

EDITORIAL **STYLE GUIDE**



MERCY COLLEGE
OF HEALTH SCIENCES

MERCY COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES

03.10.20

A

abbreviations

(See also: “academic degrees, credentials,” “e.g.,” “etc.,” “et al.,” and “initials”)

- When using an abbreviation, spell out the full name on first occurrence, followed by the abbreviation in parentheses. Do not separate initials with periods. Use the abbreviation for all subsequent references.
 - **Example:** Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN)
- Widely understood abbreviations do not have to be spelled out on the first occurrence.
 - **Ex:** PhD, GPS, EMS, EKG, CPR
- Avoid unfamiliar abbreviations on first reference. Do not use abbreviations at all unless there are multiple references. When possible, substitute a clear synonym such as “the organization,” “the foundation,” “the consortium,” etc.
- An abbreviation can be used in headlines and spelled out for the first time in body copy.
- When using an abbreviation that begins with a consonant but uses a vowel sound, use the indefinite article “an.”
 - **Ex:** A medical assistant has many tasks. An MA performs general clerical tasks.

academic course titles

- Capitalize full names of courses; do not use italics or quotation marks
 - **Ex:** He took the course Servant Leadership.
- Lowercase when not referring to proper name of course
 - **Ex:** He first met Professor Davidson while taking his course on servant leadership.
- Continuing Education and Community Courses
 - Advanced Cardiovascular Life Support
 - Advanced EKG
 - Advanced Medical Life Support
 - AHA Instructor Classes
 - Basic EKG
 - CPR and First Aid
 - EMS Safety
 - PALS and PEARS
 - Pediatric Education for Pre-Hospital Professionals
 - Pre-Hospital Trauma Life Support

academic degrees, credentials

(See also: “majors, minors, programs,” and “professional titles”)

academic degrees

- Lowercase type of degree when used generically.
- Add an apostrophe and an “s” to describe bachelor’s and master’s degrees only. Do not use possessive with associate, certificate, or doctorate.
 - associate degree
 - bachelor’s degree
 - master’s degree
 - doctorate (Do not use “doctorate degree.”)
- Capitalize specific degrees. Do not use “degree” after giving full title of degree.

- Bachelor of Arts
- Bachelor of Science
 - **Ex:** David earned his Bachelor of Arts in English. (**Not:** David earned his Bachelor of Arts degree.)

credentials

- When referring to Mercy College of Health Science faculty, refer to their abbreviated credentials on first reference. On second reference, use Professor Smith or Dr. Smith.
- When listing credentials for an individual, begin with the highest degree achieved. Progress in descending order. Separate credentials from the individual's name and subsequent credentials with commas.
 - **Ex:** Sr. Mary Perpetua, RSM, PhD, RN
 - **Note:** Religious credentials or designations typically take precedence.
- In copy, use only highest credential attained.
- If possible, avoid using JD. Restructure to accommodate.
 - **Ex:** Malcolm Reynolds earned his law degree from Notre Dame University.
- Do not use periods between initials of credentials.
- Never use academic title with credentials. In prose, set off credentials with commas.
 - **Ex:** Mercy College President Natalie Adams, PhD, gave the Commencement address.

academic honors

- Students may earn degree honors upon graduation such as summa cum laude, magna cum laude, or cum laude. Honors should be listed in lowercase with no italics.
 - **Ex:** Sarah graduated cum laude in 2016.

academic titles

- (*See also: "academic degrees, credentials," "administrative departments and offices," "chair, chairman, chairwoman," and "professional titles"*)

academic year

- Use shortened range with a hyphen.
 - **Ex:** 2016-17 academic year (**not** 2016-2017 academic year)

addresses

- Abbreviate street names (Ave., Blvd., St.) only with a numbered address.
 - **Ex:** He lived at 301 Grand Ave., Des Moines.
 - **Ex:** He lived on Grand Avenue in Des Moines.
- Always spell out *Alley, Circle, Drive, Road, and Terrace*.
- In formal uses, spell out numbered street names first through ninth. Use figures for 10th and higher.
 - **Ex:** Parking for the event will be available off of Sixth Avenue.
 - **Ex:** The College is located at 928 Sixth Ave.

administrative departments and offices

- Do not capitalize names of administrative departments when using the name as a modifier referring specifically to those areas within Mercy College.
 - **Ex:** The marketing department is working on the invitation.

- **Ex:** This week, the president's office will announce details of a new nursing program beginning this fall.
- **Ex:** The library will be closed on Monday for the holiday.
- Refer only to approved Mercy College of Health Sciences departments and offices, listed below.
 - Admissions
 - Business Office
 - Campus Ministry
 - Financial Aid
 - Human Resources
 - Information Technology
 - Institutional Research & Effectiveness
 - Library
 - Marketing
 - President's Office
 - Registrar's Office
 - Student Health Services
 - Student Support Services

advisor

- Not *adviser*.

affect, effect

- *Affect* is a verb meaning "to influence." Avoid using *affect* as a noun.
 - **Ex:** His score on the nursing test will affect his grade.
- *Effect* as a verb means "to cause."
 - **Ex:** The new president will effect many changes.
- *Effect* as a noun means "result."
 - **Ex:** Their research measures the effects of high-fidelity simulation.

ages

- Always use figures when referring to people. Ages used as a noun or as an adjective before a noun require hyphens.
 - **Ex:** The student is 19 years old.
 - **Ex:** The 19-year-old student won the prize.
- In all other cases, spell out numerals one through nine.
 - **Ex:** The building is six years old. He worked at Mercy College for 11 years.
- An age range does not require an apostrophe.
 - **Ex:** The professor was in his 50s.

alphabetizing

- Alphabetize names by the order of letters in the full last name. Disregard punctuation and spacing.
 - **Ex:** *Smith* would be alphabetized with *SMI*; *McDonald* would be *MCD*.
 - **Ex:** *O'Malley* would be alphabetized with *OMA*; *de Angelo* would be *DEA*.
- Company names and foundations should be alphabetized by last name if it is clearly a person's name. In all other cases, otherwise, alphabetize by the first major word.

