



SCHOOL OF  
PUBLIC HEALTH

EDITORIAL STYLE GUIDE

*This guide is based on the official UMD editorial guide, which in turn is based on Associated Press style. Some items in this guide have been modified to reflect specific style preferences of the UMD School of Public Health; thus, these rules supercede those of the aforementioned sources.*

**academic departments:** Capitalize the formal name of the school and of individual departments, centers, and units: *School of Public Health, the Maryland Center for Health Equity, the Department of Health Services Administration*, etc. Lowercase in an informal usage, such as the *kinesiology department*.

**academic disciplines:** Lowercase, such as *epidemiology, physical cultural studies* and *family science*, except when the study discipline includes words that are normally capitalized (i.e. *Jewish studies*).

**acronyms:** Avoid whenever possible. When necessary, set off with parentheses: the *National Institutes of Health (NIH)*. Also, do not include an acronym on first reference if it is the only reference to the agency or group in the article. Some acronyms, such as FBI, are acceptable in all instances. Consult the AP stylebook for details.

**alumnus:** The singular form for a man who has attended a school. The plural is *alumni*. *Alumna* is the singular for a woman who has attended a school. The plural is *alumnae*. Use *alumni* as the plural when referring to both men and women. *Alum* is acceptable for singular usage of either male or female.

**alumni association:** Lowercase, unless using the full name, *the UMD School of Public Health Alumni Association Chapter*. Lowercase: board of trustees or board of directors.

**class years:** Include after the alumnus' name: *John T. Consoli '86 takes photographs for the alumni magazine*. (Note direction in which apostrophe is facing.) See "degree abbreviations" entry for information on handling advanced degrees.

**commas:** Do not use a serial comma, which is placed before the *and, or* or *nor* in a list of three or more items. Note the preceding sentence for an example of university comma usage in a series. If, however, a serial comma would improve clarity in a lengthy or difficult sentence, it can be added.

**courses and lectures:** Use quotations around course titles, such as *"Sport, Commerce, and Culture in the Global Marketplace"*. Capitalize course names and codes, such as *Epidemiology 101*. Otherwise, do not capitalize common, nonspecific course subjects: I missed my biostatistics class and was late for *epidemiology*.

**courtesy titles:** Use Dr. in first reference only to someone who holds a medical degree, i.e., a dentist, podiatrist or surgeon.

**dashes:** Do not use spaces on either side of an em dash: This sentence—the one containing the dashes—shows correct usage. The en dash is half the length of an em dash and longer than a hyphen. Common uses include: 1990–1995, October–November 1994 and 9 a.m.–5 p.m. But: from 1990 to 1995 (not from 1990–1995), from October to November 1994 and between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Do not use spaces around an en dash. dates: Abbreviate the month when the date is included; in a sentence, put a comma after the year, if it is included. Do not put a comma between month and year if no specific date is used.

**degree abbreviations:** When listing alumni graduate degrees, use the following: B.A. (Bachelor of Arts), B.S. (Bachelor of Science), M.A. (Master of Arts), M.S. (Master of Science), Ph.D. (Doctor of Philosophy). For those who have earned graduate degrees, list the degree abbreviation and year immediately after the name: Claire Wingfield M. Arch. '06. For multiple advanced degrees, include all abbreviations and years: Jeffrey Yeh M.A. '70, Ph.D. '75 received two degrees from the university.

**diamondback terrapin:** Lowercase. (see “terrapins” entry)

**ellipsis ( ... ):** In general, treat an ellipsis as a three-letter word, constructed with three periods and two spaces. The marching band practices ... outside the window. At the end of a sentence, use a period (or question mark or exclamation point), then the ellipsis: The marching band is practicing. ... It is outside the window. Place a comma before the ellipsis if the sentence needs one there. Do not use ellipses at the beginning or end of a direct quote, even if it is an excerpt from a fuller quote.

**email:** Not e-mail.

**emeritus/emerita:** A special designation approved by the university. Use emeritus when referring to male professors. Use emerita when referring to female professors.

**endowed chairs:** In most cases, capitalize full name, including discipline, such as the Herschel S. Horowitz Endowed Chair in Health Literacy. But: the Sergey Brin Chair of mathematics. Consult development officers of professor’s school or college to ensure accuracy.

**ethnic backgrounds:** African American is the preferred term to describe someone of African-American descent. Note that it, along with such common descriptors such as Asian American, is hyphenated when used as an adjective: Asian-American studies.

**ex officio:** No caps, no hyphen.

**faculty:** A plural noun. Preferred: **faculty members**.

**first-ever:** **First** says it all; drop ever.

**gender-sensitive language:** Avoid the pronouns he or she or him or her when referring to a generic group of both genders. Try to use the plural they or them, and be sure to use subject-verb agreement. In addition, adult females should be referred to as women, and adult males should be referred to as men. Do not use terms that are unnecessarily gender-specific, such as policeman; use police officer.

**grade point average:** Do not hyphenate. Preferred: **GPA**.

**health care:** Two words. Not **healthcare**, unless that usage is part of an organization’s title.

**honors classes:** Do not capitalize. It’s honors biology or honors English. The exception is when referring to the University Honors program.

**initials:** Do not put spaces between names of people using multiple initials: J.P. Morgan, J.B. Robb. The exception is for former university President C. D. Mote, Jr.

**Internet:** Uppercase.

**iSchool:** The informal name of the College of Information Studies. On first reference, use the College of Information Studies, Maryland's iSchool and iSchool thereafter.

