



7th Edition

Student Paper Setup Guide

This guide will help you set up an APA Style student paper. The basic setup directions apply to the entire paper. Annotated diagrams illustrate how to set up the major sections of a student paper: the title page or cover page, the text, tables and figures, and the reference list.

Basic Setup

Seventh edition APA Style was designed with modern word-processing programs in mind. Most default settings in programs such as Academic Writer, Microsoft Word, and Google Docs already comply with APA Style. However, you may need to make a few adjustments before you begin writing.

- **Margins:** Use 1-in. margins on all sides of the page (top, bottom, left, and right).
- **Font:** Use a legible font. Many fonts are acceptable, including 11-point Calibri, 11-point Arial, 12-point Times New Roman, and 11-point Georgia. The default font of your word-processing program is acceptable.
- **Line spacing:** Use double-spacing for the entire paper (including block quotations and the reference list). Do not add blank lines before or after headings. Do not add extra spacing between paragraphs.
- **Paragraph alignment and indentation:** Align paragraphs of text to the left margin. Leave the right margin ragged. Do not use full justification. Indent the first line of every paragraph of text 0.5 in. using the tab key or the paragraph-formatting function of your word-processing program.
- **Page numbers:** Put a page number in the top right corner of every page, including the title page or cover page, which is page 1. Student papers do not require a running head on any page.

Title Page Setup



Title Page Elements

	Page number	1
Paper title	Advising Psychology Majors About Graduate School in Psychology: Current Practices and Challenges	
Author names	Robert T. Schatz and Pamela I. Ansburg	
Affiliation	Department of Psychology, Metropolitan State University of Denver	
Course number and name	PSY-4510: History & Systems Psychology	
Instructor name	Dr. Mackenzie R. Teacher	
Due date	September 10, 2020	

- The affiliation consists of the department of the course and the name of the university.
- Write the course number and name and instructor name as shown on course materials.
- Use the date format used in your country for the assignment due date.
- Page number 1 appears in the top right of the page in the page header.
- No running heads are required for student papers.

Title Page Line Spacing

Double-space
whole title page

1

Place title 3 or 4 lines down
from top of page

Advising Psychology Majors About Graduate School in Psychology: Current Practices and Challenges

Extra line between title and author names

Robert T. Schatz and Pamela I. Ansborg

Department of Psychology, Metropolitan State University of Denver

PSY-4510: History & Systems Psychology

Dr. Mackenzie R. Teacher

September 10, 2020

Title Page Alignment

Right-align
page number

1

Center entire title page
(except page number)

Advising Psychology Majors About Graduate School in Psychology: Current Practices and Challenges

Robert T. Schatz and Pamela I. Ansborg

Department of Psychology, Metropolitan State University of Denver

PSY-4510: History & Systems Psychology

Dr. Mackenzie R. Teacher

September 10, 2020

Title Page Font

1

Bold paper title

Advising Psychology Majors About Graduate School in Psychology: Current Practices and Challenges

Robert T. Schatz and Pamela I. Ansborg

Department of Psychology, Metropolitan State University of Denver

PSY-4510: History & Systems Psychology

Dr. Mackenzie R. Teacher

September 10, 2020

Standard font
(no bold, no italic)
for all other title
page elements

Text Setup



Text Elements

Repeat paper title at top of first page of text

2

Advising Psychology Majors About Graduate School in Psychology: Current Practices and Challenges

Introduction

The *APA Guidelines for the Undergraduate Psychology Major* outlines strategies for psychology departments to help students discern and take steps toward their professional development goals (APA Board of Educational Affairs Task Force on Psychology Major Competencies, 2013). For many students, graduate school is fundamental to achieving postbaccalaureate success. High-quality advising can be vital in helping students gain admission to psychology graduate programs. However, little is known about the strategies that psychology departments use to advise students about graduate school. We conducted the present research to better understand these strategies.

The job outlook for psychology majors who earn graduate degrees is quite good. In fact, the demand for psychologists with graduate degrees is expected to grow much faster than the demand for

- Repeat the paper title at the top of the first page of text.
- Begin with an introduction to provide background and context.
- Use descriptive headings to identify other sections (e.g., Method, Results, Discussion for quantitative research papers).
- Sections and headings vary depending on paper type and complexity.
- Text can include tables and figures, block quotations, headings, and footnotes.

