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INTRODUCTION

Utah State University faculty and staff—especially those who write for an external or formal audience—should use this official Editorial Style Guide for USU communications. The Editorial Style Guide will direct editorial practices for all USU communication and marketing materials, including but not limited to: news releases for the media, content for the web, copy for print publications, email campaigns, newsletters, and reports (internal and external). Like USU’s Visual Identity Guide, the primary purpose of the Editorial Style Guide is to present USU in a consistent and professional manner to the rest of the world.

Although based on the most recent Associated Press Stylebook, this Editorial Style Guide is tailored to USU’s communication needs and preferences and in a few instances departs from AP style. For capitalization and/or usage questions not addressed in the AP guide, refer to Webster’s New World College Dictionary. A new web version, Webster’s New World Online, is now available with an AP Stylebook Online subscription.

Please note this guide is not intended to replace other writing style guides used for specific purposes or for publications such as scholarly journals.

Please direct questions or comments about this style guide to Maren Aller at maren.aller@usu.edu.
GENERAL STYLE

Capitalization
Official names and proper nouns are capitalized. In subsequent references, any common nouns or shortened forms of official names are lowercased. Use the full, official name the first time it appears in a document or section of a document.

Example:
Utah State University is the state’s second largest public research university that inspires more than 1,000 students to pursue their own research projects every year. Known for its strength in academics, the university counts 20 Goldwater Scholars among its graduates in the past 10 years.

The Case for Lowercase
In general, avoid unnecessary capitals.

When too many words are capitalized, they lose their importance and no longer attract attention.

Copy is more easily read when it is not peppered with initial caps or all caps.

Using lowercase letters in no way diminishes the stature or credibility of an individual’s position or a department’s reputation. After all, even the title “president of the United States” is lowercased in running text when it does not immediately precede the president’s name.

Do Not Capitalize:
Academic and Administrative Titles
Capitalize and spell out occupational titles, such as professor or dean, when they precede a proper name. Lowercase elsewhere.

Examples:
Professor of History John Doe; Dean Jane Doe. John Doe, professor of history.

Exception:
Named and endowed chairs and professorships are always capitalized, as they are honorary titles. Always identify faculty members by their academic rank and department in published materials.
Academic Degrees
Capitalize the names of degrees unless they are referred to generically, as in the second example.

Examples:
• Julie earned a Bachelor of Arts degree at Utah State University.
• Larry earned a master’s in mechanical engineering last year.

Academic Departments
Use lowercase except for words that are proper nouns. Capitalize only when using the full formal name.

Academic and Nonacademic Units and Bodies
Capitalize only the complete and official names of colleges, schools, divisions, departments, offices, and official bodies (such as Board of Regents, Faculty Senate Executive Committee, Utah State University Student Association). Lowercase informal and shortened versions of such names.

Examples:
• All of the regents attended the Board of Regents meeting last week.
• The USU Division of Student Affairs includes a variety of services provided to help students navigate college and thrive in their education. Offices within student affairs are primarily located in or near the Taggart Student Center.

Department Names
Capitalize official department names and office names in running text. References using shortened or unofficial names should be lowercase.

Examples:
• A big change comes about as W. Farrell Edwards announces his retirement this spring from the faculty of USU’s Department of Physics.
• Tyler Brough, of economics, is now an associate professor.
• Tadd Truscott, an associate professor of mechanical and aerospace engineering at Utah State University, excels in breaking down complicated fluid dynamics concepts.
First/Second Reference in Copy
The first reference should include the full name of the entity and be capitalized. Second references may be shortened and are not capitalized. When referring to a professor, the full name should be used on first reference, followed by the last name only from second reference.

Examples:
• The Center for Integrated Biosystems is an active and vibrant focal point for life science activities at Utah State University. A multifaceted core facility at USU, the center is dedicated to agricultural and environmental biotechnology research.
• Professor Jane Doe teaches English at Utah State University. Doe’s research focuses on literary composition.

