

Associated Press style is the base editorial style followed by communicators at The Ohio State University. This document outlines words and terms that are commonly used by communicators at the university.

This guide is intended to supplement Ohio State's main style website: apstylebook.com/osu. The website features the most up-to-date version of university style and you are encouraged to use it as the primary style resource whenever possible. If you have questions about any entries in this document, contact University Marketing at style@osu.edu.

A

abbreviations

Avoid abbreviations in running text except when part of official names. If the name represented by an abbreviation may be unknown to some readers, use the full name in the initial reference.

College of Arts and Sciences (not Arts & Sciences)
Procter & Gamble (official name)
Large Binocular Telescope (LBT)

Social media exceptions: Abbreviations are acceptable when:

Twitter character count does not allow for full name
Abbreviation is more popular in conversation than full name.
For example, "RPAC" v. full name.

academic courses

Capitalize the main words in titles of specific courses, but not names used in a general sense.

Economics 200; Science 111; economics courses; sociology
Capitalize all nouns and adjectives referring to languages, countries and nationalities.

a French course; an English course

academic programs

The term "program" should not be capitalized unless used as an official part of a title.

The Department of Psychology's program offers specializations in clinical psychology, counseling psychology and developmental psychology.
She's a member of the Health Sciences Scholars Program.

academic units

Capitalize the official names of academic units. Do not capitalize the name in informal reference.

Department of Art Education; the art education department

ACT

Acceptable on first reference. Do not use periods.

ADA compliance

Publications (both print and Web) should be made available in alternative formats to students, faculty and staff with disabilities, and others with disabilities who are unable to read traditional print and online materials. If applicable, communications staff will discuss the ADA compliance process with clients upon initiation of design/editorial projects.

Affirmative Action/nondiscrimination statements

The Ohio State University is committed to a policy of equal opportunity in its admission and employment programs.

Use the following when applicable:

Short statement:

The Ohio State University is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity institution.

The long statement:

The Ohio State University is committed to building a diverse faculty and staff for employment and promotion to ensure the highest quality workforce, to reflect human diversity and to improve opportunities for minorities and women. The university embraces human diversity and is committed to equal employment opportunity, affirmative action and eliminating discrimination. Discrimination against any individual based upon protected status—defined as age, ancestry, color, disability, gender identity or expression, genetic information, military status, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation or veteran status—is prohibited.

For further information, contact the Office of Human Resources, 1590 N. High St., Suite 300, Columbus, OH 43201-2190 or 614-292-4164.

African American

No hyphen for the noun or adjective. Both *African American* and *black* are acceptable.

African Americans; African American students

ages

Use numerals.

Agricultural Technical Institute (ATI)

Abbreviate after first full reference. Do not use periods.

alma mater

Do not italicize.

alumnus, alumni

Alumnus is the singular, masculine form. For references to women, use *alumna* (singular) or *alumnae* (plural). *Alumni* is plural for a group of both men and women.

Social media exception: Use "alum" in lieu of the masculine and feminine singular forms (*alumnus* and *alumna*).

American Indian

Native American is also acceptable.

ampersand

Do not use an ampersand, unless it is part of a previously established official title:

College of Arts and Sciences

Kuhn Honors & Scholars House

Social media exception: Use an ampersand when Twitter character count does not allow for “and.”

apostrophes

Make abbreviations plural by adding *s*.

MBAs, RNs, BAs, W-2s, IDs

No apostrophe is needed for decades.

1990s, 2010s

Asian American

No hyphen for the noun or the adjective.

Asian Americans; Asian American students

autumn, autumn semester

Lowercase references to seasons and academic periods.

B

Big Ten

Ten is always spelled out in this usage.

Social media exceptions: Twitter: @BigTen, Hashtags: #B1G

Black

Use uppercase “B” in reference to people and descendants of the African diaspora, as in Black person, Black culture or Black history. Do not use Black as a noun, as in reference to “Blacks.” Use a lowercase “b” to refer to skin color, as in black or brown skin. African American (no hyphen for noun or adjective) is also acceptable, and deference should be given to the subject/writer as to which ethnic identifier is preferred.

