

Writers' Style Guide

Carnegie Mellon University

Welcome to Carnegie Mellon University's Writers' Style Guide, a resource intended to help you improve the clarity and consistency of your writing for the university community and the general public.

The guide includes the proper/formal names for all of our colleges and schools, common acronyms and abbreviations, and guidelines for writing about academic degrees, departments, centers and programs. These standards should be applied consistently throughout your work online and in print.

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I. Style References

The Associated Press (AP) Style is our preferred standard for grammar and punctuation rules, and we recommend the current AP Stylebook www.apstylebook.com as a guide. If you are unable to purchase an AP Stylebook, the Media Relations and Internal Communications groups have stylebooks available and can be reached at 412-268-2900 with any questions.

The AP Stylebook should be your guide for:

- Acronyms and Abbreviations
- Business Guidelines
- Capitalization
- Dates and Times
- Governmental Terms
- Numbers
- Places
- Plurals
- Possessives
- Punctuation
 - Commas
 - Dashes
 - Hyphenation
 - Quotations
- Sports Guidelines

Some frequently used technical terms include:

- cybersecurity
- email (no hyphen)
- high tech (no hyphen)
- Internet (capital "I")
- log off (verb) logoff (noun)
- log on (verb) logon (noun)
- multimedia (one word, no hyphen)
- offline (one word, no hyphen)
- online (one word, no hyphen)
- startup (one word, no hyphen)

Although references to the Web itself use a capital W (Web page, Web feed), these Web-based words use a lowercase w.

- webcam
- webcast
- webinar
- webmaster
- website

II. University References

The Carnegie Mellon University wordmark is the official logo of the university. It has been created specifically for use as a wordmark and **cannot be typed**. For details on how to obtain and use the wordmark correctly, see the Brand Guidelines website at www.cmu.edu/marcom/brand-guidelines/index.html.

When writing, the first time you refer to the university — whether in print or on the Web — use “Carnegie Mellon University.” In all subsequent references, use either “Carnegie Mellon” or “CMU.” Neither Carnegie Mellon nor CMU should be used on first reference.

Use lowercase when using “the university” as a reference.

Right: The university has campuses and programs all over the world.

Wrong: There are more than 6,500 staff members at the University.

When referring to university programs and campuses outside of Pittsburgh, use the following as a guide:

Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar (first reference)
Carnegie Mellon Qatar (second reference or abbreviation below)
Carnegie Mellon University in Africa (first reference)
Carnegie Mellon Africa (second reference or abbreviation below)
Carnegie Mellon University in Australia (first reference)
Carnegie Mellon Australia (second reference or abbreviation below)
Carnegie Mellon University in Silicon Valley (**NOT West Coast**) (first reference)
Carnegie Mellon Silicon Valley (**NOT West Coast**) (second reference or abbreviation below)

When using the abbreviation in reference to programs and campuses outside of Pittsburgh, use the following as a guide:

CMU-Q (Qatar)
CMU-AFRICA
CMU-A (Australia)
CMU-SV (Silicon Valley)

For external documents, include Carnegie Mellon University in first reference of any college or school. It is the preferred style to write “Carnegie Mellon University’s College of Engineering” or “Carnegie Mellon University’s School of Computer Science” when introducing one of the university’s seven colleges and schools.

You should also include the college or school name that is connected to an academic program or department. For example, write “Mellon College of Science’s Physics Department” or “Heinz College’s School of Public Policy and Management” on first reference.

For second references, using only the school, college or department name is acceptable.

III. About Carnegie Mellon

OFFICIAL BOILERPLATE TEXT

About Carnegie Mellon University: Carnegie Mellon www.cmu.edu is a private, internationally ranked research university with programs in areas ranging from science, technology and business, to public policy, the humanities and the arts. More than 13,000 students in the university's seven schools and colleges benefit from a small student-to-faculty ratio and an education characterized by its focus on creating and implementing solutions for real problems, interdisciplinary collaboration and innovation.

STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE

The Statement of Assurance must be placed in all graduate and undergraduate admission publications and all other publications where such a statement is necessary or appropriate. It may be omitted on some internal publications, including: campus memos, flyers, invitations, limited distribution departmental publications (including many departmental newsletters), posters and/or programs/event signage. It does not need to be included on the following: alumni publications (those not also distributed to faculty and staff), donor recognition publications and fundraising publications.

POLICY STATEMENT

Carnegie Mellon University does not discriminate in admission, employment, or administration of its programs or activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, handicap or disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, creed, ancestry, belief, veteran status, or genetic information. Furthermore, Carnegie Mellon University does not discriminate and is required not to discriminate in violation of federal, state, or local laws or executive orders.