- **Ex:** *Carver Trust Foundation* would be under “C”; *The Iowa Heart Scholarship* would be under “I.”

alumni

- Never italicize.
- Casual references to *alums* should be avoided.
- Pay attention to number and gender.
 - One man is an *alumnus*.
 - One woman is an *alumna*.
 - Several men or a group of men and women are *alumni*.
 - Several women are *alumnae*.

alumni names, class years

alumni names

- To designate an individual as an alumnus/a of Mercy College of Health Sciences, use the name followed by the last two digits of the graduation year.
- If the alumna is married, include her maiden name (name used as a student) followed by her married name.
 - **Ex:** Erica Jones Brown '82 (Jones is maiden name)
- No comma before or after the year.
 - **Ex:** Rhonda Jones '75 has recently retired.
- For Mercy School of Nursing graduates, use an “S” before the class year (no space).
 - **Ex:** Elizabeth Parker Smith S'56
- When referring to a couple in which only one is an alumnus/a, place the class year next to the name of the alumnus/a to avoid confusion.
 - If Doug Smith is an alumnus and his wife is not: *Susan and Doug Smith '88*
 - In prose, it is acceptable to use the following structure: *Doug Smith '88 and his wife, Susan, attended the event.*

class years

- Capitalize the “C” when referring to a particular class with the year.
- Use the complete year for alumni who graduated more than 100 years ago.
 - **Ex:** The Class of 1999 celebrated its reunion.
 - **Ex:** Patricia Davis, Class of 1914, celebrates her birthday.

am, pm

(See also: “time, time zones,”)

- Do not use periods. Lowercase.
- Also see “time”.

ampersand (&)

- Do not use an ampersand to replace “and” unless it is part of the name of an organization or company.
 - **Ex:** Great Lakes Community Higher Education Corporation & Affiliates

apostrophes, plurals, possessives

apostrophes

- Use an apostrophe to show where numbers have been omitted from years: '63

- Use an apostrophe to indicate possessives. Except in the rare instances described below, do not use apostrophes to indicate plurals.

plurals

- Do not use apostrophes to form the plural of years or age ranges.
 - **Ex:** He was born in the 1960s. He is in his 50s.
- Do not use apostrophes for plural acronyms.
 - **Ex:** After the tour, we'll answer some FAQs.
 - **Ex:** The VIPs gathered at the event.
- When using plural letters, add an apostrophe and "s" to avoid confusion.
 - **Ex:** He earned A's and B's on his report card.

possessives

- For common nouns that end in "s" or "ss," add an apostrophe and "s" unless the word that follows also begins with an "s."
 - **Ex:** The class's graduation was delayed due to weather.
 - **Ex:** The class' senior dinner was a success.
- When referring Mercy College, add an apostrophe and "s." When referring to the full title of Mercy College of Health Sciences, just add an apostrophe to form the plural possessive.
 - **Ex:** Mercy College's Commencement ceremony will be held in April.
 - **Ex:** Mercy College of Health Sciences' president hosted the event.

appositives

- Use to provide more identifying information about a noun.
- Use commas when appositive is not critical to the sentence's meaning. Do not use commas when sentence would be ambiguous without the use of the appositive.
 - **Ex:** Program Chair Charles McKellan welcomed the students.
 - **Note:** Without "Charles McKellan," it would be unclear which program chair welcomed the students.
 - **Ex:** Charles McKellan, program chair, welcomed the students.
 - **Note:** Without the appositive "program chair," it is still clear who welcomed the students: Charles McKellan.

B

bi-

(See also: "prefixes")

- Generally, do not use a hyphen.
 - **Ex:** bilingual, bimonthly, bipartisan

Bible, Bible quotations

Bible

- Capitalize Bible and do not use quotations marks or italics when referring to religious scripture. Always capitalize related terms such as the Gospels, the Gospel of John, the New Testament, the Holy Scriptures, etc.
 - **Ex:** We read the Bible in church every Sunday.
- All individual books of the Bible such as Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, etc., should also be capitalized. Never abbreviate books of the Bible.
- Do not capitalize “biblical” when using it as a modifier.
 - **Ex:** The biblical references in his speech were perplexing.

Bible quotations

- Scripture quotations should be followed by specific verse references. Place the ending quotation marks after the verse or verses quoted, then follow with the reference in parentheses. The closing punctuation follows the reference and is placed outside the parentheses.
- References should be given in Book Chapter: Verse/Verse Range format, and should not be italicized. Do not use a comma to separate the Bible book from the chapter reference. Use a colon without spaces to separate the chapter from the verse or verse range.
 - **Ex:** “The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out” (John 10:3).
 - **Ex:** Paul exhorts, “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved” (2 Timothy 2:15a).