Text Line Spacing

Double-space all text, including

- headings and section labels
- paragraphs of text
- block quotes

Text Alignment

The diagram shows a sample page layout with the following elements and annotations:

- Center paper title:** A box pointing to the title "Advising Psychology Majors About Graduate School in Psychology: Current Practices and Challenges".
- Page number:** The number "2" is in the top right corner.
- Text alignment:** The main text is left-aligned. A box labeled "Left-align text" points to the first line of the first paragraph.
- Indentation:** The first line of each paragraph is indented. A box labeled "Indent first line of paragraphs 0.5\"" points to the first line of the first paragraph.
- Right margin:** A wavy line on the right side of the text indicates a ragged right margin. A box labeled "Ragged right margin" points to this line.
- Text content:**

The APA Guidelines for the Undergraduate Psychology Major outlines strategies for psychology departments to help students discern and take steps toward their professional development goals (APA Board of Educational Affairs Task Force on Psychology Major Competencies, 2013). For many students, graduate school is fundamental to achieving postbaccalaureate success. High-quality advising can be vital in helping students gain admission to psychology graduate programs. However, little is known about the strategies that psychology departments use to advise students about graduate school. We conducted the present research to better understand these strategies.

The job outlook for psychology majors who earn graduate degrees is quite good. In fact, the demand for psychologists with graduate degrees is expected to grow much faster than the demand for

Block Quotation Alignment

The diagram shows a sample page layout with the following elements and annotations:

- Page number:** The number "5" is in the top right corner.
- Block quotation:** A large rectangular box contains a block quotation. A box labeled "Indent whole block quote 0.5\" from left margin (also double-spaced)" points to the left margin of the quotation box.
- Text content:**

Although students correctly noted that research experience, letters of recommendation, personal statements, GPA, and program fit are important factors, they erroneously attached relatively low importance to conference presentations, publications, and the thoroughness of application materials (Sanders & Landrum, 2012). Appleby and Appleby (2006) found that the shortcomings of many psychology majors' applications to graduate programs resulted from

a lack of exposure to information that would otherwise enable [the applicants] to understand the graduate school culture, the requirements of the graduate school application process, and the exact nature of some of its components [as well as] a lack of appropriate advising and mentoring. (p. 22)

Thus, there is a need for psychology departments to improve the quality of the advising they deliver to undergraduate students about applying to psychology graduate programs.

According to the National Academic Advising Association (2007), successful advising programs

Text Font

- Use the same font throughout the entire paper.
- Write body text in standard (nonbold, nonitalic) font.
- Use italics sparingly, for instance, to highlight a key term on first use (see *Concise Guide to APA Style* Section 4.15).

Headings Format

Level	Format
1	Centered, Bold, Title Case Heading Text begins as a new paragraph.
2	Flush left, Bold, Title Case Heading Text begins as a new paragraph.
3	<i>Flush Left, Bold Italic, Title Case Heading</i> Text begins as a new paragraph.
4	Indented, Bold, Title Case Heading, Ending With a Period. Text begins on the same line and continues as a regular paragraph.
5	<i>Indented, Bold Italic, Title Case Heading, Ending With a Period.</i> Text begins on the same line and continues as a regular paragraph.

- **Alignment:** Center Level 1 headings. Left-align Level 2 and Level 3 headings. Indent Level 4 and Level 5 headings like a paragraph.
- **Font:** Boldface all headings. Also italicize Level 3 and Level 5 headings.
- **Tip:** Create heading styles using your word-processing program (built into Academic Writer, available for Word via [sample papers](#) on the APA Style website).

Tables and Figures Setup



- Only some papers have tables and figures.
- Tables and figures share the same elements.

Table Elements

Number Table 1

Title Departments' Formal Requirements for Students to Learn About Graduate School in Psychology

Body
(rows and
columns)

Answer	%	<i>n</i>
No formal requirements	47.9	78
Completion of a psychology careers course or module	35.6	58
Required meeting with a department advisor	25.2	41
Other	4.9	7
Required attendance at a presentation on psychology careers	4.3	4
Required meeting with an advisor from outside the department	1.2	2
Unsure	0.6	1

Note
(optional)

Note. The survey item read as follows: "What format requirements does your department have for students to learn about graduate school in psychology? Check all that apply."

Figure Elements

Number Figure 1

Title Participant Response Frequencies Regarding Priority of Graduate School Advising

Image



Note
(optional)

Note. The survey item read as follows: "Compared to your department's other educational goals for psychology students, how much of a priority is it to provide students advising about the process of applying to graduate school in psychology?"

