Handbook for
Developing Scholarly Writing Skills

BN (Collaborative) Program

Centre for Nursing Studies

Revised May 2020

Preamble

Developing scholarly writing skills is a critical component of the BN (Collaborative) Program. Writing assignments can facilitate the development of problem-solving and critical-thinking skills. Writing also enables the student to analyze concepts and synthesize content. This handbook is intended to provide students with guidance in the following areas:

- Leveling Writing Skills Across the Curriculum (including the grading scheme for mark allocation)
- Improving Writing Skills using APA Editorial Style
- Academic Integrity
- Resources to Assist with Writing Assignments

Leveling Writing Skills Across the Curriculum

To help students progressively develop their writing abilities, a framework for the building of scholarly writing skills has also been developed by faculty at the CNS. This framework provides direction for students as they progress through the program. The framework identifies three components in which students need to develop skills. These components were used to develop objectives related to writing expectations across the four years of the program. The three components and the objectives for each year are outlined as follows:

The Three Writing Components

1. Data collection
2. Critical Analysis
3. Process (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, organization of ideas, correct use of APA, introduction, body, conclusion)

Objectives for Writing Expectations

Year 1

1. Use data sources to identify and locate appropriate literature.
2. Extract key points from two to three relevant journal articles and apply to a concept/clinical practice experience.
3. Develop a paper using an Introduction, Body of Paper, and Conclusion framework of organizing.
4. Maintain a concise and organized flow of ideas throughout the written assignment.
5. Demonstrate basic writing skills related to grammar, spelling, punctuation, and sentence and paragraph structure and APA format.

Year 2

1. Conduct a literature search and locate four to five relevant journal articles.
2. Discriminate credible literature available through web-based sources.
3. Recognize and discuss the similarities and differences presented in the literature.

Year 3

1. Conduct a literature review using a variety of literature sources.
2. Support ideas with multiple author citations using APA format.
3. Identify and apply a variety of concepts in the literature that are relevant to an assigned topic.
4. Critically appraise nursing literature.

Year 4

1. Collect comprehensive data from the literature and other relevant sources.
2. Critically analyze the data from a variety of stakeholder perspectives.
3. Formulate a position that is supported by a critical analysis of the literature.

NOTE: **Students are encouraged to select journal articles and other literature sources that are no older than 5 years.**

Grading Scheme

Student papers are graded based upon content/analysis, writing skills and editorial style. Writing skills and editorial style are both components of APA and will be evaluated separately for the purpose of grading papers/assignments. The overall weighting of content/analysis and APA will vary across papers however the total grade allotted on any individual written paper/assignment for APA will be divided as follows:

- **Writing Skills (e.g. style, grammar, expression)** **50%**

- **APA Editorial Style** **50%**

APA Editorial style will be further broken down as follows:

- **In Text Citations (paraphrasing, quotations, summaries)** **25%**

- **General Format (all other components of APA editorial style)** **25%**

Example 1 – Mark distribution for a paper in which 40% is allotted for Writing Skills	
Writing Skills (e.g. style, grammar, expression)	20 marks
In Text Citations (paraphrasing, quotations, summaries)	10 marks
General Format (all other components)	10 marks

Example 2 – Mark distribution for a paper in which 20% is allotted for Writing Skills	
Writing Skills (e.g. style, grammar, expression)	10 marks
In Text Citations (paraphrasing, quotations, summaries)	5 marks
General Format (all other components)	5 marks

Improving Writing Skills Using
APA Editorial Style

Students in the BN (Collaborative) Program are expected to develop and submit written papers/assignments in a number of nursing courses. These written papers/assignments must demonstrate good general writing skills and application of the APA editorial style as outlined in the 7th edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (2020).*

The APA Publication Manual is intended primarily as a guide to preparing manuscripts for journal publication, and therefore the Centre for Nursing Studies requires students to purchase the 7th edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (2020).* This manual demonstrates the principles of APA editorial style in a concise, easy-to-read, and user-friendly format. Students who wish further explanation of these principles are referred to the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (2020),* on reserve in the Learning Resources Centre.

An Ad Hoc Committee consisting of faculty from the Centre for Nursing Studies and MUN School of Nursing, and staff from the Health Sciences Library have compiled specific guidelines for aspects of APA style that seem problematic for students. These specific guidelines also include exceptions to APA style that apply to assignments and papers submitted at these educational institutions. Please refer to these guidelines when writing papers. **All page references are from the 7th edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (2020).***

Specific Guidelines for Student Use for Memorial University School of Nursing and the Centre for Nursing Studies

- **Title Page**: The title page should contain title of the paper, course name and number, student name, student number, professor name, and date. Page number should be placed in the top right corner. No running head or header is necessary. See sample title page on page 10 of this document.

