AMERICAN UNIVERSITY EDITORIAL STYLE
A–Z

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ABOUT THIS GUIDE

When we write about American University, we want to present a clear and consistent voice, both online and in print. Using a style guide ensures that we achieve the clarity and consistency that strengthen our brand, project a professional image, and reflect our academic excellence.

AU Editorial Style: A–Z is a quick reference guide. Organized alphabetically, the guide features *see* and *see also* references to direct users to the terms they seek. Illustrative examples are specific to AU wherever possible and demonstrate American University's commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and antiracism.

Because a quick reference guide, by definition, does not cover all aspects of editorial style in exhaustive detail, we invite you to consult the 17th edition of *The Chicago Manual of Style*, parent style guide to *AU Editorial Style: A–Z*. Any notes that mention *The Chicago Manual of Style* refer to **the online version** of the 17th edition, available through the AU Library by entering your AU username and password.

For spelling support, we turn to *The Chicago Manual of Style*'s recommended dictionaries:

- *Webster's Third New International Dictionary*
- its chief abridgment, *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*
- the continually updated **merriam-webster.com**

We welcome your feedback on *AU Editorial Style: A–Z*. Please contact UCM's editorial staff at **austyle@american.edu** with suggestions for updating future editions, questions about editorial style, or assistance in navigating the parent style guide and dictionaries.

A

abbreviations

Spell out unfamiliar abbreviations, including acronyms, on first reference.
Enclose the abbreviation in parentheses after the spelled-out version.
Use the abbreviation alone on subsequent references.
Do not use periods in abbreviations containing only capital letters.
Do not refer to an abbreviation if the spelled-out version is only used once.
see also **a.m., ampersands, DC, degrees, e.g., i.e., p.m., states, tests and exams, US**

academic years

Run from beginning of fall semester to end of the following calendar year's summer sessions.
Use both years.
Lowercase in running text.
Omit periods in abbreviated form (AY).
Separate years with an en dash.

in academic year 2021–22, the '21–'22 academic year, AY21–22

see also **en dashes**

acknowledgment

Preferred spelling.
Use instead of *acknowledgement*.

acting

Lowercase in running text when it modifies a professional title.

Vicky Wilkins assumed the role of acting provost and chief academic officer in July 2023.

Capitalize only in marketing collateral and advertisements, where names and professional titles act much as headlines.

Acting Provost and Chief Academic Officer Vicky M. Wilkins

see also **former, interim, professional titles and positions**

addresses

see **email addresses, postal addresses, web addresses**

administration

Lowercase in running text when referring to a government official's period of service.

the Biden administration, Bowser administration officials

Capitalize when referring to a specific office or department.

the Department of Public Administration and Policy

advisor

Preferred spelling.
Use instead of *adviser*.

African American

Two words. No hyphen.
see sections **8.38–39 of *The Chicago Manual of Style***
see also **Black, ethnicities, races**

alum(s)

Use in less formal writing to replace alumna(e), alumni, or alumnus.
Use to refer to nonbinary graduate(s) in an affirming way.

alumna(e)

Use when referring to graduates who are women.

alumni

Use when referring to multiple graduates who are men.
Can also refer to multiple graduates of more than one gender.

alumnus

Use when referring to one graduate who is a man.

a.m.

Lowercase. Use periods.
No space between *a.* and *m.*
Omit periods if *AM* is capitalized for design purposes in marketing materials.
see also **midnight, noon, time**

American University

Not preceded by *the* when used alone.

at American University
not at the American University

May be preceded by *the* when used as a modifier.

the American University community

see also **AU**

among

Represents a relationship involving more than two parties or entities.

Discussions among faculty, staff, and alumni were fruitful
and productive.

see also **between**

ampersands

Use in graphic elements, charts, headlines, and social media.
Use with recognized companies, products, and schools in running text.
No spaces on either side when used with initials.

> A&E, Florida A&M University, M&M's

Omit comma before ampersand when it replaces *and*.

> Adduci, Mastriani & Schaumberg
> *not* Adduci, Mastriani, & Schaumberg

Avoid using in fact sheets, brochures, marketing collateral, and news stories.
Never use with departments, institutes, and centers.

> enter for Media and Social Impact
> *not* Center for Media & Social Impact

see also **centers, departments, headlines, institutes**

annual

Use with events held for two or more successive years.

> the 24th annual McDowell Conference on philosophy and social policy

see also **inaugural**

antiracism/antiracist

One word. No hyphen.

> the Antiracist Praxis subject guide
> the Antiracist Research and Policy Center

Some organizations and programs may still use a hyphen. They are
exceptions to the rule above.

> the Anti-Racism Education Collective

antisemitic/antisemitism

One word. No hyphen. All letters lowercase.

apostrophes

Use to replace the first two digits of graduation years.

> SPA/BA '24
> Class of '24

Do not use to form plurals, except with lowercase letters.

x's and *y*'s
not *x*s and *y*s
the 1990s
not the 1990's

PCs
not PC's

Rewrite if confusion might result from not using an apostrophe.

She was a straight-A student in high school.
not She got straight As in high school.

Use your keyboard to form an apostrophe:

PC
Make sure the **NUM LOCK** key is turned on.
Hold down **ALT**.
Type **0146** on the number pad.

Mac
Press **OPTION**, **SHIFT**, **RIGHT BRACKET**.

see also **Class of 'XX, grad info**

appendixes
Preferred plural.
Use instead of *appendices*.

articles (a, an, the)
Use *an* before words that begin with vowel sounds.

an MBA
not a MBA

an hour
not a hour

If an article applies to all items in a list, it may be used either before the first item only or before each item in the list.

US intelligence agencies include the CIA, the FBI, and the NSA.
or US intelligence agencies include the CIA, FBI, and NSA.

If articles apply to some items in a list and not to others—or if some items require different articles than others—use the appropriate article before each.

He holds a BA, an MFA, and a PhD.
She has interned at the National Science Foundation, USAID, and a small nonprofit.

articles (published)

Use roman type. No italics.
Enclose in quotation marks.

> In the Summer 2024 issue of American magazine, Ethan Kauffman, SOC/BA '26, provided photos for "The Art of War(fare)" and "Sticking It to Single-Use Plastics."

artworks

Use italics for titles of drawings, paintings, photographs, etc.
Capitalize headline-style.

> *The Bump and The Poet were among the paintings in Bob Schieffer's Looking for the Light exhibition at the AU Museum in April and May 2024.*

Use roman type for works of antiquity and enormous sculptures.

> the Venus of Willendorf, the Statue of Liberty

see also **exhibitions, headlines**

Asian American

Two words. No hyphen.
see sections **8.38–39 of** *The Chicago Manual of Style*
see also **ethnicities**

AU

No periods.
May be used on first reference in advertisements when space is limited.
Include the university logo in such advertisements.

AUx/AUx1/AUx2

Abbreviations for the **American University Experience** courses.

awards

Capitalize headline-style.

> the Maria Bueno Lifetime Achievement Award
> the President's Award
> Scholar/Teacher of the Year

see also **fellows, fellowships, scholars, scholarships**

B

between
Represents a relationship involving two parties or entities.