For more context, please see the following excerpt from the USA Today diversity committee:

Black is an ethnoracial identifier that is inclusive of the collective experiences of the Black U.S. population, including recent immigrants. Capitalizing Black reflects an understanding and respect that is consistent with how many Black people and Black publications describe the people and descendants of the African diaspora and reflects a rich range of shared cultures and experiences.

Blackwell, the

Use lowercase “the” in running text.

They stayed at the Blackwell last night.

Social media exception: Twitter: @theblackwell

Board of Trustees

Capitalize the words Board and Trustees when referring to Ohio State’s Board of Trustees. Do not capitalize board or trustees when used alone or in second reference.

When referring to other boards and trustees, use lowercase.

Ohio State’s Board of Trustees will meet today.

His company’s board of trustees approved the measure.

book titles, magazine titles, etc.

Titles of books, magazines and newspapers appear in italics, without quotation marks. Titles of book chapters and magazine articles appear in quotation marks. This is an exception to AP style.

Social media exception: Use regular type when italics is not available for social media posting.

BuckID

No punctuation between letters.

bulleted lists

Keep punctuation for bulleted lists at a minimum. Begin each item with a lowercase letter.

Omit periods after items unless one or more of the items is a complete sentence. If the list completes a sentence begun in an introductory element, the final period is also omitted unless the items in the list are separated by commas or semicolons.

The required curriculum includes:

- *a calculus course*
- *an advanced physics course*
- *three chemistry courses*

Ordinarily, commas are not used following a series of items. If the vertically listed items are phrases—especially long phrases—that grammatically complete the sentence containing them, commas may, but need not, be used. If commas are used, the last item is followed by a period.

In preparation, the student:

- *earned a high score on the ACT,*
- *studied extensively on related subjects,*
- *talked with professionals in the field.*

Note: It is not necessary to include *and* before the last item in the list.

C

campus

Do not capitalize north campus, south campus, Newark campus, etc. Exception: West Campus is a formal name.

capitalization

Lowercase the word university when it is used alone in reference to Ohio State or another institution or when it is used in a generic sense.

He wants to attend Ohio State, although the university is far from home.

A general rule is that official names are capitalized; unofficial, informal, shortened or generic names are not. This rule applies to names of offices, buildings, schools, departments, programs, centers, institutes, etc. Phrases

Editorial Style Guide

Updated September 2021

such as the center, the institute, the college or the museum are not capitalized.

Names of seasons, academic periods and one-time events are generally not capitalized.

autumn 2016; summer term; spring semester; orientation; spring break; commencement

chair

Use in all cases (not *chairman*, *chairwoman*, or *chairperson*).

colleges

Capitalize the full, formal names of colleges, but lowercase shortened or informal versions.

the College of Engineering; the engineering college; the college

course work

Two words.

curriculum/curricula

Curriculum is singular. *Curricula* and *curriculum*s are plural.

D

decision making, decision-making

Two words as a noun, hyphenated as an adjective.

*Decision making was not the committee's strong point.
She found the decision-making process easy.*

degrees

Capitalize the main words in the names of degrees when they are spelled out and capitalize abbreviations of degrees. Abbreviation of the degree name is acceptable on first reference. Do not use periods in abbreviations of degrees.

BA; BS; JD; MA; MBA; MS; PhD

Capitalization of names of degrees should match the registrar's official degree list. If the official degree name contains the words *of Science*, the discipline is capitalized. (Refer to the Bachelor of Science in Chemistry, not the *Bachelor of Science degree in Chemistry* or the *Bachelor's degree in Chemistry*.) Similar rules apply to references made to master's and doctoral degrees.

Do not capitalize academic degrees used in a general sense. Note that bachelor's and master's end in 's.

an associate degree; a bachelor's degree; a master's degree; a doctoral degree; a doctorate

In references to degrees, the word *degree* is not capitalized.

She earned her Master of Music degree.

Make plural abbreviations of degrees by adding s.

