Dakota State University
Writers’ Style Guide

Based on Associated Press (AP) Style, unless noted.

advisor (Note: this is different from the AP Stylebook)
- Instead of adviser. Use when referring to a faculty member assigned to a student for advising purposes.

academic degrees
- Use an apostrophe in bachelor’s degree and master’s degree, but no possessive in Bachelor of Science or Master of Science. There is no possessive in associate degree or Associate of Science. Use doctorate when using the generic form.
- Capitalize the full names of academic degrees. Do not capitalize the field of study in which the degree was awarded, unless a proper noun such as English for new media.
  
  Aaron Anderson has a Master of Science in information systems. She received her baccalaureate in digital arts and design.

- Do not capitalize generic forms such as baccalaureate or doctorate. Lowercase and use an apostrophe s for adjective forms such as master’s degree. When referring to more than one degree, add s only to degree (bachelor’s and master’s remain singular).
  
  bachelor’s degree or baccalaureate degree
  master’s degrees
  bachelor’s and master’s degrees
  doctorate, doctoral degree

- Doctoral or postdoctoral are the adjective form; doctorate or postdoctorate are nouns.
  
  He received his doctorate at DSU.
  Not: He received his doctoral at DSU.
  She did her postdoctoral research at DSU.
  Not: She did her postdoctorate research at DSU.

- The word degree should not follow a specific degree, whether spelled out or abbreviated.
  
  He received his Bachelor of Science from DSU.
  She has an A.A. in general studies.
  Not: She has an A.A. degree in general studies.

- Capitalize degree abbreviations and use periods without spaces. An exception is Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) to match the MBA form. The following degrees are offered at DSU:
  - Associate of Science (A.S.)
  - Associate of Arts (A.A.)
  - Bachelor of General Studies (B.G.S.)
- Bachelor of Science (B.S.)
- Bachelor of Science in Education (B.S.E.)
- Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)
- Master of Science (M.S.)

- When abbreviating a master's degree, you may leave out the periods when abbreviating the whole degree name (differs from the AP Stylebook).
  - Master of Science in Analytics (MSA)
  - Master of Science in Applied Computer Science (MSACS)
  - Master of Science in Educational Technology (MSET)
  - Master of Science in Health Informatics (MSHI)
  - Master of Science in Information Assurance (MSIA)
  - Master of Science in Information Systems (MSIS)

- When abbreviating a doctoral degree, you may keep the periods in D.Sc. and include a space (differs from the AP Stylebook).
  - Doctor of Science in Information Systems (D.Sc. IS)
  - Doctor of Science in Cyber Security (D.Sc. CS)

- Form plurals of degree abbreviations by adding an s, no apostrophe.
  "More than 50 B.S.s were awarded yesterday."

- Set off degree abbreviations with commas when used after names. Do not include courtesy titles such as Dr., Mr., or Rev. before a name when a degree designation is used after the name.

- When listing alumni information, state the individual's name, the major and/or degree abbreviation if available or pertinent, and the year of graduation. Enclose with commas or parentheses.
  Bob Jones '95, biology for information systems, was at the alumni picnic.
  Linda Smith (B.G.S., '09; M.S. '12) has been voted as this year's distinguished alumna.

academic titles

- Capitalize academic titles such as professor, dean, president and professor emeritus when they precede a name. Also when used before names, capitalize words that are part of the title such as Department President or Associate Professor.

- Lowercase formal titles, descriptors and modifiers used after a name and set them off with commas.
  Joan Roberts, president, was the main speaker.
  Tom Smith, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, signed the paper.

- A formal title or an academic degree may be used in first reference, but not both in the same reference. Subsequent references generally use last name only.
  President Joan Roberts or Joan Roberts, Ph.D.
  Not: President Joan Roberts, Ph.D.
- Do not hyphenate vice president.
- In academia, it is vice president for Student Affairs (or appropriate department) not vice president of Student Affairs
- Never abbreviate professor.