> Collaborations between students and faculty are encouraged.

see also **among**

biannual(ly)
Means *twice a year*.

biennial(ly)
Means *every two years*.

bimonthly
Means *every two months*.
see also **semimonthly**

biweekly
Means *every two weeks*.
see also **semiweekly**

Black
Capitalize when referring to a person's racial and ethnic identity.
see section **8.38 of *The Chicago Manual of Style*** and **"Black and White: A Matter of Capitalization"**
see also **African American, ethnicities, races**

Board of Trustees
Capitalize first and third words when referring to AU's governing body. Lowercase *board* when used alone.

> Quarterly meetings of the Board of Trustees are held in September, November, February or March, and May. The September meeting serves as the board's annual retreat.

see also **trustees**

books

Use italics for titles.
Capitalize headline-style.

> Kyle Dargan explores issues of racial justice in *Anagorisis: Poems*.

> Patricia Park's *Re Jane* is a contemporary retelling of Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*.

> *No Visible Bruises*, by Rachel Louise Snyder, won the 2020 Helen Bernstein Book Award for Excellence in Journalism.

see also **headlines**

buildings

Capitalize names of buildings.
Lowercase when used alone or in a generic sense.
Use full name on first reference.
Shorten or abbreviate on subsequent references.

> the Hall of Science, Anderson and Centennial Halls
> the McKinley Building, at McKinley, in the building
> the Cyrus and Myrtle Katzen Arts Center, Katzen Arts Center, the Katzen
> Kay Spiritual Life Center, the Kay communities

see also **campus locations, rooms**

bulleted lists
see **vertical lists**

C

cabinet

Capitalize when referring to the President's Cabinet.
Lowercase when used alone or in a generic sense.

campus

Lowercase when used alone or in a generic sense.
see also **East Campus, main campus, Tenley Campus**

campus locations

Capitalize full and abbreviated names of campus locations.
Lowercase when used alone or in a generic sense.

Eric A. Friedheim Quadrangle, Friedheim Quad, the quad

see also **buildings, rooms**

campus plan

Capitalize and use italics when referring to a specific year's publication.
Lowercase when used alone or in a generic sense.

the *2021 Campus Plan*, the campus plan

cell phone

Two words.

centers

Capitalize full names of centers.
Lowercase on subsequent references or when used in a generic sense.

Center for Neuroscience and Behavior, the center

see **Centers, Institutes, Initiatives** for a current list of centers at AU

centuries

Lowercase. Spell out.

the twenty-first century, nineteenth-century literature

certificates

May be capitalized in marketing materials.
Lowercase in running text.

a graduate certificate in arts management
undergraduate certificate programs

chair (noun or verb)

Preferred gender-neutral term.

Use instead of *chairman*, *chairperson*, or *chairwoman*.

> Gina F. Adams is chair of American University's Board of Trustees. (noun)
> Gina F. Adams chairs American University's Board of Trustees. (verb)

Challenge Accepted

Capitalize when referring to AU's brand campaign.

Use roman type.

Change Can't Wait

Capitalize when referring to AU's comprehensive fundraising campaign.

Use roman type.

changemaker(s)

One word. No hyphen.

Changemakers for a Changing World

Title of AU's strategic plan.

Capitalize headline-style. Use italics.

chosen names

Learn and use the chosen names of the people you write about.

Honor preferences for nicknames, middle names used as first names, anglicized names, one or more initials used in place of a name, mononyms, and names that affirm gender identity.

Ensure that spelling, spacing, capitalization, and accent marks are represented accurately.

Include full chosen name on first reference.

Nicknames may be placed in quotation marks after a first name.

> Beginning with the 1976 Olympic Games in Montreal and extending through summer 2016 in Rio, George "Cookie" Reed-Dellinger, Kogod/BSBA '69, MBA '71, has experienced 14 Olympics.

Subsequent references should use surname only. Omit courtesy titles.

> Reed-Dellinger began playing soccer his sophomore year at AU.
> *not* Cookie began playing soccer his sophomore year at AU.
> *not* Mr. Reed-Dellinger began playing soccer his sophomore year at AU.

Omit references to names that a person no longer identifies with.

see also **courtesy titles, initials**

cis (prefix)

No hyphen.
Abbreviated form of *cisgender*.

>   cis man, cis woman

see also **trans**

cities

Follow with a comma and the state, country, or territory in running text.
Well-known metropolitan areas may be considered exceptions to the rule above.

>   President Alger grew up outside of Rochester, New York, a city whose residents
>   now number more than 1.09 million.

see also **countries, postal addresses, states**

Class of 'XX

Capitalize. Replace first two digits of year with an apostrophe, not a single
quotation mark.

>   Class of '24
>   *not* Class of '24

classes

see **courses**

Clawed Z. Eagle

Full name of AU's official mascot.
Usually goes by first name only.
see also **Eagles**

co (prefix)

Check **merriam-webster.com** for spellings of words with this prefix.
If *co* is capitalized and followed by a hyphen, what follows the hyphen is also capitalized.

>   2023 Multicultural Alumni Reunion Co-Chairs

college(s)

see **school(s)**

commas

Use before *and* or *or* in a series of three or more.

Clawed wears a red, white, and blue uniform.

Use in four-digit numerals after the thousands place.
Benefactors Awards provide $1,500 stipends to students interested
in careers in campaigning, lobbying, or advocacy.

see sections **6.16–55 of *The Chicago Manual of Style*** for further guidance

commencement
see **events**

compose

Parts compose a whole.

Senior university administrators compose the President's Cabinet.
The President's Cabinet is composed of senior university administrators.

comprise

The whole comprises its parts.

The President's Cabinet comprises senior university administrators who
serve as the university's officers and report directly to the president.
not The President's Cabinet is comprised of senior university
administrators who serve as the university's officers and report directly
to the president.

concentration

Preferred term when referring to academics.
Use instead of *concentrate* or *concentrating*.

Students who choose a concentration in global governance . . .
not Students who concentrate in global governance . . .
not Students concentrating in global governance . . .

conferences
see **events**

Congress

Capitalize when referring to the legislative body.

the US Congress, the 117th Congress

congressional

    Lowercase, unless part of a proper noun.

        congressional elections, Congressional Fitness Center,
        a congressional internship

coronavirus

    One word. Lowercase.
    Preceded by *the* in running text.
        Experts shared what they had learned from the coronavirus in *American* magazine.

    see also **COVID-19**

countries

    Capitalize. Use full names of countries on first reference in running text.
    Familiar abbreviations (UAE, UK, USSR) may be used on subsequent references.
    If preceded by a city, follow the name of the country with a comma
    in running text.

        AU Brussels Center is the home base for all of AU's study abroad
        programs in Belgium.

        Alumni shared their experiences studying in Brussels, Belgium,
        at AU Brussels Center.

    see sections **10.31–32 of *The Chicago Manual of Style***
    see also **abbreviations, cities, US**

courses

    Capitalize full names of courses headline-style. Use roman type.

