

Purpose of the Writing Style Guide

University Relations has established this style guide for use in non-academic, promotional written communications including news releases, newsletters, web pages, brochures, viewbooks and fliers that include narrative or running text. A more formal style may be desired for invitations, event programs, letters and for other uses.

About the University's Style Guide

This guide is based on the principles found in the Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual. Despite the scope of editorial style contained in the AP guide, it doesn't address some issues unique to the University of Northern Colorado that are frequently encountered. This style guide is intended to provide answers to those issues, and to a lesser extent, other questions of grammar such as punctuation, capitalization and acceptable word usage.

On spelling matters, our preferred resource is Webster's New World Dictionary.

Why We Use the AP Style Guide

Because it is widely used by newspapers and magazines, AP style is familiar to readers, easy to read and makes sense.

How to Get the AP Style Guide

Copies of the AP Stylebook and Libel Manual can be purchased at www.apstylebook.com or through AP Newsfeatures, 50 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, NY 10020. Online subscriptions also are available.

Why Have a University Style Guide?

Having a common style for our communications assists us in projecting a cohesive, coordinated image to the public.

Words of Wisdom about Writing

Remember, for editorial issues that can't be resolved by a stylebook, let common sense and an appreciation for the reader be your guide.

For More Information

If you have questions, would like more information or have a suggestion for future revisions of the style guide, contact UNC's Office of University News & Public Relations at 970-351-2331 or public.relations@unco.edu.

A

abbreviations, acronyms

A few universally recognized abbreviations are required in some circumstances. Examples: *Dr.*, *Mr.*, *Mrs.*, *Jr.*, *a.m.*, *p.m.*, but in general, avoid alphabet soup.

An *acronym* is a word formed from the first letter or letters of a series of words: *laser* (light amplification by stimulated emission of radiation). An *abbreviation* is not an *acronym*.

For companies, associations, organizations, etc., use the official name on first reference unless an acronym is the most common reference. Examples: *FBI*, *CIA*, *NFL*.

On second reference, an abbreviation or acronym may be used if the meaning will be clear to readers. Don't follow an organization's full name with an abbreviation or acronym in parentheses or set off by dashes. If an abbreviation or acronym will not be clear on second reference, don't use it. *The University of Northern Colorado is located in Greeley. UNC offers more than 100 undergraduate programs and more than 100 graduate programs.*

Abbreviate *junior* and *senior* as part of a name; do not set off with commas: *John Doe Jr.*

UNC is acceptable on second reference.

Also see [academic degrees](#)

academic degrees

Lowercase degree names but capitalize the field or major in running text and whenever the degree name is used generically. Generic uses often are introduced by *a*, *the*, *his* or *her*. *She earned her bachelor's degree in History at UNC and is now pursuing a master's degree.*

Capitalize the name of a degree when it is displayed on a resume, business card, diploma, alumni directory, or anywhere it looks like a title rather than a description.

Avoid abbreviations of academic degrees in narrative text. When abbreviating degree names, generally use periods: *B.A. in Psychology*; *B.S. in Chemistry*. EXCEPTION: Listings of alumni or programs of study in campus publications.

In features, news stories, etc., omit the periods in degree abbreviations consisting of three or more letters: *She received an MBA in 2000.*

EXCEPTION: Degree abbreviations consisting of three or more letters that use a combination of upper and lowercase letters require periods: *Ph.D.*; *Ed.D.*

Avoid redundancies: *Jane Doe, Ph.D.*, NOT *Dr. Jane Doe, Ph.D.* Note: Use *Dr.* before a name only when the person has a medical degree (see entries on academic titles and *Dr.*)

Use an apostrophe when writing *bachelor's degree*, or *master's degree* but not when naming the full degree: *bachelor of arts degree*.

academic departments

The University of Northern Colorado has academic departments and programs. Use of either term is acceptable.

Also see [academic units](#)

academic majors, minors, emphases and concentrations

Capitalize the names of academic majors, minors, emphases and concentrations in narrative text. *He's majoring in Business Administration with an Accounting emphasis and minoring in Political Science.*

Note: This is a deviation from the AP Style Guide.

academic titles

Use *Dr.* before a name only when the person in question has a medical degree (M.D., DMD, DDS or DVM).

Do not use an academic title with a degree: *Professor John Smith* or *John Smith, Ph.D.*, NOT *Professor John Smith, Ph.D.*

Capitalize and spell out formal titles such as *president* and *chair* ONLY when they precede a name: *President John Smith*. Lowercase elsewhere.

