

Homework Format Policy/Guidelines/Suggestions

Goals: These policies exist to reinforce quality homework preparation styles for physics majors and are designed to enable students to produce documents that effectively and responsibly communicate information. Your homework documents should be such high quality that a classmate would be able to pick up your assignment and present your work to the class, immediately, given only your homework solution. The following additional guidelines are designed to help you with creating high quality, legible and well prepared homework documents.

1. Use standard sized clean paper ---either lined or blank, holes or not, but do not hand in frayed torn edges.
2. Place your name, course, and due date in the upper right corner of the top page. You may use a cover page for this if you wish.
3. Start the first page leaving a one inch margin as a location for general instructor comments and/or grade.
4. Staple multiple pages together in the upper left hand corner (one staple only). Make sure there is sufficient clearance on each page so that your work is not covered by the staple.
5. Each problem should be written on a separate page and only the front side of the paper should be used. Each page should be numbered. Instructors should let you know if they will make exceptions to the one problem/one page for very short problems. Instructors will also let you know how to treat any plots or graphs that are requested for a specific question.
6. Each problem should be numbered (book chapter and problem number if appropriate) and a clear statement of the problem must be included along with what you are given and what you are attempting to find or determine.
7. Complete your work in a top down order below your problem statement.
8. You should understand, explain, and justify the major steps you take. This does not mean merely showing obvious algebraic scratch work like multiplying both sides of the equation by 2. You should be able to recognize the key components of the problem solution and ensure that clarifying and enlightening comments are included with these steps.
9. Any thoughts or ideas that are not originally your own must be referenced clearly. This includes help from fellow classmates, documents found online, or textbooks or other printed literature. This also includes solutions to integrals or other mathematical steps that were found in tables or using programs like Mathematica.
10. Appropriate units must be included with each solution and the final result should be circled or boxed clearly.
11. Leave room for instructor comments. Do not clutter your work.
12. Write neatly enough so as to be easily read and understood and largely and darkly enough that your entire work is legible. Time should never be wasted by anyone in reading your work because either your handwriting or your presentation style was low quality.
13. Most of the time your work will be completed on scratch paper after many attempts and you will need to create a copy/document for handing in. For multi-problem assignments (5 to 10 problems) it is expected that this work is started well before the due date. Within a day or two of the due date, you should have all the problems solved and the only remaining step should be to neatly recopy the solutions in the format described here.
14. Late work is not acceptable ---unless you are in a coma, or some other similar true emergency. Late work will be severely penalized. You are better off demonstrating your completion of an assignment by handing in your unfinished work, than handing in late work.
15. Work must be your own. Work shall not be copied from internet, electronic copies, photographed copies, or handwritten hard copies. Likewise, you shall not give your work to other students for copying. You should still work together effectively, and this can be done without copying.