A consistent writing style is essential to effective communications. Compiled by Furman University Communications, this document provides guidelines for style, word use and other editorial topics particular to Furman.

These standards apply in all published materials that represent the university to an external audience, in both print and electronic media. This guide, which was last updated in April 2018, primarily follows the latest edition of the Associated Press (AP) Stylebook with some variations that are particular to Furman.
abbreviations: Commonly used abbreviations of more than two letters do not require periods and should be in uppercase: GPA, NCAA, FAFSA, FERPA. Exception: Ph.D. Avoid “NYC” for New York City, except rarely in class notes or in quoted material.

admissions, not admission when describing the office and its function.

adviser, not advisor.

alumnus, alumni, alumna, alumnae:
Use in reference to those who have completed at least two semesters at Furman. Use alumnus (alumni in the plural) when referring to a man who has attended a school. Use alumna (alumnae) when referring to a woman who has attended a school. Use alumni when referring to a group of men and women or a group whose gender cannot be determined. The shortcut alum is to be avoided except in quotes, headlines and social media copy.

a.m./p.m.: 9 a.m., 4 p.m. (note the space between the numeral and the abbreviation).

and/& (ampersand): Avoid “&” except in trademarked business names. The ampersand may be used in headlines and social media copy when needed to save space.

athletic: A descriptor – a person may be athletic. The goalie executed an athletic move to make the save.

athletics: Used to describe the department or activities, such as in director of athletics, athletics facilities.

Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science:
Note upper case; bachelor’s degree (lower case) is acceptable in any reference.

Bell Tower: The official name of the campus landmark is the Bell Tower.

Board of Trustees: Capitalize as a formal noun when referring specifically to Furman’s Board of Trustees, otherwise lowercase: The Board of Trustees voted to approve the budget. Lowercase “board” and “trustees” when used separately on second reference: The board will meet in Shaw Hall.

buildings, named spaces and campus landmarks: Generally, a shortened version of a space’s name is acceptable after first reference or in headlines and social media copy (James B. Duke Library; Duke Library).
campus: Lowercase in all uses.

campuswide: (one word)

capitalization:

- Majors and minors are not capitalized unless they contain the adjectival form of a proper noun: English, biology, Asian studies.

- When employing an individual’s title, capitalize if it precedes the name, but lower case if it follows: Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost George Shields; George Shields, vice president for Academic Affairs and provost.

- The names of academic departments and programs are capitalized if the formal name (Department of History) is used, but not if the informal name (history department) is used, unless they contain the adjectival form of a proper noun (English, Asian studies).

- The names of administrative offices are capitalized.

- The names of university-specific calendar events (Family Weekend, Spring Break) are capitalized, similar to legal holidays, e.g. Labor Day.

class of: Lowercase when referring to a particular class with the year: The class of 1999 celebrated its reunion.

class year designations:

- Class numerals come last when a maiden name is in play: Carol Winchester Ward ’02.

- When listing a couple and only one of them is an alum, John ’86 and Christine Smith.

- When both are alums but have different class years, Christine ’87 and John ’86 Smith.

- Space and no comma between name and numerals. “M” before the numerals indicates a graduate degree: M’09. (Note no spaces.)

- Note spacing and punctuation if an individual possesses both an undergraduate and a graduate degree: Greg Ames ’07, M’09.

- A single quotation mark (‘) is not a substitute for an apostrophe (’).

commas: In accordance with AP, the serial (or Oxford) comma is to be avoided unless it is necessary for clarity, or unless one of the items in the series contains an “and” within it.

