

ASB Guide 001 Fourth Edition
2025

**Manual and Style Guide for ASB Standards, Guidelines,
Best Practice Recommendations, and Technical Reports**



ASB
ACADEMY
STANDARDS BOARD

Manual and Style Guide for Standards, Guidelines, Best Practice Recommendations, and Technical Reports

Approved by the Academy Standards Board for use by the AAFS Standards Board, LLC., 2025



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Colorado Springs, CO 80904

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Foreword

This *ASB Reference Manual and Style Guide for Standards, Guidelines, Best Practice Recommendations, and Technical Reports* is partially based on requirements and guidance from ANSI^a and the International Organization for Standardization (ISO)^b.

The American Academy of Forensic Sciences (AAFS) established the Academy Standards Board (ASB) in 2015 with a vision of safeguarding Justice, Integrity and Fairness through Consensus Based American National Standards. To that end, the ASB develops consensus based forensic standards within a framework accredited by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI), and provides training to support those standards. ASB values integrity, scientific rigor, openness, due process, collaboration, excellence, diversity and inclusion. ASB is dedicated to developing and making freely accessible the highest quality documentary forensic science consensus standards, guidelines, best practice recommendations, and technical reports in a wide range of forensic science disciplines as a service to forensic practitioners and the legal system.

ASB is accredited by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) according to ANSI's "Essential Requirements: Due Process Requirements for American National Standards."^c ASB documents are developed by volunteers working in Consensus Bodies (CBs) and Working Groups (WGs) that conform to ANSI requirements of openness, transparency, due process, and consensus.

This manual establishes basic requirements for the development of ASB products and includes the definition of each type of document, the proper formatting of each document, a writing style guide, and Annexes with additional helpful information.

Questions, comments, and suggestions for the improvement of this document can be sent to the ASB Secretariat, at asb@aafs.org or 410 N 21st Street, Colorado Springs, CO 80904.

ASB procedures are publicly available, free of cost, at www.aafs.org/academy-standards-board.

Keywords: *style, editing, layout, requirements, patents, standards, guidelines, technical reports, best practice recommendations*

^a *Essential Requirements*, ANSI

^b *Directives Parts 1 & 2*, ISO/IEC

^c Copyrighted by the American National Standards Institute, ANSI, New York, NY 2020

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Manual and Style Guide for Standards, Guidelines, Best Practice Recommendations, and Technical Reports

Preface

This manual sets style and document development requirements for standards, best practice recommendations, guidelines, and technical reports published by the ASB. The manual helps ensure brand consistency and aids in readability, quality, and implementation of ASB documents.

This manual is intended as a prime reference for ASB Consensus Body (CB) and Working Group (WG) volunteers. The manual introduces document definitions, style, and organizational requirements along with guidance on how to choose the document type suitable for an intended purpose. The annexes provide additional and more detailed directions and information on less common topics. Annex F contains a sample ASB document, and a template for creating a proposed document that can be submitted to ASB for approved development work can be requested from asb@aafs.org.

The Manual is divided into three sections:

Part I Introduction to ASB Documents

- ASB document types
- Guidance on choosing which type of document to develop
- Document identification
- Writing style

Part II Document Subdivisions and Basic Formatting

- Sectional elements
- Subsection formatting

<i>Annexes</i>	Annex A (informative)	Expression of Provisions
	Annex B (normative)	Conformity Assessment
	Annex C (normative)	Copyright, Patents, Commercial Terms, and Trademarks
	Annex D (informative)	Citation of ASB Standards
	Annex E (informative)	ASB Flow Chart
	Annex F (informative)	Sample ASB Document
	Annex G (informative)	Bibliography

PART I – Introduction to ASB Documents

1 ASB Documents

1.1 General

ASB publishes forensic science-based documents in the form of standards, best practice recommendations, guidelines, and technical reports. Each document type serves a specific purpose.

1.2 Standard (Std)

1.2.1 Description

A standard (Std) sets objectively verifiable, measurable requirements. A Std provides for common and repeated use, rules or characteristics for activities or their results, and is aimed at the achievement of the optimum degree of order in a given context.

1.2.2 Purpose

A Std reflects the level of agreement, expressed by interested parties, on what is required for a given activity, process, product, or result and can be assessed by one or more forms of conformity assessment procedures.

1.2.3 Expression of Content

The requirements in a Std are expressed as imperative sentences or stated in ‘shall’ language. The use of other verb forms, such as ‘should’, ‘may’, or ‘can’, are only allowed when their use is necessary to explain a secondary aspect of a requirement, such as an option.

1.3 Best Practice Recommendation (BPR)

1.3.1 Description

A best practice recommendation (BPR) identifies and sets forth the optimal way to carry out an action or actions. A BPR may include choices and the variants between them as a means of demonstrating optimal choices in different circumstances. Unlike a Std, a BPR does not set new requirements in a field of endeavor. Rather, the focus of a BPR is to recommend the best way to carry out activities that are already standardized through an official process or are de facto standards through common and accepted use.

1.3.2 Purpose

A BPR provides practical information and recommendations on issues such as preferred technical practices, optimal variations in procedures, and necessary personnel training. BPRs incorporated into a management system can be used as part of an assessment plan in conjunction with the Stds or operation procedures included in the conformity assessment process.

1.3.3 Expression of Content

A BPR is written in ‘should’ language. Imperative or ‘shall’ language can be used in a secondary context when necessary to clarify a recommended action or approach.

1.4 Guideline (G)

1.4.1 Description

A guideline (G) provides information and advice on processes and activities contained in a Std or BPR, or information on the implementation of a Std or series of Stds. A guideline may include recommendations but does not establish best practices.

1.4.2 Purpose

A guideline provides informative text that supports one or more Stds or BPRs. The amount of information in a guideline is too voluminous to include as NOTES or as an Annex in a Std or BPR. A guideline in and of itself is not appropriate for conformity assessment.

NOTE When desired, a guideline can be included in a conformity assessment plan based on another Std or Stds. For example, a forensic laboratory certified to ISO/IEC 17025 *General requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories* might incorporate a relevant guideline on certain testing procedures into their laboratory management system documents which would then become part of the overall assessment plan.

1.4.3 Expression of Content

A guideline is written in informative text and may include recommendations in 'should' language.

1.5 Technical Report (TR)

1.5.1 Description

A technical report (TR) is an explanatory, information-only document.

1.5.2 Purpose

A TR provides scientific, technical, terminology, or operational information relevant to a Std, a field of activity, or a profession. A TR can also, for example, identify and discuss applications not yet standardized, and provide relevant research on emerging issues or technologies that may become suitable for standardization. Less commonly, a TR can also be the Terms and Definitions document for a series of documents. TRs do not set requirements or recommendations and are not suitable for conformity assessment.