        The Design of Play, Writing for Interactivity, Introduction
        to 3D Static Modeling

coursework

    One word.

court cases

    Capitalize headline-style. Use italics.

        Raskin had more than enough Supreme Court case law to pack between
        the covers, from *Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School
        District*, which set the standard for First Amendment rights in public
        schools, to *West Virginia State Board of Education v. Barnette*, which
        protects students from being forced to salute the American flag or recite
        the Pledge of Allegiance.

courtesy titles (Dr., Miss, Mr., Mrs., Ms., Mx.)

Do not use in university publications.
On first reference, use a person's chosen name.
Use surname only on subsequent references.
First names may be used when two or more people have the same surname.
see also **chosen**

COVID-19

Capitalize all letters. Use hyphen.
see also **coronavirus**

credentials, professional

Spell out on first reference. Abbreviate on subsequent references.
Capitalize. Omit periods from abbreviated forms.

certified public accountant, CPA
registered nurse, RN

credit hours

Use *credit hours* on first reference. Use *credits* on subsequent references.
Always use numerals instead of spelled-out numbers.

6 credit hours or 6 credits
not six credit hours

cross (prefix)

Use hyphen with the following words.

cross-cultural, cross-departmental, cross-disciplinary, cross-functional

Check **merriam-webster.com** for spellings of other words with this prefix.

cum laude

see **Latin Honors**

D

dashes
see **em dashes, en dashes**

data
Takes the singular form of a verb when used as a synonym for *information*.
Takes the plural form of a verb when used in formal writing or in a scientific sense.

> The data <u>shows</u> donors how their money is used. (singular)
> The data collected <u>were</u> inconclusive. (plural)

Use one form or the other consistently throughout a piece of writing.

dates
Use month-day-year sequence.
Spell out full name of months in running text.
Omit ordinal suffixes after numerals.
Set off year with commas in running text.
End with time, if one is included.

> Our next staff meeting will be held on April 5, 2024, at 1 p.m.
> *not* Our next staff meeting will be held on Apr. 5, 2024 at 1 p.m.
> *not* Our next staff meeting will be held on April 5th at 1 p.m.

Use an en dash—or *from* and *to*—between two days to indicate a range.

> Spring commencement ceremonies took place May 10–11, 2024.

> Marianne Noble's literature course Beach Reads runs from May 13 to June 29, 2024.

see also **en dashes, months, time, years**

days of the week
May be abbreviated in marketing materials if space is limited.
Do not abbreviate in running text.

DC
May be abbreviated, even on first reference.
No periods.
Follow with a comma in running text if preceded by *Washington*.

> Muriel Bowser, SPA/MPP '00, was elected mayor of Washington, DC, in November 2014.

see also **Washington, DC**

deans
see **professional titles and positions**

degree(s)

Lowercase in running text. Omit periods from abbreviated forms.

> a bachelor's degree, bachelor's degrees, a bachelor of arts, a BA
> a master's degree, master's degrees, a master of education, an MEd
> a doctoral degree, a doctorate, doctorates, a PhD in political science

see **Program Finder** to search for AU's current academic offerings
see also **certificates, grad info, honorary degrees, majors, minors**

department(s)

Capitalize names of academic departments.
Lowercase when used alone or in a generic sense.

> Department of Literature, the department, the literature and history departments

District

Capitalize when referring to the District of Columbia and specific political divisions.
Lowercase when used alone or in a generic sense.

> AU's School of Education created the Teacher Pipeline Project to change educational outcomes in the District by training young citizens to become future educators.

> US Representative Jamie Raskin represents Maryland's Eighth Congressional District. The district covers portions of Montgomery, Carroll, and Frederick Counties.

doctoral (adjective)

Lowercase.

> a doctoral degree in education and policy and leadership

see also **degrees**

doctorate (noun)

Lowercase.

> a doctorate in international relations

see also **degrees**

dorm or dormitory

Not a preferred term.
Use *residence hall* instead.

double major

Two words. No hyphen.

Dr.

Omit before faculty members' names in running text.
Use full name and professional title on first reference.
For subsequent references, use surname only.

School of International Service professor Paul Wapner published
Is Wildness Over? in 2020. Toward the end of the book, Wapner poses
a question to readers: Are we, the privileged, willing to approach our
relationship with nature in a fundamentally different way?

see also **courtesy titles**

dual-degree program

Use hyphen.

E

EagleBucks
One word. Capitalize first and third syllables.

Eagles
Capitalize when referring to AU students, alumni, athletic teams, organizations, and programs.

East Campus
Two words. Capitalize both.
see also **main campus, Tenley Campus**

e.g.
Means *for example*.
Set off with commas in running text.
Use roman type.

email
One word. No hyphen.

email addresses
Do not underline in print publications.

em dashes
Longer than a hyphen (-) or an en dash (–).
Omit spaces on either side in running text.

> Some people—especially those new to the workforce or who've switched careers—want and need to connect and engage in informal networking.

> Despite the time savings for remote workers, many struggle to establish boundaries and rituals—called micro-transitions—that delineate work and home.

see sections **6.85–92 of *The Chicago Manual of Style***

Use your keyboard to form an em dash:

PC
Make sure the **NUM LOCK** key is turned on.
Hold down **ALT**.
Type **0151** on the number pad.

Mac
Press **OPTION**, **SHIFT**, **HYPHEN**.

emerita(e)
Capitalize when used as a professional title directly in front of a name.
Lowercase when used in a generic sense or after a name.

Professor Emerita Barbara Bird is affiliated with the Department of Management at the Kogod School of Business.

Norma Broude and Mary Garrard are professors emeritae affiliated with the Department of Art at the College of Arts and Sciences.

see also **professional titles and positions**

emeritus/emeriti

Capitalize when used as a professional title directly in front of a name.
Lowercase when used in a generic sense or after a name.

Professor Emeritus Roger Stone is the former director of the Center for Israel Studies.

Herman Schwartz, Myra Sklarew, and Howard Wachtel are professors emeriti affiliated with the Center for Israel Studies.

see also **professional titles and positions**

en dashes

Longer than a hyphen (-) and shorter than an em dash (—).
Most often used to connect numbers.
Omit spaces on either side in running text.
Do not combine with *from*.

May 7–9, academic year 2021–2022, the 1927–1955 yearbooks
not from May 7–9

see sections **6.78-84 of** *The Chicago Manual of Style*

Use your keyboard to form an en dash:

PC
Make sure the **NUM LOCK** key is turned on.
Hold down **ALT**.
Type **0150** on the number pad.

Mac
Press **OPTION**, **HYPHEN**.

see also **academic years, universities with branches, years**

endowed chairs and professorships

Capitalize. Use full names on first reference.

Elizabeth F. Thompson is the Mohamed Said Farsi Chair of Islamic Peace.

entitled

Not a preferred term.
Use *titled* when referring to titles of published or creative works.

ethnicities

Learn and use the terms preferred by the people you write about.
Specific nationalities (Filipino) may be preferable to broad categories (Asian).
Understand that preferred terms may vary and do change over time.
see sections **8.38–39 of *The Chicago Manual of Style***
see also **African American, Asian American, Black, Latine, races, White**

events

Capitalize names of specific events.
Lowercase when used alone or in a generic sense.

