

Handbook for Developing Scholarly Writing Skills: Writing across the Curriculum

Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BScN) Collaborative Program

Centre for Nursing Studies

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Preamble

Developing scholarly writing skills is a critical component of the BScN (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 provides students with guidance in the following areas:

- Leveling Writing Skills Across the Curriculum (including the grading scheme for mark allocation)
- Improving Writing Skills using American Psychological Association (APA) Stylistics
- 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 been developed. 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 are 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 them to a concept/clinical practice experience.
3. Develop a paper using an introduction, body of paper, and conclusion.
4. Maintain a concise and organized flow of ideas throughout the written assignment.
5. Demonstrate basic writing skills in grammar, spelling, punctuation, 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 supported by a critical analysis of the literature.

Reference selection and evaluation

Students are required to select journal articles and other literature sources that have been published within the last five years. Older articles that are historical, theoretical, or foundational to a particular topic or exemplar will be accepted. At the professor's discretion, additional reference selection criteria may be applied. This selection criteria can include but may not be limited to; articles from countries with health care comparable to Canada's health care system, articles in a language both the author and audience are fluent in (i.e. Canadian English), articles that demonstrate exemplary depth and scope, free from any conflicts of interest, and robust credibility (ex. systematic review). Students must demonstrate critical thinking skills when using selection criteria to choose articles, websites, and other sources for their references.

Recommended Grading Scheme

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

Recommended Breakdown of Grade	Percentage
Writing Skills (e.g. spelling, grammar, expression, tone, voice, clarity, sentence structure)	50%
APA Stylistics	50%
APA Stylistics will be further broken down as follows:	
In-Text Citations (paraphrasing, quotations, and summaries) and References	25%
General Format (all other components of APA stylistics)	25%

An example of mark distribution for a paper in which 40% is allotted for writing skills	Marks
Writing Skills	20 marks
In-Text Citations and References	10 marks
General Format	10 marks

Improving Writing Skills Using APA Stylistics

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

Students must adhere to the 7th edition of the APA manual (2020). This manual demonstrates the principles of APA stylistics in a concise, clear, and user-friendly format. Students who wish further explanation of these principles are referred to the APA manual (2020), on reserve in the Learning Resources Centre at the Centre for Nursing Studies.

Specific guidelines were developed that include additions to or exceptions to APA that apply to assignments and papers submitted at any of the sites within the BScN Collaborative program.

Specific Guidelines for Paper Writing

Elements & Format (APA, Ch. 2)

- **Title Page:** The title page should contain the title of the paper, student name, student number, course name and number, professor name, and due date of the paper. The page number is placed in the top right corner. See the sample title page on page # of this document.
- **Abstract, Running Head, Keywords:** An abstract, running head and keywords are not included.
- **Table of Contents:** A table of contents is only needed if the paper contains headings. The table of contents must follow the layout of the headings, as introduced in the student's paper. See the sample table of contents on page # of this document.
- **Font:** The font choice for papers is serif font; Times New Roman 12, Calibri 11, Arial 11, Georgia 11, and Lucida Sans Unicode 10 (APA, p.44).
- **Margins:** Papers should have one-inch margins on all sides of the page. (APA, p. 46).
- **Alignment:** Student papers are to be double-spaced with left justification and ragged right justification. These are standard settings in most word processing software.
- **Pagination:** Page numbers are placed in the top right corner of each page, including the title page (APA, p. 44).
- **Indentations:** Indent each new paragraph eight spaces (tab) (APA, p.45).
- **Headings:** Headings must correspond with the levels of divisions in your paper, in the order they are presented (APA, p. 47-49).

Writing & Grammar (APA, Ch. 4)

- **Transitions:** each new paragraph, concept or idea needs to be properly introduced with transitions. Connecting the previous idea with the next idea improves readability. (APA, p.112).
- **Noun strings:** refrain from using noun strings as the message you are trying to convey can be lost when there is too many nouns in one sentence (APA, pp. 112-113).
- **Run-on sentences:** Refrain from using overly long sentences as they can reduce clarity (APA, p.115).