1.5.3 Expression of content

A TR is written in informative text. Content is expressed in the most appropriate manner for the subject.

1.6 Standard Test Method (STM)

1.6.1 Description

A standard test method (STM) provides detailed directions on performing a specific test, to include sufficient detail in the specification to assure acceptable reproducibility of test results.

1.6.2 Standard Test Methods in ASB

The ASB Board has determined that the research and testing required to produce a STM are not currently within the scope of the ASB. If a consensus body would like to produce a STM, the ASB Board may reevaluate the decision once a new work proposal has been submitted.

2 ASB Document Identification

2.1 General

Identification is standardized across the industry to facilitate the retrieval of documents and key information on a document. It helps avoid duplication of documents.

2.2 Identifiers

Title, Scope, and Publication Number are the three primary identifiers of documents in the standards development community. Within ASB, consensus bodies develop the title and scope. Publication numbers are assigned by the ASB Staff.

3 ASB Flow Chart

The process of the submittal, development, review, and publication of an ASB document can be viewed in the flow chart in Annex F.

4 [ASB New Work Item Proposal Form](#)

To start a new project developing an ASB document, a form is completed either by the Consensus Body or an outside organization or individual. The ASB New Work Proposal Form (current revision) must be completed and submitted to asb@aafs.org.

PART II – Document Subdivisions and Formatting

5 General Formatting

5.1 Each ASB document is organized according to the formats given in this Manual. Users of ASB documents reasonably expect consistency in format and clarity of content. ASB generally follows ANSI and ISO guides in the organization and formatting of ASB documents.

5.1.1 ASB documents include the following divisions. The items in bold are mandatory.

Cover page

Title page

Foreword

Table of Contents

Section 1 – Scope

Section 2 – Normative References

Section 3 – Terms and Definitions

Section 4 – Requirements (or Recommendations or Information) - (Additional Sections, are allowed e.g., Section 5, 6, 7, etc.)

Section 5 – Tables - can be included in the document instead of as a separate section

Section 6 – Figures - can be included in the document instead of as a separate section

Annexes (as many normative or informative annexes as needed)

NOTE Consensus bodies can request deviations from ASB format and organization. The ASB Secretariat reviews justifications for deviations and, as appropriate, approves them.

5.1.2 Review the Sample ASB Document Format (see Annex F).

5.1.3 Use the ASB Document Template (available from asb@aaafs.org).

5.1.3.1 Enter user content for the Cover Page, Foreword, Section 1 Scope, Section 2 Normative References, Section 3 Terms and Definitions, and Section 4 Requirements, Recommendations or Information.

5.1.3.2 Enter user content for other sections as desired.

5.1.4 Number the document sections sequentially beginning with the numeral “1” without a period following.

5.1.5 Number the document subsections sequentially beginning with the numeral of the section followed by a decimal and the beginning of a new set of sequential numbers. Each subsequent subsection adds another level of numbers starting with 1.

Example:

1 Topic

1.1 Subtopic one

1.1.1 Sub-subtopic, etc.

5.1.5.1 Generally if there is only one subsection, it does not need to be numbered. The ASB staff will revise and make a determination on this if it is necessary.

5.1.5.2 Review the final proposed document for errors such as omissions, formatting problems, spelling and grammar.

6 Cover Page with Document Title

6.1 For draft documents, the ASB numerical designation is placed in the upper right corner. The final cover page formatting will be completed by the ASB Staff.

6.2 The title is placed on the line below the numerical designation.

6.2.1 Ensure that the Title is identical to the Title approved in the New Work Proposal.

6.2.2 The Title gives a clear, concise description of the subject matter covered by the document.

Example:

a) *Correct:* Standard for Integrated Fire Protection and Life Safety System Testing.⁶

b) *Incorrect:* Technical Measurement Requirements for Fire Protection and Life Safety System Testing.

NOTE The title distinguishes the subject matter from that of other documents, without going into unnecessary detail that may unnecessarily limit the Scope of the document. Details can be included in the Scope statement.

6.2.3 Do not refer to a Std as containing standards.

Example:

a) *Correct:* Standard for Determination of Lead in Canine Teeth.

b) *Incorrect:* Setting Testing Standards in Determining Lead in Canine Teeth.

6.3 Do not use ANSI logos on draft copies. ASB will place all final logos on the approved, final publication.

6.4 Do not include any other logos.

7 Title Page

7.1 The title page immediately follows the cover page. The title page formatting will be completed by the ASB Staff.

8 Foreword

8.1 The foreword describes the document in overall terms stating the purpose of the document along with the intended users and intended application.

8.1.1 Ensure that the Foreword is in sync with the Scope.

8.1.1.1 The Foreword can address relevant material beyond the Scope. The Foreword may include additional material in the form of explanatory scientific and operational underpinnings for requirements or recommendations laid out in the document. Such material is limited to a brief review of principles appropriate for the scope and subject matter of the document.

NOTE More lengthy explanations and full scientific treatises are appropriate for technical reports.

8.1.2 Do not include any requirements – imperative text or “shall” statements - or recommendations – “should” statements.

8.1.3 If the document is to be used in connection with, or is part of a series of documents, identify the document(s) to use in connection with this one.

8.1.4 If the document is a revision of a previous document, summarize the substantive changes to the previous edition.

8.1.5 Consider including a short statement of the compelling need for the document or the revision, the intended impact of the new or revised document, and other relevant information.

8.1.6 If the document does not cover everything in its topic or field, consider explaining why certain things have been left out.

8.1.7 Additional template text will be added by the ASB Staff.

8.1.8 If the document was drafted outside the ASB, and the CB feels an acknowledgment is appropriate, the following may also be included below the main content of the Foreword.

Example:

This document was revised, prepared, and finalized as a standard by the Friction Ridge Consensus Body of the AAFS Standards Board. The draft of this standard was developed by the Friction Ridge Subcommittee of the Organization of Scientific Area Committees (OSAC) for Forensic Science.

9 Table of Contents

The table of contents will be finalized by the ASB Staff when the document is completed.

10 Section 1 – Scope

10.1 The Scope is written for the New Work Proposal and is approved by the CB, ASB Board, and submitted to ANSI for the PINS (Project Initiation Notification System). The identical wording shall appear in the initial draft of the document.