Giving Day
President's Circle Dinner, the dinner
Fall 2024 Commencement, the commencement celebration
Multicultural Alumni Reunion, the reunion

exams

see **tests and exams**

exclamation points

Use sparingly!

exhibit (verb)

Do not use as a noun.

exhibition (noun)

Use italics for names of museum exhibitions.
Capitalize headline-style.

Bob Schieffer's *Looking for the Light in the Age of COVID, Chaos, and Confusion*

see also **headlines**

F

Faculty Senate

Capitalize both words when referring to AU's.
Lowercase *senate* when used alone in subsequent references.

> At an April 2021 meeting, the Faculty Senate viewed a draft video for the university's new brand campaign, Challenge Accepted. Among other topics, the senate also discussed changes to the faculty manual and the latest enrollment numbers.

FAQ

Preferred term.
Use instead of *FAQs*.
Q stands for *Questions* and doesn't need to be followed by an *s*.
Takes the singular form of a verb.

fellow(s)

Capitalize when used with named fellowships.
Lowercase when used alone or in a generic sense.

> Sine Fellow, a fellow, the fellows

see also **scholars**

fellowship(s)

Capitalize when referring to named fellowships.
Lowercase when used alone or in a generic sense.

> a Boren Fellowship, the fellowship

see also **awards, scholarships**

fewer

Means *not as many*.
Use with countable nouns.

> Fewer men than women graduate from college in six years.

see also **less**

field study

Two words.

fieldwork

One word.

films

Use italics for titles.
Capitalize headline-style.

> Pamela Nadell, who holds the Patrick Clendenen Chair in Women's and Gender History, served as a historical consultant on the films *And the Gates Opened: Women in the Rabbinate* and *The Life and Times of Hank Greenberg.*

see also **headlines**

first annual

Not a preferred term.
Use *inaugural* when referring to events happening for the first time.

first-gen (adjective)

Abbreviated form of *first-generation.*
Use hyphen.

firsthand (adjective and adverb)

One word. No hyphen.

first-year student(s)

Preferred term.
Use instead of *freshman* or *freshmen.*
Lowercase.

fiscal years

Run from July 1 to June 30 at AU.
Use only the year associated with June 30.
Lowercase in running text.
Omit periods in abbreviated form (FY).
In abbreviated form, separate multiple years with an en dash.

> fiscal year 2024, fiscal year '24, FY24, fiscal years 2024 and 2025, FY24–25

floors

Capitalize in postal addresses when referring to a specific floor.

> 4401 Connecticut Avenue NW, 6th Floor

former

Lowercase in running text when it modifies a professional title.

> Kerwin Hall is named after Cornelius M. Kerwin, former president of American University.

Capitalize in marketing collateral and advertisements, where names and professional titles act much as headlines.

Former AU President Neil Kerwin

see also **acting, interim, professional titles and positions**

forms

Capitalize names of forms in running text.
Abbreviations and acronyms do not require periods.
Refer to the form itself for correct capitalization or abbreviation.
Lowercase *form* when used in a generic sense.

the Common App, the FAFSA, a Flex Work Arrangement request form

foreign student(s)

Not a preferred term.
Use *international student(s)* instead.

forums

Preferred plural.
Use instead of *fora*.

fractions

Spell out in running text. Use hyphen.

one-half, two-thirds, three-quarters

see also **numbers**

freshman/freshmen

Not a preferred term.
Use *first-year student(s)* instead.

full-time (adjective)

Use hyphen when modifying a noun.

She is a full-time employee of American University.

full time (adverb)

Two words. No hyphen.

She works full time at American University.

fundraiser

One word. No hyphen.

fundraising (adjective or noun)

One word. No hyphen.

G

gender-neutral language

Avoid gendered terminology unless it is clearly relevant.

> employees, personnel, workforce
> *not* manpower

> business owner, business executive
> *not* businessman

> the women's basketball team
> the lacrosse team
> *not* the women's lacrosse team

> the men's basketball team
> the wrestling team
> *not* the men's wrestling team

> representative, spokesperson
> *not* spokesman, spokeswoman

see also **chair, Latine, pronouns**

Global South

Preferred term.
Use instead of *third world*.

GPA

May be abbreviated even on first reference.
Use numerals to represent grade point averages.

> With a combined GPA of 3.70 in spring 2020, AU student-athletes set a new record.

see also **grades**

grad info

Use after names of AU alumni, current students, and honorary degree recipients.
Abbreviate school.
Follow school by a forward slash.
Abbreviate degree.
Replace first two digits of year with an apostrophe—*not* a single quotation mark.

> SOC/BA '24
> *not* SOC/BA '24

Surround with commas in running text.

> Sarah McBride, SPA/BA '13, is the first openly transgender state senator in the US.

List multiple degrees from the same school in the order they were earned.
It is not necessary to repeat the school multiple times.

> A pioneering scholar, Abdul-Aziz Said, SIS/BA '54, MA '55, PhD '57, founded the international peace and conflict resolution program in 1995.

List multiple degrees from different schools in the order they were earned.

> Dambisa Moyo, CAS/BS '91, Kogod/MBA '92, Hon. DHL '22, received the university's Global Alumni Leader Award in May 2023.

see also **degrees, honorary degrees, schools**

grades

Roman type. No quotation marks.
No apostrophes with plurals, unless confusion would result.

> She received an A+ on the midterm exam.
> Her grades included two Cs and three Bs.

grassroots (adjective)

One word.

> a grassroots campaign, a grassroots movement

groundwork

One word.

H

handwashing
One word. No hyphen.

headlines
Capitalize first and last words.
Lowercase *a, an,* and *the* (if they are not the first word in a headline).
Capitalize both parts of hyphenated words.
Lowercase *and, but, or,* and other coordinating conjunctions.
Capitalize all other principal words.
see sections **8.159–161 of *The Chicago Manual of Style*** for further guidance

health care (adjective or noun)
Two words. No hyphen.
Organizations and programs that use one word are exceptions to the rule above.

> an online master of science in healthcare management

he/him/his
see **pronouns**

home page
Two words.

honorary degrees
Lowercase in running text.
Always include *honorary* before such degrees.

> Kwame Alexander received an honorary doctor of humane letters degree at the College of Arts and Sciences commencement on May 11, 2024.

> Kwame Alexander, CAS/Hon. DHL '24

see also **grad info**

hyphens
Shorter than an en dash (–) or an em dash (—).
Use to connect words representing two different but equal functions.

> pass-fail, scholar-practitioner, student-athlete, work-study

Check **merriam-webster.com** to verify hyphenation.

see section **7.89 of *The Chicago Manual of Style*** for further guidance
see also **em dashes, en dashes**

i.e.
Means *that is* or *namely*.
Set off with commas in running text.
Use roman type.

impact (noun)
Preferred term.

impact (verb)
Not a preferred term.
Use *affect* (verb) or *influence* (verb) instead.

impactful
Not a preferred term.
Use *influential* or *powerful* instead.

inaugural
Preferred term when referring to events happening for the first time.
Use instead of *first annual*.

indexes
Preferred plural.
Use instead of *indices*.

