**Guideline for Student Papers**

TO: FPST Students

FROM: FPST Faculty

SUBJECT: Content and Structure for written work

Use this guideline for all writing assignments in the Fire Protection and Safety Engineering Technology (FPST) Program e.g. essays, term papers, and senior projects. Submit all papers into D2L in MS Word® format.

There are two components to written work. The first component of writing is content, what you are writing about, demonstrating your understanding of the subject. The second component of writing is structure, how you present your material, demonstrating your ability to follow rules of convention and the assignment. Failure to complete both components of writing results in poor delivery to the reader and a correspondingly poor grade.

Use of the OSU Writing Center for assistance with content and structure is strongly encouraged. Visit the OSU Writing Center’s webpage here: <http://osuwritingcenter.okstate.edu/>

Grading Criteria

Every graded step of the assignment must be turned in and receive at least the minimum non-zero score in each category. Failure to turn in a sufficiently complete assignment at every step in the assignment will result in a zero for the project. Incorporate all corrections identified on returned work into the submission for the following step. Failure to incorporate identified corrections will result in a zero for the following step’s score (until corrected) and this is late work resulting in a 50% grade penalty for that step. An example of what to be turned in is included in each step description below along with the accompanying grading matrix.

# Step 1 – First week of the semester

**Read this entire guideline (emphasis on step 6)** and the instructions for your writing assignment. Grading criteria and examples of what to turn in at each step begin on page 6. Highlight key requirements. Begin researching interesting topics for your paper that fulfil the assignment’s requirements. **Set up MS Word® to check for grammar and style errors using the embedded guide**. Use the APA template provided in to begin your paper. Each step in this guideline should use the APA template in your progress, understanding that several sections may be blank. For senior project, meet with faculty members and find one who agrees to be your adviser.

 

## Grading – N/A

# Step 2 – Second and third week of the semester

Create and submit the title and thesis statement for your paper; the title should encompass the topic upon which you will be writing about. Keep track of interesting or useful articles for use in Step 3. Note: your thesis statement may require revision throughout your writing process. You thesis statement should appear in your introduction section of the final paper. Use the embedded guide to assist you in developing a sound thesis statement. For senior projects, you will likely need to go through multiple revisions with your adviser, so begin early.



## Grading – Title and Thesis Statement

Title, 3 points

0. Little to no effort, e.g. “Hangovers”

1. Minimally complete, e.g. “Preventing Hangovers”

2. Properly developed topic, “Review of Techniques for the Prevention of Hangovers”

3. Compelling and original topic, “Review of Medical Evidence to Support Common Urban Legends for the Prevention of Hangovers”

Thesis Statement, 9 points

Techniques espoused in urban legends purporting prophylaxis against hangovers lack a fundamental understanding of medical science and have little to no effect in preventing the adverse outcomes of excessive consumption of ethyl alcohol.



## Step 2 example of what to turn in:



# Step 3 – Fourth through fifth weeks of the semester

Conduct the literature review for your paper. Submit your references for your literature review using the APA 6th edition style format. Use a sufficient number of first sources to describe the topics discussed in your paper sufficiently. As a guide, lower-division papers should use 3-5 first sources, upper-division papers 5-8 first sources, and senior project 10-20 first sources. The use of first sources is in addition to secondary and tertiary sources you may need to reference in your work. Google and Wikipedia are useful tools for finding a topic for your paper, however, these website are not appropriate for conducting a literature review for first sources (with the exception of Google Scholar). Avoid the temptation to use the citations in Wikipedia as your source; you must find the original source of the information. Your primary tool for conducting a literature review is the OSU Library’s BOSS (Big On-line Search System). Use the “Advanced Search” feature and select “journal articles.” Before using BOSS, use this file to help determine appropriate keywords and phrases to search:



Find the BOSS at this link: <http://okstate.summon.serialssolutions.com/advanced#!/advanced>

Use the embedded guides to assist you in developing your reference list.

 

**Use of the built-in citation and references tool in MS Word® is strongly encouraged**. Use the embedded guide to assist you in inserting your citations and creating your reference section.