Names with Titles
Capitalize formal titles only when they immediately precede the individual’s name.

Examples:
• Professor Michelle Baker, biology; or Michelle Baker, professor of biology.
• President Noelle Cockett; or Noelle Cockett, president of Utah State University.

Use lowercase for titles that serve as occupational descriptions.

Examples:
features editor Jane Smith; astronaut Scott Carpenter; writing instructor Glen Moore.

Story Titles
Capitalize the following in titles:
• Initial cap all nouns, verbs (including short verbs, such as is, are, be), pronouns, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions of four or more letters (with, before, through), and conjunctions of four or more letters (that, because).

Do not capitalize the following in titles (unless they fall into one of the previously listed categories):
• articles (a, an, the), unless they are part of a proper noun.
• conjunctions of fewer than four letters (and, but, or, for, nor, so, yet).
• prepositions of fewer than four letters (on, of, to, by).

Utah State University
There is still considerable confusion about whether to capitalize university when the word refers to Utah State University. There is a foolproof solution: no capitalization unless spelling the full name of the university. In most cases, context will clearly indicate when university refers to the Utah State University. In cases where there may be ambiguity, writers can easily substitute using “the university” or “USU.”

Example:
Utah State University is recognized for its student engagement. In fact, the university has more than 200 student clubs and organizations, including the Special Olympics and Best Buddies programs, which are some of the largest in the country.
USU and its Campuses
For external audiences, spell out the complete name of a campus the first

time you refer to it, unless the context and nature of the document require an
abbreviation (for example, in an advertisement).

Approved names and abbreviations for Utah State University follow
(first reference in bold):

**Utah State University**
USU (no periods).
Utah State.
the university.

**All Regional Campuses**
Use hyphens: USU-Moab, USU-Brigham City, etc.

**Utah State University Eastern**
USU Eastern (no hyphen: not USU-Eastern).
When stating location of campus, use a comma: USU Eastern, Price or USU Eastern, Blanding.

**All USU Centers**
Use hyphens: USU-Castle Dale, USU-Beaver, etc.

**USU Colleges**
• Caine College of the Arts
  (Caine College is acceptable on second reference).
• College of Agriculture and Applied Science
  (CAAS is acceptable on second reference).
• College of Engineering
  (COE is acceptable on second reference).
• College of Humanities and Social Sciences
  (CHaSS is acceptable on second reference).
• College of Science
  (CoS is acceptable on second reference).
• Emma Eccles Jones College of Education and Human Services
  (CEHS is acceptable on second reference).
• Jon M. Huntsman School of Business
  (Huntsman School or HSOB is acceptable on second reference).
• S.J. and Jessie E. Quinney College of Natural Resources
  (Quinney College or QCNR is acceptable on second reference).

USU and its Facilities
Be sure to check correct spelling for all USU facilities, building names, etc. Not
all names may be spelled in a conventional manner.

Example:
Maverik Stadium (not Maverick with the conventional “ck”).
PUNCTUATION AND GRAMMAR

Academic Degrees
Use an apostrophe in bachelor’s degree and master’s degree, but not in associate degree. Do not use apostrophes when referring to the official degree title.

Academic Year
Use a hyphen when writing out an academic year.

Example:
2013-14

Acronyms
In capital letters with no periods: GPA, ID cards, ROTC, NASA. With the exception of well-understood acronyms and abbreviations, spell out the full name or title on first use, followed by the letters in parentheses, if they are to be used repeatedly in the text. Only use acronyms for degrees when in a list of graduates or a bio.

Addresses
Use abbreviations only with a numbered address.

Example:
987 Wallis Ave., 756 Central Blvd.

Bulleted lists
When making a bulleted or numbered list, be sure that capitalization, punctuation, and structure are consistent within the list. Capitalize the first word following the bullet and use a period at the end of each section whether it is a full sentence or a phrase. Maintain consistency throughout the entire document.

Colons
The colon is used to indicate something is following that will complete or amplify the previous material. It is not necessary to capitalize the word immediately following a colon unless it begins a complete sentence of its own or is a proper noun.

