Style Guide

The George Washington University
School of Medicine and Health Sciences
Office of Communications and Marketing
When in doubt, follow AP style and the university identity standards and guidelines, with the following exceptions:

**Abbreviations/acronyms** – include an unfamiliar abbreviation in parentheses after a proper noun before using it on second reference. See list of common abbreviations below:

- **The George Washington University**: GW (*Note: never GWU), upper case “T” only at the start of a sentence.
- **The GW School of Medicine and Health Sciences**: GW SMHS on second reference, or SMHS.
- **The George Washington University Cancer Center**: GW Cancer Center on second reference, avoid GWCC unless in merchandising or lists.
- **The Virginia Science and Technology Campus**: VSTC.
- **The Milken Institute School of Public Health at GW**: Milken Institute SPH on second reference.
- **Children’s National Health System**: Children’s National on second reference.
- **Centers for Disease Control**: CDC on second reference.
- **The National Institutes of Health**: NIH on second reference.
- **The George Washington University Medical Faculty Associates**: GW MFA on second reference.
- **The George Washington University Hospital**: GW Hospital on second reference.

Some names are usually abbreviated on first reference, such as:

- **Cardiopulmonary resuscitation**: CPR acceptable on first reference.
- **Food and Drug Administration**: FDA acceptable on first reference.
- **Grade Point Average**: GPA acceptable on first reference.

**Academic titles** – see titles, academic on page 10.

**Across, around** – across the United States, around the world

**Addresses** – Use the abbreviations Ave., Blvd., and St. only with a numbered address: 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. Spell them out and capitalize when part of a formal street name without a number: Pennsylvania Avenue. Lowercase and spell out when used alone or with more than one street name: Massachusetts and Pennsylvania avenues.

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.

Always use figures for an address number. (Ex. 9 Morningside Circle.)

Spell out and capitalize First through Ninth when used as street names; use figures for 10th and above. (Ex. 7 Fifth Ave., 100 21st St.)

Abbreviate compass points used to indicate directional ends of a street or quadrants of a city in a numbered address. (Ex. 222 E. 42nd St., 562 W. 43rd St., 600 K St. NW.) Do not abbreviate if the number is omitted. (Ex. East 42nd Street, West 43rd Street, K Street Northwest.) No periods in quadrant abbreviations (Ex. NW, NE, SW, SE) unless customary locally.

Use periods in the abbreviation P.O. for P.O. Box numbers.

**Adopt-a-Doc** – an MD program scholarship launched in 2012 that provides a minimum of $20,000 spread over the course of four years. The program promotes mentor relationships by pairing donors with medical students. First reference: Adopt-a-Doc program, when referring to the collective initiative; Adopt-a-Doc scholarship, when referring to a specific gift; Adopt-a-Doc scholar; Adopt-a-Doc donor.

**Adviser** – not advisor

**AIDS** – acceptable in all references for acquired immune deficiency syndrome, sometimes written as acquired immunodeficiency syndrome. The scientific name for the virus is human immunodeficiency virus, or HIV (never HIV virus). Can be written as HIV/AIDS. Compound modifier. (Ex. HIV-positive patient; HIV-negative individual.)

**Affect, effect** – affect is a verb, meaning influence. (Ex. A new study reveals that drug shortages affecting emergency care have skyrocketed in the United States in recent years.) Effect is generally used as a noun, meaning result. (Ex. The effect was overwhelming.) Effect can be used as verb, meaning to cause. (Ex. He will effect change in his new position.)

**African-American** – Acceptable for an American black person of African descent. Also acceptable is black. The terms are not necessarily interchangeable. People from Caribbean nations, for example, generally refer to themselves as Caribbean-American. Refer to subject for his/her preference. See nationalities, race on page 7.
age — always use figures. Ages written before a noun or as a substitute for a noun use hyphens. (Ex. The 26-year-old patient. The patient, who is 26 years old.)

alma mater

alumnus (singular male), alumni (plural, male+female), alumna (singular female), alumnae (plural female only)

alumni class year — always use year contraction after degree; make sure apostrophe curves away from the number (Ex. Jeffrey S. Akman, MD ’81, RESD ’85); list degrees highest to lowest.

a.m. — see time on page 9.

ampersand (&) — never use in place of “and.” Only use when it is part of an official title or a university-approved branding system.

assure, ensure, insure — assure means to make safe or give confidence to; ensure means guarantee; insure refers to providing or obtaining insurance.

B

bachelor’s degree — do not capitalize discipline. For more, see degrees, academic.

benefit, benefited, benefiting

biannual, biennial — biannual means twice a year; synonym to semiannual. Biennial means every two years.

bimonthly — means every other month. Semimonthly means twice a month.

biweekly — means every other week. Semiweekly means twice a week.

board certifications — see certifications.

board of trustees — capitalize only when using the full organization title (Ex. the George Washington University Board of Trustees). Do not capitalize board or trustee on second reference.