**acronyms**

- Spell out the organization’s full name on first reference. You may follow the name with the acronym in parentheses.
- Form the plural of an acronym by adding a lowercase s. Do not use an apostrophe unless possessive, such as EMTs, not EMT’s.
- When each letter is pronounced in most acronyms, capitalize every letter. Capitalize only the first letter in most acronyms with more than six letters. **Exceptions** to these guidelines may exist with the DSU Madison Cyber Labs institutes. For example, it is DSU Classics Institute, but the PATRIOT Lab, or CybHER.
- Leave out periods in most acronyms unless the result would spell an unrelated word.
- Do not use the before acronyms pronounced as words instead of letter by letter: OSHA, CAD.

**alumni**

- Use *alumna* for a woman, *alumnae* for a group of women.
- Use *alumnus* for a man, *alumni* for a group of men or a group of men and women.
- Try to refrain from using the term *alum*, as alum is a spice.
- Alumni status also is granted to those who attended Dakota State University for two semesters but did not complete a degree.
- When listing alumni information, state the individual’s name, the major and/or degree abbreviation, and the year of graduation. Enclose with commas or parentheses.

**athletics**

- The correct title of the DSU department is Department of Athletics (plural). The 2018 proposed plan for the department is Master Athletics Plan (MAP).
- The title *Athletics Director* should be capitalized when used before a name.
- Capitalize *Trojans* or *Lady T’s* when referring to athletic teams or players.

**buildings**

- On first reference, use the official name of the campus buildings, rooms and facilities with initial capital letters. After the first reference, do not capitalize general terms, such as *residence hall, center, laboratory, or building* if the full name is not used.
- Campus buildings and properties:
  - 8-Plexes
  - The Beacom Institute of Technology
  - Beadle Hall
  - Community Center
  - Courtyard Hall
  - Dakota Prairie Playhouse
  - Dale E. Kringen Alumni & Foundation Center
  - DSU Fieldhouse (*Fieldhouse is one word*)
• Spell out Trojan Center on first reference. On subsequent reference, student center maybe be used. When space is limited, TC may be used on second reference. Also applies to Tunheim Classroom Building or TCB, and LEC.

• Student housing is referred to as residence halls not dorms.

cancel, cancels, canceling, canceled, cancellation

capitalization

• Capitalize the full, official titles of DSU organizations, programs, colleges.
  o DSU Student Association Senate
  o DSU Photography Club
  o Fall 2014 Commencement (when referring to a specific commencement)
  o College of Arts and Sciences

Center of Excellence Honors Program

• CEX -- The official name of the program is the Dakota State University Center of Excellence Honors Program. This is an option for a minor for students of all majors. (This is different from the university's distinctions with the NSA and DHS, which are Centers of Academic Excellence.) Center of Excellence Honors Program may be used if appropriate. CEX/Honors may be used in internal communications only. Successful completion of the program requirements will result in the designation of Center of Excellence Honors graduate.

commas

• Use commas to separate elements of a series, including putting a comma before the conjunction in a simple series. This is referred to as the Oxford comma. This guideline differs from the AP Stylebook.

    The flag is red, white, and blue.
• In listing dates, no comma is needed between the month and year or between the time and date.

  The lab was scheduled for November 2012.
  The class will meet from 4-5 p.m. May 1.

• Use commas with a month, day and year. Set off the year with commas.

  The class scheduled for Nov. 17, 2012, was canceled.

cyber prefixes

• One word may be used to refer to the concept of cybersecurity; check the website or catalog for the accurate wording for certain degree programs. For the focus of the DSU Classics Institute, the preferred form is cyber-ethics.

Dakota State University

• The preferred way to refer to Dakota State University is by the full name, Dakota State University. The full name should always be used on first reference; however, Dakota State or DSU may be used in publication for variety or when space is limited. Do not overuse Dakota State or DSU.

  In formal or official context, when referring to the university president, use Pres. John Doe.

  Thereafter, use either Doe or the president.

• Dakota State University may also be referenced using a former name, when talking about past events. Use the college’s official name at the time, indicating as appropriate this was the university’s name at the time.

  o 1881 – 1901 – Dakota Normal School or Madison State Normal; Sometimes called Dakota State Normal or State Normal
  o 1902 – 1920 – Madison State Normal School
  o 1921 – 1923 – Eastern State Normal School
  o 1924 – 1927 – Eastern State Teachers College (not official)
  o 1928 – 1946 – Eastern State Teachers College (official)
  o 1947 – 1963 – General Beadle State Teachers College
  o 1964 – 1968 – General Beadle State College
  o 1969 – 1988 – Dakota State College
  o 1989 – present – Dakota State University

dates

• Except for correspondence, abbreviate Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov., Dec. when used with a specific date: We developed a new plan Feb. 11, 1994, after three months of discussion.

