

Editorial Style Guide

Boston University Terminology and Usage

Naming Conventions

1. Departments must appear in hierarchical format in logos and letterheads.

College of Engineering
Department of Computer Science

2. In keeping with the Boston University Brand Identity Standards, in logos and in running text the "&" symbol replaces "and" in the names of schools, colleges, administrative or academic departments, offices, centers, and institutes.

College of Arts & Sciences

Development & Alumni Relations

Marketing & Communications

Orientation & Off Campus Services

Department of American & New England Studies

Alcohol & Drug Institute for Policy, Training & Research

Note that the serial comma is omitted before the & symbol:

Department of Physical Education, Recreation & Dance

In cases where an individual has two titles, or two roles within the University, keep the "and" that joins the two titles:

Vice President for Financial Affairs and Treasurer

Vice President, General Counsel, and Secretary of the Board

Provost of the Medical Campus and Dean of the School of Medicine

Professor of History and University Professor

3. In logos and running text, eliminate the words "Office of" in names of departments, unless the office is an individual's title (e.g., Office of the Provost, etc.). Certain exceptions continue to call for "Office of" or "Office of the" in order to retain meaning – A general rule of thumb is "Office of the" will still remain.

Allowed exceptions:

Office of the Budget

- 01. Introduction**
- 02. Master Logo**
- 03. Sub-Brand Logotype**
- 04. Sub-Brand Signature**
- 05. University Seal**
- 06. Typography**
- 07. Editorial**
 - Voice and Tone
 - Style Guide
 - BU Terminology
 - Punctuation Rules
- 08. Image**
- 09. Websites**
- 10. Stationery**
- 11. Examples**
- 12. Downloads**
- 13. Contact**

Office of the President

Office of the Provost

Office of the Trustees

Office of the Executive Vice President

Office of the Dean (for schools and colleges)

Office of the Comptroller

Office of the General Counsel

Office of the Registrar

(Note: Dean Elmore prefers Dean of Students to refer to his entire staff— e.g., For more information, please contact the Dean of Students.)

The University

1. Capitalize "University" when referring specifically to Boston University, but lowercase "university" if used in a general sense.

President Brown presented the plan at a recent University leadership retreat.

The University encourages student involvement in the greater Boston community.

We are the largest university in Boston.

2. After an initial mention of Boston University, using the more informal "BU" (without periods) is acceptable.
3. Capitalize "School" or "College" when referring to a specific BU school or college. Do not capitalize when referring to BU schools or colleges in a more general sense.

CFA sponsors many visiting artist events at the School.

At our School, you will gain hands-on experience in hotel administration.

There are 17 schools and colleges here at BU.

4. Use the current name of a school unless there is a specific reason to use an earlier name. The standard school abbreviations are written without periods: CAS, COM, ENG, etc. View a list of the [current names and abbreviations of the 17 BU schools and colleges](#), together with their former names.
5. Capitalize "Charles River Campus" and "Medical Campus," but lowercase the word "campus" when using it alone or informally.

Titles of Administration and Faculty

1. Capitalize titles before a name, but lowercase the title when it follows the name.

We invited Vice President for Enrollment & Student Affairs Laurie Pohl.

Laurie Pohl is vice president for enrollment & student affairs.

2. When following this rule, it confuses readers if you vary the format for titles within a sentence or paragraph. Arrange names and titles consistently in the text, either preceding or following the name.

Dean Virginia Sapiro, Trustee Terry Andreas, and Executive Vice President Joseph Mercurio will attend.

Attendees include Virginia Sapiro, dean of CAS, Terry Andreas, trustee, and Joseph Mercurio, executive vice president.

3. Capitalize a title used without a name when it represents one particular person, but otherwise lowercase titles representing one of many.

Submit your request to the Provost.

The President will lead the procession.

The Dean of Students approved the poster.

Send your suggestions to the dean of the appropriate school.

4. In running text, lowercase words like "president," "professor," "dean," "director," and so on when they follow a name.

Virginia Sapiro was recently selected as the new dean of CAS.

Robert Brown is the tenth president of Boston University.

Send your request to the director of the program.

5. Capitalize a title for display, such as in a printed event program or when the title appears under a name (as in a letter's signature or on a list).
6. The gender-neutral "chair" is preferred when referring to the title of department chair.
7. Write "ad interim" in roman type, lowercased, without a comma, and following a title.

