

Writing Style and Standards
in Undergraduate
Engineering Reports

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Writing Style and Standards
in Undergraduate
Engineering Reports
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ABOUT THIS GUIDE

Writing Style and Standards in Undergraduate Engineering Reports, Fourth Edition, addresses two primary questions of inexperienced technical writers: “How should my report be written?” and “How do I present my experimental work appropriately using figures, tables, equations and spreadsheets?” The first two sections of this guide respond to these two questions.

The first section of this guide, *Writing Style in Undergraduate Engineering Reports*, speaks to the problems that students face as they draft their reports. Specifically, it outlines the norms of format in engineering reports, and it describes the way format is linked to the substance of the report. This section of the guide also provides a set of guides and example reports based on the writing requirements of the different laboratory courses at the Georgia Institute of Technology. It also includes an example of a report that would be written as part of an undergraduate research experience. These model reports are offered as examples of good reports, and they should be consulted when questions arise concerning format, style, or presentation of data. *Writing Style in Undergraduate Engineering Reports* also provides guidance on effective oral and visual communication with attention to slide presentations, posters, and tips on speaking effectively.

The second section of this guide, *Standards for Undergraduate Engineering Reports*, speaks to the problems students face as they present their work using graphical elements. This section of the guide explicitly outlines the norms for assembling and labeling figural and tabular information, provides examples of well-made figures and tables, and demonstrates how to integrate graphical elements into written documents. Detailed checklists help students determine whether their data are professionally presented. This section also guides students through navigating resources such as the engineering library and online research databases. *Standards for Undergraduate Engineering Reports* also reviews the norms of paragraph and sentence formation and other methods to achieve clear and logical writing in technical reports.

The third section of this guide, *Writing on the Job*, speaks to the kinds of tasks students face when they make the transition from classroom reporting to workplace communication, where problems are often open-ended and audiences cannot be assumed to be engineering professionals. This section of the guide concentrates on a design report and presentation for an open-ended project. This report is prepared to describe a technical project to non-technical readers, and this section highlights the visual and verbal steps the author has taken to accommodate these non-technical readers.

The Publisher would like to gratefully acknowledge that Chapter 2.7 on *Using the Engineering Library: How to Conduct Research in the Engineering Disciplines* and Chapter 2.15 on *Integrating Graphics into Written Documents* were written by Lisa Rosenstein, Ph.D. Dr. Rosenstein directs the Charles E. Gearing Program in Engineering Communications in the School of Civil and Environmental Engineering at the Georgia Institute of Technology. We would also like to thank Cole Keenum for his valuable advice on the chapter describing computer policies and common electronic resources.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART ONE

Writing Style in Undergraduate Engineering Reports

1.1	Global Style: An Introduction to Undergraduate Engineering Reports	3
1.2	Abstracts, Itemized Reports and Narrative Reports	17
1.3	Lab Manual for Oscilloscope Investigation	21
1.4	Example of a Short Itemized Report	29
1.5	Narrative Reports.....	32
1.6	Example of a Short Narrative Report in Memorandum Format.....	34
1.7	Example of a Long Narrative Report in Letter Format	39
1.8	Example of a Long Narrative Report in Memorandum Format	46
1.9	Example of a Capstone Report	53
1.10	Special Considerations for Writing Chemical Engineering Reports.....	73
1.11	Example of an Undergraduate Research Report	81
1.12	Guide to Oral-Visual Communication	96

PART TWO

Standards for Undergraduate Engineering Reports

2.1	Introduction	117
2.2	Writing Conventions in Technical Reports	119
2.3	Guidelines for Editing Specific Features of Reports	131
2.4	General Guidelines for Editing Exhibits	142
2.5	Consolidated Editing Checklist	145
2.6	Style Guides and References	151
2.7	Using the Engineering Library: How to Conduct Research in the Engineering Disciplines	164
2.8	Preparing a Cover Sheet.....	172
2.9	Guidelines for Graphs.....	175
2.10	Guidelines for Illustrations	183
2.11	Guidelines for Equations	187
2.12	Guidelines for Spreadsheets	190
2.13	Guidelines for Tables	196
2.14	Guidelines for Lists.....	199
2.15	Integrating Graphics into Written Documents	201
2.16	Policies for Notebooks	208
2.17	Computer Guidelines and Common Electronic Resources	212
2.18	Significant Digits and Uncertainty	219

PART THREE
Writing on the Job

3.1	Guide to Reports in the Workplace	227
3.2	Guide to Report Organization	233
3.3	Example of a Design Report for a Workplace Project	237
3.4	Guide to Presentations in the Workplace	252
3.5	Example of a Design Presentation for a Workplace Project	257
3.6	Guide to Performance During Presentations.....	266
3.7	Guide to Memoranda	281
3.8	Example of a Memorandum for Workplace Distribution.....	284
3.9	Guide to E-mail in the Workplace.....	285
3.10	Example of E-mail Exchange for a Workplace Project	290
	Index.....	293