

# Format Guide for the Strategic Research Project

**NSU**  
Florida

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Abraham S. Fischler  
College of Education and  
School of Criminal Justice  
**NOVA SOUTHEASTERN  
UNIVERSITY**

Written by the Strategic Research Committee and Co-Authors

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Aspects of format and style not covered in this guide are to be found in the 7th edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA). Begin to familiarize yourself with APA guidelines from the beginning of your program of study. *Mastering APA Style: Student's Workbook and Training Guide* is an essential learning tool for the study of APA style.

Your Strategic Research Project must be correct in all aspects of style, including—but not necessarily limited to—the following APA manual sections:

1. Writing Clearly and Concisely
2. The Mechanics of Style
3. Displaying Results
4. Crediting Sources
5. Reference Examples

This *Format Guide for the Strategic Research Project* describes the required format for Strategic Research Projects at the Abraham S. Fischler College of Education and School of Criminal Justice (FCE & SCJ). This format guide does not cover matters of content. Supplemental material pertaining to format and style may be found in your Strategic Research Project course in Canvas. The template for format, organization, and content may also be found in your Strategic Research Project course in Canvas. This is a *Mandatory Template* that contains all required level headings and directions for each Part (i.e., Parts 1 to 9).

## Editing

- ▶ You are responsible for preparing and editing your Strategic Research Project according to this guide (and to APA style guidelines) prior to submitting it to your Strategic Research Project faculty member. Proofread carefully for typographical, grammatical, punctuation, and spelling errors.
- ▶ If you and your Strategic Research Project faculty member determine that editing assistance is needed for the preparation and finalization of the manuscript (i.e., ESRP 9000, ESRP 9001), you may hire a private editor of your choice. Editors must not make changes that affect the content of the Strategic Research Project approved sections. In addition, editors and/or students who conduct their own editing, must not deviate from the mandatory template and all level headings; do not add supplementary headings.

## Format Review

- ▶ After receiving approval from your Strategic Research Project (SRP) course faculty member, the approved manuscript that you uploaded through the Canvas Parts sections is forwarded to the Strategic Research Project Review Team (Dr. Ross, Dr. Peyton, and Dr. Argüello).
- ▶ The final manuscript is checked for adherence to the format specifications described in this guide. Adherence to syntax, punctuation, academic writing, and APA style is solely the

responsibility of the student and the faculty member. In addition, the SRP mandatory template must be utilized; there should be no deviation from the template.

## Margins

- ▶ All pages of the Strategic Research Project must have the following margins: 1.5 in. on the left side and 1.0 in. on the top, bottom, and right. The bottom margin should be as close as possible to 1 in., but not smaller than 1 in.
- ▶ Margins for appendix items may be larger, but not smaller, than those required for other pages of the manuscript (see Appendices section of this guide).
- ▶ Use the flush-left style and ragged right margin as specified in the APA manual. The flush-right style of the Table of Contents is an exception to this rule.
- ▶ Page numbers are placed *within* the top or bottom margins (see Pagination section of this guide).
- ▶ Bottom margins must be as close as possible to 1-in. (but not smaller) regardless of the paragraph break. Therefore, you should remove the widow/orphan control in your word processing program so that each page has text to the bottom margin. This guideline applies also to the reference-list pages of the Strategic Research Project. An exception to the 1-in. bottom margin requirement is a stand-alone subheading (APA Level 2), which should not appear on the last line of a page.
- ▶ Continue the narrative text to the bottom margin on a page with a short table or figure (i.e., one that is less than a full page) and on a page that precedes a page with a table or figure.

## Typeface and Size

- ▶ Use only 12-point Times New Roman typeface, except in the circumstances noted below.
- ▶ A sans serif typeface (e.g., Arial) should be used in figures, except for the figure caption.
- ▶ A 10- or 11-point type may be used in tables and figures, if necessary, to fit material within the left and right margins or on a single page. Where reduction is necessary, also reduce the table number and title. The type size for a table note or figure caption should be 10 point.
- ▶ Italics should be used only where required per the APA manual. Do not use underlining or colors. Do not use superscript (e.g., the “<sup>th</sup>” in “5<sup>th</sup>”) or bold type (except for headings and for certain statistical symbols and table data as described in the APA manual). Do not use heavy, bold lines for the horizontal rules in tables.

## Line Spacing

- ▶ Double-space between all lines of text, in block quotations, between paragraphs, between headings and subheadings, between headings and text, between tables (and figures) and text, and between all lines of the reference list. Refer to the APA manual for line-spacing guidelines for tables.
- ▶ Single-spacing is *required* in some sections of preliminary pages (see samples in this guide). Single-spacing is *permissible* in multiple-line table titles, table notes, figure captions, and text headings; however, consistency throughout the manuscript is required.

