

Belhaven University

Style Guide

The Belhaven University Style Guide provides guidelines for staff and faculty. The purpose is to help produce consistency throughout the University's publications and website.

The guidelines are based on the Associated Press (AP) Stylebook, Webster's New World Dictionary, and local usage. Entries address questions that may commonly arise when writing about or for the University. Please consult the AP Stylebook or Webster's Dictionary for further reference. Email questions or comments to Belhaven University Relations pr@belhaven.edu.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

In general, avoid alphabet soup. Do not use abbreviations or acronyms on first reference if the reader would not quickly recognize them. Some widely-used acronyms, such as ROTC or HTML, are acceptable on first reference. ACT, SAT also fall under this umbrella. There is a more complete list in the AP Stylebook. <insert link>

DEGREES

Use periods in academic degrees and professional and honorary designations.

B.A., M.S., Ph.D.

The word degree should not follow an abbreviation.

She has a B.A. in English.

She has a bachelor's degree in English.

Degrees with more than two letters do not take the periods such as:

MBA, MSN, BSN, MFA, DNP

Only list the class year for an alumnus with a bachelor's degree, but include the academic degree abbreviation before the class year for alumni with either a master's or doctoral degree.

Jane Smith '05

Joe Smith '07, M.A. '14

Matilda Smith '07, MBA '14 (degrees with more than 2 letters↑)

FAQs

No apostrophe. Acronym for frequently asked questions, a format often used to summarize information on the Internet.

STATE ABBREVIATIONS

For states use the following abbreviations:

Ala., Ariz., Ark., Calif., Colo., Conn., Del., Fla., Ga., Ill., Ind., Kan., Ky., La., Md., Mass., Mich., Minn., Miss., Mo., Mont., Neb., Nev., N.H., N.J., N.M., N.Y., N.C., N.D., Okla., Ore., Pa., R.I., S.C., S.D., Tenn., Vt., Va., Wash., W.Va., Wis., Wyo. According to AP Style, do not abbreviate Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Ohio, Texas or Utah.

UNITED STATES

U.S. except in headlines.

TIME

Set abbreviations for divisions of the day in lowercase.

4 p.m., 3:36 a.m.

Use noon and midnight rather than 12 p.m. or 12 a.m., which can be confusing.

DAYS OF THE WEEK

Capitalize them. Do not abbreviate.

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday

SEASONS

Capitalize fall or spring if it is in conjunction with the particular year. Lowercase when year is not specified.

the Fall 2022 semester

He studied piano during the fall semester.

The team practiced in fall.

YEARS

Use complete figures to reference a span of years.

2010-2011, not 2010-11.

CAPITALIZATION

Capitalize only formal or specific names. When in doubt, use lower case, especially when a word's meaning is generic.

DEGREE

When referring to degrees in general, the type of degree is lowercased.

He has a bachelor's degree in history, a master's in translation, and a doctorate in comparative literature

 **USE AN APOSTROPHE** in bachelor's degree and master's degree.

They all earned master's degrees.

 **DO NOT USE AN APOSTROPHE** for associate degree and doctorate degree.

He has an associate degree. (not associate's)

She has a doctorate degree.

 **EXCEPTIONS:** Master's degree and bachelor's degree (with apostrophes), but there is no possessive in Bachelor of Arts. or Master of Science.

Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science

A bachelor's degree or bachelor's is acceptable in any reference.

MAJORS AND MINORS

arecapitalized when used with its formal degree type.

Majors and minors, like subjects, should be lowercase unless a proper noun (i.e. science, English, American history).

Belhaven's Bachelor of Science in Accounting program is offered online.

Belhaven University's B.S. in Accounting program is offered online.

Belhaven's accounting program is offered online.

Belhaven's bachelor's in accounting program is offered online.

John Smith is an accounting major.

John Smith is hoping to graduate with a Bachelor of Science in Accounting.

ACADEMIC TITLES

CHAIRMAN, CHAIRWOMAN

Capitalize only as a formal title before a name.

company Chairman John Doe, committee Chairwoman Jane Smith.