Board of Directors

- Capitalize when referring to the proper title of Mercy College’s Board of Directors. Use lowercase in all other instances.
- Always use singular verbs when referencing the Mercy College Board of Directors.
 - **Ex:** The Board of Directors is voting to approve the new program.
 - **Ex:** The board is in session.

book titles

(See also: “magazine, journal titles”)

- Italicize book titles and capitalize major words.
 - **Ex:** *The Old Man and the Sea* is considered a classic.

bulleted lists

- Keep information concise to avoid cluttered lists. Use complete sentences rarely.
- Do not use periods at the end of a bullet point. It is also not necessary to use colons to set off sub-bullet points.

buttons (website)

- Use all uppercase.
- Do not use a period for any buttons. Exclamation and question marks are acceptable in appropriate circumstances.
 - **Ex:** APPLY TODAY
 - **Ex:** LEARN MORE TODAY!

C

campus buildings and facilities

- Capitalize official names of Mercy College of Health Sciences buildings and use full name on first reference. Permitted acronyms for subsequent references are in parentheses, where applicable.
 - Academic Center for Excellence (ACE)
 - Brennan Hall
 - Chapel (referring to Mercy College of Health Sciences Chapel)
 - College Hill Apartments
 - Mercy Auxiliary Library
 - Norkaitis Student Success Center
 - Sullivan Center
- Lowercase generic names for buildings such as *the library*.

campus-wide

- Hyphenate.

capitalization

- In general, avoid unnecessary capitals.
- Use all uppercase for website headers: *OUR BODY OF WORK*
- Use sentence case for subheads, ledes, body copy, captions: *The future is now*
- Capitalize only major words in article titles: EXAMPLE
- Use all uppercase for website buttons: *APPLY TODAY*
- Use uppercase for acronyms or abbreviations: ACE, BSN, CPR

captions, photo identification

- Do not italicize or capitalize.
- With few people, insert *(left)*, *(right)*, and *(center)* into the sentence, using parentheses.
- With many people, use *(from left)* or *(front row, from left)*. Subsequent rows need not indicate direction since a pattern has been established.

Catherine McAuley Award for Professional Excellence

- Capitalize all major words (title case).
- Do not abbreviate or italicize.

chair, chairman, chairwoman

- When discussing a program chair, *chair* is preferred for simplification and to avoid gender bias.
- When using title after the individual's name, do not capitalize chair title. When using title before the individual's name, capitalize.
 - **Ex:** Diana Pine, chair of the Board of Directors, wrote a letter to alumni.
 - **Ex:** Board of Directors Chair Diana Pine wrote a letter to alumni.

church

- Capitalize when it forms part of a church or communion (denomination) name or is used to denote a religious organization of the world.
 - **Ex:** St. Augustine Catholic Church, Christ the King Catholic Church, the Roman Catholic Church, the Church of England
 - **Ex:** The Church's stance on evolution is open to interpretation.
- Do not capitalize when it is used as a common noun.
 - **Ex:** After class they went to church.
 - **Ex:** They attended the Catholic church, then went to the Anglican church, and visited the Presbyterian church on their way home.

cities

- The *AP Stylebook* lists cities that may stand alone in prose without state affiliation.
 - Atlanta, Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Dallas, Denver, Detroit, Honolulu, Houston, Indianapolis, Los Angeles, Miami, Milwaukee, Minneapolis, New Orleans, New York, Oklahoma City, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, St. Louis, Salt Lake City, San Diego, San Francisco, Seattle, Washington DC.
- In publications for alumni or the College, prominent Iowa cities can be added to this list.
- All others must include abbreviated state names. In copy, spell out state names and use a comma to separate cities and states.

class years

(See also: "alumni names, class years")

co-

(See also: "prefixes")

- Use a hyphen when forming nouns, adjectives, and verbs that show occupation status: *co-worker*, *co-chair*, *co-author*.
- Omit the hyphen in other combinations: *coeducation*, *coexist*, *cooperative*.

College Hill

- Use to reference the apartment-style housing located above the Academic Center for Excellence.
- Capitalize and do not abbreviate.

colons

- Generally, use colons when giving lists of instructions, Bible citations, and times, or when setting off a series.
- Do not use colons to set off subsequent lines in bulleted lists.
- In prose, a colon should be preceded by a complete sentence. It is typically used to set off a list or to emphasize a word or phrase. Do not capitalize the first word after a colon.
 - **Ex:** Mercy College students take several classes specific to their major in the first semester: Healthcare 101, Modern Geriatrics, and Insurance Compliance for Healthcare Administrators.
 - **Ex:** There were three considerations: expense, time, and feasibility.
 - **Ex:** Students without college credit who have graduated from high school must meet the following standards:
 - High school cumulative grade point average of 2.25 or higher; or

- An ACT composite score of 18 or higher
 - **Ex:** He promised this: the company will make good all the losses.
 - **Ex:** He had only one hobby: eating.
- **Exception:** Shortened headers may not require a complete sentence, and words after the colon may be capitalized.
 - **Ex:** STEP 1: COLLEGE ADMISSION

commas

- Generally, use commas to set off introductory phrases, nonessential information, elements in a series, adjectives that are equal and reversible, and two independent clauses.
 - **Ex:** After the dinner, Rogelio went straight to bed.
 - **Ex:** Next Friday, which is also Pi Day, is the only day everyone is available.
 - **Ex:** The greasy, slimy food did not settle well.
 - **Ex:** Jim had planned to study at the library all night, but then he decided to go home early to eat dinner.
- Use the serial (Oxford) comma in all materials.
 - **Ex:** The classroom has chairs, tables, and AV equipment.
- Use commas to set off abbreviated credentials.
 - **Ex:** Katerina Karenin, PhD, was the keynote speaker at the event.
- Use commas to separate dialogue tags from quotes.
 - **Ex:** “It was an exciting event,” stated the president. “We were delighted to host it.”
- Use commas to separate geographical references and years when either are used in long-form references.
 - **Ex:** She was born on March 17, 1957, in Kansas City, Missouri, to Jim and Jane Smith.

