

## Tables and figures in your work

In order to improve the appearance of your written work, illustrations (figures, tables, photographs or other images) should be used throughout your work. It is essential that these illustrations should be presented with a consistent and highly professional appearance. Figure 1 sets out a list of guidelines, which should be followed in order to achieve this professional appearance.

- Each illustration must have a caption consisting of a figure number and a title. Decide on a suitable caption format and use it consistently throughout your work. Use the caption facility in MSWord.
- Each illustration should be explicitly referenced by the figure number in the text of the work. Avoid expressions like “in the figure overleaf” or “in the table below”.
- The illustration should be positioned as close as possible to where it is first mentioned in the text.
- Each illustration must be commented on and if necessary explained.
- For a professional presentation all illustrations should have a consistent look about them. This can be achieved by
  - using a box or frame to surround it
  - using a different text font to that used in the body of the work (arial)
  - using small caps (*Format... Font...*) when formatting headings
  - avoiding fancy fonts
- Use the Borders and Shading ...Options... to position the border such that it is not touching the text.
- Some standards require a figure to have its caption below it while a table has its caption above.
- If the work in an illustration is your own creation, say so. Otherwise, you must cite a source for it.
- In order to consistently position the caption relative to the illustration itself, write the caption on the line immediately following the illustration and then set the “*Spacing Before:*” on the caption text to 6pt (Select the text and *Format... Paragraph*).
- It is useful to have two separate lists at the start of your work. One, a List of Figures and the other a List of Tables.

**Figure 1** – *Guidelines for figures and tables in a research paper or dissertation.*