

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

WRITING GUIDELINES

In general, use the *Associated Press Stylebook*. For materials for formal occasions or smaller, more targeted audiences (such as invitations, holiday cards or event programs), use your own judgment.

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12th Man

Do not use superscript in reference to the 12th Man Foundation or the tradition of students standing during football games and other athletic events.

abbreviations and acronyms

In general, do not use abbreviations or acronyms that the reader would not quickly recognize. Never abbreviate university, department or association.

Abbreviations of degrees, expressions of time and names of countries take periods with no space between the elements.

- Ph.D.
- a.m.
- U.S.

To prevent awkward line breaks in printed material, do not put a space between initials used as a first name.

- E.B. White

Do not use periods in abbreviations of phrases longer than two words or when each letter is pronounced.

- FBI
- NATO

Add an "s" but no apostrophe to plural forms of abbreviations.

- The committee was made up of CEOs and CFOs.

The first mention of organizations, firms, agencies, groups, etc., should be spelled out.

- The Texas A&M Engineering Experiment Station is the state's primary engineering research agency. TEES was established in 1914.

academic degrees (also see Dr. and doctoral/doctorate)

If your readers might not be familiar with academic degrees, it usually is better to use a phrase instead of an abbreviation.

- John Jones, who has a doctorate in psychology, said his study found that the salaries of web designers should be doubled.

Use an apostrophe.

- bachelor's degree, master's degree and so on.

Uppercase when spelled out.

- Bachelor of Arts, Master of Arts, Doctor of Philosophy and so on.

Use abbreviations such as B.A., B.S., M.A., M.S. and Ph.D. (with no spaces between letters) only when needed to identify many individuals by degree on first reference or if usage would make the preferred form cumbersome. Spell out all others. Use these only after the person's full name, and set the abbreviation off by commas.

- John Wimberly, Ph.D., is president of the National Association of Underwater Basketweaving Professionals.

academic colleges and departments

Capitalize only if referring to a specific academic unit by its full, proper name.

- College of Geosciences
- history department
- Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences
- She is a professor of mechanical engineering.

academic titles

Lowercase and spell out titles when not used with an individual's name.

- The dean gave the Mays Business School communications staff the week off.

Capitalize and spell out when a title precedes a name.

- President Young and Chancellor Sharp met yesterday to discuss the dean's decision to give the communications staff the week off.

Very long titles are more readable when placed after a name.

- Dr. Jerry R. Strawser, executive vice president for finance and administration, and chief financial officer, read the newspaper while drinking coffee.

advisor/adviser

While the Associated Press prefers adviser unless advisor is part of an official title, both spellings appear to be in use at Texas A&M. Pick one and be consistent.

ages

Always use figures.

- The 17-year-old took graduate-level courses.
- The student, who switched his major 11 times, is 32 years old.
- The dean is in her 60s. (No apostrophe)

Aggie Band

See Fightin' Texas Aggie Band

Aggie Moms

See Federation of Texas A&M University Mothers' Clubs

alumnus, alumna, alumni, alumnae

Alumnus (alumni in the plural) refers to a man who has graduated from a school. Alumna (alumnae in the plural, but rarely used) refers to a woman who has graduated from a school. Alumni is plural and includes men and women. In most cases, "former student" is preferred for a Texas A&M graduate or student who attended without graduating.

- Although she was an alumna of the University of Texas (and chair of its alumni association), she encourages everyone she knows to attend Texas A&M.
- Several former students are well-known authors of science fiction: Steven Gould, Russell Lutz, Martha Wells '86 and Gene Wolfe.

baccalaureate

In most cases, the less formal "bachelor's degree" is preferred.

Board of Regents

Use The Texas A&M University System Board of Regents for the first reference.

Use the following after the first reference.

- A&M System Board of Regents
- Texas A&M System Board of Regents

Lowercase "board" and "regents" if used separately.

- At its last meeting, the board voted to hire more writers to help tell the Texas A&M story.

capitalization (see also committee names and dean's list)

Capitalize official names; do not capitalize unofficial, informal, shortened or generic names. Do not capitalize when used in phrases:

- The museum expects record attendance at its new exhibit, "Brand Council: The Untold Story."

- The College of Engineering (but the engineering college)
- Texas Task Force 1 (but the task force)

Capitalize names of celebrations or events:

- Parents' Weekend
- March to the Brazos

Do not capitalize seasons, semesters or academic periods other than Spring Break:

- Dr. Rollins will teach the Philosophy and History of Adult Education class next semester. He will not teach advanced geology.
- After losing the bet, he let his beard grow from the fall semester through Spring Break.
- She enrolled in fall 2016 but decided to postpone her education after winning the lottery.

capital/capitol

Capital refers to the city; capitol refers to the building where the seat of government is housed. Capitalize when referring to the building. "Capitol building" is redundant.

- The Capitol is in Austin, the capital city of Texas.

chairman

Use chairman or chair in referencing the Board of Regents, even for females.

class year

As appropriate, include the last two digits of the class year after the name, with an inverted apostrophe, as in the examples below. When referring to a former student with multiple degrees, list the degrees in the order in which they were received. When referring to a couple who are both former students, include the last two digits of the class year with an apostrophe after each person's name.

- Mays Business School is the namesake of Lowry Mays '57.
- "Northgate had fewer bars and more pickup trucks when I was a student," said John O'Reilly '77, '79 (MBA).
- Marvin '98 and Marlene Finkelstein Smith '03

committee names (also see capitalization)

Capitalize the full names of committees.