C

Cafritz Conference Center, Morris and Gwendolyn
— Cafritz Conference Center on second reference, located on the third floor of the Marvin Center, first floor. 800 21st St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20052. Composed of four large event spaces as well as multiple meeting/breakout rooms. Amphitheater, capacity 104; Continental Ballroom, maximum capacity 200 seated, 225 reception; Grand Ballroom, maximum capacity 325 seated, 450 reception; and Grand Ballroom Terrace (outside) capacity 175 reception.

campus — capitalize when referencing the proper name of GW campuses (Ex. Foggy Bottom Campus, Virginia Science and Technology Campus). Lowercase on second reference. Lowercase when referencing more than one campus.

cancel, canceled, canceling, cancellation

capital — when referring to the city where a seat of government is located, use lowercase.

capitalizations — in general, avoid unnecessary capitalizations. For disciplines, never capitalize (Ex. He’s a professor of medicine at the GW School of Medicine and Health Sciences). Always capitalize official department names, endowed titles, and emeriti professorships (Ex. Alan Wasserman, MD, is the chair of the Department of Medicine. Alan Wasserman, MD, chair of the Department of Medicine, Eugene Meyer Professor of Medicine, and professor of medicine at SMHS, is the longtime moderator of the “Frontiers in Medicine” lecture series.) On second references, include GW for university and centers and institutes (Ex. GW Cancer Center). Examples of common GW references that should be lowercased include the building, the board, the campus, the office, the department, the project. First references should be capitalized only in their complete proper form (Ex. The Department of Medicine offers fellowship training programs. The department is hosting Medical Grand Rounds during the 2017–18 academic year.)

Capitol — capitalize U.S. Capitol and the Capitol when referring to the building in Washington, D.C.

Capitol Hill

centers, institutes — capitalize GW-chartered centers.

Centers for Disease Control — CDC on second reference.

century — lowercase and spell out numbers less than 10 (Ex. the first century, the 21st century, 18th-century medicine).

certifications — (as well as fellowships, professional associations, and board certifications) — do not include certifications, fellowships, professional associations, or board certifications (Ex. FAACP,
Academic Year 2018–19

Chair – preferred to chairman or chairperson. Capitalize when used before a name.

Children’s National Health System – Children’s National on second reference. The GW School of Medicine and Health Sciences and Children’s National established a clinical partnership in 1968, which based the SMHS Department of Pediatrics at Children’s National and provided joint appointments to the pediatrics faculty members.

Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy, CTE – A degenerative brain disease that researchers have linked to concussions or repeated blows to the head. It is most closely associated with football, but also has been diagnosed in some athletes from other contact sports and military combat veterans. It can be identified only posthumously by examining the brain. This is a perfect example of the need to be careful with medical diagnosis.

Citations (Fusion) – follow JAMA style guidelines. (guides.med.ucf.edu/id.php?content_id=5191991)


Class Year – for medical students, cite MS and roman numeral designating class after name (Ex. Shantum Misra, MSII, submitted an abstract to Fusion). Can also use first-year, second-year, etc. to designate medical student class (preferred in stories). For residents, use roman numeral designating class after PGY (post-graduate year). (Ex. Stephanie Cho, PGY IV, is chief resident in psychiatry.)

Clinical Trials – capitalize Phase and use roman numerals when referring to the phases of the clinical trial.

Phase I – Is it safe? Researchers look for the highest dose of the new treatment that can be given safely without serious side effects.

Phase II – Efficacy; does it work and meet the goals of the treatment?

Phase III – Comparing the safety and effectiveness of the new treatment against the current standard of care.

Typically, if Phase III clinical trials show a new drug is more effective and/or safer than the current standard treatment, a new drug application (NDA) is submitted to the FDA (Food and Drug Administration) for approval.

Commencement – refers to the specific GW ceremony conferring of degrees on the National Mall. It is a proper noun and should always be capitalized. Schools and programs do not hold commencement ceremonies, they hold graduation celebrations or diploma ceremonies. (Ex. Participants in the May 2016 Commencement gathered on the National Mall in the shadow of the Capitol. Later that day, more than 5,000 family and friends packed Lisner Auditorium for the annual MD Diploma Ceremony.)

Compliment, Complement – compliment is a noun or verb that means praise or the expression of courtesy; complement is a noun and verb meaning completeness or the process of supplementing something. (Ex. The professor was flattered by his colleague’s compliments on his lesson. The tie complements his suit.)

Composition Titles – Journals should not be italicized or underlined. Refer to AP style for more guidelines.

Comprise, Compose – Comprise means to take in, include, embody. Compose means made up of, to create, or put together. (Ex. The whole is composed of parts. Ex. The speech comprised four major themes.) The whole is not comprised of parts. That would be similar to saying “The whole is included of its parts.” (Ex. The SMHS mission comprises four themes: educating a diverse workforce of tomorrow’s leaders in medicine, science, and health sciences; healing through innovative and compassionate care; advancing biomedical, translational, and health services delivery research with an emphasis on multidisciplinary collaboration; and promoting a culture of excellence through inclusion, service, and advocacy. Ex. The SMHS Council of Advisers, composed of prominent alumni and health care experts, will track progress for the dean’s initiative.)

Congress – capitalize when referring to the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives.

courtesy titles – never use, unless in a direct quote.

CPR, Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation – CPR acceptable on first reference.

data – a plural noun, it takes plural verbs and pronouns. (Ex. The data have been collected.)
**dates** – Use Arabic figures, without st, nd, rd or th. Capitalize the names of months in all uses. When a month is used with a specific date, abbreviate only Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov., and Dec. Spell out months when used alone, or with a year. **Exception:** In formal invitations and announcements, it is acceptable to spell out months used with a specific date. When a phrase lists only a month and a year, do not separate the year with commas. (Ex. January 2019.) Do not use “on” before a date or day of the week when its absence would not lead to confusion, except at the beginning of a sentence. (Ex. The meeting will be held Monday, Jan. 20.) Use figures, without commas: When a phrase refers to a month, day, and year, set off the year with a comma. (Ex. Feb 14, 2025, is the target date.)

