

Preparing Your Manuscript for Submission

The Office of Communications and Marketing wants the process of getting your publication printed or added to the website to go smoothly and painlessly. To help, we have identified general guidelines and specific information you can use — before, during, and after writing — that will help us turn around your project more quickly.

VCE-751NP

Six Important Guidelines

Guidelines are explained in more detail in the sections that follow.

1. **Use Microsoft Word.** See Basic Document Setup.
2. **Submit all files.** Make sure you have all files ready to upload before submitting a job. See Submitting Your Manuscript.
Note: If submitting a peer-reviewed publication, the signed approval paperwork must be uploaded at the same time as the job request.
3. **Submit final versions of your documents.** Please, no drafts or unapproved manuscripts. Do not use EndNote or other automatic reference formatting programs. See Submitting Your Manuscript.
4. Avoid inserting Word's automatic "Style" function to headings or text or any layout/design. See Basic Document Setup.
5. Do not embed graphic elements, including text boxes, tables, figures, photos, charts, graphs, etc., in the document. See Graphic Elements.
6. **Cite all references in the text; reference all text citations.** See References.

Basic Document Setup

- Use **MS Word only**. We cannot edit PDF, Excel, Publisher, PowerPoint, or any other types of files. Jobs submitted in formats other than Word will not be accepted, which will delay your project's completion.
- Set up a **1-inch margin** on all sides. Do not make margin changes within the document.
- Set the line spacing to 2.0 or **double-space**. Hit <return> twice for new paragraphs and before/after headings.
- Choose a basic font, like **Arial or Times**. (No fancy or obscure fonts, please.) Use **12-point** font size for your text.
- Use **one column** of text, **left justified**. Don't indent new paragraphs; use a double <return> instead.
- Include each author's full name, job title, department, and affiliation (e.g., Virginia Tech, Virginia Department of Forestry, etc.) under the publication's title.

- Allow our graphic designers to design your publication. If you have ideas about layout, feel free to include an additional file with your suggestions, or document your ideas when you submit the job.
- **Avoid Word’s “Style” function**, which automatically applies formatting (text sizes, fonts, colors) to headings and text. Also, **do not use EndNotes** or other software for automatically formatting references or citations. We have to remove pre-established formatting, which causes delays in turnaround.
- Do not set up **headers or footers** except for page numbering.
- **Avoid footnotes** if possible. If footnotes are critical, do not use Word’s automatic numbering and placement feature. See A Note About Notes.

Formatting Your Word Document

Spacing

Use **one space between sentences** and after colons and other punctuation.

Headings

- Indicate heading levels using boldface and text size.

First-Level Heading (16 point, boldface)

Second-Level Heading (14 point)

Third-Level Heading (12 point, boldface)

General text (12 point) – please avoid font sizes smaller than 12 point.

- Or, indicate headings and subheadings by numbering the levels within slanted brackets.

<1>First-Level Heading

<2>Second-Level Heading

<3>Third-Level Heading

Format

Use boldface for emphasis — not all caps, italics, or underlining.

Punctuation

Virginia Tech uses the serial (or Oxford) comma, which is the comma placed before the conjunction (and, or) in a list of three or more items. The serial comma’s purpose is to clarify the number of items listed.

For example, in the following sentence, the serial comma is the one after “dean.”

Ex: Mary took a photograph of her parents, the dean, and the president.

The serial comma tells readers that Mary took a photograph of four people — her mother and father, the dean, and the president. Without the serial comma, the sentence could be interpreted to mean that Mary’s photo contained two people because her parents **are** the dean and the president.

Style Guides

The Office of Communications and Marketing uses four style guides, in the following order.

1. The Brand Guide: Virginia Tech Identity Standards and Style Guide – Supersedes others.
2. Style Guide for the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and Virginia Cooperative Extension – Items specific to CALS and VCE.
3. The Associated Press Stylebook 2016 and Briefing on Media Law (or most recent edition) – The primary stylebook for everything not covered in the university and CALS guides.
4. Chicago Manual of Style, 16th ed. – For references, text citations, tables, captions, and other items not covered by AP style.

