APA Style Checklist for Dissertations

Please refer to the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 7th edition, for details about each section of the checklist.

1. Grammar
a. Verb Tense (Section 4.12)
- ☐ Verb tenses are used consistently in the same and adjacent paragraphs.
- ☐ Appropriate verb tenses are used for specific paper sections, as described on p. 118 in the Verb Tense section.

b. Voice and Mood (Sections 4.13–4.14)
- ☐ The passive voice is used only when focusing on the recipient of an action rather than on who performed the action.

c. Subject and Verb Agreement (Section 4.15)
- ☐ Verbs agree in number (i.e., singular or plural) with their subjects.

d. Pronouns (Sections 4.16–4.21)
- ☐ First person pronouns are used to describe the author's work and personal reactions (e.g., "I examined," "I agreed with"), including their work with coauthors (e.g., "We conducted").
- ☐ The singular "they" is used when referring to a person who uses it as their self-identified pronoun or to a person whose gender is unknown or irrelevant.

2. Mechanics of Style
a. Punctuation (Sections 6.1–6.6, 6.8–6.10)
- ☐ Punctuation marks are used correctly (periods, commas, semicolons, colons, dashes, parentheses, brackets, slashes), including in reference list entries.
- ☐ One space is used after a period or other punctuation mark at the end of a sentence.
- ☐ A serial comma is used before the final element in lists of three or more items.
- ☐ Parentheses are used to set off intext citations.

b. Quotation Marks (Section 6.7)
- ☐ Commas and periods are placed inside closing quotation marks.
- ☐ Other punctuation marks (e.g., colons, semicolons, ellipses) are placed outside closing quotation marks.
- ☐ Quotation marks are used around direct quotations.

c. Italics (Sections 6.22–6.23)
- ☐ Italics are used for the first use of key terms or phrases accompanied by a definition.
- ☐ No italics are used for emphasis.

d. Spelling and Hyphenation (Sections 6.116.12)
- ☐ Spelling and hyphenation match the Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary or the APA Dictionary of Psychology.
- ☐ Words with prefixes and suffixes are written without a hyphen.

e. Capitalization (Sections 6.13–6.21)
- ☐ Proper nouns, including names of racial and ethnic groups are capitalized.
- ☐ Names of diseases, disorders, therapies, treatments, theories, concepts, hypotheses, principles, models, and statistical procedures are not capitalized, unless personal names appear within these terms.

f. Abbreviations (Section 6.24–6.31)
- ☐ Use abbreviations sparingly and usually when they are familiar to readers, save considerable space, and appear at least three times in the paper.
- ☐ Define abbreviations, including abbreviations for group authors, on first use.
- ☐ Do not use periods in abbreviations.
- ☐ Use Latin abbreviations only in parentheses, and use the full Latin term in the text.
- ☐ Do not define abbreviations listed as terms in the dictionary (e.g., AIDS, IQ) and abbreviations for units of measurement, time, Latin terms, and common statistical terms and symbols.

g. Numbers (Sections 6.32–6.39)
- ☐ Use words to express numbers zero through nine in the text.
- ☐ Use numerals to express numbers 10 and above in the text.
- ☐ In all cases, use numerals in statistical or mathematical functions, with units of measurement, and for fractions, decimals, ratios, percentages and percentiles, times, dates, ages, scores and points on a scale, sums of money, and

numbers in a series (e.g., Year 1, Grade 11, Chapter 2, Level 13, Table 4).

h. Statistics (Sections 6.40–6.45)

- ☐ Include enough information to allow readers to fully understand any analyses conducted.
- ☐ Space mathematical copy the same as words, with spaces between signs.
- ☐ Use statistical terms in narrative text: "the means were," not "the Ms were."
- ☐ Use statistical symbols or abbreviations with mathematical operators: "($M = 6.62$)," not "(mean = 6.62)."

i. Lists (Sections 6.49–6.52)

- ☐ Ensure items in lists are parallel.
- ☐ Use commas to separate items in simple lists.
- ☐ Use semicolons to separate items when any items in the list already contain commas.

3. Tables and Figures

a. General Guidelines (Sections 7.1–7.7)

- ☐ When possible, use a standard, or canonical, form for a table or figure.
- ☐ Do not use shading or other decorative flourishes.
- ☐ In the text, refer to each table or figure by its number. Explain what to look for in that table or figure by calling out the table or figure in the text (e.g., "Table 1 lists…" "As shown in Figure 1…").
- ☐ Either embed each table or figure in the text after it is first mentioned or place it on a separate page after the reference list. If embedded, place the table or figure at either the top or the bottom of the page with an extra double-spaced line between the table or the figure and any text.

b. Tables (Sections 7.8–7.21)

- ☐ Use the tables feature of your word-processing program to create tables.
- ☐ Number tables in the order they are mentioned in the text.
- ☐ Include borders only at the top and the bottom of the table, beneath column headings, and above column spanners.
- ☐ Do not use vertical borders or borders around every cell in the table.
- ☐ All tables include four basic components: number, title, column headings, and body.

