

## Writing for the HRD Graduate Program At Towson University

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This self-instructional module is intended to help students complete the writing assignments for their various courses both correctly and effectively. This module presents the basic formatting, compositional and style standards noted by the American Psychological Association (APA). Students are expected to meet these standards in their written presentations.

The original source document for all this material is the APA Style Manual:

Author. (2001). *Publications Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6<sup>th</sup> edition). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

There is also a Help Guide for APA matters available on the Cook Library Home Page.

### OBJECTIVES

By the end of this module, you should be able to:

1. State the reasons why effective writing is important to your success in this program and your career
2. Identify the writing standards expected of students in the HRD program
3. Identify common writing problems and their solutions
4. Use APA format and writing standards
5. Recognize what plagiarism means and how to avoid it

## WRITING: CONS AND PROSE

In your roles as both student and practicing professional, writing poorly sends the wrong message. That is, writing poorly has two effects:

1. It means that your ability to influence others to achieve desired outcomes or objectives is reduced because others are not clear as to what you want to accomplish; and
2. It also sends less than flattering signals about you.

Thus, in the “real world” as well as in this program, learning to write clearly and effectively is important because it ultimately increases your ability to influence others and become more effective in your work. It also contributes to a better professional image which will increase your personal power.

Finally, as a student, you will be graded on the quality of your writing. That is, students in this program are expected to write well and doing so will help your grades.

Students often enter Graduate School with limited experience in and knowledge of how to write in a more academic style that follows certain formatting rules. The program offers you an opportunity to improve your writing skills; be willing to take advantage of that opportunity. If you do not understand comments or feedback in your returned written assignments, be sure to ask for clarification.

Writing well is a learned skill that comes from practice and feedback. As you progress through your career as a student, it may help to keep a long-term developmental perspective in mind. As you start out, you may find it difficult and frustrating in preparing your papers. Over time, as you take more courses and practice your writing, you should find that you are improving your ability to be clear, precise, and persuasive in your composition.

## COMMON WRITING MISTAKES

Typically, students make four common kinds of writing mistakes:

1. Using an improper format or style

- The HRD program expects students to follow the American Psychological Assn (APA) style in general. The most basic principles of that style for our program are presented; in some cases, APA principles are simplified somewhat.

2. Mistakes in grammar and spelling

- Know the rules of effective and use Spell Checker – but as seen in the accompanying sidebar, running Spell Checker is not necessarily final

3. Lack of precision in composition

- Learn to read critically and edit your papers for clarity and precision

4. Faulty logic in your argument

- Does your argument flow like links in a chain?

WIN MY RETORT WAS FINNISH, EYE NEW HIT DE-SURFED AN HEY!

Eye halve a spelling chequer.

It came with my pea sea.

It plainly marques four my revue

Miss steaks eye kin knot sea.

Eye strike a key and type a word

and weight four it two say

Weather eye am wrong oar write

It shows me strait a weigh.

As soon as a mist ache is maid,

It nose bee fore two long

and eye can put the error rite.

Its rare lea ever wrong.

Eye have run this poem threw it.

I am shore your pleased two no,

Its letter perfect awl the weigh,

My chequer tolled me sew.

## GENERAL FORMAT GUIDELINES

There are seven basic rules for all papers that you hand in.

1. Use a “serif” rather than sans serif type font
  - Times New Roman is often the accepted default typeface. That is the typeface in use for the text of this document.
2. Use only one type font (do **not** *afternate* between *fonts*).
3. Only use 12 point size. Do not use different **sizes** in titles or **headings**.
4. Use 1 - 1 1/2” margins on all sides of the page.
5. Do not right justify the margin. That is, the right margin should be a jagged edge – just as shown on this paper.
6. Double-space throughout, including the title page, the text and any references.
7. Use a **SHORT TITLE IN CAPS** flush left in the header. Have the page numbers show flush right in the header.
  - Access the Header Command on the Toolbar. Flush left, type in a short title of the paper (no more than 50 characters). Then, move flush right and insert the page number.
  - This document has a manuscript header that shows the proper format.

## APA STYLE: TITLE OR COVER PAGE

Each paper should have a title or cover page. (Note: the specification below is a slight modification of APA style.)