Table Line Spacing

Double-space
number and title

Table 1

Departments' Formal Requirements for Students to Learn About Graduate School in Psychology

Answer	%	<i>n</i>
No formal requirements	47.9	78
Completion of a psychology careers course or module	35.6	58
Required meeting with a department advisor	25.2	41
Other	4.9	7
Required attendance at a presentation on psychology careers	4.3	4
Required meeting with an advisor from outside the department	1.2	2
Unsure	0.6	1

Single-, 1.5, or
double-spacing in
table body
(adjust as needed
for readability)

Double-space
note

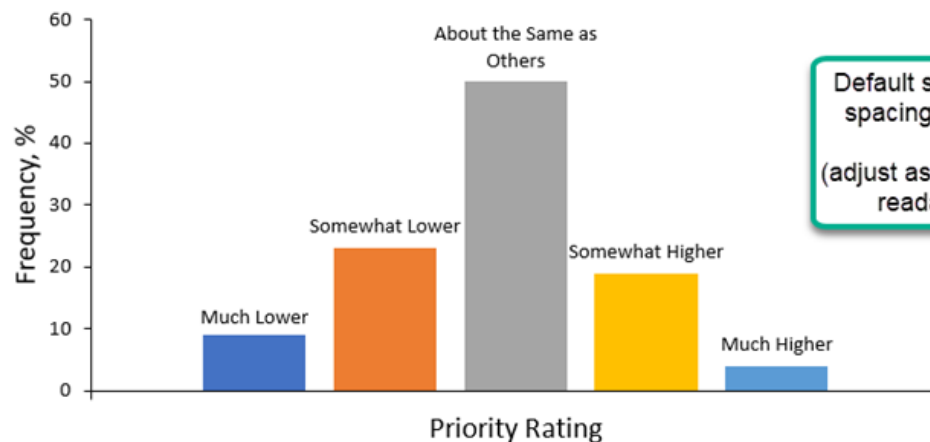
Note. The survey item read as follows: "What format requirements does your department have for students to learn about graduate school in psychology? Check all that apply."

Figure Line Spacing

Double-space
number and title

Figure 1

Participant Response Frequencies Regarding Priority of Graduate School Advising



Default settings for
spacing in image
(adjust as needed for
readability)

Double-space
note

Note. The survey item read as follows: "Compared to your department's other educational goals for psychology students, how much of a priority is it to provide students advising about the process of applying to graduate school in psychology?"

Table Alignment

Left-align
number and title

Table 1

Departments' Formal Requirements for Students to Learn About Graduate School in Psychology

Answer	%	<i>n</i>
No formal requirements	47.9	78
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Required meeting with an advisor from outside the department	1.2	2
Unsure	0.6	1

Center table
headings

Left-align
table itself

and

Left-align
leftmost column

Center data
(if short)

or

Left-align data
(if long)

Left-align note

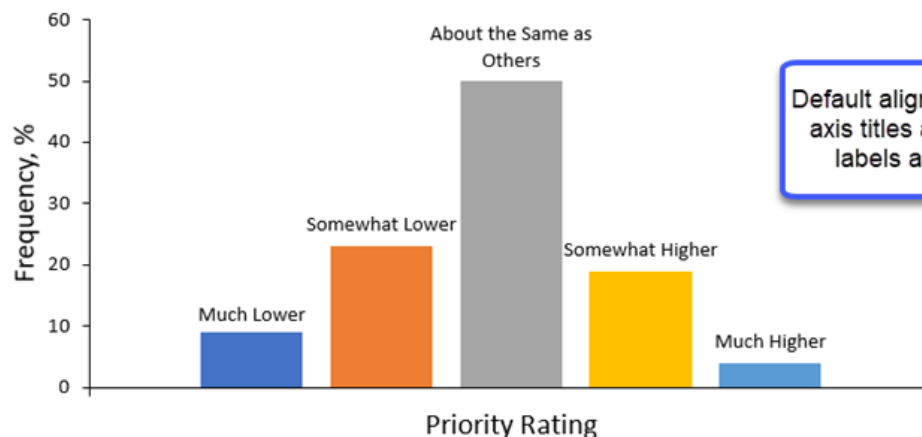
Note. The survey item read as follows: "What format requirements does your department have for students to learn about graduate school in psychology? Check all that apply."