- **Abstract:** Do not include an abstract.

- **Table of Contents:** A table of contents is needed only if the paper contains headings. Should follow the lay out of the headings. See sample table of contents on page 49.

- **Margins:** Papers should have one-inch margins on the top, bottom, left and right. Indent paragraphs five spaces (tab) (see page 45).

- **Line Spacing and Font:** The paper should be double spaced with left justification and ragged right justification. Font should be a serif font (preferably Times New Roman) size 12 (see pages 44-45).

- **Pagination:** Page numbers should appear at the top right of each page, including the first (title) page (see page 44). **NOTE page headers (i.e. running head) are not required.**

- **Headings:** Make sure your headings correspond with the levels of divisions in your paper (see pages 47-49).

- **Quotations:** Brief quotations (fewer than 40 words) should be surrounded by quotation marks and placed within the text. Long quotations (more than 40 words) should not be surrounded by quotation marks and should be in an indented paragraph (see pages 270-278).

- **Numbers:** Ensure that you are following APA guidelines when using numerals or numbers written as words (see pages 178-181).

- **Seriation:** For information on how to format lists, refer to pages 189-191.

- **Plagiarism:** Please refer to pages 21; 254-257.

- **References:** References should follow the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (2020)*. The reference list should be double spaced, both within and between references (see pages 66-67; 281-309).

- **Appendices:** Appendices are located after the Reference list and continue with page numbering. Each appendix starts on a new page. Appendices should use letters rather than numbers (see pages 41-46 and 198).

- **Reference Lists and In-text Citations (Chapter 8 and 9)**

  - ➢ References should be listed alphabetically by the last name of the first author listed for each individual reference.

  - ➢ Do not change the order of authors in a reference.

  - ➢ Second and subsequent lines of references should be indented. This is commonly referred to as a hanging indent.

  - ➢ If citing a source with three or more authors, include only the first author's name followed by "et al." for the first and subsequent citations.

  - ➢ When referencing a resource that is not a journal, capitalize only the first word of the title. If the title has a colon, capitalize the first word after the colon.

  - ➢ Italicize titles of journals and books.

  - ➢ Italicize volume number of a journal, but not the issue number.

  - ➢ When referencing a journal article, include the issue number only if the journal is paginated by issue. If the journal is paginated by volume, do not include issue number.

  - ➢ If referencing a source that was referenced in another source (commonly called a secondary source), mention the original source in your text and use the following as the in text citation (as cited in Smith & Jones…). In the reference list, list the source you read. Do not list a reference you have not read.

  - ➢ If there are two or more references by the same author, list them in order of publication date.

  - ➢ Use "&" rather than "and" when listing multiple authors in the reference list or in parenthesis in the text of the paper.

  - ➢ Use "and" if you are referring to authors in the text of the paper outside of the parenthesis. Example: "Smith and Jones (2006) suggested…" or "It has been suggested that … (Smith & Jones, 2006)".

  - ➢ If a DOI (Digital Object Identifier) is available, include it in the reference (see example below). Write to DOI as a URL.

    Jones, R. & Smith, I. (2014). Negative feedback and the effect on self-concept. *Journal of Current Psychology, 34,* 342-347. http://doi.org/34.4356/45698724483176591

➢ If a journal article is found electronically, but there is no DOI available, it is necessary to include a direct URL to the article (if open access) or a URL to the home page of the journal (if the journal is accessed via subscription). See example below. Use retrieval dates only if sources are likely to change (for example, Wikis, page 102).

Brown, G. & Smith, Y. (2013). Reflection strategies for beginning nursing students. *Journal of Student Learning, 45*(4), 12-14. Retrieved from http://www.fedperd.ca/eng/journal/index.cfm

*Do not insert a hyphen to break a URL across line, and do not add a period after the URL.

*If accessing the article from a private database (ex. CINAHL, Pub Med) you may need to do a quick web search to locate this URL.

➢ Electronic books are referenced very similarly to print books, but the URL or database must be included.

➢ For any electronic reference, refer to the *APA Style Guide to Electronic Resources*.