Do not use academic and job titles in conjunction: *Dean Jane Doe* NOT *Dean Dr. Jane Doe*.

academic units

The University of Northern Colorado has academic *departments* or *programs* within *schools* within six academic *colleges*.

Capitalize the official names of colleges, schools and departments/programs. Lowercase generic references to them. *She's dean of the College of Natural and Health Sciences. She's a professor in the School of Nursing. She's the top student in our nursing school. He's a professor of Anthropology. He joined the faculty as a professor of Physical Education in 1997.*

Where possible, use full names on first reference and acronyms or informal names thereafter: *the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, CHSS or HSS; the College of Education and Behavioral Sciences, CEBS or EBS.*

If the college is named after someone, include the honoree's last name: *Monfort College of Business*. First names and initials need be included only in the most formal settings, such as commencement programs: *Kenneth W. Monfort College of Business*.

On first reference for external communications, preface the name of the school or college with *the University of Northern Colorado's* unless the full university name has been used earlier: *the University of Northern Colorado's College of Performing and Visual Arts*. On second reference, informal names are lowercase: *the performing and visual arts college*.

Capitalize proper nouns and adjectives in all references: *She teaches in the English program*.

University, college, school department and program are never capitalized unless they part of the official name or the first word of a sentence.

ACT

Although ACT officially stands for American College Test, the acronym is sufficient even on first reference: *ACT*, no periods.

advisor, adviser

Advisor is the preferred spelling at the University of Northern Colorado.

affect, effect

Affect is usually used as a verb and mean to influence.

Effect is usually used as a noun and means result.

affirmative action statement

Use of an affirmative action statement is required on all publications intended for external audiences, staff, faculty, students and parents. It is not optional. Do not alter the wording of these statements. For more detail information about the

statements, consult the University Counsel; for advice on placing the statements, consult University Publications.

The statement should be set in small Roman type (not italic) and placed at the end of a document with *Affirmative Action* as the paragraph header for the longest version.

Long Version (use in documents such as catalogs and employment applications)
reprint BOT Policy Manual Section 1-1-508(1)

Human Resource Services is responsible for implementation of affirmative action, programs and coordination of Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1973, the Vietnam Era Veteran's Readjustment Act of 1974, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. For more information about these provisions or about issues of equity or fairness, or claims of discrimination contact the AA/EEO/Title IX Officer, Marshall Parks, Director, Human Resource Services, University of Northern Colorado, Carter Hall 2002, Greeley, CO 80639, or call 970-351-2718.

Medium Version (use in most multi-page publications such as Viewbook and handbooks for students, employees and parents, and other guides)

The University of Northern Colorado has a strong institutional commitment to the principles of diversity, including Title IX, and takes affirmative action to achieve those ends. The university does not discriminate in its educational and employment programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual preference or veteran status. For more information or issues of equity or fairness, or claims of discrimination contact the AA/EEO/Title IX Officer at University of Northern Colorado, Human Resource Services, Carter Hall 2002, Greeley, Colorado 80639, or call 970-351-2718.

Short Version (use when space does not allow the use of medium version, such as the bottom of letterhead and posters)

The University of Northern Colorado is an equal opportunity/affirmative action institution that does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual preference or veteran status. For more information or issues of equity or fairness or claims discrimination contact the UNC AA/ EEO/ Title IX Officer at University of Northern Colorado, Human Resource Services, Carter Hall 2002, Greeley, CO 80639 or call 970-351- 2718.

afterward, backward, forward, toward

These words do not need an 's' at the end.

ages

Always use figures. If used as an adjective, use hyphens (e.g., the 5-year-old boy; the professor, 35, teaches a new course; the woman is in her 30s.)

All-American

Athletics term. Often accompanied by First-Team and Second-Team.

alma mater

The college one attended. It's not capitalized.

alumnus, alumni, alumna, alumnae

Alumnus is the masculine singular form; *alumni* is the masculine or mixed masculine and feminine plural noun; *alumna* is the feminine singular noun; *alumnae* is the feminine plural.

a.m., p.m.

Don't use 0s to designate hours and lowercase with periods in narrative text and most promotional materials: *8 a.m.*; *11 p.m.* Noon is 12 p.m.; midnight is 12 a.m. Both times are better expressed without the number as simply *noon* or *midnight*. Do not use A.M. or P.M. or am or pm.

ampersand

Do not use an ampersand (&) in running text unless it is part of a trademarked or registered business name. *Proctor & Gamble*; *College of Humanities and Social Sciences*.

