



# SOUTHERN UTAH UNIVERSITY EDITORIAL STYLE GUIDE

## INTRODUCTION

All SUU colleges, departments and employees are encouraged to adhere to these guidelines in order to ensure the consistency of messages coming from the University. This guide deals with many of the troublesome issues that may face communicators at SUU.

The official editorial style manual for Southern Utah University publications and Web pages is *The Associated Press Stylebook*. The book is easy to use and is a storehouse of good information about grammar and usage. It covers most questions campus writers will have about style issues. Should your question not be addressed within this text, the *Chicago Manual of Style* is a good alternative. You may also always contact Jen Burt, director of communication within SUU's Office of University Relations, for immediate assistance with any editorial concerns.

Style also requires a good dictionary for spelling and usage issues not covered in the AP stylebook. In most cases, the first spelling choice listed in the dictionary should be used. You should also have a good grammar guide to help you settle usage issues.

Because SUU's needs are not the same as those of the news media, some exceptions to AP Style are used. Following are the exceptions, plus some of the more difficult usage issues you may encounter. Use this guide to reference SUU style on common questions you are likely to face while writing or editing materials for the University's internal and external audiences.

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## 1 - EXCEPTIONS TO AP STYLE

### academic degrees

Generic degree terms such as *bachelor of arts* and *bachelor of science* are not capitalized at SUU. Capitalize only when the formal name of the degree is used.

Use an apostrophe only when listing the degree informally.

### academic rank

In descending order: professor, associate professor, assistant professor, instructor. Lecturer and clinical instructor are also acceptable academic titles, though they are not official in the tenure track.

Also in descending order: vice president, associate vice president, assistant vice president.

### academic units

Capitalize only the formal name of a department, college or other SUU unit.

### African American

African American (not hyphenated) is the term used at SUU. For more, see the Cultural Sensitivity section.

### chair

Use the nonsexist terms chair or chairperson. AP prefers chairman or chairwoman, but don't use those unless they are part of an official title.

### telephone numbers

Separate each series of numbers by a hyphen. Do not use "1-" before long-distance or toll-free numbers.

### titles

Titles of books, paintings, sculptures, films, magazines, plays, record albums, operas and other long musical works, newspapers and continuing radio and television shows are italicized. AP says to enclose these in quotation marks but that is because there are problems with transmitting italics to all member newspapers. In fact, AP does italicize these terms in the stylebook. Titles of short stories, articles and poems; individual chapters in books; songs and other short musical compositions; and radio and television shows are set off in quotation marks.

### URLs

It isn't necessary to include `http://` in a URL when it is clear that it's a Web address. Browsers don't require that it be entered, and it's easier for the reader to remember a URL without it. As an added bonus, eliminating "`http://`" can make it easier to fit the URL on a single line.

When listing Web addresses, try to get the URL to fit on a single line. If it is necessary to break the URL, try to break it before a slash or period. Allowing the URL to break itself by hyphenating could cause the address to change.

### Examples

*Bachelor of Arts in English* or *Bachelor of Science in Biology*

*bachelor's* degree in art vs. *Bachelor of Science in Communication*

*Department of Communication*  
vs. *biology department*

876-555-4321

If a URL ends a sentence, put a period after it, but ensure the period is not included as part of the hyperlink in electronic publications. In printed materials, please remove the blue, underlined hyperlink marks that automatically appear in many word processing programs when you type in a complete URL.

## 2 – WORD USAGE

### **a, an**

The article is determined by the beginning sound of the word that follows rather than by the actual first letter. Use *an* before a vowel sound and use *a* before a consonant sound.

### **a.m., p.m.**

These are lowercase with periods in both lists and sentences. It isn't necessary to use :00 for times on the hour. To avoid confusion, *noon* and *midnight* should be used instead of 12 p.m. and 12 a.m. Avoid saying 12 noon or 12 midnight. Those are redundant.

### **advance, advanced**

When used as adjectives, *advance* means “ahead of time” and *advanced* means “beyond others.”

### **advisor**

In the interest of campus unity, use *advisor* not *adviser* when referencing all professional and academic applications.

### **affect, effect**

*Affect* is the verb, while *effect* is the noun.

