



UNIVERSITY of  
**SOUTH FLORIDA**

# Editorial Guide to Style and Usage

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## UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA MISSION STATEMENT

Led by outstanding faculty and professional staff, the University of South Florida conducts innovative scholarship, creative activity, and basic and translational research, and delivers a world-class educational experience promoting the success of our talented and diverse undergraduate, graduate, and professional students. As a public metropolitan research university, USF, in partnership with our communities, serves the people of Florida, the nation, and the world by fostering intellectual inquiry and outcomes that positively shape the future – regionally, nationally, and globally.

### GOALS

1. To promote the lifelong success of well-educated, highly skilled, and adaptable alumnae/alumni who lead enriched lives, are engaged citizens, and thrive in a dynamic global market.
2. To conduct high-impact research and innovation to advance frontiers of knowledge, solve global problems, and improve lives.
3. To be a major social and economic engine creating robust global, national, and regional partnerships to build a prosperous and sustainable future for our regional communities and the State of Florida.
4. To provide a safe, inclusive and vibrant community for learning, discovery, creative activities, and transformative experiences enabled through adaptive design of physical, social, and digital environments.
5. To practice continuous visionary planning and sound management throughout USF to ensure a strong and sustainable financial base, and to adapt proactively to emerging opportunities in a dynamic environment.

# USF EDITORIAL GUIDE TO STYLE AND USAGE

## Why create an editorial style guide for USF?

Offices and departments throughout the university independently produce fliers, posters, brochures, catalogs, newsletters, booklets, web content and other materials to communicate with internal and external audiences. A style guide ensures a high level of brand consistency and professionalism across these communications.

To be effective, written materials should be clear and consistent. While individual publications convey distinct messages, a reader often receives communications from a number of USF sources in print and in digital formats. Just as brand management (see <https://www.usf.edu/ucm/marketing/index.aspx>) provides a “look and feel” for visual design across the university, the USF Guide to Style and Usage is designed to help create a common voice that further enhances USF’s credibility and professionalism.

## When to Use this Guide (and When Not)

When creating non-academic, non-technical documents that are intended for university and general public audiences, follow these guidelines. This includes communications for a university-wide audience as well as prospective students, alumni, donors, legislators, businesses and the general public.

Specialized kinds of writing, such as professional papers, dissertations, technical publications and academic works should conform to the accepted style of the respective discipline.

This guide is not comprehensive. The majority of entries are specific to USF and there also are terms common throughout higher education. As a general rule, University Communications and Marketing follows Associated Press style and several items from the “AP Stylebook” are included in this guide. The “AP Stylebook” is available for purchase at <https://www.ap.org/books/>.

This guide is organized alphabetically.

## A

**AAU** An association of 65 leading public and private research universities in the United States and Canada. Use *Association of American Universities* on first reference and *AAU* on subsequent references.

**abbreviations for academic degrees** USF style omits punctuation with academic degrees. Do not use the word *degree* following an abbreviation.

*BA, MS, MBA*

In running text (paragraph form in brochures, newsletters, magazine articles, flyers, news releases), academic degrees are not used with a person's name.

*Mary Smith is the dean of the law school.*

*NOT: Mary Smith, JD, is the dean of the law school.*

**academic degrees** The preferred form is to avoid abbreviations and spell out and use lower case.

*bachelor's degree in*

*bachelor's in*

*master's degree in*

*master's in*

*doctoral degree in*

*doctorate in (NOT doctorate degree)*

*associate degree (not possessive)*

**Dr./PhD in text:** Use the title Dr. for someone with a medical degree on first reference. Refer to a person with a PhD as professor if they hold that title. Do not use Dr. before the names of those who hold honorary degrees only. References to honorary degrees must specify the degree was honorary.

**academic departments** See divisions and affiliates of the university.

**academic papers** When citing the name of an academic paper or journal article, capitalize the principal words, including prepositions and conjunctions of four or more letters. Capitalize articles such as a, an or the, or words of fewer letters if it is the first or last word in a title. Put quotation marks around the name of the article. If the name of the journal or magazine in which the article appears is used with the title, place it in italics. (If running text is already in italics, place the title in Roman type.)

Their study, "Early Evidence on the Effects of Regulated Suicidality Warnings on SSRI Prescriptions and Suicide in Children and Adolescents," appeared in the September 2007 issue of the *American Journal of Psychiatry*.