I am pleased to introduce Dean ad interim Walt C. Meissner.

8. Write "Emeritus," "Emerita," "Emeriti," and "Emeritae" in roman type and follow the rules of capitalization appropriate for the context. Place it at the end of the complete title without a comma or italics: President Emeritus, Professor Emerita, Trustees Emeriti.
9. If possible, avoid the use of social titles or honorifics with names. Be consistent with all names. In a list of donors or in naming those who attended an event, for example, do not to scatter "Dr." or "Mr." or "Ms." with only a few of the names.
10. The word "faculty" can be either singular or plural. It is singular when it means "the teaching and administrative staff" as a collective whole. It is plural when it means "faculty members."

The University faculty is committed to excellence in scholarship, teaching, and research.

The CFA faculty are dedicated to their teaching mission; they serve as mentors for their undergraduate and graduate students.

BU Schools, Colleges, and Departments

1. Capitalize official department names: Department of Geography & Environment, Department of Mathematics & Statistics. However, in informal usage, lowercase a department, field of study, or major, unless a word is normally capitalized.

They majored in economics.

The physics department sponsored an event.

The English department hosted a film.

2. When cited in full, use initial capitals for an organization's proper name: Institute for the Study of Muslim Societies & Civilizations, BioMolecular Engineering Research Center. In subsequent references or in informal passages, lowercase words such as "center," "institute," or "program": Research at the center is supported by a grant.

Courses and Fields of Study

1. Capitalize course titles when given exactly: A Survey of English Literature. Lowercase informal references: an introductory course in English literature.
2. Lowercase fields of study unless the area is the proper title of a department or program or the word is always capitalized.

She is a marine science specialist.

He is at the Department of Biomedical Engineering.

She studied first-year Spanish.

Academic Degrees

1. Capitalize an academic degree when it is given in full: a Bachelor of Arts in Anthropology and Religion, a Master of Arts in Religious Studies, or a Doctor of Theology.
2. Lowercase informal references to academic degrees: a bachelor's degree in astronomy and physics, a master's degree in physics, a doctorate in religion, the master's thesis and doctoral dissertation.
3. When abbreviating academic degrees, omit the periods unless they are required for consistency or tradition: BA, MA, MBA, PhD, EdD.

Alumni

1. Indicate the school or college and year of graduation after a BU alum's name with the acronym and year abbreviation run together without a space: COM'07, CAS'99. In the context of a specific school, you may also write "COM Class of 2007." Note the capitalization of "Class."
2. The word "alumni" is plural and refers to a group of men or a group of men and women. The plural "alumnae" refers to a group of women. "Alumna" refers to one female alum and "alumnus" to one male alum. The terms "alum" (singular, not gender specific) and "alums" (plural, mixed-gender or not gender-specific) are more informal and are acceptable, particularly when the gender is unknown.
3. Capitalize specific Boston University events such as Commencement, Baccalaureate, Senior Breakfast, and Reunion Weekend. Capitalize "Alma Mater" when referring specifically to BU, but lowercase it when using it in a general way. Capitalize "Class" in a specific context, as in Class of 1997, but lowercase "class" in a general context.

Gender-Neutral Language

1. When possible, use gender-neutral language such as "chair" instead of "chairman" or "chairwoman," or "letter carrier" instead of "mailman."
2. Rephrase wording to avoid the balanced but awkward "his or her." Thus, "All students received their diplomas" could replace "each student received his or her diploma." Note that "their" is correct only as a possessive with a plural noun. It is frequently used incorrectly with a singular noun in an attempt to avoid the annoying "his or her." "Each student visited their advisor" is incorrect and should be

rewritten: "The students visited their advisors."

3. Use "alumni" or "alumni/ae" to indicate a mixed-gender group. In informal writing, use the genderless word "alum" or "alums."