A Note About Notes

In general, we discourage the use of footnotes because of the additional time it takes to place them correctly on the page. We prefer text citations that correspond to references instead.

If you think a few footnotes are critical, number them manually rather than using Word's automatic footnote feature. Use superscript to insert a footnote number in the text, then add directions to the designer that what follows is a footnote.

Ex: <footnote>

¹Reprinted with the author's permission from XYZ publication.

Don't worry about the position of your footnote directions; we will move the note to the bottom of the appropriate page.

Graphic Elements

Please do not embed text boxes, tables, figures, photos, charts, graphs, or other elements in the document. It adds considerable time to our process to remove them. Instead, put them in their own Word, JPG, or Excel files and upload those files when you submit the job.

- Be sure to name additional files so they are easy to identify.

Ex: figure 1.jpg, tables 1-3.docx

- Because you will not be including figures and tables in your Word document, please add the appropriate caption or title in the approximate location where you would like it to appear in the final publication. Also add instructions for where you would like graphic elements to be placed. Put the instructions on a separate line between slanted brackets.

Ex: Figure 1. Example of a constructed wetland.

Ex: Table 3. Wine sales in the U.S. by state, 2012.

- Refer to each table and figure in your text.

Ex: Table 2 documents the results of XYZ.

Ex: The results of XYZ (fig. 5) suggest ...

- Indicate instructions to designers by typing them on a separate line and placing them between slanted brackets.

Ex: <Insert fig 1 here>

Ex: <keep table 2 on one page if possible; don't split, please>

Formats for Artwork

- Usable formats include JPEG/JPG, TIFF, EPS, and GIF. Upload the images as separate files in the job system, clearly labeled as to their content.

Ex: figure1.jpg

- Do not submit PowerPoint slides or Publisher files.

Original Artwork

Our designers have the ability to create original artwork as needed for Extension publications. Authors should provide reference materials that clearly show the features required in the finished product.

- Publications that require original artwork take more time to produce, so take that into consideration when scheduling these jobs.

Submitting Artwork

Authors may submit existing photographs, slides, etc., for inclusion in publications. It is the author's responsibility to obtain permission from the work's original creator to reproduce their artwork. The author's approval of the final proof indicates that appropriate permission has been obtained.

- When submitting artwork with your job, please provide the original source(s) and any additional info, such as when and where the image was previously published so we can credit the source.
- When possible, submit original artwork or a high-resolution scan of 300 dpi or more. Low-resolution images of 100 dpi or less or those downloaded from the internet are usually unsuitable (blurry or pixelated) for most media applications. If the author determines that low-resolution images are critical, they might require digital enhancement for the best possible outcome.
- Photocopied images are not suitable for inclusion in publications.

Other Types of Files

Excel Files

An Excel spreadsheet may be submitted when a publication contains a large amount of tabular data. Generally, if the data take up one or more pages of the publication, an Excel file can be used. Excel files are not acceptable for text or images. Upload the spreadsheet to the job system as a separate Excel file. Clearly indicate in the manuscript where the file is to be inserted.

PowerPoint Slides

PowerPoint slides cannot be used as manuscripts or original artwork. If the primary content of the publication is in PowerPoint format, the author will need to retype or copy and paste the text into a Word document.

Third-Party Publications

Occasionally, authors might wish to convert a publication obtained from another source (purchased from another agency or borrowed from another extension service) into a Virginia Cooperative Extension publication. Authors who wish to do this should contact the VCE communications manager (lgreiner@vt.edu) early in the process to discuss file format, software used, etc.

It is the author's responsibility to obtain electronic copies in a format we can use. We reserve the right to make editorial changes as well as changes to the layout, design, and style of the publication to meet VCE standards.

