

EDITORIAL STYLE GUIDE

Editorial Style Guide

The Communications and Marketing Department has assembled this editorial style guide to provide guidelines for grammar, punctuation, spelling, and usage in materials produced by Mount Saint Mary's University.

Style is a tool that helps writers and editors maintain consistency within an organization or a single publication. It is designed to let the reader concentrate on the content without being distracted by variations in spelling and punctuation.

In the University's case, style helps all departments and offices present a unified, logical picture to the public through its printed materials. The University's guidelines, although flexible, should be followed as much as possible in the interest of a unified image. For answers to questions not covered in this guide, please call 213.477.2505.

A**abbreviations/acronyms**

Use only the most universal abbreviations/acronyms: FBI, NATO. Spell others out on first reference and use abbreviation/acronym on references thereafter.

Note: Acceptable references for the University: Mount Saint Mary's University, Mount Saint Mary's, or the Mount. Do not abbreviate Mount or Saint. Do not use MSMU.

academic degrees

- Do not use periods with academic degrees: BA, BS, EdD, MA, PhD
- Do not capitalize academic degrees when spelled out in general terms: bachelor's degree, master of arts degree, doctorate.
- Faculty credentials lists:
 - PhD 1966 Princeton University
 - MA 1962 Reed College
 - PhD 1979, MA 1972 Stanford University
 - JD 1975 Harvard Law School

academic departments

- Capitalize the formal names of academic departments: Department of Chemistry, Department of English.
- Do not capitalize informal names of academic departments (except language departments) that begin with the subject: chemistry department, business department, English department.

academic majors

Lowercase academic majors except proper nouns: history, East Asian studies, English, international affairs.

academic programs

Capitalize proper names, but do not uppercase *program*: Graduate Religious Studies program, Student Ambassador program, Graduate Education program, Master of Arts in Humanities program, etc.

Adviser, advisor

Both spelling are correct; however, adviser is the more commonly used and is listed as the primary spelling in dictionaries. Use advisor when referring to a person's official title: academic advisor.

African American (n.); **African-American** (adj.)

afterward

Not afterwards.

ages

Always use figures. If ages are expressed as adjectives before a noun or as substitutes for a noun, use hyphens: The student is 19 years old. She just turned 21. He's a 5-year-old child. The woman is in her 30s.

aid, aide

Aid is assistance. Aide is a person who serves as an assistant.

all right (adv.)

Not alright.

alum, alumna, alumnae, alumnus, alumni

Alum is singular and gender neutral. Alumna is singular feminine (she is a Mount alumna); alumnae is feminine plural (Paula and Maria are Mount alumnae); alumnus is masculine singular (Steve is a Weekend College alumnus); alumni is mixed gender and masculine plural (Paula, Maria and Steve are Mount alumni). Do not use alumnae/i or alumni/ae.

Alumnae Association

The organization, composed of Mount alums.

a.m.

Not AM or A.M. or am.

ampersand (&)

In general avoid, except for law and accounting firms where it is part of the firm's official title.

Asian American (n.); **Asian-American** (adj.)

B

Board of Trustees

Capitalize when referring to MSMU's Board of Trustees; lowercase elsewhere. Use board on second reference: The Board of Trustees will meet on June 30, 2015. The board will discuss strategic plan initiatives.

buildings, campus facilities

Here's a list of official Doheny Campus names:

- Adams Art Walk
- Ahmanson Commons (bldg. 11)
- Ahmanson Weingart Hall (bldg. 4)
- Archdiocesan Spiritual Life Center
- Center for Cultural Fluency
- Doheny Mansion (bldg. 8)
- Donohue Conference Center
- Frank and Blanche Seaver House (bldg. 20)
- Frank R. Moothart Dining Room
- Fritz B. Burns Health Education Building (bldg. 5)
- Hannon Hall (bldg. 18)
- J. Thomas McCarthy Library (bldg. 6) and student quad
- Learning Resource Center
- Ken Skinner Parking Pavilion
- Marty and John Gillin Conference Room
- McIntyre Hall (bldg. 15)
- Medaille Hall (bldg. 2)
- Our Lady of Mercy Chapel
- Sister Magdalen Coughlin Learning Complex
- St. Joseph Administration (bldg. 10)
- The Rose Hills Auditorium
- Wigwam

