

Communications & University Relations

STYLE GUIDE

Revised November 2011

www.lsu.edu/pa/cc/publications_guide.pdf

LSU

RESOURCES

The LSU Office of Communications & University Relations recommends the following publications as guides:

- *Chicago Manual of Style*, 15th edition
- *Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*
- Strunk & White's *Elements of Style*

Any of the following style points that are taken from the *Chicago Manual of Style* are noted as such. If no reference is given, the recommendation is LSU style as decided by Communications & University Relations.

CAPITALIZATION

- Position and job titles of persons should be lowercase unless followed by a name: "The president," "the dean," "professor," but "President Jenkins," "Dean Smith," "Professor Jones." Example: "The president of a company asked Chancellor Green to invite Joe Brown, dean of education, to the party." (Chicago 8.31)
- Capitalize the complete names of particular departments, institutes, centers, and official offices: "Department of Physics & Astronomy," "Center for Faculty Development," "Office of the Chancellor." Do not capitalize incomplete names of departments and colleges, or incomplete versions of their proper names: "He is a professor in the math department;" "The dean of science teaches the course." (Chicago 8.62)
- Degrees should be capitalized when the complete name of the degree is given, as in "Bachelor of Arts, Master of Science, Doctor of Law, Doctor of Medicine." If the complete name is not given, use lower case: "He earned a bachelor's degree."
- Use "GPA" uppercase and without periods, or spell out "grade point average."
- Use lowercase for seasons, as in "fall semester 2005." (Chicago 8.94)
- Use an ampersand (&) instead of "and" within the unit name: "Department of

Geography & Anthropology." Ampersands should not be used with units named after donors (i.e., Craft and Hawkins Department of Petroleum Engineering).

- Capitalize "residential college" only if the full name is given: "Global Studies Residential College," but "He is enrolled in a residential college."
- When referring to academic disciplines, only names of languages are capitalized: "She's an English major," but "My favorite subject is chemistry." (Chicago 8.91)
- When newspaper or periodical titles are mentioned in text, articles preceding the title should be lowercase and not italicized (unless it is the first word of a sentence): the *New England Journal of Medicine* and the *New York Times*. (Chicago 8.180)
- No comma is necessary before an ampersand, even if it is the serial comma before the last item in a list. (Chicago 6.24)
- The first letter of each item in a vertical list should be lowercase and listed items should contain no ending punctuation unless the list is numbered or each item is a complete sentence. (Chicago 6.127)

DATES & NUMBERS

- For dates, use the following forms:
 - 2004–05; not 2004–2005 (Chicago 9.67)
 - 4 p.m.; not 4 PM or 4pm
 - 12 p.m.; not 12 noon
 - May 10, 2005; not 10 May 2005
 - 1990s; not 1990's (Chicago 9.37)
 - avoid superscripts, particularly on dates: March 15; not March 15th
- Spell out whole numbers below 10. Use numerals for 10 and above.
- Within text, spell out "percent" but use numerals: "7 percent." For statistical data relayed in charts or graphs, the percentage symbol (%) is appropriate. (Chicago 9.19)
- Abbreviate "page" as "p." and pages as "pp." (Chicago 7.15)

- For letter-number combination room locations, place letters after numbers and do not hyphenate. If the room is a basement location, place the letter “B” first and hyphenate. For example, “123A,” but “B-321.”

GRAMMAR

- “ly” compounds are not hyphenated: “recently written” (as adjective) not “recently-written.” (Chicago 7.87)
- “Faculty” is plural.
- Avoid contractions in formal writing.
- Use active voice: “The chancellor appointed a committee,” not “A committee was appointed by the chancellor.” (Chicago 5.112)
- Italics should be used for foreign words only if they are not in Webster’s and then only on the first occurrence. (Chicago 7.55)
- For science terms, both genus and species names should be italicized, but only genus names are capitalized. (Chicago 8.128)
- Use “that” restrictively and “which” nonrestrictively: “LSU is the university that was presided over by General Sherman,” but “LSU, which is located in Baton Rouge, is accredited by...” (Chicago 6.38)
- Use “such as” rather than “like” when introducing a series of representative examples: “land-grant universities such as LSU, North Carolina State, and Auburn.”
- Use “due to” only as a subject complement (usually placed after a form of the verb “to be”): “LSU’s excellence is due to the dedication of its faculty,” not “LSU is excellent due to the dedication of its faculty.” (In the second construction, substitute “because of” for “due to.”) (Chicago 5.202)
- Use “more than” instead of “over” when expressing quantities.
- Do not substitute “feel” for “believe”: “Faculty believe their concern is valid,” not “Faculty feel their concern is valid.” (Chicago 5.202)