Inquiries concerning the application of and compliance with this statement should be directed to the university ombudsman, Carnegie Mellon University, 5000 Forbes Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15213, telephone 412-268-1018.

Obtain general information about Carnegie Mellon University by calling 412-268-2000.

In addition to the statement above, please insert the paragraph below in all communications to prospective graduate and undergraduate students as well as communications to prospective employees.

Carnegie Mellon University publishes an annual campus security and fire safety report describing the university's security, alcohol and drug, sexual assault and fire safety policies and containing statistics about the number and type of crimes committed on the campus and the number and cause of fires in campus residence facilities during the preceding three years. You can obtain a copy by contacting the Carnegie Mellon Police Department at 412-268-2323. The annual security and fire safety report is also available online at www.cmu.edu/police/annualreports.

For more information regarding the statement of assurance please visit www.cmu.edu/policies/documents/SoA.html.

IV. Common University Terminology

ACADEMIC DEGREES

Spell out and use lowercase for bachelor's degree, master's degree, doctor's degree or doctorate.

You can receive a doctorate OR a doctor's degree, but **NOT** a doctoral degree. Dr. should only be used in first reference as a formal title for a doctor of medicine.

If you must abbreviate degrees, use periods after all the letters: B.A., M.S., Ph.D., M.S.I.A., B.F.A. (with the exception of MBA).

Right: He received a master's degree in engineering.

Right: She received her master of science degree in engineering.

Right: He earned a bachelor of architecture degree.

Right: He earned a bachelor's degree in architecture.

Wrong: He earned a bachelor's of engineering degree.

Do not precede a name with a title of an academic degree and follow it with the abbreviation for that degree.

Right: Subra Suresh, Ph.D., is president of Carnegie Mellon University.

Wrong: Dr. Subra Suresh, Ph.D., is president of Carnegie Mellon University.

Do not use Dr. before the names of those who hold honorary degrees only. References to honorary degrees must specify the degree was honorary.

ACADEMIC DEPARTMENTS

Capitalize the full names of departments except when used in a person's title.

Examples:

The director of admission is pleased with the number of applicants.

The Office of University Events organizes commencement.

Use lowercase for the word "department" when it stands alone.

Right: She's been with the department for three years.

Capitalize the academic field when it's used to mean the department. Use lowercase for the field when it's used in a general sense.

Examples:

She's a professor in the Physics Department.

She's a physics professor.

She majored in physics.

Use lowercase for majors with the exception of languages, which are proper nouns.

Examples:

Her major is physics.

He's an English major.

ACRONYMS AND INITIALISMS

Spell out the full name for colleges, schools, departments, buildings, offices, etc. on the first reference followed by the acronym or initialism in parentheses. Use the acronym or initialism for every subsequent use.

Right: The Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) Department, located in the Facilities Management Services (FMS) building, provides important safety training for the university community. Training information is available on the EHS website and training sessions are often held in the FMS building.

Wrong: The EHS department, located in the FMS building, provides important safety training for the university community. Training information is available on the Environmental Health and Safety website and training sessions are often held in the Facilities Management Service building.

Some common Carnegie Mellon acronyms and initialisms include:

ACS	Andrew Carnegie Society
CMARC	Carnegie Mellon Advising Resource Center
CTTEC	Center for Technology Transfer and Enterprise Creation
Engineering	College of Engineering (Carnegie Institute of Technology)
CFA	College of Fine Arts
DSSC	Data Storage Systems Center
DC	Dietrich College of Humanities and Social Sciences
ETC	Entertainment Technology Center
EHS	Environmental Health and Safety
FMS	Facilities Management Services
FSO	Fellowships and Scholarships Office
HNZ	Heinz College
INI	Information Networking Institute
ICES	Institute for Complex Engineered Systems
BXA	Intercollege Degree Programs
	BCSA Bachelor of Computer Science and Arts
	BHA Bachelor of Humanities and Arts
	BSA Bachelor of Science and Arts
MCS	Mellon College of Science
PSC	Pittsburgh Supercomputing Center
RAs	Resident assistants (use lowercase for this title)
SCS	School of Computer Science
SEI	Software Engineering Institute
SHS	Student Health Services
TAs	Teaching assistants (use lowercase for this title)
TPR	Tepper School of Business
URO	Undergraduate Research Office

Common Pittsburgh campus building initialisms:

BH	Baker Hall
Cohon Center	Jared L. Cohon University Center
CYH	Cyert Hall
DH	Doherty Hall
GHC	Gates and Hillman centers
HBH	Hamburg Hall
HH	Hamerschlag Hall
HL	Hunt Library
MI	Mellon Institute
MM	Margaret Morrison Carnegie Hall
NSH	Newell-Simon Hall
PCA	Purnell Center for the Arts
PH	Porter Hall
POS	Posner Hall
PTC	Pittsburgh Technology Center
REH	Roberts Engineering Hall
SH	Scaife Hall
WEH	Wean Hall
WH	Warner Hall
WHIT	Whitfield Hall

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 DESIGNATIONS

See indicia section on page 12.

