



Center for Academic
Development and Study Skills

CADS Student Resources

Basic Rules for Formatting a Paper (APA style)

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Formatting a Paper

This handout is based on the rules set out in the publication manual (fifth edition) of the American Psychological Association (APA). It is not intended to replace the APA manual. When in doubt consult the APA publication manual and your professor. The library call number is:

Ref
BF 76.7
P83
2001

Remember that if you are writing a paper for a course, your professor's specific instructions (e.g., headings with letters added) take precedence over those of the Publication Manual.

Basic Paper Formatting

1. Margins are to be 1" from top, bottom, and both sides
2. Sentences are double-spaced in all situations.
3. Acceptable typefaces are Times New Roman or Courier and in 12-point size.
4. Justification is only on the left side of paper. In other words, the text on the right side of the paper should have ragged edges.
5. Page numbers are placed in the header in the top right corner of the page – the number only in numerals. All pages except the title page are numbered including references and appendices.
6. The title page is not numbered (different first page in Microsoft Word page setup). All other pages are numbered sequentially.
7. Every new paragraph is indented five spaces, or one-half inch.

Formatting Headings

Headings indicate the organization of the paper and establish the importance of each topic. Most papers will use from one to four heading levels. The following are examples of how headings are to be typed:

Level 1 Heading

Heading 1 is centered on the page and uses "title case" as found in the Microsoft Word format menu under "change case".

Level 2 Heading

Heading 2 is centered on the page, is underlined and uses "title case" as found in the Microsoft Word format menu under "change case".

Level 3 Heading

Heading 3 is aligned left on the page, is underlined and uses "title case" as found in the Microsoft Word format menu under "change case".

Level 4 Heading

Heading 4 is indented five spaces from the left margin of the page, is underlined and uses “sentence case” as found in the Microsoft Word format menu under “change case”.

Headings may include any of the following parts or sections of a paper:

Heading 1	Title	Title	Heading 1
Heading 1	Abstract	Abstract	Heading 1
Heading 1	Introduction	Introduction	Heading 1
Heading 1	Body	<u>Literature Review</u>	Heading 2
Heading 2	<u>First Section of Paper</u>	<u>Design</u>	Heading 2
Heading 3	<u>First Sub-section</u>	<u>Data Gathering Tools</u>	Heading 2
Heading 4	<u>First sub-sub-section</u>	<u>Results</u>	Heading 2
Heading 3	<u>Second Sub-section</u>	Discussion and Conclusion	Heading 1
Heading 3	<u>Third Sub-section</u>	References	Heading 1
Heading 2	<u>Second Section of Paper</u>	Appendix X	Heading 1
Heading 2	<u>Third Section of Paper</u>		
Heading 1	Conclusion		
Heading 1	References		
Heading 1	Appendix X		

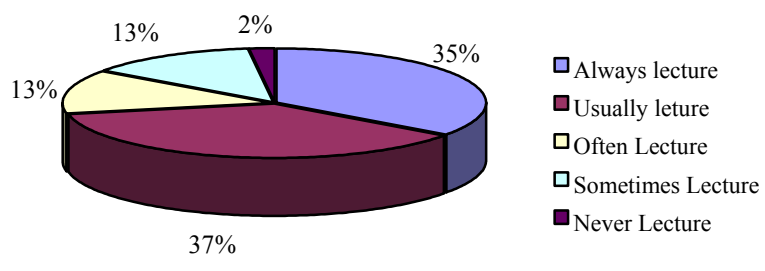
Formatting Charts and Tables

Charts and tables are used in academic papers to facilitate understanding of complex information. They are not meant to replace text.