Here's a list of official Chalon Campus names:

- Brady Hall
- Carla and Hank Bowman Microbiology Lab
- Campus Center
- Campus Center Plaza
- Carousel Room
- Carondelet Hall
- Denault-Loring Laboratory of Chemical Science
- Fine Arts Building
- Hannon Parlor
- Humanities Building
- José Drudis-Biada Art Gallery
- Kathleen and J. Thomas McCarthy Complex
- Mary Chapel
- President's Conference Room
- Ralph M. Parsons Foundation Quantitative Resource Center
- Rossiter Hall
- St. Joseph Administration and Seaver Science Center
- Teagle Classroom
- The Circle
- Thomas and Dorothy Leavey Commons
- Visitors Dining Room
- William H. Coe Memorial Library
- William H. Hannon Theater
- Yates, Aldworth and Burns Houses

C

captions

Identify each individual in a photo caption using position in parentheses. For example: Craig Mueller (left), Joseph Teller (center), and Jennifer Anderson (right) attended the Cardinal's Awards Dinner.

capitalization

The following are generally the only words that should be capitalized:

- Proper nouns — A specific individual name: Vatican
- Proper adjectives — An adjective derived from a proper noun: Romance languages (derived from the proper noun Romance)
- Common nouns only when used as a specific individual name or part of a specific individual name — Mary Chapel, William H. Coe Memorial Library. Otherwise, common nouns should be lowercased — the chapel, the library.
- Common adjectives only when used as part of a specific individual name — French Club

Capitalize prepositions or conjunctions of four or more letters in a headline or titles:

Student Graduates From the Mount With Honors

When a generic term is used in the plural after more than one proper name, the term should be lowercased; it should be capitalized before more than one proper name:

the Los Angeles and Rio Hondo rivers

the Doheny and Chalon campuses

San Bernardino and Orange counties

MSMU exceptions

It is not unusual within an organization for certain common nouns to be treated as proper nouns. The following are the only common nouns that should be capitalized in publications and correspondence of MSMU.

- Alumnae Association — Capitalize only when it refers exclusively to the MSMU Alumnae Association.
- Board of Trustees and Regents Council — Capitalize only when it refers exclusively to the MSMU Board of Trustees or Regents Council.
- Campus — Capitalize only when referring to the full name of the Chalon Campus or the Doheny Campus: The fair will be held on the Doheny Campus. In generic references, use the lowercase: The event will be held at the downtown campus. Avoid using “up” or “down” when referring to location: We’re going up to Chalon.
- Campus departments, offices and programs — Capitalize only when the formal name is given and only for departments, offices, and programs of MSMU. Capitalize: Office of the Provost; Department of Biological Sciences; Women’s Studies program. Do not capitalize: provost’s office, biological sciences department, women’s studies major.
- University — capitalize only when it refers exclusively to MSMU: The University was founded in 1925 by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet.

capitalization of titles

Used in text — In text, titles are capitalized only if they precede the name of the individual. A title following the name of an individual or a title by itself is not capitalized.

- Capitalize — President Ann McElaney-Johnson. Do not capitalize president in this sentence: Ann McElaney-Johnson, president; The president spoke at . . .
- In text, it is preferable for the title to follow the name and, therefore, the title would not be capitalized. For example:

“Joe Smith, director of corporate and foundation relations,” should be used in text rather than “Director of Corporate and Foundation Relations Joe Smith . . .”

