

Writing Style and Standards
in Undergraduate Reports
Third Edition

by Jeffrey Donnell
Sheldon Jeter
Colin MacDougall
Jacqueline Snedeker

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ABOUT THIS GUIDE

Writing Style and Standards in Undergraduate Reports, Third 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, graphs, equations, spreadsheets, and the like?” The first two sections of this guide respond to these two questions.

The first section of this guide, *Writing Style in Undergraduate 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. 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 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 Reports*, speaks to the problems students face as they present their work using figures, tables, equations, and so forth. This section of the guide explicitly outlines the norms for assembling and labeling figural and tabular information, it provides examples of well-made figures and tables, and it provides detailed checklists to help students determine whether their data is professionally presented. *Standards for Undergraduate Reports* also offers a concrete review of 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.



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