EDITORIAL STYLE GUIDE
University of California, Merced

Prepared by
University Communications
Summer 2013 Edition
Summer 2013

Message from University Communications

Dear faculty, staff and students,

We’re pleased to present you with the 2013 summer revision of UC Merced’s Editorial Style Guide. The document has been rearranged so that all entries are in alphabetical order, and repeated entries have been deleted, shortening the style guide by about a dozen pages.

We offer this document with the intention of helping you navigate the complexities of communicating about the university and your work. Language changes with the times, and while that sometimes makes it treacherous to prescribe a single way of speaking or writing, it is vital that we, as a university, present a consistent style in our communications.

No one expects this style guide to supersede the rules and guidelines already in place from the organizations that govern communications in various academic disciplines. However, if you are in an area not governed by an existing style guide, if you find a sticky problem that your style guide doesn’t address or if you find yourself communicating with an audience other than the one accustomed to your usual style guide, we hope this document will be a valuable resource for you.

If you come upon a question we’ve failed to answer in this document, we recommend the Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law as well as the Chicago Manual of Style. One of these manuals is almost certain to help you decide what to do in any given situation. We have drawn upon these manuals in the preparation of this document, as well as style manuals from other UC campuses and from Carnegie Mellon University.

We welcome feedback on the guidelines we’ve documented here. If you have comments, please email us. We will consider all your thoughts when we compile future editions of this manual.

We congratulate all of you on your excellent work and thank you for your assistance so far in allowing our office to share the story of UC Merced with important audiences near and far. As you proceed to communicate about UC Merced, may you never suffer from writer’s block and never be misunderstood.

Best regards,

Patti Waid    Scott Hernandez-Jason    Brenda Ortiz    Lorena Anderson    Tonya Kubo

University Communications

2020 Project
The second of four phases to accommodate 10,000 students by 2020. While enrollment at the campus has continued on pace to reach 10,000 students in the 2020 time frame, funding for the campus facilities that are required to serve those students has not kept pace.

The campus does not have enough space and is faced with a growing gap between strong student demand for admission to UC Merced and the campus’s limited physical capacity to accommodate that demand. Development of the facilities necessary to accommodate 10,000 students is critical to the success of the Merced campus and its economic viability, and also to the ability of the University of California to provide access to eligible students.

Considering the need to explore all options and alternatives to accomplish the physical development required to serve 10,000 students, Merced invited an Advisory Services Panel from the Urban Land Institute (ULI) to help identify the cost and programmatically effective means to build out the 2020 Project. In May 2013, the UC Board of Regents approved an amendment to the campus’s Long-Range Development Plan, reducing the size of the footprint for Phase II development from an originally planned 355 acres to 219 acres, including the original 104-acre “golf course” plot on which our facilities sit. Plans call for the next phase of construction to be an integrated, master-planned development with buildings designed for mixed uses and built in clusters, rather than individually, to save time and project costs. This approach is based on the recommendations of the Urban Land Institute, which issued its final report in December 2012, and was strongly endorsed by the UC Office of the President.

Abbreviations
In general, follow the guidelines in the Associated Press Stylebook for news purposes. Use the Chicago Manual of Style or another style manual as designated by your school or discipline for publications.

Academic degrees
Mention degrees only when it is directly relevant to the subject at hand. In most cases, spell out the degree name and avoid abbreviation.
Right: bachelor’s degree or baccalaureate
Right: master’s degree
Right: doctoral degree or doctorate
Right: Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science
Right: UC Merced conferred 900 bachelor’s degrees at commencement this year.

Use lower case for names of degrees.
Right: bachelor’s degree, master’s degree, doctor’s degree, doctoral degree, doctorate

Use of abbreviations such as B.A., M.S. or Ph.D. might be appropriate when you are writing about a group of people and need to mention one or more degrees for each person. For less common degrees, such as those awarded in other countries, double check you are using the correct
abbreviation. When used after names, set these abbreviations off with commas. Use capitals to abbreviate degrees when abbreviation is appropriate.

Right: B.N., B.A., M.S., M.F.A., Ph.D., M.D.
Right: Susan A. December, Ph.D., is a professor at the University of Utah.

Do not combine a courtesy title and an academic degree that mean the same thing.

Wrong: Dr. Robert Lindsay, M.D.
Right: Dr. Robert Lindsay, a pediatrician

The abbreviation “Dr.” should be used only for those who have received degrees in medicine, dentistry or veterinary medicine. For others who hold doctoral degrees, use the title “Professor” before the name or the abbreviation “Ph.D.” after it.

**Academic majors**

Use lower case for majors, with the exception of majors whose names inherently include proper nouns.

Right: His major is world cultures and history.
Right: The professor majored in African American studies at UCLA.
Right: He studied geological engineering as an undergraduate.
Right: She earned a degree in geological engineering.
Right: I was a history major.
Right: My girlfriend majored in African American studies.
Right: She earned her Ph.D. in women’s studies.

**Academic papers**

The title of an academic paper or journal article should be put inside quotation marks. If the journal is then named, use italics or underlining, unless you are writing a news release. In that case, simply capitalize the journal name.

Right: His paper, “Mountain Block Groundwater Discharge in Yosemite National Park,” was published in the journal Hydrology.

**Academic titles**

A person’s title is capitalized only when used before the name, and never when not used with a name. Use lower case when using a title after a person’s name or a title standing alone.

Right: Chancellor Dorothy Leland
Right: Dorothy Leland, chancellor
Right: Professor Ruth Mostern
Right: Ruth Mostern, a professor at UC Merced
Right: UC Merced has a chancellor.
Wrong: UC Merced has a Chancellor.

When using a capitalized title immediately before the name, try to keep it short. You may not need to use the whole title.

Right: Dean of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts Mark Aldenderfer
Better: Dean Mark Aldenderfer of the School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts

Chaired professorships appear in lower case, except for the proper name.

Right: Teenie Matlock was recently named the first McClatchy professor of communications.

Note that “visiting professor” may be a salary title but is not a salutation. It should be lowercased in all references.

Do not use references to professorial rank, such as “assistant professor” or “associate professor,” unless they are crucial to your meaning. This usually occurs only in human resources contexts.

Occupational titles such as “attorney” or “physicist” are not capitalized, even when they appear before a person’s name.

In most instances, titles need to be used with names only on first reference. On subsequent references, it is usually acceptable simply to use a last name.

Acronyms
It is acceptable to use acronyms, though keep it limited to avoid alphabet soup, especially in external communications. Always spell out the full name on first reference, followed immediately by the acronym in parentheses if you intend to use the acronym on subsequent references or if the entity to which you are referring is most commonly known by its acronym.

Right: Professor David Ojcius received a grant from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the National Institute for Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) to study chlamydia and miscarriage.
Right: Professor Martha Conklin presented her research at the annual conference of the American Geophysical Union (AGU) in San Francisco.
Right: The California Digital Library (CDL) makes a wide variety of materials available to library patrons. Any UC Merced library cardholder can use the CDL.

Addresses
For addresses on envelopes, use the U.S. Postal Service standards found online.
For addresses in body text, use the abbreviations Ave., St., and Blvd. only when you include a numbered address.

Right: Send mail to 1715 Canal St.
Right: Our office is on Canal Street.

All similar words (alley, drive, road, terrace, etc.) always are spelled out. Capitalize them when part of a formal name without a number; lowercase when used alone or with two or more names.

Right: 5200 N. Lake Road

Spell out all street names and use lower case when you are referring to more than one street in a phrase.

Right: Our offices are located at the corner of Canal and Main streets.
Wrong: Our offices are located at the corner of Canal and Main Streets.

For addresses or street names in text, capitalize formal street names. Use lower case when mentioning more than one street name together in text. Use lower case when street words stand alone.

Right: Turn left on Hospital Road.
Right: You may park in the lot at Canal and 19th streets.
Right: Bob Hart Square is across the street from the Mondo Building.

**adverse/averse**
“Adverse” means unfavorable. “Averse” means reluctant.

**Adviser/advisor**
Although adviser is the preferred term, it is acceptable to use advisor, especially when it is part of someone’s title.

**affect/effect**
“Affect” means (1) to influence, change or produce an effect; (2) to like to do, wear or use; or (3) to pretend.

Right: The rain will affect our plans today.

“To effect” means to accomplish, complete, cause, make possible or carry out. Used as a noun, it also refers to the result of an action or phenomenon.

Right: The long-term effects of the housing crash were not immediately understood.
afterward
not afterwards

AIDS
AIDS is acceptable in all references for acquired immune deficiency syndrome.

all right
not “alright”

allude/refer
“To allude” means to speak of without mentioning. “To refer” means to speak of directly.

allusion/illusion
An “allusion” is an indirect reference. An “illusion” is a false impression or image.

alumna/ae
An alumna is one woman. Alumnae are a group of women.

alumni/us
Alumni are more than one man or a group of men and women. An alumnus is one man.

Alumni
This word construction is taken directly from its Latin origins. Therefore, the noun forms are gender specific: “alumna” refers to one woman; “alumnae” refers to a group of women; “alumnus” refers to one man; “alumni” refers to a group of men or a group of men and women. It’s rare to see the feminine plural form, “alumnae.” Most often the form “alumni” is used for any group of graduates.

Alumni abbreviations
Identify past and current students by their class years using two digits and a single quote mark that curves away from the numbers. The Associated Press considers the abbreviation an acceptable variation. If you are listing degrees from more than one institution, refer to each by name. If you are listing only degrees from UC Merced in a UC Merced context, you do not need to refer to UC Merced by name.

Right: Mercedes Christiansen, (Brigham Young University, ’97; University of Utah, ’99; UC Merced, ’07); Stephan LeBeq (’07, ’09)

For couples, include the graduation year with each of their names, listing the woman – if she has a birth name and married name – last to avoid repeating the last name.

Right: John (’07) and Mary Taylor Smith (’06) attended the reception.
Consider exceptions, such as when the woman is the focus of the article and her spouse—an alumnus or not—is also mentioned. If only the man is an alumnus, do not list the woman’s birth name unless it’s part of her married name.

Consistency is the key as to the method of indicating year of graduation. The choice is yours as to using parentheses or commas and the use of spaces. Pick one style and use it consistently throughout your publication.

**a.m./p.m.**
Use lower case and periods for “a.m.” and “p.m.”

**amount/number**

“Amount” is not countable, “number” is countable. A large amount of water may flow under the bridge, but a large number of cars pass over it.

**anxious/eager**

“Anxious” means someone’s distressed or uneasy because of a fear of danger. “Eager” is when someone is impatiently waiting for something.

