

Style Guide for VCJ Authors

About the Journal

Since 1997, the Visual Communications Journal has served as the official journal of the Graphic Communications Education Association (GCEA) and provides a professional communicative link for educators and industry personnel associated with the design, presentation, management, and reproduction of graphic forms of communication. Manuscripts submitted for publication are subject to peer review. For article submission, please follow the guidelines provided in this Style Guide for the VCJ authors.

This guide outlines formatting, tone, length, citation style, and submission requirements for four types of contributions. Authors should follow these standards to ensure clarity, consistency, and professional presentation.

VCJ seeks these types of articles:

1. Research Articles

- Length: 6,000–8,000 words (including references, tables, and figures).
- Abstract: 150–250 words, structured with Purpose, Methods, Results, and Conclusion.
- Keywords: 4–6.
- Structure: Introduction, Literature Review, Methods, Results, Discussion, Conclusion, References.
- Figures/Tables: Maximum 8 combined, high-resolution (300 dpi).
- Style: APA 7th edition citation and formatting.
- Voice: Third person, objective, formal.

2. Practitioner Articles: Case Studies / Practice Reports

- Length: 2,500–3,500 words.
- Abstract: 100–150 words (unstructured).
- Structure: Background, Context, Intervention/Process, Outcomes, Lessons Learned, References.
- Figures/Tables: Maximum 4 combined.
- Style: APA 7th edition.
- Voice: Third person, professional but accessible.
- Focus: Practical application, transferability of insights.

3. Student Research Articles

- Length: 2,500–3,500 words (including references, tables, and figures).
- Abstract: 150–250 words, structured with Purpose, Methods, Results, and Conclusion.
- Keywords: 4–6.

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- Structure: Introduction, Literature Review, Methods, Results, Discussion, Conclusion, References.
- Figures/Tables: Maximum 8 combined, high-resolution (300 dpi).
- Style: APA 7th edition citation and formatting.
- Voice: Third person, objective, formal.

4. White Papers

- Length: 3,000–5,000 words.
- Abstract/Executive Summary: 200–300 words highlighting the issue, solution, and recommendations.
- Structure: Executive Summary, Problem/Issue Statement, Background & Context (supported by research/data), Proposed Solutions/Recommendations, Implications for Practice, Policy, or Industry, References
- Figures/Tables: Maximum 6, with emphasis on charts, infographics, and data visualization.
- Style: APA 7th edition for references, but emphasis on clarity and readability for mixed audiences (academic + professional).
- Voice: Third person, persuasive yet evidence-based.
- Focus: Bridge research and practice; provide actionable insights and recommendations.

General Formatting for All Submissions

- Font/Size: Times New Roman, 12 pt.
- Spacing: Double-spaced.
- Margins: 1 inch all around.
- File Format: Word (.docx).
- Referencing: APA 7th edition.
- Language: English, clear and concise.
- Submission: Submit your formatted Word document file of your journal proposal.

Please submit to: viscomjournal@gmail.com and cc: cnblue@clemson.edu

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Research Articles – APA 7th Edition Layout & Formatting Requirements

Resource: https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/index.html

In the case of research articles under the APA 7th edition guidelines, here are the general requirements for the layout of the title page, abstract, sections, citations, charts, images, tables, equations, and references.

1. Title Page

- Title: Bold, centered, in title case. Concise (≤ 12 words), no abbreviations.
- Author(s): Full names, centered below the title.
- Affiliation(s): Department, institution, city, state.
- Author Note: Optional, placed at the bottom of the page (includes funding, disclosures, acknowledgments).
- Running head: Not required for student papers; for professional manuscripts, include a shortened title (< 50 characters) flush left in the header.
- Page number: Upper right corner.

2. Abstract

- Placement: New page, following the title page.
- Label: “Abstract” centered and bold at the top.
- Content: 150–250 words, single paragraph, no indentation.
- Structure: Summarize purpose, methods, results, and conclusion.
- Keywords: Indent, italicize. Keywords: label, then list 3–6 keywords.

3. Main Sections

- APA research articles generally follow IMRaD format (Introduction, Methods, Results, and Discussion):
- Headings: APA uses 5 levels of headings (bold, italics, centered/flush left depending on level).
- Introduction: No heading label, begins on a new page.
- Methods, Results, Discussion: Each begins with a Level 1 heading (centered, bold).
- Conclusion or Implications: May be included at the end of the Discussion or as a separate Level 1 section.

4. In-Text Citations

- Paraphrasing: (Author, Year) → e.g., (Smith, 2020).
- Direct quotes: (Author, Year, p. #) → e.g., (Smith, 2020, p. 15).

Multiple authors:

- 2 authors → (Smith & Jones, 2020).
- 3+ authors → (Smith et al., 2020).
- Narrative citation: Smith (2020) argues that...

5. Figures, Charts, and Images Placement: Either embedded in-text after first mention OR grouped at the end (journal-specific preference).

- Numbering: Sequential, Figure 1, Figure 2, etc.
- Labeling: Caption below the figure, italicized.
- Example:

Figure 1

Scatterplot of participants' scores by group.

- Resolution: ≥ 300 dpi.
- Color: Use sparingly; ensure grayscale readability.

6. Tables

- Placement: Same options as figures (embedded or at end).
- Numbering: Sequential, Table 1, Table 2, etc.
- Labeling: Title above table, italicized.
- Example: *Table 1 Descriptive Statistics of Participant Responses*
- Formatting: No vertical lines; minimal horizontal lines.
- Notes: Place below the table (general, specific, and probability notes).

7. Equations

- Formatting: Centered on its own line.
- Numbering: Align the equation number flush right in parentheses.
- Example: $E = mc^2$ (1)

$$f(x) = a_0 + \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \left(a_n \cos \frac{n\pi x}{L} + b_n \sin \frac{n\pi x}{L} \right) \quad (1)$$

- In-text reference: “As shown in Equation 1...”

8. References

- Start: New page, with heading “References” centered and bold.
- Order: Alphabetical by first author’s last name.
- Hanging indent: 0.5 inch.

Examples:

- Journal article:

Author, A. A., & Author, B. B. (Year). Title of the article. Title of Journal, 34(2), 123–145.
<https://doi.org/xxxxx>

- Book:

Author, A. A. (Year). Title of book. Publisher. <https://doi.org/xxxxx>

- Edited book chapter:

Author, A. A. (Year). Title of chapter. In E. E. Editor (Ed.), Title of book (pp. xx–xx). Publisher.

Submission information: Submit your formatted Word document file of your journal proposal.

Please submit to: viscomjournal@gmail.com and cc: cnblue@clemson.edu

Questions to:

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