

Faculty of Community Services

Academic Support & Resource Centre

APA: Common Errors

In FCS programs, knowing how to use the APA citation style is essential. This handout will go over some of the commonly made errors in APA usage.

COMMON FORMATTING ERRORS:

- Wrong font – as per APA guidelines, all documents should be typed in 12 pt. Times New Roman font.
- Wrong margins – as per APA guidelines, all documents should have standard margins (2.54cm).
- Wrong spacing – unless otherwise specified by your instructor, as per APA guidelines, all documents should be double spaced.
- No running head – as per APA guidelines, all documents should have a running head in all caps placed in the top left corner.
- No extras – as per APA guidelines, all documents should not include boldface or underlining, unless you are using them for tables and figures or certain headings.

COMMON IN-TEXT ERRORS:

- Numbers – numbers under 10 are spelled out in APA (for example, instead of 9, you would write nine); numbers 10 and above are written as numerals.
- Incorrect use of et al. – the period always goes after ‘al’, not ‘et’, and et al. can only be used after the full citation has been used once before.
- Page numbers – page numbers should always be included when using direct quotations (i.e. Smith, 2017, p. 5).

COMMON REFERENCE LIST ERRORS:

- No hanging indent – as per APA guidelines, all reference lists need hanging indents for each reference.
- Improper spacing – as per APA guidelines, each citation itself should be double spaced, whereas the space between citations should be single spaced.

Online Resources:

- ✓ <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>
- ✓ <http://www.bibme.org/citation-guide/apa/>

References:

D, K. (2015, June 02). Top Five Mistakes of APA Style. Retrieved March 01, 2017, from <http://ucwblng.chicagolandwritingcenters.org/top-five-mistakes-of-apa-style/>