Right: He’s anxious about his mother’s health.
Right: He’s eager to learn whether the grant proposal is accepted.

**around/about**

“Around” should refer to a physical proximity or surrounding (I’ll look for you around the front of Baker Hall). “About” indicates an approximation (Let’s have lunch about 11:30 a.m.).

**Associations and licenses**

Associations and licenses do not take periods.

Right: CPA, LCSW, AAAS, GSA, AGU

**Astronomical terms**

Capitalize the names of asteroids, planets, stars and constellations.

Right: Mars, Big Dipper, North Star, Telestar

Capitalize the names of unique astronomical objects, but do not capitalize the generic words that form part of the name or descriptive terms used with a name.

Right: the Milky Way, Andromeda galaxy, Halley’s comet, the moons of Jupiter

Do not capitalize or italicize terms applied to meteorological phenomena.
Right: northern lights, aurora borealis

Capitalize Earth when you are referring to the planet Earth.

Right: The first four planets in our solar system are Mercury, Venus, Earth and Mars.
Right: Many branches of science, from chemistry to public policy, come together to study the workings of the Earth at the Sierra Nevada Research Institute.

Use lowercase when you are speaking of earth in a metaphorical sense or when you are referring to soil or dirt.

Right: Admissions officers say they’re willing to move heaven and earth to bring a strong, diverse group of students to UC Merced.
Right: In “The Secret Garden,” Mary longs for a bit of earth in which to grow things.

Use the name (which can be abbreviated) and number of astronomical objects listed in well-known catalogs.

Right: M 31, Ross 128, NGC 224, Groombridge 34

**Bay Area**
This refers to the San Francisco Bay Area. Bay Area is acceptable on all references.

**Beginnings sculpture**
Beginnings, inspired by UC Merced’s former Acting Chancellor Rod Park in 2006 and conceived by noted American sculptor Aris Demetrios, was successfully installed in the university’s central courtyard April 21, 2009. The sculpture, a gift to the university by Park and his wife, Cathy, the Bob and Marie Gallo family and John, Joseph and Fred T. Franzia of Bronco Winery, consists of two gently curving, vertical arms, each about 40 feet high. The sculpture features prominently in opening day and commencement ceremonies, as students pass through it on their way in and out of school.

**beside/besides**
Use “beside” to mean (1) at the side of (sit beside me); (2) to compare with (beside other studies); or (3) apart from (that’s beside the point).

Use “besides” to mean (1) furthermore (besides, I said so); (2) in addition to (and elm and maple trees besides); or (3) other than (there’s no one here besides Bill and me).

**between/among**
Use “between” to show a relationship between two objects only.
Use “among” when it’s more than two.

“Between” takes an objective pronoun such as me, her or him. “Between you and me” is OK. “Between you and I” is not.

**biannual/biennial**

Biannual is twice a year. Biennial is every two years.

**Biological terms**

Italize the genus and species designation (the Latin name) of a plant, animal or other living thing. Capitalize the genus name but not the species name. After using the full name once, you may abbreviate the genus name or use a colloquial name for the species.

Right: *Chlamydia trachomatis*, *C. trachomatis*
Right: *Chlamydia trachomatis* wreaks havoc by causing inflammation. Professor David Ojcius should know; he has been studying chlamydia for 12 years.

If a species is commonly called by its genus name, as in the example above, use lowercase when referring to it that way. Do not use italic type in news releases.

When using a subspecies name, place it after the species name and italicize it. Do not italicize other designations following genus and species or subspecies.

Right: *Maranta leuconera kerchoveana*
Right: *Rosa rugosa* var.

Capitalize but do not italicize taxonomic divisions larger than genus and species (kingdom, phylum, class, order and family).

Right: Animalia

When using colloquial names for living things, capitalize only proper nouns and adjectives used with their original reference.

Right: California poppy
Wrong: California Poppy

Capitalize special plant and animal names, especially those that are patented or registered as trademarks. Lowercase the generic part of the name.

Right: Pink Lady apple
Wrong: Pink Lady Apple
Board of Regents
Capitalize “Regents” only as a formal title before one or more names, or when referring to the organizational body by formal name.

Right: Regent Richard Blum
Right: Regents Richard Blum and Fred Ruiz
Right: the University of California Board of Regents (do not capitalize “the”)
Right: the UC Board of Regents (do not capitalize “the”)

Use lower case in further condensations of the organizational name and other uses.

Right: The regents ruled today.
Right: The board of regents met today.
Right: Fred Ruiz was named a regent.
Right: Three regents opposed the measure.

Board of Trustees
The component words of “Board of Trustees” should be capitalized only when using the full name of UC Merced’s or another university’s board.

Right: The Board of Trustees met in Merced on Dec. 8, 2004.
Wrong: The Trustees are a distinguished group of VIPs that supports the university.

Treat trustee as a formal title when appropriate and capitalize in such cases if used before a name.

Right: Trustee Joe Jones
Right: Joe Jones, trustee of the UC Merced Foundation

Book titles
Capitalize the title of reference works, including textbooks and reference books such as almanacs and dictionaries. The use of quotations should be reserved for fiction or nonfiction books, chapters or individual selections.

Right: Before the Internet, many families found it important to have Encyclopedia Britannica at home.
Right: In the “Looking Glass Book of Short Stories,” our favorite story was “Satan and Sam Shay.”
Right: “For Whom the Bell Tolls” is regarded as one of Ernest Hemingway’s finest novels.
Remember that italic type is not acceptable for news releases. For that purpose, use quotation marks to set off titles.

**Building names**

All proper names of buildings should be capitalized. The word “building” should be capitalized only if it’s part of the official name. On first reference, use the full name of the building as the name often denotes a person, family or business that has been supportive of the university. Successive references may be shortened.

Shortened names for buildings, such as “Kolligian Library,” are acceptable on subsequent references.

The Leo and Dottie Kolligian Library building houses multiple campus units, including Students First Center, the Office of Financial Aid, the UC Merced Library and the Campus Store. UC Merced Library is the name of the library as an organization.

Use UC Merced Library when you’re referring to the library staff and the organization.

Use Leo and Dottie Kolligian Library when you’re referring to the entire building.

Right: The students spent the afternoon studying in the UC Merced Leo and Dottie Kolligian Library.

Right: The UC Merced Library provides an array of services to help with students’ academic success.

Right: The east wing of the Leo and Dottie Kolligian Library houses the Campus Store, the UC Merced Library, the Textbook Annex, and the Office of Student Life.

Wrong: The Kolligian Library installed new furniture for collaborative studying during the summer.

Wrong: The Leo and Dottie Kolligian Library staff members are committed to student success.

The following is a list of leased buildings, current buildings and ones that will be constructed soon.

Right:
- Academic Office Annex
- Castle Commerce Center
- Central Plant
- Classroom and Office Building 1
- Classroom and Office Building 2 (under construction)
- Early Childcare and Education Center
- Joseph Edward Gallo Recreation and Wellness Center
(Do not use any variant that includes the name “Gallo” without the name “Joseph Edward.” You may shorten on second reference to “Recreation and Wellness Center.”)

Leo and Dottie Kolligian Library
(Kolligian Library is an acceptable variation)
Logistical Support/Service Facilities
Mondo Building
The Promenade
Science and Engineering Building
Science and Engineering Building 2 (under construction)
Sierra Nevada Research Institute’s Yosemite Field Station
Sierra Terraces (student housing)
Mariposa Hall and Tuolumne Hall
Social Sciences and Management Building
Student Activities and Athletics Center
The Summits (student housing)
Cathedral Hall, Tenaya Hall and Half Dome (to be opened fall 2013)
UC Merced Fresno Center
Valley Terraces (student housing):
Calaveras Hall, Fresno Hall, Kern Hall, Kings Hall, Madera Hall, Merced Hall, San Joaquin Hall, Stanislaus Hall, Tulare Hall and Terrace Center.
Yablokoff-Wallace Dining Center

Terms such as “north wing” and “residence hall” should not be capitalized unless they are used in a formal title.

Campus entities and named rooms
Following are the correct names for some campus entities that are not housed in separate buildings.
(Do not capitalize “the” before a name unless it’s the first word of a sentence.)

In the Classroom and Office Building:
The Dr. Lakireddy Auditorium
Kris-Tangella Lecture Hall

In the Leo and Dottie Kolligian Library
The McFadden/Willis Reading Room
The Ed and Jeanne Kashian Main Floor
The Louis P. and Doris M. Gonella Discovery Room
The Campus Store (formerly the Bobcat Bookstore)
The Lantern (need to specify first-floor Lantern or third-floor Lantern. The fourth-floor Lantern is the McFadden-Willis Reading Room. There is no second floor.)
The Lantern Café
The Bobcat Lair
The Chancellor’s Conference Room (KL 232)

*In the Joseph Edward Gallo Recreation and Wellness Center:*
- Greg and Cathie Hostetler Court
- The Joseph Edward Gallo Gymnasium
- The H. Rajender Reddy Health Center

*In the Science and Engineering Building:*
- The PG&E Service Learning Laboratory

*In the Valley Terraces housing area:*
- The Den
- The California Room

**Carol Tomlinson-Keasey Quad**
At the heart of campus, named after founding Chancellor Carol Tomlinson-Keasey, UC Merced’s first quadrangle is an open, three-sided landscape form that provides open space views for offices and study rooms in Science and Engineering Building 1, the Classroom Office Building and Kolligian Library. The quad was named in 2009. The open edge of the quadrangle now features the Beginnings sculpture as its focal point and provides open views to the City of Merced and the southern portions of the campus.

It is proper to use the full name of the quad on first reference, and “the quad” thereafter.

**Centers and institutes**
The formal names of centers and institutes should be capitalized. These names may be abbreviated on second and following references. Do not use periods or spaces in these abbreviations.

The current list:
- California Solar Energy Testing Center
- Center for Computational Biology (UCM-CCB)
- Center of Excellence for the Study of Health Disparities in Rural and Ethnic Underserved Populations
- Center for Nonimaging Optics
- Center for the Humanities
- Center for Research on Teaching Excellence (CRTE)
- Ernest and Julio Gallo Center for Management and Entrepreneurial Studies
- The Foster Family Center for Engineering Service Learning
- Health Sciences Research Institute (HSRI)
- Sierra Nevada Hydrologic Observatory (SNHO)
• Sierra Nevada Research Institute (SNRI)
• University of California Advanced Solar Technologies Institute (UC Solar)
• University of California Educational Evaluation Center (UCEC)
• UC Merced Energy Research Institute (UCMERI)

Right: Center for Computational Biology (UCM-CCB)
Right: Center of Excellence for the Study of Health Disparities in Rural and Ethnic Underserved Populations
Right: Center for Nonimaging Optics
Right: Center for Research in the Humanities and Arts (CRHA)
Right: Center for Research on Teaching Excellence (CRTE)
Right: The Foster Family Center for Engineering Service Learning
Right: Sierra Nevada Hydrologic Observatory (SNHO)
Right: University of California Educational Evaluation Center (UCEC)

Right: University of California Advanced Solar Technologies Institute (UC Solar)
Right: Health Sciences Research Institute (HSRI)
Right: Sierra Nevada Research Institute (SNRI)
Right: UC Merced Research Institute (UCMERI)

The words “center” and “institute” on their own should never be capitalized.