Ampersands are acceptable in page headers or references to page headers in a publications' table of contents. *College of Humanities & Social Sciences*.

and/or

Do not use this construction.

apostrophe

Do not use an apostrophe when forming plurals of dates or abbreviations: *1960s*, *M.D.s*, *Ph.D.s*

B**bachelor's degree**

Lowercase with apostrophe.

barbecue

Proper spelling for formal use. In informal uses, BBQ is acceptable.

Bears

The name given to University of Northern Colorado teams that participate in intercollegiate sports. Does not need an apostrophe to show possession. Capitalize it but not the rest of the team name: *the Bears men's basketball team*; *the Bears women's cross-country team*.

bimonthly

No hyphen necessary and means every other month. *Semimonthly* means twice a month.

biweekly

No hyphen necessary and means every other week. *Semiweekly* means twice a week.

bizarre, bazaar

Bizarre means something unusual. *Bazaar* is a fair.

black, white

Both are lowercase when used to describe racial groups.

Board of Trustees

Capitalize when using full name. Use *the board* or *the trustees* (lowercase) for subsequent references: *The University of Northern Colorado Board of Trustees met to discuss the proposal. The board discussed the proposal. The trustees voted on the issue.*

book titles

Italicize book titles. Use quotation marks in identifying chapter names within a book. Also see [composition titles](#)

buildings

Capitalize buildings that have a formal name, including the words *Hall* or *Center*: *Kepner Hall*; *Student Health Center*. Capitalize only proper nouns in common references: *the center moved to a new building*.

Use lowercase for buildings with generic names that reflect the discipline taught or the activity it houses: *the visual arts building*, *the dining hall*.

Capitalize names of rooms or areas within buildings: *Spruce A in the University Center*, *the UC's Fireside Lounge*.

For rooms that are numbered, the preferred style is: *Carter Hall 2009*; *Michener Library L-9*.

bus, buses, busses

Bus is a vehicle of public transportation. *Buses* is the plural form of *bus*. *Busses* means kisses.

C

campus

Capitalize when used with the full name of the campus as a proper noun: *West Campus*, *Central Campus*. Lowercase when it stands alone: *Recruiters from several local companies visited campus*. Hyphenate as modifier (e.g., an on-campus program)

campus community

A collective term used for students, faculty and staff at UNC.

Also see university community

campuswide

One word.

capitalization

The full, formal names of colleges, schools and programs are capitalized: *the College of Education and Behavioral Sciences*; *the School of Communication*; *the University of Northern Colorado Journalism Program*.

Use lowercase on second or generic reference: *the communication school*; *the college's faculty*; *the school's journalism program*.

Capitalize the full, formal names of centers and institutes and use lowercase on second reference or in informal usage: *The Center for International Education has moved. The center is keeping the same phone number.*

Capitalize the formal names of campus organizations and ongoing programs: *University Honors Program; Student Representative Council.*

Do not capitalize university or college when it stands alone to refer to UNC or a specific college, respectively (e.g., The university is in Greeley; the college is housed in McKee Hall.)

Also see [buildings](#), [composition titles](#), [titles](#)

Capitol, capitol, capital

Capitol is used when referring to the building in Washington, D.C. Lowercase *capitol* is used when referring to any building in which government business is conducted. Lowercase *capital* is the city where a government is located.

The president held the State of the Union Address at *Capitol* on Monday.
Denver is the *capital* of Colorado.
The mayor's office is located in the *capitol*.

catalog

A handbook for students that provides information about the university, campus rules and regulations, and courses. Capitalize when used with year. The *2009-2010 Catalog* is the most current catalog at UNC. The *catalogs* at UNC are very useful.

CEO

Do not spell out.

city

Do not capitalize in *city of* constructions: *The city of Greeley is in northern Colorado.*

classes, courses

Lowercase when making a general reference to subjects: *He studies math and economics.* Uppercase when referring to a specific class or when the class name includes a proper noun or numeral: *I took Math and Liberal Arts, and Elementary Spanish I.*

classmates

One word.

coed

Coed (not *co-ed*) residence halls house both male and female students. Never use *coed* to refer to a female college student.

collective nouns

The collective nouns *faculty* and *staff* can take singular or plural verbs, depending on whether group members are acting individually or as a group. *The sociology program faculty meets regularly with the criminal justice program faculty. The staff sometimes disagree among themselves.*

colleges and universities

For colleges and universities other than the University of Northern Colorado, use the full formal name on first reference; abbreviations and acronyms may be used in subsequent references.

commas

Avoid excessive use. Use commas to avoid confusion and provide clarity for the reader.

