Psychology 280
APA Style Checklist for Research Proposal & Final Paper

Below are general guidelines for your final paper. Additional guidelines are found in lecture notes, the Cozby text or the APA Manual (5th Edition).

**General Typing and Organization (Research Proposal/Final Paper)**
- √ 1” margins all around
- √ The parts of the report are in the correct order
- √ Double-space throughout the report
- √ Each page has a manuscript page header and page number (except figures pages)
- √ Five-pace paragraph indents throughout the main body of the report
- √ Typed all the title and headings in the upper and lowercase letters (except the running head)
- √ Entire document has been checked for spelling and grammatical errors
- √ Paper is written in the third person, trying to avoid personal pronouns such as “I,” “we,” “our”

**Title Page (Research Proposal/Final Paper)**
- √ Try for a title 15 words or less
- √ Title, your name and your institutional affiliation are centered on the page
- √ Running head no longer than 50 characters, including spaces

**Abstract (Research Proposal/Final Paper)**
- √ Abstract headed by centered word “Abstract”
- √ Abstract 100 to 150 words in length
- √ First line of abstract not indented

**Introduction Section (Research Proposal/Final Paper)**
- √ Introduction is headed by the paper’s title, not by the word “Introduction”
- √ All reference citations complete, accurate and correctly formatted
- √ The introduction section moves from general to specific.
  - o The introduction begins with a general statement about the area being studied
  - o The literature review moves from general to more specific references related to the topic of the current paper
  - o After the literature review, the introduction section ends with the study’s purpose followed by the hypothesis
- √ The Introduction section is written in past tense

**Method Section (Research Proposal/Final Paper)**
- √ The method section follows immediately after the end of the introduction
- √ The method section is headed by the centered word “Method”
- √ The method section is organized into subsections (e.g. Subjects, Procedure, etc.)
- √ The titles for the subsections are underlined (e.g. Subjects)
- √ Titles for the subsections are flush with left margins
- √ Method section is written in the past tense

**Results Section (Final Paper)**
- √ The results section follows immediately after the end of the method section
- √ The method section is headed by the centered word “Results”
- √ If appropriate, the results section is organized into subsections using underlined margin headings
- √ If interactions are discussed, the independent variables are capitalized when linked by an X (e.g. Time by Difficulty interaction)
- √ Proper form is used for the insertion of tables and figures in the appropriate place
Discussion Section (Final Paper)

√ Discussion section begins immediately after the end of the results section
√ Discussion section is headed by the centered word “Discussion”
√ Past tense is used to describe the results and to refer to other research cited in the introduction
√ Present used to discuss theories, speculations, conclusions
√ Future tense used to suggest additional research which could further the present state of knowledge
√ Discussion section is written from specific to general
  o The Discussion begins immediately by stating if the results did or did not support your hypothesis
  o Then goes on to relate your findings to similar studies cited in the introduction
  o Then goes on to describe design features or procedures which would have improved the present study if you could do it over
  o Then goes on to suggest further research
√ Citations are formatted properly

Reference Section (Research Proposal/Final Paper)

√ Reference sections begins on a new page
√ The reference page is headed by the centered word “References”
√ References are listed in alphabetical order by first author’s last name
√ Each author's first and middle name is in initials followed by a period, not spelled out (e.g. Smith, R. J.)
√ Each reference begins at the left margin
√ Subsequent lines within each reference are indented three spaces from the left
√ The correct reference format is used for each citation

Tables (Final Paper)

√ Do either a Table or a Figure for your final paper
√ Each table is typed on a separate page
√ Each table has a manuscript page header and a page number
√ Each table is numbered consecutively according to its order in the results section of the report
√ Each table is identified by the heading “Table” and a number, typed flush with the left margin of the table
√ Each table has a concise title located between the heading “Table” and the table itself
√ Each table title is underlined
√ The first letter of each word in the title is capitalized (except for prepositions, etc.)
√ All lines within the table are at least double-spaced
√ In the body of the table, each column has a heading
√ All lines in the table are horizontal (there should be no vertical lines)

Figures (Final Paper)

√ Do either a Table or a Figure for your final paper
√ The figure caption list is typed on a separate page
√ The figure caption page is headed by the centered title “Figure Caption” if only one figure or “Figure Captions” if two or more figures are included in the results
√ The figure caption page has a manuscript page header and a page number
√ Each figure is drawn on a separate page
√ Each figure is numbered consecutively, corresponding to its order in the results
√ Lines are drawn perfectly straight using a ruler, graphing paper or a computer program
√ The independent variable is on the horizontal axis, the dependent variable on the vertical axis
√ The units on each axis are labeled and spaced equally
√ If appropriate, a legend is used to identify the lines in the graph