## Pagination

- ▶ Preliminary pages must have a lowercase Roman numeral centered between the left and right margins and placed two-line spaces below the 1-in. margin line (see samples in this guide). The title page is assigned a number (i) that is *not* placed on the page.
- ▶ For all pages of the main body of the manuscript (from page 1 of the first part through all pages of the appendices), place Arabic numerals on the right margin and two-line spaces above the 1-in. top margin line.
- ▶ The typeface and size of page numbers should be the same as the manuscript type. Do not use running heads.

## Indentation

- ▶ For the first lines of paragraphs, use the indentation measurements specified in APA. Use the required indentation for subheadings and titles in the Table of Contents, for block quotations, for the first lines of numbered lists, and for the second and subsequent lines of a reference list entry (hanging-indent style).
- ▶ In itemized lists, indent the first line of each item; second and succeeding lines should be flush left.

## Headings

- ▶ An APA Level 1 heading is used for (a) the preliminary pages, (b) the beginning of each Part, and (c) the References section.
- ▶ The wording of headings must match the wording of the corresponding headings in the Table of Contents. Refer to the Strategic Research Project template for appropriate headings in your manuscript.

## Tables and Figures

- ▶ Tables and figures must be formatted according to the guidelines of the APA manual.

- ▶ Tables and figures should be set flush left, presented horizontally, and placed at the appropriate point in text (i.e., following— as soon as possible—the text reference).
- ▶ A table and figure caption serves as a title; as such, the first sentence should appear in the Table of Contents listing.
- ▶ If you have only one table or figure in the manuscript, do not label it with a number; label the item as “Table” or “Figure.”
- ▶ Horizontal rules in tables should not extend into the left and right margin areas.

## Reference List

- ▶ Begin the reference list on a new page. Double-space between entries and within each entry. Use the hanging-indent style. The reference list must be titled as “**References.**” Each entry must follow the style guidelines of the APA manual.
- ▶ Hyperlinks should be used for all URLs. The hyperlinks should be (a) the same typeface and type size as the text, (b) in black, and (c) not underlined.

## Appendices

- ▶ The format of appendix material may deviate from the format used for other sections of the manuscript. However, sufficient margin space must be provided, and pagination must be continuous.
- ▶ Each appendix item must have a cover page on which the title is double-spaced and centered between the required margins. Do not include a separate cover page for the whole appendix section.
- ▶ Keep the number of appendix items to a minimum. If only one appendix item is included, label it as “Appendix,” not as “Appendix A.”
- ▶ Landscaped pages should face out from the left side of the manuscript. Page numbers on landscaped pages must be placed in the same position as Arabic numbers on other pages.

## Preliminary Pages

- ▶ The order of preliminary pages is as follows: Title page, Approval Page, Statement of Original Work, Acknowledgments (optional), Dedication (optional), Executive Summary, and Table of Contents.
- ▶ Use only your legal name—as recorded by the university registrar—on the title page, Approval Page, Statement of Original Work, and Executive Summary. Do not include titles or degree abbreviations.

## Title Page

- ▶ See the sample Title Page in this guide for the required format.

- ▶ The top line (title) must be 1 in. from the top of the page; the bottom line (year) must be 1 in. from the bottom of the page. The byline section and the fulfillment-of-requirements section should be placed, so that white space is evenly distributed between all sections.
- ▶ The year in which you expect final approval of your Strategic Research Project should be typed under the University name. Do not include a month or day.
- ▶ Break each line of the title at a logical point (e.g., avoid the splitting of a phrase). The avoidance of a split phrase takes precedence over the use of a pyramid or inverted pyramid style. Break the lines of the fulfillment statement as shown in the sample.

### **Approval Page**

- ▶ See the sample for the Approval Page in this guide for the required format.

### **Statement of Original Work**

- ▶ See the sample Statement of Original Work in this guide for the required format.
- ▶ Provide a 1/2 in. space above the Name and Date rules.
- ▶ The Statement of Original Work must be typed with your name and dated at the beginning of ESRP 9000 and ESRP 9001.
- ▶ A signature is not required. Including the dated page in your manuscript indicates that you attest to all content contained therein.

### **Acknowledgments (Optional)**

- ▶ An Acknowledgments page, if included, must be double-spaced with a paragraph indentation. Use the preferred spelling of “**Acknowledgments**” for the heading.
- ▶ Acknowledgments could exceed one page in length, and the tone must be academic and appropriate to a scholarly manuscript.