**days** – always capitalize days of the week. DO NOT abbreviate.

**dean** – capitalize when used before a name; lowercase in all other references (Ex. School of Medicine and Health Sciences Dean Jeffrey S. Akman, MD).

**degrees, academic** – use abbreviated degree as a courtesy title after a name on first reference. List in order of most advanced to least advanced; do not include bachelor’s degrees or master’s degrees that are not MSPH unless the individual received those degrees at GW. *Do not use periods on degrees or certifications (see certifications). Include graduate years for alumni. ALL DEGREES MUST BE PRECEDED AND FOLLOWED BY COMMAS. (Ex. Kathleen Ogle, MD ’08, assistant professor of emergency medicine at SMHS, received the 2017 Distinguished Teacher Award for the MD Program. Ex. Joyce Maring, DPT, EdD. Ex. Lawrence “Bopper” Dayton, MD ’85, MSPH.)

Commonly used academic degrees:

- MD
- PA-C
- RESD
- MSPH
- PT
- PhD
- PharmD
- PA
- EdD

Do not capitalize doctorate (n.), doctoral (adj.), bachelor’s, or master’s.

*This entry went into effect May 31, 2017; it will not be applied retroactively to past coverage online or in publications.

**departments, academic** – first references should be capitalized only in their complete proper form; see academic titles and capitalization for more. (Ex. Alan Wasserman, MD, is the chair of the Department of Medicine.)

**District of Columbia** – abbreviate as D.C. On second reference, it may be referred to as the District or D.C.

**doctor** – unless in a direct quote, never precede a person’s name with his/her title (Ex. Dr. Jeffrey S. Akman). Never in any circumstance combine a preceding title with a degree reference. (Ex. Dr. Jeffrey S. Akman, MD ’81.)

**Doctor of Physical Therapy** – abbreviate as DPT.

**doctoral, doctorate** – doctoral is an adjective, doctorate is a noun. A person with a doctorate has earned a doctoral degree. See **degrees, academic**.

**Dorothy Betts Marvin Theater** – Located in the Marvin Center, first floor. 800 21st St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20052. Capacity 325.

**E**

**effect, affect** – **affect** is a verb, meaning influence. (Ex. A new study reveals that drug shortages affecting emergency care have skyrocketed in the United States in recent years.) **Effect** is generally used as a noun, meaning result. (Ex. The effect was overwhelming.) Effect can be used as verb, meaning to cause. (Ex. He will effect change in his new position.)

**e.g., i.e.** – e.g. is a Latin abbreviation meaning “for example,” while i.e. is the Latin abbreviation of “that is.” Both should be followed by a comma, per AP style.

**email** – no hyphen, acceptable in all references for electronic mail. Also: esports. Use a hyphen with other “e” terms: e-book, e-reader, e-commerce.

**emertus, emerita, emeriti** – honorary title awarded to select retired faculty members. Emeritus for male professors, emerita for female, and emeriti for plural. All emeritus titles are capitalized. (Ex. Lawrence Thomas Bowles, MD, PhD, Professor Emeritus of Surgery.)

**ensure, insure, assure** – ensure means guarantee; insure refers to providing or obtaining insurance; assure means to make safe or give confidence to.

**entitled, titled** – a book or journal article is titled, not entitled. People are entitled to things.

**et al.** – Latin abbreviation meaning “and others.” Use with JAMA style in Fusion.

**Eye Street** – preferred use to avoid confusion with Roman numerals. (Ex. 2300 Eye St. NW. Ex. The Eye Street Mall.)
Academic Year 2018–19

Faculty – a collective noun referring to an institution’s entire teaching staff. For subject/verb agreement, treat as a singular noun. To refer to individuals, use “faculty member” or “faculty members.”

FDA – Food and Drug Administration, FDA acceptable on first reference

Fellow – a physician who has completed residency and elects to complete further training in a specialty. May be referred to as a fellow. Fellowship alumni should be cited as FEL. (Ex. Jane Doe, MD, FEL ’98.) See residency on page 8.

Fellowships, professional – see certifications on page 2.

Fewer, less – use fewer for individual items, less for bulk or quantity (Ex. Fewer than 10 applicants called. I had less than $50 in my pocket.)

Foggy Bottom – neighborhood in Northwest Washington, D.C., Ward 2a, bounded roughly by 17th Street to the east, Rock Creek Parkway to the west, Constitution Avenue to the south, and Pennsylvania Avenue to the north.

Foggy Bottom Campus – GW moved to the Foggy Bottom neighborhood in 1912, originally occupying an old school building between 20th and 21st streets. Campus now covers 43 acres, with administrative offices extending outside the main campus boundaries.

Full time, full-time – hyphenate when used as a compound modifier. (Ex. She works full time. He’s a full-time professor.)