Electronic Media

1. Lowercase and hyphenate "e-business" and "e-commerce" unless the word begins a sentence.
2. E-mail and web addresses are written in roman type: www.bu.edu/creative or gdubois@bu.edu. It is optional to use a distinctive type treatment, such as bold or italic, to differentiate a URL or e-mail address from the surrounding text.
3. URLs should omit "http://" unless the address lacks the "www," as in the case of <http://management.bu.edu>.
4. "Online" and "homepage" are written as one word, without a hyphen; "voice mail" is written as two.
5. Capitalize URL, an acronym for Uniform Resource Locator.
6. Capitalize "Internet" or "Web" when either word is used as a proper noun to refer to the World Wide Web: Find us on the Web at www.bu.edu/creative.
7. Write "website" as one word, lowercased.
8. When used as an adjective modifying a noun, "web" is lowercased but not joined: web page, web address, web design, etc.
9. Avoid breaking URLs and e-mail addresses over two lines. Whenever it is necessary to break a URL, avoid doing so in the middle of a word, and do not add a hyphen. Instead, choose a breaking point at the end of a word and place the next symbol at the beginning of the new line.

[www.bu.edu
/admissions](http://www.bu.edu/admissions)

[http://fitrec.bu.edu/facilities
/fitrec/](http://fitrec.bu.edu/facilities)

10. Use italics for the names of online publications, such as *Salon.com* or *Slate* magazines.

Dates, Time, and Telephone

1. On programs, invitations, and the like, use numerals for dates and times of day: January 1, 2008, at 3 p.m.
2. In very formal invitations, the day and time may be written in words: January third at three o'clock.
3. Write 2007/2008 or 2007–08 for the academic year (note the en dash to denote a range of numbers). Avoid writing 2007/8 or 2007–8.
4. Omit the comma between seasons or months and year.

The visiting scholars are expected in January 2008.

The students will graduate in spring 2008.

5. In times of day, use only necessary digits: 8 p.m., not 8:00 p.m., or 10–11:30 a.m. Note that "a.m." and "p.m." are lowercase and periods are used.

6. Express dates or times in parallel construction: From 1997 to 2007, or from 9 to 10:30 a.m. (A common error is to combine "from" with a dash: from 9–10:30 a.m., or from 1997–2007.)
7. In telephone numbers, use hyphens throughout the number: 617-353-4557 or 1-800-353-4557.

Numbers

1. In nontechnical text, spell out numbers from one to nine and write numbers above nine in figures: There are six professors and three assistant professors in the department. There are 15 students in the class. The bookstore sold 2,317 copies of the novel. This treatment is similar to *The Associated Press Stylebook* rule and is an alternative style of *The Chicago Manual of Style*.
2. When numbers above nine and below nine occur in the same sentence, for consistency's sake they should be written as numerals: There are 6 professors and 47 students.
3. Spell out round numbers, approximations, and numbers beginning a sentence.

There were enough seats for a thousand guests.

Around fifty students attended the lecture.

Thirteen boats entered the race.

4. Do not begin a sentence with a numeral. Write the number in words or restructure the sentence if necessary.
5. For clarity, when two numbers fall together, spell out one and use a numeral for the other.

There are three 4-credit courses.
6. Use numerals for dates, times, page numbers, course credits, decimal amounts, and percentages.
7. In humanities and nontechnical text, spell out the word percent: A survey showed that 90 percent of the class attended the information session.
8. In scientific writing or when space is a consideration, use numerals and the % symbol.
9. Typically, numerals are used in lists and other display type.
10. When referring to sums of money, use only those digits that are necessary: \$60, not \$60.00. Write \$60 million, not \$60 million dollars.
11. Spell out ordinals denoting centuries: the sixteenth century, the twentieth century.
12. Avoid "rd," "th," and "st" with dates. Write January 3 or March 12 or May 21.
13. Decades may be written as either 1920s, '20s, or twenties, but not 1920's.
14. Use a comma in a number containing four or more digits, except in test scores. Our first-year class of 4,174 students, with average combined critical reading and math SAT scores of 1335, was selected from a pool of 33,930 applicants.

Capitalization

1. In report titles, capitalize the first word and all other words except conjunctions, articles, and short prepositions (fewer than five letters). However, do capitalize a short preposition that is construed to be part of the verb that precedes it: Speeding Up the Process; Calling Out for Help.
2. In report titles, capitalize short verbs like "Is" and "Be," but do not capitalize "to" in an infinitive: Born

to Be a Scholar; Choosing to Be Great.