committees

- Capitalize major standing committees, including committees of the Board of Directors and committees of the faculty and staff (Academic Council, Staff Council).
- Lowercase informal committees that may change members often.
 - **Ex:** The graduation committee met to discuss Commencement.
 - **Ex:** Staff Council will meet next Wednesday.

compass directions, regions

(See also: “time, time zones”)

- Do not capitalize general directions (north, south, east, west) and descriptors (eastern Iowa, midwestern, southern).
 - **Ex:** The snowbirds drove south to their winter home.
 - **Ex:** She’s from central Iowa.
- Capitalize when referencing specific geographical regions (Midwest, Pacific Northwest, the South, etc.).
 - **Ex:** The Midwest received the most snow this season.

contact information

- Use the following as the primary contact information for Mercy College of Health Sciences.

Mercy College of Health Sciences
928 6th Ave.
Des Moines, IA 50309-1225

Phone: (515) 643-3180

Fax: (515) 643-6698

Email: admissions@mchs.edu

Web: MCHS.edu

- Use the following as a secondary contact for the College specifically for admissions purposes.

Mercy College of Health Sciences

Office of Admissions

921 6th Ave.

Des Moines, IA 50309-1222

Phone: (515) 643-6715

Fax: (515) 643-6702

Email: admissions@mchs.edu

Web: MCHS.edu/Admissions

copyright

- Include a copyright disclaimer on all printed material.
 - **Ex:** ©2020 Mercy College of Health Sciences

Core

- Use to refer to the general education course requirements prescribed for students before beginning major-specific courses. Generally referred to as *Core requirements*. To avoid repetition in subsequent references, use *general education*. Capitalize.
- Capitalize. Do not capitalize synonyms or *requirements*.
 - **Ex:** He still has to complete all Core requirements before he can begin his nursing courses. These general education classes will provide the foundation for his education.

course titles

(See also: “academic course titles”)

D

dates

- Do not include superscript after a specific date. Use *th*, *nd*, or *rd* only when referring to a century or anniversary.
 - **Ex:** They were married on Feb. 19. (**Not:** They were married on Feb. 19th.)
 - **Ex:** He studied paintings of the 19th century.
 - **Ex:** This year marks the 25th anniversary of Mercy College of Health Sciences.
- When a month is used with a date, abbreviate all but March, April, May, June, and July. Spell out the month when using it alone or with a year, and do not set off with a comma. When using long-form (date, month, and year), set off the year with commas.
 - **Ex:** June 6, 1944, was D-Day.
 - **Ex:** He was born on Feb. 14, 1956.
 - **Ex:** He was born in December 1943. (**Not:** He was born in December of 1943.)
- Capitalize days of the week. Do not abbreviate. Set apart with a comma when using day in a date series.

- **Ex:** The Commencement ceremony will be held on Friday, April 24, 2020, at the Iowa Events Center.

decades

- Use an apostrophe to indicate omitted numbers. Show plural by adding “s” with no apostrophe.
 - **Ex:** She grew up in the ’80s.
 - **Note:** the apostrophe faces left, toward the missing numbers.
 - **Ex:** The 1920s marked the height of the swing era.

degree(s)

(See also: “academic degrees, credentials,” “majors, minors, programs,” and “professional titles”)

dimensions

- Use figures and spell out units of measurement.
 - **Ex:** The office is 16 feet wide and 8 feet long.
 - **Ex:** The storm brought 9 inches of snow.
 - **Ex:** The new building has 25,000 square feet of laboratory space.

dollars

- Spell out casual references: *another day, another dollar*
- Use figures and the dollar sign for all other references: *\$4 per unit, \$3.25 total, \$0.50 candy*
- For amounts of more than \$1 million, use the dollar sign and figures up to one decimal place: *\$1.3 million*

E

e.g.

- Abbreviated Latin phrase meaning “for example.” Used to indicate a group of examples.
- Do not capitalize. Use periods without spaces.
- Use phrase rarely.
 - **Ex:** The rule only applied to direct admit programs, e.g. Healthcare Administration, Nursing, and Medical Assisting.

ellipsis

- Use an ellipsis to represent an omission in text, usually quoted material. Treat as a three letter word, constructed with three periods and a space on each side. Only omit information from text if doing so does not change the meaning of the sentence.
- Do not use to create ambiguity.
 - **Ex:** The student talked quickly ... during their speech.

email

- One word. Do not hyphenate.

emeritus, emerita, emeriti

- Refers to an honor earned for significant contributions to Mercy College of Health Sciences.
- Pay attention to gender and number.

- One man is an *emeritus*.
- One woman is an *emerita*.
- A group of individuals is referred to as *emeriti*.
- Do not italicize. When used as part of a job title, capitalize. After the name, lowercase.
 - **Ex:** President Emeritus Marion M. Morrison joined the ceremony.
 - **Ex:** Jennifer Streisand, president emerita, participated in the event.

ensure, insure

- Use *ensure* to mean “guarantee.”
 - **Ex:** Use this style guide to ensure accuracy in your writing.
- Use *insure* only when referring to insurance.
 - **Ex:** The policy insures his car.

et al.