### **alumni, alumna**

*Alumna* is the feminine singular form. *Alumnae* is the feminine plural. *Alumnus* is the male (or nonspecific gender) singular. *Alumni* is the masculine or mixed-gender plural.

### **and, but**

*And* or *but* may begin a sentence. This approach can be useful in providing a transition between closely related sentences. But it shouldn't be overdone.

### **brand names**

It isn't necessary to use a trademark symbol with brand names that are not part of SUU. The symbols are for the trademark owner to indicate its rights to its own materials. Be careful to capitalize appropriately when using brand names, however. A good general rule is to avoid using trademarked names when there is an easy alternative.

## *Examples*

*an* honor vs. *a* university

*9 a.m.*, *10:30 a.m.*

*advance* tuition deposit vs. *advanced* ability

The new policy will not *affect* student tuition.  
The new policy will not have an *effect* on student tuition.

*tissue* vs. *Kleenex*

**centuries**

Spell out numbers less than 10; use ordinal numerals for higher numbers.

**coed or co-ed**

Don't use this term to refer to a female student. Use it only when referring to both sexes at the same time.

**comprise, compose**

These words are often misused. *Comprise* means "include" or "encompass." The whole comprises the parts, but the parts are composed of the whole.

**co-op**

Use a hyphen so it's not confused with *coop*.

**countries**

Spell out the names of countries in text. The abbreviation *U.S.* is acceptable as an adjective, but use *United States* in other contexts.

**coursework**

One word. Not course work.

**credit hours**

'Credit hours' is the accepted term at SUU. Don't use just *credit* or *hours*.

**database**

One word.

**dates**

Don't use ordinals such as 3rd, 5th and 23rd in dates.

Months can be abbreviated only when referring to a complete date; otherwise, spell out the word.

When using a complete date within text, insert a comma at the end of the date.

**directions**

Directions are not capitalized when indicating a compass direction (street addresses and names being the exception to that rule).

Capitalize the direction when talking about a significant section of the world.

Do not capitalize "southern" in *southern Utah* when talking about the geographic region.

**do's and don'ts**

Spell these words this way so it is clear at first glance what they are.

**Examples**

*seventh century; 20th century*

SUU is home to *six* colleges, offering more than *121* areas of study.

*co-ed residence hall*

The College of Performing and Visual Arts *comprises* three departments.

The College of Performing and Visual Arts *is composed of* three departments.

*U.S.* foreign policy

the foreign policy of the *United States*

Commencement is slated for Saturday, *May 2*.

*Jan. 14, 2009* vs. *January 14* or *January 2009*

*Old Sorrel* was born on *January 1, 1878*, in *Iron County*.

Fans can use the parking lot *west* of the Centrum when attending basketball games.

SUU is the *West's* premier public-private institution.

**e.g., i.e.**

Be sure you know what these mean if you intend to use them. The abbreviation *e.g.* stands for *exempli gratia*, meaning “for example.” The abbreviation *i.e.* stands for *id est*, meaning “that is” or “in other words.” Thus *e.g.* is used to cite examples from a longer series, while *i.e.* clarifies exactly what is included in the series.

**e-mail**

Use a hyphen. Don’t capitalize unless it starts a sentence or is before the e-mail address in a vertical list.

**ensure, insure**

Although these can be considered synonyms, it is best to limit the use of *insure* to insurance matters and use *ensure* when you mean “assure” or “guarantee.”

**etc., et al.**

*Etc.* means “and so forth” and should be used when referring to things. *Et al.* means “and others” and should be used in reference to people. Note that *et al.* is an abbreviation for *et alia*, so put a period after the *al.* Try to avoid using these abbreviations after such terms as *i.e.*, *e.g.*, or *including*.

**faculty**

*Faculty* can be singular or plural, depending on whether you are referring to an individual or group. Many people are uncomfortable using *faculty* as a plural noun, however, so you can use *faculty members* in its place for collective situations if you prefer.

**fax**

*Fax* is short for *facsimile* and is not an acronym. It should not be all caps. Use *fax*, not *facsimile*, when referring to a copy sent electronically.

**grades**

Use the capital letters, A, B, C, etc., with no quotation marks. Plurals are made by adding s, except in the case of A, which has an apostrophe to avoid confusion with the word *as*.

**GPA, grade-point average**

Either is acceptable. GPAs normally have two numbers after the decimal, e.g., 3.00, 4.25.