**I-Series:** The name of the signature program of the university's general education program. Note the hyphen.

**italics:** When using italics on a manuscript to be designed by the Office of University Publications, insert a pound sign (#) at the beginning and end of the phrase to alert designers in case italics don't import correctly.

**job titles:** lowercase unless the title directly precedes someone's name. EX: **Stephen Roth, director of the Public Health Science program** AND **Public Health Science Director Stephen Roth**. The exception is line-by-line lists. junior, senior: Abbreviate as Jr. and Sr. only with full names of people. Do not precede with a comma. The same goes for II, III and IV, etc. The exception is for former university President C. D. Mote, Jr.

**living and learning programs:** The preferred name for undergraduate living communities. They are no longer called living-learning programs.

**M Square:** No hyphen. Unless space is tight, use the official title of M Square, the University of Maryland Research Park on first reference.

**MD:** Use only in full addresses that include ZIP codes. Md. should be used in any other reference to a location in Maryland: The university created a partnership with the city of Hyattsville, Md.

**Mtech:** The requested, shortened name for the Maryland Technology Enterprise Institute. Do not use MTECH.

**national academies:** Lowercase except when referring to a specific academy by name.

**nonprofit:** not non-profit.

**numbers:** Spell out the numbers one through nine, and use numerals for 10 and up. But spell out any number at the start of a sentence, and use numerals in ages within sentences.

**off-site:** Hyphenate as an adjective and adverb.

**over:** Use only to describe location. Use **more than** when talking about amounts: More than 50 people attended the event. **NOTE:** *the Associated Press has changed its style on this, and both "over" and "more than" are now acceptable terms for amounts.*

**percent:** Spell out the word rather than use %.

**Ph.D.:** Write out doctorate if the degree is used in a sentence: John Smith received his doctorate in psychology.

**professor:** Use only when referring to full professors. Other faculty members should be referred to with their proper title: **Robin G. Sawyer is an assistant professor and associate chair of the Department of Behavioral and Community Health.** As a title, it should be capitalized before the person's name: **Assistant Professor Robin G. Sawyer.**

**programs:** Capitalize the names of formal programs: University Honors, College Park Scholars or the Jerry P. Wrenn Scholarship

**residence hall:** The preferred term for a dormitory building.

**retired military:** Use retired before the rank, not ret. afterward.

**School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation:** The college uses a serial comma, a deviation from AP and university styles.

**School of Theatre, Dance, and Performance Studies:** Not Theater. All other uses of theater should be spelled with er. Also uses a serial comma.

**service learning:** Do not hyphenate unless used as an adjective.

**staff:** Singular, not plural. Use an article to precede it: The staff is offering a seminar series.

**state of Maryland:** Do not capitalize state.

**states:** When a city and state are given together, the states should be abbreviated and set apart with commas: College Park, Md., is the home of the Terrapins. Follow standard state abbreviations as suggested in the AP stylebook, as well as the list of U.S. cities that may stand alone. Note that the same rule applies to cities in foreign countries: Kwasi Bosompem founded a school program in Soweto, South Africa, promoting gender equity.

**terms of study:** A specific semester is capitalized: Spring 2009 or Fall 2009, but remains lowercase if generic: the spring semester.

**Terrapins:** Capitalize on all references to the university's athletic teams.

**time:** Do not use capital letters or extraneous zeros: 2 p.m. In addition, refer to 12 a.m. as midnight and 12 p.m. as noon whenever possible to avoid confusion.

**trademark symbols:** Unnecessary. Capitalization implies a name brand.

**University of Maryland, College Park:** The full, formal name of the university. Note the comma. Do not use an em dash or at. On subsequent references, use Maryland, UMD or the university, or Terrapins or Terps in athletic references. Prohibited: UMCP, U of M and College Park. **UMCP** is allowed only when referring also to the University of Baltimore campus, particularly the MPowering the State initiative, for clarity. Use UMCP only to distinguish between College Park and Baltimore (UMB).

- **University of Maryland School of Medicine:** NOT **University of Maryland, Baltimore, School of Medicine.** SOM is allowed in subsequent, informal references.
- lowercase **university, school** and **department** unless using the full formal name.

**URLs:** Drop the http:// section of the Web address when www is already included. If the URL is at the end of a sentence, add a period.

**verb tense:** Use past verb tense **she said** in news releases, and present tense **she says** in stories for Terp magazine, Between the Columns and other magazine-style publications.

**website:** One word. But online material is available on the **Web**.

**ZIP code:** An acronym for zoning improvement plan; it is uppercase.

### **Web formatting:**

- **headlines:** In AP headline style, only the first word and proper nouns are capped.
- **photo credits:** for iStock photos, this is not usually necessary, but when in doubt use “**Photo credit: iStock**” or other appropriate source
- **student/alum profiles:** Follow this headline style: **Alum Profile: Anthony Pellegrino (BS '11)** to distinguish from regular news stories about alumni. Do not use gender-specific forms of “alumni” or the plural form itself in profile headlines; it muddies up the headline.
- **SPH in the News:** Follow this headline style: **Time: The Case Against Energy Drinks is Getting Stronger** (the name of news org, followed by the exact title of the article. For an image, use either the preferred head shot of the researcher whose work is featured in the story, OR a relevant stock image (do not copy and paste the photo from the original article).
- **Using the school’s acronym:** Write “**in the SPH,**” not “**in SPH**” (use “the” where you would use it if you were saying the name in full)

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