- Abbreviated Latin phrase meaning “and others.” Used primarily to indicate the existence of other people not included in a list.
- Do not capitalize. Do not use a period following *et*.
- Use phrase rarely.
 - **Ex:** The study was conducted by Smith, Jones, et al.

etc.

- Abbreviated Latin phrase meaning “and the rest.” Used to indicate the existence of other defined elements not included in a list.
- Do not capitalize. Use a period after the abbreviation.
- Use phrase rarely.
 - **Ex:** The event will include all kinds of breakfast foods: pancakes, waffles, French toast, etc.

events

- Capitalize major words in specific event names. Lowercase general names.
 - **Ex:** New Student Orientation will be a great opportunity to meet people.
 - **Ex:** Students must attend an orientation in order to enroll in classes.

exclamation points

- Use to emphasize commands or information, particularly on website buttons.
- When used in quotes, exclamation points should be included inside the quotation marks. If a dialogue tag immediately follows, it is not capitalized.
- Use rarely.
 - **Ex:** “We’re so proud!” exclaimed Maria’s parents.

F

faculty

(See also: “professional titles” and “professor”)

- When used alone, treat as a singular noun.

- **Ex:** The faculty is reviewing the program.
- When referring to a person who is a member of the faculty, use *faculty member* or *professor* (if appropriate).

flier, flyer

- Use *flier* when referring to someone in a plane.
 - **Ex:** The man in first class is a frequent flier.
- Use *flyer* when referring to a pamphlet or paper for distribution.
 - **Ex:** They made a flyer to promote the event.

full-time, part-time

- Hyphenate adjective or adverb.
- In copy, it is allowable to use the FT and PT abbreviations on subsequent references.
 - **Ex:** She enjoyed working full-time.
 - **Ex:** His coursework only satisfied the part-time requirement.

fundraiser, fundraising

- One word. Do not hyphenate.

H

healthcare

- Always used as one word. Do not hyphenate.

honors

(See also: “academic honors”)

hyphens, dashes

hyphens

- In general, do not put spaces around hyphens.
- Use hyphens to attach prefixes that might otherwise cause confusion, or to combine two or more words acting as a single modifier.
 - **Ex:** She had to re-sign the paperwork using her married name.
 - **Ex:** The chocolate-covered pretzels were a big hit.
 - **Ex:** The 180-hour practicum is time-consuming.
 - **Note:** *180-hour* is used as a hyphenated compound adjective describing *practicum* in this sentence. Do not hyphenate labels: *The practicum requires 180 hours.*
- Use hyphens in grouped number series such as social security numbers, phone numbers, zip codes, and listed time ranges, as well as compound numbers that have been spelled out for formality purposes.
 - **Ex:** His phone number was (515) 643-9865.
 - **Ex:** The inauguration was held at 121 Forty-Sixth Street.
 - **Ex:** Campus Visit Day: 1 - 3:30 pm
 - **Note:** there are spaces around the hyphen in listed time ranges.

dashes

- Use em dashes surrounded by spaces to emphasize a phrase, or to offset series that already include commas. Avoid using an em dash in place of a colon, as this use of the dash is considered more informal than the use of the colon.
 - **Ex:** The programs — Healthcare Administration, Public Health, and Medical Assisting — will be offered online.
 - **Ex:** He had one goal: to eat. (**Not:** He had one goal — to eat.)
- Use an em dash followed by a space to cite sources for pull-out quotes.
 - **Ex:** “The new online programs will offer more opportunities for students to earn their degrees in convenient, affordable ways.”
— Jane Smith, professor of nursing
- Use an en dash surrounded by spaces to indicate date ranges.
 - **Ex:** The application is open from March 6 – March 31.
- Use an en dash when referencing specific locations, as with MercyOne Medical Centers.
 - **Ex:** MercyOne – Des Moines Medical Center is located downtown.
- **Note:** hyphens and dashes are differentiated by size and dependent upon usage. Spaces are rarely used in either case.

I

i.e.

- Abbreviated Latin phrase meaning “in other words.” Used to rephrase a statement or word.
- Do not capitalize. Use periods without spaces.
- Use phrase rarely.
 - **Ex:** She decided to serve waffles, i.e. the greatest breakfast food known to man.

in memoriam

- Two words. Do not hyphenate, capitalize, or italicize.

initials

(See also: “abbreviations”)

- Initials standing for given names are followed by a period. Do not use a space between two or more initials:
Mark S.J. Davidson '94.

Interdisciplinary

- One word, no hyphen.

J

Jr., Sr., etc.

- Use a comma before *Jr.* and *Sr.* Do not place a comma before Roman numerals: *Bill Boyd, Jr., Adlai E. Stevenson III.*

L

letter grades

- Capitalize the letter grade. Do not use quotation marks. Add an apostrophe and “s” to indicate plurals.
 - **Ex:** He earned an A in biology and two B’s in his computer science courses.

liberal arts and science

(See also: “Core”)

- This is almost always used as an adjective and should not influence verb number or agreement.
- *Arts* is plural; *science* is not.
- Avoid use, if possible.
 - **Ex:** A liberal arts and science education is the best preparation for a fulfilling life.

