INSTITUTE OF AERONAUTICAL ENGINEERING
(AUTONOMOUS)
Dundigal - 500 043, Hyderabad, Telangana

How to Make a Word Document Look Professional

It is an important tool for successful technical or professional document.

Document formatting refers to the way a document is laid out on the page—the way it looks and is visually organized—and it addresses things like font selection, font size and presentation (like bold or italics), spacing, margins, alignment, columns, indentation, and lists. Basically, the mechanics of how the words appear on the page. A well formatting document is consistent, correct (in terms of meeting any stated requirements), and easy to read. It is an important tool for successful technical or professional document.

Basic Formatting Standards for Laboratory / Technical / Professional Documents:

A few standards that should be used in most lab documents, unless specified otherwise:

Font Size

1. Use 11-12 point **Times New Roman** or **Courier** in a consistent style throughout, including headers, footers, and visual labels.
2. For laboratory documents, use **Segoe UI** 10-point font
3. 14 pt font for section headings (and "Memo" or other document label within a header)

The recommended standard, professional fonts are:
- Arial (not Arial Narrow)
- Verdana
- Calibri
- Daxline Pro
- Helvetica

Capitals, bold, underlining and italics

1. Avoid the use of Italics and underlining wherever possible.
2. Use italics sparingly for emphasis instead of bold, underlining, or all capital letters.
3. Eliminate bold text.
4. Continuous text should not be in capitals, although a couple of words in capitals is acceptable.
5. Wherever possible use bold to emphasise items or create headings as this is the most accessible type of formatting.

Capitalization

1. Use title case and sentence case capitalization correctly.
2. Capitalize proper nouns, including names of racial and ethnic groups.
3. Do not capitalize names of diseases, disorders, therapies, treatments, theories, concepts, hypotheses, principles, models, and statistical procedures, unless personal names appear within these terms.

Quotation Marks
1. Use quotation marks correctly.
2. Place commas and periods inside closing quotation marks; place other punctuation marks (e.g., colons, semicolons, ellipses) outside closing quotation marks.
3. Use quotation marks around direct quotations.
4. Do not use quotation marks in the reference list

Italics
1. Use italics correctly to draw attention to text.
2. Use italics for the first use of key terms or phrases accompanied by a definition.
3. Do not use italics for emphasis.

Page Size and Margins
1. Use 1-inch margins on all sides (top, bottom, left, and right).
2. Use a ragged right-hand margin (no right justification).
3. Most documents should be formatted to print on A4 (or US letter size) paper (8½" x 11"). This size is readily available in most printers and considered quite standard. It is the default setting for Microsoft Word documents.
4. If the document is going to be bound, you may want to customize the settings and increase the side margin.

Page numbers
At bottom right corner (starting the first page of the main text, i.e. not the cover page or Table of Contents)

Paragraph Alignment and Indentation
1. Use left alignment.
2. Do not use justified text as this makes the spaces between words uneven which can make it difficult for some individuals to read. By aligning to the left you ensure the spaces between words are equal.
3. Indent the first line of each paragraph 0.5 - inch (one tab key).
4. Additional line break between paragraphs

Pagination
Use automatic pagination. Be sure to have at least two lines of a paragraph at the bottom of a page or at the top of a page. When headings are used, place at least two lines of text with the heading at the bottom of a page. (Avoid placing a heading at the bottom of the page with no other lines of the paragraph.)

Spacing
1. Single or 0.15 line spacing, with no indentation on the first line of the paragraph
2. Use one space after each end punctuation mark. Be consistent throughout the document.

Abbreviations
1. Use abbreviations sparingly and usually when they are familiar to readers, save considerable space, and appear at least three times in the paper.
2. Define abbreviations, including abbreviations for group authors, on first use.
3. Do not use periods in abbreviations.
4. Use Latin abbreviations only in parentheses, and use the full Latin term in the text.

5. 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.

Figures

1. Figures include graphs, charts, drawings, pictures and illustrations.
2. All figures include three basic components: number, title, and image.
3. Always mention and discuss the table or figure in the text.
4. 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.
5. Place the figure close to where it is first mentioned in the text, or on separate pages at the end of the document if they are extensive.
6. Number figures / tables in the order they are mentioned in the text.
7. Capitalize the word Figure 1 in the text when referring to it. Refrain from using "the table below," or "the table on page 17."
8. Are sequentially numbered with an explanatory title placed consistently either above or below the figure; and have clearly labeled elements, axes and elements.

Tables

1. Tables show data in rows and columns.
2. Try not to split tables across pages. In case required, add repeat as row header on each page.
3. All tables include four basic components: number, title, column headings, and body.
4. Capitalize the word Table 1 in the text when referring to it. Refrain from using "the table below," or "the table on page 17."
5. Place the table close to where it is first mentioned in the text, or on separate pages at the end of the document if they are extensive.
6. Number tables in the order they are mentioned in the text. 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.
7. Label all columns.
8. Center column headings, and capitalize them in sentence case.
9. Include borders for all the cells or alternatively, use 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.