Commencement, Commencement Weekend: Use when referring to Furman’s graduation event.

composition titles: Follow AP guidelines for book titles, musical works, movies, plays, poems, albums, radio and television. Capitalize the principal words, including prepositions and conjunctions of four or more letters. Capitalize an article – the, a, an – or words of fewer than four letters if it is the first or last word in a title. Put quotation marks around the names of all such works except the Bible, the Quran and other holy books, and books that are primarily catalogs of reference material. Newspaper and magazine titles are capitalized but do not require quotation marks or italics (The Greenville News, TIME, The Chronicle of Higher Education).
comprise/compose: The whole comprises the parts; the parts compose the whole. The Board of Trustees comprises 40 members; 40 members compose the Board of Trustees.

course titles: Full names of courses are capitalized but not set off in italics or with quotation marks: He took Professor Pate’s course, Writing Fiction. Lowercase when not referring to proper name of course: He met Professor Pate while taking her course on fiction. Exception: a proper noun in the course title: Shakespeare; Russian history.

daniel chapel: Official name of the chapel centrally located on campus across from the James B. Duke Library.

dates: Use figures for days of the month, omitting nd, rd, st, th. Abbreviate only Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov. and Dec. when used with a specific date. Place a comma between the month and the year and following the year when the day is mentioned: On May 6, 2017, Commencement brought together hundreds of people. Do not place a comma between the month and the year when the day is not mentioned: The May 2017 Commencement brought together hundreds of people.

days of the week: Spell out in body copy; do not abbreviate except in lists, such as marriages in Class Notes.

Dean’s List

department names: The names of academic departments and programs are capitalized if the formal name (Department of History) is used, but not if the informal name (history department) is used, unless they contain the adjectival form of a proper noun (English, Asian studies).

The names of administrative offices are capitalized.

dins day: Held during spring term on LDOC (Last Day of Class), Dins Day is a day of Furman spirit and giving.

everal decision (also regular decision): Lowercase in text; uppercase is acceptable in lists, charts and similar display copy.

emerita/emeriti/emeritus: Emerita, in the title, “professor emerita,” means a woman retired from the faculty but permitted to retain as an honorary title the rank of the last academic appointment held. Emeritus refers to a man with the same status. The plural is emeriti. Place immediately after the formal title: Professor Emeritus of History James B. Leavell, or James B. Leavell, professor emeritus of history.

en dash: The shorter of the two dashes, the en dash should be used to denote an abrupt change in a sentence, a series within a phrase, or in an attribution of an author. There should be spaces on either side of it. (On a Mac, the en dash is created using option/alt + hyphen/minus sign; on a PC, use ctrl + alt + -. You must use the minus sign on the numeric keypad.)
fall/fall semester (seasons are not capitalized except when personified in poetry).

Furman Lake: Although sometimes referred to as “Swan Lake,” the official name is Furman Lake.

Furman Mall: The official name of the road and grassy median that runs the length of campus from the Main Gate to the Lay Physical Activities Center.

Furman on Deck: Furman’s named space at the Greenville Drive stadium, Fluor Field.

Furman on Main: Furman’s partnership with M. Judson Booksellers on Main Street in Greenville.

grade-point average/GPA: Spell out and hyphenate on first reference and when used alone.

Otherwise, GPA is acceptable when used with figures: A 3.5 GPA is required.

i.e., that is (note punctuation).

Instagram

Internet

institutes and centers:

Furman’s Institute for the Advancement of Community Health (IACH) allows students and faculty to be more strategically involved in the work of community organizations devoted to supporting healthier lifestyles.

The Riley Institute at Furman broadens student and community perspective about issues critical to South Carolina’s progress. It builds and engages present and future leaders, creates and shares data-supported information about the state’s core challenges, and links the leadership body to those solutions to drive sustainable solutions. “The Riley Institute” is acceptable after first reference or in headlines and social media copy.

The Shi Center for Sustainability connects campus and community through applied, interdisciplinary teaching and research. “The Shi Center” is acceptable after first reference or in headlines and social media copy.

italics: Names of news publications, e.g., The Greenville News, are not italicized.

Headlines: Stories should have a short headline and a long headline. Only the first word and proper nouns are capitalized. Exception: Furman magazine, which uses headline styles determined by design standards particular to each issue.

homepage: one word.
J

Jr.: No comma between a name and this title; Thomas E. Mason Jr. The same is true for Sr., Ill, etc.

L

Lay Physical Activities Center: Commonly known to the campus community as the “PAC,” the Lay Physical Activities Center houses the Department of Health Sciences, the Department of Military Science, Human Resources and the Furman Fitness Center.

LDOC: Student reference for the last day of class for the academic year. This is also the day that the Furman community celebrates Dins Day.