10.2 “The Scope clearly defines the subject of the document, and the aspects covered, thereby indicating the limits of applicability of the document or parts of it. If necessary, the Scope should indicate subjects that might reasonably be inferred to be covered but actually are excluded from the document.”^[7]

10.3 Scopes can be changed after or during document development if the CB determines that the wording needs to be modified to reflect the actual content of the document. If a scope is significantly altered, it will go through the CB/ASB approval process again to be resubmitted to ANSI as an updated PINS.

10.4 A Scope statement is a mandatory element in each ASB document and is numbered as Section 1.

10.5 Write a Scope statement that is a succinct statement of facts, informative text, providing the reader with an accurate summary of the content of the document.

10.6 Do not include any requirements, imperative text or “shall” statements, or recommendations, “should” statements.

10.7 Do not include background information or justifications.

10.8 Begin the Scope statement with phrases such as the following:

- This document specifies...
- This document establishes...
- This document sets requirements for...
- This document provides guidelines for...
- This document defines terms for...

Examples:

- a) Correct: “This document provides guidance on the development and formatting of ASB documents.”
- b) Incorrect: “This document shall be used as guidance on the development and formatting of ASB document.”

- c) Correct: “This document specifies minimum requirements and test methods for rice (*Oryza sativa* L.). It is applicable to husked rice, husked parboiled rice, milled rice and milled parboiled rice, suitable for human consumption, directly or after reconditioning. It is not applicable to cooked rice products.”
- d) Incorrect: “This standard is required for DNA markers.”

10.9 Introduce statements of applicability of the document with statements such as:

- This document is applicable to... or for...
- This document does not apply to...
- This document does not include...

11 Section 2 – Normative References

11.1 Normative references are published documents or parts of published documents that are indispensable for the application of the document, i.e., the document cannot be implemented without them.

NOTE References that provide additional information but are not essential to the application of the document are not normative. See 13.4 of this Manual for rules related to informative references.

Examples:

- 1) “This evaluation shall ensure the CRM supplier meets the competence, measurement traceability, and measurement capability requirements of ISO/IEC 17025:2005.”

Here, the ISO/IEC standard is a normative reference.

- 2) “Substrate measurements shall be determined prior to treatment. Measurement types can be found in TAPPI standard T 565.”

In this example, the TAPPI standard is useful but not necessary for completing the required measurement.

11.2 Normative references shall be cited in the main body of the document and included in this section as a list. Do not include normative references in the Bibliography.

11.3 Normative references for a document should not be placed in an Annex.

11.4 Normative references are not numbered.

11.5 Normative references are listed alphabetically.

11.6 When standards (incl. Std, BPR, G, TR) are cited as references list completely, not in abbreviated form.

11.6.1 When the reference is a standard (incl. Std, BPR, G, TR), the designation of that document should be used.

11.6.2 Other types of references should be listed according to MLA directions.^d

Examples:

ANSI/ASB Best Practice Recommendation 037, *Guidelines for Opinions and Testimony in Forensic Toxicology*, 1st ed 2019

ANSI/INCITS 398, ed 2018

11.7 For dated references, only the cited edition applies. For undated references, the latest edition including amendments applies.

NOTE An option is to include information on how to obtain the reference.

11.8 If the document has normative references, the following text shall be used for the lead-in paragraph:

“The following references are indispensable for the application of the standard. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies. See Annex X, Bibliography, for informative references.”

11.9 If the document has no normative references, the following text shall be placed in the section:

“The document contains no normative references. See Annex X, Bibliography for other references.”

NOTE The second sentence can be removed if there are no normative references and no bibliography.

12 Section 3 – Terms and Definitions

12.1 General

12.1.1 Include a Terms and Definitions section in all ASB documents.

12.1.2 For a series of documents on the same topic, Terms and Definitions may be written as a separate TR for the entire series rather than developing a Terms and Definition section in each document.

12.1.3 When a TR is the set of Terms and Definitions for another document, it can be included as a normative reference or annex for that document.

12.1.4 This section may also be a hybrid of a reference to the existing terms document and additional pertinent terms.

12.1.5 The Terms and Definitions section begins with the following phrase:

“For purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.”

^d *MLA Handbook*, 9th edition

12.2 Terms

Terms clarify certain words used in the document, especially words that pertain to a particular technical application, profession, discipline, science, or areas of study.

12.2.1 Only include terms which are used in the document.

NOTE This limitation does not apply to terminology documents, whose terms will encompass a number of documents.

12.2.2 Do not define common terms.

12.2.3 List terms alphabetically with special characters appearing first.

12.2.4 List terms in bold type.

NOTE Character styles, such as italics, are only used in a term if that is the normal written form of the term.

12.2.5 Capitalize only proper nouns.

12.2.6 Include a term's acronym in this section if it will be used in the body of the document.

12.3 Definitions

12.3.1 Attempt to write definitions to the terms as a single phrase or sentence.

12.3.1.1 The definition phrase should be able to replace the term in its context.

12.3.1.2 Definitions taken word-for-word from other sources need the source provided. ASB staff can assist with the formatting.

12.3.2 Do not include requirements (imperative or shall) or recommendations. (should).

Examples:

administrative review

An evaluation of the report and supporting documentation for consistency with laboratory policies and for editorial correctness.

competency testing

The evaluation of a persons knowledge and ability to perform work before authorization to do so independently.

Forensic Service Provider

FSP

An organization or individual that provides forensic services.

result

The product of the forensic service provider. This term is broad and includes observations, data, calculations, interpretations, and opinions.

12.4 NOTES to Terms/Definitions

12.4.1 Notes contain supplemental information to the definition.

12.4.2 Like notes within the text of the document, they cannot contain requirements (shall) or recommendations (should).

12.4.3 Within each definition if there is more than one NOTE, number each beginning with “1”.

Example:

moisture content mass by volume

The mass of evaporable water divided by volume of dry material.

NOTE 1 The method of evaporating water from a moist material may be stated when “moisture content mass by volume” is used.

NOTE 2 This method is sometimes referred to as “moisture content”.

13 ASB Document Writing Style – Section 4 and More

13.1 General

ASB style and writing requirements are important elements in creating useful and used documents. ASB’s requirements generally follow those from ISO^e.