- **Contractions:** Do not use contractions (APA, p.116).
Ex. Don't, shouldn't, that's, isn't, etc.
- **Jargon & colloquialisms:** Be mindful of your audience, who is reading your paper. Your audience may not know certain jargon or colloquialisms (APA, p.116).
Ex. 'needle in a haystack', 'cheeky', 'yes b'y', 'we have the tea', 'deadset', 'fell through the cracks', 'beat around the bush', 'hit a roadblock', etc.
- **Anthropomorphism:** Anthropomorphism is attributing human characteristics to inanimate objects or animals. Refer to the author's last name when mentioning an article, rather than writing 'the article concluded...' (APA, p.117).
- **Active voice:** Active voice is where the subject performs the action. Use active voice to increase readability, conciseness, and clarity (APA, p.118).
- **Pronouns:** Where possible default to using them/them pronouns. Where possible specify 'they' by Author's last name or patient initials to avoid ambiguity. Do not use the editorial "we" (APA, pp. 120-123).

Bias-free Language (APA, Ch. 5)

- Where appropriate use specificity when referring to a particular group. Use preferred pronouns and preferred names. Use bias-free, neutral, and professional language (APA, p.132-148).

Mechanics of Style (APA, Ch. 6)

- **Punctuation:** Ensure that you are following APA guidelines for punctuation and spacing (APA, p.153-160).
- **Spelling:** Canadian spelling is preferred, but not required.
- **Capitalization:** Please see pages 165-166 in the APA manual for capitalizing proper nouns and trade names. Note the proper capitalization of medications, diseases, disorders, and therapies names.
- **Italics:** Italicise titles of books, webpages, and periodicals. Do not italicise article titles (APA, pp. 170-171).
- **Abbreviations:** When using abbreviations first write out the full term and then the abbreviation in parenthesis, and then use the abbreviation consistently for the rest of the paper (APA, pp. 172-178).

Ex. "Fitness to Practice (FTP) is defined as..."

Ex. "... are the requisite skills needed (College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Newfoundland and Labrador [CLPNNL], p. 5).

- **Numbers:** Students are to follow APA guidelines when using numerals or numbers written as words (APA, pp. 178-181).
- **Seriation:** For information on how to format lists, refer to pages 189-191 in the APA Manual.

In-text Citations (APA, Ch. 7)

- **Plagiarism:** Please refer to page 21 and pages 254-257 in the APA Manual.
- **Secondary Sources:** Should be used sparingly. If referencing a source that was referenced in another source, mention the original source in your text and use the example below for your in-text citation (APA, p.63; p.258);

Ex. (Williams, 2000, as cited in Smith & Jones, 2024).

- **Parenthetical Citation:** The standard in-text citation. Used when you are paraphrasing, mentioning a work or idea that is not your own, or referencing a dataset that is not your own. The author's last name and date are listed in parenthesis (brackets) for parenthetical citations.

Ex. "... inconclusive findings (Smith, 2024)."

- **Narrative Citation:** Is when the author's name is mentioned in the sentence and the date in parentheses follows immediately after the author's name.

Ex. "Smith (2024) calculated that..."

- **Quotations:** It is best practice to paraphrase sources to show that you have understood, synthesized, and analysed a source. However, in cases where paraphrasing would lose the meaning or impact of another author's work, a direct quotation is acceptable.

Ex. "Privilege is when you think something isn't a problem because it's not a problem for you personally" (Gaider, 2013, as cited in Wilde, 2013, para 9).

- **2 Authors Citation:** Use the Ampersand symbol "&" in the in-text citation, and use "and" when using narrative citation (APA, p.266).

Ex. "Smith and Jones (2006) suggested that..."

Ex. "...and the findings were inconclusive (Smith & Jones, 2006)."

- **3 or more authors Citation:** When citing a work with three or more authors, use the first author's last name and follow it with "et al." (APA, p. 266).

Ex. "... as substantial evidence suggested (James et al., 2022).

Ex. “James et al. (2022) introduced the concept...”