**international students**

Not *foreign* students.

**its, it’s**

These tend to cause confusion because *its* is a possessive but has no apostrophe. On the other hand *it’s* has an apostrophe because it is a contraction for *it is*.

**military units**

These are capitalized when referring to the forces of the United States, such as *U.S. Navy* or *Air Force*. ROTC stands for Reserve Officers’ Training Corps, but the abbreviation ROTC is acceptable in all references to the programs.

**Examples**

The SUU ID card has many uses, *e.g.*, library book checkouts, free admittance into athletic events.

The team now focuses its attention on two games, *i.e.*, Centenary and Oakland, before looking ahead to the conference tournament.

*A’s, B’s, C’s, etc.*

One of a university’s selling points is *its* campus. vs. *It’s* a beautiful campus.

## names

As a general rule, spell and punctuate people's names the way they prefer. Don't use spaces between initials in a person's name unless the person has indicated a preference for a space. Never use spaces between three initials. Terms such as Jr., Sr., II, III are not set off by commas when used in a name.

## non

Words with the prefix *non* are generally not hyphenated unless the prefix is directly before a proper noun. The dictionary contains a long list of *non* words and appropriate spellings.

## off campus, on campus

Hyphenate when using as an adjective, not as an adverb.

## online

No hyphen. No capitalization.

## please

There is a tendency to overuse this word. It isn't necessary to say please return the attached card, please visit our Web site, please call for more information.

## pre and post

These prefixes generally don't take hyphens unless they come directly before proper nouns. The dictionary contains a list of words with appropriate spelling.

## residence hall

This is preferred to dorm or dormitory when referring to housing units at SUU.

## résumé

The preferred spelling includes the diacritical marks and helps avoid confusion with *resume*.

## Southern Utah University

Within text, always first reference the University by its full name. Afterwards, you may alternate between its full name, SUU and the University as you see fit.

University is capitalized only when specifically referencing SUU.

## state names

Spell out the names of states when used alone in text. They are abbreviated when used after the name of a city or county. Check the AP stylebook for the appropriate abbreviations of states. Always use the Postal Service abbreviation and zip code in a complete address.

## that, which

Use *that* for restrictive clauses that are essential to the meaning of the sentence. Use *which* for nonrestrictive clauses that would not change the meaning of the sentence if removed.

## Examples

*Martin Luther King Jr.* Day is celebrated on the third Monday in January.

nondegree, nonresident, noncredit  
*non-English speaking*

*Off-campus* housing is plentiful during the summer. vs. It's difficult to find housing *off campus* during fall term.

*postbaccalaureate, postdoctoral*  
*preregister, premedicine, preveterinary*  
*pre-Columbian*

*Southern Utah University* will commemorate the *University's* heritage with a play entitled, *SUU: The Early Years*.

*Parowan, Ut.; Iron County, Ut*  
SUU is one of 6 universities in *Utah*.

The book *that* she needed was not in the library. The library book, *which* is due Thursday, is on my desk.

**theater, theatre**

Use the *er* spelling except in a proper name that uses the British spelling.

**till**

This is an alternative for until. It is not a contraction of until, so don't use *'til*.

**toward**

Not towards.

**under way**

Spell as two words.

**Web, Web site, Web page**

Capitalize *Web* but not *site* or *page* (either term is acceptable, though a Web site generally references a collection of Web pages). Do not hyphenate.

**wide**

University-wide is hyphenated. However, most words with *wide* as a suffix are closed, e.g. *worldwide*, unless they are long and cumbersome. If in doubt, check the dictionary.

**work-study**

Hyphenate always. Capitalize only when using the formal designation.

**yearlong**

One word.

**Examples**

One of the *theaters* on SUU's campus is the Randall Jones *Theatre*.

*Federal Work-Study Program*

### 3 - PUNCTUATION

#### ampersands

It's best not to use an ampersand (&) in place of the word *and* in text unless it is an official part of a name.

#### apostrophes

Avoid the common mistake of using apostrophes with nouns that are plural, not possessive.

Use an apostrophe to represent the missing letters in a contraction.

#### bulleted lists

When making a bulleted or numbered list, be sure that capitalization, punctuation and structure are consistent. If individual items in a list are complete sentences, end each one with appropriate punctuation.