Do not use a comma before the final conjunction in a simple series: *The color choices for the car were red, green and blue.*

EXCEPTION: A serial comma can be used when an integral element of the series requires a conjunction - *the programs of physics, journalism, recreation, and chemistry and biochemistry* - or in a complex series of phrases.

Do not use a comma to introduce a subordinate clause: *He decided not to go to class because he didn't want to expose others to potentially contagious germs.*

Do not use a comma to set off essential information: *John's sister Amanda is arriving from Denver today.* NOT *John's sister, Amanda, is arriving from Denver today.* This implies that John has only one sister when in fact he has three. However, the following is correct: *John's father, Peter, is remaining in Denver.*

DEPENDENT CLAUSES: If the second half of a compound sentence does not contain its own subject and predicate, do not separate the clauses with a comma: *The ATM is in the University Center and is available 24 hours a day.*

INDEPENDENT CLAUSES: Use a comma between the two independent clauses of a compound sentence (preceding the conjunctions *and*, *but*, *or*, *nor*, *for*, *so* and *yet*). The second half of the sentence must contain its own subject and verb: *The ATM is in the University Center, and it is available 24 hours a day.*

DATE: Use a comma between a specific date and year: *Jan. 1, 1999*. A comma should follow the year when a specific date is mentioned mid-sentence: *May 11, 1988, was the date of the party.* Do not use a comma between month and year or season and year: *July 2006; fall 1999.*

LOCATIONS: When using a city name with a state or country in a sentence, place a comma afterward: *She is a Denver, Colo., native.*

INTRODUCTORY PREPOSITIONAL PHRASES: Use a comma to separate a prepositional phrase of more than four words when the phrase comes at the beginning of a sentence or if a comma is needed for clarity. *At first Tim thought Beth was smart. Of all the girls he knew in the class, she impressed him most.*

commencement, Commencement

Uppercase the formal ceremony; lowercase for generic usage: *This year's Commencement has been moved to Jackson Field. The university holds commencements in December and May every year.*

compass directions

Compass directions are not capitalized. *He lived just north of the campus.*

composition titles

Use italics for titles of books, magazines, journals, newspapers, newsletters, plays, operas, movies, television and radio shows, and gallery and museum exhibitions.

Note: This is a departure from AP style.

Use quotation marks for subsets of these major categories and short works. Examples: short stories, poems, a specific episode of a television show, magazine and newspaper articles, songs and individual works of art.

Capitalize the first and last word of the title along with all verbs, nouns and principal words: *A Man Named Horse*. Capitalize all prepositions and conjunctions in a title that consist of four or more letters: *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest, The House That Jack Built.*

contractions

Contractions make for informal, conversational-sounding copy and are acceptable and preferred for most non-academic writing. Avoid purely colloquial contractions like *what'll*. Full verb forms can be used in non-academic writing for emphasis.

courses

Capitalize specific course titles and put in quotes (e.g., Bob Smith, professor of Communication, teaches the graduate-level course “Media Relations in Ethical Business.”)

courtesy titles

Courtesy titles such as *Mr.*, *Mrs.*, *Ms.*, etc. are generally omitted except in commencement and convocation programs.

Also see [titles](#)

cum laude

A Latin phrase meaning *with distinction*; lowercase. *cum laude*.

D

dash

The dash (-) is used for parenthetical remarks or abrupt changes of thought, epigraphs and datelines. Include one space before and after the dash: *Smith offered a plan – it was unprecedented – to raise revenues.*

Also see [hyphen](#)

dates

Spell out months when used alone or with the year only: *September 1991*. Abbreviate the month except for March, April, May, June and July when used with a specific day: *Sept. 2*.

Correct abbreviations: Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov., Dec.

Do not use a comma between the month and year when no specific day is mentioned: *January 1994*. The same rule applies to seasons: *fall 1996*.

When referring to a month, day and year, place a comma between the day and year: *Dec. 7, 1945*.