**academic titles** Capitalize and spell out formal titles when they directly precede a name. Lowercase title and uppercase formal department designation when following a name or when appearing without a name. In general, do not capitalize occupational descriptions or identifiers, even if they appear directly before a name. Do capitalize academic titles, such as Professor, when the title comes before the name. (This differs from the AP Stylebook.) Following are some examples of how various academic titles might appear in text:

*President Steve Currall; Steve Currall, president of the University of South Florida*

*Provost Ralph Wilcox; Ralph Wilcox, provost and executive vice president for USF*

*John Doe, chair of the Chemistry Department; John Doe, department chair*

*Professor Jane Smith*

*Associate Professor Paula Jones*

*Professor Emeritus Susan Johnson*

*Jim Smith, associate vice president of government relations, is visiting the campus today.*

In news releases and articles, an individual's full name and title are used only on first references. On subsequent references, use only the last name.

**accreditation** The Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACSCOC) is the recognized institutional accreditor in Florida.

**acronyms** In general, avoid acronyms. If needed, USF is acceptable on second reference. Avoid additional acronyms such as USFSP for the St. Petersburg campus, USFSM for the Sarasota-Manatee campus or USF-T for the Tampa campus.

Avoid acronyms after first full reference to a college.

ACT, SAT, LSAT, GMAT, GRE, MAT, MCAT and other entrance examination titles usually do not need to be spelled out, even on first reference.

**adjuncts** Part-time, temporary instructors

**administration** Lowercase. Faculty and staff are also lowercase.

**alma mater** Lowercase.

*My alma matter is USF.*

*The band played the alma mater.*

**alumni association** See **USF Alumni Association**.

**assistant/associate professor** See **professor**.

## B

**Board of Governors** The Office of the Board of Governors is the governing body for the State University System of Florida. On first reference, you may use the Office of the Board of Governors or the Florida Board of Governors. On subsequent references, you may use *board* (if it won't be confused with another board). Avoid using *BOG* in externally facing written materials.

**Board of Trustees** On first reference, acceptable ways to refer to the university's governing body include: the University of South Florida Board of Trustees and the USF Board of Trustees. Use capital letters on first reference. On subsequent references, you may use *board* (if it won't be confused with another board), trustees or BOT. *Trustee* may be used as a title and is capitalized before a name. The board has five committees:

- Academics and Campus Environment
- Finance
- Governance
- Audit & Compliance
- Strategic Initiatives

**boilerplate** Public relations/marketing term that refers to a standard description about an organization that is used for a variety of purposes: for example, as the last paragraph of a news release. USF's boilerplate is as follows:

### **About the University of South Florida**

*The University of South Florida is a high-impact global research university dedicated to student success. Over the past 10 years, no other public university in the country has risen faster in U.S. News and World Report's national university rankings than USF. Serving more than 50,000 students on campuses in Tampa, St. Petersburg and Sarasota-Manatee, USF is designated as a Preeminent State Research University by the Florida Board of Governors, placing it in the most elite category among the state's 12 public universities. USF has earned widespread national recognition for its success graduating under-represented minority and limited-income students at rates equal to or higher than white and higher income students. USF is a member of the American Athletic Conference. Learn more at [www.usf.edu](http://www.usf.edu).*

**building names** Capitalize and spell out *building* when it is part of a proper name, but not when it stands alone or is used collectively.

Capitalize formal building names or accepted formal references to a building. On second reference, lowercase when proper name is not used. Also lowercase when using as a generic description.

*The Empire State and Chrysler buildings are in New York City.*

*My class is in Cooper Hall.*

*The tour group walked past the David C. Anchin Center.*

*I walked to the library.*

*They had coffee in the USF Bookstore.*

*I'm working in an engineering lab.*

Names of buildings are available on the website for each campus:

USF Tampa campus: usf.edu

USF St. Petersburg campus: stpetersburg.usf.edu

USF Sarasota-Manatee campus: sarasotamanatee.usf.edu

**Bulls, USF Bulls** Commonly refers to USF's athletic teams. Always capitalize.

## C

**campus** Use the lowercase word “campus” after referring to the geographic location; this is a necessary component of USF's accreditation.