Indigenous
May be capitalized when referring to a person's ethnicity.
see sections **8.38–39 of *The Chicago Manual of Style*** for further guidance
see also **ethnicities, Native**

information technology
Spell out on first reference. Abbreviate on subsequent references.
Lowercase, unless part of a proper noun.

> information technology courses, IT consulting
> Department of Information Technology and Analytics
> Office of Information Technology

initials
Capitalize. Follow with periods in names, unless used alone.
Spaces should follow periods when used.

> C. J. Cregg, Clawed Z. Eagle, W. E. B. DuBois, MLK, Malcolm X

see also **chosen names**

in residence

No hyphens when used with professional titles.

> artist in residence, executive in residence, scholar in residence

see also **professional titles and positions**

institutes

Capitalize full names of institutes.
Lowercase on subsequent references or when used in a generic sense.
Use *and* instead of ampersand.

> Founded in 2000, the Women and Politics Institute is a leading center for women's political leadership training and scholarly research. In addition to offering graduate and undergraduate certificates, the institute provides a training program for young women seeking to become involved in the political arena.

see **Centers, Institutes, Initiatives** for a current list of institutes at AU

interim

Lowercase in running text when it modifies a professional title.

> Alison Jacknowitz began serving as interim dean of the School of Public Affairs in June 2023.

Capitalize in event programs and marketing materials, where names and professional titles act much as headlines.

> Interim Dean Alison Jacknowitz

see also **acting, former, professional titles and positions**

international student(s)

Preferred term.
Use instead of *foreign student(*s).

internet

Lowercase.

J

journals
see **periodicals**

Jr. (Junior)
see **name suffixes**

junior(s)
Use for undergraduate students in their third year.

L

Latin honors
Lowercase. Use italics.

> *cum laude, magna cum laude, summa cum laude*

Latine
May be used as a gender-neutral alternative to *Latina* or *Latino*.
see also **ethnicities**

lawmaker
One word. No hyphen.

lawmaking
One word. No hyphen.

lectures
Capitalize the title of an individual lecture.
Enclose in quotation marks.

> Alex Nava, professor of religious studies and classics at the University of Arizona, presented "God and Hip Hop" for the 15th annual Durfee Lecture in spring 2023.

Lowercase the subject matter of an individual lecture if the title is unknown or nonexistent.

> Donna Brazile, the first Black woman to manage a presidential campaign, spoke about navigating the political arena during an event at the Women and Politics Institute.

lecture series
Capitalize headline-style. Use roman type.

> Books That Shaped America
> Exploring Social Justice
> Political Theory Colloquium

see also **headlines**

less

Means *not as much*.
Use with uncountable nouns.

> Last winter brought less snow and more rain to the DC area.

see also **fewer**

lifelong

One word. No hyphen.

links

Capitalize headline-style in running text. Use roman type.

> Go to Work @ AU on the myAU Portal and click on the Benefits: myBenefits link.

see also **headlines, websites**

living-learning community

One hyphen.

LISTSERV

Not a preferred term.
Use *mailing list* or *email list* instead.
see also **trademarks**

log in (verb)

Two words. No hyphen.

login (noun)

One word. No hyphen.

long (suffix)

Check **merriam-webster.com** for spellings of words with this suffix.

> a daylong seminar, an hour-long lecture, a weeklong workshop, a semester-long program

longtime (adjective)

One word. No hyphen.

M

magazines
   see **periodicals**

magna cum laude
   see **Latin honors**

main campus
   Two words. Lowercase both.
   see also **East Campus, Tenley Campus**

majors
   Lowercase in running text, unless a proper noun is included.

      She is an Arabic studies major, with a double minor in justice
      and law and religion.

   see also **minors**

measurements
   Spell out words like *degrees, feet, inches,* and *percent* in running text.

      During winter break, domestic hot water temperatures are set
      to 120 degrees Fahrenheit.
      not During winter break, domestic hot water temperatures are set
      to 120˚ Fahrenheit.

   Use digits with percentages, temperatures, and symbols.

      In summer 2020, about 44 percent of American workers were able
      to telework.
      not In summer 2020, about forty-four percent of American workers
      were able to telework.

   Symbols (˚ , ", ' , %) may be used in charts and tables.

Metro
   Capitalize when referring to Washington Metropolitan Area Transit
   Authority (WMATA).
   May be used even on first reference.

Metro stations and lines
   Capitalize names of Metro stations and lines.
   Use an en dash in compound names of stations.

      Tenleytown–AU, Van Ness–UDC, the Red Line

mid (prefix)

No hyphen, unless followed by a proper noun or numerals.

mid-Atlantic, midterm, temperatures in the mid-50s

midnight

Use instead of *12 a.m.*
see also **time**

minors

Lowercase in running text, unless a proper noun is included.
see also **majors**

money

Use digits and the dollar symbol for amounts between $100 and $999,999.
For amounts of $1 million or more, combine digits with million, billion, etc.
Place a comma after the thousands place in four-digit dollar amounts.

The average US worker spends $1,000 a year on coffee.

see also **numbers**

months

Capitalize.
Spell out unless space is limited. Always spell out in running text.
Use three-letter abbreviations if space is limited, such as in advertisements or tables.

Apr. 2024, Oct. 2025

Omit comma after month when followed by year.

December 2024, May 2025

N

name suffixes

Do not use a comma after a surname and before *Jr., Sr., III,* etc.

Harvard professor and spring 2020 commencement speaker Henry Louis Gates Jr.
Lonnie G. Bunch III, CAS/BA '74, MA '76, Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution

named spaces

see **buildings, campus locations, rooms**

names of people

see **chosen names, initials**

native (adjective or noun)

Lowercase when referring to a person born in a specific place.

their native Wyoming, the Georgia native

Native (adjective or noun)

Capitalize when referring to a person's ethnicity.

Alaska Native, Native American

see sections **8.38–39 of *The Chicago Manual of Style*** for further guidance
see also **ethnicities, Indigenous**

newspapers

see **periodicals**

non (prefix)

Check **merriam-webster.com** for spellings of words with this prefix.

noncredit, nondegree, nonprofit, non-thesis

noon

Use instead of *12 p.m.*
see also **midnight, time**

numbers

Use words for numbers *zero* through nine and their corresponding ordinals, *first* through *ninth*.
Spell out common fractions, such as *one-quarter* or *two-thirds*.
Use words for numbers of any kind at the beginning of a sentence.

Forty-four percent of US workers were able to telework in summer 2020.

Rewrite sentences to avoid spelling out lengthy numbers at the beginning of a sentence.

Graduate students enrolled at AU numbered 4,198 in fall 2019.
not Four thousand, one hundred ninety-eight graduate students enrolled at AU in fall 2019.

Use digits for numbers *10* through *999,999* and their corresponding ordinals.