### **Dedication (Optional)**

- ▶ An Dedication page, if included, must be double-spaced with a paragraph indentation. Use the preferred spelling of “**Dedication**” for the heading.
- ▶ Dedications could exceed one page in length, and the tone must be academic and appropriate to a scholarly manuscript.

### **Executive Summary**

- ▶ See the sample Executive Summary in this guide for the required format.

- ▶ The first paragraph must contain all of the elements shown in the sample. The Strategic Research Project title, your name, and the year must be identical to the title, name, and year on the title page.
- ▶ Include four or five keywords (lowercase) that relate to your study.
- ▶ Single-space within each paragraph but double-space between paragraphs. Do not indent the first lines of paragraphs. The narrative portion of the executive summary (i.e., after the informational first paragraph) should be 220-270 words. The executive summary must not exceed one page in length.

## Table of Contents

- ▶ See the sample Table of Contents in this guide for the required format.
- ▶ All Level 1, Level 2, and Level 3 headings that appear in the text must appear in the Table of Contents. Do not include Levels 4 and 5 in the Table of Contents. Lists of tables and figures follow immediately after the list of appendices.
- ▶ Dot leaders, rather than a series of periods, must be used to join headings and titles with their respective page numbers; at least two dots must separate the heading or title from its page number.
- ▶ The right margin for the Table of Contents is justified. Do not provide an additional tab (indent) for the second and subsequent lines of a heading, subheading, or title; begin the second line of the heading or title at the same point as the first line. Avoid having headings and titles extend into the column of page numbers.
- ▶ The page numbers of the appendix cover page, not of the actual appendix items, are presented in the Table of Contents.
- ▶ Headings, titles, and page numbers in the Table of Contents must match the corresponding headings, titles, and page numbers in the text.
- ▶ Lines for preliminary pages should not be included in the Table of Contents. The headers “Appendices,” “Tables,” and “Figures” should not appear as the last line of a Table of Contents page. Do not repeat headers (such as “Page”) on the second and subsequent pages of the Table of Contents; do not type words such as “Continued.”
- ▶ Do not include an identifying letter or number if you have only one appendix item, one table, or one figure; label the header “Appendix,” “Table,” or “Figure” and begin the title on the next line at the first tab position.
- ▶ Refer to the APA manual for capitalization rules relating to headings and titles. Initial caps are used for all listings, including figure titles, in the Table of Contents.

# **SAMPLE TITLE PAGE**



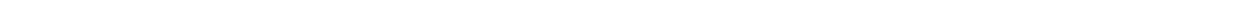
Xxxx xx XXXXXX XXXXXX xx XXXXX XXXXXXXXXXX xxx  
xx XXXXXXXXXXX xxxx XXXXXX

by  
XXXXX XXXXXXX

A Strategic Research Project Submitted to  
the Abraham S. Fischler College of  
Education and School of Criminal Justice in  
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for  
the Degree of Doctor of Education

Nova Southeastern University  
2023

# **SAMPLE APPROVAL PAGE**



## **Approval Page**

This Strategic Research Project was submitted by Xxxxx XXXXXXXX under the direction of the persons listed below. It was submitted to the Abraham S. Fischler College of Education and School of Criminal Justice and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova Southeastern University.

Xxxx XXXXXXXX, EdD or PhD  
ESRP 9000 Faculty Member

Xxxx XXXXXXXX, EdD or PhD  
ESRP 9001 Faculty Member

Kimberly Durham, PsyD  
Dean

## **SAMPLE STATEMENT OF ORIGINAL WORK**

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### Statement of Original Work

I declare the following:

I have read the Code of Student Conduct and Academic Responsibility as described in the *Student Handbook* of Nova Southeastern University. This Strategic Research Project represents my original work, except where I have acknowledged the ideas, words, or material of other authors.

Where another author's ideas have been presented in this Strategic Research Project, I have acknowledged the author's ideas by citing them in the required style.

Where another author's words have been presented in this Strategic Research Project, I have acknowledged the author's words by using appropriate quotation devices and citations in the required style.

I have obtained permission from the author or publisher—in accordance with the required guidelines—to include any copyrighted material (e.g., tables, figures, survey instruments, large portions of text) in this Strategic Research Project manuscript.