Do not use unnecessary colons in sentences.

- Correct: Visit our website at usu.edu.
- Incorrect: Visit our website at: usu.edu.

Use a colon when the sentence is not complete without it.
- Be sure to visit the Utah State University website: usu.edu.
Commas
University publications will use the Oxford comma.

However, when writing news releases, one should use AP style. AP style does not use the Oxford comma—or serial comma—in a simple series. In a series with more complexity, an Oxford comma may be needed for clarity.

Dates are punctuated with commas before and after the year in a complete date: May 3, 2013, was a beautiful day. There is no comma if only the month and year are used: Utah State University will be closed December 25. Don’t use ordinals such as 1st, 4th, or 23rd in dates.

Whether writing a university document, or for the news, maintain consistency throughout.

Committee, Center, Group, Program, and Initiative Names
Unless a committee, center, group, program, or initiative is officially recognized and formally named, avoid capitalizing. An ad hoc committee’s name, for example, would not typically be capitalized. Do capitalize the official, proper names of long-standing committees and groups and formally developed programs and initiatives.

Examples:
- The Fife Folklore Archives in Merrill-Cazier Library contains a wealth of intriguing materials.
- The Honors Program provides special educational opportunities for highly motivated students.
- The Student Health and Wellness Center assist students, staff, and faculty in the development of life skills necessary to enhance their personal wellness and ability to be successful in life.
- The university’s presidential search committee met in executive session Tuesday.

Dashes
The en dash (–) is wider than a hyphen and is used between ranges of numbers or dates and between adjectival phrases containing two-word concepts. If the en dash is unavailable, it is acceptable to use a hyphen in its place.

Examples:
- pages 206–220.
- St. George–Salt Lake City flight.

The em dash (—) is used to indicate a break in thought or a strong parenthetical phrase. There are no spaces before and after the em dash.

Example:
Two professors—what a contrast in styles—share the teaching duties.
Hyphens
Don’t use a hyphen after an adverb ending in ly: She is an overly zealous recruiter. Some words that normally would be solid should be hyphenated for clarity: co-op (as opposed to coop), re-signed (as opposed to resigned), or for easier reading when the root word begins with a vowel: re-enrolled, re-admitted.

Use hyphens when two or more words describe a noun: One-credit course. Or in verb phrases: I’m going to test-drive the car tomorrow.

Names with Degrees
Use a comma between a person’s name and degree.

Example:
Laurie McNeill, Ph.D., is a professor.

Numbers in General
The following guidelines apply to the majority of USU writing except for scientific, statistical, technical, and mathematical writing.

- Spell out one to nine. Use figures for 10 and above.
- Use figures for percentages, decimals, credit hours, GPAs, book sections and pages, ages, distances and dimensions, quantities combining whole numbers and fractions, and when symbols rather than abbreviations are used for units of measure.
- Use the word percent in formal running text. Use the percent sign in tables, charts, scientific and statistical copy, and some informal and promotional copy. Whichever you choose, be consistent throughout a document.

Examples:
- The Alumni Association recognized 10 people at the awards ceremony, including two alumni who have demonstrated extraordinary service to Utah State University.
- We printed the first draft on 8.5” x 11” paper.
- In his first semester, when he carried 16 credit hours, he earned a 3.100 GPA while spending 30 percent of his time on a work-study job.
- You’ll find the answer in Chapter 2 on page 31.
- Her brother gave $5 to the USU Scholarship Fund.
- Her sister gave $1 million to the USU Scholarship Fund.
- He is 5 years old.
- She walked 5 miles.
- He is 6-feet 2-inches tall.

Spelling out large round numbers is preferred.

Example:
She gave the museum more than two hundred thousand artifacts.
Use a combination of figures and words with numbers in the millions and larger.

**Example:**
The population increased by 2.3 million.

Use a comma for numbers with more than three digits unless they represent SAT scores or years.