Place a comma after the year when a phrase with a month, day and year is used in a sentence: *Feb. 18, 1987, was the target date.*

Do not use *on* with dates unless its absence would lead to confusion: *The program ends Dec. 15* NOT *The program ends on Dec. 15.*

To indicate sequences or inclusive dates and times, use a hyphen instead of *to*: *Apply here May 7-9, 8 a.m.-4 p.m.*

Do not use *st, rd* or *th* with dates: *Oct. 14* NOT *Oct. 14th*; *Feb. 2* NOT *Feb. 2nd*.

Do not abbreviate days of the week when using formally. *Sunday* not *Sun.* unless used informally on fliers or brochures.

For PR Office use: Include day of the week, month and day (numeral). Monday, *Jan. 1*. Do not add year if date is in the current year.

dean

Capitalize only when it precedes a name. Don't combine *dean* or any administrative title with an academic title before a name: *Dean John Doe* NOT *Dean Dr. John Doe*.

Also see [titles](#)

decades – Use figures (e.g., 1870s, 1900s, '80s, '90s)

degrees

See [academic degrees](#)

doctoral, doctorate

Doctorate is a noun; *doctoral* is the adjective. You may have a doctorate or a doctoral degree, but not a doctorate degree: *He received his doctoral degree in English. He holds a doctorate in English.*

Dr.

Use *Dr.* before a name only when the person has a medical degree (M.D., DMD, DDS or DVM); the university does not use academic titles in general external communications because it is assumed that faculty possess the terminal degree in their field. Acceptable to use Ph.D. after title (e.g., Professor Bob Smith, Ph.D., teaches and researches at UNC.)

E

email

e.g., i.e.

E.g. stands for *for example*; *i.e.* stands for *that is*. The two are not interchangeable. Both are always followed by a comma.

emeritus, emerita, emeriti

The title of *emeritus* is not synonymous with retired; it is an honor bestowed on a small number of retired faculty and should be included in the title. *Emerita* is feminine; *emeriti* is plural. The word may precede or follow professor: *John Doe is a professor emeritus of art. Jane Doe, professor emerita at the university.*

e-newsletter

entitle, title

Entitle means having the right to something: *He was entitled to the promotion because he met all the qualifications and had the full support of the department.* *Title* is the name of a publication, musical composition, etc.: *My first book, titled My First Book, was for children.*

exclamation point (!)

Avoid uses in press releases and other formal documents. Acceptable after *Go Bears!*

F

Fifty-Year Society (it's 50-Year Society)

50-Year Society celebration honoring the class of 1956.

faculty

Lowercase unless it is part of a specific name such as *Faculty Senate* or *Faculty Research Publication Board*.

financial aid office

The formal name is *Office of Financial Aid*. She works in UNC's Office of Financial Aid. I have to go to the financial aid office.

foreign words and phrases

Use italics on first reference for all but the most familiar and follow (if needed) with an English translation of the word or phrase in parenthesis.

fractions

Spell out when used in text; use numerals in charts. For fractions and percentages, the verb should agree with the noun following the *of*: *Three-fourths of the students are English majors. Two-thirds of the project is completed.*

fraternities, sororities

The full, formal name should be used on first reference: *Sigma Phi Epsilon*. Abbreviations are acceptable on second reference (SfE), but avoid nicknames such as *SigEps*.

A member is a member, never a brother or sister.

In reference to a fraternity or sorority's building, the word *house* should be capitalized when it follows the name of the organization: *Sigma Phi Epsilon House; fraternity house.*

Fulbright Scholar

Proper noun that should be capitalized.

Fulbright-Hays Grant

Proper noun. Capitalize it and note the dash.

full time, full-time

Hyphenate when used as a compound modifier: *She is a full-time employee of the university. She works full time at the university.*

fund-raiser (n.), fund raising (n.), fund-raising (adj.)

Fund raising is difficult. They planned a fund-raising campaign. A fund-raiser was hired. The organization is planning a fund-raiser.

G

grade point average, GPA

GPA (no periods) is acceptable on first reference. Federal law prohibits the listing of a student's GPA in a publication without the explicit written permission of the student (not the student's parents).

GRE

Acronym for the Graduate Record Examinations. Always use the official name on first reference. On second reference in informal usage, *GRE* is acceptable if the meaning will be clear to readers. If you intend to use the acronym on second reference, let readers know this by setting it off in parentheses directly after the first official reference.

greek

Lowercase for fraternities and sororities; uppercase when referring to someone from Greece: *The Greek student decided to go greek during rush week and try out for a sorority.*

H

his/her

Do not use this construction when trying to be gender sensitive in an article. Instead, use plurals when possible: *The students decided they wanted to enroll at UNC.*

home page

The front page of a particular website.

