers. They include two or three words of the title in the upper right-hand corner to the left of the page number (Chapter 5, Section 5.10 and Figure 5.1).

F. Abstract: An abstract may be required with some student papers. An abstract is a brief, comprehensive summary of the contents of the paper. Abstracts should not exceed 120 words (Chapter 5, Section 5.16). Check with the course professor regarding this requirement.

G. Paper Length: Faithfully follow length assigned by professor. For example, a 7-page paper means at least 7 pages of solid text (does not include title page, abstract, reference pages, or appendixes). Be careful of schemes to make the paper appear longer (overly wide margins, triple spacing between paragraphs, right justification, oversize type, etc.).

H. Margins: Leave uniform margins of 1 inch at the top, bottom, left, and right of every page (Chapter 5, Section 5.04).

I. Paper Organization: Student papers are organized into three sections: introduction, body, and conclusion. These headings are not used in the text. Type the title of the paper centered at the top of the first page of text. The sections of text follow each other without a break until the end of the text.

J. Paragraphs and Indentation: Indent the first line of every paragraph. Use the tab key, which should be set at five to seven spaces (Chapter 5, Section 5.08).

K. Headings: Headings may be required with some student papers. Levels of headings establish a hierarchy of sections to orient the reader. One, two, or three levels are usually satisfactory for student papers. Use upper and lower case letters (Chapter 3, Sections 3.30 – 3.32). Check with the course professor regarding this requirement.

L. Seriation: Academic writing relies on standard essay format of well-developed paragraphs and complete sentences. Bullets and lists of incomplete sentences are not acceptable in academic writing (Chapter 3, Section 3.33).

M. Quotation of Sources: Short quotations of 40 words or less are incorporated into the text with quotation marks. Quotations of more than 40 words are displayed in a free-standing indented block without quotation marks. Single space blocked quotes (Chapter 3, Sections 3.34 – 3.40).

N. Figures: Common figures: charts, graphs, and drawings. Figures are considered any illustration other than a table. A figure title appears at the bottom (pp. Chapter 5, Section 5.22 and Chapter 6, Section 6.03).

O. Tables: The title of a table appears at the top of the table (Chapter 5, Section 5.21 and Chapter 6 Section 6.03).

P. Citations in Text: Student papers are documented throughout the text by citing by author and date of the works used in the text (Chapter 3, Sections 3.94 – 3.103). Several examples follow.

Paraphrasing

Fenton (2002) compared reaction times …

In a recent study of reaction times (Gardiner & Auman, 2002) …

In 2002, Wilson compared reaction times …

Direct Quote

Anholt (2002) suggested, "xxxxxxxx" (p. 10).

In 2002, Beale suggested, "xxxxxxxx" (p. 258).

"xxxxxxxxxx," (Payne, 2002, p. 49).

Specific Parts of a Source

(Ashar & Lane-Maher, 2002, p. 333)

Personal Communication

Personal interviews are cited in the text not in the reference list (J. Mitchell, personal communication, January 21, 2003).

Q. Reference List: The reference list is alphabetized with a hanging indent. Since student papers are not submitted for publication, NLU requires each reference entry to be single spaced with a double space between entries (Chapter 6, Section 6.03). Several examples are listed below on referencing books, journals, government documents, electronic media, and personal communication. Also see Chapter 4, Sections 4.16 for a comprehensive list of formats. See Chapter 5, Figure 5.1 for a sample References page.

Publication Manual

American Psychological Association (2001). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (5th ed.), Washington, DC: Author.

Electronic Newspaper Article

Hilts, P. J. (1999, February 16) In forecasting their emotions, most people flunk out. *New York Times*. Retrieved November 21, 2000, from http://www.nytimes.com

NLU E-Library

Kelly, K. (2002). Managing business knowledge. *Journal of Managerial Studies*, 78, 443-452. Retrieved November 6, 2000, from Business Elite Database.

Internet Journal Article

Williams, J. A. (n.d.). *Psychology of adult learning*. Retrieved August 3, 2002, from http:///www.com/psuadulearn/psyrelpr.htm

Book

Robbins, S. P. (2001). *Organizational behavior* (9th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Article in an Edited Book

Brady, D. (2002). Why service stinks. In J. E. Richardson (Ed.), *Annual editions: Marketing 02/03* (24th ed., pp. 44-49). Guilford, CT: McGraw-Hill/Dushkin.