**Examples:**
- In-state tuition for 2017–18 was $7,200 per year.
- The book, which was published in 2010, has 1,229 pages.
- His combined SAT score was 1235.

Spell out numbers at the beginning of a sentence or rephrase the sentence to avoid beginning with a number.

**Example:**
Forty-nine students received the new degree at the May commencement.

**Periods**
If a sentence ends with a URL or an email address, the closing punctuation—usually a period—should be included.

Use periods in bulleted lists, even if including incomplete sentences.

The use of periods in degree abbreviations is preferred: B.A., M.S., Ed.D., Ph.D. Note there are no spaces in the degree abbreviations. Abbreviated degrees should only be used in lists, not in main body copy.

**Phone Numbers**
Hyphens and dashes are acceptable between number sequences. When writing online content, use hyphens to make the number clickable on a mobile device.

**Pictures of Alums/Students**
When identifying someone, always identify them using the format:

- For alums identify them with a name, degree, and graduation year. If they are a current student, identify them with a name and year in school.

(Obtain and keep a signed model release when using photos along with identifying information at usu.edu/prm/copyright-model-release).
Policies
When writing text for USU Policies, words listed in the policy definitions section should be capitalized throughout the policy. When listing policies in a document, include the full policy citation on the first mention to avoid confusion. The formal names of policies should be capitalized.

Example:
• USU Policy 101: Statutes That Define the University

Publications, Presentations, and Reports
Titles of books, periodicals, journals, movies, television and radio programs, musicals, plays, long poems, works of art, museum exhibitions, and campus publications are styled italic with initial caps. This deviates from the AP style. Presentation titles are enclosed in quotes.

Examples:
• Utah State Greats, created by USU Public Relations and Marketing, contains a wealth of facts, statistics, and information about Utah State University.
• Renowned American political activist, scholar, and author Ibram X. Kendi visits the Utah State University campus this fall for a keynote presentation on “How to be an Anti-Racist.”

Quotation Marks
Quotation marks are placed outside of commas and periods, but inside of semicolons and colons. Question marks and exclamation marks are placed inside or outside the quotation marks, depending on whether they are part of the quoted matter.

Avoid using quotation marks around a word to call attention to it or because there isn’t a better word to use: She uses “air quotes” constantly in her presentation, which is very annoying. But do, on first reference, put quotation marks around a word that is likely unfamiliar to a reader.

Seasons and Semesters
Seasons, semesters, and terms should all be lowercase.

Examples:
• spring semester.
• fall 2017.
• the summer 2016 term (no commas).
• summer session.
• spring break.
**Time**
Use figures with a.m. or p.m. (small caps or lowercase letters) to indicate specific times.

Use noon and midnight in place of 12 p.m. and 12 a.m., respectively, for clarity.

**Examples:**
- The lecture will begin at 2 p.m.
- The meeting starts at 8:30 a.m.
- The committee met for a luncheon at noon.

**Years**
Use an “s” without an apostrophe to indicate spans of decades or centuries.

**Examples:**
- the 1800s.
- the ’80s.

Use the correct placement for A.D. and B.C. (all caps).

**Examples:**
- Hannibal died in 183 B.C.
- King George IV died in A.D. 1830.

**AP STYLES TO WATCH FOR WHEN NEWS WRITING**

- In general, avoid unnecessary capitalization.
- The title Dr. is used only for medical doctors, not someone with a doctorate.
- In general, formal titles are capitalized only when they precede a name, not after. This includes “Noelle Cockett, president of Utah State University.”
- Use a hyphen for both first-grader and first-grade student.
- Use figures for numbers of 10 and higher, except when they begin a sentence.
- In a simple series of items, AP style calls for no comma before the final “and,” such as in “red, white and blue.”
- Periods and commas are always placed within quotation marks, never outside.
- The possessive form of campus is “campus’s.”
WORD USE

The following list includes easily confused words as well as the preferred spelling and capitalization for words that are commonly used in Utah State University writing. For words not included here, consult a good dictionary. Typically, the preferred, United States (as opposed to British Commonwealth) spelling is listed first when there is more than one correct spelling.

adviser/advisor
Both are acceptable.

advance, advanced
When used as adjectives, advance means “ahead of time” and advanced means “beyond others.” Thus, it would be advance tuition deposit, but advanced standing.