M

major medical-related programs:
Furman University-University of South Carolina (USC) School of Medicine Greenville Direct Entry Program helps accepted Furman students chart a pathway to medical school and allows the USC School of Medicine Greenville to identify talented South Carolina students who are interested in studying and practicing medicine.

The South Carolina Medical Legal Partnership (MLP) formally connects Furman University, the Greenville Health System and South Carolina Legal Services in work to improve health outcomes for people throughout the Upstate, especially those living in poverty.

masters degree

mid-term, mid-year

Milford Mall: This walkway and grassy area extends from the Furman Mall to the James B. Duke Library.

military ranks: Follow standard capitalization rules, capitalizing a rank only if it precedes a person’s name.

N

names/titles of persons: Full title and first and last name on first reference, title capitalized if it precedes name, lowercase if it follows; last name only in subsequent references. Exceptions: Endowed professorships are capitalized, even when the title follows a name: Glen Halva-Neubauer, Dana Professor of Political Science. In more casual uses, particularly on the web and in social media, a student’s first name may be used in subsequent references. Example: Associate Professor of English Gina Pearson, or Brandon Inabinet, associate professor of communication studies.
numbers:

– Write out one through nine, use digits for 10 and up.
– Use commas in four-digit (and higher) numbers (1,000, etc.).

Exceptions:

– people’s ages, always use digits (“...their 1-year-old son...”).
– percentages, always use digits and the word “percent” spelled out, not %, except in tabular materials, headlines and social media copy.
– times, always use digits (note: 9 a.m., without the “:00,” lowercase, periods).

off-campus/on-campus: Following standard procedure, hyphenate when used as an adjective (off-campus housing), but not when used as an adverb (He lives off campus).

online: He registered online; she took advantage of online registration.

president: As with any title, capitalize when used before a full name (President Elizabeth Davis announced...), lowercase when used alone (The president announced...).

regular decision (also early decision):
Lowercase in text; uppercase is acceptable in lists, charts and similar display copy.

says/said: Use “says” for attribution in magazine content, except when doing so creates historical conflict. “Said” is typically used in news releases and news stories online.

serial comma: This refers to the comma before the conjunctions “and” or “or” in a series of items (football, baseball and soccer). Following AP, avoid using in a simple series. Use best judgment for clarity in a complex series (one that has a conjunction within one of the items, e.g., toast, green eggs and ham, and coffee).

state names: Spell out state names in body copy. “D.C.” may be abbreviated.

If the state name must be abbreviated in tabular material – Class Notes, for example – use the AP Style Guide abbreviations below. The names of eight states are never abbreviated in datelines or text: Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Ohio, Texas and Utah.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>State Abbreviation</th>
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<td>W.Va.</td>
<td>West Virginia</td>
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standardized tests: Abbreviations are acceptable on first reference: SAT, ACT, GRE, MCAT.

study away, study-away programs: Use hyphen only when using as a compound modifier.

T

theater: Exceptions: space names that use “theatre” or official major name

The Furman Advantage: The acronym TFA is not to be used in external communications and is used as internal shorthand only. The proper name, including The, is always capitalized.

time designations: Avoid “:00” in top-of-the-hour designations. Five in the afternoon is 5 p.m.

toward, not towards.

U,V

University: When used alone, “university” is not capitalized, even when referring specifically to Furman University.

universitywide (one word)

Upcountry History Museum – Furman University

upperclass students: This term (one word, lowercase) designates sophomores, juniors and seniors.

W

web addresses: Do not underline. Do not include http:// or www, unless excluding either would cause confusion or cause the address not to work. Place a period at the end of a sentence that ends with a web address.

webpage, website

X,Y,Z

years: No apostrophe in decades: the 1990s. Apostrophe in contracted years: the Blizzard of ’88, the class of ’06, the ’90s. Exception: 9/11.
RESOURCES & SUPPORT

THERE ARE MANY RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO HELP YOU COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY WITH YOUR AUDIENCE. PLEASE CONTACT US FOR:

- Writing/Content
- Design/Graphics
- Website
- Photography: Contact University Communications or Jeremy Fleming

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