References & Appendices (APA, Ch. 9; see also Ch.2; Ch. 7)

- **Format:** Students are to start their reference list on a new page after the main body is finished. Place the heading “**References**” centered at the top of the new page (APA, p. 66-67; p. 303).
- **Spacing:** Double-space all references and between the references (APA, p. 303).
- **List:** List references alphabetically by the first author’s last name for each reference (APA, p.303).
- **Indentation:** Second and subsequent lines of a reference should be indented 8 spaces (tab). This is called a hanging indent and is a paragraph function in most word processing software (APA, p. 303).
- **Authors:** Do not change the order of the authors in a reference.
- **Numerous Authors:** List up to 20 authors. If the reference has more than 20 authors, list 19 authors, an ellipsis “...”, and then the final author’s name (APA, p. 317)
- **Author with multiple references:** If there are two or more references by the same first author, list them in order of publication date (APA, p. 304).
- **Listing Multiple Authors:** Use the symbol “&” rather than “and” when listing multiple authors in the reference list or in parenthesis in the text of the paper (APA, p. 286).
- **Title-Case:** If referencing a resource that is not a journal, capitalize only the first word of the title. If the title has a colon or semicolon, capitalize the first word after the colon (APA, p. 168; p. 291).
- **Italicising:** Italicise the titles of journals, book titles, and volume numbers. Do not italicise the issue number (APA, p.170).
- **Secondary Sources:** In your reference entry for a secondary source list the document read. Do not list a reference you have not read (APA, p.258).
- **Digital Object Identifier (DOI):** If a DOI is available, include it in the reference, writing it as a URL. See the example below;

Ex.

Cathal, G & Saleem, F. (2022). How the United Kingdom’s nursing and midwifery council applies guidance when exercising its disciplinary functions. *Journal of Nursing Regulation*. 13(3), 52-59. [10.1016/S2155-8256\(22\)00080-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2155-8256(22)00080-1)

- **URLs:** do not insert a hyphen to break a URL that extends over multiple lines. Do not

add a period after the URL.

- **Retrieved from:** Students do not need to include a “retrieve from” for a URL, unless a retrieval date is needed. A retrieval date is only needed for sources that change frequently. Sources that have archived versions of their pages do not require a retrieval date, such as Cochrane reviews (APA, p.290). See below for frequently changing online material that requires a retrieval date:

Ex: Wikis, Google Maps, UpToDate, Twitter profile, & Facebook posts/pages

- **Reference List Entries Examples:**

Article Ex.

Hiestand, S., Waage, S., Forthun, I., Pallesen, S., & Bjorvatn, B. (2024). Factors leading to excessive fatigue in nurses – a three-year follow-up study. *BMC Nursing*, 23(1), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12912-024-02066w>

Book Ex.

Potter, P. A., Perry, A. G., Stockert, P. A., & Hall, A. M. (2019). *Canadian fundamentals of nursing* (B. J. Astle, W. Duggleby, Eds.; 6th ed.). Elsevier Canada.

Website Ex.

College of Registered Nurses of Newfoundland & Labrador (2023, December). *Continuing competency program framework*. <https://crnml.ca/site/uploads/2023/12/continuing-competency-program-framework.pdf>

Course Content from Brightspace Ex.

Smith, A.B. (2024, September 4). *Anatomy and physiology section 1* [Lecture notes, PowerPoint Slides]. Brightspace. <https://online.mun.ca/d2l/login/>

- For other types of references please see chapter 10 in the APA Manual.
- **Appendixes:** Appendixes are located after the reference list and continue with page numbering. Each appendix starts on a new page. Appendixes should be labeled with letters (APA, pp.41-42).

Sample Title Page

1

An Examination of Lay Health Information

Jane Smith, 200908965

Nursing 3000: Community Health Nursing

Professor T. Jones

May 10, 2024

Sample Table of Contents

	2
Table of Contents	
Introduction	3
Summary of Lay Article	5
Critical Analysis	6
Current Guidelines	6
Comparison with Current Guidelines	7
Author Credibility	7
Usefulness of Article	8
Conclusion	8
References	9
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Academic Integrity