Aggie
Preferred plural is Aggies. Plural possessive is Aggies’. (capitalized because it’s the proper name of USU’s sports teams.)

alum
Alum is the mixed-gender singular.

alumni (a)
Alumni is the masculine or mixed-gender plural. Alumna refers to a female graduate.

alumnus
Alumnus is the nonspecific gender singular.

and, but
And or but may begin a sentence. This approach can be useful in providing a transition between closely related sentences, but it should not be overdone.

bachelor of “ ” degree/bachelor’s
Capitalize the names of degrees unless they are referred to generically, as in the second example.

Examples:
• Samuel earned a Bachelor of Science degree at USU.
• Claire earned a bachelor’s in nutrition and food sciences last year.

Board of Regents
Use the full name for first reference. Subsequent references may be styled as the regents or the board. Board of Regents is singular; regents takes a plural verb. No possessive apostrophe for the regents meeting.
building
Uppercase when included in the formal name of the building, lowercase otherwise. Note: Be sure to check for the correct spelling.

Example:
S.J. and Jessie E. Quinney Building versus natural resources building.

catalog
Not catalogue.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
Latter-day Saints, LDS, LDS Church, Mormon, or Mormon Church are acceptable on second reference.

contractions
Although contractions may be discouraged in formal academic writing, they are acceptable in informal marketing writing: social media, email marketing, and websites.

course titles
Capitalize all official course titles. No italics or quotation marks.

Example:
Lisa is hoping to take Mass Media Law during spring semester.

When listing the course number with the departmental abbreviation, put a space between the abbreviation, course number and course name.

Example:
ACCT 2010

coursework
One word. Not course work.

database
One word.

dean
Capitalize when used as a formal title before a name. Lowercase in other uses.

dean’s list
Lowercase in all instances.

Examples:
Example: College of Humanities and Social Sciences Dean Joe Ward is speaking today. Maura Hagan, dean of the College of Science, is speaking today.
departments, offices
Capitalize the full, formal name of the university’s administrative divisions, offices, and departments.

Examples:
Division of Student Affairs, Office of the President.

A shortened version may be used on second reference. You may lowercase on second reference.
• (e.g: student affairs, president’s office (note: capitalize “office” only when it precedes the formal name))

degrees
Capitalize the names of degrees unless they are referred to generically, as in the second example.

Examples:
• Susan earned a Doctor of Aerospace Engineering degree at USU.
• Dan earned a bachelor’s in accounting last year.

doctorate/Ph.D.
Capitalize the names of degrees unless they are referred to generically, as in the second example. Ph.D. should only be used in lists, not in main body copy.

Examples:
• Glenn earned a Doctor of Biology degree at USU.
• Sally earned a doctorate in computer science last year.

Dr.
Use of Dr. is acceptable, however when writing news releases, one should use AP style where the title Dr. is used only for medical doctors, not someone with a doctorate.

e-mail
Not e-mail. Don’t capitalize unless it starts a sentence or is before the email address in a vertical list.

emeritus, emerita, emeriti
Honorary title for retired professor: emeritus for a male or female professor, emerita for a female professor. Emeriti is plural for both male and female professors.

freshman/freshmen
Freshman is singular. Freshmen is plural.

gray
Not grey. But: greyhound dog or Greyhound bus.
GPA, grade-point average
Either is acceptable. GPAs normally have two numbers after the decimal.

Examples:
3.00, 4.25.

international students
Not foreign students.

land-grant
Two words. Hyphenate. Don’t capitalize unless referring to its formal name.

majors/minors
Capitalize the full, formal name of a major or minor. You may lowercase on second reference

Master of “ ” degree/master’s
Capitalize the names of degrees unless they’re referred to generically, as in the second example.