MAs; PhDs; JDs

When they follow a person's name, qualifiers such as *PhD* and *MD* are preceded by a comma. A second comma follows the qualifier in running text.

William Turner, PhD

The latest article published by William Turner, PhD, was his third in six months.

department names

Capitalize the full, formal names of departments, but lowercase shortened or informal versions.

the Department of Mechanical Engineering; the mechanical engineering department

E

email

No hyphen.

emeritus

Emeritus is the singular, masculine form. For references to women, use *emerita* (singular) or *emeritae* (plural). *Emeriti* may serve as the plural for a group that is composed of men only or both men and women. *Emeritus* is lowercase in all forms (unless used before a name as a formal title).

professor emerita of art; professors emeriti; Emeritus Professor John Smith

F

faculty

Faculty can be plural or singular depending on whether the word is used to describe the group as a whole (singular) or to describe its members individually (plural). For clarity, try to rewrite the sentence to avoid a plural verb or use faculty members.

Fisher College of Business

Use *Fisher College of Business* on first full reference. Use *Fisher* (not *Fisher College*) on second reference.

Social media exception to first reference: Twitter: @fisherosu, Instagram: @fisherosu

foreign students

Use *international students* instead.

fraternal groups

Capitalize the names of fraternities and sororities but not the words *fraternity*, *sorority* and *chapter*.

Ohio State chapter of Phi Beta Kappa fraternity

full time/full-time

Hyphenate as an adjective before the noun; otherwise use two words.

He is a full-time worker.

He works full time in the office.

fundraising

One word, noun or adjective.



G

grade point average (GPA)

Do not hyphenate. Do not use periods in abbreviation (*GPA*).
Use all caps.

graduates with honors

Italicize but do not capitalize.

summa cum laude; magna cum laude; cum laude; magna cum laude with distinction

Social media exception: Italics not necessary in social media posts.

graduation year attribution on social media

For social media, use the name followed by the last two digits of the year.

*For example: John Doe '98 OR John '98
OR @JohnDoe '98*

groundbreaking

One word, noun or adjective.

H

hashtags (#searchterm)

Outside social media, use hashtags only to refer to a way to “join the conversation” and/or particular campaign.

Within social media, use hashtags that are relevant to your social post’s topic and that users may search.

- Hashtags should not be used as a means to “bold” a word.
- Hashtags also can be used for general search topics (e.g., #healthcarereform), campaigns (e.g., #osu2020vision) and events.
- Always check a non-branded hashtag before using to make sure it is not popular due to something inappropriate or off-brand.
- As a general rule of thumb, do not use more than two hashtags in one tweet or four hashtags in one Instagram post.
- Do not use hashtags on Facebook unless informing users how to “join the conversation.”
- Until otherwise announced, do not use hashtags on LinkedIn or Snapchat, as the platform does not have this capability.

health care

Two words, no hyphen, nouns or adjective.

*She has health care at the company where she works.
She has high health care costs.*

homepage

One word when referring to an internet website.

Honors and Scholars Programs

Spell out; no ampersand.

http:// and www. in URLs

Delete *http://* and *www.* in web addresses if not essential.
osu.edu
womensplace.osu.edu

I

international students

Use instead of *foreign students*.

J

John Glenn College of Public Affairs

First reference: *the John Glenn College of Public Affairs*.
Subsequent references: *the Glenn College*.

Social media exception to first reference:

Twitter: @Glenn_College, Instagram: @johnglenncollege

Johnson, President Kristina M.

Materials such as newsletters, newspapers, magazines, web articles and press releases should follow this style in presenting the president’s name:

First reference: *President Kristina M. Johnson*
Subsequent references: *President Johnson*

Branding/marketing materials, invitations, event notifications and biographical information on the president should follow a more formal usage:

First reference: President Kristina M. Johnson, PhD
Subsequent references: President Johnson

Social media exception to first reference:

Twitter: @preskmjohnson, Instagram: @preskmjohnson

Meinhard, Veronica

First reference: Veronica Meinhard

Subsequent references: Mrs. Meinhard or Meinhard

Addressing both the president and her wife:

First reference: President Kristina M. Johnson and Mrs. Veronica Meinhard

Subsequent references: President Johnson and Mrs. Meinhard

K

Knowlton School of Architecture

KSA is acceptable on second reference.