Homecoming

Uppercase when referring to UNC's homecoming event. Needs year to be considered a proper noun. *The 2009 UNC Homecoming will be the best ever.* Lowercase for generic usage: *He was his high school's homecoming king.*

Honors Program

The official name is *University Honors Program*, but *Honors Program* also is acceptable. Uppercase. However, *honors classes* and *honors professor* are lowercase.

historic, historical

Historic is an event of important occurrence, one that stands out in history. Sept. 11, 2001, is a *historic* event. *Historical* is any occurrence in the past. The debate over the wording of the First Amendment is part of the *historical* record.

hyphen

Use a hyphen to avoid ambiguity: *He was a small-business man.*

Hyphenate modifiers that follow forms of the verb to be: *The cancer program is world-renowned for its innovative treatments.*

Hyphenate compound modifiers except when the compound modifier follows the noun: *She is a part-time worker. She works part time.*

EXCEPTIONS: No hyphen is needed for compound modifiers using the adverb very and all adverbs ending in -ly: *She was a very qualified candidate. This is not such an easily remembered rule.*

However, note that when family (which, of course, is not an adverb) is part of a compound modifier, the modifier is hyphenated: *family-owned business.*

I

Internet

The *Internet* is a proper noun so it should be capitalized.

J

jargon

Avoid at all times.

L

Latin honors

summa cum laude (3.90 – 4.00 GPA)

magna cum laude (3.80 – 3.89 GPA)

cum laude (3.70 – 3.79 GPA)

M

magazine names

Italicize the names of magazines: *Newsweek*.

Lowercase *magazine* unless it is part of the formal title: *Harper's Magazine*; *Time* magazine.

Note: This is a departure from the AP Style Guide.

magna cum laude

With great distinction; italicize and lowercase: *magna cum laude*.

majors

Capitalize. *He's majoring in Music Education*.

Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award

The Monfort College of Business is the first and only business program to receive the award from the Office of the President of the United States (2004). Note that there is not a second d before the g.

M. Lucile Harrison Award

Bestowed by the Provost's Office, the award recognizes a faculty member with a long career of professional excellence and is the university's top faculty honor. The award is named after Professor Emeritus of Elementary Education M. Lucile Harrison, whose long and award-winning career included co-authoring a national reading series.

N

newspapers

Italicize a newspaper's name.

Capitalize the definite article if that is the way the publication prefers to be known: *The Courier-Journal*.

However, do not capitalize the definite article in a story that mentions several papers where some papers use the as part of their name and others do not: the *Cincinnati Enquirer*, the *Courier-Journal* and the *New York Times*.

Where location is needed but is not part of a newspaper's name, use parentheses: *The (Cleveland) Plain Dealer*.

Note: This is a departure from AP Style.

non

In general, no hyphen when used as a prefix: *nonprofit*; *nonentity*.

EXCEPTIONS: Use a hyphen before proper nouns and in awkward constructions: *non-English speaking people*; *non-nuclear submarine*.

Northern Colorado, northern Colorado

Always use University of Northern Colorado on first reference. UNC is acceptable on second and successive references.

EXCEPTION: National and state media started referring to UNC's intercollegiate athletics teams as Northern Colorado teams to avoid confusion when referring to University of North Carolina teams. UNC's Athletics program has adopted the practice to be consistent.

Note: The term *northern Colorado* refers to the geographic area of the state that includes Weld and Larimer counties.

Also see **UNC**

numbers

Spell out those for nine and fewer; use numerals for 10 and above.

Always spell out numbers at the beginning of a sentence, except for calendar years: *Five years ago today she graduated from high school. 2001 marked the beginning of increased airport security.* (Avoid this construction when possible. INSTEAD: *The Challenge for Excellence plan began in 1998.*)

Always use numerals for percents, credit hours, ages, parts of a book: *7 percent*; *3 credit hours*; *2 years old*; *The information can be found in Chapter 2.*

O

on-campus, on campus

Use *on-campus* as a compound adjective. *She lives in on-campus housing.* Use *on campus* as an adverbial phrase. *She lived on campus all four years at the university.*

online

One word as an adjective or adverb, not hyphenated. *He took two online courses this semester. He took two courses online this semester.*

P

percent

Use numerals and spell out percent: *3 percent; 55 percent.*

possessives

Follow AP style (some of the more commonly confused instances are noted here).

