Author Checklist for MSU Extension Educational Materials

This document is designed to help you keep track of where you are in the writing (presubmission) stage of your project. We suggest you use it as a guide to help make sure your document is complete and formatted correctly and that you've collected all of the information and files you need before you submit your project for production. Check off each item as you complete it, sign the form and send it to the Michigan State University Extension Educational Materials Team along with the other project files.

Please see the corresponding sections in the document called "Preparing Your Document for Submission" for advice on how to address the areas mentioned in this checklist.

Content & Writing Style

Note: The MSU Extension Educational Materials Team recommends that you follow what is known as "APA style," which is described in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed., 2019), and use the current edition of *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* as needed.

Yes	NA	Before submitting your project, make sure that you have:
		Identified your project's primary audience and written with that audience in mind.
		Included learning goals and objectives or otherwise explained the purpose of the final product.
		Written at an appropriate reading level for the primary audience (no higher than seventh or eighth grade): ❑Using short sentences and paragraphs. ❑Defining new or unfamiliar terms and concepts on first use. ❑Minimizing jargon. ❑Writing directly to the primary audience. ❑Using vertical (bulleted or numbered) lists that are introduced correctly and in which all items are parallel in structure. ❑Choosing the simple word (*use*) over the complicated word (*utilize*). ❑Using mostly active, not passive, voice (sometimes passive voice is needed and appropriate). ❑Using consistent terms and language to describe concepts, organizations, procedures, and so on.
		Double-checked the spelling and accuracy of people's names, job titles, and organizational affiliations; the names of companies, organizations, agencies, and places; titles of works, technical terms; URLs; practices and procedures; and other unusual or unfamiliar words and phrases.
		Used inclusive, unbiased language.
		Chosen diverse images of people.
		Made electronic documents as accessible as possible to readers who use adaptive technology (such as screen readers) to access such material.
		Created a style sheet that all writers on the project have followed.
		Produced an original work that is well-organized, grammatically sound, logical, thoughtful, and evidence-based, and that communicates clearly to the intended audience.

Authorizations, Permissions, Reviews & Copyright Issues

Yes	NA	Before submitting your project, make sure that you have:
		Obtained written permission from copyright holders to adapt, reprint, or use all third-party and previously published materials. (This applies to text, data, tables, charts, graphs, photos, videos, social media posts, cartoons and comics, computer code, graphics, internet memes, figures, and more.)
		Pilot tested the material with geographically and otherwise diverse segments of the target audience.

Yes	NA	Before submitting your project, make sure that you have:
		Had content experts review the document.

Parts of the Document

Yes	NA	Before submitting your project, make sure that you have:
		Written the document in Microsoft Word (docx format; the older .doc format is a security risk and will not be accepted).
		Created a complete, accurate working table of contents (that is, one that includes all levels of headings and all sidebars, tables and figures, but not, at this point, page numbers). (The final table of contents won't be as comprehensive.)
		Created a table of abbreviations for abbreviation-heavy documents.
		Checked cross-references to tables, figures, other chapters and other sections.
		Checked all quotations against the original sources to ensure that they're accurate and that you've cited them correctly following APA style in the text and in the reference list: ❑Included the sources of all data, information, and quotes in the reference list. ❑Cited every entry in the reference list in the text at least once. ❑Formatted and organized the reference list and (if included) the additional resources list following APA style.
		Included an acknowledgments section with: ❑A complete list of authors, their job titles, departments, and affiliation, one person per line. (Include a note indicating how to alphabetize any author's name that has three or more parts.) ❑A copyright statement (at minimum "Copyright Michigan State University Board of Trustees"). ❑Funding credits (if necessary). ❑Organizational identification and other standard language (for example, the MSU Extension antidiscrimination statement).
		Organized the material with a clear and consistent hierarchy of headings and subheadings with: ❑No more than four heading levels that are clearly indicated by numbers enclosed in triangle brackets < > in front of each heading. (For example, headings in a project called *Building Wood Duck Boxes* might include: "<1>Build a Better Wood Duck House," "<2>Construction Materials," and "<2>Tools and Equipment.") ❑At least two of any one level of subordinate heading under a superior heading. Avoid stacking headings (that is, two headings in a row with no text between). ❑Parallel grammatical construction in related headings whenever possible.
		Included only tables and figures that are needed to advance one or more of the educational or communications goals of the project.
		Included appropriate credits for outside sources of tables and figures.
		Double-checked for math and statistical errors in charts, tables and figures and that the data presented in each match the data in the text.
		Referred to each table and figure at least once in the text at some point before it appears in the document.
		Provided alt text for each table and figure briefly describing its content (to meet accessibility standards).
		Structured each table as simply as possible to meet accessibility requirements.
		Created all tables using Word's tables feature.
		Numbered each table in the order it is mentioned in the text and included a brief, descriptive title above and outside of the table.
		Included separate high-resolution (at least 300 dpi) photo and other graphics files for all figures. (**Note:** Photos embedded in the Word file are considered "for position only" and aren't suitable for publication). Photo files must be in .jpg, .tiff, or .eps format.
		Gave each photo or other graphics file a name that includes an abbreviated version of the project name and the figure number so they're easy to identify. (**Ex:** WoodDuckBox_fig1.jpg, WoodDuckBox_fig2.jpg, and so on.)
		Numbered each figure (in a separate list from the tables) in the order it is mentioned in the text and included a brief, descriptive title above and outside of the figure.

