

# LAS WRITING STYLE GUIDE

## College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

### Office of Communications and Marketing

**Last updated: February 11, 2022**

In general, the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences follows the AP Stylebook in all publications. For matters concerning the University of Illinois, LAS style adheres to the Writing Style Guide under the Illinois Identity Standards, found at <https://publicaffairs.illinois.edu/resources/writingstyleguide.html>. LAS style also includes certain exceptions to the AP Stylebook and the Writing Style Guide (see below).

Occasional deviations from style and grammatical rules are acceptable if it improves the effectiveness of a particular message.

Exceptions to the AP Stylebook and the Writing Style Guide (and points of clarification) are as follows:

**Advisor:** End the word with –or, not –er.

**Alumni references:** The proper first reference is name (degree designation, 'year, major). For example, Richard Berkowitz (BS, '79, biology; MD, '83). If the person has multiple degrees in the same subject, the proper form is Name (degree type, year; degree type 2, year; degree type 3, year; subject). For example, Charles Getz (BS, '32; MS, '34; PhD, '38; chemistry).

For multiple degrees of the same type (BA, BS, etc.) and year, the reference can simply list both subjects after the degree type and year. For example, John Smith (BA, '15, English and Asian American studies). However, if the degrees are different types—even if it's BA vs. BS—each degree needs its own complete reference. For example, Jane Peabody (BA, '10, communication; BS, '10, chemistry) or Paul Jones (BA, '75, history; BS, '77, mathematics).

For multiple degrees of varying type, list all degrees of the same subject together so that each subject is listed only once. The first subject listed should be the one for the degree that was earned first. If two or more degree subjects were earned the same year, list the subject with the most degrees first. For example, Paul M. Lisnek (BA, '80; MA, '80; PhD, '86, speech communication; BA, '80, political science; JD, '83).

Specific alumni degree references should reflect the name of degree at the time of graduation, even if the name of the degree-granting unit has since changed. For example, Jean Driscoll should be listed as Jean Driscoll (AB, '91, speech communication; MS, '93, rehabilitation administration) even though the Department of Speech Communication has since been renamed the Department of Communication.

See also: Degree

- Alumni: plural males or mixed gender

- Alumnae: plural females only
- Alumnus: single male
- Alumna: single female
- Alum or alums: Permissible in certain social media posts where character count is an issue

**Ampersands:** Use an ampersand (&) in place of “and” whenever writing a unit name, such as the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences. Units may request to use “and” instead of the ampersand in their titles. Ampersands should be avoided in all text except for unit names.

**Apostrophes:** Follow AP style. For proper nouns ending in S, such as the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences or College of LAS, just add an apostrophe. For example: The College of Liberal Arts & Sciences’ teaching programs are the best on campus. As a point of clarification, the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences is a noun plural in form but singular in meaning, which means that the possessive form is as described here.

**Attribution:** For story attribution, see the Bylines entry. Graphics and photos taken by photographers for the College of LAS (or photographers paid by LAS) do not require attribution. If space and other circumstances allow, graphics and photos created/taken by other communications units on campus should have attribution, i.e., (Photo by L. Brian Stauffer.) or (Graphic by Julie McMahon.), but it is not necessary. Graphics/photos given to us for use in the story should be credited, i.e., (Graphic courtesy of Atul Jain.) Graphics/photos obtained from outside organizations will be attributed, i.e., (Photo by Ryan Fang/Daily Illini.)

**Bulleted lists:** Hyphens or bullets are acceptable. For a list where each point consists of a single word or incomplete sentence, capitalize only the first letter, and periods are not necessary. If each point consists of a complete sentence, use standard sentence rules, including a period at the end of each item.

**Bylines:** All stories receive a byline. Writers for the College of LAS (or contracted by the college) are listed only by name. Bylines in stories obtained from other units or organizations will include affiliation, i.e., By Diana Yates, Illinois News Bureau. If the writer can’t be identified, the story will be credited to the organization it came from, i.e., Story courtesy of National Center for Supercomputing Applications.

**Capitalizations:** In general, follow AP Style.

- The Class of 2019.
- the College of Law, the law college, the college
- the dean of the college; Feng Sheng Hu, Harry E. Preble Dean of the College of LAS; Feng Sheng Hu, dean of LAS; “The committee heard comments from Dean Hu.” (Note: In the last example, “Dean” is treated as a shorthand proper noun since there is only one dean of the college. However, first reference to the dean should always include the full title, and the shorthand version should only be used to clarify the reference, for example, if there is more than one dean in the story or more than one person named Hu.)
- Chad Rienstra, professor of chemistry; Chad Rienstra, John Witt Professor of Chemistry; John Witt Professor of Chemistry Chad Rienstra; “The research was completed by chemistry professor Chad Rienstra;” “The research was completed by professor Chad Rienstra.” (Note: AP Style

treats “professor” as an occupational description, which is why it’s lowercase prior to the professor’s name in the last two examples.)

- Matthew Ando, associate dean for life and physical sciences in the College of LAS; “The crowd heard from Associate Dean for Life and Physical Sciences Matthew Ando;” “The crowd heard from associate dean Matthew Ando.” (Note: In the last example associate dean is treated as an occupational description since there is more than one associate dean.)
- Ronald Bailey, head of the Department of African American Studies; Department head Ronald Bailey (Note: Department head is treated as an occupational description.)
- the Office of Admissions and Records, OAR, the admissions office, this office
- the School of Music, the music school, the school
- Letter signatures are all caps or capitalizations of each word.