Central Valley
“Central Valley” refers to the entire vertical midsection of the state of California, from Sacramento to Riverside. “San Joaquin Valley” refers to the area from Stockton to Bakersfield that is generally considered to be the service area of UC Merced.

Capitalize “Valley” when it is part of a region name such as “San Joaquin Valley,” “Sacramento Valley,” “Yosemite Valley” or “Central Valley.”

Never use “Valley” capitalized and alone on first reference. You may use it capitalized without a modifier on subsequent references.

Right: Our service area is the San Joaquin Valley. Admissions and outreach workers work hard to make sure Valley students are informed about the possibility of attending UC Merced.

Chancellors
UC Merced has had three chancellors:
• Carol Tomlinson-Keasey, 1999 to 2006
• Sung-Mo "Steve" Kang, 2007 to 2011
• Dorothy Leland, 2011 to present
**Chancellor’s Associates**

Capitalize references to the UC Merced Chancellor’s Associates.

**Chemical and physical terms**

Do not capitalize the names of laws, theorems or principles except for proper nouns that are part of the names.

Right: Newtonian physics
Right: the Heisenberg principle
Right: theory of relativity

Do not capitalize the spelled-out names of chemical elements and compounds. Use capital letters but no periods when using chemical symbols.

Right: cadmium, iron, sulfuric acid
Right: Cd, Fe, H₂SO₄

In scientific usage, place the mass number in superscript to the left of the symbol.

Right: $^{14}$C

In nonscientific usage, you have some choices about how to denote the same concept. The mass number may be placed in superscript to the right of the symbol, on the same line with the spelled-out name of the element (no hyphenation), or hyphenated with the element symbol.

Right: C14
Right: carbon 14
Right: C-14

**Cities and towns**

Use lower case for general sections of the city.

Right: Some UC Merced employees work downtown in the Mondo Building.

Capitalize widely recognized names for city regions or neighborhoods.

Right: Reasonable rents can be found in Merced’s Ragsdale neighborhood.
Right: She came from the East Bay.
Right: North Merced is considered a desirable area.

**Classes, courses and lectures**
Capitalize the main words in the titles of courses. Quotation marks or italics are not necessary. Use lower case when you refer to classes and courses, unless you are using the specific and complete title.

Right: She took calculus in high school.
Right: I’m taking Probability and Statistics (MATH 10) this semester.

If a course name contains any proper noun, capitalize the entire name of the course.

Right: I took African History and Culture as a sophomore.
Right: My sophomore year, I took African History and Theory of Literary Criticism.

A university course is analogous to a series of lectures or classes. Therefore, if you are referring to a series of classes or lectures, even if it is not a university course, capitalize the title of the series. Set off the titles of individual classes or lectures with quotation marks.

Right: Arnold Kim’s presentation “Scattering of Light” is part of the Frontiers of Science and Engineering lecture series.
Right: “Teaching Teens to Write” is a class in the UC Merced Writing Project’s Saturday Outreach Series.

This rule can also apply if a professor or instructor has given a title to a particular lecture within a university course.


**Clubs and organizations**

Clubs and organizations are managed by the organizers themselves – they do not “belong to” UC Merced.
Correct: The Chess Club at UC Merced
Incorrect: UC Merced’s Chess Club
Incorrect: The UC Merced Chess Club

**Collective nouns**

The collective nouns “faculty” and “staff” are singular nouns. If you wish to use a plural construction, use “members of the faculty/staff” or “faculty/staff members.”

Right: The faculty is represented by Academic Senate.
Right: Faculty members are dedicated researchers and teachers.
Right: Staff members disagree among themselves about the best benefits options.

Right: The UC Merced staff numbers more than 800.

**College One**

Capitalize “College One” on all references.

**Commencement**

Use lower case for “commencement” in text, unless the year follows it and creates a formal name.

Right: NBC Nightly News weekend anchor Lester Holt was the Commencement 2010 speaker.

Right: The 2009 commencement ceremony featured first lady Michelle Obama.

The following people have spoken at UC Merced commencements:

2009 – First Lady Michelle Obama
2010 – Award-winning broadcast journalist Lester Holt
2011 – Catholic Healthcare West President and CEO Lloyd H. Dean
2012 – Former California Lt. Gov. Cruz Bustamante
2013 – Former NASA astronaut Jose M. Hernandez and author David Mas Masumoto

**Committees**

Capitalize the formal names of groups and committees, such as Long-Range Planning Committee, Budget Committee, Vanguard Group, Staff Assembly. Use lower case for words like “committee,” “assembly” or “council” when they stand alone.

**Commonly misspelled words**

This is just a small sampling to get you thinking. When in doubt, use a computer spell program or look it up (or both).

- accommodate
- acknowledgment
- aesthetics (not esthetics)
- antiquated
- catalog (not catalogue)
- commitment
- conscience
- consensus
- counselor
- deductible
- dialog/dialogue (either is acceptable)
- dissension
- drunkenness
- ecstasy
- embarrass
- exhilarate
- foreword
- harass
- hors d’oeuvres
- inadvertent
- indispensable
- inoculate
- insistent
- irresistible
- judgment
- knowledgeable
- liaison
- memento
- nickel
- occurred
- occurrence
- perseverance
- prerogative
- privilege
- proceed
- sponsor
- tyrannous
- vacuum
- vilify

Company names
Refer to each company as indicated by its own style preferences, including abbreviations and ampersands.

complement/compliment
“Complement” is something that supplements. “Compliment” is praise or the expression of courtesy.
**compose/comprise/constitute**

“Compose” is to create or put together. “Comprise” is to contain, to include all or embrace.
“Constitute” is to make up, to be the elements of.

Right: The whole comprises the parts. The parts constitute the whole. The whole is composed of parts.

Right: The department comprises 12 people. Twelve people constitute the department. The department is composed of 12 people.

**Composition titles**

Capitalize first and last words and all nouns, pronouns, adjectives, verbs and adverbs. Use lower case for articles (a, an, the). Use lower case for prepositions if they are three letters long or shorter and not the first or last words of the title.

For more information on the proper rendering of composition titles, including punctuation and typesetting issues, see the “Punctuation” section of this style manual.

**Conferences and meetings**

Full, official names of conferences and meetings should be capitalized.

Right: the Geological Society of America 2007 Annual Meeting and Exposition
Right: the Republican National Convention

If you are not using the exact wording of the official title, capitalize only the proper nouns involved. An abbreviation is acceptable on second reference.

Right: the annual meeting of the Geological Society of America
Right: the GSA’s annual meeting

The title given to a conference is enclosed in quotation marks.

Right: “Geoscience in a Changing World”

**Contractions**

Use contractions according to the desired formality of the communication you are creating. Contractions are not usually appropriate for academic writing. Also, the Associated Press discourages “excessive” use of contractions for news purposes.

Consider spelling out a phrase you might otherwise contract to create emphasis.
continual/continuous
“Continual” is a steady repetition. “Continuous” is uninterrupted.

criteria
plural (more than one criterion, which is a quality, a value or a standard of judgment)

curricula
plural (more than one curriculum, which is a program of academic courses or learning activities—the engineering curricula)

curricular
adjective (The School of Natural Sciences’ curricular philosophy)

curriculum
singular (the history curriculum)

data
plural noun, usually takes a plural verb; if used as a collective noun, when the group or quantity is regarded as a noun, it takes a singular verb (the data is sound).

Dates/years
When a month is used with a specific date, use it this way:
Jan. 1
Feb.1
March 1
April 1
May 1
June 1
July 1
Aug. 1
Sept. 1
Oct. 1
Nov. 1
Dec. 1

Spell out the name of the month when using it alone or with only a year. When using a month and year only, do not separate with commas. When you use a phrase with a month, date and year, use commas on both sides of the year.

Right: January 2005
Right: Jan. 10
Right: She will resume professorial duties on Jan. 10, 2005, following her maternity leave.
Do not use the word “on” before a date or day of the month, unless its absence would lead to confusion.

Right: The holiday party is Thursday.
Right: Opening day was Sept. 6, 2005.
Right: The semester ends in December.

To describe sequences of dates or inclusive dates, use "to" or "through."

Right: The priority application period is Nov. 1 to 30.
Right: Our offices are open Monday through Friday.

Do not use suffixes with dates.

Right: April 26
Wrong: April 26th

Use an “s” without an apostrophe after the year to indicate spans of decades or centuries, because you are talking about a plural and not a possessive. It is preferable to use the four-digit year rather than the two-digit abbreviation for the sake of clarity as we have entered a new millennium. If you decide to use the two-digit abbreviation, make sure the single quote mark curves away from the numbers.

Right: The last UC campuses to be built were Santa Cruz and Irvine in the 1960s.
Wrong: The ’60s saw hundreds of demonstrations on college campuses.
Right: The donor was a member of the UC Berkeley Class of 1920.
Right: Today’s students in the charter school may eventually graduate in the UC Merced Class of 2020.
Wrong: The donor was a member of the UC Berkeley Class of ’20.

An apostrophe is needed if you are using a possessive form of the year.

Right: The opening of the campus will be 2005’s biggest event.

Rather than creating a possessive form for a decade, explain what you mean using an “of” construction. A possessive form tends to look like a mistaken placement of an apostrophe on a noun modifier.

Right: The tech boom of the 1990s
Wrong: The 1990s’ tech boom
daylight-saving time
donot daylight-savings time

deepeated
not deep-seeded

different from
not different than

Disabilities
The material in this section is offered not to police your communication or to intimidate you, but to assist you in communicating sensitively and respectfully with and about members of diverse groups. Learning preferred ways of communicating may seem daunting at first, but if you keep your mind open and realize that respectful language is just a way to indicate your true respectful feelings, you will soon become more comfortable.

The overall rule for sensitive communications with or about diverse groups is that each individual or group has a right to choose appropriate descriptive language. It is always OK to ask a question like, “How would you prefer to have me refer to your disability?”