All entries on the title page should be centered on the left-right axis and in the top half of the page.

The entries (see next) should be double spaced

Title (no longer than 10-12 words)

Your name

Course name (e.g., HRD 606, Organization Behavior)

Date of Submission

JOB SATISFACTION AGING	1
Job Satisfaction and Aging: Causes and Effects	
Fran Smith	
HRD 601. Introduction to Human Resources	
October 15, 200X	

## THE TEXT OR BODY OF THE PAPER

The main body or text of your paper begins on the second page. Repeat the title at the top of page 2. Unless otherwise requested by your instructor, an Abstract page is not expected.

At the start of the text, do not use a subheading, like Introduction. Go directly to the first sentence in an indented paragraph.

The opening paragraph(s) should identify the focus of your paper.

Also, in the opening paragraph(s), tell the reader the flow or sections of the paper that follow. In the box below, assume that these are the ending sentences of the first paragraph of the paper.

JOB SATISFACTION AGING

1

### Job Satisfaction and Aging: Causes and Effects

[Opening paragraph sentences.....] The construct of job satisfaction has a long history; the main points of that history will be covered in the first section of this paper. In the second section, several studies on aging and job attitudes will be reviewed, followed by the third section that looks at the relationship between job satisfaction and productivity. Finally, the last section looks at the implications for practice.

## USING SUBHEADINGS IN THE TEXT

In general, use subheadings in the text after the opening paragraphs to mark off the major sections of your paper. These serve as an aide to the reader.

You probably only need one type of subheading format, what APA calls Level 1:

### **Level 1 Is Centered Uppercase First Letters in Bold**

Within a section, if you need additional subheadings, you can use a Level 2 format:

### **Level 3 is Flush Left and Bold**

JOB SATISFACTION AGING	2
Job Satisfaction and Aging: Causes and Effects	
Opening paragraph text.....	
..... The construct	
of job satisfaction has a long history; the main points of	
that history will be covered in the first section of this	
paper. In the second section, several studies on aging and	
job attitudes will be reviewed, followed by the third section	
that looks at the relationship between job satisfaction and	
productivity. Finally, the last section will look at the	
implications for practice.	
<b>The History of Job Satisfaction</b>	
The first use of the concept of job satisfaction can be	
traced back to the Hawthorne Studies.....	



## REFERENCE CITATIONS IN THE TEXT

To avoid plagiarism, you must properly note the source of the ideas and quotations used in the paper.

Whenever you use a direct quotation, you must identify the author(s), year, and page number. All direct quotations must have a page number shown.

- Short quotations of less than 40 words are enclosed in double quotation marks in the normal flow of the text.

More recently, job satisfaction is treated as one of several kinds of attitudes about work. As Jones (2003) put it, “job satisfaction is an attitude employees develop about their work and their working conditions” (p. 432).

- Long quotation of 40 or more words should be placed in a separate indented paragraph without quotation marks. Do not indent the first line of the block. Type the entire quotation double-spaced. Put the page number in parentheses at the end of the quotation.

There are several theories of how job satisfaction attitudes are formed (Williams, 2006):

One more recent model of job satisfaction is the value discrepancy theory. In this approach, job satisfaction depends upon two things: the relative importance of working condition factors and how well those factors are being met. Consider these two possible factors: listening to Muzak and good relationships with co-workers. Say an employee is modestly unhappy with the amount of each, yet overall, Muzak is not that important, while co-worker relationships are very important. Low job satisfaction will be due to poor working relationships, not to poor Muzak. (p. 279)

These theories help orient the practitioner to different treatment interventions.

- When you are simply paraphrasing or referring to an idea, you only need to put in the author(s) name and year of the publication; page number is not needed.

When a period or comma occurs with closing quotation marks, place the period or comma before rather than after the quotation marks. Put other punctuation outside quotation marks unless it is part of the quoted material.

At the start of the week, the supervisor said, “We have a new employee.”

After the supervisor said, “This is a new employee,” work began.

Did the supervisor forget to say, “This is a new employee”?

## FORMAT FOR CITATIONS

You do not need to use footnotes or endnotes. Simply insert the author, date, page number in the sentence. Examples:

She said, “This is a new computer” (Smith, 1993, p. 276), but she was mistaken.