Fundraising, fundraiser

The George Washington University Medical Faculty Associates – GW MFA acceptable on second reference. The George Washington University Medical Faculty Associates (GW MFA) is a multispecialty physician practice group of more than 750 physicians covering 51 specialty and subspecialty areas. GW MFA doctors have offices in the Ambulatory Care Center, an outpatient clinic located at the corner of 22nd and Eye streets. Primary address is; 2150 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Washington, D.C. 20037

The GW School of Medicine and Health Sciences – GW SMHS on second reference, or SMHS. See School of Medicine and Health Sciences on page 8.

The George Washington University Hospital – GW Hospital acceptable on second reference. Since July 1997, GW Hospital has been jointly owned and operated by a partnership between George Washington University and a subsidiary of Universal Health Services Inc. (UHS), based in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania.

GPA – acceptable on first reference for grade point average.

GW Health Network – the George Washington University’s (GW) accountable care organization (ACO), established in 2018.

Health care – two words unless part of a proper noun.

Health, Human Function, and Rehabilitation Sciences, Department of – Formerly the Department of Physical Therapy, the name was changed to the Department of Health, Human Function, and Rehabilitation Sciences (HHFRS acceptable on second reference) in order to “capture the broad array of education, clinical practice innovation, and research being accomplished – each focused on improving the quality of lives of patients and families.”

Honorary degrees – abbreviated as HON when listed after a name. (Ex. Luther W. Brady, MD ’48, HON ’04, BA ’46, AA ’44, passed away July 13, 2018.)

I Street – see Eye Street on page 4.

Impact – do not use as a verb, use affect(ed) or influence(d).
imply, infer – to imply means to suggest; to infer means to draw from.

incorporated – abbreviate and capitalize as Inc. when used as part of a corporate name. Do not set off with commas.

insure, assure, ensure – insure refers to providing or obtaining insurance; assure means to make safe or give confidence to; ensure means guarantee.

intern – first year of post-medical school training, may be referred to as first-year resident, or PGY I. See residency on page 8.

initials – do not put a space between initials. (Ex. e.e. cummings, T.S. Eliot)

inpatient, outpatient – one word.

Institute for Biomedical Sciences (IBS) – the administrative and academic home for interdisciplinary PhD training in the biomedical sciences. Established in 1996, IBS is administered by SMHS and can be referenced as an SMHS entity.

Institute for Patient-Centered Initiatives and Health Equity – formerly known as the GW Cancer Institute. Under the umbrella of the GW Cancer Center.

International student – use instead of foreign student.

italics vs. quotation marks – refer to AP style.

J


junior/senior – abbreviate as Jr. and Sr. only with full names. Do not precede with a comma. (Ex. Cal Ripken Jr.)

K

kids – use children unless the use of kids as an informal synonym for children is appropriate in the context.


lay, lie – “lay” is a transitive verb; it takes a direct object. (Ex. He laid the book on the table.) “Lie” is intransitive; it cannot take a direct object. (Ex. I lay down to take a nap.)

Lay: lay, laying, laid, have laid
Lie (to recline): lie, lying, lay, have lain
Lie (to tell an untruth): lie, lying, lied, have lied

like, such as – in comparing nouns and pronouns, “like” means something similar to, but not exact (a comparison); “such as” means exactly this (inclusion). (Ex. He’s looking at elements of clinical trials, such as catheter design, placebo effect, and heterogeneity of operator skills. “I enjoy working with people like Dr. Smith,“ she said.)


logos – see website creativeservices.gwu.edu/identity-standards-guidelines.

M

Master’s degree – do not capitalize discipline. See degrees, academic on page 4.

medical doctor – abbreviate as MD.

medical student – refer by class year. (Ex. Jane Doe, member of the Class of 2022, and John Doe, member of the class of 2019; first-year medical student Jane Doe, and fourth-year medical student John Doe; Jane Doe, MSI, and John Doe, MSIV.)

mid – no hyphen unless a capitalized word follows. (Ex. midterm, mid-America)

midnight – preferred to 12 a.m. Never use 12 midnight.

Milken Institute School of Public Health at GW – Milken Institute SPH on second reference. Milken Institute SPH building, 950 New Hampshire Ave. NW, Washington, D.C. 20052. Auditorium, capacity 227; two theaters, capacity 111 and 96 respectively; and four rooms that comprise a convening center with a total reception capacity of 350.

money – use figures in reference to money. Use commas for figures of four numerals, periods for millions or billions. Figures without cents are usually set without decimal points and zeroes. (Ex. $5, $7.75, $1,500, $1.2 million).

more than, over – “over” refers to spacial relationships (direction or elevation); “more than” refers to quantity.

Mount Vernon Campus – colloquially known as The Vern. In 1996, GW purchased the Mount Vernon College for Women located in the Washington, D.C., Palisades neighborhood. The campus remained exclusively a women’s college until 1999 when it became a co-ed facility. The campus features Eckles Library, six residence halls, Lloyd Gymnasium, The GW-Mount Vernon Athletic Complex, and other campus facilities. 2100 Foxhall Rd. NW, Washington, D.C. 20007

multimedia

names of organizations – refer to an organization/department by its full name on first reference; shortened names or abbreviations are acceptable on second reference.

names of people – always use first and last names on first reference. Use middle initial if individual prefers to include it. On second reference, only use last name. No courtesy titles.