Above all, do not let the fact that there is preferred language about diverse groups stop you from communicating with or about them. Remember that if your intentions are good, people will more than likely forgive your mistakes.

A disability is defined as a functional limitation. That includes any physical, sensory or mental condition.

Avoid reinforcing negative images and myths. Use words and images that cast persons with disabilities in a positive or at least a neutral light. For instance:

- Avoid tear-jerking stories. Instead of writing a story that makes the reader feel sorry for the person with a disability, focus on issues that affect that person’s quality of life.
- Avoid portraying someone as a victim. Using phrases such as “victim of” or “suffers from” sensationalizes the situation. A better way of saying the same thing would be “a person who has multiple sclerosis” or “a man who had polio.”
- Avoid labeling people. Instead of saying, “the retarded,” or “the deaf,” say “people with developmental disabilities” or “people who are deaf.” Mention the person first, not the disability. For instance, use “a girl who is deaf,” not “a deaf girl.”
- Emphasize a person’s abilities, not limitation. As an example, say “uses a wheelchair,” rather than “confined to a wheelchair.”
Outdated, negative terms have been replaced with more positive terminology. Also, some convoluted terms and ambiguous euphemisms should be avoided in favor of simple, direct language. Some examples are listed below.

Avoid descriptions that connote pity, such as afflicted with or suffers from multiple sclerosis. Rather, has multiple sclerosis. Some terms include:

**Cripple**: Often considered offensive when used to describe a person who is lame or disabled.

**Disabled**: A general term used for a physical or mental disability. Do not use mentally retarded.

**Handicap**: It should be avoided in describing a disability.

**Blind**: Describes a person with complete loss of sight. For others, use terms such as visually impaired or person with low vision.

**Deaf**: Describes a person with total hearing loss. For others, use partial hearing loss or partially deaf.

Avoid using deaf-mute. Do not use deaf and dumb.

**Mute**: Describes a person who physically cannot speak. Others with speaking difficulties are speech impaired.

**Wheelchair user**: People use wheelchairs for independent mobility. Do not use confined to a wheelchair, or wheelchair-bound. If a wheelchair is needed, say why.

When possible, speak with the person about whom you are writing and find out how they prefer to have you refer to their disability.

**Disc/disk**

The preferred spelling for CDs and other optical or laser-based media is “disc.” “Disk” is preferred for floppy drives, hard drives and other magnetic storage media.

**Diseases**

Do not capitalize the names of diseases, syndromes, tests and other medical terms except for proper nouns that are part of the names.

Right: Alzheimer’s disease
Right: diabetes

**disinterested/uninterested**

“Disinterested” means impartial. “Uninterested” means someone lacks interest.

**dissociate**

not disassociate

**Divisions, offices and schools**

Capitalize the names of schools, offices and administrative divisions when using the whole name.
Right: Faculty members from the School of Natural Sciences brought their families to participate in Merced’s annual Christmas Parade.

Right: Staff members from Government and Community Relations sang a stirring rendition of “The Twelve Days of Budget Negotiations” at the UC Merced holiday party.

Right: Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Jane Lawrence is busy preparing for the arrival of students.

Right: Contact University Communications if you have questions about how to obtain high-resolution files for printing.

Use lower case for the words division, office or school when they stand alone.

Right: The School of Engineering encourages women and minority students to enter the field. Numerous programs in the school help make this possible.

Wrong: The Division will release its report this Friday.

Capitalize the name of the field of study or work when referring to the school or division. Use lower case to refer to a field in the general sense.

Right: Teenie Matlock is a professor in the School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts.

Right: The social sciences, humanities and arts are growing at UC Merced.

Right: Valerie Leppert is an engineering professor.

UC Merced has one named school, the Ernest and Julio Gallo School of Management (planned). Do not use any variant that includes the name “Gallo” without the names “Ernest and Julio,” even on second reference.

**email**

Use lower case and no hyphen.

**Earth, earth**

Capitalize “Earth” when you are referring to the planet Earth.

Right: The first four planets in our solar system are Mercury, Venus, Earth and Mars.

Right: Many branches of science, from chemistry to public policy, come together to study the workings of the Earth at the Sierra Nevada Research Institute.

Use lowercase when you are speaking of earth in a metaphorical sense or when you are referring to soil or dirt.

Right: She is a down-to-earth woman.

Right: In “The Secret Garden,” Mary longs for a bit of earth in which to grow things.
Electronic addresses
In text, electronic addresses are lowercase.
Right: communications@ucmerced.edu

It is no longer necessary to use http:// or www.
Right: ucmerced.edu

Rarely, some sites still require “www,” but most do not. If “www” is used when it is not needed, the address will not work. The best practice is to check any Web address that will appear in your communications to make sure it is correct and functional. Do not omit the period when a Web address falls at the end of a sentence.

entitled/titled
“Entitled” means having the right to something (she is entitled to the inheritance). Use “titled” to introduce the name of a publication, speech, musical piece (the piece is titled “Love and Illusion”).

E-terms
- dial up (verb)
- dialup (adjective) account
- dot-com
- e-business
- e-commerce
- email
- high tech (no hyphen)
- Internet (cap “I”)
- Listserv ™
- log off (verb) logoff (noun)
- log on (verb) logon (noun)
- multimedia (one word, no hyphen)
- Net (cap “N,” no apostrophe, when referring to the Internet)
- offline (one word, no hyphen)
- online (one word, no hyphen)
- username
- user ID
- Web 2.0
- website
- Web address
- Web browser
- World Wide Web
Ethnicity and race

Never be afraid to discuss race and ethnicity. It’s important to ask open questions with good intentions to produce good communications about this subject. You may use the guidelines below to help you, but when writing about individuals, it is always best to ask how they prefer to have you refer to their ethnicity.

On the other hand, if race and ethnicity are not directly relevant to your point, you should not mention them.

Our ways of speaking about race change over time. Terms that used to be considered appropriate such as “Negro” or “Oriental” are no longer acceptable — not because they are inherently racist, but because they hark back to a time when our society was less accepting of racial and ethnic diversity. Use the terms included in the discussion below, instead. Try to be flexible as language changes.

African American/black: It’s acceptable to use these interchangeably to describe black people in the United States. When referring to specific individuals, use the term he or she prefers. Do not capitalize “black” when referring to race. Don’t use “colored.”

Because of the history of slavery in the United States it is often impossible to use a country-specific reference such as “Nigerian American,” but if an individual prefers that you do so, by all means do.

African, Asian: When you are speaking about someone who comes from a country in Africa or Asia, refer specifically to that person’s native country if at all possible. Africa and Asia are not homogenous masses but diverse continents that are homes to many different countries and ethnic groups. Ignoring this fact is a common mistake.

American Indian/Native American: The two terms are synonymous. Some indigenous people in the United States prefer “American Indian” to “Native American.” It’s best to use individual preference, if known. Other terms, such as “First Nations” or “First Peoples,” may be used on individual preference. When possible, use national affiliation rather than the generic “American Indian” or “Native American,” for example, “Navajo,” “Quechua” or “Cherokee.” To specify that someone was born in the United States, but isn’t Native American, use “native-born.”

Asians, Asian American: Use Asian when referring to anyone from Asia if you cannot determine their specific country of origin. Use Asian American when specifically referring to those of Asian ancestry who are American citizens. Use country- or group-specific designations, such as “Japanese American” or “Hmong,” whenever possible.

Hispanic, Latino/a: Hispanic is a general term used to encompass a diverse group of individuals whose heritage ties them to Spanish-speaking countries and cultures. Some dislike this term because it signifies a perceived effort to homogenize the diverse group. However, it is acceptable when other, more specific terms do not apply.
“Latino” and “Latina” are preferred by many individuals and are acceptable, but must be used in the correct gender form, with “Latino” referring to males or mixed groups and “Latina” referring to females. “Chicano” and “Chicana” refer only to Mexican peoples and cultures but are not always preferred by Mexican people.

When possible, use a country-specific term such as “Mexican,” “Nicaraguan” or “Argentine” (adding “-American” when referring to someone who is a born or naturalized citizen of the United States). Remember that many Hispanic people would scientifically be considered Caucasian, so be careful to be clear about what you mean when you are writing about different groups in the same communication.

European American, Caucasian, white: Capitalize European American and Caucasian, but use lower case for “white” when referring to race. All are acceptable depending on the preferences of the individuals about whom you are writing. Use country-specific references such as “Irish American” or “Portuguese American” when applicable or relevant.

Do not assume white as the default if you are writing about different racial or ethnic groups. If you mention the race or ethnicity of other groups, mention it for a group of white people in the same way.

biracial, multiracial, multiethnic: For individuals or groups who identify with more than one racial or ethnic group, use “biracial,” “multiracial” or “multiethnic,” without capitalization or hyphens. If individuals wish to identify their heritage specifically, use these words combined with the guidelines above. Try to use parallel constructions when speaking about more than one racial or ethnic heritage.

Right: My son is biracial, black and white.
Right: She is multiracial African American, Native American and European American.

Fairfield Canal
The large canal runs through campus under the Scholars Lane Bridge. It is a Merced Irrigation District canal.

Fax
Use lower case when you use “fax” in body copy. If you’re providing a fax number on your business card or in a listing, you may capitalize the word.

Right: You could fax or email me the invitation.
Right: UC Merced University Communications
       Phone: 209-228-4432
       Fax: 209-228-4499
farther/further
“Farther” refers to physical distance. “Further” refers to an extension of time or degree.

Fellow, fellowship
When “fellow” or “fellowship” is used alone, use lower case. When speaking of the official name of a fellow or fellowship, capitalize.

Right: She was one of four fellows selected from California universities.
Right: He won a Guggenheim Fellowship five years ago.
Right: My roommate became an AAEA Fellow.

fewer/less
In general, use “fewer” for individual items that can be counted. Use “less” for bulk or quantity that is measured (not counted). “Fewer” usually takes a plural noun; “less” usually takes a singular noun.

Founders Day
The campus’s first Founders Day celebration, honoring the 10th anniversary of campus groundbreaking, was held in October 2012. Groundbreaking ceremonies for the campus took place Oct. 25, 2002. Founders Day has no apostrophe in its title.

Founding deans
There were three founding deans:
Maria Pallavicini, dean of the School of Natural Sciences
Jeff R. Wright, dean of the School of Engineering
Kenji Hakuta, dean of the School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts

Carol Tomlinson-Keasey served as founding chancellor. Her term began in 1999 and ended in August 2006, when she stepped down.