Journal Article

Summers, L. (1994). A logical approach to development planning. *Training and Development*, 11, 22-30.

Government Report

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (1992). *Pressure ulcers in adults* (AHCPR Publication No. 92-0047). Rockville, MD: Author.

R. Appendix: An appendix may be required with some student papers. The appendix allows the writer to provide the reader with detailed information that would be distracting to read in the body of the paper (Chapter 3, Section 3.90 – 3.93 and Chapter 5, Section 5.19). Check with the course professor regarding this requirement.

II. Expressing Ideas and Reducing Bias in Language

All of the selected items below clarify specific concerns relative to expressing ideas and reducing bias in language. The *Publication Manual* includes more in-depth information on the subject (Chapter 2, Sections 2.01 – 2.17). The *Manual* also provides additional information on editorial style regarding **punctuation** (Chapter 3, Sections 3.01 – 3.09), **spelling** (Chapter 3, Section 3.10), **capitalization** (Chapter 3, Sections 3.12 – 3.18), ***italics*** (Chapter 3, Section 3.19), and **abbreviations** (Chapter 3, Sections 3.20 – 3.29). A selected checklist for expressing ideas and reducing language bias in academic papers follows.

A. **Check Paper Organization:** Paper does not follow a logical pattern. It should begin with an introduction, followed by the body of the paper, and end with a conclusion.

B. **Check for Awkward Writing:** Words used (or their order used) are confusing and lacking in clear thoughts.

C. **Check for Relevant Content:** Includes information not (nor) related to the paper's theme.

D. **Check for Transitions:** Words, as placed in sentence, do not make sense and do not flow from one sentence to another or from one paragraph to another. Need connecting words to help reader.

E. **Check for Run-On Sentences:** Sentences containing several subject and verb combinations, causing readers to read on and on and on and losing the main idea.

F. **Check Verb Agreement:** Singular subjects require singular verbs; plural subjects require plural verbs.

G. **Check for Double Negatives:** When sentence contains "not and no" or "not and never."

H. **Check for Wordiness:** Too many words diminish effectiveness--be simple, clear and concise.

I. **Check for Sequence:** Show steps sequentially and be consistent (e.g., if describing three steps/ideas, use: one, two, three, or first, second, and third).

J. **Check for Personal Pronouns:** Do not use personal pronouns in academic writing. For example refer to yourself as "the researcher," or "the author."

K. **Check Acronyms:** Use only after identifying the full term, then use only the acronym (or a different clarifying word) thereafter. Be careful about using acronyms too frequently.

L. **Check Apostrophes:** Use only for possessive and contractions, not plurals. Exception: Use "it's" for contraction only (it is), use "its" (no apostrophe) for possessive. Avoid using contractions in academic writing.

M. **Check for Sexist Language:** Academic writing is gender neutral. Whenever possible, use plural forms to avoid "he" or "she" as a subject.

N. **Check for Correct Words:** The following are examples of words often misused: their/there, accept/except, to/too/two, that/which, it's/its, affect/effect, and bear/bare.

O. **Check for Plagiarism:** All sources must be cited and referenced in student papers. Plagiarism is a serious issue in academic writing and must be avoided.

P. **Check for Active Voice:** Use the active voice throughout student papers.

Q. **Check Syntax:** Use correct syntax with agreement of subject and verb and no run-on or fragmented sentences.

R. Check Third Person Use: Always write in third person unless the course professor makes an exception.

III. Index of APA

Abbreviations, Chapter 3, Sections 3.20 – 3.29
Abstract, Chapter 5, Section 5.16
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Sample Paper and Outlines, Chapter 5, Figures 5.1 – 5.3
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Spelling, Chapter 3, Sections 3.10 – 3.11 and Chapter 5, Section 5.23
Tables, pp. Chapter 5, Section 5.21 and Chapter 6, Section 6.03
Typeface, Chapter 5, Section 5.02
Title Page, Chapter 1, Section 1.06
Uppercase and Lowercase Letters, Chapter 5, Section 5.09
Writing Style, Chapter 2, Sections 2.01 – 2.04

The *Publication Manual* includes a sample paper and outlines to illustrate APA style in typed form (Chapter 5, Figures 5.1 – 5.3). Overall, the sample paper provides students with a visual reference point to better understand style requirements. The paper also references specific style sections in the *Manual.* This NLU guide is to be used as a reference for finding relevant APA requirements and not as a complete document on APA style—check the *Manual.*

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