#### colons

The colon is used to anticipate that something to follow will complete or amplify the previous material.

It isn't necessary to capitalize the word immediately following a colon unless it begins a complete sentence of its own or is a proper noun.

Don't use unnecessary colons in sentences.

Use a colon when the sentence isn't complete without it.

#### commas

Do not use a comma before *and* or *or* in a series of more than two items unless it is necessary to clarify the meaning. If more than one series is used in a sentence, separate the series by semicolons if necessary to clarify the sentence.

Set off the name of a state with commas when it follows the city name in a sentence.

Dates are punctuated with commas setting off the year in a complete date. There is no comma if only the month and year are used. Don't use ordinals such as *1st*, *4th*, or *23rd* in dates.

Jr., Sr., II, III, etc., in names are not set off by commas unless the person specifically indicates a preference for that.

Insert a comma if it is necessary to indicate a pause or clarify the meaning of a sentence.

#### Examples

*College of Performing and Visual Arts, Department of Physical Education and Human Performance vs. AT&T*

Correct: The apostrophe's proper usage is to indicate ownership.

Incorrect: *I am confused about when to use apostrophe's.*

*isn't, haven't, rock 'n' roll, you'll, etc.*

Correct: *Visit the Web site at www.suu.edu.*

Incorrect: *Visit the Web site at: www.suu.edu.*

Correct:

*Be sure to visit the SUU Web site: www.suu.edu.*

The College of Science comprises departments in agriculture and nutrition, biology, nursing and physical science.

*Cedar City, Utah, is home to Southern Utah University.*

*On January 5, 1898, the first Cedar City residents ascended the Cedar Mountains to gather wood for the completion of Old Main. vs. Construction of Old Main began in January 1898.*

### ellipsis points

The ellipsis is best used to indicate the omission of material from within quoted matter, not as a way to trail off or pause in a sentence. When ellipsis points are used within a sentence, use three; when they are used between sentences, punctuate the first sentence and then use three additional ellipsis points, set off by one space before and after the mark. Some word processing programs provide an ellipsis. Use a space before and after the ellipsis.

There is no need for ellipsis points at the beginning or end of the material you are quoting, unless it is necessary to make it clear that the quote is only part of the full text. Under normal circumstances, the reader assumes that the text quoted may not be the entire quotation.

When you use ellipsis points, be careful to avoid skewing the meaning of the quote by leaving out clarifying words.

### hyphens and dashes

Use the dictionary to determine the appropriate place for breaking and hyphenating words. Break words at the end of syllables, but consider the sound of the word. Some words are best not broken at certain syllables. Compound words that are hyphenated should be kept on one line and not broken in a second place at the end of a line.

The trend is away from using hyphens in permanent compound words. The dictionary can help you determine the appropriateness of a hyphen in many cases.

Don't use a hyphen after an adverb ending in *ly*.

Some words that normally would be solid should be hyphenated for clarity or for easier reading when the root word begins with a vowel.

The en dash (named because it is the width of the letter "n") is wider than a hyphen and is used between ranges of numbers or dates and between adjectival phrases containing two-word concepts. There are no spaces before or after the en dash (though many word processing programs require you to include a space before and after the dash before it will convert the shorter dash to an en dash).

In text, use the missing words instead of a dash. If the en dash is unavailable, it is acceptable to use a hyphen in its place.

The em dash (named because it is the width of the letter "m") is used to indicate a break in thought or a strong parenthetical phrase. There are spaces before and after the em dash. An em dash is indicated by two hyphens in typed material (though many word processing programs will automatically replace the two hyphens with an em dash).

### Examples

*SUU has a beautiful campus. ... The people are friendly and according to one student, "professors ... want to see you succeed."*

Be careful to avoid this: *president-elect*, not *president-elect*.

She is an *overly zealous* recruiter.

*co-op* (as opposed to *coop*), *re-signed* (as opposed to *resigned*), *re-enrolled*, *re-admitted*

*2001–2004, pages 206–220*  
*Portland–San Francisco flight*

He was at SUU from *1993 to 1998*. (Not: He was at SUU from *1993–1998*.)