Even though she was mistaken, Smith (1993) said “This computer is broken” (p. 276).

Identify works by the same author (or by the same two or more authors in the same order) with the same publication date by the suffixes a, b, c, and so forth after the year; repeat the year.

Several studies by (Johnson, 1991a, 1991b) ....

If you cite two or more works by different authors within the same parentheses, list them in alphabetical order by the first author’s surname. Separate the citations by semicolons.

Several studies (Brown, 1980; Green, 1994; Jones, 1991) showed the value of....

## REFERENCES

If you refer to published material in your text, you must include a full listing of the citations in the List of References.

- This is called References, not a Bibliography. It begins at the top of a new page that immediately follows the last page of your text.

Put References – centered -- at the top of a new page.

- Include only the sources that were used and that you in fact read.

The reference list must be double-spaced

List all entries in alphabetical order by the last name of the first author

### THE HANGING INDENT FORMAT

In general, the citation format for articles is:

Author, A.A., Author, B.B., & Author, C. C. (1994). Title of article. *Title of Periodical*, year, start page-ending page. Doi:xx.xxxxxxxxxx

For books, the format is:

Author, D.D. (year). *Title of work*. Location: Publisher.

If no author is identified, list the first few words of the title and the year.

...on aging (*Aging workers*, 1992).

...the book *College Bound Seniors* (1979), ....

JOB SATISFACTION AGING	12
References	
<i>Aging workers: Happy geezers are productive</i> (2002).	
Washington, DC: AARP.	
Clancy, T. (1994). <i>Even old fools can still write best sellers</i> .	
New York: Metropolis Brothers Publishing.	
Milton, J., Bacon, F. and Johnson, S. (1999). Pondering	
imponderables: still crazy after all these years. <i>Journal of</i>	
<i>scholarship on aging</i> , 15 (3), 109-133.	

Note: journals are identified by their annual VOLUME number. Every VOLUME usually has some number of ISSUES. For example, the Harvard Business Review is probably around VOLUME 100 (meaning it has been published for about 100 years). It is published bimonthly, so that there are 6 issues every year.

Thus, an article published, say, in 2010 in the May-June issue would be found in VOLUME 100, issue 3 (Jan-Feb = issue 1; Mar-Apr = issue 2; May-Jun = issue 3).

The proper way to format that reference is to list the volume number and possibly the issue number after the title. BUT, do NOT use the words VOLUME or ISSUE, or the abbreviations V or # or N. Here is the correct version after the author, year and article title are given:

.... *Harvard Business Review*, 100 (3), 97-112.

## USING THE BEST LITERATURE

One overarching goal of your study as a graduate student is to learn the knowledge of the discipline in which you are enrolled. You will often refer to this body of knowledge in your papers and reports. That is, you are expected to learn about and refer to what others have studied, theorized and written about. In doing this, though, there are two important considerations to keep in mind:

1. You should learn about and use the best quality information possible
2. You need to refer to that information correctly in order to avoid plagiarism (discussed shortly)

The knowledge of a field of practice is contained in its literature. This literature occurs in various forms and more importantly, represents different levels of quality.

You should seek out the best quality of information possible. Generally, this means that the knowledge should be published in peer-reviewed outlets. The leading example of peer-reviewed work will be found in academic and scholarly journals in the field. Books or monographs are not necessarily subject to the same level of scrutiny. Even less well reviewed are organizationally-sponsored reports, such as survey reports by private associations or consultancies. The lowest level of quality would be self-published blogs and other statements found on the internet.

In general, then, the HR literature can be found in these various venues and outlets:

1. Practitioner journals (like *Training + Development*, published by the ASTD) that contains basically news and testimonial reports
2. General summaries on a topic, such as textbook chapters
3. More detailed and recent summaries of research in annual reviews, meta-analyses, or similar kinds of reports
4. Original reports of research and/or theory as found in journal articles

Beyond the location of the literature, it is also important to recognize the type of information being represented. In general, the literature contains five main types of knowledge:

- Theoretical developments and integrations
- Case studies: rich descriptions of specific situations
- Surveys: collections of data from a sample or population
- Correlational studies: associations between variables
- Experimental studies: causation

The most important advances and the most cutting-edge knowledge in any scientifically based discipline are going to be reported in journal articles.