- ☐ Write the table number above the table title and body and in bold.
- ☐ Write the table title one double-spaced line below the table number and in italic title case.
- ☐ Label all columns.
- ☐ Center column headings, and capitalize them in sentence case.
- ☐ Include notes beneath the table if needed to describe the contents.
- ☐ Start each type of note (general, specific, and probability) on its own line, and double-space it.

c. Figures (Sections 7.22–7.36)

- ☐ Use a program appropriate for creating figures (e.g., Word, Excel, Photoshop, Inkscape, SPSS).
- ☐ Number figures in the order they are mentioned in the text.
- ☐ Within figures, check that images are clear, lines are smooth and sharp, and font is legible and simple.
- ☐ Provide units of measurement.
- ☐ Clearly label or explain axes and other figure elements.
- ☐ All figures include three basic components: number, title, and image.
- ☐ Write the figure number above the figure title and image and in bold.
- ☐ Write the figure title one double-spaced line below the figure number and in italic title case.
- ☐ Write text in the figure image in a sans serif font between 8 and 14 points.
- ☐ Include a figure legend if needed to explain any symbols in the image.
- ☐ Position the legend within the borders of the figure, and capitalize it in title case. Include notes beneath the figure if needed to describe the contents.
- ☐ Start each type of note (general, specific, and probability) on its own line, and double-space it.

4. In-Text Citations (Chapter 8)

- ☐ Cite only works you read and ideas you incorporated into your paper.
- ☐ Include all sources cited in the text in the reference list (exception: personal communications are cited in the text only).
- ☐ Make sure the spelling of author names and the publication dates in the in-text citations match those of the corresponding reference list entries.

☐ Paraphrase sources in your own words whenever possible.

☐ Cite appropriately to avoid plagiarism, but do not repeat the same citation in every sentence when the source and topic do not change.

  ☐ One author: Use the author surname in all in-text citations.

  ☐ Two authors: Use both author surnames in all in-text citations.

  ☐ Three or more authors: Use only the first author surname and then "et al." in all in-text citations.

☐ Use either the narrative or the parenthetical citation format for in-text citations.

  ☐ Parenthetical citation: Place the author name and publication year in parentheses.

  ☐ Narrative citation: Incorporate the author name into the text as part of the sentence and then follow with the year in parentheses.

☐ For works with two authors,

  ☐ use an ampersand (&) in parenthetical in-text citations: (Guirrez & Castillo, 2020)

  ☐ use the word "and" in narrative in-text citations: Guirrez and Castillo (2020)

☐ When citing multiple works in parentheses, place the citations in alphabetical order.

☐ When multiple parenthetical citations have the same author(s), order the years chronologically and separate them with commas (e.g., Coutlee, 2019, 2020).

☐ When the authors are different, separate the parenthetical citations with semicolons (e.g., Coutlee, 2019, 2020; Ngwane, 2020; Oishi, 2019).

☐ Limit the use of direct quotations.

☐ Include the author (or title if no author), year, and specific part of the work (page number(s), paragraph number(s), section name) in the citation.

  ☐ Short quotation (less than 40 words): Use double quotation marks around the quotation.

  ☐ Block quotation (40 words or more): Use the block format: Indent the entire quotation 0.5 in. from the left margin and double-space it.

5. References (Chapters 9 and 10)

- ☐ Double-space the entire reference list, both within and between entries.
- ☐ Use a hanging indent for each reference entry: First line of the reference is flush left, and subsequent lines are indented by 0.5 in.
- ☐ Apply the hanging indent using the paragraph formatting function of your word-processing program.
- ☐ All reference entries should have a corresponding in-text citation.
- ☐ The beginning of the reference entry (usually the first author's surname) and year should match the corresponding in-text citation.
- ☐ List references in alphabetical order according to seventh edition guidelines.
- ☐ Create the appropriate reference entry for the type of work being cited, as described in Chapter 9 and shown in Chapter 10 and on the Reference Examples pages.
- ☐ Do not create reference entries for personal communications and secondary sources.
- ☐ For a list of works to include and exclude from a reference list, see the Works Included page.
- ☐ Each reference entry includes four elements: author, date, title, and source. See exceptions for references with missing information on the Missing Information page.
- ☐ Use punctuation to group information and separate reference elements. For more information, see the Basic Principles of References page.
- ☐ List authors in the same order as the original source.
- ☐ Use initials for authors' first and middle names.
- ☐ Put a comma after the surname and a period and a space after each initial (e.g., Lewis, C. S.).
- ☐ Put a comma after each author (even two authors).
- ☐ Use an ampersand before the last author.
- ☐ Capitalize titles in sentence case: Capitalize only the first word of the title, the subtitle, and any proper nouns.
- ☐ Format titles according to the type of work.
  - ☐ Works that stand alone: Italicize the title (e.g., authored books, reports, data sets, dissertations and theses, films, TV series, albums, podcasts, social media, websites).

- ☐ Works that are part of a greater whole: Do not italicize or use quotation marks around the title (e.g., periodical articles, edited book chapters, TV and podcast episodes, songs).
- ☐ Write the title of the greater whole (e.g., journal or edited book) in italics in the source element.
- ☐ Do not include database information for works retrieved from academic research databases.
- ☐ Do include database information for works retrieved from databases with original, proprietary content or works of limited circulation (e.g., UpToDate).
- ☐ Include a DOI for any work that has one.
- ☐ If there is no DOI, include a URL if the work is retrieved online (but not from a database).
- ☐ Present DOIs and URLs as hyperlinks (beginning with "http:" or "https:"). Copy and paste DOIs and URLs directly from your web browser.
- ☐ Do not write "Retrieved from" or "Accessed from" before a DOI or URL.
- ☐ Do not add a period after a DOI or URL.