- Honesty and integrity are 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 written for another purpose without prior agreement with your professor. One of the most serious breaches of academic integrity is plagiarism (see below), which could jeopardize your continuance in the BScN (Collaborative) Program.
- Cheating is a serious breach of academic integrity and includes but is not limited to; copying, allowing a colleague to copy your work, writing an assignment for another student, submitting something written by someone else as your paper, resubmitting a paper written for another course, and submitting a paper that a generative artificial intelligence (GAI) writing software wrote (APA, p. 256).
- Plagiarism refers to “the act of presenting the ideas or works of another as one’s own” (Section 6.12.4 of the General Academic Regulations [Undergraduate] in the 2022-2023 University Calendar). It includes failure to acknowledge sources as well as inappropriate usage of both direct quotations and paraphrasing. Plagiarism is a serious academic offense.
- Appropriate use of writing software and GAI software. Students are permitted to use GAI for learning activities and assessments to help with editing their work. Examples of appropriate use include; proofreading, grammar and spelling checking, citation generation, and critiquing GAI generated output. Use of AI tools must be accompanied by proper citation. Improper citation or no citation of AI tools constitutes plagiarism and will be subject to the appropriate Memorial Academic Misconduct policy (Carew & Hickey, 2023; MUN, 6.12). Refer to the current student handbook of your program for more information regarding academic misconduct (CNS, 2024).

Resources to Assist with Writing Assignments

Memorial University

<https://www.mun.ca/nursing/>

Students at the St. John's Memorial campus can avail of supports from the writing centre which offers individual tutorials, online and in-person workshops, and English as a second language support. The Writing Centre also have numerous resources available for students on their website.

The Writing Centre

St. John's Campus

Science Building SN-2053

709-864-3168

writing@mun.ca

<https://www.mun.ca/writingcentre/>

Memorial Students can also avail of the Health Science Library (HSL) which has citation style guides, citation management resources, and literary search resources available on their website.

Health Sciences Library

St. John's Campus

Health Sciences Centre H-1615

Services desk 709-864-6070

hslinfo@mun.ca

hslcirc@mun.ca

<https://www.library.mun.ca/hsl/>

Centre for Nursing Studies (CNS)

<https://cns.easternhealth.ca/>

Students at the Centre for Nursing Studies campus can avail of the Learning Resource Centre (LRC), which includes the Library and the Computer Lab. The LRC offers help sessions, tutorials, and one-on-one document review appointments for essay writing, APA citation, and Literary Searches. The Library offers various print resources, including copies of the APA manual.

The Learning Resource Centre

St. John's Campus, Southcott Hall

Library Room G36

Computer Lab Room 122

709-777-8194

709-777-8189

Lindsay.Porter@mun.ca

Karen.Hutchens@mun.ca

<https://cns.easternhealth.ca/resources/learning-resource-centre-lrc/>

Western Regional School of Nursing

<https://mun.ca/grenfellcampus/programs--schools/undergraduate-programs/western-regional-school-of-nursing/program-options/>

Students at the Western Regional School of Nursing have access to resources from the Learning Centre at the Grenfell Campus in Corner Brook.

The Learning Centre

Corner Brook Campus

Arts & Science Building, AS-2033

Wpt1@grenfell.mun.ca

<https://mun.ca/grenfellcampus/student-life/learning-centre/>

Western Regional students can also take advantage of supports offered by the Grenfell Library, including APA style guides and copies of the APA manual.

Grenfell Library

Grenfell Campus

Library and Computing Building, LC-

709-637-6236

gclibrary@mun.ca

<https://www.library.mun.ca/grenfell/>

Software Programs

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

Citation Generators

There are various websites and functions on digital article databases that provide citation generation. It is the student's responsibility to ensure the accuracy of these citations.

References

- American Psychological Association (2024). *Style and grammar guidelines*.
<https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines>
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<https://blog.citl.mun.ca/instructionalresources/using-generative-artificial-intelligence-syllabus-statements/>
- Centre for Nursing Studies (2023-2024). *Student documents and handbooks*.
<https://cns.easternhealth.ca/programs-and-courses/bn/student-documents-handbooks/>
- Dalhousie University (n.d.) *Online tutorials*. <https://libraries.dal.ca/help/online-tutorials.html>
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- Memorial University (2024). *Academic misconduct*. <https://www.mun.ca/university-calendar/university-regulations-undergraduate/6/12/>
- Memorial University Libraries (n.d.) *APA style quick guide*.
<https://www.library.mun.ca/researchtools/guides/citations/apa/>
- Purdue Online Writing Lab (n.d.). *APA formatting and style guide (7th edition)*. Purdue OWL.
https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/index.html