**Centers:** See Unit names entry.

**College of Liberal Arts & Sciences:** See Unit names entry.

**Commas:** We use serial commas (contrary to A.P. style), i.e. “The departments of English, mathematics, statistics, and communication are part of LAS.”

**Course titles:** Use all caps to denote the unit, followed by the course number and the name of the course, i.e. LAS 199: Exploring the world of work.

**Dashes:** Use em dashes in all editorial copy. En dashes and hyphens are acceptable in marketing copy and other publications to accommodate space and other concerns.

**Degree titles:** No periods separate letters in degree designation. BA, BS, MA, MS, PhD, JD, and MD are all proper references. This applies in alumni degree information and in story/caption text, i.e. “St. Elmo Brady earned an MS and PhD in chemistry from Illinois.” Bachelor’s degree, master’s degree, medical degree, juris doctor degree, and doctoral degree are also acceptable. For honorary degrees, place “honorary” prior to honorary degree designation. Freeman A. Hrabowski III (MA, ’71, mathematics; PhD, ’75, education; honorary PhD, ’04, education)

**Departments:** See Unit names entry.

**Faculty members:** “Faculty members” is the preferred phrase for referring to multiple professors. “Faculty” is also correct, but should be reserved for headlines or where space is limited. See “professors” entry for more.

**Headlines:** Headlines should follow sentence style. Capitalize the first word, and the rest of the headline or subheadline should be in sentence format.

**Honorary degrees:** See degree titles

**Humanities Professional Resource Center:** See Unit references entry.

**Hyperlinks:** Add hyperlinks to departments, schools, and other units housed within the College of LAS, or with a significant connection to LAS (such as a degree program), on first reference. Consider adding hyperlinks to campus units outside of LAS if omitting them would appear awkward or exclusive. Hyperlinks to outside organizations, articles, references, etc. are permissible if necessary for additional information.

**Italics:** We follow AP style except for the case of Latin science terms, such as the names of bacteria, which are italicized.

**Lincoln Hall Theater:** Spelled Theater, not Theatre.

**Main Quad:** Main Quad or Quad is acceptable. It's capitalized (per university standards).

**Names:** Use last names on second reference. First names are permissible on a case-by-case basis, most typically for clarification if there are two people by the same last name.

**Percent:** Spell out percent, except in cases where space or other special considerations are a concern.

**Professors:**

Active: Tenure track professors (assistant, associate, and full) are all referred to as simply "professor" in news stories. Visiting professors have "visiting" placed before "professor." Also, "professor" is not considered a formal title. It is lowercase unless it's part of a named position. Correct: "The study was conducted by communication professor David Tewksbury," or "Donald Ort, Robert Emerson Professor of Plant Biology." However, on social media, it's accept to use the capitalized abbreviation "Prof." before one's name for brevity's sake: "Prof. Dave Tewksbury" or "Prof. Tewksbury," depending on what fits.

Capitalizations: See capitalizations section.

Emeritus/emerita/emeriti: Emeritus/emerita is a title given to a male or female retired faculty member respectively, i.e. "Professor emeritus Richard Mohr" or "Professor emerita Carol Augspurger." Emeriti is plural (most often used to head retired faculty listings).

**Programs:** See Unit names entry.

**Schools:** See Unit names entry.

**Semesters, time, and terms of study:**

- spring break, unless it's part of a title (i.e. 2017 Spring Break).
- Fall 2020 (in reference to a specific academic semester); fall 2020 (in reference to a season). She studied in Spain in fall 2020. She studied in Spain during the Fall 2020 semester. She studied in Spain during the fall semester.
- The 2020-21 academic year

## **Unit names:**

College of Liberal Arts & Sciences: Proper first reference is College of Liberal Arts & Sciences (ampersand is required; see Ampersands entry), but in a publication with heavy LAS branding, College of LAS is acceptable on first reference. Acceptable second references include College of LAS or LAS. Subsequent references should be consistent within the publication. LAS may be used as an adjective in a headline (“LAS professor wins research grant”) in a publication with heavy college branding.

Departments, schools, centers, and programs: the Department of Biology, the biology department, the department; the School of Literatures, Cultures & Linguistics, the school, SLCL (on second reference); the Program in Translation & Interpreting Studies, the translation and interpreting studies program, the program; the Center for Global Studies, the global studies center, the center.

Department of Atmospheric Sciences:

Department of Communication: No ‘s’ at the end of Communication.

Humanities Professional Resource Center: On second reference, use the full name or “center.” Do not use HPRC.

Name changes: References to colleges, schools, departments, programs, etc. should reflect the most current name of the unit. In certain materials, such as a story with historical elements, it’s advisable to make note of the unit’s former name, but first and primary reference should be the unit’s current name. Note: An exception exists for specific alumni degree references. See the Alumni references section.

Names as study subjects: Taylor Hoffman earned her degree in communication; Taylor Hoffman earned her degree from the Department of Communication; Taylor Hoffman majored in communication.

University of Illinois: First reference is University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. “Urbana-Champaign” may be omitted on first reference if it is easily seen elsewhere in the publication. Acceptable second references are University of Illinois, U of I (no periods), or UIUC. Illinois is acceptable only if the other options do not work. If using Illinois on second reference, proper context should be provided to show that it refers to the university, not the state. Subsequent references should be consistent within the publication.