*Two professors — what a contrast in styles — share the teaching duties.*

## parentheses

If a dependent clause or other sentence fragment is in parentheses, the final punctuation goes outside the parentheses. If the parenthetical matter is an entire sentence, the final punctuation goes inside the parentheses. In the latter case, be sure to properly punctuate the preceding sentence leading up to the parentheses.

If parenthetical matter is included within another set of parentheses, use brackets [ ] in place of the inner parentheses.

## periods

If a sentence ends with a URL or an e-mail address, the closing punctuation, usually a period, should be included. There no longer is any real danger of Web users trying to make the sentence-ending period part of the URL, but if you are concerned, use a different font for the actual URL or make it bold. In electronic text, be sure the sentence-ending period is not included as part of a hyper link.

The use of periods in degree abbreviations is preferred. Note also that there are no spaces in the degree abbreviations. For a cleaner appearance, it is acceptable to use degree abbreviations without periods in long listings or in text where degrees are repeated often.

Acronyms should be in capital letters with no periods.

With the exception of well-understood acronyms and abbreviations, such as B.A., M.S., other degrees, GPA and ROTC, spell out the full name or title on first use, followed by the letters in parentheses, if the term is to be used repeatedly in the text. Repeated usage only then requires the acronym.

It is normal practice for printed materials to have one space between sentences and after colons. The use of two spaces is for typewriters, which use different fonts and font spacing.

There are no periods in *SUU*.

## quotation marks

Quotation marks are placed outside of commas and periods, but inside of semicolons and colons. Question marks and exclamation marks are placed inside or outside the quotations marks, depending on whether they are part of the quote.

Titles of short stories, articles and poems; individual chapters in books; songs and other short musical compositions; and radio and television shows are set off in quotation marks. Titles of books, paintings, sculptures, films, magazines, plays, record albums, operas and other long musical works, newspapers, and continuing radio and television shows, are italicized.

## Examples

*B.A., M.S., Ed.D., Ph.D.*

*GPA, ID cards, ROTC*

Many students take advantage of the *Undergraduate Research and Scholarship Program (UGRASP)* available at SUU. *UGRASP* offers students...

*According to The Princeton Review, SUU is one of the "Best in the West."*

## 4 - CAPITALIZATION

Capitalize the names of university units when the complete title is used, otherwise use lowercase initials.

University is always capitalized when specifically referring to SUU.

Names of majors, minors and programs are lowercase.

It is best to refrain from capitalizing first letters or entire words just to give them importance or emphasis. This device is outdated. Italics can be used to indicate emphasis when needed.

Don't capitalize a generic term that follows or precedes more than one name.

If you are in doubt about any term not listed here, check the dictionary to see if capitalization is preferred.

### **academic and administrative titles**

Capitalize a title that directly precedes the name of the person in that position, making the name part of the formal title.

Do not capitalize a title if it follows a name or stands alone.

This rule applies to titles such as president, provost, director and dean, as well as academic titles.

### **academic areas**

Areas of instruction should not be capitalized when used as generic terms unless the area is a proper noun.

Areas of instruction should be capitalized when used as part of the formal department name.

### **academic semesters**

Lowercase, even when used with a year.

### **bachelor's degree/master's degree**

These are lowercase and possessive ('s), not plural.

### **catalog**

Not catalogue.

### **century**

Lowercase unless it begins a sentence.

## **Examples**

*Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships, School of Business* vs. *financial aid office, the business school*

The *University* is best known for providing a private school-type education at a public school price.

*information systems, international business, journalism, etc.*

Correct:

*Send the attached card or go to the Web.*

Incorrect:

*Send the attached card OR go to the Web.*

*colleges of Liberal Arts and Agricultural Sciences; Monroe and Jefferson avenues; Manzanita and Juniper halls*

*Professor Richard Jones, Dean Mary Smith*

Richard Jones, *professor* of mechanical engineering

Talk to your *professor*, not the *provost*, to clarify homework deadlines.

*physics, English, integrated engineering, nutrition and food science*

Department of *Biology*, vs. *biology* department

*fall semester, spring semester 2004*

*15th century; Centuries ago...*

**course titles**

Capitalize course titles when used in text.

**degrees**

Don't capitalize the subject area unless it is the formal name of the degree.

**e-mail**

Lowercase except when it begins a sentence or precedes the address in a list.