13.2 Style Requirements

ASB writing style requirements include:

- a) use plain language to the extent possible;
- b) construct sentences in the active rather than passive voice;
- c) use present tense predominantly minimizing the use of past and future tense;
- d) keep sentences as short as possible while still conveying their correct meaning;
- e) use consistent terminology, e.g., use either ‘palm print’ or ‘palmprint’ throughout the document;
- f) define an acronym at its first use in the body (section 4 or later) of the standard;
- g) avoid use of personal pronouns (i.e., I, you, he, she, it, we, they, them, me, him, her, us).
- h) avoid vague expressions (e.g., ‘significantly impact’ or ‘will probably result in’);
- i) avoid using modifiers (e.g., ‘very’, ‘like’, ‘all’, ‘every’, ‘never’, ‘excessive’, ‘slightly’, ‘nearly’, ‘significant’, ‘applicable’, ‘highly’, ‘approximately’);

^e Available from: <https://www.iso.org/ISO-house-style.html>

- j) avoid using “and/or”, choose one or the other;
- k) “(s)” may be used at the end of an item to indicate singular or plural;
- l) punctuate single level lists using:
 - 1) a colon to introduce the list, alpha-numeric designation of each bullet, a semi-colon after each bullet, with either ‘and’ or ‘or’ prior to the last bullet and a period at the end of the last bullet; or
 - 2) a colon to introduce the list, an m-dash for each bullet, a comma or semi-colon after each bullet depending on the levels of the lists (ASB Staff will format appropriately prior to publication), and a period at the end of the last bullet.

Examples:

At a minimum, the written record shall include the following elements:

- a) the name of the examiner;
- b) the date of the examination; and
- c) the items examined.

At a minimum, the written record shall include the following elements:

- name,
- date,
- items.

13.3 Designating Subsection Divisions

13.3.1 As appropriate, for non-requirements or non-recommendations, consider using list formats other than numerical designations for ease of reading and clarity.

Example of a multi-level sub-section designation:

- a) list level 1 – lower case alphanumeric
 - 1) list level 2 – numbers 1), 2), 3), 4), 5) etc.
 - i) list level 3 – lowercase roman numerals i), ii), iii), iv), v), etc.

13.4 References

13.4.1 References cited in the main body are either Normative or Informative. An ASB document can include both types.

13.4.2 All references must be published and available.

13.4.3 See Section 11 on normative references for rules related to this type of reference.

13.4.4 Informative references:

- a) are suitable as background reading, research findings, guidance, or additional information relevant to the document;
- b) are not indispensable for implementation of the document; and
- c) are listed in the Bibliography if cited in the text.

13.4.5 Use footnotes to reference *text copied* from another document.

13.4.6 See Annex D for additional information on the citation of ASB documents (within other ASB documents, or in external documents).

14 Requirements

14.1 Requirements are:

- a) characteristic of Stds;
- b) only used in a BPR as secondary context when necessary to clarify a recommended action or approach; and are
- c) not used in Gs or TRs.

14.2 Requirements can be the title of the section (i.e., **Section 4 Requirements**) or the title may be one or more other headings that are appropriate.

NOTE A section title such as **Section 4 Requirements** does not in and of itself make everything that follows a requirement. A 'shall' statement or imperative text is still required.

14.3 State requirements in a manner that enables conformance assessment.

NOTE Examples of measurable requirements might include setting specific operational procedures, specifying technical dimensions, establishing verifiable levels of scientific rigor, or setting management responsibilities.

14.4 Number requirements, separating multiple requirements using different clause numbers or sub-numbers.

14.5 Write requirements using the word 'shall'.

Examples:

- The practitioner shall perform the following steps in this order.
- The following steps shall be performed in this order.

14.6 Avoid using negative phrasing such as 'shall not' since conformance can be difficult to determine.

15 Recommendations

15.1 Recommendations are:

- a) only used in a Std to explain a secondary aspect of a requirement such as an option;
- b) characteristic of BPRs;
- c) may be included in a G but are not to establish best practices; and are
- d) not to be used in a TR.

15.2 Recommendations can be the title of the section (i.e., **Section 4 Recommendations**) or the title may be one or more other headings that are appropriate.

NOTE A section title such as **Section 4 Recommendations** does not in and of itself make everything that follows a recommendation. A 'should' statement is still required.

15.3 Number recommendations, separating multiple recommendations using different clause numbers or sub-numbers.

15.4 Write recommendations using the word 'should'.

15.5 Negative phrasing should be avoided, such as 'should not'.

16 Expressing Permission

16.1 "May" is used to indicate a course of action permissible within the limits of the document.

16.2 A permission may be included in any type of document.

16.3 Number permissions, separating multiple permissions using different clause numbers, or sub-numbers.

16.4 Negative phrasing should be avoided, such as 'need not'.

17 Expressing Possibility and Capability

17.1 "Can" refers to the ability of a user of the document or to a possibility open to a user of the document.

17.2 A possibility or capability may be included in any type of document.

17.3 Negative phrasing should be avoided, such as 'cannot'.

18 Informational Text

18.1 Standards and Best Practice Recommendations

Informational text in Stds and BPRs is:

- a) found in standards secondary to requirements, in NOTES, or in an informative Annex;
- b) found in BPRs secondary to recommendations, in NOTES, or in an informative Annex; and
- c) characteristic of Gs and TRs.

18.2 Guidelines and Technical Reports

Informational text in Gs and TRs:

- a) present the informational content clearly;
- b) identify any standards associated with the G or TR;
- c) identify all references and resources; and
- d) use subsections or topic headings if the document relies on divisions for clarity or ease of reading; these can be numbered but numbering is not required.

18.3 NOTES and *Examples*

18.3.1 NOTES are used in the document to provide additional clarity or understanding.

18.3.2 NOTES in the text shall not contain requirements or recommendations.

18.3.3 NOTES can express a permission “may” - or a capability/possibility - “can”.

18.3.4 NOTES in the text of the document are numbered if there is more than one for a single clause.

18.3.5 NOTES in figures and tables are numbered and do not contain requirements or recommendations.

18.3.6 NOTES are formatted with two spaces after “NOTE”, “NOTE 1”, or “NOTE 2” and in 10 pt font.

18.3.7 *Examples* are used to assist the user of the document in implementing a requirement or recommendation.

18.3.8 *Examples* are formatted with “*Examples*” in italic font and the remainder of the example in standard font.

18.3.9 If there is both a NOTE and an *Example*, the NOTE comes first.

19 Numerical Expressions – Numbers, Units of Measurements, and Equations

19.1 Numbers

19.1.1 Express numbers using words or Arabic numerals.

19.1.2 Ensure that decimal placement is appropriate to the subject.

19.1.3 Rounding is not required by ASB.

19.1.4 Numbers in text:

- a) spell out numbers that are less than 10, not precise measurements, and not grouped with numbers over 10 (e.g., eight trials, First Edition);
- b) use numerals for numbers 10 and above, or numbers under 10 grouped with numbers 10 and above (e.g., from 6 to 12 cups of water, 20th Edition);
- c) use numerals for exact statistical measures, scores, sample sizes, and sums (e.g., multiplied by 3, 6% of the sample);
- d) use combinations of written and Arabic numerals for back-to-back numbers (e.g., five 4-point scales);
- e) use combinations of numerals and written numbers for large sums (e.g., 6 million people);
- f) use a comma in numbers that are > 10,000 (e.g., 7000 items, 11,200 units);
- g) use the percent symbol (%) only with figures (6%) not with written numbers (six percent); and
- h) do not use periods within measurements (lb, ft, s) except inches (in.).