• Spell out those months in correspondence.

• Spell out the names of months when using a month alone or with a year alone: We opened the Beacom Institute of Technology in August 2017.

• Avoid using virgules (a slash) or hyphens with numerals to give dates, especially if your readers could confuse the order of the day and month: 2/11/94, 11-16-1993.

• When not including a specific date, do not separate the month and year with a comma, such as September 2018.
• Including the year is not always necessary in documents with a limited shelf life; however, noting the month and year of publication in an inconspicuous place may be useful.
• Do not follow numerals used with dates by *nd, rd, st or th.*

days of the week

• Always capitalize days of the week.
• Don’t abbreviate unless needed in a chart or table: *Sun, Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat* (no periods).

departments, offices, centers

• Capitalize the full, official department, college and office names (note: this differs from the *AP Stylebook*).

  College of Arts and Sciences  
  the arts and sciences college  
  College of Business and Information Systems  
  the business college  
  President’s Office  
  Business Office  
  Students Services Center

PLEASE NOTE: it is The Beacom College of Computer and Cyber Sciences, with a capital “The.” The official name of the DSU bookstore is *Trojan Zone.*

e-mail

• Acceptable in all references for electronic mail.
• Use hyphen with other e- terms: *e-books, e-business, e-brochure, e-commerce.*

ejeritus

• *Emeritus* is added after titles of people who have retired but retained their rank. Only capitalize if it precedes a name.

esports

• The official DSU team name is E-Sports Club; when referring to the general term, use esports as designated in the *AP Stylebook.*

exclamation point

• Exclamation points are often overused. Use this thought as a guide: In your lifetime, you get three. Use them wisely.

fieldhouse

• one word

health care

• two words
high-tech, high tech

- As an adjective, use high-tech or high-technology.
- As a noun, use high tech or high technology. It's never hi-tech or hi tech.

honors

- Academic honors – undergraduate full-time students may be designated for the President's Academic Honors List; undergraduate part-time students may be designated for Academic Recognition.
- Graduation Honors – Dakota State recognizes Graduation Honors by an Honor's Designation at graduation. Baccalaureate degrees received the following designations: summa cum laude, magna cum laude and cum laude. These designations are used lowercase.

internet

- Lowercase and spell out.

login/log in, logon/log on, log off, log out

- Use one word as nouns, two words as verbs: Have you been told your login yet? She was told to log on to her computer. He logged in to the database program. Everyone was logging off the network.
- Verb use is more common. Log in and log on are interchangeable; so are log off and log out.
- Don't log into or log onto.

mailings

- The United States Postal Service prefers no punctuation in addresses, and all caps. An example using the DSU address is:
  820 N WASHINGTON AVE
  MADISON SD 57042

majors/programs of study

- When discussing DSU academics in general, use the term "programs of study," such as "DSU offers 45 programs of study." When speaking about a particular student or alumni, the term "major" is appropriate, as in "John Doe is a finance major."

months

- Capitalize the names of months in all uses.
- Write out the full name: on invitations and when using a month alone or with a year alone.
- Abbreviations may be used with the following months when used with a specific date: Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov., Dec.
- Do not abbreviate months in datelines of business letters.
- When using the month, day and year, set off the year with commas. DO NOT use a comma when there is no date, as in January 2018.
numbers

- In text, write out numbers under 10. In graphs and charts, the numerals may be used.

on-campus, off-campus

- Hyphenate when used as an adjective, but not when used as an adverb.

  She lives in off-campus housing.
  He lives on campus.

online

- Use lowercase and do not hyphenate.

percent

- Write out the word percent in text; the percent symbol (%) is acceptable in charts and graphics.

phone numbers

- Use dashes, not periods, so 888-DSU-9988. Parentheses around the area code (first three digits) are not necessary. Also, the “1” as in 1-800-DSU-9988 is not necessary.

punctuation and quotation marks

- Punctuation should fall inside quote marks, not outside. Placing periods, etc. outside quotation marks is the British style; in the United States they are placed inside quotes.

