

**NORTHWESTERN STATE UNIVERSITY  
GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH IN NURSING  
GUIDELINES FOR WRITING AND SUBMITTING FORMAL TERM PAPERS**

The following guidelines are intended for use when students are writing formal papers for MSN course assignments. In general, the student should be guided in writing formal papers by the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA) (5<sup>th</sup> ed.)*. In some instances, the NSU guidelines described below in this document may differ from the APA Manual. When this occurs, the NSU guidelines supercede the APA Manual. Also, the Course Faculty for the course in which the student is completing the term paper may have specific instructions for writing the paper that would supercede the APA Manual and NSU Paper Guidelines. These special instructions are usually included in the written criteria for the particular course assignment.

**I. MANUSCRIPT PREPARATION**

Because computers and printers vary in formatting, the same computer and printer must be used for all parts of the paper. Use Arial, Times New Roman, or Courier New typeface (font) in 12 pt size for word-processing the paper. Strong black type should be clear, readable, and uniform throughout the paper.

**A. Margins**

Left margins should not be less than 1 1/2 inches. Right, top and bottom margin should not be less than 1 inch. Exception is that the top margin on the first page of each paper should not be less than 1 1/2 inches. (Please note that this is contrary to APA Manual which states “Leave uniform margins of

at least 1 in. (2.54 cm) at the top, bottom, left and right of every page.”(5<sup>th</sup> ed., p. 286)

**B. Running Heads**

Running heads for term papers are not typically used. Check with Course Faculty in each class to determine if running heads required for those papers. Running headings are different than using the different levels of headings within the text of a paper. (See APA Manual 5<sup>th</sup> ed.)

**C. Symbols**

Symbols and formulas which cannot be typewritten are lettered clearly in black permanent ink in all copies if the student is preparing an original and with copies. When xerographic copies are being prepared, lettering is done clearly and sharply on the master before copying. Rub on letters, such as "Chart Paks" may be used. These may be purchased from a stationary store. If used, the page must be reproduced for final copy because letters unpeel when aged.

**D. Pagination**

All pages of the paper must be counted and assigned a number including prefatory material, graphs, figures, charts, tables, illustrations, bibliographies and appendices.

The numbering system acceptable for the paper is as follows:

Use small roman numerals (i,ii,iii) for the prefatory materials (these include title pg, abstract, table of contents, etc., not the text of paper), and arabic numerals (1,2,3) for the text of the paper. (The numbering begins with ii; the

title page counts as page i, but the roman numeral does not appear). On the prefatory pages the small roman numerals are centered about 3/4 inches above the bottom of the page. The first prefatory page is numbered ii. Continue with the small roman numerals throughout the prefatory material. The FIRST page of the TEXT becomes page 1 (arabic numerals) of the text. Pagination of the initial page of the text of the paper is centered on the bottom of the page. Begin with arabic numerals in the upper right corner of the SECOND page of text and number consecutively to the last page of the paper, including the appendices. PLEASE NOTE: See Appendix A for instructions on how to paginate the text with first page number centered 1 inch from the bottom of the page and the consecutive pages with the numbers in the upper right hand corner in a Word document. Some students may choose to accomplish this by using the “Copy” and “Paste” features. To do this, copy and paste the first page of the text to a new document, then paginate this new document with “1” centered at the bottom of the page. Print this first page and use it to replace the first page of your complete document that has the page numbers in the upper right corner.

**E. Text**

The value of a carefully prepared outline for the formal paper cannot be overestimated; since it will give you a useful framework, as well as help the reader follow your presentation and reasoning. Even with an excellent outline, most persons find it necessary to make several false starts before finding the best method of presentation, and you should not be discouraged if

**this happens to you. Rare indeed is the person who can say precisely what is intended in the first version of a manuscript. Dictation is especially prone to produce vague, unevenly constructed and even paradoxical statements, requiring extensive revision for clarity.**