Figure Alignment

Left-align
number and title

Figure 1

Participant Response Frequencies Regarding Priority of Graduate School Advising



Left-align whole
image (chart,
graph, etc.)

Default alignments for
axis titles and data
labels are fine

Left-align note

Note. The survey item read as follows: "Compared to your department's other educational goals for psychology students, how much of a priority is it to provide students advising about the process of applying to graduate school in psychology?"

Table Font

Bold number Table 1

Italic title *Departments' Formal Requirements for Students to Learn About Graduate School in Psychology*

Answer	%	<i>n</i>
No formal requirements	47.9	78
Completion of a psychology careers course or module	35.6	58
Required meeting with a department advisor	25.2	41
Other	4.9	7
Required attendance at a presentation on psychology careers	4.3	4
Required meeting with an advisor from outside the department	1.2	2
Unsure	0.6	1

Same font
as paper in
table body

Italic "Note" *Note.* The survey item read as follows: "What format requirements does your department have for students to learn about graduate school in psychology? Check all that apply."

Same font
as paper in
note text

Figure Font

Bold number Figure 1

Italic title *Participant Response Frequencies Regarding Priority of Graduate School Advising*



Sans serif font
(e.g., Calibri, Arial)
in image,
size 8-14 pt
(default settings
are fine)

Italic "Note" *Note.* The survey item read as follows: "Compared to your department's other educational goals for psychology students, how much of a priority is it to provide students advising about the process of applying to graduate school in psychology?"

Same font
as paper in
note text

Placement of Tables and Figures

You can embed tables and figures in the body of the paper.

This guide shows options for placement. If your instructor requires tables and figures to be placed at the end of the paper, see examples in the *Publication Manual* and in the professional sample paper on the APA Style website.

- Embed tables and figures in the text.
- Call out (mention) the table or figure in the text before embedding it.
- Place the table or figure after the callout
 - at the bottom of the page
 - at the top of the next page
 - by itself on the next page
- Avoid placing tables and figures in the middle of the page.

Embedding at the Bottom of the Page

estimates (American Psychological Association, 2016; Halonen, 2011). Respondents evaluated the

relative priority of graduate school advising versus other priorities (see Figure 1).

Callout in text before
table or figure

Blank line between text
and table or figure at
bottom of page

Figure 1

Participant Response Frequencies Regarding Priority of Graduate School Advising



Embedding at the Top of the Page

Callout in text before
table or figure

Table 1 presents responses to the question regarding formal requirements for students to learn about graduate school in participants' home departments. A little more than a third of departments required students to complete a careers or professional development course or course module(s) that included information about graduate school, and 25% of departments required that students meet with a department advisor about graduate school. Forty-eight percent of participants indicated that their department had no formal requirements for students to learn about graduate school.

6

Table or figure is at
top of page

Table 1

Departments' Formal Requirements for Students to Learn About Graduate School in Psychology

Answer	%	<i>n</i>
No formal requirements	47.9	78
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Required meeting with a department advisor	25.2	41
Other	4.9	7
Required attendance at a presentation on psychology careers	4.3	4
Required meeting with an advisor from outside the department	1.2	2
Unsure	0.6	1

Note. The survey item read as follows: "What format requirements does your department have for students to learn about graduate school in psychology? Check all that apply."

Blank line between
end of table or figure
and more text

Table 2 shows participants' perceptions regarding the most common way that students in their department learn about the psychology graduate school application process. Over half of the

Embedding on Its Own Page

8

Table 4

Challenges or Barriers to Advising Students About Applying to Graduate School in Psychology

Challenge	%	<i>n</i>	Example
Disseminating information	32	52	We need to get information to students effectively.
Faculty time and resources	20	33	We each have 30 to 40 advisees.
Student effort or initiative	7	12	Students need to be more proactive.
Student constraints	7	12	Many students cannot leave the area due to family responsibilities.
Student planning and timelines	7	12	Students get involved in research too late.
Student interest	6	9	Not all students are interested in graduate school.
Student resources	5	8	We do not have adequate research and field work opportunities for all interested students.
Assessment	4	7	There is no easy way to track students or follow up to find out who actually applies to graduate school.
Faculty interest and motivation	4	6	Some faculty do not encourage students to apply.

- Embed long tables or large figures on their own page if needed.
- Text continues on the next page.

