How to Prepare and Format a Paper or a Thesis: Specific Instructions for Andrews Group Members

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1. File Nomenclature

LastNameFirstName_BriefDescription_Date(MonthDayYear-2 digits, no spaces or punctuation)_RevisionNumber (R1).doc or .pdf

2. General Format

Double-space all text including figure legends and bibliographies. Use Times New Roman or Palatino 12 pt font with 1” margins and with the text right/left justified. Include a separate title page with working title, authors, affiliations, journal for submission (or thesis information). Use only one space after periods (not two). Indent paragraphs by 5 spaces.

Using figures to illustrate important concepts or data. These should be included at the end of paper drafts. You can reproduce figures from published sources for theses but you must obtain copyright permission. Otherwise, you must make your own figures or use figures made by others in our group (credit author in figure legend for theses). Figures should include legends describing the figures and summarizing the points they illustrate in your text.

Include a header with your name and the date (revision number if applicable) and a footer with a short running title and page numbers on each page.

Use major subheadings, e.g., Introduction, Discussion, and minor subheadings. These should be numbered, e.g., 2.1, 2.2.

3. Editing drafts

When a comment is made by me in your draft, determine whether this change should be made globally and apply it.

If you don’t understand a comment or cannot read my writing, highlight the comment and ask me about it prior to submitting your next draft. Do not ignore comments. If you do not agree with a comment, add an in text note suggesting an alternate change.

Keep all bloody drafts until the paper is published. Remember that the process of writing is collaborative and iterative. We may need to go through a number of drafts before producing a finished product. You must prepare in advance for this and leave sufficient time for revisions.

4. Writing Style

See tips at http://www.jneurosci.org/misc/ifa_writing.shtml. This is a very informative site!

Keep sentences short and succinct.

Work to be as specific and clear as possible in your explanations.
Do not offer value judgments, e.g., This was an excellent paper. Avoid over qualifying, e.g., the best experiment… very good. Refrain from using words such as “hope”, “obviously”, “clearly”.

Remember that scientific writing differs from creative writing in the following important way. Creative writing is a form of art – the experience of each reader will be unique. In scientific writing, we strive for the opposite. The writing style should be crisp, clear and unambiguous. All readers should arrive at the same understanding.

Review the guidelines on plagiarism (http://ttt.its.psu.edu/suggestions/cyberplag/cyberplagstudent.html). Plagiarism of any kind will not be tolerated and the policy and consequences can include expulsion from the university.

5. Grammar and abbreviations

Review the proper usage of commas (see http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/grammar/g_comma.html)

Review the correct use of “which” versus “that” (see http://www.kentlaw.edu/academics/lrw/grinker/LwtaThat_Versus_Which.htm).

Have at least one other person read your paper before you give it to me. If English is not your first language, this is a must. It is not an efficient use of my time to correct grammar.

Make sure you run a grammar and spell check.

When using abbreviations, do not capitalize words being abbreviated unless they are proper nouns, e.g., “brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF)” or “serotonin transporter (SERT)” not “Brain-Derived Neurotrophic Factor (BDNF)” or “Serotonin Transporter (SERT)”.

My shorthand is as follows: “l.c.” means change to lower case, “u.c.” means change to upper case, “sp” means check spelling, “ref” means add references, a capital “P” with a double stem means start a new paragraph, “Δ TO” means change throughout or make this a global change.

Know your Latin abbreviations and when to use them appropriately (i.e., vs. e.g.,).

Use Andrews group standard abbreviations, e.g., serotonin transporter (SERT), serotonin-selective reuptake inhibitors (SRIs), SERT-deficient mice not SERT knockout mice.

Use SI abbreviations, e.g., µM not micromolar, h not hrs.

6. References

Use in text references copiously!!! You must read the papers you reference. Trail of information must be correct. Use primary citation, i.e., don’t cite a paper that simply discusses the concept in its introduction, point the reader to the primary source of information.
Place references at the **first** occurrence. Do not make the reader wait 2 or more sentences to find citations.

