

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. It also notes instances in which the university breaks from AP style.

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.

2020 Vision

The term refers to Ohio State President Michael V. Drake's five-year vision for the institution. The goal is to achieve the vision by 2020 by excelling in the areas of access and affordability, community engagement and partnerships and diversity and inclusion.

Capitalize the V, and do not use a slash with 2020 (20/20). The preferred hashtag to use when promoting content related to the 2020 Vision on social media is #OSU2020Vision.

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.

BBig Ten

Ten is always spelled out in this usage.
Social media exceptions: Twitter: @BigTen, Hashtags: #B1G

black

Both black and African American are acceptable.

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.

Ccampus

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 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 curriculums are plural.

Ddates

In most instances, spell out months and days of the week in running text (see Exceptions below); use numerals for years. Use no punctuation if listing just the month and the year, but set the year off with commas if using the day of the month.

May 2016

a February 5, 2016, deadline

Join us Wednesday, October 17, for a celebration.

Decades may be referred to in any of the following ways (note that no apostrophe is needed for 1990s, 2000s, etc.):

the 1990s

the '90s

the nineties

Exceptions: Abbreviations for certain months may be made in digital applications (online, social media, e-newsletters) and in onCampus and Ohio State Alumni Magazine: Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov., Dec.

Note that March, April, May, June and July are not abbreviated.

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.

MA's; PhD's; JD's

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

Drake, President Michael V.

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

First reference: President Michael V. Drake

Subsequent reference: Drake

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

First reference: President Michael V. Drake, MD

Subsequent reference: Dr. Drake

Social media exception to first reference:

Twitter: @osuprezdrake, Instagram: President Drake,

Facebook: full name

Drake, Brenda J.

(include middle initial "J." on first reference and in formal copy)

First reference: Mrs. Brenda J. Drake

Subsequent reference: Mrs. Drake

Addressing both the president and Mrs. Drake:

First reference: Dr. and Mrs. Michael V. Drake

Subsequent reference: Dr. and Mrs. Drake

Eemail

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

Food security

When referring to Ohio State's efforts to ensure citizens locally and globally have access to food, use the term food security not food insecurity.

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.

JJohn 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

KKnowlton School of Architecture

KSA is acceptable on second reference.
Social media exception to first reference:
Twitter: @knowltonosu

Llaboratory

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.

Mmain 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.

NNative 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)

Ooff 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.

One university

When referencing Ohio State's "One university" vision, use uppercase **One** and lowercase **university** and place both words in quotation marks on first reference.
Subsequent references: **One university**.

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.

Ppay forward

Not pay it forward.

percent

Spelling out percent is preferred, although % may be used if space is needed or in graphs or charts. Use numerals in front of percent, unless starting a sentence.
About 40 percent of the students responded.
One percent of the faculty attended.
Social media exception: Use "%" in social media when presenting data and rates.

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

SSAT

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.

TThe 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 (see also book/magazine titles on page 2)

Capitalize titles when they immediately precede a personal name. Titles following a personal name or used alone in place of a name are lowercase. Capitalize titles used in lists if they appear line for line as in an address.

Professor George Shaw

George Shaw, professor,

George Shaw is a professor.

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