



EDITORIAL STYLE GUIDE



Governors State
UNIVERSITY

Editorial Guidelines

Governors State University recognizes the importance of providing a clear and consistent message across all printed media, including the web. This guide is intended to assist university communicators by providing information on commonly used grammar, spelling, punctuation, and usage.

The university uses the *Associated Press Stylebook* and the *Chicago Style Guide* as the basis for its editorial style. These manuals are available for reference in the Office of Communications and Marketing.

The following guidelines are not designed to be all-inclusive. If you have a specific editorial question not addressed in the guide, please contact the Office of Marketing and Communications at officeofcommunications@govst.edu.

Academic Degrees – Generic degree names should be spelled out whenever possible, using all lowercase letters: *bachelor's degree*, *master's degree*, *doctoral degree* or *doctorate*. Capitals should be used only when referring to a specific academic degree program: *Bachelor of Science in Nursing*. Periods should not be used when specific academic program names are abbreviated.

Examples: *DPT*, *MBA*

However, periods are used when abbreviating generic degree types.

Examples: *B.A.*; *M.A.*; *Ph.D.*; *Ed.S*

Academic Degree Programs

All university degree programs should be referenced and listed in the same manner.

Degree programs should be named by program followed by degree.

Examples:

Communication, Bachelor of Arts

Community Health, Bachelor of Health Science MBA in Supply Chain

Management

Counseling, Master of Arts

Art, Master of Fine Arts

Supply Chain Management, MBA

By putting the program name first, prospects looking for specific programs or program types will be able to find them easily. The naming consistency is logical and will enable an alphabetical listing of programs for easy access.

Please note - the following examples demonstrate the correct way to include concentrations or tracts with a degree program to maintain logical sequencing of programs.

Examples:

Communication - Advertising and Public Relations, Bachelor of Arts

Community Health - Gerontology/Healthy Aging, Bachelor of Health Science

Academic Term – Capitalize if referring to a specific term/semester. Use lowercase for generic references.

Examples: *Fall 2018; fall semester*

Acronyms – Follow the first use of an organization's full name with an abbreviation or acronym in parentheses.

African American – Use this term without a hyphen separating the two words.

Alumni – *Alumnus* refers to a male who has attended a school; the plural is *alumni*. *Alumna* refers to a female who has attended a school; the plural is *alumnae*. Use *alumni* when referring to a mixed gender group. *Alum* should be avoided in official university publications due to its informality.

Campus Names – Refer to the *Governors State University* entry below for main campus denotations. Satellite campus names should directly follow the name of the university.

Example: *The Governors State University 'Satellite' Education Center.*

When abbreviating campus names, periods should not be used.

Examples: *GSU; SEC*

Colleges – Full college names should always be used in the first textual instance(s) followed immediately by the full university name. The college may be referred to by its acronym (Note: see Acronyms) or simply as college throughout the remainder of the text. The full college name should always be used as part of letterhead, in instances listing full college/university contact information and with the logo/wordmark.

Example: *The College of Education at Governors State University*

Example: *College of Arts and Sciences-CAS; College of Business-COB; College of Education-COE; College of Health and Human Services-CHHS*

Date – Dates should be formatted in month-day-year order without the use of ordinals following the day.

Correct – *January 1, 2010*

Incorrect – *January 1st, 2000*

Departments - Full department names should always be used during the first textual instance. The department may be referred to by its acronym (Note: see Acronyms) or simply as department throughout the remainder of the text. The full department name should always be used as part of letterhead, in instances listing full department/college/university contact information, and with the logo/wordmark.

Example: *Department of Psychology*

Geographic Terms – All proper names should be capitalized. Compass directions are not capitalized.

Examples: *The Village of University Park; south suburbs;*

State names should be spelled out unless used in complete addresses containing zip codes. For full addresses, abbreviate using the official USPS, two-letter designations.

Example: University Park, IL 60484

Governors State University – The full university name should always be used during the first textual instance. The university may be referred to as Governors State or GSU (Note: see Acronyms) throughout the remainder of the text. The full university name should always be used as part of letterhead, in instances listing full university contact information, and in the logo.