For example:

- *The group will perform on the USF Sarasota-Manatee campus.*
- *I'm teaching a biology course this semester on the USF Tampa campus.*
- *Joe Smith is a USF student who lives in a residence hall on the USF St. Petersburg campus.*
- *Christine Ruva, a psychology professor on USF's Sarasota-Manatee campus, conducted an extensive study of pre-trial publicity.*

After establishing you are talking about the University of South Florida/USF on first reference, it's acceptable to use Tampa campus, St. Petersburg campus or Sarasota-Manatee campus or simply “campus” on second reference, without “USF.”

For example:

- *Seth Morano knows that he wants to pursue a writing career, but he hasn't figured out exactly what form that should take. Fortunately for the University of South Florida student studying at the Sarasota-Manatee campus, there's plenty of time to declare a major.*

**campuswide** One word. Also: *citywide, countrywide, statewide, nationwide* and *worldwide*.

An exception to this rule is if the word becomes long and cumbersome, as in *university-wide*.

**capitalization** In general, avoid unnecessary capitals by capitalizing only when referring to an official name. Many words and phrases are listed separately in this guide.

**university, college:** Capitalize university and college when they are part of an official name: the *University of South Florida, New York University, Muma College of Business*. Lowercase when used as plurals.

*Princeton and Yale universities.*

*The colleges of nursing and engineering.*

Lowercase university and college on second references.

*I earned my bachelor's degree at the University of South Florida.*

*The university has a strong liberal arts program.*

*The College of Marine Science offers a rigorous curriculum.*

*The college has an outstanding faculty.*

**titles:** Capitalize formal titles for positions when used immediately before a name. Lowercase formal titles when used alone or when set off by commas. If the formal name of a department is part of a title, capitalize even if it follows the name:

*The president spoke.*

*Jane Doe, director of the Division of Patents and Licensing, is here.*

*Director of Patents and Licensing Jane Doe has arrived.*

In news releases and articles, an individual's full name and title are used only on a first reference. On subsequent references, use just the last name.

**classes and courses:** Use lowercase when you refer to classes and courses, unless you use the specific (and complete) title or the name carries a proper noun or numeral.

*She registered for Biology 101.*

*Her History of Civilization class is cancelled.*

*My chemistry class is fascinating.*



**majors, minors, programs, departments, offices:** Lowercase USF majors, minors, programs of study, departments or offices unless referring to an official title (with the exception of languages, which are proper nouns).

*Mary is a music major.*

*Greg earned a degree in biology.*

*I'm a French major.*

*The Department of Chemical and Biomedical Engineering is part of the College of Engineering.*

*She was accepted into the Environmental Chemistry Program.*

*USF offers a master's program in women's studies.*

**chair** Chair is preferred as a title, not chairman or chairwoman. This differs from AP style. Capitalize as a title only when used before a name as an official title and lowercase when used after the name.

**colleges** Use the official name of a USF college or school on a first reference and then lowercase the word *college* or *school* on second reference. USF has 14 colleges:

College of the Arts

College of Arts and Sciences

College of Behavioral and Community Sciences

Muma College of Business

College of Education

College of Engineering

Patel College of Global Sustainability

Judy Genshaft Honors College

USF Libraries

College of Marine Science

Morsani College of Medicine

College of Nursing

Taneja College of Pharmacy

College of Public Health

**commencement** Capitalize when referring to USF, including season of year – *Spring Commencement* (this is an exception to AP Stylebook guidance)

**composition titles** Put quotation marks around the names of books, long works and compositions, works of art and art exhibitions, legal cases, magazines, journals, pamphlets, brochures, long poems, plays, movies, television series, television programs, musical compositions, and the titles of lectures and speeches.

**curricula, curriculum, curricular** Curriculum is the singular form for a program of academic courses or learning activities (*the mathematics curriculum*). *Curricula* is the plural for curriculum. *Curricular* is the adjective form of curriculum as in *the Chemistry Department's curricular philosophy*.

**curriculum vita, curricula vitae** *Curriculum vita* is singular, *curricula vitae* is plural.

## D

**degrees** See **academic degrees**.

**divisions and affiliates of the university** Capitalize the formal names of schools, academic departments and divisions of the university. Lowercase names that are shortened or reversed.

*Department of Chemistry, chemistry department*

*Office of the President, president's office*

*University Registrar, registrar's office*

Always capitalize units that don't normally use "Office of" or "Department of" in their formal titles.

