Text Formatting Guidelines

For Academic Case Study Documents and Journal Submissions

This comprehensive guide provides professional formatting standards for creating academic case study documents suitable for journal publication, conference proceedings, or academic coursework submission. Following these guidelines ensures consistency, readability, and adherence to academic publishing standards.

1. Document Structure and Organization

1.1 Essential Sections

A well-structured academic document should include the following sections in order:

- **Title Page: Center-aligned title, subtitle, author information**
- **Abstract: 150-250 words summarizing key findings**
- **Keywords: 5-8 relevant terms in italics**
- **Table of Contents: Auto-generated with hyperlinks**
- **Main Body: Introduction, Literature Review, Methodology, Results, Discussion, Conclusion**
- **Acknowledgments: Optional but recommended**
- **References: IEEE or APA format with proper citations**

1.2 Heading Hierarchy

Maintain a consistent hierarchical structure throughout your document:

- **Heading 1: Main sections (e.g., "1. Introduction") - 14pt, bold**
- **Heading 2: Subsections (e.g., "1.1 Background") - 13pt, bold**
- **Heading 3: Sub-subsections (e.g., "1.1.1 Context") - 12pt, bold**
- **Maintain consistent numbering throughout the document**

2. Typography Standards

2.1 Font Specifications

Table 1: Font Specifications

Element	Specification
Primary Font	Times New Roman
Body Text Size	12pt
Line Spacing	1.5 or Double (as per journal requirements)
Paragraph Spacing	6pt after paragraphs
Character Spacing	Normal/Standard

2.2 Text Alignment

- **Body Text: Justified alignment for professional appearance**
- **Headings: Left-aligned (unless specified otherwise)**
- **Title/Abstract: Center-aligned**
- **Tables/Figures: Center-aligned with captions**

3. Page Layout

3.1 Page Dimensions

Table 2: Page Layout Specifications

Element	Specification
Paper Size	US Letter (8.5" × 11") or A4 (as per journal)
Margins	1 inch (2.54 cm) on all sides
Orientation	Portrait (unless specific content requires landscape)

3.2 Page Numbering

- Start numbering from first content page
- Position: Bottom center or top right
- Format: Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3...)

4. Lists and Enumerations

4.1 Bullet Points

- Use for non-sequential items
- Maintain consistent bullet style (•)
- Indent: 0.5 inch from left margin
- Hanging indent: 0.25 inch

4.2 Numbered Lists

- Use for sequential or hierarchical items
- Format: 1., 2., 3. or (1), (2), (3)
- Sub-levels: a), b), c) or i., ii., iii.

4.3 When to Use Lists

Use lists when:

- Presenting multiple distinct items
- Outlining steps or procedures
- Listing research objectives
- Enumerating key findings

Avoid lists for:

- Regular narrative content
- Single items

- Content better suited for prose

5. Tables and Figures

5.1 Table Formatting

- **Caption:** Above table, bold, format "Table I: Description"
- **Header Row:** Dark background (e.g., #2E75B6), white bold text
- **Borders:** Light gray (#CCCCCC) for cell borders
- **Cell Padding:** 6-8pt internal margins
- **Alternating Rows:** Optional light shading for readability
- **Width:** Fit to page width (typically 6.5 inches for 1-inch margins)

5.2 Table Numbering

- Roman numerals (I, II, III, IV...) or Arabic (1, 2, 3...)
- Sequential numbering throughout document
- Reference in text: "as shown in Table II..."

5.3 Figure Guidelines

- **Caption:** Below figure, format "Figure 1: Description"
- **Resolution:** Minimum 300 DPI for print
- **File Format:** PNG, JPEG, or TIFF
- **Size:** Appropriate to content, typically 3-6 inches wide

6. Citations and References

6.1 IEEE Citation Style

- **In-text citations:** Use square brackets [1], [2], [3-5]
- **Citation placement:** After relevant text, before punctuation
- **Multiple citations:** [1], [3], [7] or [1-3] for consecutive

6.2 Reference List Format Examples

Journal Article:

[1] A. Author, B. Author, and C. Author, "Title of article," Journal Name, vol. X, no. Y, pp. XX-YY, Year.

Book:

[2] A. Author, "Title of book," Edition. City, State: Publisher, Year.

Conference Paper:

[3] A. Author et al., "Conference paper title," in Proc. Conference Name, City, State, Year, pp. XX-YY.

