



UNIVERSITY OF
ARABIC CALLIGRAPHY

Script Accuracy Checklist

Checklist

12/31/2024

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Academic Documents

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Introduction

Script accuracy is a fundamental aspect of Arabic calligraphy that ensures every letter and word adheres to the traditional rules and proportions of the chosen script. This checklist provides a detailed evaluation framework, enabling calligraphers to refine their work and judges to assess submissions objectively.

How to Use This Checklist

1. Review the checklist before starting your calligraphy piece to ensure alignment with the script's rules.
2. Use the checklist during the creation process as a guide to maintain consistency.
3. After completing the piece, evaluate it using the checklist to identify areas for improvement.

Script Accuracy Checklist

1. Letter Formation

- Each letter follows the traditional rules of the chosen script (e.g., Naskh, Thuluth, Ruqaa).
- Letter strokes are formed correctly with smooth curves, sharp edges, and consistent thickness.
- Ascenders (e.g., Alef, Laam) and descenders (e.g., Meem, Qaaf) are aligned to their respective guidelines.
- Letter terminals (the ends of letters) are executed cleanly without unnecessary flourishes.

2. Proportional Consistency

- Letter heights and widths are proportional to the dot-based system of the chosen script.
- Ascenders and descenders maintain consistent lengths relative to other letters in the script.
- Space within and around circular letters (e.g., Meem, Waw) aligns with the prescribed proportions.
- All letters in a word are evenly sized without distortion.

3. Letter Spacing

- Spacing between letters is consistent throughout the composition.
- Letters within ligatures are seamlessly connected without excessive gaps or overlap.
- The spacing between separate words is appropriate for the script's rules (e.g., 1–2 dots for Naskh).

4. Alignment and Baseline Accuracy

- All letters rest on the baseline without tilting or misalignment (exceptions for scripts like Diwani).
- Words follow a straight or curved alignment, depending on the script's style.
- Overlapping strokes in multi-line compositions are harmonious and well-balanced.

5. Diacritical Marks and Vowel Placement

- Dots are placed accurately above or below letters as per traditional guidelines.
- Vowels and tashkeel (e.g., fatha, damma, kasra) are consistently sized and placed.
- Diacritical marks do not interfere with letter strokes or crowd the composition.
- Dots are uniform in shape and size across the entire piece.

6. Stroke Precision and Ink Flow

- Strokes are consistent in thickness and executed with smooth, even pressure.
- Transitions between thick and thin strokes are seamless, maintaining the pen angle.
- Ink flow is even, without smudges, blobs, or faint lines.
- Curves are fluid, and straight lines are sharp and unwavering.

7. Script-Specific Rules

For Naskh:

- Alef is exactly 7 dots high.
- Meem is 3 dots wide and 3 dots high.
- Letters are upright and evenly spaced.

For Thuluth:

- Alef is exactly 9 dots high.
- Letters are gracefully elongated with pronounced curves.
- Diacritical marks are slightly exaggerated for decorative effect.

For Ruqaa:

- Letters are compact and simple, with minimal ornamentation.
- Ascenders and descenders are shorter compared to other scripts.
- Letters maintain a slight forward slant.

For Diwani:

- Letters are heavily curved, with tight spacing for intricate compositions.
- Ascenders often intertwine with other strokes.
- Baseline is wavy rather than straight.

For Kufi:

- Letters are angular and geometric, adhering strictly to square or rectangular shapes.
- Proportions are based on rigid grid systems.
- No flourishes or curves unless integrated geometrically.

8. Overall Composition

- The composition maintains harmony and balance across the entire piece.
- Positive (inked) and negative (blank) spaces are evenly distributed.
- Words and lines flow naturally without overcrowding or excessive gaps.
- Decorative elements (if any) do not detract from the script's clarity or accuracy.

Common Mistakes to Avoid

1. **Inconsistent Proportions:** Letters vary in size and height, disrupting visual harmony.
2. **Misaligned Baseline:** Letters tilt or fail to align properly, creating an uneven composition.
3. **Irregular Diacritical Marks:** Dots and vowels are placed inaccurately or inconsistently.
4. **Overlapping Strokes:** Ligatures and ascenders/descenders interfere with nearby letters.
5. **Improper Spacing:** Letters or words are either too tightly packed or spaced too far apart.

Scoring with the Checklist

Each item in the checklist can be scored on a scale of 1–5, with:

- **1:** Needs significant improvement.
- **3:** Meets basic standards.
- **5:** Excellent execution.

Use this scoring system to identify strengths and areas for improvement in your work.

Tips for Mastering Script Accuracy

1. **Practice with Grids:** Use proportional grid sheets to align your letters correctly.
2. **Study Masterpieces:** Analyze works by renowned calligraphers to understand their accuracy.
3. **Seek Feedback:** Share your work with mentors or peers for constructive critique.
4. **Start Simple:** Focus on mastering individual letters before progressing to words and compositions.

Conclusion

Script accuracy is the foundation of Arabic calligraphy. By following this checklist, calligraphers can ensure their work reflects the traditional elegance and precision of this timeless art form.

Contact Us

For guidance or questions, please email info@uacalligraphy.ac or visit www.uacalligraphy.ac.

Would you like additional visual aids or diagram examples for this checklist? Let me know!