19.2 Units of Measurements

19.2.1 List units consistently within a document.

19.2.2 Measured and calculated values shall be expressed in metric unite (SI) and in U.S. customary units (USC).

NOTE Either may be listed first with the corresponding unit listed either in parentheses in the text or on separate tables, figures, datasheets, or in separate annexes.

19.3 Equations

19.3.1 Equations should be numbered when two or more are included in the main text of the document.

19.3.1.1 Designate equations with consecutive Arabic numbers beginning with 1.

19.3.1.2 Number each equation in the order that it appears in the standard, regardless of the section number in which it is referenced.

19.3.1.3 Designate equations in annexes by the designation of the annex followed by consecutive numbers beginning with 1 (for example, A.1, B.4).

19.3.2 The format for a numbered equation includes the expression of the equation and a legend of the individual elements.

Example:

$$S = \frac{Mc}{I} \quad (1)$$

where:

S = stress, psi, or Pa,

M = bending moment, lbf•in. or N•m,

c = distance from neutral axis to outermost fiber, in., or m, and

I = second moment of area, in.⁴ or m⁴.

20 Tables and Figures

20.1 Do not include requirements or recommendations in tables or figures.

20.2 All tables and figures shall be called out in the main body of the document.

20.3 Number them consecutively based on type (e.g., Table 1 or Figure 1).

20.4 Additional formatting information for tables and figures can be found in the Sample ASB Document in Annex F.

21 Annexes

21.1 Annexes can be **Normative** (mandatory) or **Informative** (informational).

21.2 A document can have as many Normative (necessary for the implementation of the document) and Informative (providing useful information but not required for the implementation of the document) annexes as needed for the purpose of the document.

21.3 Informative annexes provide relevant information that is not appropriate to include in the body of the document.

21.3.1 An informative annex can be included to provide information such as background material or a description of research findings that assist in the comprehension of the document.

21.3.2 Lengthy didactic material, or treatise-level information should not be included in an annex but can be developed in an accompanying TR.

21.4 All Annexes shall be called out in the main body of the document.

21.5 Center and bold the designation of an annex at the top of the page under the designation of the standard.

21.6 Specify the type of Annex, i.e., either (informative) or (normative) on the line under the annex designation, centered, and in parentheses.

21.7 Designate the first annex of a document with a capital 'A' and any sequential annexes in the same document with sequential lettering.

21.8 Designate sections and subsections of annexes by the annex letter followed by a period and a sequence of numbers.

Example:

Annex A

A.1

A.2, etc.

21.9 For a figure or a table in an Annex, include the letter of the annex as the first designated identifier for tables or figures, e.g., Figure A.1, Table B.1.

21.10 If an Annex contains references, include those references in the bibliography of the document.

22 Bibliography – an Informative Annex

22.1 Inclusion of a Bibliography is optional.

22.2 Do not include requirements or recommendations in a Bibliography.

22.3 The following text shall be included as the lead-in paragraph to the Bibliography; it can be altered with permission from the Secretariat.

“The following bibliography is not intended to be an all-inclusive list, review, or endorsement of literature on this topic. The goal of the bibliography is to provide publications cited informationally, and publications relevant to the standard.”

22.4 Do not include normative references in a Bibliography, as they are cited in Section 2.

22.5 Include all documents:

- a) from which text has been cited in the document; and
- b) helpful in understanding and implementing the document.

22.6 List all documents alphabetically.

22.7 Do not include all possibly relevant sources of information; the bibliography is not meant to be an exhaustive list.

23 Conformity Assessment

ASB documents only include conformity assessment requirements that are necessary to provide repeatable and reproducible conformity assessment results. See **Annex B**.

24 Copyrights, Trademarks, Commercial Terms, and Patents

ANSI's *Essential Requirements* includes normative policies involving patents, copyrights, and commercial terms such as warranties and trademarks.^f These policies are incumbent on ASB document development and publication. See **Annex C**.

^f Available from: <https://ansi.org/american-national-standards/ans-introduction/essential-requirements>

Annex A (informative)

Expression of Provisions

A.1 Requirements

A.1.1 Table A.1 summarizes verbal forms of expressions that establish requirements necessary to achieve conformance to the document.

Table A.1—Verbal Forms to Express Requirements

Verbal Form	Expressions that “shall” or “shall not” replaces
shall	must is to is required to it is required that has to only...is permitted it is necessary
shall not	is not allowed (permitted) (acceptable) (permissible) is required to be not is required that... not be is not to be do not

A.1.2 Avoid using vague expressions that are not truly informative and might cause the reader to make an incorrect judgment call. Words like “very,” “all,” “every,” “never,” “excessive,” “slightly,” “approximately,” “nearly,” or “significant” are not useful.

A.2 Recommendations

Table A.2 summarizes the verbal forms used to indicate:

- a) that among several possibilities one is recommended as particularly suitable, without mentioning or excluding the others;
- b) or that a certain course of action is preferred but not required;
- c) or that (in the negative form) a certain possibility or course of action is discouraged.

Table A.2—Verbal Forms to Express Recommendations

Verbal Form	Expressions that “should” or “should not” replaces
should	it is recommended that ought to
should not	it is not recommended it ought not to

A.3 Permission

Table A.3 summarizes the verbal forms that shall be used to indicate a course of action permissible within the limits of the document.

Table A.3—Verbal Forms to Express Permission

Verbal Form	Expressions that “may” replaces
may	is permitted to is allowed is permissible
NOTE Do not use “possible” or “impossible” in this context. Do not use “can” instead of “may” in this context. Do not use “might” instead of “may” in this context. “May” signifies a permission expressed by the document, whereas “can” refers to the ability of a user of the document or to a possibility open to him/her. Negative permissions are ambiguous and should not be used. Rather than using negative permissions, either rewrite the sentence to state what is permitted, or rewrite as a requirement/recommendation not to do something.	

A.4 Possibility and Capability

Table A.4 summarizes the verbal forms that shall be used for statements of possibility and capability, whether material, physical, or causal.