Fractions
Spell out fractions less than one, using hyphens between words. Use figures for precise amounts larger than one, converting to decimals when appropriate.

Right: one-half, two-thirds
Right: 1.5 liters
Wrong: one and one-half liters

fundraiser/fundraising
Always one word.
Gender and sex
The material in this section is offered not to police your communication or to intimidate you, but to assist you in communicating sensitively and respectfully with and about members of diverse groups. Learning preferred ways of communicating may seem daunting at first, but if you keep your mind open and realize that respectful language is just a way to indicate your true respectful feelings, you will soon become more comfortable.

The overall rule for sensitive communications with or about diverse groups is that each individual or group has a right to choose appropriate descriptive language. It is always OK to ask a question like, “How would you prefer to have me refer to your gender?”

Above all, do not let the fact that there is preferred language about diverse groups stop you from communicating with or about them. Remember that if your intentions are good, people will more than likely forgive your mistakes.

Do not use “he,” “she,” “his” or “her” unless it is essential to meaning or understanding. (When referring to a specific person, you may of course use the appropriate gendered pronoun for that person.) Never use the made-up non-words “s/he” or “his/her.” Avoid the use of “he or she” and “his or her” if at all possible. A plural construction often solves problems, but be careful not to mix the singular and plural.

Wrong: A student may choose to live off campus if he or she wishes.
Right: Students may choose off campus if they wish.

Wrong: Every student has their preferences.
Right: All students have their preferences.
Right: Each student has a preference.

Do not point to a person’s gender unless it is directly relevant to the point you are making.

Right: Carol Tomlinson-Keasey was the first woman to serve as a founding chancellor in the UC system.
Wrong: Tomlinson-Keasey, the female chancellor of UC Merced, fought to get the campus funded. Use gender-neutral nouns in the simplest possible form: not “chairman” but “chair,” not “waitress” but “server,” not “mailman” but “mail carrier.” It is also becoming more common to see the word “actor” used for both men and women.

Geological terms
Capitalize the names of eras, periods and epochs, but do not capitalize the words “era,” “period” and so on.

Right: Pleistocene epoch, Cenozoic era
Do not capitalize modifiers such as “early,” “middle” or “late.”

Right: early Paleocene epoch

Capitalize the term “Ice Age” when referring to the Pleistocene glacial epoch. Do not capitalize “ice age” as a general term.

Do not capitalize the names of glacial and interglacial stages.

Right: fourth glacial stage

**Graduate studies**

UC Merced’s Graduate Division has a number of graduate study areas. As of spring 2013:

- Applied Mathematics
- Biological Engineering and Small-scale Technologies
- Chemistry and Chemical Biology
- Cognitive and Information Sciences
- Electrical Engineering and Computer Science
- Environmental Systems
- Mechanical Engineering
- Physics
- Psychological Sciences
- Quantitative and Systems Biology
- Social Sciences
- World Cultures

When referring to them in writing, it is proper to capitalize the titles of the areas.

**gray/grey**

Gray is the American spelling. Grey is the English spelling.

**half-mast/half-staff**

To use “half-mast,” you must be referring to a flag on a ship or at a naval station. A flag anywhere else is at “half-staff.”

**historic/historical**

“Historic” means important. “Historical” refers to any event in the past.

**Honors**
Use lower case and italicize *cum laude, magna cum laude* and *summa cum laude*. In news releases, do not use italic type.

**hopefully**
Unless you’re describing the way someone spoke, appeared or acted, do not use this one. Too many people use “hopefully,” an adverb that must modify a verb only, as if it were a conditional phrase.

Right: I hope we can go.
Wrong: Hopefully, we can go.
Wrong: Hopefully, the report will address that issue.

Right: It is hoped that the report will address that issue.
Right: She watched the mailbox hopefully for an acceptance letter.

**Hyphenated words in titles**
A general rule of thumb is always to capitalize the first unit and capitalize the second unit if it is a noun or adjective, or if it has an equal balance with the first unit.

Right: Twenty-first-Century University Built in Central California
Right: City-States in Nineteenth-Century Europe
Right: Non-Christian Religions in North America

The second unit should be in lower case if it is a participle modifying the first unit or if both units constitute a single word.

Right: Spanish-speaking Students Encouraged to Pursue University Education
Right: E-flat Minor Symphony First Work Performed in New Concert Hall
Right: Re-establishing Division Goals
Right: Self-fulfilling Promises in Small-Town California

**implement**
In most cases, “use” will work fine.

Right: He will use the strategy to improve his business.
Wrong: He will implement the strategy.

**important/importantly**
“Importantly” is incorrect unless it is an adverb.

Right: He strode importantly into the meeting.

“More important,” as used correctly below, is a comparative adjective.
Right: More important, students should focus on becoming well rounded.

Wrong: More importantly, students should focus on becoming well rounded.

**imply/infer**

“Imply” means to suggest or indicate indirectly. To “infer” is to conclude or decide from something known or assumed.

The reader or listener infers. The writer or speaker implies.

**in regard to**

not in regards to

“As regards” or “regarding” may also be used.

**insure/ensure**

“Insure” means to establish a contract for insurance of some type. “Ensure” means to guarantee. As a general rule, use “ensure.”

**irregardless**

The word is “regardless.” There is no such word as “irregardless.”

**-ize**

Do not coin verbs with this suffix.

**Jr.**

Do not precede by a comma.

Right: John F. Kennedy Jr.

**Kelly Grove**

The area of campus near the entrance that includes Little Lake, the recreation fields and Lower Pond.

**Lake Yosemite**

Lake Yosemite is an artificial freshwater lake about a half mile north of campus. Two canals (Fairfield Canal and Le Grand Canal) run through or near campus and come from Lake Yosemite, which was built in the 1800s for irrigation, and is owned by Merced Irrigation District, though it is operated as a recreational facility by the Merced County Parks and Recreation District.

**lay/lie**

“Lay” means to place or deposit, and requires a direct object (forms: lay, laid, laid, laying). “Lie”
means to be in a reclining position or to be situated. It does not take an object (forms: lie, lay, lain, lying).

Right: Every day he lies down for a power nap after lunch. (present tense, no object)

Right: I lay down my books when I walk into the classroom. (present tense, object: books)

Right: I lay down to watch TV last night and didn’t wake up until morning. (past tense of lie, no object)

Right: I laid my head on the pillow but I couldn’t fall asleep. (past tense of lay, object: head)

Leadership titles
At UC Merced, a person is vice chancellor for a division and a dean of a school. The prepositions are often confused.

- Chancellor
- Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor
- Vice Chancellor for Business and Administrative Services
- Vice Chancellor for Planning and Budget
- Dean of Graduate Studies
- Vice Chancellor for Research
- Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs
- Vice Chancellor for Development and Alumni Relations
- Assistant Chancellor and Chief of Staff
- Dean of the School of Engineering
- Dean of the School of Natural Sciences
- Dean of the School of Social Sciences, Humanities & Arts
- Chief Information Officer
- University Librarian

lectern/podium
You stand on a podium and behind a lectern.

Le Grand Canal
One of two irrigation canals, Le Grand Canal runs along the northeastern border of campus. It comes from Lake Yosemite, and is owned by Merced Irrigation District.

Legislative titles
Abbreviate Rep., Reps., Sen., Sens., in first reference before an elected official’s name and omit afterward, using only the person’s last name. Spell out and lowercase representative and senator when used alone.

Other legislative titles, such as assemblyman, supervisor and city councilwoman, should be capitalized before the person’s name. They are not abbreviated. If possible, the titles should also be gender specific.

Right: Congressman Jim Costa was elected in 2005. Right: Councilman Noah Lor was the first Hmong resident elected to the Merced City Council.

**Legislative and governmental entities**

Use lower case when the word “federal” is an adjective.

Right: federal court, the federal government

Lowercase all “state of” and "city of" constructions.

Right: the state of California

Capitalize the names of most governmental entities only when using full titles that make it immediately clear what body you are talking about. Continue to capitalize the entities when it’s clear you’re referring to a specific body.

Right: The California Legislature
Right: Each state has a legislature
Right: The California Legislature met today. It’s unlikely the Legislature will pass the bill today.

Exceptions to this rule are the United States Senate and House of Representatives. They should be referred to as the Senate and the House, capitalized.

**let/leave**

To “let alone” means to leave something undisturbed. To “leave alone” means to depart from or cause to be in solitude.

**like/as**

Use “like” to compare nouns and pronouns.

Use “as” to introduce clauses and phrases.

Wrong: You’re almost as tall as me.

Right: You’re almost as tall as I am.
literally/figuratively

Right: The furnace literally exploded.

Wrong: He was so furious he literally blew his stack.

Little Lake
Little Lake is the small water feature with a fountain in Kelly Grove, south of the dining and recreation centers. It can be seen from many areas of campus.

Lower Pond
It is a small pond on the southern corner of campus, near the recreation fields and Evolution Valley parking lot.

located
In most cases, you’ll find you don’t really need this word. Instead of “The store is located in the University Center,” you can simply write “The store is in the University Center.” Instead of “Where are you located at?” write “Where are you?”

Magazines and newspapers
Capitalize the name but do not place it in quotations or italics. Do not capitalize “magazine” unless it’s part of the publication’s title or masthead.

Right: Time magazine, Newsweek magazine, PC Magazine

Capitalize the word “the” only if it’s part of the periodical’s title.

Right: The New York Times, the Merced Sun-Star

many/much
In general, use “many” for individual items that can be counted. Use “much” for bulk or quantity that is measured.

Right: Many cars passed over the bridge during rush hour.

Right: Much water passed under the bridge during the flood.

me/myself
Avoid using “myself.” In most constructions, it’s the objective pronoun you really want:

Right: It’s between you and me.
Wrong: You may report abuses of the system to your supervisor or to myself.

Correct use of “myself” (as well as words like “himself” or “herself”) is often – though not always – preceded by the word “by.”

Often people use “myself” because they don’t know whether to use “I” or “me” in a compound predicate. A simple test to take out the compounding word and see what sounds right.

Right: Throw it in the oven for baby and me.

Right: Throw it in the oven for me.

Wrong: Come over and see Carla and I.

Wrong: Come over and see I. (See? Now it’s obvious.)

**Medical terms**

See the section “Biological Terms” for information on treating species names, including microorganisms that may be studied in medicine.

Do not capitalize the names of diseases, syndromes, tests and other medical terms except for proper nouns that are part of the names.

Right: Alzheimer’s disease
Right: diabetes

When referring to specific vitamins, capitalize only the letter representing the vitamin, not the word “vitamin.”