**fax**

Lowercase when used in text or when it follows the number; capitalize when it precedes the number in a list.

**homecoming**

Capitalize only when referring to the SUU Homecoming.

**Internet**

Internet is capitalized.

**state**

Don't capitalize even when preceding the name of the state within text. Do, however, capitalize the name of specific counties.

**Examples**

She is taking *Cultures in Conflict* this term.

B.S. in *physics* vs. Bachelor of Science in *Biology*

*state* of Utah (not *State* of Utah)

*Iron County, Washington County*

## 5 - NUMBERS

Spell out numbers of nine or less within text. Use numerals for higher numbers. Exceptions are made for ages, monetary units, percents, credits and grade-point averages, which are always numerals unless they start a sentence.

Any number that begins a sentence is spelled out. It's okay to mix uses in a sentence.

It is permissible to spell out numbers from one to 99 in formal or scientific writing.

Plurals of numerals are made by adding the letter s. There is no apostrophe in the plurals.

Contractions of years take an apostrophe. Be aware of this because word processing systems will often try to insert an opening single quotation mark, which is incorrect (on PCs, you can overcome this by pushing alt + the single quotation mark).

Numbers containing four digits or more (except years) take commas between each series of three numbers. For rounded numbers of more than six digits, it is appropriate to use a figure and a word.

Use dollar signs and numerals for monetary references. It's not necessary to add .00 after whole dollar amounts, but it is permissible in a sentence that also contains fractional dollar amounts. When discussing cents alone, use the word.

Telephone numbers are written with a hyphen between groupings. A "1" should not precede the area codes. The telephone company no longer uses parentheses to set off area codes.

Spell out numbers at the start of a sentence unless they represent a year. The example to the right is permissible, but it would be better to rewrite the sentence to avoid starting with the year.

Dates are indicated by cardinal, not ordinal numbers.

A series of years can be indicated by using the entire year in both cases or only the last two numbers in the second year.

When the years cross a century mark, the entire year must be used.

Within text, use *percent* rather than the % symbol.

### Examples

*8 percent, 3 credits, 3.50 GPA, 3-year-old daughter, 7 cents, six colleges, four departments*

*SUU has 17 intercollegiate athletics programs, 10 women's and seven men's.*

*100s, 1900s*

*Class of '92*

*4,000; 12,197; 12,297,865  
14 million, 237 billion*

*5 cents; 47 cents; Tickets are \$7 per person.*

*541-737-1000; 800-291-4192*

*1776 is the year the Declaration of Independence was signed.*

*April 1, not April 1st; July 4, not July 4th*

*2003–2004 or 2003–04*

*1999–2002, not 1999–02*

*Student enrollment increased by 6.5 percent this past year.*

## 6 – CULTURAL SENSITIVITY

Avoid all sexual or racial stereotyping and language. Use *he* or *she* or make the usage plural: *they*. Many words now have neutral alternatives that can be used rather than assuming a particular gender. Don't create words such as *s/he*, and use skillful writing to avoid putting two words together with slashes: *he/she*.

Disabilities are handled according to the preference of the individual or group, when appropriate. In writing about disabilities, stress the person, not the disability. If you have questions, check with the Services for Students with Disabilities office, 865-8022.

Ethnic designations generally follow the preference of the group being referred to. As a general rule, identify ethnic groups by recognized ethnic designations. It also is appropriate to use national-origin designators such as *Polish American*, *Cuban American*, *Irish American*, *Japanese American*, etc. Don't hyphenate these designations, even when using them as adjectives. The generic terms *black* and *white* aren't capitalized, but if you capitalize one to conform to a particular group's preference, capitalize both.

## 7 – MISCELLANY

Don't underline words or capitalize every letter in textual matter for emphasis. These are typewriter techniques, but they aren't appropriate in professional printed materials. It's best to indicate your emphasis through skillful use of language, often by putting the material to be emphasized at the beginning or end of the sentence. If it is necessary to show emphasis, use italics.

It is normal practice for printed materials to have one space between sentences and after colons. The use of two spaces is for typewriters, which use different fonts and font spacing.

### Examples

*firefighter, police officer, chair or chairperson*

use: *persons with disabilities*

avoid: *the disabled*

Acceptable identifiers:

*African American, Asian, Pacific Islander, Latina, Latino, Hispanic*