Endings of ordinal numbers should not appear in superscript.

AU's 147th Commencement
not AU's 147th Commencement

Place a comma after the thousands place in four-digit numbers.

AU's campus is an accredited arboretum with more than 5,000 trees.

Use digits for percentages located elsewhere in a sentence (i.e., not at the beginning).

According to the Cooperative Center for Children's Books, just 3.4 percent of books published in 2019 featured a disabled character.

Use digits for less common and decimal fractions: *15/16, 1.46,* etc.
Combine words or digits with *million, billion,* and similar terms for numbers above *999,999*.

Low-flow fixtures on East Campus save five million gallons of water per year.
Auto debt reached $1.46 trillion in 2022.
Cats kill between one and four billion birds every year.
There are more than 97 billion Google searches each month.

Digits may be used for *zero* through *nine* to maintain consistency within a sentence.

AU's volleyball team led the 2021 Patriot League Championships with 44 wins and 5 losses.

see also **centuries, credit hours, dates, GPA, measurements, money, time, years**

O

offices

Capitalize names of specific campus entities.
Lowercase when used alone or in a generic sense.

> the Office of Campus Life, the office

The word *office* may be dropped when referring to more than one in running text.

> Campus Life and Human Resources fought it out for first place in the volleyball tournament during Staff Appreciation Week.

on-campus/off-campus (adjective)

Use hyphen.

> on-campus housing, off-campus parking

on campus/off campus (adverb)

No hyphen.

> activities on campus, students who live off campus

P

part-time (adjective)

Use hyphen when modifying a noun.

> He is a part-time employee of American University.

part time (adverb)

Two words. No hyphen.

> He works part time at American University.

percentages

see **measurements**

periodicals

Use italics for titles. Capitalize headline-style.
Lowercase an initial *the* regardless of title on masthead.
Use roman type for an initial *the*.
Italicize and capitalize words such as *magazine* only if they are part of the full, official title.

> the *American University Business Law Review*
> *Congress & the Presidency*
> the *Journal of Academic Librarianship*
> the *Washington Post*
> *American* magazine

periods

Follow by a single space between sentences.

phone numbers

Use hyphens after area code and before last four digits.
Do not enclose area code in parentheses.

photo captions

Tell a one-sentence story that describes the action in or sets the context for the photo.
With photos of two people, use *left* in parentheses after the name of the person on the left.
Use *from left* followed by a colon before identifying three or more people by name.

plays

Use italics for titles.
Capitalize headline-style.

> An all-female cast performed Caleen Jennings's play *Elsewhere in Elsinore: The Unseen Women of Hamlet* at Katzen's Studio Theatre.

see also **headlines**

p.m.

Lowercase. Use periods.
No space between *p.* and *m.*
Omit periods if *PM* is capitalized for design purposes in marketing materials.
see also **midnight, noon, time**

poems

Use roman type. No italics.
Enclose in quotation marks.

> Sarah Katz, CAS/MFA '15, called "Memory" her favorite poem in her first published collection, *Country of Glass*.

political affiliations

Place in parentheses after name.
Use two-letter postal code abbreviation for state.
Use hyphen between party and state.

> Rep. Jamie Raskin (D-MD) is a WCL professor of law emeritus.

post (prefix)

Check **merriam-webster.com** for spellings of words with this prefix.

> post-master's certificate, Center for Postsecondary Readiness and Success

postal addresses

Use comma after street name and quadrant if a floor or room number follows.
Separate street name and quadrant with one space. No comma.
Abbreviate quadrants with capital letters only. No periods.

4401 Connecticut Avenue NW, 6th Floor
not 4401 Connecticut Avenue, NW, 6th Floor
not 4401 Connecticut Avenue N.W., 6th Floor

pre (prefix)

Check **merriam-webster.com** for spellings of words with this prefix.

preregistration, pre-semester

President's Circle

Apostrophe goes between *t* and *s.*

professional titles and positions

Capitalize headline-style in running text when title/position is used as part of a name.
Capitalize when names and titles/positions appear in event programs or marketing materials.

President Alger
Dean Niles Goins
Professor Beers
Coach Marsha Harper

Lowercase in running text when title/position is modified or when it follows a name.

American University president Jonathan R. Alger
Jonathan R. Alger, president of American University

SOC dean Marnel Niles Goins
Marnel Niles Goins, dean of the School of Communication

Laura Beers, history professor
history professor Laura Beers

women's soccer coach Marsha Harper
Marsha Harper, head coach of the women's soccer team

Capitalize endowed chairs and named professorships before or after a name.

    Kogod Eminent Scholar Chair in Marketing Sonya Grier
    Sonya Grier, Kogod Eminent Scholar Chair in Marketing

Avoid stating a professor's exact rank, except in lists of faculty that give credentials.

see also **acting, endowed chairs and professorships, former, in residence, interim**

program

Capitalize when part of the full, official name.
Lowercase when used alone, in a generic sense, or if not part of full, official name.

    Washington Semester Program, the program, the District Scholars program

pronouns

Learn and use the pronouns associated with the people you write about.
Understand that a person's pronouns may vary or change over time.
see **Pronouns: A Guide for the American University Community**
see also **chair, gender-neutral language, Latine**

publications

see **articles (published), books, periodicals, plays, poems, songs**

punctuation

see sections **6.1–132 of** *The Chicago Manual Style* for further guidance on punctuation not covered by this guide—including colons, semicolons, and slashes
see **ampersands, apostrophes, commas, em dashes, en dashes, hyphens, exclamation points, periods, quotation marks**

Q

quad

Lowercase, unless part of the full name of a building or named space.

> AU's annual staff picnic is held on the quad.
> This year's Veterans Day ceremony will take place on Eric Freidheim Quadrangle.
> Her office is in the East Quad Building.

quotation marks

Periods and commas go inside.

> "The myth is that only wealthy people in rich countries can afford to care about the environment," Broad says. "But around the world, it is often poor people who care the most. They are more dependent on natural resources, and they are the ones more likely to take organized actions on the ground to protect them."

Colons and semicolons go outside.

> One panelist stressed "the bottom line"; the other spoke of the human cost.

> Take, for example, the first stanza of "The Star-Spangled Banner": It is the best known of the original poem's four stanzas, and the one most often sung aloud at sporting events.

Question marks and exclamation points go inside when part of quoted material.

> "I have never seen people eat so much food!" said the cook for the football team.

Question marks and exclamation points go outside when not part of quoted material.

> Who first came up with AU's motto "Once an Eagle, Always an Eagle"?

see also **articles (published), lectures, poems, songs**

R

races

Learn and use the terms preferred by the people you write about.
Preferred terms may vary and do change over time.
see section **8.38 of *The Chicago Manual of Style*** and **"Black and White:
A Matter of Capitalization"**
see also **Black, ethnicities, White**

rankings

Spelling out *number* conveys more gravitas in formal publications and communications.

Firearms are the number one cause of death among children and teens in the US.

A number sign directly in front of a numeral may be used in headlines or running text.

