

The most important editorial guidelines for the Assurance Argument will not be about form or appearances but about content.

Format and Style Guidelines

- All reports should be written in Microsoft Word and submitted via email to the Accreditation Liaison.
- Body type should be in Times New Roman, 12 pt.
- Body text should be single-spaced with two spaces between paragraphs and no indentation of paragraphs.
- Don't justify text; all text should be flush left.
- The tone of the reports will be objective. Not stiff or rigidly formal but straightforward, clear and well supported.
- To avoid sexist language and to avoid the awkwardness of "he or she", try using plural pronouns and plural antecedents ("students" rather than "student" and "they" rather than "he" or "she").
- Sentences should be followed by only one space, not two as was once the accepted style.

General Mechanics

- Refer to the campus as "Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College" the first time it is referenced.
- Subsequent references should be "Southern".
 - Italicize titles of book-length publications: *Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College Academic Catalog 2025-2026*
- Abbreviations and acronyms - Use the full name in the initial reference followed by the abbreviation or acronym in parenthesis.
 - *College of Arts and Sciences (not Arts & Sciences)*
 - *Procter & Gamble (official name)*
 - *Large Binocular Telescope (LBT)*
- Avoid using an ampersand unless it is part of an official title.
 - *College of Arts and Sciences*
 - *Kuhn Honors & Scholars House*
- Use "part-time faculty" instead of "adjunct faculty".
- Use "faculty" instead of "instructors".
- Refer to "autumn" instead of "fall" semester.
- Numbers one through nine should be spelled out, use numerals for 10 or more and for fractions; spell out numbers that begin or end a sentence, or rewrite the sentence.
- In running text, when referring to dollar amounts in millions, use the numeral and "million".
\$6 million (not \$6,000,000).
- Spelling out percent is preferred, although % may be used if space is needed or in graphs or charts. Use numerals in front of percent, unless starting a sentence.
About 40 percent of the students responded.
- *One percent of the faculty attended.*
- Dates: Spell out all days of the week and months. Use numerals for years. Use no punctuation if listing just the month and the year, but set the year off with commas if using the day of the month.

May 2014

August 12, 2016

February 5, 2014, deadline

Join us Wednesday, October 17, for a celebration.

Do not use 'th' or 'st' for dates.

May 10, not May 10th

Decades are to be referred to as the 1990s, 2000s, etc.

Capitalization

- Academic courses
 - Capitalize the main words in titles of specific courses, but not names used in a general
 - *Economics 200; Science 111; economics courses; sociology*
 - Capitalize all nouns and adjectives referring to languages, countries and nationalities.
 - *a French course; an English course*
- Academic departments or areas
 - All formal and informal references to specific departments and administrative offices should be capitalized.