➢ **NOTE:** APA style is not only the way in which you cite your sources and format your paper but also includes your writing style. Examples include the organization of your paper, the flow of ideas through sections and paragraphs, verb tense, choice of words, use or non-use of biased language, and other editorial style elements. Refer to chapter 2 in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (2020).*

Developed by the Ad Hoc Committee on APA Style January 2009,
Adapted July 2010, Revised July 2011, July 2014, June 2015, 2017, 2019, May 2020.

Changes to the 7th edition - Adapted from (Streefkerk, 2020)

• The publisher location is no longer included in the reference.

• The in-text citation for three or more authors is now shortened right from the first citation. You include the first author's name followed by "et al."

• Surnames and initials for up to 20 authors (instead of 7) should be provided in the reference list.

• DOIs are formatted the same as URLs. It's no longer necessary to label as "DOI".

• URLs no longer require a "Retrieved from," unless a retrieval date is needed.
  o The website name is included (unless it's the same as the author), and
  o Web page titles are italicized.

- For ebooks, the format, platform, or device (e.g. Kindle) is no longer included in the reference. The publisher is included in the reference.

- Clear guidelines are provided for including other kinds of contributors, such as:
    - when citing a podcast episode, the host of the episode should be included;
    - for a TV series episode, the writer and director of that episode are cited.

- Examples for online source types such as
    - podcast episodes,
    - social media posts, and
    - YouTube videos.
    - The use of emojis and hashtags is also explained.

- The singular gender-neutral pronoun "they" or "their" is endorsed.

- Instead of using adjectives as nouns to label groups of people, descriptive phrases are preferred. For example: instead of "the poor" use "people living in poverty".

- Instead of broad categories, you should use exact age ranges that are more relevant and specific.

- Increased flexibility regarding fonts: options include Calibri 11, Arial 11, Lucida Sans Unicode 10, Times New Roman 12, and Georgia 11.

- Heading levels 3-5 are updated to improve readability.

- Use double quotation marks instead of italics to refer to linguistic examples.

Sample Title Page

An Examination of Lay Health Information

Jane Smith, 200908965

Nursing 2014: Community Health Nursing

Professor T. Jones

May 10th, 2017

Sample Table of Contents

Table of Contents

Academic Integrity

➢ Honesty and integrity is expected at all times in your written work. Honesty implies that the work you submit is your own work, any source of information is appropriately cited, and you do not resubmit papers that were written for another purpose without prior agreement with your professor. One of the most serious breaches of academic integrity is plagiarism (see below) and could jeopardize your continuance in the BN (Collaborative) Program.

➢ Cheating is also a serious breach and includes but is not limited to copying, allowing a colleague to copy your work, writing an assignment for another student, and submitting something written by someone else as your own paper. It also usually includes resubmitting a paper written for another course.

➢ Plagiarism refers to "the act of presenting the ideas or works of another as one's own" (section 6.11.4 of the General Academic Regulations [Undergraduate] in the 2015-2016 University Calendar). It includes complete failure to acknowledge sources as well as inappropriate usage of both direct quotations and paraphrasing. Plagiarism is a serious academic offence.

Resources to Assist with Writing Assignments

CNS students can avail of the supports available through the Writing Centre at Memorial University. The Writing Centre is located in SN-2053, telephone 864-3168. The Writing Centre offers individualized tutorials to students and has a list of student resources on their website. The Centre also has its own Web Page at www.mun.ca/writingcentre.

The Computer Lab at the Centre for Nursing Studies has resources to assist students with this component of writing. Additionally, it is strongly recommended that students purchase the 7th edition of The *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (2020).* This is also on reserve in the Learning Resource Centre.

Software Programs

There are numerous APA software packages available. If you choose to purchase any one of these, please ensure that it is consistent with the most recent version of APA editorial style as outlined in the 7th edition of the publication manual.

Links / Available Resources
CNS Website: http://www.cns.nf.ca/Library/apa_and_other_resources.php
APA PowerPoint Guide

On line Tutorials through Dalhousie University. Retrieved from
      https://libraries.dal.ca/help/online-tutorials.html

Quick Guide from MUN. Retrieved from http://www.library.mun.ca/guides/howto/apa.php
Other Links / Available Resources

Perdue Online Writing Center (OWL). Retrieved from
      http://owl.english.purdue.edu/sitemap/

American Psychological Association. (2020). *APA style*. Retrieved from http://apastyle.apa.org/

Streefkerk, R. (2020, May 8). APA Manual 7th edition: The most notable changes. Retrieved from https://www.scribbr.com/apa-style/apa-seventh-edition-changes/