Money – When referring to an even dollar amount, no cents should be included: \$25. Use the word cents for amounts less than a dollar and the dollar sign for amounts of greater than a dollar.

Example: *The candy bar cost \$2, but I only had 50 cents.*

If the monetary amount is greater than a million dollars, use the dollar sign and spell out million, billion, etc.

Example: *The renovation will cost \$50 million.*

Nicknames - A nickname should be used in place of a person's given name in news stories only when it is the way the individual prefers to be known.

Example: *Jimmy Carter.*

When a nickname is inserted into the identification of an individual, use quotation marks:

Example: *Sen. Henry M. "Scoop" Jackson. Also: Jackson is known as "Scoop."*

Numbers – Numbers one through nine should be spelled out. Use numerals for 10 and higher.

Examples: *GSU has four colleges, which offer a total of 60 degree programs. However, numbers should always be spelled out at the beginning of a sentence.*

Example: *Eighteen credit hours are required.*

On Campus/Off Campus – Use these terms without hyphens.

Percent – Always spell out the word "percent" in text. The symbol "%" should only appear in charts and graphs.

Punctuation – Correct punctuation use in university documents is as follows:

- **Apostrophe** – Used to indicate possession. Apostrophes should never be used to form the plural of a noun.

- **Comma** – Use commas to separate all the elements in a series.

Example: *Dick, Jane, and Sally ate in the cafeteria.*

Commas should be placed inside quotation marks but outside of brackets and parentheses.

Example: *"Here is tonight's homework," said the professor.*

Use a comma to separate two or more adjectives that modify a single noun.

Example: *The dark-roasted, amaretto coffee was too hot to drink.*

Remember, commas make important distinctions.

Incorrect – *Let's eat mommy.*

Correct – *Let's eat, mommy*

- **Exclamation Point** – Should be used sparingly in text unless included in the proper name or title of an event.

- **Quotation Marks** – Sentence ending punctuation and commas should appear within quotation marks.

Example: *"What time does the lecture begin?" asked Nick.*

Example: *They called the event "First Friday."*

- **Semicolon** – Semicolons should be used to separate lists that include commas as well as closely related independent clauses.

Spacing - A single space is preferred between sentences in text.

Telephone Numbers – Format telephone and fax numbers using periods, instead of hyphens or parenthesis, when used on marketing materials, brochures and the Web.

Correct: 708.534.5000

Incorrect: (708) 534.5000, 708-534-5000

Time – Indicate time of day by pairing numerals with *a.m.* or *p.m.* (not AM or am). Do not use zeroes if the time is on the hour. A space should separate the numeral and the a.m./p.m.

Use the terms noon and midnight in place of 12 a.m. or 12 p.m.

Correct: 3 *a.m.*, 3:30 *a.m.*

Incorrect: 3AM, 3:00 AM

A range of time may be indicated using the word “to” or a “-“ to separate the starting and ending time depending on the context. For example, times shown on a poster promoting an event should use a dash while times included in an article should use “to.” If both times are in the a.m. (or p.m. respectively) only the second time should include the a.m. or p.m. This rule should also be followed when indicating times on posters and flyers.

Examples: *The distinguished lecture runs from 3 to 5 p.m.*

Distinguished Lecture; May 1; 3-5 p.m.

Titles – Capitalization should be used when presenting a complete title and name or when a title directly precedes a name.

Examples: *President Maimon; Elaine P. Maimon, President of Governors State University.*

Do not capitalize titles when used generically, alone, or in place of a name.

Examples: *Elaine Maimon is president of Governors State University. The department chair called an emergency meeting.*

University – The term should be capitalized when used as part of a proper name: *I received my degree from Governors State University.* The term should be lowercase

when used to generically to refer to an institution of higher learning: *I walked by the lake on the university campus.*

Web/Internet Terms – Correct spelling/usage of common web terms is as follows: *CD-ROM, email; Internet; online; webpage; website; World Wide Web*

When referring to a specific web address, the use of *http://* is not necessary if the address includes *www*.

Correct: *www.govst.edu*

Incorrect: *http://www.govst.edu*