

Worcester State University
Style Guide for Writers and Editors
updated December 2010

This style guide is intended to promote consistency of style for written materials produced by Worcester State University. It presents a set of editorial rules for use in texts, drawing from *The Chicago Manual of Style* and reflecting the University's preferences on questions of word usage, grammar, and punctuation. It also presents information specific to Worcester State University.

A

abbreviations, state

Use state postal abbreviations only in mailing addresses. When using state names within text, abbreviate state names only when listed with a city (Worcester, Mass.). Spell out the names when they stand alone. (He lives in Missouri.) Do not abbreviate Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Ohio, and Utah. All other state names should be abbreviated as follows:

Ala.	Conn.	Ind.	Mass.	Mont.	N.M.	Ore.	Tenn.	W.Va.
Ariz.	Del.	Kan.	Mich.	Neb.	N.Y.	Pa.	Tex.	Wis.
Ark.	Fla.	Ky.	Minn.	Nev.	N.C.	R.I.	Vt.	Wyo.
Calif.	Ga.	La.	Miss.	N.H.	N.D.	S.C.	Va.	
Colo.	Ill.	Md.	Mo.	N.J.	Okla.	S.D.	Wash.	

academic degrees

B.A. (bachelor of arts)	M.O.T. (master of occupational therapy)
B.S. (bachelor of science)	M.D. (doctor of medicine)
M.A. (master of arts)	Ed.D. (doctor of education)
M.S. (master of science)	Ph. D. (doctor of philosophy)
M.B.A. (master of business administration)	
M.Ed. (master of education)	
M.F.A. (master of fine arts)	
Ex: He received a B.A. in music.	

He received a bachelor's degree in French.

She received a bachelor of science in biology.

He received an M.A. in English.

She received a master's degree in nursing.

He received a master of science in biotechnology.

She received a Ph.D. in chemistry.

She received a doctorate in chemistry. ("Doctorate" is preferable to "doctor's degree.")

She received a doctor of philosophy in chemistry.

acronyms

On first usage, give the full name followed by the acronym in parenthesis. Omit parenthesis when using the acronym thereafter. In longer documents, the full name is sometimes given in each new section with the acronym in parenthesis.

Ex: Alumni Association's Advisory Board (AAAB)

Board of Higher Education (BHE)

Student Government Association (SGA)

Worcester State University (WSU)

advisor

(not adviser)

alumna/alumnae

a female graduate/more than one female graduate

alumnus/alumni

a male graduate/more than one graduate (male or female)

B

boards and associations on campus

Alumni Association's Advisory Board

Student Government Association

Worcester State Foundation

Worcester State University Board of Trustees

buildings, rooms, and other campus sites

athletic field

John Coughlin Memorial Field

auditoriums and lecture halls

Eager Auditorium (in Sullivan Academic Center)

Multimedia Auditorium (Room 102, Ghosh Center)

Sullivan Auditorium (south wing of Sullivan Academic Center)

buildings

Campus Ministry House

Chandler Village

Dowden Hall

Ghosh Science and Technology Center (also the Ghosh Center)

Gymnasium or Gym Building

Latino Education Institute

Learning Resource Center

Helen G. Shaughnessy Administration Building (also the Shaughnessy Building)

Student Center

Sullivan Academic Center

Wasylean Hall

function rooms

Blue Lounge (in Student Center)

Charter Business TV Lounge (also called The Living Room - in Student Center)

Fallon Room (in Student Center)

Foster Room (in Student Center)

North/South Auditorium (in Student Center)

One Lancer Place (in Student Center)

President's Dining Room (in Student Center)

Seven Hills Lounge (in Wasylean Hall)

theater

Fuller Theater

bullets

Bullets are graphic devices that separate items in a list. In bulleted lists within text passages, follow these guidelines:

- Do not use commas or semicolons at the end of each item.
- If an item in the bulleted list is a complete sentence, capitalize the first word and put a period at the end of the sentence.
- If the item is not a complete sentence, then the first word should be lowercased, with a period placed at the end of the last item in the bulleted list.
- Do not mix sentence and non-sentence items in a bulleted list.

C

capitalization

Avoid unnecessary capitalization by following these guidelines:

- Capitalize the formal names of departments and centers: the Department of Languages and Literature, the Center for Business and Industry. Use lowercase if writing “the history department,” “the biology department,” or “the center.”
- Capitalize specific courses: Introduction to Biology; Fundamentals of Accounting II.
- Do not capitalize majors and minors, except for proper nouns: He is majoring in criminal justice and earning a minor in Spanish.
- Capitalize the names of specific buildings and rooms: We are meeting in the Blue Lounge in the Student Center.
- Capitalize the word “University” when it refers specifically to WSU.
- Capitalize formal titles that precede a name: Director of Research Donald Bailey.
- Do not capitalize titles that follow a name within text: Donald Bailey, director of research.