While some style guides say that singular nouns ending in *s* sounds (such as *x* and *z*) may take either the apostrophe alone or *'s*, for consistency AP style is to always use *'s* if the word does not end in the letter *s*: *the fox's lair; Marx's theories.*

EXCEPTION: Words that end in an *s* sound and are followed by a word that begins with *s*: *for appearance's sake; the appearance's cost.*

SINGULAR COMMON NOUNS ENDING IN S: Add *'s* unless the next word begins with *s*: *the hostess's invitation; the hostess' son.*

SINGULAR PROPER NOUNS ENDING IN S: Use an apostrophe only: *Kansas' school system; Hercules' labors.*

JOINT POSSESSIVES: Use an apostrophe after the last word only: *John and Sue's car.*

postgraduate

No hyphen; use as an adjective only: *He was a postgraduate student at Yale.*
NOT: *He was a postgraduate at Yale.*

president

Uppercase only before the name: *former President George W. Bush; George Bush, former president of the United States. President Kay Norton; Kay Norton, president of UNC.* When used without the name, always lowercase: *The president visited Denver.*

professor

Capitalize only before the name; lowercase when it stands alone. *I enjoy Professor Smith's classes. He's a professor of philosophy.*

program

Capitalize only when program is part of the formal name: *the center's visiting scholars program; the University Honors Program.*

Q

quotation marks

Periods and commas always go within the quotation marks. Dashes, semicolons, question marks and exclamation points go within the quotes when they apply to the quoted matter and outside when they apply to the whole sentence.

R

range

Constructions indicating a range (of time, for example, or other inclusive numbers) use a hyphen: *9-11 p.m.*

Robert and Ludie Dickeson Presidential Prize for Leadership

Acknowledges and rewards student leadership on the UNC campus. Named after former UNC President Robert Dickeson and his wife, who bestowed the prize.

S

SAT

Although *SAT* still officially stands for Scholastic Assessment Test, the abbreviation is sufficient even on first reference: *SAT*, no periods. Score totals are written without a comma: 1300. As with GPAs, federal law prohibits releasing individual student scores without the explicit written permission of the student.

scholarship

Lowercase except for named awards: *He received an athletic scholarship. She received a National Merit Scholarship.*

schools and colleges

Also see [academic units](#).

seasons

Always lowercase, even when naming an issue of a publication: *the fall 2003 issue of Northern Vision*.

semesters

Academic semesters are lowercase with no comma preceding a year: *fall semester 2006*.

semicolon

Semicolons may be used to separate the elements of a series when the elements themselves include commas. *He has a daughter, Jane Doe of Greeley; three sons, Jim Doe of Denver, Jack Doe of Greeley and Joe Doe of Loveland; and a sister, Mary Smith of Topeka*. Do not use semicolons in a series if commas will work.

When semicolons are used, include one before the conjunction at the end of the series.

state names

In text, always spell out state names when they stand alone: *She visited Colorado for the first time to go skiing*.

When used in conjunction with a city or town, abbreviate per AP style and set off with commas: *Greeley, Colo., is the site of the Independence Day Stampede*.

Do not abbreviate Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Ohio, Texas and Utah, unless as part of an address with a ZIP code.

stereotypes

Avoid racial and sexual references or mention of debilitating physical conditions if they are not germane to the topic of your writing. The phrase *people with disabilities* is preferable to *the disabled*; the term *disabled* is preferable to *handicapped*.

Don't say *afflicted with* or *the victim of*; instead: *She has a spinal injury*.

Don't use a disease as a descriptive: *He has diabetes*. NOT *He is a diabetic*.

EXCEPTION: *Survivor of* is acceptable, as in *He is a survivor of cancer*.

student-athlete

Hyphenated.

Student Senate

Formerly the Student Representative Council, *Student Senate* is always written out. Never abbreviate.

summa cum laude

With greatest distinction; italicize and lowercase: *summa cum laude*

T

telephone numbers

The preferred form is to set off the area code with a dash. This is a departure from the *AP Style Guide*. People are now accustomed to

CORRECT: 970-555-1212

INCORRECT: (970) 555-1212; 970.555.1212

Do not use the numeral 1 before area codes, including 800 numbers.

that, which, who, whom

Use *that* and *which* in reference to inanimate objects and to animals without a name. Use *who* and *whom* in referring to people and to animals that have a name.