*Student Success*

*Innovative Education*

*Facilities Operations*

**doctor, doctorate** See **academic degrees**.

**dormitory/dorm** See **residence halls**.

**dual degree** Dual degree, without a hyphen, is the noun. Dual-degree is the adjective.

## E

**emeritus, emerita** Place *emeritus* (masculine, singular) or *emerita* (feminine, singular) after the formal title. Use *emeriti* for plural, both masculine and feminine and *emeritae* for plural, feminine.

*Professor Emeritus Howard Smith*

*Susan Jones, professor emerita*

## F

**faculty** Lowercase. Refers generally to educators holding the rank of professor, associate professor, assistant professor, lecturer, instructor, librarian, associate librarian, or assistant librarian; and central administrative officers, deans and directors, if they also hold regular faculty status. Technically speaking, faculty can take a plural or a singular verb depending on how the word is being used – either to refer to a group as a whole (singular) or to refer to members individually (plural)

*The faculty is present.*

*The faculty agree to meet tomorrow.*

For the sake of clarity, rewrite the sentence to avoid a plural verb or use faculty members. When writing about individuals, use *a faculty member*.

**freshman, freshmen** *Freshman* is singular. *Freshmen* is plural. Use the singular as an adjective as in *freshman class*, *freshman year*. Other alternatives are: *incoming students* or *first-year class*.

**FTIC** Stands for *first time in college*.

**Fulbright** Always takes an initial cap: a *Fulbright research grant*, *Fulbright scholar*.

## G

**GPA** Stands for *grade point average*. Write out for external audiences. USF's grade point average is based on a 4.0 scale.

**graduated** Graduated from is the correct usage.

*He graduated from USF in 1991.*

*The Morsani College of Medicine graduated 100 students.*

**(Not:** *He graduated USF.*)

**GRE** Stands for Graduate Record Examination. *GRE* is acceptable on a first reference. Do not use periods.

## H

**headlines** Only the first word and proper nouns are capitalized. Use numerals for all numbers and single quotes for quotation marks.

**home campus** Determined by the campus where a student's major is available. For some majors, such as dance and engineering, only one home campus exists, while other majors might be delivered on two campuses, and some majors, such as finance, exist on all three campuses. If a major is offered on multiple campuses, the student chooses their home campus. Home campus is not determined by the place of residence, either on-campus or off. A student may reside in Pinellas County or in a St. Petersburg campus residence hall and have a Tampa home campus designation based upon where their major is available. Regardless of the designated home campus, a student may access non-academic services, such as the recreation center, wellness services, counseling, financial aid, etc., on any campus. The full description of home campus is available in Section 3, page 2 in the [\*USF CONSOLIDATION Academic and Student Success Implementation Handbook\*](#).

**homecoming** Always capitalize when referring to *USF Homecoming* as a noun or as an adjective, i.e., *Homecoming* week, *Homecoming* activities. Homecoming is scheduled during football season.

**housing** See **residence halls**.

## L

**living-learning communities** Residential student communities with emphasis on academic major or an area of special interest. USF's living-learning communities include: Bulls Business, Education, Engineering, Judy Genshaft Honors College, Nursing-Public Health, Provost's Scholars Program, Rising Health Professionals, STEM, Women A.R.E. (Advancing and Rising in Engineering), Zimmerman Advertising Program, ROTC and Stonewall Suites.

## N

**nondegree** One word. Use a hyphen in **nondegree-seeking**.

## O

**off campus, on campus** Two words, but hyphenate before a noun.

*He lives on campus.*

*She lives in an off-campus apartment.*

## organizational titles

*Steven Currall is the president of the University of South Florida.*

*Martin Tadlock is the regional chancellor of USF's St. Petersburg campus or Martin Tadlock is the USF St. Petersburg campus regional chancellor.*

*Karen Holbrook is the regional chancellor of USF's Sarasota-Manatee campus.*

USF has both multi-campus deans and campus deans. For example:

- *Eric Eisenberg is the dean of USF's College of Arts and Sciences.*
- *Magali Michael is the St. Petersburg campus dean of the USF College of Arts and Sciences.*

## P

**p.m., a.m.** Lowercase, with period. Avoid the redundant *8 a.m. this morning*.

## postdoctoral

## postgraduate

## prelaw

## premed

## preprofessional

**president** In text, the word president is capitalized only when it appears as a formal title before the name.

*USF President Steven Currall spoke at the ceremony.*

On a second reference, it is lowercase.

