

SOUTHERN ARKANSAS UNIVERSITY

*Style*  
*Styleguide*  
*guide*

Fall 2011

# ABBREVIATIONS

- When an abbreviation is not quickly recognizable, spell out the entire name in the first reference. The abbreviation, generally without periods, can be used thereafter.
- Southern Arkansas University, Magnolia, should be spelled out in the first reference. The identifying abbreviation may be omitted following the reference because of its customary usage among schools. “SAU” or “the University” may be used thereafter.

All documents going to State of Arkansas officials or offices must use Southern Arkansas University, Magnolia and SAUM since this is the official state designation. This will prevent confusion.

- The abbreviations “for example” and “that is” should be preceded by and followed by commas, and periods should be used.

, i.e., e.g.,

# ALUMNI

- Identify past and current students by their class years with an apostrophe before the year.

Bruce Maloch '80 is president of the Alumni Board.

- alumna = feminine
- alumnae = feminine plural
- alum, alumnus = masculine
- alumni = male plural or male and female plural

# AMPERSANDS

- Use an ampersand only when it is part of an organization's formal name. An ampersand should never replace the word "and" otherwise.

The Department of Theatre and Mass Communication

# APOSTROPHES

- Use an apostrophe to indicate where letters are omitted in a contraction.

It's so easy if you're familiar with the rules.

- Do not use an apostrophe to indicate a plural; use the apostrophe only to indicate possession.

Southern Arkansas University reached its highest enrollment last year.

The University's baseball team is one of the best in the nation.

The Joneses and the Johnsons were among those in attendance.

The 1980s were good for the University.

# CAPITALIZATION

- Do not capitalize words to make them seem important. Important words and phrases carry their own weight.
- Use lower case for civil and professional titles unless they immediately precede the name.

SAU's vice president for student affairs is Dr. Donna Allen.

Dr. David Rankin, Southern Arkansas University System president, will be in attendance.

Southern Arkansas University President Dr. David Rankin.

➤ **Exceptions:**

A title may be capitalized when it appears on the line following the name when using tabbed listings.

David Crouse  
Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs

➤ **Capitalize academic degrees in the following manner:**

Ph.D., B.S.N., M.S.N.  
(always use periods between the initials for degrees and exclude spaces after the periods)

doctoral degree, master's degree, bachelor's degree, associate's degree

She earned a bachelor of arts degree in journalism.  
(The word "degree" should not follow a degree abbreviation, example: He has a B.A. in history.)

B.S.N. and M.S.N. always come before nursing credentials such as RN, RNC. No periods used on nursing credentials.

➤ **Capitalize an academic subject only when it is the name of a language or is followed by a course number.**

He majored in engineering technology with a minor in Spanish.

Dr. Linda Selman teaches technical writing.

Dr. Linda Selman teaches Technical Writing 3102.

➤ **Capitalize the word "university" when referring specifically to Southern Arkansas University.**

He is a graduate of the University.

## CAPITALIZATION CONTINUED

- Capitalize the formal names of SAU's schools, departments, divisions, offices and organizations. Lower case all subsequent references when the formal name is not used in its entirety.

The Brinson Fine Arts Building has beautiful exhibits.

The school is growing at an alarming rate.

Bronwyn Sneed is the director of the Office of Financial Aid.

Bronwyn Sneed is the director of financial aid.

- In titles of works (such as novels, essays, and professional papers), capitalize the first words, the last words and all the principal words, including those that follow hyphens in compound terms. As a general rule, capitalize all words of four or more letters that fall in the middle of a title.

“Focusing on International Entrepreneurship: A New Contribution of Business Education for a Changing Economy”

“The Teaching of Spanish in English-Speaking Countries”

- Lower case seasons.

More than 1,250 students have registered for the spring semester.

- Lower case when indicating a direction; capitalize when referring to a region of the country.

Southern Arkansas University is located in the southwest part of Arkansas.

He is from the Deep South.

# COLONS

- Use a colon after an independent clause to list, restate, clarify, or illustrate. Do not use a colon where a semicolon is appropriate.

Illustrate the correct usage of the following punctuation marks: commas, semicolons and colons.

Quality is a concern; our reputation is based on it.

# COMMAS

- In a series use commas to separate items but no comma before a conjunction. Example: We bought eggs, milk and cheese at the store.

The flag is red, white and blue.

The University offers classes in nursing, sociology, social work and history.

- Use a comma to separate adjectives equal in rank and the word “and” could be inserted without changing the intent of the statement.

He considered the situation in a thoughtful, precise manner.

The tickets will be sold on a first-come, first-served basis.

- Introductory phrases such as “Last year” and “In 1966” do not require commas. When in doubt, **leave it out**.

In 1966 the board was established.

- When a conjunction such as “and,” “but” or “for” links two clauses that could stand alone as separate sentences, use a comma before the conjunction.

He teaches English, and she teaches history.

# DATES

- Spell out the names of months when standing alone or with a year alone.

November 2000

- When a month is used with a specific date, abbreviate it if it contains six or more letters.

Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov.

- Do not use a comma between month and year or season and year.

The Imon E. Bruce Student Center was dedicated in October 1991.