Social media exception to first reference:

Twitter: @knowltonosu



L

laboratory

Spell out as part of an official name or in first reference. *Lab* is acceptable as a second reference.

Social media exception to first reference: “Lab” is acceptable when character counts are limited.

landmarks

Capitalize the main words in the official names of campus landmarks.

the Oval
Mirror Lake

library

Do not use *main library*. Use Thompson Library.

M

main campus

Do not use *main campus*. Use *Columbus campus*.

majors and minors

Do not capitalize names of college studies, fields of study, curricula, majors, minors or programs unless a specific course is referred to or if using names of countries, nationalities, historical periods and languages.

She is majoring in political science.
He is a psychology major.
She changed her major from history to English.

mentions on social (@username)

Tag appropriate users, companies, colleges, etc., with @ mentions across all social channels in lieu of first references.

Midwest, Midwestern

Uppercase references to the Midwest region of the United States, both noun and adjective.

Ohio State is located in the Midwest.
He is from a small Midwestern town.

multicultural, multidisciplinary

Single words.

N

Native American

American Indian is also acceptable.

noncredit

One word.

nonprofit

One word.

nonsexist language

Avoid words and usage that reinforce sexist stereotypes. Do not use *he* as an all-inclusive pronoun. He or she may be used, but the following solutions are preferable: Change the subject to the plural and use they, making sure there is verb/noun agreement. Change the singular third-person reference (*he/she*) to the second person (*you*). Use neutral words to replace personal pronouns (such as *one* or *several*). Repeat the noun or use a synonym. Revise the sentence to eliminate the pronoun altogether.

nontraditional

One word.

numbers

Spell out numbers one through nine. Use numerals for 10 or more and for fractions; spell out numbers that begin or end a sentence, or rewrite the sentence. (Exceptions: Big Ten; in special cases involving formal invitations, numbers 10 and above may be spelled out.)

In running text, when referring to dollar amounts in millions, use the numeral and *million*, rather than zeros.

\$6 million (not *\$6,000,000*)

O

off campus

Two words; hyphenated as an adjective before a noun.

Ed lives off campus.
Ed has an off-campus apartment.

Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center (OARDC)

Abbreviate after the first full reference. Do not use periods.

Social media exception to first reference: Use OARDC on first reference in social media when character counts are limited.

Ohio State Scholars Program

Scholars Program is acceptable on second reference.

Ohio State University Extension

Note there is no *The* used for this title. Second references: Extension or OSU Extension.

Ohio State University Research Foundation (OSURF)

Note there is no *The* used for this title. Abbreviate after the first full reference. Do not use periods.

Social media exception to first reference: Use OSURF on first reference in social media when character counts are limited.



Editorial Style Guide

Updated September 2021

on campus

Two words; hyphenated as an adjective before a noun.

Sylvia works on campus.
Sylvia has an on-campus job.

online

One word.

ordinals

Write out first through ninth. Use numerals for 10th and higher.

Social media exception: Use numerals on all occasions in social media when character counts are limited.

P

pay forward

Not pay *it* forward.

percent

Use % sign instead of spelling out.

phone numbers

Use hyphens to separate the sections of phone numbers.

Do not use *1* before toll-free numbers.

614-292-3980; 800-555-1212

postdoctoral

One word. Postdoc is also acceptable.

president

Lowercase when not used as a formal title.

the president of Ohio State; when President Smith visited the classroom

President's Club

Apostrophe before *s*; lowercase *t* when the is used: the President's Club

Q

R

rankings

Do not use a hyphen when referring to a top 10 or top 25 program.

She hopes to stay in the top 10 of her class.
Ohio State is a top 10 research university.

Recreation and Physical Activity Center (RPAC)

RPAC is acceptable on second reference.