M

magazine, journal titles

(See also: “book titles”)

- Italicize the name of the publication. Use quotation marks for article titles.
 - **Ex:** The doctor was quoted in the article “A Novel Coronavirus Emerging in China,” which appeared in the *New England Journal of Medicine* last month.

majors, minors, programs

(See also: “academic degrees, credentials”)

majors

- It is acceptable to refer to a degree as a “major,” especially in admission materials.
- Capitalize when referring to specific academic majors. Do not capitalize when using as an adjective.
 - **Ex:** James majored in Healthcare Administration.
 - **Ex:** Vincent still had to complete his Core requirements before he could begin his nursing courses.
- The following are approved Mercy College of Health Sciences majors:
 - Certificate Programs
 - Medical Assisting
 - Medical Laboratory Science
 - Paramedic
 - Surgical Technology
 - Associate degrees
 - Diagnostic Medical Sonography
 - Medical Assisting
 - Nursing
 - Emergency Medical Services
 - Physical Therapist Assistant
 - Radiologic Technology
 - Surgical Technology
 - Bachelor’s degrees

- Health Science
- Healthcare Administration
- Nursing
 - Bachelor of Science in Nursing
 - Accelerated BSN
 - Paramedic to BSN
 - RN to BSN
- Public Health

minors

- Refers to the specific disciplines in which a Mercy College of Health Sciences student may minor; also known as areas of study.
- Do not capitalize in prose.

programs

- Refers to multiple academic disciplines or degree tracks. Used when an area of study includes several collective majors and/or degree tracks. The *nursing program*, therefore, would encompass the ASN major and all BSN major tracks.
- Do not capitalize.
 - **Ex:** Mercy College's nursing program provides many opportunities for students to become life-saving nurses.

mannequins

- Do not use *manikins*.

Mercy College of Health Sciences

- On first reference with external audiences, use Mercy College of Health Sciences. On second reference, it is acceptable to use *Mercy College* or *the College*.
- When referring to Mercy College as *the College* on subsequent references, use a capital "C."
- Use plural possessive (apostrophe) for *Mercy College of Health Sciences*. Use singular possessive (apostrophe followed by "s") for *Mercy College*.
 - **Ex:** Mercy College of Health Sciences' programs are top-notch.
 - **Ex:** The College's curriculum prepares graduates for their intended careers.
- In formal articles or statements, use the third person singular for *Mercy College or Health Sciences*.
 - **Ex:** Mercy College of Health Sciences is located in downtown Des Moines. It prepares future healthcare professionals.
- In informal instances, marketing materials, or web content, use the first person plural.
 - **Ex:** We offer many degrees and extracurricular opportunities. Join us for any of our upcoming events.
- **Note:** For guidelines on the usage of the Mercy College of Health Sciences logo (wordmark plus icon), crest, and College colors, refer to the Graphic Identity Style Guide.

Mercy College of Health Sciences Alumni Association

- Use full name on first reference. Subsequent references may use *the Alumni Association*.
- *Alumni Advisory Committee* denotes those on the Alumni Association leadership team.

Mercy College PLUS

- Refers to the online education extension of Mercy College of Health Sciences.
- Use full name on first reference. Subsequent references should use *MercyPLUS*, without a space. *PLUS* is always all uppercase.
- Use an apostrophe followed by an “s” to create the possessive, no matter the form used.
 - **Ex:** Mercy College PLUS’s programs are all online.
 - **Ex:** MercyPLUS’s tuition rates are very affordable.
- In formal articles or statements, use the third person singular for *Mercy College PLUS*.
 - **Ex:** Mercy College PLUS allows students to earn their degrees from the comfort of their homes. It is a convenient alternative to traditional classroom learning.
- In informal instances, marketing materials, or web content, use the first person plural.
 - **Ex:** We offer an affordable approach to online education.

Mercy College Training Center

- Refers to the arm of Mercy College of Health Sciences that supports continuing education programs available to the community and MercyOne – Des Moines Medical Center.
- Do not abbreviate.

MercyOne

- Capitalize. Do not use a space.
- Use *MercyOne* when referencing all affiliated medical centers throughout the region.
- Use specific approved medical center name when referencing a facility in a specific community.

MercyOne – Des Moines Medical Center

- Use en dash before specific medical center name.
- Use full name on first reference. Subsequent references can use *MercyOne*. Do not use *MMC*.

MercyOne – West Des Moines Medical Center

- Use en dash before specific medical center name.
- Use full name on first reference. Subsequent references can use *MercyOne*. Do not use *MMC*.

mid-

- Do not hyphenate unless the word that follows begins with a figure or capital letter: *midcareer*, *midsemester*, *mid-Atlantic*, *mid-30s*, *mid-August*

minor

(See also: “majors, minors, programs”)

money

- Use figures. Do not hyphenate when using as a compound modifier.
 - **Ex:** James Smith ’64 pledged \$5,000.
 - **Ex:** He made a \$5 million gift earlier this year.

more than, over

- Use interchangeably: *more than \$20, over 10 years*

N

numbers

(See also: “ages,” “addresses,” “dates,” “dimensions,” “dollars,” and “money”)

- Spell out whole numbers and ordinals from one to nine. Use figures for 10 and above. Same rule applies to first through ninth.
 - **Ex:** three emails, second semester, 24 students
- Use superscript when letters pair with numbers other than dates:
 - **Ex:** 12th day of the month
- Spell out numbers at the beginning of a sentence unless it’s a calendar year or used in conjunction with a letter: *sixteen people, 2018 was profitable, 3D rendering.*
- If needed, figures may be used in article titles or headlines.
 - **Ex:** The article titled “31 Potential Students Signed to Mercy College of Health Sciences” was posted last week.
- For numbers more than 1 million, use figures up to one decimal place: *\$1,250,000 = \$1.3 million*
- Use figures in the following instances.
 - Dates: *May 4*
 - Fractions: *2/3, 1-3/4*
 - Imperial and metric measurements: *4.3 in (10.9 cm)*
 - Ranges: *from 4 to 6 animals, 4-6 animals*
 - Ratios: *a ratio of 2 to 1, a 2-1 ratio*
 - Pages: *1-pager*
 - Percentages: *8%*
 - Scores: *a score of 4 to 3, a 4-3 score*
 - Semesters: *2 semesters*
 - Statistics: *1 in 5 products*
 - Years: *3-year BSN*

nonprofit, not-for-profit

- In general, the prefix *non* is not separated by a hyphen.