Use commas with *which*. No commas with *that*. *The lawn mower, which is broken, is in the garage.* (Adds a fact about the only mower in question). *The lawn mower that is broken is in the garage.* (Tells which one).

theater, theatre

Use *theater* unless *theatre* is part of the official name. *The School of Theatre Arts and Dance offers numerous theater classes.* At Northern Colorado, officially it's *Langworthy Theatre, Little Theatre of the Rockies, Norton Theatre and Garden Theatre.*

time

Don't use *0s* to designate hours and lowercase with periods: *8 a.m.; 11 p.m.* Noon is 12 p.m.; *midnight* is 12 a.m. Both times are better expressed without the number as simply *noon* or *midnight*. Do not use *A.M.* or *P.M.* or *am* or *pm*.

Avoid redundancies such as *10 a.m. this morning*.

Avoid constructions using *o'clock*.

titles

In general, capitalize formal or courtesy titles - president, dean, professor, senator, coach - before names of individuals and lowercase when they follow names. *President George Bush; She is the president of the university.*

Lowercase descriptive or occupational titles except for professor: *editor John Doe; Professor Sue Smith.*

Use full names on first reference. On second and subsequent references, use only last names, without courtesy titles, for both men and women regardless of marital status.

EXCEPTION: To distinguish between a husband and wife quoted in the same story, confusion often can be avoided by using first names: *John and Jane Smith collaborated on the study. We reported our findings at the next conference, Jane says. It was an interesting session, John adds.*

As a general rule, titles containing more than four words should be placed after the name.

TITLES OF EVENTS: Capitalize, in quotation marks, the full, formal titles of workshops, conferences, seminars, speeches and similar events: *A workshop titled The Use of the Library will be held next week.* Use lowercase for subject matter: *Michener Library will offer a workshop on library use.*

Also see [academic titles](#), [composition titles](#)

U

UNC

Acronym for the University of Northern Colorado. *UNC* is acceptable upon second reference.

Note: National and state media started referring to UNC's intercollegiate athletics teams as Northern Colorado teams to avoid confusion when referring to University of North Carolina teams. UNC's Athletics program has adopted the practice to be consistent, and use of *Northern Colorado* as a shortened form of the university's full name by those outside of Athletics is discouraged.

university

Capitalize only when used as part of a complete formal name or title; lowercase otherwise. *She attends the University of Northern Colorado. The university is providing her with an excellent education.*

university community

A collective term used for UNC students, faculty, staff, alumni who may be on or off campus.

See also campus community

V

vice president

Do not hyphenate. Do not capitalize in text unless the title precedes a person's name: *Vice President Dan Hall; Dan Hall, vice president for university relations.*

Visitors Center

No apostrophe; capitalized. The center isn't a possession of our visitors.

W

website, web page

Do not use *www* as an abbreviation within a sentence; instead, use *the web*.

Also see **URL**

work study

Of or relating to any of various programs that enable students to engage in part-time employment while continuing their studies.

Tips for Writing Effective Copy

Note: Messaging created for UNC's electronic and print communications should support the university's brand identity. Copy should reflect the themes described in the brand messages, while the tone of messages should reflect the qualities described in the brand identity.

1. Know your audience and write copy that addresses your audience's needs. Are you writing for 18-year-olds? Parents? Graduate students? Regardless, make sure your copy addresses that audience's needs.
2. When you've finished writing your copy, pretend you're the audience and ask: "So what? Why should I care?" If your copy doesn't pass this test, it won't be very effective with your target audience. If you show the audience how they will benefit from your program, event, etc., it will be effective.
3. Write compelling copy that is to the point. We live in a time when audiences are overwhelmed with the amount of information they receive. Writing shorter copy increases the possibility that audiences will read and retain messages. Use bullet points rather than long narrative text for key messages. Break long blocks of copy into several shorter paragraphs.
4. Consider all of the media you can use to communicate and use them. For example, all of the information about a program or activity doesn't necessarily need to be included in a print publication. Additional information can be incorporated on a website.
5. Use headlines to get the reader's attention and deliver information. Use action words; don't settle for a label. Instead of writing a headline reading "A Message from the Dean" (label), use verbs to highlight a point from the dean's message: "New Program to Meet Needs of Working Law Enforcement Personnel."
6. Include a call to action. It's what moves your audience from being passive prospects to taking the next step to becoming a customer. Tell them exactly how they can obtain more information, sign up for a class, or purchase a service.