ANNUAL FUND

Capitalize references to the Carnegie Mellon Annual Fund.

Examples:

Did you contribute to the Annual Fund this year?

A healthy annual fund helps colleges and universities support basic programming.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Board of trustees should be capitalized only when referring to Carnegie Mellon’s board, but “board” by itself is not capitalized, nor is “trustees.”

Examples:

The Carnegie Mellon University’s Board of Trustees will meet in November.

The board will meet in November with most trustees attending.

BUILDINGS

All proper names of buildings, such as Jared L. Cohon University Center, should be capitalized. Terms such as “north wing” and “new residence hall” should not be capitalized, unless they are used in the title.

Examples:

The Gates Center for Computer Science and Hillman Center for Future-Generation Technologies are connected to the Purnell Center via the Pausch Bridge. The centers were dedicated in September 2009.

BUGGY

The proper name for this traditional event is “Sweepstakes,” but it is more commonly known as Buggy. The races are held every year during Spring Carnival.

CÈILIDH

Use uppercase for “Cèilidh.” Cèilidh weekend is a celebration for the entire CMU family, combining the traditions of Homecoming weekend and Family Weekend. As a reminder: *Cèilidh* [ka-le]: *n. a Scottish Gaelic term meaning “visit,” used to describe a celebration with stories and tales, poems and ballads, music and dance. Cèilidhs were traditionally hosted in the homes of family and friends.*

CENTERS, INSTITUTES AND PROGRAMS

The formal names of centers, such as the Center for Bioimage Informatics, should be capitalized, but “center” by itself should be in lowercase. The same rules apply to institutes and programs.

Examples:

The Software Engineering Institute hosts seminars.
The institute will welcome dozens of affiliates.
The Center for Behavioral Decision Research was founded in 2005.
The center supports and promotes research on decision making.
The Bachelor of Humanities and Arts Degree Program allows students to combine their interests.
The program is sponsored by DC and CFA.

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.”

Examples:

The faculty is represented by Faculty Senate.
Members of the faculty are dedicated researchers and teachers.
The Carnegie Mellon staff is a dedicated group.

COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING

The Carnegie Institute of Technology (CIT) should be referenced as the College of Engineering (Engineering). The College of Engineering (Engineering) includes the departments of Biomedical, Chemical, Civil and Environmental, Electrical and Computer, Engineering and Public Policy, Materials Science and Engineering and Mechanical. Engineering's centers include Carnegie Mellon CyLab (never use "CyLab" alone in its first reference), Information Networking Institute (INI) and the Institute for Complex Engineered Systems (ICES). The College of Engineering has programs at Carnegie Mellon University in Africa, Carnegie Mellon University in Silicon Valley and the Joint Institute of Engineering (SYSU-CMU JIE) in China.

COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS

The College of Fine Arts at Carnegie Mellon (CFA) is made up of five schools: Architecture, Art, Design, Drama and Music. It also includes the programs Arts and Entertainment Management and BXA Intercollege Degree.

COMMENCEMENT

The Pittsburgh campus ceremony in May is the only Carnegie Mellon commencement event and should be referred to in lowercase. All other campus/program ceremonies should be referred to as "graduation ceremonies," and events in which graduates receive their diplomas can be called "diploma ceremonies."

COMMITTEES

Capitalize the formal names of groups and committees, such as Faculty Senate, Long-Range Planning Committee, President's Student Advisory Council. Use lowercase for the words "committee" or "council" when they stand alone.

THE CUT AND THE FENCE

Capitalize the "C" and "F" only: the Cut and the Fence.

Right: Tradition dictates that spray paint cannot be used on the Fence.

Wrong: Meet me at The Cut.

MARIANNA BROWN DIETRICH COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

The Marianna Brown Dietrich College of Humanities and Social Sciences (DC) includes the departments of English, History, Modern Languages, Philosophy, Psychology, Social and Decision Sciences and Statistics, and the programs Information Systems, Undergraduate Economics and BXA Intercollege Degree. Dietrich College has a program at Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar. "Dietrich College" is acceptable on second reference.

DONOR DESIGNATIONS

Many buildings, centers and rooms are named for Carnegie Mellon donors. It is important to use the full name for each of these spaces on first reference. For example, write “The Robert L. Preger Intelligent Workplace” first, and use the common name of “Intelligent Workplace” thereafter.

