

ITM Research Paper Guidelines

The ability to write cogently, concisely and clearly in an acceptable academic format and to present the results of your research orally are skills you must develop to be a success in our program. At the same time, you will be learning skills essential to success in your working life after graduation, as the ability to communicate clearly in written and spoken English is one of the most important elements to success in business. You will regularly be expected to submit research papers and project reports as you progress through our program. Here's some key advice to help you succeed.

Writing Papers: The following outline suggests an effective way of organizing a paper (it's just a suggestion):

1. Describe the problem;
2. Discuss previous work in the field and any necessary background information
3. Explain what you did, how you did it, and what obstacles you encountered;
or
Provide specific findings of fact that support your proposed solution or thesis;
4. State your solution or conclusion;
5. List the resulting benefits, both quantitative and qualitative; and
6. If applicable, provide an appendix giving the particulars of any models used or data collected during the research.

In writing your paper, explain your work so readers outside the field can understand it. If you must use a specialized term, abbreviation, or acronym, make sure you define it; write out an acronym or abbreviation the first time it appears and enclose it in parentheses immediately afterwards.

Here is a possible step-by-step breakdown:

- ◆ Choose an area of interest to you to start your topic selection
- ◆ Search for publications—both in print and online—related to your topic
- ◆ Narrow your topic to refine your search results
- ◆ Formulate a thesis statement to guide your research
 - ✓ A good thesis statement is critical; it's the answer to the question that your paper explores and clearly delineates the argument that will be presented in your paper
- ◆ Scan books to see if they are relevant
 - ✓ Use the Table of Contents & index to quickly locate useful information
 - ✓ The table of contents for many books is now available online at the publisher or on amazon.com
 - ✓ If you find a book you need at Border's or Barnes & Nobles, go to our library and odds are that if they don't have it that they can get it on interlibrary loan.
- ◆ Make notes on, or photocopy, interesting passages as you encounter them
- ◆ Make notes as you read to capture thoughts, questions, and ideas
- ◆ Refine your research question and do further information gathering
- ◆ Compose and write down your working thesis
- ◆ Review and reflect on work done in the field already and discuss any necessary background information
- ◆ Construct your argument, with the main points organized in an outline
- ◆ Write a rough draft, expanding the outline to fulfill paper length requirements
- ◆ Include quotes that support your points
- ◆ Revise your rough draft to ensure a strong, logical argument
- ◆ Document referenced works by creating a bibliography
- ◆ Revise your paper for spelling, punctuation and grammar errors
- ◆ Print out the final revision of your paper and bibliography or save as PDF or RTF file as necessary

Formatting: Unless your professor gives you different instructions, you should prepare ITM research papers in the formats prescribed by the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, which are very common styles in use for scholarly publications and academic papers. Among other things, this means that you should submit your paper typed in 10, 11, or 12-point type (no larger than 12-point), double-spaced, with 1" margins on one side of 8½" by 11" paper. Quotations, figure captions and the list of references should all be double-spaced. Devote separate pages to each figure, each table and the list of references, and number all pages after the first. Attach a cover sheet listing the paper title and the name and email address of the author. If submitting electronically, please submit as a PDF file or in Rich Text Format. Most word processors can save as RTF. Your professor may prescribe required or acceptable electronic formats.

Length: Make papers as concise as possible; 15 to 20 pages should be reasonable for a graduate student research paper and 10 to 15 pages should be reasonable for an undergraduate paper. Note that your professor may prescribe a different length expectation. Please count only pages containing body text; figures, tables, the abstract, references and bibliography do not toward the page total.

Title: Make your title short and specific. Preferably, titles should be five or six words long, never more than 10.

Headings: Please use only one level of heading.

Headers: Despite what it appears to say in the APA guidelines, it is NOT necessary to place the words "Running Head:" in every page header; just put the title of your paper in all uppercase letters ("all caps").

Figures and Tables: Please submit copies of any figures and tables on separate sheets of paper. They should have captions that are interesting, that are written in complete sentences, and that fully explain and interpret the exhibit without forcing the reader to refer to the text. Conversely, the reader should not have to refer back and forth from the text to the figures to understand the paper. You should refer to figures where appropriate with “(Figure 1),” but you should explain the meaning and implications of your data fully in the text. Do not require the reader to interpret the figure to understand what you have done, as in “Figure 1 shows the outcome of this survey.” Tables should list information in some obvious logical order.

