‘However’ can be used in a number of different ways and each usage requires particular punctuation.

**using ‘however’ as a conjunctive adverb**

‘However’ can be used to join two simple sentences to make a compound sentence. ‘However’ indicates that the relationship between the two independent clauses is one of contrast or opposition.

The engineers claimed that the bridge was safe; **however**, they were still not prepared to risk crossing.

Use a semi-colon (;) before and a comma (,) after however when you are using it to write a compound sentence.

**using ‘however’ to begin a sentence**

If ‘however’ is used to begin a sentence, it must be followed by a comma, and what appears after the comma must be a complete sentence.

**However,** there was no need to repeat the data entry.

Keep the use of sentences beginning with ‘however’ to a minimum. Overuse makes ‘however’ look more important than the content of the sentence. It may also result in sentence fragments.

**FRAGMENT** — However, life in Ancient Egypt three thousand years ago.

**REVISED** — However, life in Ancient Egypt three thousand years ago was much more sophisticated.

A sentence beginning with ‘however,’ is usually closely related to the sentence which precedes it. In most cases, it is more appropriate to use ‘however’ to form a compound sentence.
Using ‘however’ as an aside

‘However’ can be used to interrupt a sentence. Use a comma (,) before and a comma (,) after ‘however’ when you use it in this way.

It is, however, extremely difficult to identify all the relevant variables.

Using ‘however’ to mean ‘in whatever manner’, ‘by whatever means’ or ‘to whatever extent’

However the data were analysed, the results remained consistent.

OR

The results remained consistent however the data were analysed.

Note the comma in the first example. Be careful when using ‘however’ in this way as the result may be ambiguous.

Compare the following:

The results remained consistent however the data were analysed.

The results remained consistent; however, the data were analysed.

If punctuation is not a strong point, your marker may find it difficult to decide what you mean.