National Institutes of Health: NIH on second reference.

nationalities/race – always capitalize the proper names of nationalities, peoples, races, tribes, etc.

nonprofit

noon – not 12 p.m. or 12 noon.

not only – should always be followed with “but also” or at least “also.”

numbers – spell out numbers one through nine (except in the case of ages and percentages, which always use figures). Use numerals for anything 10 or higher. Spell out all numbers at the beginning of a sentence. See dates, telephone numbers, time on pages 4, 8, and 9 respectively.

OK – no periods, do not use okay.

One GW – The partnership between the GW School of Medicine and Health Sciences, the GW Medical Faculty Associates, and GW Hospital.

opiate, opioid – opiate refers to drugs derived directly from the poppy plant, such as morphine and codeine. Opioids are synthetic or partially synthetic manufactured drugs that mimic the properties of opiates. Heroin can be made different ways, but is generally considered an opioid, as are more common prescription painkillers, such as OxyContin and Vicodin. When referring to just prescription medications, a general term like powerful prescription painkillers can be more accurate. But when referring to the overall class of drugs, opioid is the better choice.

over, more than – “more than” refers to quantity, “over” refers to spacial relationships (direction or elevation).

PhD student, PhD candidate – A PhD student is currently working toward a doctoral degree. A PhD candidate has completed all of the requirements for a doctoral degree except the dissertation.

p.m. – see time on page 9.

percent – always one word. Use with figures. Only use % in reference to results in scientific abstracts (Fusion).

physician assistant – abbreviate as PA.

physical therapist – abbreviate as PT.

Physical Therapy, Department of – the department changed its name in 2018 to the Department of Health, Human Function, and Rehabilitation Sciences (HHFRS acceptable on second reference). The change reflects “the broad array of education, clinical practice innovation, and research being accomplished – each focused on improving the quality of lives of patients and families.”

postdoctoral
pre-eminent — hyphenate; a hyphen is used if a prefix ends in a vowel and the word that follows begins with the same vowel.

principal, principle — principal is a noun and adjective meaning someone or something first in rank, authority, or importance. (Ex. Carson was sent to the principal. He was the principal player in the trade.) Principle is a noun meaning fundamental truth, law, doctrine, or motivating force. (Ex. It’s the principle of the matter that counts.)

professor titles — see titles, academic on page 10.

professional associations — see certifications on page 2.

programming

provost — lowercase when it stands alone or after a name. Capitalize when it appears before a name.


residency — Post-graduate medical education. Residents are in a department at SMHS. In academic year 2017-18, the school had 360 residents and 77 fellows in 41 ACGME-accredited programs. (Ex. Jane Doe, MD, second-year cardiology resident at SMHS; Jane Doe, MD, cardiology PGY III.) PGY stands for post-graduate year. Refer to resident alumni as RESD. (Ex. Jane Doe, MD, RESD ’98.)

Intern — first year of post-medical school training, may be referred to as first-year resident, or PGY I.

Resident — follows the intern year. Residency can range from an additional two years of education to an additional seven years of training, depending on the specialty.

Fellow — a physician who has completed their residency and elects to complete further training in a specialty. May be referred to as a fellow. Fellowship alumni should be cited as FEL. (Ex. Jane Doe, MD, FEL ’98.)


RSVP — The abbreviation for the French repondez s’il vous plaît, means please reply. No periods. Do not use with “please” to avoid redundancy. (Ex. RSVP by Nov. 19, go.gwu.edu/DCwomenphysicians.)

scholarship — lowercase except when used as part of a proper name. (Ex. Seven GW SMHS students received the opportunity to participate in a learning experience abroad, thanks to the Leonard C. Akman, MD ’43, Global Medicine Scholarship.)

school — capitalize when part of a proper name (Ex. the GW School of Medicine and Health Sciences), but lowercase in second reference when the proper name isn’t used.

School of Medicine and Health Sciences — spell out on first reference; SMHS is acceptable on subsequent references. One of the 10 degree-granting schools at GW, established in 1825, and the 11th oldest medical school in the country. Located in Ross Hall. SMHS, the GW Medical Faculty Associates (or GW MFA), and the GW Hospital are clinical partners. Do not use with an ampersand.

seasons — in general, do not capitalize. (Ex. fall 1994)

semesters — do not capitalize. (Ex. fall semester)

semiannual — twice a year; synonym for biannual.

states — spell out, separate from cities with commas. (Ex. Kimberly Russo, MBA, MS, pauses in the description of her hometown, White Hall, Illinois, to mock gasp. “Everyone was like, ‘We have a stoplight!’” Ex. Washington, D.C., is home to Ben’s Chili Bowl.)

such as, like — in comparing nouns and pronouns, “such as” means exactly this (inclusion); “like” means something similar to, but not exact (a comparison). (Ex. He’s looking at elements of clinical trials, such as catheter design, placebo effect, and heterogeneity of operator skills. “I enjoy working with people like Dr. Smith,” she said.)