- *The Office of Student Life or Student Life*
 - *The Office of Financial Aid or Financial Aid*
 - *Students are advised to meet with someone in Financial Aid to get help with the FAFSA.*
 - Do not capitalize “financial aid” in a sentence when used generically.
 - *There are several financial aid options available to students, including grants and scholarships.*
 - Administrative department or offices
- Capitalize the name of the department and the word “department” or “office” only when using the official name.
 - *Department of Marketing and Public Relations*
 - *Marketing and Public Relations department*
- Assurance Argument
- Refer to the Assurance Argument as “the Assurance Argument,” always capitalized.
 - *The completed Assurance Argument will certainly meet expectations.*
- Board of Governors
- Capitalize Board of Governors when referring to the college or another college’s board of trustees.
- Do not capitalize “board” or “trustees” when used alone.
 - *Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College Board of Governors*
 - *The college’s board member*
- Campuses
 - Capitalize when using the formal name of the campus, but do not capitalize the word campuses when listing multiples:
 - *Newark Campus, Knox Campus, Coshocton Campus or Pataskala Campus*
 - *Knox and Coshocton campuses*
- College/university
 - The word “college” should be lowercase when it is used alone in reference to Central Ohio
 - Technical College or another specific institution.
 - *Many students attend Central Ohio Technical College because the college is so close to home.*
- Degrees
- Capitalize the main words in the names of degrees when they are spelled out and capitalize abbreviations of degrees. Abbreviation of the degree name is acceptable on first reference. Do not use periods in the abbreviation of degrees.
 - *Bachelor of Arts - BA*
 - *Bachelor of Science - BS*
 - *Master of Arts - MA*
 - *Master of Science - MS*
 - *Doctor of Philosophy - PhD*
- Capitalization of names of degrees should match the registrar’s official degree list. If the official degree name contains the words “of Science”, the discipline is capitalized. (Refer to the Bachelor of Science in Chemistry, not the Bachelor of Science degree in Chemistry or the Bachelor’s degree in Chemistry.) Similar rules apply to references made to master’s and doctoral degrees.
- Do not capitalize academic degrees used in a general sense. Note that bachelor’s and master’s end in ’s.
 - *an associate degree*
 - *a bachelor’s degree*
 - *a master’s degree*
 - *a doctoral degree or a doctorate*
- In references to degrees, the word degree is not capitalized.
 - *They each earned a Master of Music degree or MA in music.*
- Make plural abbreviations of degrees by adding s.
 - *MAs; PhDs; JDs*
- Capitalize names or abbreviations of academic degrees and honors following a personal name.

- *Jim Smith, Doctor of Law*
 - *Susan Brown, MD*
 - *James Trillburn, Woodrow Wilson Fellow*
- When they follow a person's name, qualifiers such as PhD and MD are preceded by a comma. A second comma follows the qualifier in running text.
 - *William Turner, PhD*
 - *The latest article published by William Turner, PhD, was his third in six months.*
 - Job Titles
 - Capitalize anytime a specific job title is referenced.
 - *Kim Manno, Director of Advancement*
 - *Director of Advancement Kim Manno*
- When preparing lists of faculty names with titles, spell out the titles unless the list is long and space is at a premium.

President

- First reference: *President John M. Berry, PhD*
- Subsequent reference: *Dr. Berry or the President*
- Any specific reference to COTC's President should be capitalized
- *the President of Central Ohio Technical College*
- Lowercase when not used as a formal/specific title.
- *A college president has many responsibilities.*
- Only specific seasons and semesters should be capitalized.
- *Spring Semester 2015* should be capitalized
- *a spring semester* should not be capitalized

Punctuation

- Bulleted lists
 - Keep punctuation for bulleted lists at a minimum. Begin each item with a capital letter.
 - Omit periods after items unless one or more of the items is a complete sentence.
 - *The required curriculum includes:*
 - *A calculus course*
 - *An advanced physics course*
 - *Three chemistry courses*
 - Ordinarily, commas are not used following a series of items. If the vertically listed items are phrases—especially long phrases—that grammatically complete the sentence
 - containing them, commas may, but need not, be used. If commas are used, the last item is followed by a period.
 - *Campus's*
 - *campus's (The campus's growth ...)*
 - Singular common nouns ending in s, use 's unless the next word begins with s:
the witness's answer, the witness' story
- Commas/Semicolons
 - Use commas to separate elements in a series, but do not put a comma before the conjunction in a simple series. Use serial commas only to prevent confusion. Use a comma before the concluding conjunction in a complex series of phrases, for instance if an integral element of the series requires a conjunction.
 - *Apples, bananas, grapes and oranges*
 - *Biology, Chemistry, and Anatomy and Physiology*
- Use a semicolon to separate items in a list only if each element in the list contains a comma.
 - *We have a son, John; a daughter, Jane; and a dog, Spot.*
- Hyphenate
 - Hyphenate as an adjective before the noun; otherwise use two words.
 - *full time/full-time; part time/part-time*
 - *They are full-time workers.*
 - *They work full time in the office.*