Table A.4—Verbal Forms to Express Possibility and Capability

Verbal Form	Expressions that “can” or “cannot” replaces
can	be able to there is a possibility of it is possible to
cannot	be unable to there is no possibility of it is not possible to

Annex B **(normative)**

Conformity Assessment

B.1 General Directions on Including Conformity Assessment Provisions

B.1.1 ASB documents only include conformity assessment requirements that are necessary to provide repeatable and reproducible conformity assessment results.

Examples:

“Conformance shall be determined on the following requirements contained in this standard.”

“Sampling, testing, and recording requirements contained in this standard are subject to conformance assessment.”

B.1.2 ASB documents do not:

- specify conformity assessment procedures or practices;
- dictate or specify conformity assessment schemes or systems;
- require any specific conformity assessment results;
- identify conformity assessment providers.

B.2 Neutrality Principle

B.2.1 All documents containing requirements for products, processes, services, persons, systems, and bodies are written in accordance with the “neutrality principle,” such that conformity can be assessed by a manufacturer or supplier (first party), a user or purchaser (second party), or an independent body (third party).

NOTE First-party, second-party and third-party conformity assessment activities are defined in ISO/IEC 17000:2004 *Conformity assessment - Vocabulary and general principles*.

B.2.2 Inclusion of conformance is optional, but if included, shall adhere to **C.2**.

NOTE ISO’s House Style located online at <https://www.iso.org/ISO-house-style.html> contains information on inclusion of conformity assessment in international standards development. The information may be adapted to ASB procedures when an ASB CB determines the necessity of including elements relating to conformity assessment. The CB shall consult with the ASB Secretariat or other ASB staff before undertaking any activity associated with conformity assessment requirements.

Annex C (normative)

Copyright, Patents, Commercial Terms, and Trademarks

C.1 ANSI and ASB Policies

ANSI's *Essential Requirements* includes normative policies involving patents, copyrights, and commercial terms such as warranties and trademarks.^g These policies are incumbent on ASB document development and publication. ASB document writers are encouraged to read ANSI's full explanation by accessing the URL given below.

C.2 Copyrighted Material

ASB adheres to laws guarding copyrighted material and intellectual property. Include copyrighted material only with the full acknowledgement of the copyright information. Where copyright or reproduction of intellectual property is not allowed, do not include the material in an ASB document.

C.3 Patents

C.3.1 The ASB Patent Policy^h

C.3.1.1 There is no objection in principle to drafting an American National Standard (ANS) in terms that include the use of an essential patent claim (one whose use would be required for compliance with that standard) if it is considered that technical reasons justify this approach.

C.3.1.2 Participants in the ASB document development process are encouraged to bring patents with claims *believed* to be essential to the attention of the ASB Secretariat.

C.3.1.3 If ASB receives a notice that a proposed, revised, or approved ANS may require the use of such a patent claim that is not already covered by an existing letter of assurance (LOA), the procedures in **C.3.2** shall be followed.

C.3.2 Procedures: Statement from Patent Holder

C.3.2.1 ASB shall receive from the patent holder, or a party authorized to make assurances on its behalf, in written or electronic form, either:

- a) assurance in the form of a general disclaimer to the effect that such party does not hold and does not currently intend holding any essential patent claim(s); or
- b) assurance that a license to such essential patent claim(s) will be made available to applicants desiring to utilize the license for the purpose of implementing the standard either:

^g The 2020 revision of these policies are on the ANSI website at: <https://ansi.org/american-national-standards/ans-introduction/essential-requirements>

^h Adapted from section 3 of ANSI's *Essential Requirements*

- 1) under reasonable terms and conditions that are demonstrably free of any unfair discrimination; or
- 2) without compensation and under reasonable terms and conditions that are demonstrably free of any unfair discrimination.

C.3.2.2 Such assurance shall indicate that the patent holder (or third party authorized to make assurances on its behalf) will include in any documents transferring ownership of patents subject to the assurance, provisions sufficient to ensure that the commitments in the assurance are binding on the transferee, and that the transferee will similarly include appropriate provisions in the event of future transfers with the goal of binding each successor-in-interest.

C.3.2.3 The assurance shall also indicate that it is intended to be binding on successors-in-interest regardless of whether such provisions are included in the relevant transfer documents.

C.3.3 Record of Statement

ASB shall retain a record of the patent holder's statement in ASB files, and the record shall be made publicly available at ASB's election of either the ASB website or ANSI's LOA repository.

C.3.4 Notice

C.3.4.1 When ASB receives from a patent holder the assurance set forth in C.3.2 above, the standard shall include a note substantially as follows.

- a) NOTE - the user's attention is called to the possibility that compliance with this standard may require use of an invention covered by patent rights.
- b) By publication of this standard, no position is taken with respect to the validity of any such claims(s) or of any patent rights in connection therewith. If a patent holder has filed a statement of willingness to grant a license under these rights on reasonable and nondiscriminatory terms and conditions to applicants desiring to obtain such a license, then details may be obtained from ASB.

C.3.4.2 Neither ASB nor ANSI is responsible for identifying patents for which a license may be required by an ANS or for conducting inquiries into the legal validity or scope of those patents that are brought to their attention.

C.4 Commercial Terms and Trademarks

C.4.1 In accordance with ANSI's Essential Requirements, Section 3.2, ANS shall not include terms or conditions that are primarily contractual or commercial in nature, as opposed to technical, engineering, or scientific in nature. In addition, an ANS shall not endorse or require the use of proprietary products or services or endorse or require the use of conformity-assessment bodies, testing facilities or training organizations.

C.4.2 Prohibited material includes manufacturer lists, service provider lists, or text in the document or in an annex.

C.4.3 If there is only one source (not a preferred source but a sole source) for necessary equipment, materials, or services necessary to comply with a standard, then a footnote or informative annex can list the source but ONLY if the reference includes the words “or equivalent.”

C.5 Expression of Trade Names and Trademarks

C.5.1 The correct designation or description of a product shall be given rather than a trade name or trademark. Avoid using proprietary trade names or trademarks for a particular product, even if they are in common use.

C.5.2 Exceptionally, when use of a trade name or trademark cannot be avoided, and the successful application of the document depends on the use of a trade name or trademark, correctly indicate their nature using symbol ® for a registered trademark and the symbol ™ for a trademark.

Annex D (informative)

Citation of ASB Standards

D.1 Background

Publishers, including research and academic institutions, may require a specific citation style such as MLA or Chicago, and these styles can apply to citing standards (Incl. Std, BPR, G, TR) as well as other references. The citation style does not affect the designation of a standard, but may require additional information or punctuation. The following is an excerpt from the University of Iowa's section "Citing Standards"ⁱ:

How to cite an industry standard varies depending on the style manual required by each journal or discipline. There is no such thing as a separate style guide just for industry standards.