Example: Incorrect –

**Correct** --

In text citations and bibliographies should follow *Journal of Neuroscience* style for early paper drafts and theses (see below). Other journal styles will be applied as necessary in the final draft stages when we decide what journal the paper will be sent to. **You are required to learn and to use EndNote to manage references.** However, you still need to proof read your drafts, including the bibliography, to identify errors and omissions that can occur even when EndNote is used. Only peer-reviewed papers are acceptable for references. Websites cannot be used as references due to the fact that they are not peer-reviewed and may change over time. While you may use review articles to provide you with background information, these should be referenced sparingly in your bibliography. Reviews can be used to point you to the **primary literature**, which you should read and reference in your paper or when you want to point the reader to a good review of the subject or where a review is putting forth a new concept.

**References (Journal of Neuroscience: http://www.jneurosci.org/misc/ifa_organization.shtml)**

Only published references should appear in the reference list at the end of the paper.

References should be cited in the text as follows: "The procedure used has been described elsewhere (Green, 1978),"or "Our observations are in agreement with those of Brown and Black (1979) and of White et al. (1980),"or with multiple references, in chronological order: "Earlier reports (Brown and Black, 1979, 1981; White et al., 1980; Smith, 1982, 1984).... " In the list of references (to be typed double-spaced), papers should be given in alphabetical order according to the surname of the first author. In two-author papers with the same first author, the order is alphabetical by the second author's name. In three-or-more-author papers with the same first author, the order is chronological. The name of the author(s) should be followed by the date in parentheses, the full title of the paper as it appeared in the original manuscript together (sentence case) with the source of the reference (PubMed (Index Medicus) or ISI abbreviations for journal names/no periods), the volume number, and the full first and last page numbers. Do not number or bullet the references. If the author list for a paper in the references exceeds 20, the paper should be cited as Author A et al. The following illustrate the format to be used:

**Journal articles:**


Book


Chapter in a book:


Responsibility for the correctness of the references lies with the author(s). After manuscript revisions, authors should double-check that all in-text citations are in the reference list and that all references on the reference list have at least one corresponding in-text citation.

7. Choosing preferred reviewers for your manuscript
1. Don't suggest editors or associate editors as reviewers, e.g., Bob Kennedy. They have their hands full and generally do not review papers too. There are some exceptions to this, e.g., very high profile papers. One might ask an editor at AChem to review a paper submitted to Science, for example.

2. No reviewers from your institution, e.g., no one from UCLA. This is considered an outright conflict of interest (COI).

3. All current collaborators, e.g., people that you have grants with, joint students, etc. and anyone you've published a paper with in the past 5 years can not be considered impartial reviewers (COI). Also, former students/postdocs/mentors generally cannot review one another's papers. There are some statutes of limitations here. For example, a former postdoc who is now completely established in an independent career and who hasn't published with their former mentor for many years might be an appropriate reviewer and visa versa.

While I will make the final determination regarding suggested reviewers, it is important for all authors to be thinking about who will review a manuscript during the writing process, particularly the latter stages. Look at the bibliography. Who's work is cited most often? This might be a potential reviewer and this is one way that editors will select reviewers. Search keywords for you paper on PubMed. Who's work do you come up with? These might also be potential reviewers. Ask yourself, who would be excited to read this paper? (If you can't come up with good answers to this, you should consider rewriting the ms or not submitting at all...)

Lists of suggested referees should be developed during the writing process, not at the end. Make sure your preferred reviewers' work is cited in your paper. Referrees will generally be
unfavorable toward a ms from the start if they receive it for review, look immediately at the bibliography (which we all do), and do not see their relevant work cited there.

Thing about the main aspects of the paper, e.g., microdialysis, behavior, separations, no net flux, circadian rhythm, etc. Does the expertise represented in your list of suggested referees cover the important aspects of your work. Referees are not expected to be experts in all aspects of the manuscript.

Finally, send the editor a comprehensive list of referees, e.g. 6 or more! Make the editor's job easy. If you suggest a long list of highly appropriate reviewers, the editor is more likely to use your preferred referees. Some referees will decline to review b/c they are busy or are not interested. Editors usually need 2-3 reviews to make a decision on your paper. If they have to look for appropriate reviewers, this can slow down the review process. Also, you might end up with reviewers that are not highly knowledgeable in the areas of the work in the ms. That said, in my experience, the reviewers selected by authors are usually the hardest on manuscripts! (Authors find this hard to believe as they think their preferred reviewers are likely to be the most favorable. Most editors will tell you the same thing.)