- Do not confuse a job function with a title: well-known illustrator Cory Jones.
- When hyphenated words are capitalized, capitalize both units of the word when the second unit is a noun or adjective or when it has equal weight with the first: “Eighteenth-Century British Poets”; “Non-Traditional Students in Community Colleges”; “First-Year Student Orientation.” Do not capitalize the second unit when it is a participle or if both units are defined as a single word: “Self-fulfilling Prophecies in Student Assessment”; “Designing an Eye-catching Ad”; “Seven Ways to Build Self-esteem.”

class years

Insert an apostrophe to replace the first two numerals of alumni class years. Designate year of graduation as follows:

Mary Smith '68 (undergraduate degree)

Mary Smith '68, M.A. '72 (undergraduate and graduate degree)

Mary Smith, M.A. '72 (graduate degree only)

Mary (Smith) Pauley '68 (Her last name was Smith at time of graduation.)

Mary (Smith) '68 and James Pauley (Only the wife is a graduate.)

Mary (Smith) '68 and James Pauley '65 (Wife and husband are graduates.)

James '65 and Mary (Smith) '68 Pauley (Husband and wife are graduates.)

commas

Avoid four common comma errors by following these rules:

- Place a comma before and after a state name that follows a town or city name:

Ex: Worcester, Mass., is home to several colleges and universities.

- Place a comma before and after the year when it is part of a complete date within text. Do not use a comma if only the month and year are given.

Ex: On September 11, 1874, Worcester Normal School was founded.

He was born in February 1987.

- Place a comma before and after academic degrees that follow a name.

Ex: Caroline Harper, M.B.A., Ph.D., is the guest speaker.

- Do not use a comma before or after Jr. or Sr., and do not precede Roman numerals such as I, II, or III with a comma.

Ex: William Smith Jr. will be late for the meeting.
Roland Johnson III is chair of the committee.

D

dialogue

(not dialog)

E

emerita, emeritae, emeritus, emeriti

denotes individuals who have retired, but retain their rank or title

Ex: Professor Emerita Sylvia Johnson is visiting us today.
Professors Emeritae Sylvia Johnson and Gloria Jones are visiting us today.
Professor Emeritus John Johnson is visiting us today.
Professors Emeriti John Johnson and Jim Jackson are visiting us today.
Sylvia Johnson and Jim Jackson, professors emeriti, are visiting us today.

F

faculty/staff

Faculty and staff are collective nouns that may take a singular or plural verb, depending on whether the writer is referring to the group as a single unit or to the members of the group.

Ex: Our adjunct faculty are very dedicated.
The faculty is voting on the matter next week.
Our staff are working on many projects at the moment.
Our staff is very efficient.

first-year/freshman

Use first-year instead of freshman when referring to students' first year of college.

fiscal year

The 12-month period is six months ahead of the calendar year: July 1, 2010-June 30, 2011. In writing, write fiscal year out first, then use FY. The fiscal year began in July for FY2010-2011.

H

honors

Use lower case and italicize *cum laude*, *magna cum laude*, and *summa cum laude*.

hyphens

Don't forget the first hyphen when using successive compound modifiers. (We accept both part- and full-time students.)

I

Internet

Always capitalize.

L

Lancers

the official name of Worcester State University's athletic teams

months

Spell out months when used alone. Abbreviate only (but not necessarily) when used with a specific date. (January is my favorite month. She was born Dec. 6, 1966.)

N

non-traditional

Use a hyphen.

numbers

Spell out one through nine. Spell out numbers at the beginning of a sentence. Use numerals in percentages (2 percent; .06 percent), money (6 cents, \$2), and units of measure (6 million, 3

credit hours). Use numerals in sports scores (2 goals, 4 assists). Do not add an apostrophe when making numerals plural. (He rolled three 11s in a row. The 1920s were a turbulent decade.)

O

online

one word

P

professor

Do not abbreviate, as in Prof.

Q

quotation marks

Place commas and periods inside end quotation marks. Semi-colons and colons belong outside end quotation marks. Place exclamation points and question marks inside end quotation marks if they apply to the quotation itself, outside if they apply to the entire sentence:

Ex: Marjorie screamed, “Stop!”

Just before she crashed her car, Beverly said, “I never get in accidents”!

Justin asked his professor, “Is it okay if I email my paper?”

Does Professor Maxwell always tell students, “I will accept no late assignments”?

R

Rockwood Field

The athletic complex adjacent to the WSU campus is owned by the City of Worcester. Through a collaborative agreement between WSU and the city, Lancer baseball and softball teams use the ball fields for practice and games.

S

social media

Capitalize and spell social media sites in accordance with their official names: Facebook, LinkedIn, MySpace, Twitter, and YouTube.

T

teachers college

There is no apostrophe in Worcester State Teachers College.

time

Use a.m. and p.m.; 12 noon; 12 midnight. Use 1 p.m., not 1:00 p.m. For time spans, use from 1 to 2 p.m. or 1-2 p.m.; 1 a.m. to 2 p.m.

U

union names:

- **AFSCME** American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees – classified employees
- **APA** Association of Professional Administrators – non-exempt employees
- **MSCA/MTA/NEA** Massachusetts State College Association/ Massachusetts Teachers Association/National Education Association--faculty union

United States

Spell out the name when referring to the country as a noun. “U.S.” is acceptable only when used as an adjective. (Many children in the United States live in poverty. Many U.S. children live in poverty.)

W

Web

Capitalize when referring to the World Wide Web. (I found it on the Web.) Website is one word. (I am developing my own website.)

Worcester State University

Use the acronym WSU only after Worcester State University has been spelled out and clearly identified.

V

Voice mail is two words.