Footnotes: Avoid footnotes. If what they contain is important, it deserves a place in the text. If not, don't distract the reader from what is important. If you really, really feel you have to have footnotes, we'll live with them.

References: Cite references in the body of the text: “Thrupp (1998) quibbled that ...” or if 1998 was a prolific year for Thrupp, “(1998b).” If the author is not cited in the text, then use (Thrupp 1998). Alphabetize the list of references according to the name of the first author.

For articles use the form

Smith, James Q. (1978) Title of article. *Title of Journal or Periodical*, 10(5) 45-50.

and for books,

Toklas, Alice B. (1947) *Book title*. Publisher's name, City, State (or Country).

and for collections of papers,

Beedle, Albert A. (1979) Title of chapter. J.J. Fox, ed. *Book title*. Publisher's name, City, State (or Country), 556-572.

and for material online,

Bly, Laura (2000) Upstart airfare site beats the big boys. *USA Today.com*, April 21, retrieved on October 23, 2000 from (www.usatoday.com/life/travel/leisure/2000/ltl227.htm).

The one exception to standard APA style is that we would prefer you to italicize the titles of books, journals, periodicals and web sites rather than underlining as the APA style would require. Note also that the APA style requires indentation of the second lines of citations, and that only the first word of a book title should be capitalized unless subsequent words would otherwise be capitalized (i.e. proper nouns, etc.). Also, if there is no author given for online resources, cite the title.

Use of Wikipedia: While *Wikipedia* is a good starting point for research to get an overview and point you to available resources, you **cannot cite or quote** *Wikipedia* in an assignment in IIT's Information Technology & Management curriculum. *Wikipedia* is a wonderful resource, but due to its community-edited nature is not acceptable as a source of material for use for academic writing.

Live, In-Person Help:

The IIT Writing Center (http://www.iit.edu/csl/hum/resources/writing_center.shtml) exists only to HELP YOU WRITE YOUR PAPER. Typically, you will take a project or paper assignment to the center, where a tutor will work one-on-one with you to assist with the writing process. There are tutors there who are especially trained to work with students for whom English is a second language but they certainly will work with anyone. The Writing Center is in Siegel Hall rooms 232 and 233. Students may use sign-up sheets on the doors of SH 232 and 233 to reserve a specific time with a tutor. When possible, the Writing Center also accepts students on a walk-in basis without an appointment.

Reference Librarians at IIT's Galvin Library are there specifically to assist you in your research and preparation of citations. If you have questions about preparation of citations, they are the experts and they are there to help. They also offer classes to help you learn how to prepare a research paper; one will be offered Friday, October 2, 2009 at 12:50pm. In this workshop, Preparing for your Research Paper, a humanities instructor and librarian will walk you through the pre-writing stages of a research paper. They'll show you how to craft a strong thesis statement, find the types of sources your professors require, and begin outlining your paper.

Additional Information:

For a fine discussion of writing, read William Strunk Jr. and E.B. White's *The Elements of Style*, Allyn and Bacon, Needham Heights, MA.

For definitive guidance for preparation of a research paper in APA style, see the American Psychological Association's *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, American Psychological Association, Washington D.C.

For a more complete, formal treatment of the process of preparing a paper for publication, see The University of Chicago Press *The Chicago Manual of Style*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL.

For sound advice on figures, refer to the series of books by Edward R. Tufte: *The Visual Display of Quantitative Information*, *Envisioning Information*, and *Visual Explanations*, all from Graphics Press, Cheshire, CT.

Other very useful resources for preparing papers:

The IIT Writing Center: http://www.iit.edu/csl/hum/resources/writing_center.shtml

57 Tips for Writing Your Term Paper: <http://www.degreetutor.com/library/online-assignments/termpaper-writing>
50 Ways to Increase Your Chances for an "A" Research Paper: <http://www.rasmussen.edu/articles/research-paper-strategies.asp>

Writing Tutorial Services pamphlets, Indiana University: <http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets.shtml>

OWL at Purdue: The Online Writing Lab at Purdue University: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>

LEO: Literacy Education Online, St. Cloud State University: <http://leo.stcloudstate.edu/>

APA Style (includes tutorials on APA citation styles and bibliography entries): <http://www.apastyle.org/>

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