H. JOHN HEINZ III COLLEGE

The H. John Heinz III College (HNZ), formally named in the fall of 2008, includes the School of Public Policy and Management, the School of Information Systems and Management and the program at Carnegie Mellon University in Australia. “Heinz College” is acceptable on second reference.

HONORS

Use lowercase for cum laude, magna cum laude and summa cum laude.

Example:

She is a magna cum laude graduate from Carnegie Mellon University’s Dietrich College of Humanities and Social Sciences.

INDICIA

When referencing the **college** and year of graduation for alumni, use the appropriate college code (these may be different than the college acronyms or initialisms listed) and four digits of the graduation year in parentheses after the name. There should be a space between the college code and graduation year. Please use the college indicia not degrees or programs. In the case of external audiences please spell out the complete college name (and program if needed).

Right: Zachary Quinto (A 1999) played Spock in the Star Trek movie.

Right: Stephen Schwartz, College of Fine Arts, 1999, received the Isabelle Stevenson Award at the June 2015 Tony Awards ceremony.

Wrong: Johnny Lee (CS’08) has a number of inventions to his name.

The indicia is most commonly used when communicating with an alumni audience that recognizes these abbreviated designations.

A	College of Fine Arts
CMU	Joint College Programs
CS	School of Computer Science
E	College of Engineering
H	Honorary Doctorate
HNZ	Heinz College
DC	Dietrich College of Humanities and Social Sciences
MM	Margaret Morrison Carnegie College
S	Mellon College of Science
TPR	Tepper School of Business

MASCOT

Carnegie Mellon's mascot is a Scottish terrier named Scotty.

MELLON COLLEGE OF SCIENCE

The Mellon College of Science (MCS) includes the departments of Biological Sciences, Chemistry, Mathematical Sciences and Physics. The Mellon College of Science has a program at Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar.

OFFICE OF UNDERGRADUATE ADMISSION

The Office of Undergraduate Admission prefers usage of "admission" in the singular form.

Right: The Office of Undergraduate Admission will host an information session in New York.

Right: Carnegie Mellon's holistic admission process is about more than just admitting a group of students who have the potential to succeed academically.

Wrong: The Office of Undergraduate Admissions hosts tours for prospective students.

Wrong: The admissions staff answers calls from parents.

Note: CMU does not handle graduate admission centrally. Each graduate program handles its own admission process.

SCHOOL OF COMPUTER SCIENCE

The School of Computer Science (SCS) is located in the Gates Center for Computer Science and the Hillman Center for Future-Generation Technologies — "Gates and Hillman centers" on second reference — which opened in September 2009. It includes the Computational Biology Department, Computer Science Department, the Human-Computer Interaction Institute (HCII), the Institute for Software Research (ISR), the Language Technologies Institute (LTI), the Machine Learning Department and the Robotics Institute (RI). The School of Computer Science has programs at Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar.

SEMESTERS

Do not capitalize semesters in text.

Right: Spring Carnival takes place during the spring semester; C ilidh occurs in the fall semester.

STUDENT CLASSIFICATIONS

Do not capitalize "first-year," "sophomore," "junior," "senior," "postdoctoral fellow" or "graduate student." Capitalize only when using a class designation in a formal title. (The term "first-year" is preferred over "freshman.")

Examples:

He's a senior engineering major.

The Senior Class gift was the clock.

TARTANS

Carnegie Mellon athletic teams are nicknamed the “Tartans” as a nod to Andrew Carnegie’s Scottish heritage. Tartan is a twilled woolen fabric with a very specific plaid design.

TEPPER SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

Named for David A. Tepper, the Tepper School of Business (TPB) offers programs in undergraduate business and economics, a master’s degree in computational finance, and MBA and Ph.D. programs. The Tepper School has a program in Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar. “The Tepper School” is acceptable on second reference.

TITLES

A person’s title is capitalized only when used before the name. When using a capitalized title immediately before the name, try to keep it short. Do not capitalize an occupational designation, only a true title.

Examples:

We met President Subra Suresh.
The president will speak at the dinner.
Our speaker will be artist and professor Ayanah Moor.

Titles following a person’s name should be lowercase. Use lowercase when a title is used alone.

Examples:

The president of Carnegie Mellon University will address the group.
Michael Murphy, vice president for campus affairs, will host the reception.

Chaired professorships appear in uppercase. A University Professor, the highest distinction faculty can receive, should also be uppercase.

Examples:

Andres Cardenes, the Dorothy Richard Starling and Alexander C. Speyer Jr. Professor of Music, donated his Stradivarius violin to the School of Music.
Her years of hard work were acknowledged when she earned the rank of University Professor.