

File naming conventions

This page defines the filename and directory naming conventions used in lab repositories. These conventions apply to new repositories and new files. Existing repositories are not retroactively renamed unless there is a strong practical reason to do so.

General principles

- Use descriptive names.
- Use only lowercase letters (a-z), digits (0-9), hyphens (-), and underscores (_).
- Avoid spaces and other special characters.
- Use **hyphens (-)** for named entities intended primarily for human reading and reference.
- Use **underscores (_)** for technical identifiers intended primarily for software, programming languages, databases, GIS, and other computational environments.

Directory names

Directory names use **hyphens**, unless the directory represents a software package that must follow programming naming rules.

Examples:

```
submission-docs/  
review-response/  
fig-study-area/  
build-scripts/
```

Documentation and manuscripts

Documentation files, manuscripts, figures, tables, LaTeX macros, and other document-related files use **hyphens** to separate words.

Examples:

```
main.tex  
cover-letter.tex  
cover-letter.pdf  
review-response.tex  
response-macros.tex  
fig-study-basin.tex  
tab-algorithms.tex  
software-availability.tex
```

Hyphens improve readability and match conventions commonly used in documentation, URLs, and open-source repositories.

Workflow scripts

Workflow scripts are treated as command-line tools and therefore also use **hyphens**.

If the execution order matters, a numeric prefix may be used.

Examples:

```
1-download-files.sh  
2-preprocess-files.sh  
3-run-model.sh  
4-postprocess-results.sh
```

Command-line tools

Command-line interface (CLI) programs use **hyphens** in executable names because they are user-facing commands.

Examples:

```
flow-direction  
longest-flow-path  
mesh-builder
```

Software source code

Software source code files use **underscores** to separate words. This ensures compatibility with programming identifiers and module imports.

Examples:

```
flow_direction.py  
longest_flow_path.py  
mesh_builder.cpp  
grid_utils.h
```

GIS datasets and technical identifiers

GIS datasets and technical identifiers use **underscores** to separate words. This ensures compatibility with GIS layers, raster algebra, databases, and similar computational environments.

Examples:

```
gcn10_amc_i.tif  
gcn10_amc_ii.tif  
nm_hydro_basins.gpkg  
stream_order.parquet
```

Generated files

Generated files should normally keep the same base name as their source files.

Example:

```
cover-letter.tex → cover-letter.pdf
```

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