Right: vitamin C
Right: vitamin B-12

**Michelle Obama Garden for Young Children**

A garden at the Early Childhood Education Center, named for the First Lady after her commencement speech on campus in 2009.

**midnight/noon**

Use instead of 12 a.m. or 12 p.m. Do not put a “12” in front of either one.

**Money**

Use the dollar sign and numbers. Do not use a decimal and two zeros.

Right: $24
Right: $24.89  
Wrong: $24.00

Use the comma in amounts in the thousands.

Right: $1,200  
Wrong: $1200

For amounts beyond the thousands, use the dollar sign, number and appropriate word.

Right: The Foster family gave $1.2 million for the Engineering Service Learning program.  
Wrong: The Foster family gave $1,200,000 for the Engineering Service Learning program.

For foreign currency, spell out the name of the currency and identify it by country, rather than using symbols that may not be familiar to your readers.

**more than/over**  
Use “more than” when you mean in excess of; use “over” when referring to physical placement of an object, an ending or extent of authority.

Right: The university has more than 30 professors.  
Right: The student jumped over the fence.  
Wrong: Over 1700 workers have contributed labor to the first buildings.

**Movies**
Put quotation marks around the titles of movies.

Right: “Napoleon Dynamite” is a cult favorite.

**Music**
Capitalize but do not use quotation marks around descriptive titles for orchestral works. If a work has a special title, use quotation marks around it.

Right: Bach’s Suite No. 1 for Orchestra  
Right: Mozart’s “The Magic Flute”

**National labs**
Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (LLNL)  
Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (LBNL)  
Sandia National Laboratory (SNL)  
Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL)
North Bowl (includes Northern Pond)
North Bowl is a cornerstone of the campus’s open-space system and a naturally occurring
topographical depression bordered on three sides by the Le Grand Canal. North Bowl is used as
grazing land for cattle, but long-range plans call for recreational fields, an arboretum and a
prominent role in the campus’s pedestrian and bicycle circulation system. North Bowl occupies
about 60 acres at the northeastern side of campus.

Northern Pond
It is a small pond found in the North Bowl area.

nor
Use this word anytime you use “neither.”

Numbers
Spell out numbers from one to nine. Use numerals for all numbers 10 and above. Exceptions are
noted below.

Right: nine apples
Right: 16 coffee mugs
Right: three miles
Right: He teaches fourth grade and tutors a 12th grader.

Use numerals for ages, percentages, equipment specifications, page numbers and sums of money.

Right: I have a 3-year-old and a 5-year-old.
Right: 8 megabytes
Right: the chart on page 4
Right: His grandmother sent him $100 to start his college fund.

Avoid starting a sentence with a number, but if you must, spell out the number unless it is a year.

Right: Nine thousand applications were processed.
Right: 2005 will be a landmark year.

off campus/on campus
Hyphenate only when it’s used as a compound modifier.

Right: She chose to live on campus in Merced Hall.
Right: There are plenty of off-campus housing options available to students.
oral/verbal
“Oral” refers to spoken words. “Verbal” can refer to either spoken or written words, but most often connotes the process of reducing ideas to writing.

partially/partly
These two are not interchangeable. “Partially” is used to mean to a certain degree when speaking of a condition or state. “Partly” implies the idea of a part, usually of a physical object, as distinct from the whole.

Right: I’m partially convinced.

Wrong: The first year’s faculty is partially hired.

Right: The first year’s faculty is partly hired.

Passive Voice
Avoid using the passive voice, which can contribute to imprecise, weak or wordy prose.

Think about this sentence: “Jane’s classes were taught in the morning.” Taught by whom? Is Jane a teacher or a student? An active construction would clarify the sentence: “Professor Smith taught Jane’s morning classes.”

When a passive construction makes an appearance in an early draft, think about the sentence. Try to alter the construction and choose an active verb. Concise sentences with active verbs and a few, carefully selected modifiers communicate most clearly to the reader.

Sometimes passive voice is a better choice. For example, when the recipient of an award is more important than the awarding body, it’s better to keep this information in the lead of the sentence: “Director of Homeland Security Tom Ridge was awarded an honorary doctorate.”

past experience
What other kind of experience is there? Just use “experience” alone.

peddle/pedal
To “peddle” is to sell. To “pedal” is to use pedals, as on a bicycle. You can “back-pedal,” as on a bicycle, or “soft-pedal,” as on a piano, but not “back-peddle” or “soft-peddle.”

people/persons
Use “person” when speaking of an individual. The word “people,” rather than “persons,” is preferred for plural uses.
Percentages
Always use numerals (including the numbers 1-9) and spell out the word “percent” in text. “Percent” takes a singular verb when standing alone or when a singular word follows an “of” construction. Use a plural verb when a plural word follows an “of” construction.

Right: I believe 50 percent is enough.
Right: We anticipate 60 percent of the membership is coming.
Right: We anticipate 60 percent of the members are coming.

Use the percent symbol (%) in charts or figures and in academic, statistical or technical writing.

Ph.D.
The preferred form for Ph.D. is to say the person holds a doctorate, doctor’s degree or doctoral degree in (name the field or specialty).

Plurals and possessives
Names
Form plurals of family names that end in “s” by adding “es.”

Right: The Evanses live on the west side of town.
Right: The Evans family lives on the west side of town.

Form plurals and possessives of proper names that end with “s,” “x” and “z” according to the following examples:

Right: Moses’ writings, Joseph James’ dissertation
Right: Marx’s films
Right: Getz’s recordings, Fernandez’s statement

Plural possessives combine the above rules.

Right: the Davis family’s hometown, the Lopez family’s accomplishments
Right: the Davises’ hometown, the Lopezes’ accomplishments

Plurals
Form plurals of the following by adding “s” alone:

Right: dos and don’ts
Right: CDs
Right: M.A.s and Ph.D.s
Right: The three Rs
Right: the early 1920s
Right: Several YMCAs
Right: CODs and IOUs
Right: in twos and threes

Form plurals of the following by adding “’s” (apostrophe s):
Right: A’s and B’s
Right: dot your i’s and cross your t’s
Right: SOS’s

Preferred plurals
The following list of preferred plurals reflects the preferred of two or more correct plurals for a select group of words.
alumni, alumnae (women only), not alums
data, not datums (remember that data is plural and should take a plural verb)
memoranda or memos, not memorandum
millennia, not millenniums
symposia, not symposiums

Politics
When you are speaking or writing on behalf of UC Merced, do not take a position on any election, initiative or political issue unless you have consulted with Executive Director of Government and Community Relations Cori Lucero at 209-228-4440 or through her assistant at 209-228-4353.

In recognition of the importance of academic freedom and freedom of speech, there is no restriction on individuals’ political expressions when they are speaking for themselves. When you exercise your right to individual free speech, do not identify yourself with the university. For example, a letter to the editor stating your personal opinion on a controversial issue would be signed, “John Jones, Merced,” rather than, “UC Merced Program Manager John Jones, UC Merced.”

Postal abbreviations
The all-caps, two-letter postal abbreviations for states should be used only on envelopes for mail to be sent through the postal service. See the entry on Addresses in this style guide for more information on addressing envelopes.

For rules on other state name abbreviations, see the States and Regions entry of this style guide.

premier/premiere
“Premier” is first in status or importance, chief, or a prime minister or chief executive. “Premiere” is a first performance.
**presently/currently**
Many writers use these terms as if they were synonymous. But “presently” means in a little while, soon. “Currently” means now. In most cases you can do just fine without using “currently.” For example, “We are currently revising the plan” works better when simply stated as “We are revising the plan.”

**pretense/pretext**
“Pretense” is a false show or unsupported claim to some distinction or accomplishment. “Pretext” is a false reason or motive put forth to hide the real one, an excuse or a cover-up.

**principal/principle**
“Principal” as a noun is a chief person or thing; as an adjective, it means first in importance. “Principle” is a noun meaning a fundamental truth, doctrine or law; a guiding rule or code of conduct; a method of operation.

**Professor**
Avoid the abbreviation “Prof.”

In most instances, titles need to be used with names only on first reference. On subsequent references, it is acceptable to use simply a last name.

In most instances, it isn’t necessary to specify whether the person is an assistant, associate or full professor.

Right: Professor Peggy O’Day studies contaminants in groundwater. O’Day has several research sites, including an important one on the San Francisco Bay.

**Punctuation**
For most punctuation, consult the Chicago Manual of Style, but refer to the AP Stylebook as shown here:

**Ampersand**
Use only when it’s part of the official name of a company, foundation or organization.

Right: AT&T
Right: The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

**Brackets**
News releases should not contain brackets ([]). Substitute parentheses.
For other communications, follow the guidelines in Chicago.
Colon
According to the AP, if the material following a colon consists of one or more complete sentences, or if it is a quotation, it should begin with a capital letter. Lowercase a sentence fragment following a colon.

The most frequent use of a colon is at the end of a complete sentence to introduce a list.

Right: We received generous donations from several families: the Hains, the Cohens, the Lencionis and the Olivarezes.

A colon should not separate main sentence elements, such as a verb and a direct object, even if the direct object is a list.

Right: The new professors hired this month were
- Jan Goggans
- Sean Malloy
- Matthew Meyer
- Miriam Barlow

Wrong: The new professors hired this month were:
- Jan Goggans
- Sean Malloy
- Matthew Meyer
- Miriam Barlow

A colon may also be used in a Q&A or interview format and in recounting dialogue.

Comma
According to the AP, use a comma only when an element of a series of three or more elements requires its own conjunction or in a series or complex phrases.

Right: I had orange juice, toast, and ham and eggs for breakfast.
Wrong: I had orange juice, toast and ham and eggs for breakfast.
Wrong: I had coffee, doughnuts, and cold pizza for breakfast.

Dash
There are several kinds of dashes, differing in length and each having specific uses. The most common is the em dash (—), used to denote a sudden break in thought that causes an abrupt change in sentence structure. Separate the em dash from surrounding words with spaces.
Right: Funding was unavailable — or so they thought — because of the controversial nature of their work.

An em dash is also used to separate the dateline from the opening sentence in a news release.

Right: MERCED, Calif. — UC Merced administrators announced today …

The en dash (–) is half the length of the em dash but longer than a hyphen. It is used to indicate continuing or inclusive numbers, such as dates, times or reference numbers.

Right: May – June 2004

If you use “from” when referring to inclusive numbers, you must use “to” instead of an en dash.

Wrong: from 1989 – 1992
Right: from 1989 to 1992

According to Chicago, the en dash is also correctly used in place of a hyphen in a compound adjective that contains one element that is two words or a hyphenated word.