Guiding principle: Make sure you provide enough information that anyone interested in further Information can track down the original document.

- Issuing Agency (or publication name)
- Standard Number
- Standard Title
- Publication Date
- Specific Version

Where a citation machine such as the Purdue Owl^j is used and requires the name of an author, the proper name of the SDO is the author. Purdue provides instruction on using several different format styles. The following is an example of an MLA format for reference citation and in-text citation.

General Format for Reference List - Note that 'Standard Issuing Body' is used instead of 'Author'.

[Reference Number] **Standard Issuing Body**, year, "Standard Name," Number.

Example

[1] **AAFS-ASB**, 2022, "Standard for Collection of Known DNA Samples from Domestic Mammals," ANSI/ASB Std. 138", First Edition.

In Text Citation

Use Square Brackets to reference the citation.

Your text about a general reference [1] your text continues after the in-text citation to explain why that reference was used.

ⁱ University of Iowa, "Citing Standards" <https://guides.lib.uiowa.edu/c.php?g=132283&p=5262019#s-lg-box-16552412>

^j <https://owl.purdue.edu>

Standard Issuing Body, year, "Standard Name," Number. [1] AAFS-ASB, 2022, "Standard for Collection of Known DNA Samples from Domestic Mammals," ANSI/ASB Std. 138-2022. Use Square Brackets to reference the citation.

D.2 Citation of ANSI/ASB Documents

Cite ANSI/ASB documents as follows:

Base Designation, Title, date of publication and/or Version.

- Base Designation = ANSI/ASB + Document type + alpha-numeric identifier
- Title = *title of document without additional identifiers*
- Publication or version date = year and any accompanying version identifier

Example: ANSI/ASB Standard 035, *Standard for the Examination of Documents for Alterations*. 2020. 1st. Ed.

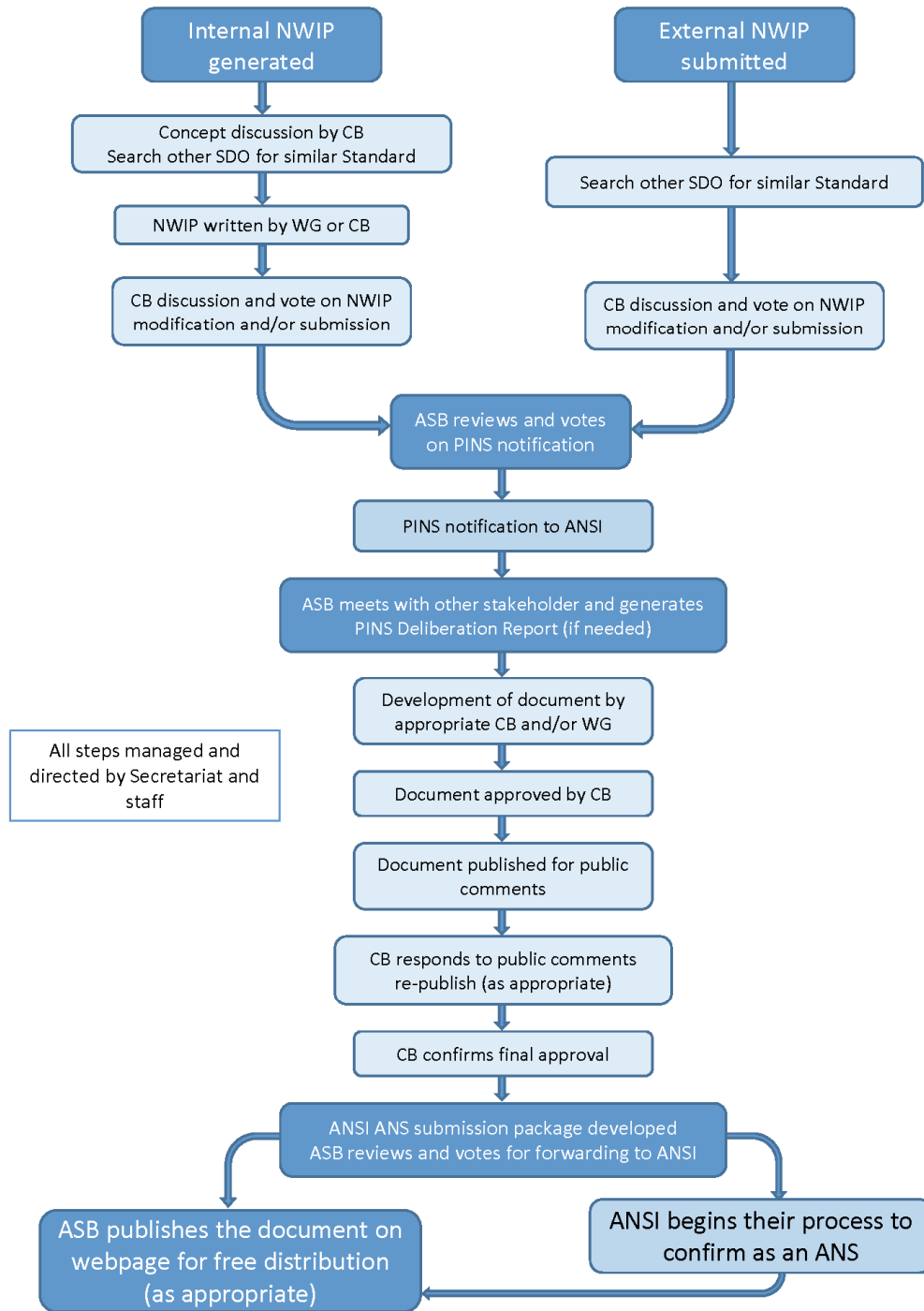
When additional information, such as the author's name, is required by a publisher's citation style, use the following:

- Author = AAFS-ASB
- Publisher = AAFS-ASB
- Publisher Address = 410 North 21st Street, Colorado Springs, CO 80904

Example: ANSI/ASB Standard 035, *Standard for the Examination of Documents for Alterations*. 2020. 1st. Ed. AAFS-ASB, 410 North 21st Street, Colorado Springs, CO 80904

Annex E (informative)

ASB Flow Chart



Annex F (informative)

Sample ASB Document

The following is a sample of how an ASB document should be formatted. The ASB Staff can convert documents into the appropriate format. If a working group or consensus body member would like to format an ASB document, a template can be obtained from asb@aafs.org.