  “Spring registration will begin on October 22.” Not “Spring registration will begin on October 22”.

semesters

- Do not capitalize unless citing a specific year or term:

  - Fall 2012
  - Fall Semester 2009
  - spring semester
  - next spring

South Dakota Board of Regents

- Dakota State University is a member of the South Dakota’s Unified System of Higher Education.
- Dakota State University is part of the South Dakota Board of Regents system, which is made up of eight institutions, six public universities and two schools serving special K-12 populations: the deaf and the blind/visually impaired.
- On first reference, spell out in full and capitalize, South Dakota Board of Regents. Thereafter, Board of Regents is acceptable.
- BOR is also acceptable after first use of the full name
**spaces between sentences**

- The standard practice is now one space between sentences, as it looks better on digital platforms.

**state names**

- **STANDING ALONE:** Spell out the names of the 50 U.S. states when they stand alone in textual material. Any state name may be condensed, however, to fit typographical requirements for tabular material.

- **EIGHT NOT ABBREVIATED:** The names of eight states are never abbreviated in datelines or text: Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Ohio, Texas and Utah.

- **Memory Aid:** Spell out the names of the two states that are not part of the contiguous United States and of the continental states that are five letters or fewer.

- **ABBREVIATIONS REQUIRED:** Use the state abbreviations listed at the end of this section:
  
  - In conjunction with the name of a city, town, village or military base in text. See examples in Punctuation section below. See datelines for guidelines on when a city name may stand alone in the body of a story.
  
  - In short-form listings of party affiliation: D-Ala., R-Mont. See party affiliation entry for details.


- These are the ZIP code abbreviations for the eight states that are not abbreviated in datelines or text: AK (Alaska), HI (Hawaii), ID (Idaho), IA (Iowa), ME (Maine), OH (Ohio), TX (Texas), UT (Utah). Also: District of Columbia (DC).

- **PUNCTUATION:** Place one comma between the city and the state name, and another comma after the state name, unless ending a sentence or indicating a dateline: He was traveling from Nashville, Tenn., to Austin, Texas, en route to his home in Albuquerque, N.M. She said Cook County, Ill., was Mayor Daley's stronghold.
• MISCELLANEOUS: Use New York state when necessary to distinguish the state from New York City. Use state of Washington or Washington state when necessary to distinguish the state from the District of Columbia. (Washington State is the name of a university in the state of Washington.)

student designations

• Do not capitalize freshman, sophomore, junior, senior, graduate, transfer or first-year student, unless part of a formal title.

superscript

• Superscript the rd, th, etc. in rankings, placements, such as 3rd place, 4th place.

systemwide

• One word, no hyphen.

time

• Lowercase and use periods for a.m., p.m., as they are abbreviations. In Latin, a.m. stands for ante meridiem, or "before noon," and p.m. stands for post meridiem, or "after noon."
• Use numerals except for 12 p.m. or 12 a.m. For these use noon and midnight.
• Times on the hour do not use zeros, so 7 a.m., not 7:00 a.m. unless other times in the document are not on the hour, for the sake of consistency. For example: "A social hour will begin at 6:30 p.m., the program begins at 7:00 p.m."
• Use a colon to separate hours from minutes: 2:15 p.m.
• To give ranges of time use a simple dash, or "to." Office hours are 9:30-11 a.m. and 6-8 p.m., or 9:30 to 11 a.m. and 6 to 8 p.m.
• Avoid redundancies such as 12 noon or 12 midnight and 8:30 a.m. this morning or 8:30 p.m. Monday night. Instead, use noon, midnight, 8 a.m. today, 8:30 p.m. Monday.
• The construction 2 o'clock in the afternoon is acceptable for formal invitations, but wordy in text of other documents.

Web prefixes

• Website is one word along with other terms such as webcam, webcast and webmaster.
• Web page should be used as two words, as should web browser. When sharing a website link, it is not necessary to include www. or https://.

University Center–Sioux Falls

• Never use the University Center, use University Center–Sioux Falls, University Center–Rapid City or University Centers.