- A comma should follow the year when used with a month and day.

The students gathered on Oct. 17, 1985, for a birthday celebration.

- Do not use ordinal numbers (1st, 2nd, . . . ) in a date.

Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov.

- Always spell out the days of the week.

The game will begin at 1 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 17.

# EMPHASIS

- Limit over emphasis in text. Never use All Caps, Bold, Underline, and Italics at the same time.

NEVER DO THIS!

- Limit the use of ALL CAPS. It is difficult to read. In e-mail, all caps is associated with shouting.
- **Bold** is recommended for emphasis.
- Limit the number of fonts used in a document.

Fonts commonly used in SAU publications include:  
Times New Roman  
Arial  
Century Gothic

# HYPHENS

- Hyphenate compound words that are used as adjectives.

full-time job, on-campus housing, triple-option offense, so-called neurosis, 12-year-old boy

- Do not hyphenate compound words that have an “-ly” ending or those that are used as nouns.

widely known speaker, sensibly tailored suit, firmly held opinion, sharply reduced prices

- Whenever self is used as a prefix, it must be followed by a hyphen.

self-confidence, self-esteem, self-denial, self-taught

## **HYPHENS CONTINUED**

- “Suspension” hyphens are always used when parts of the compound words are separated from each other.

In second-and third-down situations, the coach usually sends in a pass-option play.

- Do not hyphenate “vice president.”

Roger Giles is the vice president for administration and general counsel.  
Vice President Roger Giles will give the report.

- Hyphenate part-time and full-time when using it as a compound modifier (adjective).

She works part time.  
He has a full-time job.

- Do not hyphenate African American.

## **INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE**

- Don't say “he” when referring to an unspecified person. Instead, rephrase the sentence into the plural, or avoid the use of pronouns altogether.

The students' papers are due on Tuesday.

- Avoid gender specific titles or terms.

Roger Giles is the vice president for administration and general counsel.  
Vice President Roger Giles will give the report.

- Avoid stereotypes: Age, gender, national or ethnic background, disabilities need not be mentioned at all, unless they are relevant to the story.

Be sensitive.

people with hearing impairments (instead of the deaf), people with disabilities (instead of disabled or handicapped), person with AIDS (instead of victim of AIDS), gay person (instead of homosexual), wheelchair-user (instead of wheelchair-bound).

# LOGO

- The University logo should be used in all documents pertaining to SAU.

programs, brochures, letterhead, publications, t-shirts, flyers, etc.

- The logo should be sized proportionally by holding down the shift key, placing the cursor on a corner of the logo before pulling to size the logo.



correct proportions



incorrect proportions



incorrect proportions

# MASCOT

- The University mascot, the Mulerider, is intended only for athletic or student activity uses.



# NUMBERS

- As a general rule, spell out numbers one through nine; use figures starting with 10. Spell out first through ninth; use figures starting with 10th.

The Muleriders made a first down.  
She was 14th in her graduating class.

- Express related numbers in a series in the same style.

Four freshmen, twenty sophomores and three juniors  
attended class.

- Always spell out numbers at the beginning of a sentence.

Fifteen sophomores attended the meeting.

- When large numbers must be spelled out, use a hyphen to connect a word ending in “y” to another word.

Thirty-seven students registered for the class.

- Use a comma in numbers of 1,000 and above, except for temperatures and dates.
- Always use numerals with abbreviations or symbols and in addresses, dates, decimal fractions, and page references. Please note, however, that abbreviations and symbols are primarily reserved for tabular indexing and are rarely used in text material.

## QUOTATION MARKS

- Quotation marks appear in pairs with one exception. If an individual's dialogue extends more than a paragraph, put quotation marks at the beginning of each paragraph but at the end of only the final paragraph.
- In general, quotations within quotations require single marks.

She asked, "Have you read the poem 'To Autumn' by Keats?"

- Commas and periods should be placed inside the closing quotation marks in all circumstances.

"I'll let you know in the morning," he replied.

- Colons and semicolons appearing at the end of a quote should always be placed outside the closing quotation marks.

The bird said "Nevermore"; I said, "Why do you always take such a negative attitude?"

## QUOTATION MARKS CONTINUED

- Question marks, exclamation points, and dashes go either inside or outside the closing quotation marks depending on their function. If they are punctuating the quoted material itself, they go inside.

“Is it healthy to sit around all day and watch television?” he asked.

Do you think the bird could be taught to say “I’ll think it over and get back with you later”?

## SEMICOLONS

- Semicolons may be used to connect closely related independent clauses not joined by coordinating conjunctions.

I have ordered the book you requested; we no longer have it in stock.

- Semicolons may be used to separate a series of items that require internal commas.

He traveled to Austin, Texas; Baltimore, Md.; Norman, Okla.; Phoenix, Ariz.; and South Bend, Ind.

