

# Firm-Wide Word Standards

What does your word processed page look like? Does it have the format you planned on, and does it look like a letter or document that you would want to receive?

There are several options that can make your document look professional ... or you can use the same options to make the document look like a child's crayon drawing! The choice is yours. When setting up for documents, it is best to develop a particular style that fits the manner you want to present, and then make the selection the default for all future documents.



to see how they work within your documents.

On the font tab, the lower left corner has a button called "Default." Clicking on this button sets the options you have picked as the default for future MS Word documents. While this default can be changed as often as you wish, if you have only one document and you want different fonts in that document, change the options just for that document rather than clicking on the default.

The next formatting choices are for page setup. When first installing Word, Microsoft made wrong decisions about how a page should look. The initial defaults for margins are 1.25," but this is not a business standard and leaves too much white space surrounding your document. Instead, change the margins to 1" on all sides.

Other tabs on this window are for paper and layout. This provides options for setting how the overall page will appear, including the capability to make the first page different from

One of the first options is to pick a font that fits your style. Click on the Format tab and then the Font option. The Font window pops up and allows you to select font and type size. Most common for correspondence are Arial and Times Roman; however, you may want to look at Verdana, Tahoma, Franklin Gothic, Lucinda and other fonts that fit your style. As for type size, most common sizes range between 10 and 12 points. Bigger is clearer, but larger sizes do take up more pages.

Other Font options include color, underlining and unique effects, while other tabs include character spacing and text effects. My suggestion is to practice using these formatting tools



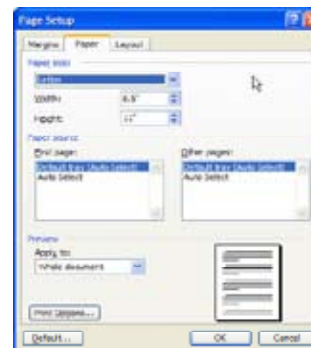
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all of the other pages. For example, if page 1 is a letterhead or needs a title, the header and footer for all subsequent pages will be different. This is an option on the layout tab.

On the layout tab, setting the distance between paper edge



and the header/footer can be changed. This is also the location to change vertical alignment – top, center or bottom. You can change the way line numbers are presented, along with the starting page number. If you are starting in Chapter 3 and want the page number to begin with 1, this is where to set those options.

All of these options can be modified by each individual user. It is important to implement and maintain firm-wide standards; it is not a good standardized look or image when each partner or staff person produces documents with a different set of options. If this happens, it will be very difficult to collaborate and coordinate the creation, editing and finalizing of all sorts of documents. This does not stifle creativity; it supports the look and feel that the firm wants to present to clients and beyond. This information should be placed in the firm's administrative manual. ☺

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