Right: a New York – London flight

**Ellipses**

Use AP guidelines governing use and spacing of ellipses within and between sentences.
Right: "Congress shall make no law respecting … the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."
Wrong: "Congress shall make no law respecting…the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."

**Hyphen**

Use the hyphen to link words with prefixes, to link the elements of compound modifiers, or to link words or fragments at line breaks. Use it to avoid ambiguity.

Right: He recovered from his illness.
Right: After examining the sculpture, she re-covered it to prepare for the unveiling.

Also use the hyphen in telephone numbers. See the section titled “Dates and Numbers” in this manual for more information.
Parentheses
The need for parentheses often suggests that a sentence is becoming contorted; rewrite the sentence if you can, or use commas or dashes to set off incidental or contrasting material.

If parenthetical information must be included, place a period outside a closing parenthesis if the material inside is not a complete sentence. An independent sentence inside parentheses takes a period before the closing parenthesis. When a phrase placed in parentheses might normally qualify as a complete sentence but is dependent on the surrounding material, do not capitalize the first word or end with a period.

Possessives
See the section titled “Plurals and Possessives” in this manual for more information.

Quotations and quotation marks
In general, follow AP style. In dialogue, every change in speaker requires a new paragraph. A partial quote does not require a new paragraph, but always requires a set of closing quotation marks, even when immediately followed by a new paragraph that continues a quote from the same individual.

Never use quotation marks to attempt to add emphasis. This is incorrect.

Type style of punctuation
Punctuation should generally be printed in the same style or font of type as the surrounding text.

Race
Capitalize names of races or ethnicities (African American, Caucasian, Asian, Native American) but do not capitalize “black” or “white” when referring to race. For more information, see the entry on ethnicity and race.

rebut/refute
To “rebut” is to argue to the contrary. To “refute” is to win the argument.

regardless
“Regardless” is a word. “Irregardless” is not a word.

Regions
Region names are capitalized when they stand alone and are widely understood to designate a specific geographic area.

Right: Central California, Northern California, Southern California
Right: the West Coast, the Intermountain West
Right: the San Joaquin Valley
Right: the Bay Area
See also the “Central Valley” and San Joaquin Valley” entries.

**Religion**
To respect the wide variety of religions on our campus, use terms like “holiday party” rather than “Christmas party,” and “winter break” rather than “Christmas break.”

Islam/Islamic/Muslim: “Islam” is the name of the religion whose final prophet was Muhammad. “Muslim” is the name used for adherents of the Islamic faith or their actions. “Islamic” should be used only for what pertains directly to the faith and its doctrines. Use “Muslim” as an adjective to denote the works and acts of Muslims, or groups of people and their institutions. The book, “Teaching about Islam and Muslims in the Public School Classroom” states, “Human interpretation of Islam by Muslims is necessarily imperfect … in short, human acts and constructs fall short of being purely Islamic, and therefore may not be denoted as such.”

Jew, Judaism: Use the word “Jew” for both men and women. Never use “Jewess.” “Jewish” is a description of heritage and culture, as much as a religion. Children born to Jewish mothers are considered Jewish, even if they do not practice Judaism.

The Jewish religion has several subgroups, each of which should be referred to using capitalization. “Orthodox Jews” refers to literal adherents to the Judaic Laws. These Jews tend to be traditionalists. “Conservative Jews” refers to the majority of Jews in the world, who adhere to most of the laws, but not the older traditions. “Reform Jews” refers to a group that regards scripture as lessons, not necessarily literal and unchanging. Reform Jews are sometimes called “culturally Jewish.” Other groups exist. Check with those about whom you are writing regarding how they prefer to describe their faith or culture.

For additional information about religious movements, see the AP Stylebook.

**Reproductive and family-building issues**

*abortion:* Use the following language, according to AP guidelines, to make your communications as neutral as possible:

Right: anti-abortion  
Wrong: pro-life, anti-choice  
Right: abortion rights  
Wrong: pro-abortion, anti-life, pro-choice  
Right: abortion doctor, abortion practitioner  
Wrong: abortionist

*adoption:* Do not mention adoption in communications unless it is directly relevant to your point.
Wrong: The donor graduated from UC Berkeley, as did his adoptive father and grandfather.
Right: Williams, inspired by her own experience as an adoptee, studies transracial adoption in the United States.

When writing about adoption, be sensitive to the feelings of all parties involved — birth families, adoptive families and adoptees. The following language is encouraged to convey adoption sensitivity.

Right: birth mother, birth parent
Right: biological parent, genetic parent (scientific use)
Wrong: real mother, natural mother, real parent, natural parent

Right: place for adoption, make an adoption plan
Wrong: give up for adoption, put up for adoption, give away

Right: adoptee, adopted
Wrong: adopted child (if referring to an adult)

embryo, fetus, baby: The word “embryo” refers to the product of human conception through the end of its eighth week of development. (This is the stage where embryonic stem cells can be extracted for use in research.) The word “fetus” is correct from the end of the eighth week of development until the moment of birth. The word “baby” is correct, although less scientific, to use when referring to an embryo or fetus. Be aware that any word choice in this area will carry political or moral weight. Your best option, if you are striving for neutrality, is to alternate words within your communications.

Reverend
This courtesy title for members of the clergy may be abbreviated or spelled out, but it must be preceded by “the.” If abbreviated, it must also be followed by the person’s name. Use the last name or the reverend on subsequent references.

Right: The Rev. John Ochoa will speak at the commemoration.
Right: The Reverend John Ochoa will speak at the commemoration.
Wrong: Rev. Ochoa spoke at the commemoration.
Wrong: The Rev. will speak at the commemoration.

Rooms on or related to campus
Capitalize only when used with a number, letter or proper name.

Right: Her office is in Room 210 of the Mondo Building.
Right: We’ll be in the Sequoia Conference Room.
Right: Meet me in the break room at 12:30 p.m.

RSVP
“RSVP” is an abbreviation for the French phrase, *respondez s’il vous plait*, translatable as “please reply.” Therefore, it is redundant to write, “Please RSVP”

**San Joaquin Valley**
The San Joaquin Valley the area of the Central Valley of California that lies south of the Sacramento–San Joaquin River Delta in Stockton. Most of the Valley is rural, but cities and suburbs include Chowchilla, Fresno, Bakersfield, Stockton, Modesto, Visalia, Porterville, Merced, Madera and Hanford. In writing, it is the San Joaquin Valley on first reference and the Valley after that. The San Joaquin Valley is not synonymous with the Central Valley, which is a much larger area.

**Seasons/semesters**
Capitalize only when used in a title or as part of a formal name or semester name. Use lower case when these words stand alone.

Right: UC Merced welcomed its largest class in Fall 2010.
Right: Freshman students will take general education classes in the fall of 2010.
Right: UC Merced had two new student housing buildings under construction during summer 2010.

**Sexual orientation**
The material in this section is offered not to police your communication or to intimidate you, but to assist you in communicating sensitively and respectfully with and about members of diverse groups. Learning preferred ways of communicating may seem daunting at first, but if you keep your mind open and realize that respectful language is just a way to indicate your true respectful feelings, you will soon become more comfortable.

The overall rule for sensitive communications with or about diverse groups is that each individual or group has a right to choose appropriate descriptive language. It is *always* OK to ask a question like, “How would you prefer to have me refer to your orientation?”

Above all, do not let the fact that there is preferred language about diverse groups stop you from communicating with or about them. Remember that if your intentions are good, people will more than likely forgive your mistakes.

gay/lesbian: “Gay” is acceptable and preferable as a synonym for “homosexual,” especially when referring to males. “Lesbian” is preferred for females. When describing a group that includes both male and female members, use “gay and lesbian” if space allows or “gay” if space is an issue. Use “gay” as an adjective, rather than a noun.

gay lifestyle: Avoid this term. There is no one gay lifestyle, just as there’s no one heterosexual or straight lifestyle.
**gay relationships:** People use a variety of terms to describe their commitments and relationships. Make every effort to ask any individual you are writing about what term he or she prefers. Otherwise, “partner” is generally acceptable.

**homosexual:** This is the medical or clinical term for lesbian and gay people. It can be used as an adjective to describe a person or their preferences, or as a noun referring to a person attracted to members of the same sex. “Gay” or “lesbian” is preferred in all contexts, except clinical.

**transgendered:** Transgendered individuals are those who were born with the physical characteristics of one sex but identify themselves as belonging to the other sex. Some have undergone medical therapies or surgeries to bring their physical characteristics into harmony with their self-identification; some have begun that process; some have not and some will not. Again, each person has the right to be identified in writing in whatever way he or she chooses to be identified. If the person’s transgenderedness is not relevant to the subject you are writing about, you should not mention it.

In some cases, it may be helpful or relevant to mention a person’s past identity in order to identify the work as having been done by the same person.

Right: Professor Barbara Jones, who previously completed dozens of acclaimed studies as Professor Bruce Jones, has a new paper published in the journal Nature.

Work with the person you are writing about to determine whether this is important.

**shall/will**

“Shall” is used for the first-person future tense and expresses the speaker’s belief regarding his or her future action or state.

If “will” is used for first-person future, it expresses his or her determination or consent. At other times, “will” is used for the second- and third-person future tense.

**States and regions**

Spell out the names of the 50 states when they stand alone in text.

Right: Most students come from California.
Wrong: We have 14 students from Nev.

Abbreviate, using Associated Press (not postal) rules, when citing a city and a state together. Some states must always be spelled out.

Ala.
Alaska
Ariz.
Ark.
Calif.
Colo.
Conn.
Del.
Fla.
Ga.
Hawaii
Idaho
Ill.
Ind.
Iowa
Kan.
Ky.
La.
Maine
Md.
Mass.
Mich.
Minn.
Miss.
Mo.
Mont.
Neb.
Nev.
N.H.
N.J.
N.M.
N.Y.
N.C.
N.D.
Ohio
Okla.
Ore.
Pa.
R.I.
S.C.
S.D.
Tenn.
Texas
Utah
Always spell out Washington, D.C., in body text and set off “D.C.” with commas. D.C. is the
distinguisher – you do not need to say “Washington State,” because the state’s name is just

Use these abbreviations rather than the two-letter postal abbreviations in conjunction with city
names in text.

Right: The campus is located in Merced, Calif.
Wrong: The campus is located in Merced, CA.

Always spell out a state name if it’s part of a title or name.

Right: The California Energy Commission
Wrong: The Calif. Energy Commission

Social security
Use lower case when referring to a social security number or social security benefits. Capitalize only
references to the Social Security Administration.