6.3 Reference Guidelines

- Alphabetical order NOT required (IEEE uses numerical order)
- Italicize journal/book titles

- Use "et al." for more than 3 authors
- Include DOI when available

7. Special Text Formatting

7.1 Emphasis and Styling

- **Bold:** Section headings, table headers, emphasis (use sparingly)
- **Italics:** Journal names, foreign terms, mathematical variables, keywords
- **Underline:** Avoid in academic writing (reserve for hyperlinks)
- **ALL CAPS:** Avoid except for established acronyms

7.2 Acronyms and Abbreviations

- Define on first use: "Convolutional Neural Network (CNN)"
- Subsequent uses: CNN only
- Maintain consistency throughout document

7.3 Mathematical Expressions

- Use equation editor for complex formulas
- Italicize variables: x, y, α, β
- Center-align standalone equations
- Number equations: (1), (2), (3)
- Reference: "as shown in Equation (1)..."

8. Paragraph Formatting

8.1 Structure

- **First Line Indent:** None (block style) or 0.5 inch
- **Paragraph Spacing:** 6-12pt after each paragraph
- **No extra spaces:** Between sentences (single space after period)
- **Widow/Orphan Control:** Enable to prevent single lines at page breaks

8.2 Content Guidelines

- One main idea per paragraph
- Topic sentence at beginning
- Supporting sentences in middle
- Concluding/transitional sentence at end
- Typical length: 4-8 sentences

9. Abstract and Keywords

9.1 Abstract Guidelines

- Length: 150-250 words (check journal requirements)
- Single paragraph, no indentation
- Present tense for background, past tense for methods/results
- Include: Background, Methods, Results, Conclusion

- No citations in abstract

9.2 Keywords

- 5-8 keywords or phrases
- Separated by commas
- Not already in title (preferred)
- Format: "Keywords: term1, term2, term3"

10. Quality Checklist

10.1 Before Submission

Use this checklist to ensure your document meets all formatting requirements:

- ☐ Consistent heading hierarchy (1, 1.1, 1.1.1)
- ☐ All tables/figures numbered and referenced
- ☐ Citations properly formatted and sequential
- ☐ No orphaned headings (heading at bottom of page)
- ☐ Page breaks appropriate (new sections start on new page)
- ☐ Table of contents updated and accurate
- ☐ Spell-check and grammar-check completed
- ☐ Consistent terminology throughout
- ☐ All acronyms defined on first use
- ☐ References complete with all required fields

11. Common Formatting Errors to Avoid

11.1 Typography Errors

- ❌ Multiple spaces between words
- ❌ Manual line breaks within paragraphs
- ❌ Inconsistent font sizes/styles
- ❌ Using spaces instead of tabs for alignment
- ❌ Hard returns for spacing (use paragraph spacing instead)

11.2 Structural Errors

- ❌ Missing section numbers
- ❌ Inconsistent heading capitalization
- ❌ Tables without captions
- ❌ Figures without proper resolution
- ❌ Unreferenced tables or figures

11.3 Citation Errors

- ❌ Missing citations for key claims
- ❌ Broken reference links ([?] instead of [5])

- ❌ Inconsistent citation format
- ❌ References not in numerical order
- ❌ Incomplete reference information

12. Journal-Specific Requirements

Always check your target journal's specific requirements for:

- Column format (single vs. double column)
- Specific template requirements
- Copyright/licensing statements
- Author contribution statements
- Data availability statements
- Conflict of interest declarations
- Supplementary material guidelines

13. File Management Best Practices

13.1 Version Control

- Use descriptive filenames: CaseStudy_TeleDermatology_v3_Final.docx
- Include date in filename: Study_2024-02-14.docx
- Keep backup copies of all versions

13.2 File Format

- Primary format: .docx (Microsoft Word)
- Submission format: Usually .docx or PDF (check journal requirements)
- Archive format: PDF/A for long-term preservation

Summary

Following these comprehensive formatting guidelines ensures that your academic case study document maintains professional standards suitable for journal publication, conference proceedings, or academic coursework submission. Consistency, attention to detail, and adherence to established conventions are key to producing high-quality academic documents. Always refer to your target journal's specific author guidelines for any additional requirements or modifications to these general formatting standards.

Document prepared for academic formatting guidance

For questions or clarifications, consult your institution's style guide or journal editor