3. In a title containing a hyphenated compound word, both parts are usually capitalized: Long-Term Investment Strategies; Ready-Made Savings Plans.
4. In general text, the four seasons are lowercased: winter, spring, summer, fall. However, for clarity when referring specifically to the academic year, capitalize the semesters: Fall Semester, Spring Semester, Summer Term.
5. In prose and in text giving directions, capitalize important words: First Floor Auditorium, Exit 9 on Route 2. On invitations and posters or in addresses, capitalize such words as Floor or Room with the number: Seventh Floor, Room 701.

Boston University's Equal Opportunity Statement

1. University communications that are used to recruit students or personnel should include a form of the Equal Opportunity Statement.
2. This is the full version of the University's Equal Opportunity Statement, used in Human Resources recruitment information, the Admissions viewbook, the bulletins of the various schools and colleges, and other formal documents:

Boston University prohibits discrimination against any individual on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, or marital, parental, or veteran status. This policy extends to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities, including admissions, financial assistance, employment, housing, athletics, and educational programs. Boston University recognizes that nondiscrimination does not ensure that equal opportunity is a reality. Because of this, the University will continue to implement affirmative action initiatives that promote equal opportunity for all students, applicants, and employees. Inquiries regarding the application of this policy should be addressed to the Director of Equal Opportunity, 25 Buick Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02215.

3. A shorter version is used in advertisements and many other publications targeted to an audience outside the University:

Boston University's policies provide for equal opportunity and affirmative action in employment and admission to all programs of the University.

4. When space is at a premium, as on posters and small ads, use:

An equal opportunity, affirmative action institution.

Preparing Printed Materials for Mailing

1. Departments designing and planning their own mailings are advised to consult well in advance with Boston University Mail Services at 617-353-9724 or with U.S. Postal Service Mail Piece Design (John Powers at 617-654-5068 or John Donovan at 617-654-5323). To be compatible with the USPS automated processing equipment, the mail piece should comply with current design requirements, including size, shape, weight, color, areas that must be clear of any print, and placement of the address. Business reply envelopes and business reply cards should always be reviewed by BU Mail Services.
2. Always use [two-digit state codes](#) and Zip codes in addressing your outgoing mail piece and reply envelopes. The U.S. Postal Service processes all mail using automated sorting systems that recognize only two-digit state codes and Zip codes. Problems and delays of many days may occur when envelopes and self-mailers are incompatible with the USPS address recognition software and sorting systems.

3. Boston University should be included in your return address. The City, State, and Zip code line should be the lowest line on your reply envelope. Place your "Attention" line in the body of the address.
4. Also check with BU Mail Services regarding the fees associated with Special Address Services, such as Address Service Requested, Return Service Requested, Change Service Requested, and Forwarding Service Requested.
5. There are two basic indicias for University bulk mailings:

First Class
U.S. Postage
PAID
Boston MA
Permit No. 1839

Nonprofit
U.S. Postage
PAID
Boston MA
Permit No. 1839

Miscellaneous Troublesome Terms

How to treat some common problem words:

Advanced Placement

a.m., p.m. (lowercase, with periods)

Barristers Hall (no apostrophe)

Boston University Theatre

Commencement Exercises at Nickerson Field

coursework

Dean ad interim

dual degree program (no hyphen)

fax (noun and verb: lowercase)

fieldwork

Founders' Day (use an apostrophe)

fundraising (one word)

grade point average (no hyphen)

greater Boston

health care (no hyphen)

high school transcript (no hyphen)

homepage

Huntington Theatre Company



Marketing &
Communications | Contact
Us | Request a Logo

ID card

late payment fee (no hyphen)

MasterCard, Visa

master class (two words, no hyphen)

online

Parents Convocation (no apostrophe)

Parents Weekend (no apostrophe)

Patriots Day (no apostrophe)

postbachelor's degree

postdoctoral degree

post-master's degree

President Emeritus

Presidents Day (no apostrophe)

Professor Emeritus, Professor Emerita, Professors Emeriti, Professors Emeritae

Reserve Officers' Training Corps (use an apostrophe)

Room (capitalize with a number)

School of Management Auditorium

Social Security number

Student Link

The Castle (when used in an address)

Trustees Emeriti

under way (almost always two words)

Veterans Administration (no apostrophe)

Veterans Day (no apostrophe)

voice mail (two words)

vs (abbreviation of versus, no period necessary)

website

Work-Study