Right: Her research found a disproportionate number of individuals receiving social security in the
San Joaquin Valley.
Right: Guard your social security number carefully to prevent identity theft.
Right: Send the forms to Social Security.

Solar array
The colloquial term is solar field, though solar array is the accurate and preferred description.

South Bowl (includes Kelly Grove, Little Lake and Lower Pond)
South Bowl is a principal open space feature in the first two phases of campus development, and is
the home to recreational outdoor facilities. It includes Kelly Grove, Little Lake and Lower Pond, and
will be home to a campus amphitheater. Long-range plans also call for an aquatics center, a student
union and more, connected by a trail system.

Streets
Street names should be capitalized
Right: Bellevue Road
Right: Lake Road
Right: Campus Parkway
Right: Ranchers Road
Right: Scholars Lane
Right: Emigrant Pass
Right: Mammoth Lakes Road
Right: Evolution Valley Road
Right: Bobcat Lane
Right: Muir Pass
Right: Ansel Adams Road
Right: Mineral King Road
Right: Services Lane
Right: Facilities Loop

The street designation is lower case if it refers to two roads.

Right: The asphalt was repaired at Bellevue and Lake roads.

**student body**
Use “student” or “students” instead.

**Student classifications**
Use lower case for “freshman,” “sophomore,” “junior,” “senior,” “graduate student” or “postdoctoral fellow.” Do capitalize these words if they are part of a designation for an entire class or a formal title.

Right: She’s a senior majoring in world cultures and history.
Right: The Freshman Class organized the first student club.

**Telephone numbers**
If a publication is strictly for internal use, you may omit the area code and the first three digits. Use the four-digit extension number only.

Right: You may reach me in my office at 4406.

If the publication may or will be sent outside of UC Merced, include the area code as part of the complete number. Use parentheses and a single space to separate the area code from the rest of the number.

Right: 209-228-4400
Wrong: (209) 228-4400
Wrong: (209)228-4400

If you use more than one number, separate with the word “or” or with a forward slash (/). If the area code and prefix of the phone numbers are the same, you may choose not to repeat them. Be consistent.

Right: 209-228-4400/415-555-9876
Right: 209-228-4400/4432

When giving different types of contact numbers in an address listing, identify each one. Place the identification before the number, capitalized and with a colon.

Right: Office: 209-228-4406
     Home: 209-555-5555
     Fax: 209-228-4499
     Cell: 209-205-8561

That/which
These words cause so much confusion, they deserve a section of their own. “That” and “which” often are used incorrectly in clauses.

When referring to a human being (or an animal with a name), any clause should be introduced by the word “who” or “whom.”

When referring to an object or nameless animal with an essential clause – one that cannot be eliminated without changing the meaning of the sentence – use the word “that” to introduce the clause. Essential clauses do not need commas.

When referring to an object or nameless animal with a non-essential clause – one that can be eliminated from the sentence without changing the basic meaning – use the word “which” to introduce the clause. If non-essential clauses appear in the middle of sentences, they may need to be set off by commas.

A simple test: Once your sentence is written, try reading it without the clause. If the sentence still means about the same thing, your clause should be introduced by the word “which.” If taking out the clause changes the meaning drastically, it should be introduced by “that.”

Right: The club meeting, which was held in the library, was lively.

Meaning: The club meeting was lively. (We must already know to which club meeting the writer is referring.)

Right: The club meeting that was held in the library was lively.
Meaning: It’s important to convey where it was held in order to identify it.

Another way to think about this is that when the word “that” is appropriate, it would usually change the meaning of your sentence to leave it out.

**theater/theatre**
The preferred word in the United States is “theater,” unless the European spelling is part of a proper name, as in “Kresge Theatre” or the “Merced Theatre” building.

**toward/towards**
“Toward” is correct. “Towards” is not.

**Theater and TV titles**
Put quotation marks around the titles of plays and television shows and episodes.

Right: Controversy has arisen over the Fox network’s new reality show “Who’s Your Daddy?”
Right: “The Cherry Orchard” is one of Anton Chekhov’s best-known plays.

**Time**
Use lower case with periods for “a.m.” and “p.m.” When writing a time that falls on the hour, do not use “:00.” Simply state the hour with “a.m.”, “p.m.” Use “noon” or “midnight” without the numeral “12,” or use 12 p.m. or 12 a.m., but not both.

Right: 3 p.m.
Wrong: 3:00 p.m.
Right: Noon to 1 p.m.
Wrong: 12 noon
Right: The ceremony begins at 5:30 p.m.
Right: The concert begins at 8 o’clock.

When writing anything in which you are including a time, date and location for something, it goes in this order: time, date, place.

**Titles**
A person’s title is capitalized only when used before the name. Use lower case when using a title after a person’s name or a title standing alone.

Right: Chancellor Dorothy Leland
Right: Dorothy Leland, chancellor
Right: Professor Ruth Mostern
Right: Ruth Mostern, a professor at UC Merced
When using a capitalized title immediately before the name, try to keep it short. You may not need to use the whole title.

Right: Dean of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts Mark Aldenderfer
Better: Dean Mark Aldenderfer of the School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts

Chaired professorships appear in lower case, except for the proper name.

Right: Teenie Matlock was recently named as the first McClatchy chair of communications.

Note that “visiting professor” may be a salary title but is not a salutation. It should be lowercased in all references.

Do not use references to professorial rank, such as “assistant professor” or “associate professor,” unless they are crucial to your meaning. This usually occurs only in human resources contexts.

Occupational titles such as “attorney” or “physicist” are not capitalized, even when they appear before a person’s name.

In most instances, titles need to be used with names only on first reference. On subsequent references, it is usually acceptable simply to use a last name.

**University**

Do not capitalize the word “university” when it stands alone and refers to a single campus of the UC system.

Right: The university will have many benefits for the region.

Capitalize the word when referring to the entire UC system.

Right: The University has 10 campuses.

**University of California**

In news releases or other publications sent to off-campus audiences, spell out on first reference. In following references, abbreviate as “UC,” using no periods.

Right: Jessica Trounstine is a professor at the University of California, Merced. Her research at UC Merced focuses on local government.

This rule applies even if you are referring to different UC campuses or entities on each reference.
Right: Jones completed her doctorate at the University of California, Berkeley. She joined the faculty at UC Merced in the summer of 2006.

Right: The University of California Board of Regents met today to review designs for new buildings at UC Merced.

“UCLA” is an exception to the rules above. The abbreviation is preferred on all references. It is correctly rendered using no periods or spaces.

When referring to the UC Office of the President, do not use the abbreviations “OP” or “UCOP” when writing for off-campus audiences.

**University of California, Merced**

The correct first reference is University of California, Merced. On subsequent references, it is UC Merced or the university.

Do not use the abbreviation “UCM” to refer to UC Merced, especially for off-campus audiences.

For UC Merced programs that include the university’s name, you may use an acronym that includes the letters “UCM.” Spell out the name of the program on first reference.

Right: UC Merced Writing Project (UCMWP)
Wrong: UCM Communications
Wrong: UC-Merced
Wrong: UC, Merced

**UCPath**
The systemwide initiative to have a centralized payroll and human resources system.

**unique**
Commonly overused, this word literally means one of a kind, without equal. “Unique” should never be modified by “truly,” “rather” or “very.” Something is either unique or it’s not.

Use the word “unusual” if your subject is not one of a kind.

**U.S./United States**
Use “United States” or “U.S.” rather than “USA.” Avoid using “America” to refer to the United States. Spell out “United States” in all references in formal communications.
use/utilize
Use “use.” “Utilize” is the too-long, awkward verb form of the obsolete adjective “utile.” Why bother?

Vernal Pools-Grasslands Natural Reserve
The campus is seeking approval by the UC Natural Reserve Board to add nearly 6,500 acres of protected land at the northeast corner of campus to the system. The land was part of the Virginia Smith Trust, property given to the UC to build the Merced campus, with the express direction that it never be developed. The planned reserve is overseen by the Sierra Nevada Research Institute, and plans call for it to be used for research, education and community outreach. As of summer 2013, the UC NRB is still considering the application for reserve status.

Wallace-Dutra Amphitheater
In 2013, longtime campus supporters Joel and Elizabeth Wallace gave UC Merced $250,000 to establish the Wallace-Dutra Amphitheater, building on the Class of 2009’s gift. The graduating seniors sold bricks — now installed in the sidewalk by the amphitheater — to help establish the venue. A sign reading “The Wallace-Dutra Amphitheater Celebrating the Class of 2009’s Vision” will be installed at the site.

Web words
Although references to the Web itself use a cap W, these Web-based words use a lower case w:

- website
- webmaster: The creator or maintainer of a site
- webonomics: The laws governing the online economy of the Web and defining relationships between consumers, publishers and advertisers

Common abbreviations:
- BCC - blind carbon copy
- CC - carbon copy
- CD - compact disc (plural CDs)
- dpi - dots per inch (lower case, never spelled out)
- FAQ - frequently asked questions
- FPS - frames per second
- FTP - file transfer protocol
- GIF - graphic interchange format
- GUI - graphical user interface (plural GUIs)
- HTML - hypertext markup language
- IP - Internet protocol
- ISP - Internet service provider
- JPEG - joint photographic experts group
- LAN - local area network
- OOP - object-oriented programming
- RAM – random-access memory
- ROM - read-only memory
- RSI - repetitive strain injury
- TCP/IP - transmission control protocol/Internet protocol
- TIFF - tagged image file format
- WAN - wide area network

**who/whom**

We rarely see the word “whom” in writing. But if your sentence has an objective clause referring to a person or animal with a proper name, you should use “whom.”

Right: Between the two calculus professors, whom did you prefer?

The word “who” substitutes for subjective pronouns he, she or they; “whom” must be used in the sense of him, her or them. If you don’t want to use “whom,” restructure your sentence. Don’t just stick in “who” when it is incorrect.

If you’re ending a sentence with a preposition like “with” or “to,” that often signals that you need to use “whom.”

Wrong: Who did you study for your calculus exam with?

Right: With whom did you study for your calculus exam?

You may not choose to use “whom” in informal, spoken communications. But when you’re writing, your words will be much more closely scrutinized, so it’s a good idea to learn to use it correctly.

**-wise**

Do not use this suffix to coin words like “weatherwise.”

**World Wide Web**

Capitalize “World Wide Web.” Capitalize “Web” when referring to the World Wide Web, even when “Web” stands alone or is used in conjunction with other words. The only exception is for "website."

Right: World Wide Web
Right: Web page
Right: website
Xerox/photocopy
A trademark for a brand of photocopy machine should never be used as a noun or verb. Use “photocopy” or “copy” instead.