DEAN

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

Dean John Doe, Deans John Doe and Jane Smith

John Doe, dean of the college; the dean

DEAN'S LIST

Lowercase in all uses:

He is on the dean's list. She is a dean's list student.

DR.

Use Dr. in the first reference of any individual who holds a true doctorate of any kind — M.D., DVM, Ph.D., Ed.D., etc.

Do not continue the use of Dr. in subsequent references.

EMERITUS

This word often is added to formal titles to denote that individuals who have retired retain their rank or title.

When used, place emeritus after the formal title, in keeping with general practice.

Professor Emeritus John Doe, Dean Emeritus Jane Smith. Or: John Doe, professor emeritus;

Jane Smith, dean emeritus. In addition, professor emeritus of computer science.

PROFESSOR

Capitalize when used before the name

Lowercase when used after the name, except for endowed chairs

Professor of English John Smith, President Maud S. Mandel

Dr. Claire Ting, professor of biology

COURTESY TITLES

In any news related story, refer to both men and women by first and last name. Do not use any courtesy title.

Dr. is not a courtesy title, but is a formal title and capitalized.

Mr., Mrs., Ms., Miss, Sir, and Madam

Courtesy titles can be used for formal publications and letters

CAMPUS BUILDINGS

Capitalize proper names of buildings and subunits of buildings and shortened forms based on proper names.

After first use of the proper name, capitalize generic names of facilities or abbreviations based on generic names.

The Bitsy Irby Visual Arts and Dance Center is capitalized.

Bitsy Irby is capitalized

BIRBY, BKIC and CFTA are capitalized.

COURSE NUMBERS

Use numerals and capitalize the subject when used with a numeral.

History 101 and Philosophy 209

Do not use quotation marks. Do not place title in parentheses.

DEPARTMENTS

Lowercase when written informally

Capitalize full name

the biology department

the Department of Biology, Belhaven University's School of Nursing

HONORARY DEGREES

All references to honorary degrees should specify that the degree was honorary.

Do not use Dr. before the name of an individual whose only doctorate is honorary.

HONORS PROGRAM

Always capitalize Honors Program. Lowercase honors in other contexts

honors class, honors student, honors curriculum, honors committee, honors events, honors residence hall, honors thesis

ORGANIZATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS

Capitalize the full name of organizations and institution.

The American Medical Association; First Presbyterian Church; General Motors Corp.; Harvard University.

HEADLINES

Capitalize the first word, last word and all nouns, pronouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs, and subordinating conjunctions.

Articles, coordinating conjunctions, and prepositions are lowercased.

Use single quote marks in headlines.

Use numerals in headlines, except when the number is the first word.

Conference Features 4 Speakers

Four Speakers Present at Conference

DAYS OF THE WEEK

Do not abbreviate. Capitalize them.

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday

PUNCTUATION

COMMA

Comma should be used before a conjunction in a complex series, if part of that series also contains a conjunction.

Belhaven University students can now earn degrees in actuary science, sales management, and supply chain management.

COMMAS AND PERIODS

Commas and periods go inside quotation marks.

He said, "I may forget your name, but I never forget a face."

SERIAL COMMA (OXFORD COMMA)

Do use the serial comma in complex, longer sentences.

Do use the serial comma whenever you think it helps aid readability.

Don't use the serial comma if the list is simple.

John studied chemistry, biology, and mathematics.

SEMICOLON

Marks stronger breaks in a sentence flow than that represented by a comma.

Use semicolons to break up three or more individuals with titles listed in an article or photo caption. Example:

Jane Doe, provost and executive vice president; John Doe, assistant professor of Biology; and Jane Doe, program assistant.

SEMICOLONS AND COLONS

Semicolons and colons go outside quotation marks.

Williams described the experiment as “a definitive step forward”; other scientists disagreed.

Benedetto emphasizes three elements of what she calls her “Olympic journey”: family support, personal commitment, and great coaching.