WAMU Ranked #1 DC Radio Station

Choose one of the above and use consistently throughout a publication
or communication.

residence hall

Preferred term.
Use instead of *dorm* or *dormitory.*

rooms

Capitalize when used in postal addresses.
Lowercase in running text.
Use numerals for numbered rooms.
Capitalize named rooms in running text.

Orientation will be held in Mary Graydon Center, room 200.
The staff retreat will take place in Butler Board Room.

see also **buildings, campus locations**

RSVP

Omit *please* before this term.
SVP stands for *s'il vous plait*, a French term meaning *if you please.*
No periods.

S

sabbatical

Preferred term.
Use instead of *sabbatical leave.*

scholars

Capitalize when used with named scholarships or scholarly programs.
Lowercase when used alone or in a generic sense.

> Community-Based Research Scholars
> Frederick Douglass Distinguished Scholars

see also **fellows**

scholarships

Capitalize specific scholarships.
Lowercase when used in a generic sense.

> Established in 2002, the Jane R. Glaser Scholarship supports
> undergraduate students in the School of Public Affairs who plans
> to study abroad in Israel for at least one semester.
>
> The scholarship is awarded to first-year graduate students.

see also **awards, fellowships**

school(s)

Capitalize full names of schools in running text.
Lowercase when used alone or in a generic sense.
Omit periods in abbreviated versions.

> the College of Arts and Sciences, the college, CAS
> Kogod Business School, Kogod (*never* KSB)
> the School of Communication (*not* Communications)

see **Schools and Colleges** for a full list of AU-affiliated schools and colleges
see also **grad info**

scientific names

Capitalize genus. Lowercase species. Use italics for both.

> Becca Peixotto, CAS/MA '13, PhD '17, coauthored a paper about a
> newly discovered hominin species, *Homo naledi.*

scriptwriter/scriptwriting

One word. No hyphen.

seasons

Lowercase in running text.
Omit *of* when followed by a year.

> fall 2021, spring 2022

semesters

Lowercase in running text.

> fall semester, spring semester

semiannual(ly)

Means *every six months* or *twice a year.*

semimonthly

Means *twice a month.*

semiweekly

Means *twice a week.*

she/her/hers

see **pronouns**

smartphone

One word.

songs

Use roman type. No italics.
Enclose in quotation marks.

> AU Chamber Singers sang "Wanting Memories" in a spring 2021
> commencement video.

Sr. (Senior)

see **name suffixes**

staff (noun)

Use singular form of verb, unless followed by *members.*

> While the pandemic kept arts institutions closed nationwide, the AU Museum staff
> was finding new ways to engage patrons with the AU Museum at Home initiative.

> While the pandemic kept art institutions closed nationwide, AU Museum staff
> members were finding new ways to engage patrons.

start-up (noun)
Use hyphen.

states
Two-letter postal codes should be used for address labels, lists, and tables.
Use full names of states in running text.

> Madelaine Reis, SPA/MA '20, returned to her native New York on
> March 3 for a doctor's appointment, expecting a quick, four-day trip.

If the state is preceded by a city in running text, follow the name of the state
with a comma.

> Falls Church, Virginia, is a suburb of Washington, DC.

Capitalize *state* if it follows the official name of the state.
Use this construction to distinguish between cities and states that share a name.

> Washington State, New York State

student-athletes
Use hyphen.

suites
see **rooms**

summa cum laude
see **Latin honors**

syllabi
Preferred plural.
Use instead of *syllabuses*.

T

task force

Two words.

team-taught (adjective)

Use hyphen.

team teach(ing)

Two words.

teamwork

One word.

telephone numbers

see **phone numbers**

television stations and channels

Capitalize. No periods.
Use hyphen to separate *TV* from call letters.
Add network and channel of local affiliate in parentheses.

    WETA-TV (PBS 26)
    WRC-TV (NBC 4)
    WTTG-TV (FOX 5)

Tenley Campus

Two words. Capitalize both.
see also **East Campus, main campus**

tests and exams

May be abbreviated even on first reference.
Capitalize. Omit periods.

    GMAT, GRE, LSAT, SAT, TOEFL

Avoid redundant language.

    We recommend taking the GRE no later than February 15.
    not We recommend taking the GRE exams no later than February 15.

the

see **headlines, periodicals**

theater

Preferred spelling when used in a generic sense.

theatre

Use this spelling with AU's theatre and musical theatre programs.
Follow a venue's spelling preference for *theater* or *theatre*.

> the Greenberg Theatre, the National Theatre, the theatre
> Mosaic Theater Company, the theater

they/them/their(s)

Use as a singular pronoun to refer to a specific person in an affirming manner.

> Nic Sakurai, CAS/MA '07, was the first person in the US to have
> a nonbinary gender designation on their driver's license.

In formal writing, it is still recommended to avoid referring to an unknown person of unspecified gender with *they*.

> Someone left a coat on that chair.
> *not* Someone left their coat on that chair.

see sections **5.48**, **5.252**, and **5.256 of** *The Chicago Manual of Style*
see also **pronouns**

time

Use *o'clock* with spelled-out numbers.

> seven o'clock, quarter to four, half past eight

Use *a.m.* or *p.m.* with numerals.

> 2:30 p.m.

Use an en dash—or *from* and *to*—between two times to indicate a range.

> The workshop runs from 1 to 3 p.m.
> The 1–3 p.m. workshop started late and ran long.

Use zeroes after the hour when combining with a fractional time.

> You are scheduled to attend an orientation session for new hires
> on Monday, March 15, 2021, from 9:15 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

see also **a.m., dates, midnight, noon, p.m.**

time frame

Two words.

time zones

If needed, place abbreviation in parentheses after time.

> Monday, March 11, 2024, at 4:30 p.m. (EDT)
> Monday, November 4, 2024, at 4:30 p.m. (EST)

titled

Preferred term.
Use instead of *entitled* when referring to titles of published or creative works.

titles

see **articles (published), artworks, books, court cases, courtesy, exhibitions, films, periodicals, plays, poems, professional titles and positions, songs**

toward

Preferred term.
Use instead of *towards.*

trademarks

Capitalize corporate and brand names. Follow with a generic term if possible.
Avoid using as verbs. Check **merriam-webster.com** for exceptions.
see sections **8.153–155 of *The Chicago Manual of Style*** for further guidance

trans (prefix)

No hyphen.
Abbreviated form of *transgender.*

> trans man, trans woman

see also **cis**

trustee(s)

Capitalize when used with *Board of Trustees.*

> Gina F. Adams, SPA/BA '80, has chaired AU's Board of Trustees since 2023.

Lowercase when referring to individual or multiple members of the board.

> An interview with trustee Margery Kraus appears in *Enterprising Woman* magazine.

> AU trustee Alan Meltzer, CAS/BA '21, was named a 2023 Washingtonian of Year by *Washingtonian* magazine.

> AU welcomed new trustees Victoria D. Harker, Kogod/MBA '90, and Amy V. Kothari, Kogod/MBA '93, to the board in May 2024.

see also **Board of Trustees**

T-shirt

Use hyphen. Use a capital *T* even in running text.