- Do not use “hopefully” except when referring to an action done in a hopeful manner: “The university undertook the project hopefully,” not “Hopefully, LSU will be reaffirmed.” (Chicago 5.202)
- Do not use the suffix “ize” or “wise” to create adjectives or adverbs when more standard ones already exist.
- Avoid use of “etc.” Appropriate replacements include “and the like” or “and so forth.” (Chicago 5.202)
- Avoid unnecessary words, such as “there is,” “there are,” and “it is” constructions: “No committee addresses the problem,” not “There is no committee addressing the problem.”
- Remove unnecessary phrases from your copy. For example, there is no need for the phrase “in order” in this sentence: “In order to participate, students must attend the informational workshop.”

INTERNET REFERENCES

- Correct spelling and capitalizations are as follows:
 - e-mail
 - home page
 - Internet
 - online
 - Capitalize “Web” when used as an abbreviation of World Wide Web, but not in website, web page, web address, webmaster
- Not all addresses begin with “www” or “http.” When writing web addresses, you should include “http://” only if the address does not begin with “www” or if it includes a variation of “http://.” Examples:
 - Did you know you can visit <https://www.google.com/accounts/> to register for a Google account?
 - Students may complete applications for admission and student aid online at www.lsu.edu/admissions, the website for LSU’s prospective students.
- Check all website addresses for accuracy.

- Do not underline web addresses. You may bold the address if you find that it is “buried” in the copy.
- Verify the suffix—.com, .edu, .gov, .net, .org—of websites before printing them.
- Web addresses should not be separated onto multiple lines of text. If a line break occurs at a web address, move the entire address to the following line.
- When writing a web address in your copy, avoid placing the address at the end of the sentence, as the end punctuation can confuse the reader: “Visit www.lsu.edu to view the latest LSU Highlights.”

PUNCTUATION

- Include a comma before the conjunction in a series of three or more items: “LSU, North Carolina State, and Auburn.” (Chicago 6.19)
- No comma is necessary before an ampersand, even if it is the serial comma before the last item in a list. (Chicago 6.24)
- No comma is necessary before “Jr.,” “Sr.,” or any numeral suffix. (Chicago 6.49)
- There should only be one space after periods and colons. (Chicago 2.12)
- When abbreviating academic degrees, do not use periods: “BA, PhD, MS, MBA, JD.” (Chicago 15.21)
- It is not necessary to write “degree” if the full name of the degree is given. For example, it is sufficient to say “Master of Science” rather than “Master of Science degree.”
- “African American” and “Native American” do not need hyphens. (Chicago 8.41–42)
- The following words should be hyphenated:
 - first-year, first-time students
 - on-campus, off-campus (as adjectives)
 - pre-professional
 - academic fields beginning with “pre”
- Use a colon to introduce items in a series that rename or amplify material that precedes the colon. If the items are lengthy, use a semicolon to separate them;

otherwise, use the semicolon only as a “weak period” to separate closely related independent clauses (as in this sentence). (Chicago 6.21, 6.57, 6.63)

- When hyphenating words, the second word should only be capitalized if it is a proper noun (i.e., non-Louisiana). (Chicago 8.169)
- Commas and periods are placed inside quotation marks; colons and semicolons are placed outside. Depending on meaning, question marks can appear either inside or outside quotation marks. (Chicago 6.8-9)
- When using a dash to amplify a phrase or show a break in thought, use an em dash (—) rather than an en dash (–) or hyphen (-). (Chicago 6.87)
- No space is needed between dashes or slashes and surrounding text. For example, use “and/or” rather than “and / or”; “Alzheimer’s disease destroys many lives—and families—every day” rather than “Alzheimer’s disease destroys many lives — and families — every day.”