**For a formal term paper, you will be given grading criteria for the assignment by your Course Faculty. You should organize the content and structure of the paper according to the assignment criteria. In the text of the paper, address each criteria in the order listed on the assignment criteria, and precede the text content for each criteria with an appropriate level of HEADING indicating the criteria you are addressing. For example, if criteria #2 for the assignment states, “Identifies and briefly describes personal and professional factors that have influenced your philosophy of nursing”, you might select a Level 3 heading. A Level 3 heading is a flush left, italicized, upper and lower case side heading. The Level 3 heading for criteria #2 might read, *Factors Influencing Personal Philosophy of Nursing*. (See APA manul, 5<sup>th</sup> ed., for description and format for the five levels of headings.)**

**In a brief guideline such as this, there can be no attempt to summarize all of the errors which can occur in grammar, punctuation, and meaning. Your writing should not only express your thoughts as precisely as possible, but clear rules of the best American usage of the English language should also be followed. It is the student’s responsibility to read Chapters 2 and 3 of the APA Manual, 5<sup>th</sup> ed., related to writing style, grammar, reducing bias**

**in language, and editorial style rules, and to accurately apply this information when writing a formal term paper. It is suggested that the student who is having difficulties with understanding or applying these APA guidelines secure an editor. The student(s) is responsible for READING and EDITING his/her own paper PRIOR to handing it in to the Course Faculty!**

**F. References**

**Reference citations lead the reader (usually your faculty) to the sources of scholarly material mentioned or quoted in a document so the reader can verify the author's statement or learn more about the topic. The only useful reference is an absolutely correct one. For this reason, the student must double check the citation with the original source and with bibliographic listing to ensure that it is accurate in every detail. References may be cited in many styles which generally agree on the information stated. In the MSN Program, the APA Manual (5th ed.) is the required format for citing references. This format has the first line of the reference flush with the margins and all subsequent lines of the references indented 5 spaces. An example would be:**

**Simmons, P., Planchock, N., & Thompson, W. (1999). Supporting a successful thesis defense. *Journal of Graduate Faculty*, 1(1), 1-7.**

**For the list of references page at the end of the paper, the references must be singled spaced with double spacing between references (this is different than APA 5<sup>th</sup> ed. which states references are double spaced). The reference citation format must be consistent with the particular type of reference to be**

cited. The student should also see APA Manual (5<sup>th</sup> ed.) for the various rules and formats related to citation of references in the text of the paper.

#### **G. Appendices**

Not every paper requires appendices, but they often provide an appropriate means for making various auxiliary materials available. Note that this paper guideline stipulates that the appendices are the final section of the document following the references. If appendices are used, their form follows the recommendations of the APA Manual (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). The appendices are designated as Appendix A, Appendix B, Appendix C, etc. Each appendix begins on a new page if homogeneous in content and is headed with its letter and a short descriptive title. The pages of the appendices are numbered as a consecutive part of the pagination of the paper as a whole. The appendix must be typewritten with the usual 1½ inch left margin and on the same paper as the text. If needed, they may be reproduced by acceptable processes. (Such as pictures). The letter designated for each appendix, full title and page number appear in the Table of Contents. If the paper has only one appendix, no letter is assigned.

Appendices - use a sheet of paper before each appendix with Appendix or Appendix A, B, C., etc., centered in the middle of the page.

#### **H. Indentation**

The first line of each paragraph receives an indentation which must be uniform throughout the paper; an indentation of 5 to 7 spaces is suggested. See APA Manual 5<sup>th</sup> ed. for indentation for direct block

quotations.

**I. Spacing**

Typing is on only one side of the paper. The text is double spaced throughout. Single space within footnotes and bibliographic entries, but double space between such items. More space is provided above and below heading as follows:

1 ½ inches above the title of the paper on the first page of the text

Quadruple space below the title of the paper and the next heading

Triple space above and below a centered heading

Triple space above a side heading

Double space below a side heading

**J. Length**

Length of the paper is usually determined by content and is subject to the Course Faculty's specification. Length of paper is usually stated in the assignment criteria.

**K. Title Page for term papers**

1. A title page must be included in the submission of all term papers (see Appendix B for instructions).
2. The title page for term papers can be modified by the student to serve as a the title page for any of the other course assignments that are submitted in the MSN courses.