## Grading – Literature Review

15 points



## Step 3 example of what to turn in:



# Step 4 – Sixth week of the semester

Create and submit a descriptive abstract for your paper. A descriptive abstract is not a summary of your results; rather it is an explanation of what your report will contain. Be cautious to avoid anthropomorphizing your paper. Your paper cannot perform any of the following actions: describe, explore, cover, etc. For the “Keywords” section of the abstract, include the main search terms used in the BOSS search. Use the embedded guide to assist you in developing a pithy abstract. See paragraph 2.04 of the APA Style Guide for additional information. Abstracts must be between 75 and 150 words, no more, no less.



## Grading – Descriptive Abstract

18 points



## Step 4 example of what to turn in:



# Step 5 – Seventh week of the semester

Create and submit a content outline for your paper. The content outline should follow the appropriate sections of the style of paper you are submitting. Common APA styles include:

* Empirical Studies (original experimental research – typical for graduate work)
  + Introduction (does not get a heading)
  + Method (describe how the study was conducted, including Literature Review)
  + Results
  + Discussion (Summary, interpretation, implications)
* Literature Reviews (summary of existing work – typical for undergraduate work)
  + Introduction (does not get a heading)
  + Define and clarify the problem
  + Summarize previous investigations/work (Literature Review)
  + Identify relations, contradictions, gaps
  + Suggest next steps in solving the problem identified in the thesis statement
    - See note in step eight on argument
* Theoretical Articles (expand, refine, or critique existing theory)
* Methodological Articles (description of an approach or method)
* Case Studies (observational analysis, typically used for proposing empirical studies)

The outline should help you organize your thoughts into a coherent structure. Use the embedded guide to assist you in developing a sound content outline. Each section of the content outline must map the sources of the literature review.



## Grading – Content Outline

20 Points



## Step 5 example of what to turn in:



# Step 6 – Eighth through tenth weeks of the semester

Create a rough draft for your paper. As a guide, lower division papers should be 5-7 body pages, upper division papers should be 10-14 body pages, and senior projects should be 20-28 body pages. Body pages are the main written content of the paper and do not include the title page, abstract, reference pages, figures, tables, or appendices. The rough draft should be mindful of APA style conventions, but the focus of the rough draft is content. Some key elements of APA style:

* Times New Roman 12 point font
* One inch margins
* Active Voice
* No graphics on the title page
* All figures and tables follow the References section and are not in the body of the paper
* Limited use of first person, never second person e.g. “you”

Properly provide a citation for all statements of fact. Direct quotes from another author must be in quotation marks and properly cited. Unless the author has stated something particularly profound, or if paraphrasing would degrade the author’s meaning, the points of the work should be paraphrased. Under no circumstance should more than 5% of the paper consist of direct quotes; grade deductions result from the excessive use of direct quotes. Use the embedded guides to assist you in developing your rough draft.



Use the following embedded guides to assist you with proper English usage:



*Grading – Rough Draft*

Professor must be carbon copied when transmitting your paper to the peer reviewer.

## Step 6 – Example of what to turn in



# Step 7 – Eleventh week of the semester

Trade rough drafts with a classmate and proofread each other’s papers using “Track Changes” in MS Word®. E-mail the file with mark-ups back to your classmate and place a copy in D2L. Incorporate their edits and acknowledge their efforts in the “Author Note” on the first page. Submit your updated draft to your instructor in D2L. Note proofing requirements for group projects below. Use the embedded guide to assist you in using track changes for editing.



## Grading – Proofing of peer paper

1. Little to no effort to provide proofing
2. Basic spelling and grammar check
3. Good review of grammar and APA
4. Excellent review of content, grammar, and strict adherence to APA

## Step 7 example of what to turn in



# Step 8 – Twelfth through Fourteenth weeks of the semester

Create and submit a second draft for your paper. The second draft should focus on incorporating comments and on crisp adherence to the use of proper English and the APA style conventions.

Ensure that the conclusion section has a well-developed argument defending the thesis statement. The thesis statement is the argument; the body of the paper should provide the necessary premises and evidence to support the argument (thesis). See the hyperlinked guides on writing an argument.