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Name

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Date

**SAMPLE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

## Executive Summary

Xxxx xx XXXXXX XXXXXX xx XXXXX XXXXXXXXXXX xxx xx XXXXXXXXXXX XXXX XXXXXX. [*the first element is the Strategic Research Project title*] XXXXX XXXXXXX [student's name], 2023: Strategic Research Project, Nova Southeastern University, Abraham S. Fischler College of Education and School of Criminal Justice. Keywords: xxxxxxxx, xxx xxxxxxx, xxxxx xxxxxxxx, xxxxxxx

The first paragraph must contain all of the elements shown in this sample. The Strategic Research Project title, your name (surname last), and the year must be identical to the title, name, and year on the title page.

Single-space within each paragraph but double-space between paragraphs. Do not indent the first lines of paragraphs. The narrative portion (i.e., after the informational first paragraph) of the executive summary should be 220-270 words. The executive summary must not exceed one page in length. See the APA manual for content guidelines.

# **SAMPLE TABLE OF CONTENTS**



## Table of Contents

	Page
Part 1: Critical Analysis .....	1
Researcher's Role .....	#
Description of the Setting .....	#
Organizational Background and History .....	#
The Mission Statement .....	#
The Vision Statement.....	#
The Value Statement.....	#
Organizational Reputation and Sustainability .....	#
Relevant Terms .....	#
Identify Potential Gaps or Areas for Growth.....	#
Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT).....	#
Internal Factor Evaluation (IFE).....	#
External Factor Evaluation (EFE).....	#
Part 2: Define the Problem.....	#
Synthesis of Literature Related to the Problem .....	#
Research Methods.....	#
Pertinent Models, Frameworks, or Theories.....	#
Summary of Findings.....	#
Statement of the Problem.....	#
Description of the Context of the Problem .....	#
Scope and Significance of the Problem .....	#
Rationale for Investigating the Problem .....	#
Well-Defined Problem Statement .....	#
Part 3: Research Possible Solutions.....	#
Introduction.....	#
Possible Solutions .....	#
Possible Solution One: Solution Title.....	#
Possible Solution Two: Solution Title .....	#
Possible Solution Three: Solution Title .....	#
Possible Solution Four: Solution Title.....	#
Part 4: Select a Solution.....	#
Overview of the Four Solutions.....	#
Advantages (Pros) and Disadvantages (Cons) of Solutions .....	#
Solution One: Solution Title .....	#
Solution Two: Solution Title .....	#
Solution Three: Solution Title .....	#
Solution Four: Solution Title .....	#
Discussion of Barriers.....	#
Solution One: Solution Title .....	#
Solution Two: Solution Title .....	#
Solution Three: Solution Title .....	#

Solution Four: Solution Title .....	#
Summary of Rationale for Selected Solution.....	#
Part 5: Strategies to Accomplish the Selected Solution.....	#
Strategy One: Strategy Title.....	#
Synthesis of Literature Related to the Strategy.....	#
Strategy Two: Strategy Title.....	#
Synthesis of Literature Related to the Strategy.....	#
Part 6: Evaluation of the Strategies.....	#
Quantitative Strategic Plan Matrix.....	#
Evaluation of Internal Factor Evaluation.....	#
Discussion of Factors That Influence the Plan .....	#
Evaluation of External Factor Evaluation.....	#
Discussion of Factors That Influence the Plan .....	#
First Alternative Attractiveness Score and Benefit for the Organization .....	#
Second Alternative Attractiveness Score and Benefit for the Organization.....	#
Summary of Most Important Strategy .....	#
Part 7: Development of an Action Plan .....	#
Action Steps .....	#
Timeline .....	#
Roles and Responsibilities .....	#
Resources .....	#
Organizational Support .....	#
Barriers or Resistance .....	#
Evaluation .....	#
Reflection on the Overall Experience .....	#
Part 8: Visual Presentation of SRP .....	#
Narrative of Visual Electronic Presentation .....	#
Peer Review Questions of Peers .....	#
Oral Defense of the SRP.....	#
Narrative Defense of Selected Questions .....	#
Part 9: Conclusion.....	#
Findings.....	#
Recommendations.....	#
Final Conclusions.....	#
References.....	#
Appendices	
A Title in Initial Caps and Lower Case—Begin a Second Line Directly Below the First Line .....	#
B Title in Initial Caps and Lower Case .....	#

C Title in Initial Caps and Lower Case .....#

Tables

1 Title in Initial Caps and Lower Case .....#

2 Title in Initial Caps and Lower Case .....#

3 Title in Initial Caps and Lower Case .....#

4 Title in Initial Caps and Lower Case .....#

Figures

1 Title in Initial Caps and Lower Case .....#

2 Title in Initial Caps and Lower Case .....#

3 Title in Initial Caps and Lower Case .....#

4 Title in Initial Caps and Lower Case .....#

# **SAMPLE OF HEADINGS AND LINE SPACING**

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## **Part 1: Main Heading**

[APA Level 1, centered, boldface]

### **Second-Level Heading** [APA Level 2, flush left, boldface]

Begin the first line of text two line spaces under the subheading. Use a consistent 1/2 in. indentation for the first line of each paragraph. Provide one space after sentence-ending punctuation. Double-space between the chapter heading and the subheading.