*The president also answered questions from the audience.*

*She is running for president.*

## presidents of the University of South Florida

 Terms of service:

John Allen – 1957-1970

Cecil Mackey – 1971-1976

John Lott Brown – 1978-1988

Francis T. Borkowski – 1988-1993

Betty Castor – 1994-1999

Judy Genshaft – 2000-2019

Steven C. Currall – 2019-present

**professor** Capitalize only if it precedes a proper name. Lowercase if it refers to a generic description and is not an actual title. Treat *associate professor* and *assistant professor* in the same manner.

## R

**residence halls** Use the term *residence halls*, not dorms or dormitories. Residence hall should not be used after the proper name of the hall.

*Jane Thomas lives in Endeavor Hall.*

## S

**SAT** Stands for Scholastic Aptitude Test. *SAT* is acceptable on first reference. Do not use periods.

**scholar** Lowercase except when used with named scholarships.

*USF Presidential Scholars Award*

*National Hispanic Scholars*

**scholarship** Lowercase except when used with proper names.

*Joe applied for the USF Honors College Scholarship*

*Mary received a scholarship.*

**seasons** Lowercase *spring*, *summer*, *fall*, *winter* and derivatives such as *springtime* unless part of a formal name, i.e., *Winter Olympics*; *Spring Commencement* (USF only)

**semesters** Lowercase references to semesters in text.

*She will teach during the fall semester.*

**Student Success** Previously known as “Student Affairs & Student Success”. Do not use “Office of” or “Division of”.

**study abroad** Do not hyphenate study abroad.

*USF offers many study abroad programs.*

*Next summer I will study abroad.*

*She is going to study abroad for a semester.*

*USF’s study abroad program is extensive.*

**SUS** Refers to the State University System of Florida, which consists of 12 public universities throughout the state. Use State University System on first reference and SUS on subsequent references. The universities are:

Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University (FAMU)  
Florida Atlantic University (FAU)  
Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU)  
Florida International University (FIU)  
Florida Polytechnic University (FPU)  
Florida State University (FSU)  
New College of Florida (NCF)  
University of Central Florida (UCF)  
University of Florida (UF)  
University of North Florida (UNF)  
University of South Florida (USF)  
University of West Florida (UWF)

**syllabus, syllabi** Syllabus is singular. Syllabi is plural.

## T

**tenure, tenured** *tenure* is a noun; *tenured* is an adjective.

**trustee** Capitalize when used before a name as a title. Lowercase when used as a generic description or after a name.

## U

**University of South Florida/USF** Refers to the singular entity that includes campuses in Tampa, St. Petersburg and Sarasota-Manatee. Spell out on first reference. After establishing you are talking about the University of South Florida on first reference, it's acceptable to use Tampa campus, St. Petersburg campus or Sarasota-Manatee campus or simply "campus" on second reference, without "USF".

**USF Alumni Association** Capitalize on first reference. Lowercase on subsequent references when referring to the alumni association.

**USF Foundation** Capitalize on first reference. Lowercase *foundation* on second reference.

**USF Health** The overarching organization for the health disciplines, including the multi-disciplinary faculty practice plan consisting of doctors and allied health professionals. USF Health is based primarily on the Tampa campus; some programs involve facilities, clinical sites and campuses throughout Tampa Bay. They include:

The Morsani College of Medicine, which offers an MD program that is based, in part, on the South Tampa campus (located in downtown Tampa).

The South Tampa Center for Advanced Healthcare, a clinical facility offering multi-specialty care for patients close to USF's primary hospital partner, Tampa General Hospital.

The Morsani Center for Advanced Healthcare, which offers multi-specialty care on the Tampa campus.

The Center for Advanced Medical Learning and Simulation (often referred to as CAMLS), located in downtown Tampa, is one of the world's largest free-standing simulation facilities dedicated exclusively to training health care professionals.

The College of Nursing has most of its programs on the Tampa campus, but also offers courses on the St. Petersburg and Sarasota-Manatee campuses.

Use the full names of USF Health colleges on first reference:

USF Health Morsani College of Medicine

USF Health College of Nursing

USF Health Taneja College of Pharmacy

USF Health College of Public Health

If for a national audience, identify USF Health as part of the university:

*USF Health at the University of South Florida, Northwell Health, Formlabs and Tampa General Hospital join forces to create 3D printed nasal swabs to test for COVID-19*