Social media exception: Use RPAC in social media posts. Hashtag: #lifeinmotion

regional campuses

The Ohio State University includes campuses in Columbus, Lima, Mansfield, Marion and Newark and the Agricultural Technical Institute and Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center in Wooster. In referring to regional campuses, the first reference in running text should be to the complete title.

The Ohio State University at Mansfield held a special student seminar.

Subsequent references: *Ohio State Lima; Ohio State Mansfield; Ohio State Marion; Ohio State Newark; the Lima campus*

S

SAT

Acceptable on first reference. Do not use periods.

Scarlet and Gray

Uppercase when referring to the Buckeyes. Lowercase when referring to the colors.

She always roots for the Scarlet and Gray, even though she lives in Texas now.

She always wears scarlet and gray to the games.

spring, spring semester

Lowercase references to seasons and academic periods.

T

The Ohio State University

After the first full reference to The Ohio State University (note the capital *T*), the following references are acceptable:

Ohio State; the university (always lowercase)

Do not use *OSU* to refer to The Ohio State University.

The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center

Please see apstylebook.com/osu.

Social media exception: Twitter: @osuwexmed
Instagram: @osuwexmed

time

Use numerals in all cases and omit the zeros for on-the-hour times. Use periods for a.m. and p.m. To avoid confusion, use *noon* and *midnight* instead of *12 p.m.* and *12 a.m.*

11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

1-3 p.m.

8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

8 a.m. to noon



titles (university style)

Capitalize formal titles when they immediately precede a name: *Professor Betty Kincaid*; *Dean William Jones*

In text, titles following a personal name or used alone in place of a name are lowercased:

Li Yang, associate professor of history, chaired the committee. The college's chief communications officer attended the meeting.

But: *Chief Communications Officer Alicia North of the College of Medicine* attended the meeting.

In general, full names and titles are appropriate on first reference, then last names only on second and subsequent references:

Assistant Professor Keith Smith gave the keynote address. Smith's main talking points included....

Exception: As noted in the entry for Johnson, *President Kristina M.*, second and subsequent references are *President Johnson* (not *Johnson*). To avoid inconsistencies in text that includes *President Johnson* and other university officials (faculty or staff), use title/last name for all:

President Kristina M. Johnson, *Provost Allen J. Green* and *Professor Sheila K. Roberts* created the task force. *President Johnson*, *Provost Green* and *Professor Roberts* all agreed that....

Not: *President Johnson*, *Green* and *Roberts* all agreed that....

titles on social media

Titles before name: Capitalized: The department welcomed *Professor John Doe*.

Titles after name: Lowercase: The department welcomed *John Doe, professor of history*.

Professor, President, Vice President, etc: Abbreviate titles on social media only when character counts are limited: *Prof. Doe* will address the students.

Adjunct professor: If applicable, identify a professor as "adjunct" after noting his/her name in text: *John Doe, adjunct professor of history* ...

Endowed professorships: Should be capitalized when the full name of the official title is used: *John Doe is the William and Jane Smith Professor in Engineering*.

Doctor: Reserve "Dr." for medical doctors, but use "PhD" after a name to indicate a non-medical doctoral degree, if the individual prefers that instead of "Professor." This applies to adjunct professors as well.

U

United States, U.S.

Use *United States* as the proper noun, *U.S.* as the adjective.

He was born in the United States.

He is a U.S. citizen.

university

Lowercase when referring to Ohio State, unless used as part of the full name of the institution.

university-wide

Hyphenate.

V

versus

Use *v.* when abbreviating *versus*.

He's the prosecutor in Smith v. Jones.

This Saturday, it's the Buckeyes v. the Hawkeyes.

W

website

One word.

Wexner Center for the Arts

Not ... *of the Arts*

Social media exception: Twitter: @wexarts,

Instagram: @wexarts, Hashtag: #thewex

X

Y

year in school

Do not capitalize the words *freshman*, *sophomore*, *junior*, *senior* or *graduate* when they refer to the year in which a course is to be taken or to the classification of the student.

Tom thinks his graduate courses are easier than those he took as a senior.

Z

ZIP code

Do not use a comma to separate a state abbreviation from the ZIP code in addresses.

Columbus, OH 43210