Yes	NA	Before submitting your project, make sure that you have:
		Placed all appendixes after the reference list in the document.
		Labeled and titled all appendixes. If there is only one appendix, label it *Appendix*. If there are two or more, label them *Appendix A, Appendix B,* and so on.
		Referred to each appendix by label and title in the text.
		Written metadata that includes the product title, author, copyright statement (© Michigan State University Board of Trustees), and a brief marketing description for the final product that explains—in about 100 words—what the document is about and its purpose and scope. The description may not include hyperlinks or citations.
		Provided a short list of keywords and key phrases (separated by commas) to help search engines find the final product more easily. The keywords and key phrases are specific and likely to be used by people conducting online searches on topics related to the project.

Formatting

Yes	NA	Before submitting your project, make sure that you have followed these basic formatting recommendations:
		Margins—1 inch all the way around.
		Columns—One column throughout.
		Typeface—Pick one simple serif typeface for text (such as Cambria or Times New Roman) and a different, sans serif typeface for headings and subheadings (such as Calibri or Arial). (Serifs are the fancy bits on the ends and edges of letters and numbers.) You can also do the opposite and choose simple serif for the headings and sans serif for the text.
		Type size—Use 11- or 12-point type for body text and for figure and table captions. (It's okay for headings to be bigger than that.)
		Text boxes—Just say "no" to text boxes. They're hard to work with in Word and they convert badly (or not at all) to InDesign, which is the layout program our designers use.

The Submission Process

Yes	NA	Before submitting your project, make sure that you have:
		Included the abbreviated project name in each file name. (For example, file names for a project called Building Wood Duck Boxes might be named "BWDB-draft4editing_2020-03-22.docx"; "BWDB-fig01_2020-03-22.jpg," through "BWDB-fig16_2020-03-22.jpg" and "BWDB-fig17_2020-03-22.pdf." Include the figure or the file name of each photo or other graphic file.)
		Run virus and malware checks on all files.
		Collected all of the electronic files that the editor and designer will need to produce the job. (**Note:** Send **only** the files that will be used to produce the final product, not an entire memory stick or thumb drive full of files that may or may not be related to the project.) Include these files in the submission package: ❏One or more Word files with absolutely all of the words – body copy, tables and figures, table and figure numbers and titles (above for tables, below for figures), references, appendixes, organizational identification, funding credits (if any) and more—that will appear in the final product. (**Remember:** Word files must be in the .docx format. Files in .doc format will not be accepted because they are computer security risks.) ❏Separate high-resolution files for each photo, illustration, chart, and graph. The file names must include the abbreviated project name and be numbered sequentially to indicate the order in which the items will appear in the document. Number the figures separately from the tables. Photo files must be in .jpg, .tiff or .eps format and at least 300 dpi or 1Mb in size. Charts, graphs and illustrations may be .jpg or .pdf files. ❏Completed and signed Author Checklist (this form). ❏Electronic copies of permissions materials (letters or emails). ❏Project style sheet.
		Included "[project name] submission" in the subject line when submitting production files by email or in the folder name when submitting them through the Google Docs file sharing service. When submitting files on a memory stick or thumb drive, a CD or DVD, or some other portable memory device, label the media with the project name and the lead author's name and phone number.

Lead Author Signature

I have reviewed this checklist and complied with its requirements.

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Signature of lead author or project manager   Date

Acknowledgments

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