Grammar Checklist

1. Do **not** begin sentences or independent clauses with the words *there*, *here*, or *it*, or the phrase, “*It is important . . . .”*

2. Do not begin sentences or independent clauses with the words *this* or *that* unless these demonstrative pronouns are immediately followed by a noun.

3. Do not use the words *it* or *thing* in business writing unless you clearly define what an *it* is or a *thing* is.

4. Use two spaces after periods, colons, and question marks when writing business letters and documents.

5. “*Periods* and *commas* are placed inside quotation marks,” states Dr. Guffey.

6. Be sure an independent clause precedes a colon. However, lists introduced by a *verb* should not have a colon.

7. Use first person sparingly or **not at all** in business documents. Business documents should be “receiver-centered.”

8. Use second person to write a set of instructions; use third person to write *formal* documents.

9. Do use bulleted lists in business writing as using these lists improve readability of documents.

10. Do not use punctuation at the end of bulleted lists unless the bullets are complete sentences/questions.

11. Be sure that items in a bulleted list or a listing in a sentence all begin with *the same part of speech*, e.g. a noun, a verb, adjective, adverb. Using this method is an example of *parallelism*.

12. Do not end sentences with prepositions, e.g. “Where is the meeting at?”

13. Use a comma with the word *which* in a sentence as this word introduces nonessential information; do not use commas with the word *that* as this word introduces essential information.

14. Do not capitalize words that are not proper nouns. Use *italics* or *underlining* for placing special emphasis on words.

15. *Internet* is now a proper noun and should be capitalized.
16. The word *e-mail* is still hyphenated.

17. *Web* is now a proper noun also and the words *Web site* and *Web page* should be written as two words with the word *Web* capitalized.

18. Use an en dash (not a hyphen) to denote the term *through*, e.g. (1999 – 2000).

19. When creating tables, remember that numbers are right aligned and text is left aligned.

20. First person pronouns include the words *I, me, my, we, our.*
   Second person pronouns include the words *you, your.*
   *Third person pronouns include the words *he, she, they, their, him, her.*
   *When writing in third person, use the terms “the business,” “the individual,” “the person,” and refrain from using too many pronouns.*

21. Do not use clichés such as “look forward to,” “on the scene,” “enclosed please find,” “in the future,” in business writing.

22. The words *thank you* should be hyphenated when followed by a noun, e.g. *thank-you note.* [Rule: Two adjectives preceding a noun are hyphenated—e.g. *all-important fact.*]

23. Do **not use contractions** in business writing, especially when writing formal reports.

24. Use appropriate APA citations for in-text references (for paraphrasing and/or a direct quote) and on the reference page of a report, proposal, etc.\(^1\)

25. Avoid using ambiguous or unclear words such as *great, wonderful, fantastic* in business writing. For example, rather than stating that “sales last quarter were *great,*” use specific terms such as, “sales last quarter were up 10%.”

26. Avoid using redundant terms such as the following:
   - reasons why—use “reasons”
   - past history—use history
   - true facts—use facts
   - brief summary—use summary
   - staple together—use staple
   - personal opinion—use opinion\(^2\)

27. In business writing, a “company” should be referred to as an “it,” not a “they or them.”