Reference List Setup



Reference List Elements

"References"
section label

9

Alphabetical list of
references

References

APA Board of Educational Affairs Task Force on Psychology Major Competencies. (2013). *APA guidelines for the undergraduate psychology major* (Version 2.0).
<https://www.apa.org/ed/precollege/about/psymajor-guidelines.pdf>

Appleby, D. C., & Appleby, K. M. (2006). Kisses of death in the graduate school application process. *Teaching of Psychology*, 33(1), 19–24. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15328023top3301_5

Halonen, J. S. (2011). *Are there too many psychology majors?* [White paper]. Council of Graduate Departments of Psychology.
[https://www.cogdop.org/page_attachments/0000/0199/FLA White Paper for cogop posting.pdf](https://www.cogdop.org/page_attachments/0000/0199/FLA%20White%20Paper%20for%20cogop%20posting.pdf)

Patton, M. Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods* (2nd ed.). Sage Publications.

- View [reference examples](#) on the APA Style website
- Consult Chapter 10 for even more examples.

Reference List Line Spacing

Start reference list
at top of a new
page after text

9

References

Double-space the
entire reference list

(both within and
between entries)

APA Board of Educational Affairs Task Force on Psychology Major Competencies. (2013). *APA guidelines for the undergraduate psychology major* (Version 2.0).

<https://www.apa.org/ed/precollege/about/psymajor-guidelines.pdf>

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[https://www.cogdop.org/page_attachments/0000/0199/FLA White Paper for cogop posting.pdf](https://www.cogdop.org/page_attachments/0000/0199/FLA%20White%20Paper%20for%20cogop%20posting.pdf)

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Medina, E., & Sgro, J. A. (1993). Developing and improving advising: Challenges to prepare

Reference List Alignment

Center the bold
"References" label

9

References

Hanging indent of
0.5" on all reference
entries

Create hanging
indent with your
word-processing
program

(do not manually hit
enter and tab keys)

APA Board of Educational Affairs Task Force on Psychology Major Competencies. (2013). *APA guidelines for the undergraduate psychology major* (Version 2.0).

<https://www.apa.org/ed/precollege/about/psymajor-guidelines.pdf>

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Halonen, J. S. (2011). *Are there too many psychology majors?* [White paper]. Council of Graduate Departments of Psychology.

[https://www.cogdop.org/page_attachments/0000/0199/FLA White Paper for cogop posting.pdf](https://www.cogdop.org/page_attachments/0000/0199/FLA%20White%20Paper%20for%20cogop%20posting.pdf)

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Medina, E., & Sgro, J. A. (1993). Developing and improving advising: Challenges to prepare

Reference List Font

Bold "References" label at top
of first page of references

9

References

APA Board of Educational Affairs Task Force on Psychology Major Competencies. (2013). *APA guidelines for the undergraduate psychology major* (Version 2.0).

<https://www.apa.org/ed/precollege/about/psymajor-guidelines.pdf>

Appleby, D. C., & Appleby, K. M. (2006). Kisses of death in the graduate school application process.

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Medina, E., & Sgro, J. A. (1993). Developing and improving advising: Challenges to prepare

students for life. In T. V. McGovern (Ed.), *Handbook for enhancing undergraduate education in psychology* (pp. 47–70). American Psychological Association. <https://doi.org/10.1037/10126-002>

Italics in reference
entries either

on the title
(e.g., webpages,
books, reports)

or

on the source
(e.g., journal articles,
edited book chapters)

Final Checks

Check Page Order

- Start each section on a new page.
- Arrange pages in the following order:
 - Title page (page 1)
 - Text (starts on page 2)
 - Reference list (starts on a new page after the text)



Check Headings

- Check that headings accurately reflect the content in each section.
- Start each main section with a Level 1 heading.
- Use Level 2 headings for subsections of the introduction.
- Use the same level of heading for sections of equal importance.
- Avoid having only one subsection within a section (have two or more, or none).

Check Assignment Instructions

- Instructors' guidelines supersede APA Style.
- Students should check their assignment guidelines or rubric for specific content to include in their papers and to make sure they are meeting assignment requirements.

Tips for Better Writing

- Ask for feedback on your paper from a classmate, writing center tutor, or instructor.
- Budget time to implement suggestions.
- Use spell-check and grammar-check to identify potential errors.
- Proofread the paper by reading it slowly and carefully aloud to yourself.
- Consult your university writing center if you need extra help.



AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

More information on student papers can be found in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.) and in the *Concise Guide to APA Style* (7th ed.).

SOURCE: American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.). <https://doi.org/10.1037/0000165-000>

Last updated 10/21/2020