O

off-campus, on-campus

- Hyphenate when using as a compound adjective or adverb. Do not hyphenate if stating as part of a descriptive prepositional phrase.
 - **Ex:** The on-campus tour will be held in an hour. (“on-campus” describes the type of tour given.)
 - **Ex:** The students were on campus for a short time before going to their clinicals. (“on” is a preposition; “campus” is the object of the preposition describing *where*.)

P

page numbers

- Use page numbers for pieces that are longer than four pages.
- Begin page count on the cover page. Use figures only.

parentheses

- Generally, parentheses are used to set apart nonessential information and source citations. They are also used around area codes in phone numbers.
- Use rarely.

percent

- Do not use the percent symbol (%) except in charts and graphs. Always use figures in text, even if the numbers are less than 10:
 - **Ex:** Fewer than 3 percent of seniors did not graduate.

periods

- Do not use periods in headers or website buttons, even if it is a full sentence.
- Do not use between abbreviations or times (*am* or *pm*).
 - **Exception:** Latin abbreviations *e.g.*, *et al.*, *etc.*, and *i.e.* should all use periods as indicated.
- Use for initials that take the place of an individual's proper name.
- In the instance of direct quotations, the period should go outside the quotes, after the dialogue tag.
 - **Ex:** "We had a great turnout," O'Hara said. "It was great to see all the students and their families."

phone numbers

- Utilize parentheses around area codes and use hyphens without spaces as separators. Do not include "1" before any phone number.
 - **Ex:** (515) 259-7985

plurals

- For compound words that include two or more separate terms, add "s" to the noun.
 - **Ex:** attorneys general, fathers-in-law, lieutenant colonels
- In abbreviations, add "s" with no apostrophe.
 - **Ex:** The VIPs gathered at the event.
- For single letters, add an apostrophe and "s" to avoid confusion.
 - **Ex:** He earned A's and B's on his report card.
- For numbers, add "s" with no apostrophe.
 - **Ex:** She was in her 60s when she was hired.

pm, am

(See also: "time, time zones")

- Do not use periods. Lowercase.

prefixes

- Do not hyphenate when using a prefix with a word starting with a consonant: *preprogram*, *copilot*, *autobiography*.
- Hyphenate if the prefix ends in a vowel and the word that follows begins with the same vowel: *pre-eminent*, *re-establish*, *non-negotiable*.
- **Exception:** *Pre-requisite* should always be hyphenated.

pre-requisite

- Hyphenate. Do not capitalize.
- Use to refer specifically to courses students are required to complete before they are admitted to a program or are able to progress to advanced-level courses.
 - **Ex:** James had already completed the Core requirements; however, he still had to meet all of his pre-requisites before he could begin his nursing classes.

professional titles

- On first reference, use the person's official title. Capitalize formal titles when they precede the individual's name.
 - **Ex:** Mercy College President Clark Cavill, PhD, attended the event.
 - **Ex:** Professor of Nursing Joan Fellman served on the committee.
- In subsequent references, refer to the main title. In copy, use only last name for subsequent references.
 - **Ex:** Professor Fellman was pleased by the student's progress.
 - **Ex:** "We are proud of all we've accomplished," Cavill stated.
- Do not capitalize formal titles when they follow the individual's name:
 - **Ex:** Clark Cavill, PhD, president of Mercy College of Health Sciences, attended the event.
 - **Ex:** Jim Rome, professor of nursing, welcomed attendees.
- Do not capitalize formal titles when they stand alone.
 - **Ex:** The president welcomed the students to campus.

professor

(See also: "academic degrees, credentials" and "professional titles")

- On first reference, use the official title (professor, associate professor). Simply use *professor* on second reference.
- See "professional titles" for capitalization preferences.

programs

(See also: "majors, minors, programs")

punctuation

- See also
 - "apostrophes, plurals, possessives"
 - "bulleted lists"
 - "colons"
 - "commas"
 - "ellipses"
 - "exclamation points"
 - "hyphens, dashes"

- “parentheses”
- “periods”
- “question marks”
- “quotation marks, quotes”
- “semicolons”

Q

question marks

- When used in quotes, question marks should be included inside the quotation marks. If a dialogue tag immediately follows, it is not capitalized.
- Use rarely.
 - **Ex:** “What time does the event start?” asked Micah.

quotation marks, quotes

- Generally, use quotation marks around article titles and direct quotes.
- Use the standard format to attribute quotes in copy.
 - **Ex:** “Thank you for the DASH Emergency Grant,” said Mercy College Dean of Students Amy Nguyen, PhD.
- Refer to the quoted person’s last name after first reference, and do not use credentials.
 - **Ex:** Nguyen said, “Mercy College now has more resources to help more students.”
- Attribute pull quotes with an em dash, space, and author’s name on a separate line.
 - **Ex:** “We can provide modest emergency grants to our students in times of greatest need.”
— Amy Nguyen, PhD, vice president of enrollment management and student affairs at Mercy College

R

RSVP

- Capitalize and do not use periods.
- Since RSVP means “please reply,” avoid the redundant “Please RSVP.”