- Titles are not capitalized when they are written in association with the name of an office, department or program. Do not capitalize the title in “Sister Darlene Kawulok, chair of the religious studies department.”
- Used in a list — when used in a directory listing or other similar situations, the title may be capitalized whether it precedes the name, follows the name, or appears in tabular form.
- Used in an address — when used as part of an address, the title is capitalized, whether it appears in text or block address form.

century

Use numerals: 18th century, 19th century. Hyphenate as an adjective: 20th-century poetry.

chair

Instead of chairman or chairwoman.

class identification (by graduation year)

Jane Smith '89 (bachelor)

John Smith '76 MS (graduate degree)

John Smith '89, '92 MA (two degrees) Jane Smith '96 DPT (doctor of physical therapy)

Jane Smith '96 MBA

Sister Jill Napier, CSJ, '71 (sister, alumna)

class year/standing

first-year student, sophomore or second-year student, junior and senior.

co

Hyphenate: co-author, co-chair, co-pastor.

comma

Use a comma to separate elements in a series, but do not put a comma before the conjunction in a simple series:

Students, faculty and staff are invited to the music recital next Friday night. They will perform orchestral classics, jazz masterpieces, ballads, and contemporary pop music.

Commencement

Capitalize when referring to Mount Saint Mary's event: Alejandra Ceja '96 is the keynote speaker for Commencement 2015.

course load

coursework

courses (titles of)

Use caps and lowercase with course titles and enclose in quotation marks.

CSJ

Not C.S.J. Example: Sister Cecilia Louise Moore, CSJ, '53

D**dashes**

Em dash — a traditional long dash, use to indicate an abrupt change in thought or where a period is too strong and a comma is too weak. Put a space on either side of the dash: The grant will ensure that the region's classrooms — both public and Catholic — are occupied by highly qualified teachers.

En dash — a shorter dash than the em dash (though not a hyphen), use to indicate duration: October – December; 7 – 9 p.m. Also use in a compound adjective in which one of the elements is two words or a hyphenated word. Note: do not add a space if joining two words: San Francisco–Chicago flight; pre–Vietnam War period; quasi–judicial body.

dates

- Months — Capitalize the names of all months in all uses. When a month is used with a specific date, abbreviate only Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov. and Dec. Spell out when using alone or with a year alone.
- Use commas to set off the year when using full dates: She was born on Sept. 15, 1985, in Los Angeles.
- Do not use commas when using only month and year constructions: Planning began September 1985.
- Do not use 1st, 2nd, etc. with dates: July 21, April 2, etc.
- Use the year if not the current calendar year. If publishing in May 2016: Finals were held in December 2015. The spring semester begins in January.
- Periods of years:
 - He worked from 1949 to 1961.
 - He worked in the 1950s (if a decade); avoid '50s. Do not add an apostrophe between the decade and the s.

degrees

See **academic degrees**.

departments

See **academic departments**.

doctor (Dr.)

Mostly reserved for medical doctors. Do not use in publications meant for general audiences. In academic or scholarly writing, the

preferred style is to specify the type of doctoral degree (PhD, EdD, JD, etc) on first reference. Then, on subsequent references, use Dr. before the last name: Eleanor Siebert, PhD, previously served as provost. Dr. Siebert received the professor emerita title upon her retirement.

dollar amounts

Use a dollar sign followed by a numeral. Do not use .00 with dollar values: \$250 (not \$250.00), \$12,500, \$5.3 million.

dorm, dormitory

Avoid; use residence hall instead.

E**email**

Not e-mail.

F

faculty

- Usually considered plural: The faculty attend those events.
- In MSMU publications, faculty members are referred to by their position at the University, not their academic degrees:
Helen Boutrous, associate professor of history and political science.

first-year student

Avoid freshman or freshmen.

Founders Day

Not Founder's Day (possessive).

fundraiser (n.); fundraising (adj., n.)

One word in all uses.

G

grade point average

Use GPA on second reference.

grades

Use letter grade with no quotation marks: She received an A in the course. There is a W on his transcript. She earned a B and three Cs.

Graduate Division

Use Graduate Division when referring to Mount Saint Mary's graduate program.

H

healthcare (adj.); healthcare (n.)

One word.

he/she

Not s/he.

Heritage Society

Always capitalize.

Hispanic American (n.); Hispanic-American (adj.)