Double-space between text and heading and between heading and text.

### ***Third-Level Heading*** [APA Level 3, indented, boldface, italicized]

Begin the first line of text two line spaces under the subheading. Use a consistent 1/2 in. indentation for the first line of each paragraph. Provide one space after sentence-ending punctuation. Double-space between the chapter heading and the subheading.

Double-space between text and heading and between heading and text.

**Fourth-Level Heading.** [APA Level 4, indented, boldface]. Begin the first line of the paragraph immediately after the heading.

***Fifth-Level Heading.*** [APA Level 5, boldface, indented, italicized]. Begin the first line of the paragraph immediately after the heading.

# **SAMPLE APPENDIX COVER PAGE**

## Appendix B

### Student Survey

**SAMPLES OF NUMBERED LIST AND  
HANGING INDENT STYLE FOR THE  
REFERENCE LIST**



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## Numbered List (Seriation)

According to APA, this style is used to indicate an “ordinal position (e.g., chronology, importance, priority) among the items.”

XXXXX XXXXXX XXX XXXXX XXXXXXXX XX XXXX XXX XXXXX XXX XXXXXXX X XXXXX XXXX  
XXXXXXXX X XXXXX XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX XXX XXXX XXXXXXX  
XXXXXXX:

1. Xxx XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX XXXXXXX XX XXXXX XXXXXXXXXXXX XX XXXXXXX XXX XXXXX XXXX XX  
XXXXXXXX XXXX XXXXXXX XXXXX.

2. Xxx XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX XXXXXXX XX XXXXX XXXXXXXXXXXX XX XXXX XX XXX XXXXXXX XXX X  
XXXXXXXX XXXX XXXXXXX XXXXX.

3. Xxx XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX XXXXXXX XX XXXXX XXXXXXXXXXXX XX X XXXXXXX XXX X XXXXXXXXXXX  
XXXXXXXX XXXX XXXXXXX XXXXX.

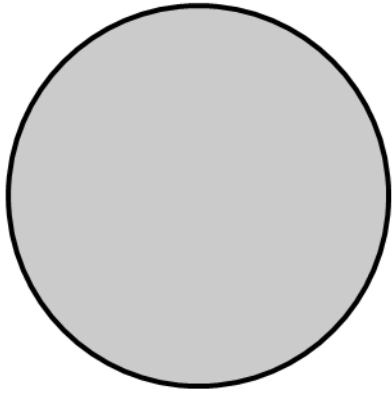
## Hanging Indent Style for the Reference List

Double space between all lines of text in the reference list (i.e., between entries and within each entry. Indent the second and subsequent lines of entry per APA manual.

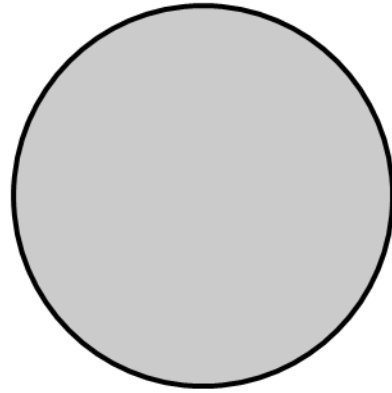
Gregory, A., Skiba, R. J., & Noguera, P. A. (2010). The achievement gap and the discipline gap: Two sides of the same coin? *Educational Researcher*, 39, 59–68.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.3102/0013189X08314117>

**SAMPLE OF A  
LANDSCAPED APPENDIX PAGE**

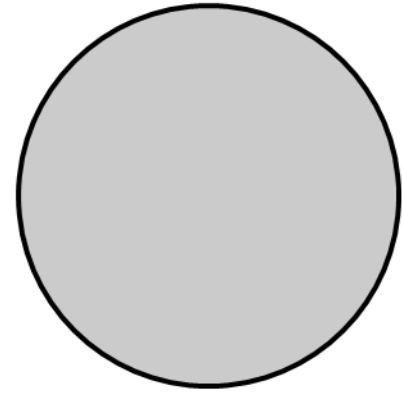
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**Concept**  
**1**



**Concept**  
**2**



**Concept**  
**3**