ASB Sample Document 002 First Edition
2025

Sample ASB Document

Cambria 18 pt



ASB
ACADEMY
STANDARDS BOARD

Sample ASB Document

Cambria 14 pt

ASB Approved Xxxxx 2025

ANSI Approved Xxxxxx 2025



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Colorado Springs, CO 80904

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Proper citation of ASB documents includes the designation, title, edition, and year of publication.

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Foreword

The American Academy of Forensic Sciences established the Academy Standards Board (ASB) in 2015 with a vision of safeguarding Justice, Integrity and Fairness through Consensus Based American National Standards. To that end, the ASB develops consensus based forensic standards within a framework accredited by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI), and provides training to support those standards. ASB values integrity, scientific rigor, openness, due process, collaboration, excellence, diversity and inclusion. ASB is dedicated to developing and making freely accessible the highest quality documentary forensic science consensus standards, guidelines, best practices, and technical reports in a wide range of forensic science disciplines as a service to forensic practitioners and the legal system.

This document was revised, prepared, and finalized as a standard by the Xxxxx Consensus Body of the AAFS Standards Board. The draft of this standard was developed *[to be inserted, if appropriate]*.

Questions, comments, and suggestions for the improvement of this document can be sent to AAFS-ASB Secretariat, or 410 N 21st Street, Colorado Springs, CO 80904.

All hyperlinks and web addresses shown in this document are current as of the publication date of this standard.

ASB procedures are publicly available, free of cost, at www.aafs.org/academy-standards-board.

Keywords: *standard, guideline, best practice recommendation, technical report.*

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Table

1—Table Title - Cambria font, 11 pt. bold, centered above the table6

Figure

1—Figure Title - Cambria font, 11pt. , bold, centered, below the figure6

Sample ASB Document Format

Cambria 14 pt

1 Scope

This Sample provides guidance for preparing standards, guidelines, best practice recommendations and technical reports copyrighted by the Academy Standards Board (ASB). ASB submits standards, Guidelines and BPRs for publication by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI).

2 Normative References

The following normative reference is indispensable for the application of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ANSI Style Guide-Sheet - 2003¹¹

Or, if no normative references are included:

This document contains no normative references. See Annex X, Bibliography for other references.

3 Terms and Definitions

For the purpose of this document, the following definitions and acronyms apply.

3.1

nomenclature

system of names and terms used in a particular field of study or community.

3.2

Cambria

a transitional serif typeface commissioned by Microsoft and distributed with Windows.

4 Level 1 Heading [Cambria font, 12 pt, bold, 12pt space below]

4.1 Level 2 additional Heading [Cambria font, 11 pt, bold, 12 pt space below]

Document text [Cambria font, 11 pt, 12 pt space below].

NOTE Cambria font, 10 pt.

Example Cambria Font, 11 pt Italic

Example text [Cambria font, 11 pt, 12 pt space below].

¹¹ Available from: <https://www.usug.org/answg/pdf/ANSI%20Style%20Guidesheet%20-%202003.pdf>

5 Tables

Call tables out in the text, and number them sequentially throughout the document. Number tables in annexes sequentially throughout each annex with the annex letter as the prefix to the table number.

Table 1—Table Title - Cambria font, 11 pt. bold, centered above the table

Table Header Row	Cambria font, 10 pt., bold
Table content	Cambria font, 10 pt., centered if appropriate, all table content has 2 pt. above and below
Table notes or footnotes Cambria	Font, 9pt

6 Figures

Call out figures in the text, and number them sequentially throughout the document. Number figures in annexes sequentially throughout each annex with the annex letter as the prefix to the figure number.



Figure 1—Figure Title - Cambria font, 11pt. , bold, centered, below the figure

Annex A
(informative)

Supplemental Information

Always start an annex at the top of a new page and call out the annex in the body of the document.

Annex X
Cambria font, 14 pt, bold, centered, no space below
(informative or normative) Cambria font, 14 pt, centered, 12 pt. below

Annex Title
Cambria font, 14 pt, bold, centered, 18 pt, below

X.1 Level 1 Annex Header - Cambria font, 12 pt, bold, 12 pt below

X.1.2 Level 2 Annex additional Heading - Cambria font, 11 pt, bold, 12 pt space below

Annex text - Cambria font, 11 pt, 12 pt space below

Annex B **(informative)**

Bibliography

The Bibliography will always be the last Annex in the document.

The following bibliography is not intended to be an all-inclusive list, review, or endorsement of literature on this topic. The goal of the bibliography is to provide publications cited informationally, and publications relevant to the standard.

1] Annex text - Cambria font, 11 pt, 12 pt space below. Numbered with brackets. Footnote web links.

2] *Follow MLA Handbook, 8th Edition. The Modern Language Association of America, 2016.*¹²

¹² https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/mla_general_format.html

Annex G (informative)

Bibliography

The following bibliography is not intended to be an all-inclusive list, review, or endorsement of literature on this topic. The goal of the bibliography is to provide publications cited informationally, and publications relevant to the standard.

- 3] American National Standards Institute (ANSI). *ANSI Essential Requirements: Due Process Requirements for American National Standards*, 2025^m.
- 4] *ANSI Style Guidesheet* - 2003ⁿ.
- 5] *Conformity Assessment for Standards Writers*. International Organization for Standardization, 2016.
- 6] *How to Write Standards Update 2016* - EN^o.
- 7] *ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 - Principles and rules for the structure and drafting of ISO and IEC documents*, 9th Ed. 2021^p.
- 8] ISO/IEC 17000:2020 *Conformity assessment - Vocabulary and general principles*.^q
- 9] *MLA Handbook*, 9th Edition. The Modern Language Association of America, 2021^r.
- 10] *Recommended Practice for the Designation and Organization of Standards*, ANSI/SWES 1:2013, The Society for Standards Professionals (SES)^s.

^m Available from: <https://www.ansi.org/american-national-standards/ans-introduction/essential-requirements>

ⁿ Available from: <https://www.usug.org/answg/pdf/ANSI%20Style%20Guidesheet%20-%20202003.pdf>

^o Available from: https://www.iso.org/files/live/sites/isoorg/files/developing_standards/docs/en/how-to-write-standards.pdf

^p Available from: <https://www.iso.org/sites/directives/current/part2/index.xhtml>

^q Available from: <https://www.iso.org/standard/73029.html>

^r Available from: <https://www.mla.org/Publications/Bookstore/Nonseries/MLA-Handbook-Ninth-Edition>

^s Available from: <https://www.ses-standards.org/page/Publications>



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