T-cell — a type of lymphocyte produced or processed by the thymus gland and actively participating in the immune response. “T” stands for thymus.

telephone numbers — use figures with hyphens, not periods or parentheses. (Ex. 212-621-1500) For international numbers use 011 (from the United States), the country code, the city code and the telephone number. (Ex. 011-44-20-7535-1515) If extension numbers are needed, use a comma to separate the main number from the extension. (Ex. 212-621-1500, ext. 2.)
that, which  — that and which should be used to refer to animals or inanimate objects, not people. That introduces an essential clause and should not be preceded with a comma. (Ex. The CLASS Center offers resources that are available to medical students and residents.) Which introduces a non-essential clause and should be preceded by a comma. (Ex. The white coats, which are funded by GW alumni donations, were presented to the incoming class.)

time  — use periods with a.m. and p.m. Do not use a colon and zeros when the time is on the hour. Avoid redundancies. (Ex. 8 a.m. in the morning, 12 noon, 12 midnight) When writing spans of time, use only one a.m. or p.m. (if span is confined to before or after noon), and use an en dash. (Ex. Opening remarks, 8 – 9 a.m. Lunch, 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.) Do not use an en dash with a preposition; use “to.” (Ex. The event took place from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.)

titles  — in general, capitalize titles only when they are used before a person’s name; in second reference, the use of a last name will suffice. See titles, academic on page 10.

toward  — not towards.

U

underrepresented  — no hyphen.

United States  — always spell out when appearing as a noun; use U.S. on second reference or as an adjective.

university  — always lowercase unless when used as part of a proper noun or at the start of a sentence.

V

versus  — spell out in ordinary speech and writing. In short expressions, however, the abbreviation “vs.” is allowed.

The Virginia Science and Technology Campus  — VSTC on second reference. 122-acre campus located in Loudoun County, Virginia. The campus opened in 1991. 45085 University Dr., Ashburn, VA 20147.
yearlong, daylong

years – use figures, without commas: 2017. When a phrase refers to a month, day, and year, set off the year with a comma. (Ex. Feb. 14, 2025, is the target date.) Use an s without an apostrophe to indicate spans of decades or centuries. (Ex. the 1990s, the 1700s) When contracting a year, the apostrophe must face away from the remaining numerals. (Ex. Jeffrey S. Akman, MD ’81, RESD ’85)

titles, academic – in first reference to a GW faculty/staff member, include the first and last name, followed by graduation years (if applicable) and his/her title. Degrees should appear in order of most advanced degree first (Ex. MD, PhD). Titles should follow the order: executive title (if applicable), endowed professorship or Professor Emeritus (see capitalization for more), dean title (if applicable), professor title. In the case of faculty who hold both chair and professor positions in the same department, write as “chair and professor of ...” Always use primary appointments; only include secondary appointments if contextually relevant. ALL DEGREES AND TITLES APPEARING AFTER A NAME MUST BE PRECEDED AND FOLLOWED BY COMMAS. (Ex. Jeffrey S. Akman, MD ’81, RESD ’85, vice president for health affairs, Walter A. Bloedorn Professor of Medicine, and dean of SMHS; Ex. Nancy Gaba, MD ’93, RESD ’97, chair of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at SMHS, Oscar I. and Mildred S. Dodek and Joan B. and Oscar I. Dodek Jr. Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology.)

See capitalization on page 2 for more on references to departments and disciplines. See degrees, academic on page 4 for more on punctuation regarding degrees.

*Note: Unless in a direct quote, never precede a person’s name with his/her title. (Ex. Dr. Jeffrey S. Akman.) Under no circumstances combine a preceding title with a degree reference. (Ex. Dr. Jeffrey S. Akman, MD ’81.)

Origin of these title style rules.
CHICAGO MANUAL OF STYLE: Titles and offices – the general rule

CIVIL, MILITARY, RELIGIOUS, AND PROFESSIONAL TITLES – Capitalized when they immediately precede a personal name and are thus used as part of the name (typically replacing the title holder’s first name). In formal prose and other generic text (as opposed to promotional or ceremonial contexts or a heading), titles are normally lowercased when following a name or used in place of a name. (Ex. President Abraham Lincoln; Abraham Lincoln, 16th president of the United States of America.)

ACADEMIC TITLES: – Named academic professorships and fellowships are usually capitalized whenever they appear, especially if they are accompanied by a personal name. (Ex. Mary M. Warren, PhD, Alfred R. Wellingman Distinguished Service Professor.)

AP STYLEBOOK – In general, confine capitalization to formal titles used directly before an individual’s name.

LOWERCASE – Lowercase and spell out titles when they are not used with an individual’s name. (Ex. The president issued a statement. The pope gave his blessing.)

LOWERCASE AND SPELL OUT – titles in constructions that set them off from a name by commas. (Ex. The vice president, Mike Pence, was elected in 2016. Pope Francis, the current pope, was born in Argentina.)

FORMAL TITLES – Capitalize formal titles when they are used immediately before one or more names. (Ex. Pope Francis, President George Washington, Vice Presidents John Jones and William Smith.) A formal title generally is one that denotes a scope of authority, professional activity or academic activity. (Ex. Sen. Dianne Feinstein, retired Gen. Colin Powell.)

OCCUPATIONAL DESCRIPTIONS: lowercase occupational descriptions. (Ex. astronaut John Glenn, movie star John Wayne, peanut farmer Jimmy Carter.) If there is doubt about the status of a title and the practice of the organization cannot be determined, use a construction that sets the name or the title off with commas.
Boiler Plates

About Children’s National Health System — Children’s National, has served the nation’s children since 1870. Children’s National is one of the nation’s Top 5 pediatric hospitals and, for a second straight year, is ranked No. 1 in newborn care, as well as ranked in all specialties evaluated by U.S. News & World Report. It has been designated two times as a Magnet® hospital, a designation given to hospitals that demonstrate the highest standards of nursing and patient care delivery. This pediatric academic health system offers expert care through a convenient, community-based primary care network and specialty outpatient centers in the D.C. Metropolitan area, including the Maryland suburbs and Northern Virginia. Home to the Children’s Research Institute and the Sheikh Zayed Institute for Pediatric Surgical Innovation, Children’s National is the seventh-highest NIH-funded pediatric institution in the nation. Children’s National is recognized for its expertise and innovation in pediatric care and as a strong voice for children through advocacy at the local, regional, and national levels.