NUMBERS/NUMERALS

Spell out numbers one through nine, except when referring to someone’s age or distance or dimension.

The toddler was 2

The store is 1.5 miles away

They shored up the sagging wall with a 2 X 4

Numbers 10 and higher should usually be written as a number:

There are 12 squirrels on that tree.

There are 6,000 full-time students.

There are a thousand excuses.

All numbers beginning a sentence are written out.

Three shalt be the number thou shalt count, and the number of the counting shall be three.

Use commas for numbers 1,000 and above.

There were 1,253 students at the football game.

Use roman numerals to describe wars and to show sequences for people.

World War II, Pope John Paul II, Elizabeth II

When referring to money, use numerals.

For cents or amounts of \$1 million or more, spell the words cents, million, billion, trillion etc.

\$26.52, \$100,200, \$8 million, 6 cents

PERCENT

Use the % sign.

PERIOD

Use a single space after a period.

We can’t protect you from becoming your parents, but we can protect you from using two spaces after the end of a sentence.

WAIT-A-MINUTE WORDS

ADVISER/ADVISOR

Advisor should be used when specifically referencing University academic advising functions, such as academic advisor or study abroad advisor. All other generic uses or non-academic activities should use adviser.

thesis advisor vs domestic or foreign-policy adviser

ALUMNA, ALUMNAE (FEMALE); ALUMNUS, ALUMNI (MALE)

Use alumni when referring to a group of men and women.

DOCTORAL DEGREE, DOCTORATE

Doctoral is the adjective, doctorate the noun. Doctoral degree and doctorate are interchangeable. Do not use doctorate degree.

DORMITORY

Use residence halls, not dormitories.

EMAIL

Short form of electronic mail. No hyphen

HOME PAGE

Two words.

FACULTY

As a singular noun, represents all of the instructors of the University (or one of its programs); takes a singular verb.

FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE

Hyphenate first-year when used as an adjective, such as “first-year studies” and “first-year students.”

FRESHMAN

Singular: freshman; plural: freshmen; adj.: freshman (i.e. class)

FULL-TIME, FULL TIME

Hyphenate when using as adjective

He is a full-time student, and he works full time.

GRADE-POINT AVERAGE, GPA

Use GPA on first reference when used with figures

A 2.5 GPA is required.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Not foreign students.

INTERNET

With a capital I.

INTRANET

With a lower case i.

MULTI, NOT MULTI-

The prefix “multi” should not be hyphenated in most cases: multicultural, not multi-cultural, multimedia, not multi-media.

ONLINE

one word, no hyphen

PHONE NUMBERS

867-5309, uses dashes, not periods

THAT OR WHICH

Use “that” for essential clauses that are important to the meaning of the sentence.

I remember the day that I met my future wife.

Use “which” for nonessential clauses where the pronoun is less necessary.

The team, which won the championship last year, begins its 2016 season in August.

THEATER/ THEATRE

Used only to generically refer to a venue for performance. (i.e., Theatre majors often secure production internships at theaters around the country.)

All majors/minors, courses, reference to department and/or discipline.

WEBSITE

AP style. Also: webcast, webcam, World Wide Web, the web, and webpage.

EXTRA SAMPLES OF CORRECT CAPITALIZATION

CAPITALIZED	NOT CAPITALIZED
The 11th Annual Book Awards were a success.	Three students received book awards.
The Department of Biology expanded.	The biology department expanded.
Class President Judy Smith spoke.	She was named president of her class.
They attended Reunion Weekend.	Judy Smith, class president, spoke.
The Williams College Board of Trustees convened.	They came back for the 25th reunion.
She took Fundamentals of Western History.	The trustees convened.
He visited Thompson Memorial Chapel.	She took a history course.
They enjoyed the 112th Convocation and Fall Weekend.	He visited the chapel.
The Bicentennial Medalist gave the Convocation Address.	They enjoyed convocation in the fall.
He is an English major.	She is a math major.