<http://www.mesacc.edu/~barsp59601/text/103/notes/1.html>

<http://onlinephilosophyclub.com/elements-of-a-complete-logical-argument.php>

<http://onlinephilosophyclub.com/forums/viewtopic.php?t=2819>

Hiring a copyeditor is strongly encouraged. The OSU Writing Center keeps a list of copyeditors for hire.

Retrieving a copy of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association Sixth Edition from the library is strongly encouraged; call number 808.02 P976 2010 (Located on the fourth floor), or purchase from the book store. Use the APA Publication Manual to assist in formatting tables and figures, and to review formatting of headers, cover pages, etc.

A note on the Author Note, the term “supported by” in this context refers to monetary support. An undergraduate paper will not often use “supported by.”

**Remember to update your abstract.**

Review the embedded Written Communication Value Rubric used, in part, in grading your paper. Ensure that your final draft meets the requirements in column four to the best of your ability.



## Grading – Second Draft

20 Points



## Step 8 example of what to turn in



# Step 9 – Fifteenth through Sixteenth weeks of the semester

Submit your final draft of your paper in D2L. Submit senior projects in print and professionally bound. Professionally bound means you pay a service. Using staples, clip-in style binders, or other off-the-self binding applications result in a **significant point reduction**.

## Grading – Final Draft

10 Points



## Step 9 example of what to turn in



# Group Projects

In addition to the requirements set forth in steps one through eight, group projects require an additional appendix that details the contributions and roles of each team member. The expectation is that each group member will author portions of the paper. However, the reader should not be able to detect a change in author throughout the paper. The APA style guide’s requirement for active voice assists in presenting a single-author tone. English convention is to speak in the passive voice, therefore writing in the active voice assists in speaking directly, rather than the flowing prose of the voice inside the mind. Therefore, groups more easily speak in one voice rather than the individual dialogues in the minds of the authors.

In the content outline, identify the group member to author each section.

In addition to authoring a section of the paper, each group member should be responsible for an aspect of proofreading and editing the group’s paper as well as the paper exchanged with another group in the class. Acknowledge the members of the group who proofed your paper in the Author Note.

Proofreading roles may include:

* APA Style
* APA Citations
* Grammar & Spelling
* Technical Content
* Adherence to the requirements of the assignment

# Tips

* Never begin a sentence with “It is” or “This is.”
  + Ask yourself, “What is” then replace “It” or “This” with the proper subject that you are trying to describe.
  + Avoid ambiguity, your reader cannot ask you a clarifying question.
* Never begin a sentence with “But,” “So,” or “Because.”
  + Consider using “Therefore.”
* Do not use contractions.
* While “I” or “we” are sometimes appropriate, never use “you.”
  + Consider using “the reader.”
* Avoid colloquialisms, clichés, puns, hyperbole, and rhetorical questions.
  + These are formal writing assignments, do not use phrases such as, “At the end of the day” or “cut and dried.”
* Do not begin a sentence with a numeral, spell out numbers less than 10, use commas to separate thousands, see APA 4.31-4.38
* Use metric units
* Do not commit [Word Crimes](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Gv0H-vPoDc).



# **Due dates for the Spring 2018 semester**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Step | Description | Timeline of Semester | ~Hours | Due Date in D2L |
| 1 | Topic Investigation/Advisor Selection | Second week | 6 | 1/24/2018 |
| 2 | Title and Thesis Statement | Third week | 4 | 1/31/2018 |
| 3 | Literature Review and References Section | 4th-5th weeks | 20 | 2/14/2018 |
| 4 | Descriptive Abstract | Sixth week | 4 | 2/21/2018 |
| 5 | Content Outline | Seventh week | 6 | 2/28/2018 |
| 6 | Conduct Experiment/ Survey and Author Rough Draft | 8th-11th\* weeks | 60 | 3/28/2018 |
| 7 | Proofread and Submit Rough Draft/Poster Draft | 12th week | 6 | 4/4/2018 |
| 8 | Final Poster | 13th week | 4 | 4/18/2018 |
| 9 | Second Draft | 14th week | 6 | 4/25/2018 |
| 10 | Poster / Presentation | 15th week | 2 | 5/2/2018 |
| 11 | Final Draft (Electronic and Bound copy) | 16th week | 2  (120 total) | 5/9/2018 |
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