You can manually adjust the width of any table; however, the following tips allow to fine-tune your tables with less effort.

1. Insert a table that has as many columns and rows required.
2. In **Table Properties**, set the preferred width to **100%** measured in **Percentage (autofit to window)**. Leave the text wrapping set to **None**. Set 1 pt solid black top and bottom borders (and internal borders, if you want them,
3. When a table is inserted, all columns are of same width and all rows are of same height. Specify the minimum height you need (you will need to play with this to match your table, preferably not less than 0.6 cm) then make sure you have the "Row height is:" box set to "At least". Align the cell text to 'centre' in the row, if it is one line across all columns, otherwise cell text aligned to 'top'.

Add Images Between Your Paragraphs

Sometimes, you can add images inside a paragraph and let the text move around it. However, generally, this may impact the readability of the text. This is especially the case for data-driven reports.

A better option, especially for tables, charts, and graphs, is to put images in between the paragraphs and ensure they remain center aligned. This ensures images don't vie for attention over the nearby text. It also helps the captions you add to stand out and be noticed.

Symbols and Special Characters

Guidance on usage and presentation of commonly used symbols

Symbol	Description	Usage	Spacing
+	plus, and		One space either side
-	minus Note: the minus symbol is different to the dash available on most keyboards. The minus sign is available as a symbol in RevMan.		One space either side in mathematical equations, but no space between the minus sign and the number for a negative number. e.g. Standard negative pressure rates range from -50 mmHg to -125 mmHg.
. , ; :	Dot, comma, semicolon, colon		Immediately after the word and one space after.
/	per or divided by	Use '/' instead of 'per' where 'per' is otherwise cumbersome. 10 mg/kg (not 10 mg per kg)	No space on either side. e.g. 10 g/L
<	less than (e.g. for percentages) fewer than (e.g. for people)		One space either side.
>	greater than more than		One space either side.
=	equals		One space either side.
&	and	The ampersand symbol should only be used if it is part of a brand name (e.g. Procter & Gamble) or the title of a publication (e.g. *Annals of Nutrition & Metabolism*).	One space either side.
%	percentage	The percentage sign can be used in a block of text when it is used with a numeral. e.g. Fewer than 90% of the participants completed the study.	There is no space between the number and the percentage sign. e.g. 15%.

Symbol	Description	Usage	Spacing
		Use 'per cent' instead of '%' when starting a sentence and when the number is written in full (i.e. not a numeral). e.g. Three per cent of people suffer from . . .	
™, ®	Trademark (® for registered; ™ for unregistered)	The trademark symbols are not normally used in Cochrane reviews.	If used, the symbols should be written immediately after the brand name they apply to, with no separating space. e.g. Nexium®, Backup Exec™ software.
°	degree symbol	Use to indicate degrees of arc, e.g. when measuring joint flexibility, or temperature.	For degrees of arc, the degree symbol follows the number without any intervening space, e.g. 43°. For temperature, there is a space between the number and the degree symbol, but no space between the degree symbol and the letter that indicates the scale being used, e.g. 100 °C, 212 °F. Note: degree symbols are not used for temperatures measured on the Kelvin scale, e.g. 373.15 K.

Numbers
1. Use words to express numbers zero through nine in the text.
2. Use numerals to express numbers 10 and above in the text.
3. If a number is less than 1, place a 0 before the decimal unless the number cannot be greater than 1.
4. 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).

Equations
1. Place short, simple equations in the line of text
2. To display an equation, place it on a separate line, indented, with extra space above and below. If the equation does not fit on a single line, separate it before an operational or relational symbol. There is no need to use punctuation at the end of an equation.
3. Insert a space on either side of the operators +, -, = except in subscripts or superscripts.

4. When referring to numbers equations, write out the reference; for example, write *Equation 1* (do not abbreviate), or write *the third equation*.
5. Number all equations sequentially, (1), (2), etc., and enclosed in parentheses. The number should be placed on the same line as the equation near the right margin of the page.

Sample Heading Formats

Level	Heading Uses	Heading Characteristics
1	Use for the main title	Centered, boldfaced, uppercase and lowercase heading.
2	Use to divide major sections of the report	Flush left, boldface, uppercase and lowercase heading.
3		Indented, boldface, lowercase paragraph heading ending with a period.
4	Use for subheadings within the major sections of the report	Indented, boldface, italicized, lowercase paragraph heading with a period.
5		Indented, italicized, lowercase paragraph heading with a period.

Examples of heading characteristics for reports.

1. Heading Level 1 is used for the main title. This should be a centered, boldfaced, uppercase and lowercase heading.
2. Heading Level 2 is used to divide major sections of the report. This should be a flush left, boldface, uppercase and lowercase heading.
3. Heading Level 3 is used to divide major sections of the report. This should be an indented, boldface, lowercase paragraph heading ending with a period.
4. Heading Level 4 is used for subheadings within the major sections of the report. This should be an indented, boldface, italicized, lowercase paragraph heading with a period.
5. Heading Level 5 is used for subheadings within the major sections of the report. This should be an indented, italicized, lowercase paragraph heading with a period.