The most powerful kind of knowledge for professional practice purposes is causal.

So, you should prepare yourself to be able to access and interpret recent empirical studies as reported in various journals.

## PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is both a form of stealing and of fraud. It involves using the work of others without credit and then representing that work as your own.

HRD Program standard:

We treat plagiarism as a serious violation of academic integrity. If plagiarism is determined to have occurred, we will institute penalties, beginning with a Failure grade for the assignment, but up to and possibly including Failure for the course, and/or expulsion from the program.

Plagiarism is relatively easy to detect. The HRD faculty is instructed to be on guard for possible violations of our academic integrity policy and to report instances it to the Director of the program.

### What to Do

Generally, plagiarism is not a concern when you are presenting information that is common knowledge. To comment that “larger firms are likely to have formal training programs” is probably relatively common knowledge and would not require citation.

On the other hand, when you refer to facts that are not widely known and/or ideas, theories, or conclusions from studies, you need to clearly identify the source of that information. Thus, to avoid instances of plagiarism, remember two simple things:

1. If you wish to use a direct quote from a source, put that statement in quotation marks (or block paragraph) and follow the Reference Citation guidelines covered earlier. But as a general writing strategy, avoid stringing together one direct quote after another.
2. When referring to the works of others (again, this is an expected part of your graduate study), condense and paraphrase that information. Summarize the key points and put them in your own words. Even so, be sure to cite the source of the information (author, date).

## GRAMMAR AND COMPOSITION GUIDELINES

Use the active rather than the passive voice.

*Poor:* The study was reported by Williams (1994).

*Better:* Williams (1994) reported these findings.

A verb must agree in number (i.e., singular or plural) with subject of the sentence.

*Incorrect:* The percentage of correct responses increase with practice.

*Correct:* The percentage of correct responses increases with practice.

Subject is percentage.

Plural nouns require plural verbs.

<u>Singular</u>	Appendix	Datum	Matrix	Phenomenon
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<u>Plural</u>	Appendices	Data	Matrices	Phenomena
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*Incorrect:* The data indicates that turnover was high.

*Correct:* The data indicate that turnover was high.



## Guidelines to Reduce Bias in Language

Avoid perpetuating demeaning attitudes and biased assumptions about people.

There are many alternative to the use of the generic “he”, including:

- rephrasing (e.g., from “when an individual conducts this kind of self-appraisal, he is a much stronger person” to “when an individual conducts this kind of self-appraisal, that person is much stronger....”);
- using plural nouns or pronouns ... (from “A manager ... his employee” to “Managers ... their employees”);
- replacing the pronoun with an article (from “A manager must deal with his employees...” to “A manager must deal with employees ....”);
- and dropping the pronoun (e.g., from “The manager must avoid letting his biases...” to “The manager must avoid letting biases....”)

“Sexual orientation” is different than “sexual preference.” Sexual orientation is preferred usage.

If used, the terms *lesbians* and *gay men* are preferred to the word *homosexual*.

Use the terms preferred by members of racial or ethnic groups.

Both *Black* and *African American* are currently acceptable. Racial and ethnic groups are designated by proper nouns and are capitalized. Therefore, use *Black* and *White* instead of *black* and *white*.

*Boy* and *girl* are correct terms for referring to people of high school age and younger. For persons 18 and older (or of college age and older), use *men* and *women*.

A term to be abbreviated must, on its first appearance, be written out completely and followed immediately by its abbreviation in parentheses. Thereafter, the abbreviation is used in text without further explanation.

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## Latin abbreviations

When you use a term like “that is” in the sentence without parentheses, it is written in English. If the term is in parentheses, use the Latin abbreviation (i.e., as just shown).

that is (i.e., ) for example (e.g., ) and so forth (etc.) versus or against (vs.)

## Using Numbers

Use Arabic numerals to express numbers 10 and above; spell out numbers zero to nine. You should use Arabic numerals for numbers below 10 if:

- they are grouped with numbers 10 and higher (e.g., 2 of 21 subjects)
- numbers represent time (2:05 pm); dates (2 weeks ago); ages (2-year-olds); sample or population size (N= 8); scores and points on a scale (scored 4 on a 7-point); or the sums of money that were paid (\$5 each).