Latino and Latina are sometimes preferred. Follow the person's preference. Use a more specific identification when possible, such as Mexican-American, Cuban, etc.

homepage

Not home page.

hyphen

Consult the dictionary first for correct hyphenation (or not) of compounds formed with common prefixes and suffixes. In general hyphenate compound words that serve as adjectives unless the first word ends in *-ly*.

Examples:

- First-hand knowledge
- Widely held opinion

I

initials

Do not separate with a space: JP Morgan.

Internet

Capitalize.

italics

If a non-English word is unfamiliar to an audience, then set it in italics; otherwise use roman type. See **titles of works**.

J

junior, senior

Abbreviate as *Jr.* and *Sr.* only with full names of persons. Do not precede by a comma: Joseph P. Kennedy Jr.

K**L****Latino/Latina**

This is most often the preferred term for a person from (or whose ancestors were from) a Spanish-speaking land or culture or from Latin America. Follow the person's preference. Use a more specific identification when possible, such as Mexican-American, Cuban, etc.

Los Angeles

On first reference, always spell out. It is acceptable to abbreviate Los Angeles as L.A. when the meaning is clear: L.A. County. If an acronym would be unfamiliar (LAUSD), spell out the full city name or only abbreviate the L.A.: Los Angeles Unified School District. or L.A. Unified School District.

M**Maiden names**

When using an alumna's maiden name, place parentheses around the maiden name, and alphabetize based on the

married last name: Jeanne (Redell) Ruiz '63. Note: Only the President's Report lists names without parentheses.

magazine

Magazine names are capitalized but not in quote marks. Only capitalize the word *magazine* if it is part of the formal name.

See also **titles**. See **Mount Magazine**.

majors

See **academic majors**.

months

Capitalize the names of all months in all uses.

When a month is used with a specific date, abbreviate only Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov., and Dec. Spell out when using alone or with a year alone.

See also **dates**.

Mount Associates

Always capitalize.

Mount Magazine

Official name of the University's alum magazine. Not The Mount Magazine.

Mount Saint Mary's University

Spell out Mount Saint Mary's University on first reference. Also, the name should always be accompanied by *Los Angeles* on first reference: Mount Saint Mary's University, Los Angeles, welcomes new students on campus; or Mount Saint Mary's, the only women's university in Los Angeles.

Not acceptable: Mount St. Mary's University or Mt. St. Mary's University.

For wider recognition of our University, limit the use of MSMU.

Note: The following boilerplate should be used when a general description of the university is needed. This university-wide descriptor unites all parts of the institution. It can be paired with a more specific description of a program, department or division:

About Mount Saint Mary's University

Mount Saint Mary's is the only women's university in Los Angeles and one of the most diverse in the nation. The University is known nationally for its research on gender equality, its innovative health and science programs, and its commitment to community service. As a leading liberal arts institution, Mount Saint Mary's provides year-round, flexible and online programs at the undergraduate and graduate level. Weekend, evening and graduate programs are offered to both women and men. Mount alums are engaged, active global citizens who use their knowledge and skills to better themselves, their communities

and the world. www.msmu.edu

Mount Saint Mary's Online

Official name of the University's online degree program.

MSMU

Avoid using abbreviation on external materials or merchandise.

N

names of people

In first reference, use the individual's full name. Leave out the middle initial unless they prefer to use it or if it is used in a formal context. In subsequent sentences, use last names only:

First reference: Gail Gresser; second reference: Gresser

First reference: Sister Mary Williams; second reference: Williams

First reference: Harvey Smith Jr.; second reference: Smith. Do not use a comma before or after the word *Jr.* I saw Harvey Smith Jr. at the event.

nicknames

Enclose nicknames in quotation marks.

Note: Nicknames generally should be avoided.

newspapers

Newspaper names should be capitalized and not in quotation marks or italics: Los Angeles Times.

numerals

- Spell out zero through nine; use numerals for 10 and greater. Example: There were five students in the morning and 12 students in the afternoon.
- Use a comma with numerals of 1,000 and above (except dates): 5,000; 42,000.
- Use numerals when referring to academic credit: The student earned 2.5 hours of credit.
- Use numerals when referring to a page number: The passage begins on Page 5.

o**online**

Not on-line.