About the George Washington University — In the heart of the nation’s capital with additional programs in Virginia, the George Washington University (GW) was created by an Act of Congress in 1821. Today, GW is the largest institution of higher education in the District of Columbia. The university offers comprehensive programs of undergraduate and graduate liberal arts study, as well as degree programs in medicine, public health, law, engineering, education, business, and international affairs. Each year, GW enrolls a diverse population of undergraduate, graduate, and professional students from all 50 states, the District, and more than 130 countries.

About the George Washington University Cancer Center — GW Cancer Center is a collaboration of the George Washington University, the GW Hospital and the GW Medical Faculty Associates to expand GW’s efforts in the fight against cancer. The GW Cancer Center also incorporates all existing cancer-related activities at GW, with a vision to create a cancer-free world through groundbreaking research, innovative education, and equitable care for all. Learn more about the GW Cancer Center at gwcanccenter.org.

About the George Washington University Hospital — The GW Hospital is a 385-bed tertiary care, academic medical center located in downtown Washington, D.C. Featuring a Level I Trauma Center and a Level III NICU, GW Hospital offers clinical expertise in a variety of areas including cardiac, cancer, neurosciences, women’s health, and advanced surgery, including robotic and minimally invasive surgery. The mission of GW Hospital is to provide the highest quality health care, advanced medical technology, and world-class service to its patients in an academic medical center dedicated to education and research. GW Hospital is jointly owned and operated by George Washington University and a subsidiary of Universal Health Services, Inc. (UHS).

About the George Washington University Medical Faculty Associates — The GW MFA is committed to comprehensive, thorough, and accessible patient care. Our 750+ physicians see patients on our main campus at GW, and at Sibley Memorial, Suburban, Inova Fairfax, Inova Mount Vernon, Shady Grove, Washington Adventist, and Reston Hospitals. The MFA is a national leader in implementation of the Electronic Healthcare Record, which allows doctors to work from a single, secure electronic patient file. Innovation in clinical care. Innovation in education and research. Innovation in health information technology. gwdocs.com

About the George Washington University School of Medicine and Health Sciences — Founded in 1824, the GW School of Medicine and Health Sciences (SMHS) was the first medical school in the nation’s capital and is the 11th oldest in the country. Working together in our nation’s capital, with integrity and resolve, the GW SMHS is committed to improving the health and well-being of our local, national, and global communities. smhs.gwu.edu

About the George Washington University School of Nursing: Established in May 2010, GW School of Nursing (SON) develops nursing leaders who are actively engaged in health promotion, patient advocacy, and health care innovation. By providing students with a high level of nursing expertise and enhancement of professional leadership skills, graduates of GW’s SON are prepared to make a difference in the world.

About Milken Institute School of Public Health at GW — Established in July 1997 as the School of Public Health and Health Services, Milken Institute SPH is the only school of public health in the nation’s capital. Today, more than 1,900 students from 54 U.S. states and territories and more than 50 countries pursue undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral-level degrees in public health. The school also offers an online Master of Public Health, MPH@GW, and an online Executive Master of Health Administration, MPH@GW, which allow students to pursue their degree from anywhere in the world.
Punctuation

**apostrophe** – use to indicate that a noun is possessive. Follow AP Style in all cases. (Ex. The GW School of Medicine and Health Sciences’ dean, Jeffrey S. Akman, MD ’81, RESD ’85, vice president for health affairs and Walter A. Bloedorn Professor of Administrative Medicine, spoke at the diploma ceremony on Sunday. Ex. GW’s School of Medicine and Health Sciences. Ex. SMHS’ professors are highly regarded.)

**brackets** – use to add explanations or corrections to quoted materials. (Ex. “It was like [Mr. and Mrs. D] had never learned how to talk together about difficult things,” Heru said at the lecture.)

**bullet points** – Items that conclude an introductory sentence should be lowercase and punctuated with a comma or semicolon at the end of each item, except for the last, which should have a period. AP uses dashes instead of bullets to introduce individual sections of a list; others may choose to use bullets. Put a space between the dash or bullet and the first word of each item in the list. Capitalize the first word following the dash or bullet. Use periods, not semicolons, at the end of each section, except for the last, which should have a period. (Ex. Our partners: or Our partners are.)

Introduce the list with a short phrase or sentence. (Ex. Our partners: or These are our partners: or Our partners are.)

**colon** – frequently used at the end of a sentence to introduce lists, tabulations, text, etc. It may also be used to as a mark of emphasis and/or anticipation. (Ex. The psychiatrist gave her patients a homework assignment: write down their hopes for the marriage.) Capitalize the first word after a colon only if it is a proper noun or the start of a complete sentence. Do not use a colon between a verb and its object. (Ex. Her three favorite foods are chocolate, bread, and yogurt. NOT Her three favorite foods are: chocolate, bread, and yogurt.)