Charts

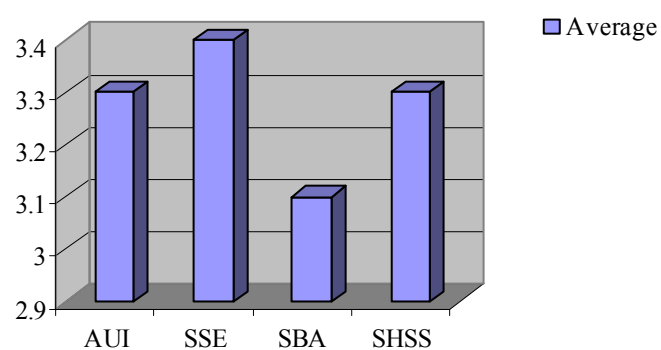
1. Choose an appropriate chart type. Do not change the chart type without an academic reason. For example, if you are showing percentages, a pie chart may be appropriate, while if you are comparing two issues, a bar chart might be appropriate.
2. Try to keep all charts the same size.
3. Align the charts professionally on the page. Look for balance.
4. Use the same format in the chart tool, e.g., font size and style; color, depth, and boundaries.
5. Use an appropriate heading for the chart.
6. Number each chart in order starting with Figure 1.
7. Include the sample size (as appropriate) by typing n= (the number of respondents).

Figure 1: Frequency of lectures



N=78

Figure 2: Average ranking of student academic skills across schools



N=78

Tables

1. Try to keep all tables the same size.
2. Align the tables professionally on the page. Look for balance.
3. Use the same format in the table: font size and style; color, depth, and boundaries.
4. Use an appropriate heading for the table.
5. Number each table in order starting from Table 1.
6. Include the sample size (as appropriate).

Example

Results

Overall Skills Levels

The first research question asked "How do AUI faculty rank AUI students in various skills areas?" In order to answer this question, faculty ranking of student skills and the importance of those skills to their teaching were quantified as follows:

Table 1: Quantification of faculty rankings

Faculty Ranking of Student Academic Skills		Faculty Ranking of Importance of Student Academic Skills	
Excellent =	5	Extremely important =	5
Good =	4	Very important =	4
Average =	3	Important =	3
Weak =	2	Somewhat important =	2
Poor =	1	Not important =	1

Thus it was possible to tabulate an average ranking of student skills across the university as a whole and across schools. It was also possible to tabulate average rankings of the importance of those skills, again across the university, and across schools.

Table 2: Ranking of student academic skills by faculty

Ranking	AUI	Ranking	SSE
Asking Questions	3.7	Asking Questions	3.9
Computer Skills	3.7	Listening to Lectures	3.9
Listening to Lectures	3.5	Computer Skills	3.8
Speaking	3.4	Collaborative Learning	3.7
Test-Taking	3.4	Speaking	3.6
Collaborative Learning	3.4	Ethics	3.6
Ethics	3.2	Test-Taking	3.5
Reading Texts	3.1	Reading Texts	3.3
Notetaking from Lectures	3.1	Notetaking from Texts	3.3
Notetaking from Texts	3.1	Notetaking from Lectures	3.2
Independent Learning	3.0	Time Management	3.1
Writing Papers	2.9	Independent Learning	2.9
Time Management	2.9	Writing Papers	2.9
Average	3.3	Average	3.4

N=58

N=21

Ranking	SHSS	Ranking	SBA
Asking Questions	3.7	Computer Skills	3.7
Computer Skills	3.7	Listening to Lectures	3.4
Listening to Lectures	3.4	Test-Taking	3.4
Speaking	3.4	Asking Questions	3.3
Test-Taking	3.4	Collaborative Learning	3.3
Note-taking from Texts	3.4	Speaking	3.2
Collaborative Learning	3.3	Reading Texts	3.1
Reading Texts	3.2	Note-taking from Lectures	3.0
Note-taking from Lectures	3.2	Ethics	2.9
Independent Learning	3.2	Writing Papers	2.9
Ethics	3.0	Independent Learning	2.8
Writing Papers	3.0	Note-taking from Texts	2.7
Time Management	3.0	Time Management	2.7
Average	3.3	Average	3.1

N=22

N=15

The AUI faculty ranked students skills levels above average across the skills areas (see table 2). This was true for individual schools as well. The SSE ranked students skills slightly higher than the university average and SBA slightly lower. Although the rankings were above "average", none reached the level of "good" or "excellent". Clearly more work needs to be done across the skills areas to bring the rankings in the "good" or "excellent" range. Particular attention should be paid to those skills ranked below the AUI average of 3.3 such as time management and writing academic papers.