References

Peer-reviewed publications usually include a list of references.

It is essential that there be at least one text citation for every reference listed and a reference for every text citation. They need to match. Please verify this before submitting your publication.

If authors do not wish to provide text citations, they can rename the list Resources. See Resources.

Formatting References

Every discipline and journal has its own formatting guidelines for reference lists and text citations. For consistency, our office uses the author-date style documented in *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 16th ed.

Book Reference

Ex: Diamond, J. 2005. *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed*. New York: Viking Penguin Group.

Journal Article Reference

Ex: Kim, K. C., and L. B. Byrne. 2006. "Biodiversity Loss and the Taxonomic Bottleneck: Emerging Biodiversity Science." *Ecological Resources* 21:794-810.

Additional examples of references are provided in the Style Guide for the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and Virginia Cooperative Extension.

- Alphabetize the reference list by the last name of the first author listed. The "author" can be an agency, organization, or company if individual names are not provided.
- Do not use EndNotes or other automated reference formatting software.
- If you are unsure how to format a reference, provide all the publication information available so we can format it for you.

For books, provide

- Book title (and subtitle, if applicable).
- Name of all authors and/or editors.
- Year of publication.
- Edition, volume, or chapter, if applicable.
- Publisher.
- City and state of publication.
- Page numbers for quoted material and chapters.

For journal articles, provide

- Article title (and subtitle, if applicable).
- Name of all authors.
- Full title of journal (not abbreviated).
- Date of publication.
- Volume number (and issue number, if applicable).
- First and last page number of the article.

For other types of references, such as websites, conference proceedings, dissertations, etc., please consult the Style Guide for the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and Virginia Cooperative Extension, which contains additional examples, or provide as much information as possible and we will format them.

Formatting Text Citations

Text citations include the author's last name(s) and the year of publication, with no punctuation between them.

Ex: (Johnson 2010)

Ex: (Johnson and Jones 2010)

Ex: (Johnson, Jones, and James 2010)

Use “et al.” for text citations with four or more authors.

Ex: (Johnson et al. 2010)

Resources

If you choose not to include text citations to indicate where particular sources were used, we cannot call the sources “references.” Instead, they can be listed as resources.

- Provide the same information as required for references.
- Alphabetize a resource list by the first author's last name.

Submitting Your Manuscript

- Have all files ready to upload to the job system before submitting a job. Our office cannot accept incomplete jobs. Files include the basic document and any files containing tables, photos, figures, graphs, or other elements.
- Submit a copy of the Peer Reviewed Content Request Form when submitting peer-reviewed publications. This should be uploaded at the same time as your other files because the job cannot be accepted without it.
- We expect all manuscripts to be submitted in final form. Extensive revisions during the editing and design process will cause delays in completion of your project. The job may be closed and have to be submitted as a new job when final documents can be uploaded.
- Upload final, approved materials only. No drafts or multiple versions, please.

- Please do not add new versions of the manuscript or other files after your job has been accepted unless you (1) check to see where the project is in the design/editing process and (2) provide explicit instructions in the project request. Make sure that newer versions of files are named to make it obvious which file we should use. If the project is already in the design phase, changes to the manuscript will not be made until the design has been completed.

Writing Tips

- Keep your audience in mind when writing your publication. Will readers be familiar with technical terms, abbreviations, and acronyms? Do they need to be defined?
- Set aside your publication for 24 to 48 hours or longer before your final read-through. You will see things you missed earlier.
- Check the spelling and accuracy of names, companies, organizations/agencies, locations, publication titles, technical terms, etc.
- Check URLs immediately before submitting the publication.
- Ask someone to read your work when you are finished. A second set of eyes can be valuable.

Questions?

All these guidelines can seem a bit daunting at first, but we can help you with that. If you have any questions regarding your job, contact Lori Greiner, VCE communications manager (lgreiner@vt.edu).