

SACS Writing and Editorial Guidelines

4-2-09 Draft

The Drafting and Editing Process

Each principle of accreditation is assigned to a committee chair who will post compliance reports to demonstrate compliance. No fewer than three editors will read each report. The editors may offer advice during the drafting process, review drafts, and either consult with the committee or return drafts with suggested revisions. Each committee chair may have more than one first-round editor, and each first-round editor may read reports from more than one committee chair.

Editors and steering committee members will review committee reports for accuracy, completeness, and clarity and will work with authors to produce final copies. Final committee drafts may be edited even further to achieve uniformity, clarity, or economy. The better the job from the beginning, the better the final result, especially if we share common guidelines.

For questions these guidelines do not answer, writers should check first with your editorial liaisons; then contact either Kathryn Mincey at 3-2305 (k.mincey) or April Nutter at 3-9351 (a.nutter).

Drafting the Report

Authors are encouraged to create text within the editor (set to Verdana font), not in MS Word. However, any text created in Word and pasted in should be in plain text. Indicate paragraphing with block style (no indentation, space between).

File naming: Dataliant requires a name for items you upload. Be consistent; Document Name, Year, Page #, for example, *Undergraduate Catalog, 08-09, p. 52*. Add hyperlinks to external files.

File names should be all lower case, no special characters: Save as nameyearp#.pdf, for example *undergradcatalog08-09p52.pdf*.

General Style

1. Write as economically as possible. Avoid empty words and phrases. When you think you have finished a good draft, read it one more time to cut every dispensable word.
2. Avoid jargon and "buzz words" characteristic of academic prose. Write clearly, precisely, and simply.
3. Avoid awkward accumulations of hybrid or inclusive pronouns in an attempt to avoid sexist language (*s/he, his or her, him/her*). By all means, avoid sexist language, but it is probably best to either
 - a. Convert to plural antecedents and pronouns when possible or
 - b. Write out "he or she" instead of using a slash or hybrid, but limit the reference to two occurrences within the same sentence or contiguous sentences.Do not let the avoidance of masculine pronouns create number disagreement, i.e., a singular antecedent (such as "a student") with a plural referent ("they"). Just use a plural antecedent ("students").
4. While passive voice is occasionally the better choice, avoid agentless prose as much as possible.

Mechanics and Usage

1. SPACING: Web style only uses one space after a period.
2. ITALICS: Use italics instead of underlining for titles of long or complete works and for referring to words or phrases as terms, for example, "The word *resident* here refers to...." or "The phrase *nontraditional student* means...."
3. EMPHASIS: Use bold font sparingly for emphasized words and phrases.

4. CAPITALIZATION: In general, don't overuse capitalization.
- a. Capitalize the formal names of organizations, committees, boards, councils, and offices. Capitalize the word *University* when it specifically refers to MSU but not when it is used as a general term, such as a *university education*.
 - b. We use *Internet*, *Web site* and *e-mail* (but *online*, not *on-line*)
 - c. Capitalize professional titles when they precede a person's name or follow the name as a specific title.
 - d. Do not capitalize terms for individual members, positions, or officers when they stand alone or appear as a generic title.

For example:

Capitalize

Professor Smith
 John Smith, Professor of French
 the Department of Art
 the University
 the Steering Committee
 Office of the President

 MSU Board of Regents

Don't Capitalize

a French professor
 John Smith, a professor of French
 One department is not represented.
 any university such as MSU
 most standing committees
 the president's office
 the vice president for fiscal affairs
 when regents considered

- 6. When photos are needed in a narrative, the committee chair and/or editorial committee should identify where and what sort of photo. For example, a report about student services might include, "**PHOTO NEEDED: Architect's Rendering of Student Recreation Center.**"
- 7. MSU Style, Logos, etc. – Communications & Marketing:
 - a. Logos and color: <http://www.moreheadstate.edu/ocm/index.aspx?id=43376>
 - b. Logo/symbol usage: <http://www.moreheadstate.edu/ocm/index.aspx?id=43394>
 - c. **Style Guide** (Most of these items would apply, for instance, how to refer to the University in second reference, etc.): <http://www.moreheadstate.edu/ocm/index.aspx?id=1579>

Consistencies	Exceptions
<p>Numbers: AP style says to spell out one through 9 and use numerals for 10 and up.</p> <p>Time: a.m. or p.m., not am or pm/AM – PM.</p> <p>Regional campuses or regional campus centers, not extended campus(es).</p> <p>Terms of study: capitalize if referring to a specific term (Fall 2009) but not in generic reference (Register for fall classes.).</p> <p>Vice President or vice president, no hyphen; all titles are VP for XXX, not of.</p> <p>Web site or e-mail: use www.moreheadstate.edu not www.morehead-st.edu; @moreheadstate.edu not @morehead-st.edu.</p>	<p>Although C&M uses <i>adviser</i> instead of <i>advisor</i> because of AP style, we will use <i>advisor</i>.</p> <p>Although C&M uses <i>East Kentucky</i>, we will use <i>eastern Kentucky</i>.</p>