# STATES (ABBREVIATIONS)

Ala.	Kan.	Nev.	S.C.
Ariz.	Ky.	N.H.	S.D.
Ark.	La.	N.J.	Tenn.
Calif.	Md.	N.M.	Vt.
Colo.	Mass.	N.Y.	Va.
Conn.	Mich.	N.C.	Wash.
Del.	Minn.	N.D.	W.Va.
Fla.	Miss.	Okla.	Wis.
Ga.	Mo.	Ore.	Wyo.
Ill.	Mont.	Pa.	
Ind.	Neb.	R.I.	

- The two states that are not part of the continental United States, Hawaii and Alaska, and the continental states that have five letters or fewer, Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Ohio, Texas, and Utah, should not be abbreviated. Do not use the postal abbreviations.
- A comma should follow the name of a state when preceded by a city.

The Magnolia, Ark., contingent traveled to Dallas.

# TITLES

- In general, underline or italicize the titles of works published independently and use quotation marks for the titles of works published within larger works.
- Use full names preceded by an earned title such as Dr., Rev., or Lt. Col. in first references only. Do not use a courtesy title such as Mr., Miss, or Ms. Use the last name only in subsequent references unless a title is necessary to identify persons with the same last name.

# TITLES (ETHNIC GROUPS)

- The preferred usage for African Americans is “black.” The term is not capitalized.
- Preferred usage for Caucasians is “white,” also not capitalized.
- Preferred usage for Asian people is “Asian,” capitalized. Please note that in British usage the term applies only to people of the Indian Subcontinent.
- “American Indian,” capitalized with no hyphen, is preferred over “Native American.”

# TITLES (SEASONS)

- Lowercase “spring,” “summer,” “fall” and “winter” and derivatives such as “wintertime” unless part of a formal name: I love Paris in the springtime; the Winter Olympics.

# TRADEMARKS

- The University owns registered trademarks relating to logos and word marks. Due to federal restrictions on trademarks, and to protect the University's interest in the trademarks, the following guidelines must always be followed.

- **WORD MARKS**

MULERIDER and MULRIDERS must always be followed by the ® symbol.

- **LOGOS**

The University's logos as they appear on in the Style Guide sections "Logo" and "Mascot" must always be accompanied by the TM symbol.

- All merchandise carrying the University's trademarks must be manufactured by a licensed vendor. This also applies to merchandise that is being sold or given away by on-campus groups or organizations.
- Questions about the University's trademark and licensing program should be directed to Jeremy Langley, assistant to the president for special projects.

# WEB SPECIFIC STYLES

## UNDERSTAND YOUR PURPOSE AND AUDIENCE

*Guideline:* Identify and clearly articulate the primary goals of the website before beginning the design or content creation process.

- Ensure the content meets user expectations.
- Do not use words that typical users may not understand.
- Do not use unfamiliar or undefined acronyms or abbreviations.
- Compose sentences in active rather than passive voice.

## AVOID SURPRISES

*Guideline:* Do not have unsolicited windows or graphics ‘pop-up’ to users.

- Links should open in the same window.
- Links to Word documents [.doc], PDF files [.pdf], Excel spreadsheets [.xls], Zip files [.zip], etc., should be clearly labeled as such to indicate to the user that a download or non-html file load will take place.

## PROVIDE TEXT EQUIVALENTS FOR NON-TEXT ELEMENTS

*Guideline:* Provide a text equivalent for every non-text element that conveys information. This means descriptive alternative and title text for images, videos, and even text links.

## AVOID CLUTTERED DISPLAYS

*Guideline:* Create pages that are not considered cluttered by users.

- Use bold text only when it is important to draw the user’s attention to a specific piece of information. Do not bold entire sentences or paragraphs.
- Images should be relevant to the content and add value to the information presented.

- Information should be logically organized with descriptive headers.
- Use normal capitalization and punctuation. WE DON'T USE ALL CAPS ON THE WEBSITE.

### ESTABLISH LEVEL OF IMPORTANCE

*Guideline:* Establish a high-to-low level of importance for information and infuse this approach throughout each page on the website. Research shows users scan (vs. read) Web content. Make your content easily scannable.

- Include the primary theme and scope in the first sentence of each paragraph.
- Arrange lists and tasks in an order that best facilitates efficient and successful user performance.
- Place a list's most important items at the top.
- Display a series of related items in a vertical list rather than as continuous text.
- Provide an introductory heading at the top of each list.

### SET APPROPRIATE PAGE LENGTHS

*Guideline:* Make page-length decisions that support the primary use of the Web page. Break up large pages by using document structure appropriate headers (in the correctly nested order) and bullet lists. Use descriptive headers liberally. Evaluate breaking large blocks of copy into multiple pages.

## LINKS:

- Use link labels and concepts that are meaningful, understandable, and easily differentiated by users.
  - “Chemistry degree plan” vs “click here to learn more about our chemistry degree requirements”
- Provide links to other pages in the website with related content.
- Make the link text consistent with the title or headings on the destination (target) page.
- Items that are not clickable should not appear to be. Do not underline text for emphasis.
- Use text links rather than image links (“buttons”).

## WEB TERMS

cyberspace  
database  
dot-com  
DSL  
e-mail  
home page  
hypertext

hyperlink  
intranet  
Internet  
login  
logoff  
logon  
online

shareware  
Web page  
Webcast  
webmaster  
website  
World Wide Web



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