**L. Miscellaneous information**

- 1. Avoid ending a page with the first line of a new paragraph; avoid carrying over from the preceding page only the last line of a new paragraph.**
- 2. Never end a page with a heading or subheading. Unless the last two lines of the text follow the heading on the same page, place the heading at the top of the next page.**
- 3. Avoid dividing words from the bottom line of one page to the top of another. Also, avoid too many divided words in the text.**
- 4. Once a table or figure is referred to in the text, this table or figure must appear as soon as possible in its entirety. This may mean that it will be situated with text before and after it. Do not divide tables unless the table already occupies an entire page and there is still more information. If this occurs, you may then continue the table on to a second page. (See APA Manual 5<sup>th</sup> ed. related to this)**
- 5. Use the current APA Manual for table, titles, figures and references (except use NSU Guidelines for spacing of references on the reference list as previously stated in this document).**
- 6. If someone other than the student is typing the paper, it is not sufficient to give the typist a copy of this manual and expect the typist to do the rest. The typist's responsibility is limited to making a neat and accurate copy of the material given. It is wise to employ a skillful and experienced professional typist. Early arrangements should be**

made for a typist's services. Obtain a written statement of rates and an estimate of the time required including obligation/costs to correct errors. Ask for references from the typist which may save you from entrusting your work to a well-meaning novice or to a ruthless agency.

## II. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Listed below are some examples of transitional words that may be useful to the student:

### Transitions

- |                       |                     |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| 1. In other words     | 21. Hence           |
| 2. On the contrary    | 22. Consequently    |
| 3. For example        | 23. Frequently      |
| 4. Now let us turn to | 24. occasionally    |
| 5. All in all         | 25. In particular   |
| 6. On the whole       | 26. In general      |
| 7. Finally            | 27. Of course       |
| 8. Likewise           | 28. No doubt        |
| 9. Similarly          | 29. Doubtless       |
| 10. First, second     | 30. But             |
| 11. In fact           | 31. Yet             |
| 12. Indeed            | 32. Shall           |
| 13. Furthermore       | 33. Nevertheless    |
| 14. And or            | 34. Granted         |
| 15. Surely            | 35. To be sure      |
| 16. Not at all        | 36. Especially      |
| 17. Certainly         | 37. Specifically    |
| 18. Also              | 38. In short        |
| 19. Nor               | 39. Notwithstanding |
| 20. For one thing     | 40. Usually         |

## Appendix A

### Page Numbering Instructions in Word Document

Page numbering in Word. To get page "1" to center on bottom of first page, and to get page "2" to be in top right thereafter:

At the last line of page one, you must "force" a Section Break. I'm attaching my dummy document so you can see it.

Type any text on page one

Press "Enter" key to get to the blank line after the text you typed in

Click "Insert"

Click "Break"

Click "Next Page" (under the Section break types)

Click "OK"

Go back to page one, and click anywhere on the page

Click "View"

Click "Header and Footer"

Drag down to the Footer window

Click on the # icon and "center" the page number

Go to page two, and click anywhere on the page

Click "View"

Click "Header and Footer"

In the "Header - Section 2" window, change the formatting to right justified, and click on the # icon

Drag down to the Footer on page two and click anywhere in the Footer

Above the right side of the Footer, you should be seeing the words "Same as Previous"

To remove the "Same as Previous," click on the 5th choice from the right side, if you count "Close" as #1 (the icon looks like two pages side by side)

The words "Same as Previous" above the right side of the Footer on page 2 should have disappeared.

**Appendix B**

**Title Page for Position or Term Paper**

**(12 spaces from top of page type the title of paper)**

**TITLE OF A POSITION PAPER OR A TERM PAPER**

**(4 SPACES)**

**BY**

**(2 SPACES)**

**NAME**

**(12 SPACES)**

**SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE IN NURSING AT  
NORTHWESTERN STATE UNIVERSITY**

**COURSE NUMBER AND NAME**

**NAME OF INSTRUCTOR**

**DATE**