S

seasons

- Lowercase: *spring, summer, winter, fall*.

semesters

- Lowercase when discussing general semesters. When referencing specific terms, capitalize.
 - **Ex:** Mercy College offers start dates in the fall, spring, and summer semesters.
 - **Ex:** We are currently accepting applications for the Fall 2019 semester.

semicolons

- Generally, use semicolons to join independent clauses of equal emphasis.
 - **Ex:** The committee was able to identify the problem quickly; however, a solution was not so forthcoming.
- In a complex series, use a semicolon to separate items.
 - **Ex:** The committee included Jill Brahn, vice president for student health; Missy Gentry, interim professor; and Emily Dennison, vice president for recruitment.

spring break

- Do not capitalize. Two words.

state names

- Spell out the names of U.S. states in copy.
 - **Ex:** He was traveling from Nashville, Tennessee, to Austin, Texas, en route to his home in Albuquerque, New Mexico.
- Do not abbreviate states when not accompanied by a city. Use a comma to separate cities and states.
 - **Ex:** He was born in Illinois.
 - **Ex:** He was born in Chicago, Illinois.
- Abbreviate state names in stacked addresses. Use the standard abbreviations.

Alabama (AL)	Indiana (IN)	Nebraska (NE)	South Carolina (SC)
Alaska (AK)	Iowa (IA)	Nevada (NV)	South Dakota (SD)
Arizona (AZ)	Kansas (KS)	New Hampshire (NH)	Tennessee (TN)
Arkansas (AR)	Kentucky (KY)	New Jersey (NJ)	Texas (TX)
California (CA)	Louisiana (LA)	New Mexico (NM)	Utah (UT)
Colorado (CO)	Maine (ME)	New York (NY)	Vermont (VT)
Connecticut (CT)	Maryland (MD)	North Carolina (NC)	Virginia (VA)
Delaware (DE)	Massachusetts (MA)	North Dakota (ND)	Washington (WA)
Florida (FL)	Michigan (MI)	Ohio (OH)	West Virginia (WV)
Georgia (GA)	Minnesota (MN)	Oklahoma (OK)	Wisconsin (WI)
Hawaii (HI)	Mississippi (MS)	Oregon (OR)	Wyoming (WY)
Idaho (ID)	Missouri (MO)	Pennsylvania (PA)	
Illinois (IL)	Montana (MT)	Rhode Island (RI)	

superscript

- Always use superscript with trademarks and ordinal indicators: *Tylenol*[®], 9th.
- Do not use superscript with fractions: 1-1/2.

symbols

- With the exception of \$ (as it refers to a specific amount), spell out symbols and abbreviations in copy.
 - inches
 - feet
 - pounds

- gallons
- number
- degrees Fahrenheit
- percent
- Use symbols and abbreviations in bullets, tables, and charts.
 - in.
 - ft.
 - lb.
 - gal.
 - No.
 - °F
 - %
 - \$

T

time, time zones

time

- Use *am* and *pm* for specific times. Use a space between time and label, and lowercase label without periods. Do not use zeros for times on the hour: 3 *pm*.
- Use *midnight* or *noon* instead of 12 *am* or 12 *pm*. Do not capitalize.
- In a list or short-form, use a hyphen for time ranges. In copy, spell out range indicators. Do not repeat *am* or *pm* when giving a time range.
 - **Ex:** Orientation will take place from 1:30 to 4 *pm*.
 - **Ex:** Orientation: 1:30 - 4 *pm*, Professional Program Day: 4 - 5:30 *pm*
 - **Ex:** The Campus Visit Day will take place from 10 *am* to 2 *pm*.
- When indicating a span of time, print the words that indicate the span.
 - **Ex:** We lived in Dubuque from 1945 to 1976.
 - **Ex:** The movie showed between 5 *pm* and midnight.

time zones

- Capitalize full title of time zone. Do not use time zones unless absolutely necessary for clarity.
- Spell out time zones on first reference. Use full title on all occurrences not accompanied by a specific time. On any subsequent references, it is appropriate to use shortened forms. In this case, capitalize only the region.
 - **Ex:** Des Moines uses Central Standard Time. Please schedule all appointments in Central time.
- For instances that include a specific time, use abbreviations, all capitalized, without periods or commas to separate times and time zones.
 - **Ex:** The online visit will take place at 7 *pm* CST.

trademarks

- Use trademarks on the first reference of every page: *Tylenol*® *tablets*.
- Do not use trademarks on subsequent references on the page: *Tylenol tablets*.

U

URLs and web addresses

- Generally, use uppercase for main website addresses.
 - MCHS.edu/admissions/campus-visits
 - PLUS.MCHS.edu
- Do not underline and do not include http://
- Use a period at the end of a sentence that ends with a web address.
 - **Ex:** To register online, go to www.MCHS.edu/registration.

US, United States

- Use *United States* when used as a noun on first reference.
- Use *U.S.* (all capitalized, with periods) as an adjective or on subsequent references.

V

VitalSigns

- Capitalize and do not use a space.

W

website

- Do not capitalize. One word.