P

page

In text, the word *page* is capitalized when a page number is given: See Page 6.

percentages

In text, spell out the word *percent*; use the percent sign (%) in tables and graphics.

phone numbers

Set off with periods: 213.477.2505.

p.m.

Not PM or P.M. or pm.

pre

In general, do not hyphenate: preapproved, preset, prework. Exceptions: pre-law, pre-med, pre-dental.

program

Capitalize proper names, but not the word *program*. For example: StudentAmbassador program. (See **academic programs**.)

Q

quotation marks

See **titles of works**.

R

re-

In general, hyphenate only if two e's appear in a row: re-edit, reunify, re-establish.

Regents Council

Always capitalized; not possessive (no apostrophe).

residence hall

Not dormitory or dorm.

Report on the Status of Women and Girls in California™

Spell out and use trademark symbol on the first reference. On second and subsequent references, capitalize Report when talking about the MSMU publication and event: The public is invited to the release of this year's Report.

RSVP

Not R.S.V.P.

S

seasons

Lowercase the names of seasons: fall, winter, spring, summer; fall semester; winter 1996.

senior citizens (usually those over age 65) Avoid seniors, which may cause confusion with fourth-year students in some contexts.

sister

Capitalize and spell out when used in front of a name: Sister Joseph Adele. Do not capitalize when used as a common noun: The sister was honored last Friday.

social media

Capitalize the names of social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Promote your department or program's social media accounts only when they are active and up to date with University policy. Check with the Communications and Marketing Department before creating an account.

The University's official accounts are:

- Facebook.com/MountSaintMarysU
- Twitter: @MSMU_LA
- Instagram: @MSMU_LA

spaces

Use one space after periods, commas or colons when typing text.

state names

Spell out the names of the U.S. states when they stand alone in textual materials. When used with a city, abbreviate state names using Associated Press style guidelines; do not use postal abbreviations in text. Some major cities do not require state or country identification. (See AP Stylebook for list.). Set off states and countries with commas: Fresno, Calif.; Washington, D.C.; Seoul, Korea; We traveled to Nashville, Tenn., for a conference.

Do not capitalize *state* when used simply as an adjective: state of Maine, state Education Department, etc.

student employee

Not student worker.

T**time of day**

Use colon to separate hour from minutes. The colon and minutes are not necessary for even-hour times: 11 a.m. (not 11:00 a.m.), but 11:30 a.m. and 5:30 – 8:30 p.m. in listings.

In text, write 5:30 to 8:30 (not from 5:30 – 8:30). Also use noon or midnight (not 12 a.m. or 12 p.m.).

titles of people

See **capitalization of titles**.

titles of works

In non-academic documents and articles, use quotation marks with:

- Books (title alone is normally sufficient; no need to reference publisher, year, etc.)
- Movies, plays, television episodes, television series
- Major musical compositions, songs and albums, radio programs
- Paintings, drawings, statues and other works of art
- Articles and stories
- Titles of papers and dissertations

Do not use quotation marks or italics with names of events, such as Homecoming or Scholarship Dinner. Those titles should be marked by capital letters.

Do not use quotation marks or italics with periodicals (magazines and journals) and newspapers.

toward

Not towards.

U

UCLA, USC

Acceptable acronyms, without spelling out the University of California, Los Angeles or the University of Southern California.

United States (n.); U.S. (adj.)

University

Capitalize the word *University* if it stands for Mount Saint Mary's, but lowercase everywhere else (if it is a generic reference or if it refers to another school).

Unstoppable, {UNSTOPPABLE}

Use brackets around the brand expression {UNSTOPPABLE} as a visual device or graphic element. Use the brackets sparingly in the body of a text.

V

vice president

At Mount Saint Mary's, should be vice president for, not vice president of.

W

Weekend and Evening College

work-study (n., adj.)

Web

Website; Web page. Web alone is also capitalized.

X

Y

Z



Mount Saint Mary's University

LOS ANGELES

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