- The Academic Affairs Committee will meet tomorrow. The committee will discuss proposed new courses.

Dr. (also see academic degrees, and titles)

Since most readers outside academia identify "Dr." only with physicians, make clear what the title means. Use M.D. following the name of a physician. Use both with the first reference only, and the last name only thereafter. Do not use for people who hold only honorary degrees.

doctoral/doctorate (also see academic degrees)

Use doctoral as an adjective and doctorate as a noun.

- She received her doctoral degree last Saturday.
- She received her doctorate in English.

em dash

Put a space on both sides of the dash.

- Leadership — a Texas A&M core value — is developed through more than 1,000 student-led clubs and organizations.

emeritus/emerita/emeritae/emeriti

Honorary title bestowed on select retired faculty members. Use emeritus when referring to men, and emerita for women. Emeritae is the plural feminine form; emeriti is plural for a group of men, or a group of men and women.

faculty

Singular when used as a collective noun.

- The faculty was protesting the requirement to end each class with “Thanks, and Gig ‘em!”

Federation of Texas A&M University Mothers’ Clubs

Also known as the “Aggie Moms,” this group — the only one of its kind — was organized in 1928 and contributes nearly \$300,000 per year in scholarships and donations to Texas A&M.

Fightin’ Texas Aggie Band

Use an apostrophe to indicate the missing “g.”

fiscal year

Do not capitalize when spelled out. When abbreviated, capitalize and put a space between FY and the year.

- She planned to give her lottery winnings to the university in fiscal year 2018.
- The university’s FY 2019 budget will reflect her generous donation.

fundraising/fundraiser

One word in all cases.

Gameday

One word

Gig ‘em

Two words. Capitalize and use an inverted apostrophe.

grades

Use a capital letter when referring to a grade. When plural, use an apostrophe.

- She made all A's last year.

Half-staff/half-mast

Flags are lowered to half-staff, not half-mast.

international students

This phrase is preferred over foreign students.

internet

Associated Press style no longer requires capitalization.

land-grant university

Hyphenate when used as an adjective.

legislation

Refer to bills as House Bill 1 or Senate Bill 1, or as H.B. 1 or S.B. 1 (periods but no space between the letters, with a space between the letters and number).

legislative

Do not capitalize unless it begins a sentence.

- That is a legislative matter, not a judicial one.

legislative special item

Do not capitalize.

legislature

Capitalize when referencing a particular legislative body. Do not capitalize when used as a generic term.

- The law-making body in a democracy is called a legislature.
- The Legislature meets every other year in Austin.

matriculate

Matriculate means to enroll, not graduate. Use this term sparingly in external communications since many readers might not be familiar with the term.

Nobel Prize

It's the Nobel Prize in physics, physiology or medicine, but the Nobel Peace Prize and the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economics. A recipient is a Nobel laureate. "Received" or "was awarded" is preferred over "won."

Spring Break

Capitalize

state/federal

Capitalize when referring to a governmental entity, but not when referring to geographical areas or systems/theories of government.

- The current State budget is the largest in history.
- The student is from the state of Arkansas.
- The city is seeking federal aid to help with rebuilding costs.

student employee

This phrase is preferred over student worker.

tailgate

One word

Texas A&M University System, The

Use "The Texas A&M University System" on first reference (with "The" capitalized) and "A&M System" or "Texas A&M System" on second reference. Do not put a space between the letters and ampersand (e.g., A & M).

Texas A&M University System members

When referencing A&M System universities and agencies, always use the institution's complete name on first reference and its preferred acronym or abbreviation on second reference. Texas A&M's two branch campuses use "at" in their names, and the other universities use an en dash.

First reference

Texas A&M University

Texas A&M University at Galveston

Texas A&M University at Qatar

Prairie View A&M University

Texas A&M University-Commerce

Tarleton State University

Second reference

Texas A&M

TAMUG

Texas A&M at Qatar

PVAMU

A&M-Commerce

Tarleton

West Texas A&M University	WTAMU
Texas A&M University-Kingsville	Texas A&M-Kingsville
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi	A&M-Corpus Christi
Texas A&M International University	TAMIU
Texas A&M University-Texarkana	TAMUT
Texas A&M University-Central Texas	A&M-Central Texas
Texas A&M University-San Antonio	A&M-San Antonio
Texas A&M AgriLife Research	AgriLife Research
Texas A&M Engineering Experiment Station	TEES
Texas A&M Forest Service	TFS
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service	AgriLife Extension
Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service	TEEX
Texas A&M Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory	TVMDL
Texas A&M Transportation Institute	TTI
Texas A&M System Sponsored Research Services	SRS
Texas A&M System Technology Commercialization	TTC

titles

Capitalize when used before a name (but not after), and for the full names of offices.

- President Michael Young
- John Sharp, chancellor of the A&M System
- Office of Admissions

trademarks

For the first mention of any trademarked brand, use the trade name followed by ® or ™. After the first mention, use the trade name without the ® or ™.

United States

Spell out as a noun; abbreviate (with no space between the letters) as an adjective.

- The United States is a popular destination for students from China.
- The official U.S. policy has not changed.

work-study

Lowercase and hyphenated

years

In most cases, except to indicate a graduating class year, use the full four digits. Do not use an apostrophe to indicate spans of decades or centuries.

- Enrollment for fall 2016 rose sharply.
- He graduated in the 1990s.
- Her research topic was French literature from 1650 to 1700.
- The banner read, "The Class of '07 welcomes you to Aggieland."