Examples:
• Ben earned a Master of Science in geology at USU.
• Kate earned a master’s in special education last year.

Maverik Stadium
USU’s Maverik Stadium does not follow the conventional spelling (not Maveri“ck”).

more than/over
More than is preferred when using numerals, particularly in formal writing. Over generally refers to spatial relationships.

No.
Use to indicate rank or position, especially in sports writing.

Example:
Jack Swindells led the team with 22 victories in doubles, pairing with Jonas Maier to post an overall mark of 22-13, appearing at No. 1 and No. 2 doubles.

non
Words with the prefix “non” are generally not hyphenated unless the prefix is directly before a proper noun (i.e. non-English speaking). The dictionary contains a long list of words with the “non” prefix and their appropriate spellings.

Examples:
nondegree, nonresident, noncredit, nonconsensual
off campus, on campus
Hyphenate when using as an adjective, not as an adverb.

**Examples:**
Off-campus housing is plentiful during the summer. It’s difficult to find housing off campus during the fall term.

online
One word, no hyphen.

pre & post
These prefixes generally don’t take hyphens unless they come directly before proper nouns (i.e. pre-Columbian). The dictionary contains a list of words with appropriate spelling.

professor
Capitalize before a proper name, use lowercase elsewhere. A named professorship is always capitalized.

**Examples:**
Professor Brian McCuskey; Brian McCuskey, English professor. Arrington Chair Philip Barlow; Philip Barlow holds the Arrington Chair of Mormon Studies.

*Always identify faculty by their academic rank or department in published materials.*

programs
Capitalize the full, formal name of a program. You may lowercase on second reference.

range of time, day, or date
The preferred form in body copy is to spell out “to” or “through” when referring to a range of time. For a range of dates and in tabular material, use an en dash.

**Examples:**
- The class will be held April 1-3.
- Office hours are Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

re-
In general, use a hyphen in compounds beginning with “re” only if the word following the prefix begins with an e or if confusion would result: re-elect, re-establish, redo, rewrite, recover/re-cover.
regional campuses
Use hyphens for regional campuses. No hyphen is used in USU Eastern references. Use full name of Utah State University for the first reference, shorten to USU for second onward.

Examples:
USU-Moab and USU Eastern, Price.

state names
Spell out the names of states in the body of a story, whether standing alone or in conjunction with the name of a city or town. There is no abbreviation for Utah. Refer to the *AP Stylebook* for the appropriate abbreviations of states.

student-athlete
Always hyphenate, whether used as a noun or adjective.

theater
Use this spelling except when it is spelled “theatre” in a proper name (e.g., USU Department of Theatre Arts).

United States
Spell out United States in stand-alone references in text body. Abbreviation to U.S. is only acceptable on second reference and when used in conjunction with another entity as in U.S. Department of Agriculture.

university
Only capitalized when in formal name of the university. Likewise with “department” and other office names.

Examples:
Utah State University; the university employees more than 2,000 staff and faculty.

URLs
Do not include http:// or www before a URL in printed copy when it is clear that it’s a web address. For online communications, make sure the link will work. Sometimes www is still necessary before web addresses. When listing web addresses, try to get the URL to fit on a single line. Don’t allow the URL to break itself by adding a hyphen because that could change the address.

For printed materials, use appropriate punctuation after a url. For online communications, if link finishes a sentence, place a period after it unless that disrupts the link function.

Utah
Do not abbreviate unless used in physical address. Do not capitalize “state” when used with any state.

Example:
state of Utah
Utahn
not Utahan

website
One word, lowercase

wide
University-wide is hyphenated. Most words with wide as a suffix are closed, though, unless they are long and cumbersome. If in doubt, check the dictionary.

work-study
Hyphenate; capitalize only when using the formal designation.

**Examples:**
Federal Work-Study Program; Work-study funds are offered to students who qualify.

yearlong
One word.