UNIVERSITY STYLE

- When referring to a college, it is acceptable to say either “The College of Engineering” or “LSU’s College of Engineering.”
- On first reference, use the full, official name of a unit, college, or department. If the same unit is frequently referenced, subsequent references may be abbreviated: “The College of Humanities & Social Sciences houses the Department of English. Humanities & Social Sciences also maintains research units like the English Language & Orientation Program.”
- There are no periods or spaces in “LSU.” Refer to the university as “LSU,” not as “LSU and A&M College.” “LSU” includes the School of Veterinary Medicine but excludes the Hebert Law Center, the LSU Agricultural Center, and the System administration.
- When referring to grades, put letters in quotes to avoid confusing the reader. For example: He made an “A.”

- Use “Did You Know?” rather than “Did U Know?”
- When referring to other LSU campuses, place an en dash between LSU and the campus location (i.e., LSU–Eunice). The same rule applies to other universities with campuses in multiple locations.
- Unless it is within the full name of the university (i.e., Louisiana State University), lowercase “university” when referring to LSU (e.g., the university).
- When referring to the LSU System, differentiation between the System administration and the collection of all component units or campuses in the System should be made clear by sentence structure and meaning. The word “system” is always capitalized when referring to the LSU System.
- The LSU Agricultural Center is the unit administratively responsible for the Louisiana Agricultural Experiment Station and the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service; the College of Agriculture is an administrative unit of LSU. Sentence structure should clearly indicate this differentiation.
- Both Louisianan and Louisianaian are acceptable. Whichever you prefer to use, be consistent within your document.
- Within a document, list only one telephone number when possible (unless different extensions bring different options).
- Use “telephone” instead of “phone.” Standard telephone structure is 225-578-1234. To indicate a facsimile number, specify “Fax” before the number.
- Avoid using courtesy titles (Mr., Mrs., Ms., Dr.) within paragraph text or cutlines. On first reference, use “PhD” or a professor’s title to establish expertise. Use a husband’s and a wife’s first names: “John and Mary Smith,” never “Mr. and Mrs. Smith.” Courtesy titles are allowed in donor lists to satisfy donor wishes.
- Use “first-year” or “first-time” student rather than “freshman.”

- Use “advisor” rather than “adviser.”
- Use “students” rather than “coeds.”
- When addressing international students, be aware of cultural differences. While American students may identify with the Memorial Tower, Tiger, or school colors, for example, those symbols may have different meanings for international students.
- Use gender-neutral language such as “chair” or “chairperson” (rather than “chairman”), “police officers” (rather than “policemen”), and so forth.
- Use “people with disabilities” rather than “handicapped people.”

WORD CHOICE & SENTENCE STRUCTURE

- Whether you write in second person (you) or third person (he or she) depends on your audience. Whatever the case, be consistent throughout your document.
- Whatever the purpose of your publication, assume an audience of intelligent nonspecialists. Avoid technical jargon and abbreviations (unless identified at least once in the beginning of the document). When a specialized vocabulary is unavoidable, be sure to define terms clearly in lay language.
- Avoid redundancy. State your message once in the strongest, most precise language possible.

UNIVERSITY APPROVAL

If your publication contains academic course or degree information, text should be approved by the Office of the University Registrar. Reputation-defining materials (as outlined in PS-10) should be sent to approvals@lsu.edu for review and approval prior to printing.

VISUAL IDENTITY & GRAPHIC STANDARDS

All LSU publications are required to have the LSU logo, wordmark, or signature on the cover or front panel. Consult the LSU Visual Identity Program (www.lsu.edu/pa/identity) for proper logo use.

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LIVE GOLD

LSU

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Produced by the LSU Office of Communications & University Relations
08187.2 • 11/11