U

underway (adjective or adverb)

One word.

universities with branches

Follow an institution's preference on linking the location to the name of the school.

the University of California, Los Angeles (comma)
the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (preposition)
the University of Wisconsin–Madison (en dash)

see also **en dashes**

university

Capitalize when referring to a specific institution.
Lowercase subsequent references and when used in a generic sense.

American University, the university

up-to-date (adjective)

Use hyphens.

Please consult the most up-to-date version of the FAQ.

up to date (adverb)

No hyphens.

Please keep the FAQ up to date.

URLs (uniform resource locators)

see **web addresses**

US (adjective or noun)

Omit periods in print publications.
May be abbreviated even on first reference.

In *Nasty Politics: The Logic of Insults, Threats, and Incitement*, School of Public Affairs professor Thomas Zeitzoff explores the use of ugly rhetoric for political gain, looking at the recent experience of Israel, the US, and Ukraine.

Use periods to make web writing accessible.
Screen readers often pronounce *US* as *us*.

username

One word.

V

vertical lists

- Use to highlight important information.
- Include at least three items, never just one.
- Precede with running text, not just a header.
- End lead-in text with a colon if it is a complete sentence.
- Capitalize full sentences. Use terminal punctuation.
- Lowercase sentence fragments.
- Avoid mixing full sentences and sentence fragments.
- Begin each item in list with the same part of speech.
- Number each item if sequence or hierarchy is important.
- Use bullets if sequence or hierarchy does not matter.

Veterans Day

No apostrophe.

vice (prefix)

No hyphen.

vice chair, vice provost, vice president

VIP (very important person)

May be abbreviated even on first reference.

voice mail

Two words. No hyphen.

W

WAMU
Capitalize all letters. No periods.

Washington, DC
No periods in DC.
Follow both *Washington* and *DC* with commas in running text.
Reword sentences to avoid an excess of punctuation.

> Universities in the Washington, DC, area are closed due to severe winter weather.
> *or* Washington–area universities are closed due to severe winter weather.
> *or* DC–area universities are closed due to severe winter weather.
> *not* Washington, DC,–area universities are closed due to severe winter weather.

web addresses
Use roman type. Do not underline in print publications.
Use camel case in running text to increase readability.

> Visit go.american.edu/GoodNeighbor for information about
> AU's parking policy.
> *not* Visit go.american.edu/goodneighbor for information about
> AU's parking policy.

Avoid *http://* or *https://* in print or when writing for the web.
Include *www.* in front of hyperlinks when writing for the web.

Web addresses should not end sentences in marketing collateral.
Rewrite sentences to avoid following web addresses with a period.

> Visit american.edu to learn more.
> *not* Learn more at american.edu.

When writing for the web, use hyperlinked text rather than displaying
the web address.

> Visit **Housing and Residence Life** for information about residence halls.
> *not* Visit **https://www.american.edu/ocl/housing** for information about
> residence halls.

In print advertisements, web addresses may appear in bold type for emphasis. Avoid using long web addresses in print.

UCM can create vanity web addresses for marketing campaigns and publications. If a web address spans more than one line of text, do not insert a hyphen to signal a line break. A line break should occur *after* a colon or a double slash and *before* other punctuation marks and numerals. An ampersand or an equals sign within a web address may appear *before* or *after* a line break.

see sections **14.17–18 of *The Chicago Manual of Style*** for further guidance

web page

Two words. Lowercase.

web pages

Capitalize titles headline-style in running text. Use roman type.

> Please consult the Campus Services and Hours web page about AU's operating status.

see also **headlines**

website

One word. Lowercase.

websites

Capitalize titles headline-style in running text. Use roman type.

> Please visit our Admissions website to learn more about applying to AU.

see also **headlines**

White

Capitalize when referring to a person's racial and ethnic identity.

see section **8.38 of *The Chicago Manual of Style*** and **"Black and White: A Matter of Capitalization"**

see also **ethnicities, races**

wide (suffix)

Use hyphen with place names and base words of three or more syllables.

> DC-wide, university-wide

No hyphen when used with base words of two syllables or fewer.

> campuswide, nationwide, statewide, systemwide, worldwide

work-study

Use hyphen.

Y

years

Use digits, except when a year begins a sentence.

> Seth Speyer, executive director of planned giving, joined AU's 20-Year Club in 2024. Twenty twenty-four was the year Seth Speyer, executive director of planned giving, joined AU's 20-Year Club.

Rewording a sentence is usually preferred to spelling out a year at its beginning. Use an en dash—or *from* and *to*—between two years to indicate a range.

> The 1927–1955 yearbooks were titled *AUCOLA* rather than the *Talon*. American University yearbooks dating from 1927 to 1998 have been digitized.

With a date that includes month and day, follow the year with a comma in running text.

> Staff Appreciation events took place from May 28, 2024, through May 30, 2024.

see also **academic years, dates, en dashes, fiscal years, grad info, numbers**

Z

Z.

Clawed's middle initial.
Capitalize. Use period.

UNIVERSITY STATEMENTS AND NOTICES

Accommodating People with Disabilities Notice

Use a notice such as this on invitations and event announcements and advertisements:

> To request a disability-related accommodation or accessibility information, please contact [department/staff member] at [phone/email]. Requests should be made by [date at least two weeks prior to the event].

Accreditation Statement

To comply with US Department of Education regulations, use this statement on all print materials:

> Visit american.edu/academics for more information regarding the accreditation and state licensing of American University.

Preferred placement is on back cover, either above or below the university logo and address. Font size can be small, as long as it is legible.

Notice of Nondiscrimination

Use the statement below for major university publications and the AU home page:

> American University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, including sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, sex characteristics, sex stereotypes and pregnancy or related conditions, age, marital status, genetic information, personal appearance, matriculation, family responsibilities, political affiliation, disability, familial status, source of income, place of residence or business, veteran status, or any other protected basis and prohibits discrimination in any program or activity that it operates, as required by federal or local laws and their implementing regulations and university policies, including in employment and admission. Inquiries about Title IX and American University's nondiscrimination policies may be referred to the university's assistant vice president for equity and Title IX coordinator,

US Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights, or both. The assistant vice president for equity and Title IX coordinator may be contacted at the Office of Equity and Title IX, 3201 New Mexico Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20016, **equityoffice@ american.edu,** or 202-885-8080.

American University's nondiscrimination policies and grievance procedures can be located at the university's policy webpage (**https://www.american.edu/policies/all-policies.cfm**) or the Office of Equity and Title IX webpage (**https://www.american. edu/equity-titleix/**). To report or make a complaint of discrimination, including sex discrimination, please use the online reporting form located at **https://www.american. edu/equity-titleix/**.

Place in an easy-to-find position such as the title page or inside front or back cover.

Equal Opportunity Statement

Use this statement in publications related to employment:

If space permits, this version is preferred:

American University is an equal opportunity, affirmative action institution that operates in compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

Use one of the following depending on other space considerations:

American University is an affirmative action, equal opportunity employer (or university).

An equal opportunity, affirmative action university.

EO/AA