You do not need a colon when introducing a direct quotation of one sentence or less. A comma will suffice.

**comma** – always use serial/Oxford comma. Independent clauses linked by a coordinating conjunction should have a comma preceding the conjunction. Use a comma after all introductory prepositional phrases. Use commas to offset a person’s name or degrees. Use a comma to set off a nonessential word or phrase. Use a comma to set off cities and states. (Ex. The Virginia Science and Technology Campus, located in Ashburn, Virginia, houses the new Department of Integrated Health Sciences.)

Commas always go inside of quotation marks. See AP Stylebook for more guidelines.

**dash** – the en dash (–) should be used to enclose a word or word group that interrupts the main sentence structure. (Ex. Bhatt’s story — a request from Dominic Raj, MD, director of the Division of Renal Diseases and Hypertension and professor of medicine at the George Washington University School of Medicine and Health Sciences – came at the Irene Tamagna Lecture on Hypertension in early May.)

The em dash can also be used within a phrase that otherwise would be set off by commas when there is a series that must be separated with commas within the phrase. (Ex. Bhatt and his fellow researchers went to extensive lengths to ensure that the patients were kept as blind as possible, including using sensory isolation – ear plugs and face masks – and ensured that at every step the medical procedures used were sound.)

The en dash (–) should be used to represent a span between items such as time. (Ex. Office hours are 9 a.m. – 5 p.m., Monday – Friday.)

Dashes should have a space on either side. Hyphens should not.

**ellipsis** – when using the ellipsis, treat it as a three-letter word with three periods and a space on either side. It should be used to indicate an omitted word or words in condensing quotes, texts, and documents. Be careful not to distort the meaning of the sentence by deleting words. (Ex. “We judged that the procedure was safe … but the real question was, ‘is it efficacious?’ ” Bhatt asked.)

If the words that precede an ellipsis constitute a grammatically complete sentence, place a period at the end of the last word before the ellipsis.

**exclamation point** – use SPARINGLY! Place inside quotations when part of quoted material, outside when not part of quoted material. Do not use a comma or period after the exclamation point.
**hyphen** – use to join adjectives and avoid ambiguity. Refer to AP style for guidance.

Additional guidelines:
- **Compound modifiers:** When two or more words that express a single concept are used before a noun, link them with a hyphen, with the exceptions of the word “very” and adverbs that end in -ly. (Ex. a high-profile research project, a full-time job, a highly qualified student.)
- **Compound nouns:** (Ex. well-being, 18-year-old, brother-in-law.)
- **With numbers:** Hyphenate the written form of compound numbers and fractions. (Ex. one-fifth.)
- **Between a prefix and a proper noun:** (Ex. mid-Atlantic.)
- **Capitalization:** When hyphenated words are used in headlines, capitalize both. (Ex. Blue-Green Algae Kills Farmer, Two Cows.)
- **Suspensive hyphenation:** (Ex. He received funding for a 10- to 20-year project.)

**parentheses** – use sparingly to insert necessary background or reference information. Place a period outside parentheses if the material inside is not a complete sentence (like this fragment). Otherwise, place periods inside parentheses.

**period** – use with the following:
- At the end of a declarative sentence.
- At the end of a rhetorical question if the statement is more of a suggestion than question.
- At the end of an indirect question.
- At the end of a sentence ending in a website or email address.

Use a single space (NOT a double space) after a period at the end of a sentence.

**question mark** – use with the following:
- At the end of a direct question.
- In the middle of an interpolated question (Ex. You told me – Did I hear you correctly? – that we should meet in the conference room.).
- At the end of a full sentence with multiple questions.

Like the exclamation point, a question mark should be inside quotations when part of quoted material, outside when not part of quoted material. Do not use a comma or period after the question mark. A question mark supersedes the comma when supplying attribution for a quotation. (Ex. “What should clinicians do?” he asked.)

**quotation marks** – use with the following:
- Direct quotations.
- Personal nicknames (Ex. Lawrence “Bopper” Deyton).
- Unfamiliar terms or phrases on first reference. Do not put subsequent references in quotation marks.

Additional guidelines:
- Periods and commas also go within quotation marks.
- Dashes, question marks, and exclamation points go within the quotation marks when they apply to the quoted matter only. They go outside when applied to the whole sentence.
- Semicolons go outside of quotation marks.

**semicolon** – use to clarify a series, especially when individual segments contain material that also must be set off by commas.

**Note:** the semicolon is used before the final “and” in such a series. (Ex. The meeting included several graduates: John Smith, MD ’84; Jane Doe, MD ’98, MSPH; and Steve Jones, PhD ’95.) Also used to link independent clauses, especially when coordinating conjunctions (and, but, or) are not present. (Ex. The lecture was scheduled for Tuesday; it was moved to today.)

**Note:** Do not use a semicolon when linking an independent clause with a dependent clause. Never follow a semicolon with a dependent clause.

Semicolons appear outside of quotation marks.

**superscript** – include in Fusion in reference to advisers and citations. When used with advisers, the superscript should appear after the person’s name and degree. (Ex. Anthony-Samuel LaMantia, PhD1 When used in text, it should be treated as a closed quotation mark; in other words, all other punctuation (comma, period) should precede it. (Ex. Congenital heart disease is the leading birth defect, affecting almost 1 percent of births each year.1)
School of Medicine & Health Sciences
THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY