

MST Technical Writing Minimum Standard

Mechatronic and Sensor Systems Technology (MST) – Master Programme

Public student-facing programme minimum standard for technical writing

Document owner	M.Sc. Le Duy Can, MST Programme Coordinator, Faculty of Engineering, VGU
Prepared by	MST Programme Office, Faculty of Engineering, VGU
Approval authority	Dean, Faculty of Engineering, VGU
Version	v1.2
Effective date	07 Mar 2026
Next review date	07 Mar 2027

1. Purpose

This document defines the minimum programme-wide standard for technical and academic writing in the MST master programme. It aims to ensure consistent academic quality, formal requirements, and citation practices across modules and written submissions. The standard complements module-specific instructions and the applicable VGU examination regulations.

2. Scope and applicability

This minimum standard applies to all written submissions in the MST programme, including (but not limited to):

- seminar papers, assignments and lab reports (where applicable);
- project proposals and project documentation in 61MST604 Scientific Project / Industry Project;
- written outputs produced in 61MST603.2 Research Methodology;
- the Master's thesis and associated written documents.

Module leaders may specify additional requirements (e.g., report structure, page limits, or reference style). Where requirements differ, students must follow the module-specific requirements and ensure consistency within the submission. This document does not replace or override the VGU General Examination Regulation or the programme-specific examination regulation.

3. Curriculum alignment and implementation concept

The MST programme implements a taught–applied concept for technical writing:

- Taught and practised in Semester 3 through 61MST603.2 Research Methodology (e.g., structure of scientific papers, proposal writing, writing style, correct use of units/equations, and language conventions).
- Applied and evidenced in 61MST604 Scientific Project / Industry Project through written project proposals (and, where required by the module leader, project documentation/reports).
- Consolidated in the Master's thesis through programme thesis requirements and assessment processes.

4. Minimum requirements

4.1 General writing quality

All submissions must meet the following minimum quality requirements:

- clear purpose and logical structure;
- precise and concise technical language appropriate for engineering/scientific writing;
- consistent terminology and abbreviations (define at first use);
- adequate grammar and spelling such that meaning is unambiguous.

4.2 Mandatory elements and structure

Unless a module specifies a different structure, written reports should include the elements below as applicable to the task:

- title and author information (as required by the module);
- introduction and objectives;
- methods / approach (including assumptions and limitations);
- results / outputs (with figures/tables where relevant);
- discussion and conclusion;
- references;
- appendices (if needed).

For project proposals (e.g., within 61MST604), the minimum structure should include: problem statement, objectives, scope, methodology, work plan/timeline, expected outcomes, and references.

4.3 Citations and references

All non-trivial ideas, data, figures, tables, and text that are not the student's own work must be properly cited. The reference style must be applied consistently throughout the submission.

Default reference style: IEEE (recommended for engineering). A module leader may prescribe an alternative style; in such cases, students must follow the module instruction and remain consistent.

Minimum citation rules:

- Every figure/table taken or adapted from another source must cite the source in the caption and in the reference list.
- Direct quotations must be clearly marked and referenced; excessive quoting should be avoided.
- Paraphrases must still be cited if the underlying idea is not original.

4.4 Figures, tables, equations, units and symbols

Figures and tables:

- must be numbered and have a descriptive caption;
- must be referenced in the text;
- must be readable (labels, axes, legends, and units);
- must state the source if reused/adapted.

Equations and symbols:

- equations should be numbered if referenced;
- all variables and symbols must be defined in the text;
- use SI units; ensure unit consistency and correct significant figures.

4.5 Academic integrity and originality

Students are responsible for producing original work and complying with VGU rules on academic integrity. Plagiarism, contract cheating, fabrication/falsification of data, or misrepresentation of authorship constitutes academic misconduct and may lead to disciplinary and/or examination consequences under the applicable regulations.

4.6 Responsible use of digital tools (including AI tools)

If digital tools (including AI-assisted tools) are used to support writing (e.g., language editing, formatting, or outline generation), students remain fully responsible for the correctness, originality, and defensibility of the submission.

Minimum expectations:

- Do not use tools to generate or manipulate data/results dishonestly.
- Do not include references that were not consulted or cannot be verified.
- Ensure the student can explain and defend all content during discussions or examinations.
- Where required by the module leader or programme rules, disclose the use of AI tools in an acknowledgement statement.

5. Implementation and evidence at programme level

To implement this minimum standard programme-wide, the MST programme will:

- use this standard in course introductions and writing-related assignments in 61MST603.2 Research Methodology;
- apply the standard to project proposal review and acceptance for 61MST604 Scientific/Industry Project;
- align thesis writing expectations with the MST Thesis Handbook and apply consistent citation and formatting requirements;
- maintain supporting tools such as templates and checklists and review them annually.

Annex A. Quick checklist for students

Item	Minimum requirement	Student check (✓)
Structure	Required structure and mandatory sections included.	
Citations	All sources cited; reference list complete and consistent.	
Figures/Tables	Captions, units and sources provided; visuals readable.	
Units/Equations	SI units; variables defined; equations numbered if needed.	
Language	Clear and concise writing; terminology consistent.	
Integrity	Original work; citations correct; no fabricated results.	
Tool use	Tool use does not compromise integrity; disclosure if required.	

Annex B. References

MST Module Handbook (2025–2030) – Module 61MST603.2 Research Methodology; Module 61MST604 Scientific Project / Industry Project.

VGU General Examination Regulation (Bachelor and Master programmes).

MST Thesis Handbook.