

A Condensed Guide to USF Style

Use only one space after periods in sentences.

Use the serial comma, also known as the Oxford comma. This helps avoid misunderstandings.

Correct: I love my parents, Lady Gaga, and Robin Hood.

Incorrect: I love my parents, Lady Gaga and Robin Hood.

Lowercase professional titles, unless they precede a name.

Correct: Aziz Ansari has accepted a position as the university's vice provost of comedic engagement.

Incorrect: Aziz Ansari has left his position as Vice Provost of Comedic Engagement.

Dates: See the Editorial Style Guide for style guidelines. Avoid using the current year in dates, unless omitting it would cause confusion.

Correct: Thursday, May 5

Incorrect: Thursday, May 5th

Times: See the Editorial Style Guide for style guidelines and the use of "en dashes" (Mac: option-hyphen, PC: ctl-number keypad hyphen).

Correct: 5–7:30 p.m.; 11 a.m. – 3 p.m.; 9–10 a.m.

When referring to academic departments, only capitalize the official name of the department.

Correct: Four professors from the Department of Biology won major grants.

Incorrect: Four professors from the Biology Department won major grants.

When referring to academic programs in general writing, do not capitalize "program."

If the program title has degree titles like "MA" or "MS," use "Master" instead, in general writing. Refer to the program website on usage of "of" or "in." The "MA in Sport Management" is the Master in Sport Management program.

Correct: Attend the open house to learn about the Master of Public Health program.

Incorrect: Attend the open house to learn about the Public Health Graduate Program.

Avoid unnecessary capitalization. Do not capitalize "university" unless it's part of a proper name.

Correct: Fr. Paul Fitzgerald, S.J., is the president of the University of San Francisco, the city's oldest university.

Incorrect: The President of the University will speak on Important Topics at a City meeting on Tuesday.

Headlines: Capitalize words with four or more letters. Capitalize pronouns. Capitalize the first word and last word. Capitalize all other words except articles (a, an, the), coordinate conjunctions (and, or, for, nor), and short prepositions (in, to, of, at, by, up, off). Do not use italics.

In emails, ensure that each image has an alt tag and a link.

For more information

The Editorial Style Guide can be found at <https://myusf.usfca.edu/marketing-communications/editorial-style-guide>

The Email Style Guide can be found at <https://myusf.usfca.edu/marketing-communications/resources/email-resources/email-style-guide>

Email questions to usfnews@usfca.edu