Georgia Southern University
Editorial Style Guide

Prepared by the Office of Marketing and Communications
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INTRODUCTION

Georgia Southern University’s editorial style guide follows AP (Associated Press) rules and is compiled and managed by the Office of Marketing and Communications. It is designed for all members of our campus community who write for University publications.

The first goal of good writing is clarity. Clarity is fostered by style. We do this by bringing consistency and common reference points to all writers in the organization and to those who read our combined work. A consistent writing style across all Georgia Southern University publications read by both internal and external audiences conveys quality, reflects professionalism and reinforces artistic harmony. This guide covers style, usage and writing issues specific to Georgia Southern University, and the standards by which all University printed materials are produced.

Printed materials created for the University should be:
1. Accurate,
2. Clear to any person or audience reading them,
3. And as polished as they can be, given No. 1 and No. 2.

This document is not intended to address all issues you may encounter, but it does cover many that are unique to Georgia Southern. The Associated Press Stylebook should be used as the primary source for any issues not supplied in this University editorial style guide.
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SECTION 1 • ABBREVIATIONS

1.1 ACADEMIC DEGREES

When referring to degrees in general, bachelor’s, master’s, doctorate or doctoral are lowercase as are disciplines (except languages), major, minor or areas of concentration.

NOTE: For bachelor’s and master’s use an apostrophe plus the s (’s)

Use periods when abbreviating B.A., B.S., M.S., M.A., Ph.D. and Ed.D. Our MBA program does not use periods.

NOTE: Two-letter abbreviations need periods. (See 1.8)

Capitalize formal names of academic degrees:
B.A.—Bachelor of Arts in English (no need to use degree or do not capitalize degree if used)
M.S.—Master of Science in biology
Ph.D.—Doctor of Philosophy (The preferred form is to say the person holds a doctorate in journalism, rather than a Ph.D.)

Correct: John Smith earned a Bachelor of Science in mathematics from Georgia Southern.
Correct: John Smith has a bachelor’s degree in mathematics.
Correct: She holds a Master of Accountancy or “a master’s in accounting.”
Incorrect: She holds a Master’s of Accountancy.

1.2 ACRONYMS

Use the full name of agencies, colleges and organizations on first reference unless the organization is known by its abbreviation. FBI and NASA are good examples. If a second reference will be made, place abbreviation in parenthesis after first use and use abbreviation on second reference.

Acronyms (shortened forms pronounced as words) do not need periods, e.g., NAFTA, NASA, nor do widely known organizations like CIA, NFL and NCAA.

Examples:
• Southern Orientation, Advisement and Registration (SOAR)
• Institute for Arthropodology and Parasitology (IAP)
• Recreation Activity Center (RAC)
• Performing Arts Center (PAC)
• Betty Foy Sanders Department of Art (BFSDoArt)
• ROTC is an acronym for Reserve Officers’ Training Corps
coursework within the Department of Military Science, and leading to a military officer’s commission.

• First-Year Experience (FYE)

1.3 COLLEGES

When listing the University’s colleges, they should be presented in alpha-order by the first letter of the proper name and written out completely upon first reference. Abbreviations should be used for any additional references.

• Allen E. Paulson College of Engineering and Information Technology (CEIT)
• College of Business Administration (COBA)
• College of Education (COE)
• College of Health and Human Sciences (CHHS)
• College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CLASS)
• College of Science and Mathematics (COSM)
• Jack N. Averitt College of Graduate Studies (COGS)
• Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health (JPHCOPH)

1.4 GEORGIA SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY

Do not abbreviate as GSU. Use of GSU is only acceptable as part of a quote from an external source, such as an alumnus.

On first reference to alumni or campus audience, Georgia Southern is acceptable, with “the University” as a second reference.

To a general audience, Georgia Southern University is correct for first reference, Georgia Southern or the University for second reference.

1.5 MONTHS

When a month is used with a specific date, abbreviate only Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov. and Dec., and spell out March, April, May, June and July. Do not abbreviate months when they stand alone or appear with only a year. Do not separate month from year with a comma.

Correct: Jan. 2, 2008
Correct: March 2014, January 2012
Correct: She will attend the meeting Friday, Dec. 3, 2015, at 8 p.m. in the Performing Arts Center.
Correct: The meeting is scheduled for June 30 at 8 p.m.
Incorrect: She will attend the meeting Fri., December 3, 2015 at 8PM.
1.6 RSVP

RSVP is an abbreviation for the French phrase, “Repondez s’il vous plait,” meaning “please reply.” Never use the redundant “Please RSVP.”

1.7 STATES/TERRITORIES/CITIES

The names of the 50 states should always be spelled out when used in the body of a story, whether standing alone or in conjunction with a city, town, village or military base. Only use postal codes with mailing addresses.

Per AP: Use New York state when necessary to distinguish the state from New York City. Use state of Washington or Washington state when necessary to distinguish the state from the District of Columbia. (Washington State is the name of a university in the state of Washington. DO NOT capitalize the “s” in state, unless referring to that specific university.)

NOTE: Do not capitalize the words state, city, and government or federal unless they are part of an official name.

Cities: In body copy, when giving the location of a city universally known to our alumni and campus (Atlanta, Savannah, Statesboro, Chicago, New York, Los Angeles) the state name is not needed. Other universally known cities may include Baltimore, Boston, Cincinnati, Dallas, Denver, Detroit, Honolulu, Houston, Indianapolis, Las Vegas, Miami, Milwaukee, Minneapolis, New Orleans, Oklahoma City, Philadelphia, Phoenix, Pittsburgh, St. Louis, Salt Lake City, San Antonio, San Diego, San Francisco, Seattle and Washington.

Punctuation: Place one comma between the city and the state name, and another comma following the state name if the sentence continues.

Correct: He was traveling from Nashville, Tennessee, to Austin, Texas, en route to his home in Albuquerque, New Mexico.
Incorrect: He was traveling from Nashville, TN, to Austin, Texas, en route to his home in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

1.8 COUNTRIES

Spell out the names of countries when they stand alone. When abbreviating United States, it is U.S., not US.

Correct: We have students from Geneva, Switzerland, in the class of 2015.
Incorrect: The US ambassador spoke at the convention.
1.9 ABBREVIATED TITLES

Per AP, the following formal titles are abbreviated and capitalized as shown when used before a name inside and outside quotations: Dr., Gov., Lt. Gov., Rep., Sen.

SECTION 2 • CAPITALIZATION

2.1 ACADEMIC COLLEGES, DEPARTMENTS, DIVISIONS, LABORATORIES, PROGRAMS, SCHOOLS AND ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES

The formal names of academic departments, divisions, programs, colleges and schools should be capitalized, and the words department, office, division, program or laboratory uppercased when they appear in the formal title.

Examples:
Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management
Office of Admissions
Office of the Registrar
Office of the President
Department of Physics
College of Education
School of Human Ecology
Facilities Services
Center for Addiction Recovery
Child Development Center
Religious Studies Program
Special Collections
Betty Foy Sanders Department of Art

Lowercase informal or incomplete references (physics department, biology department, accounting department).

Correct: The Department of Writing and Linguistics is part of the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences.
Correct: Workers in the Physical Plant painted offices in the history department.

Correct: The Department of Art is located in the Center for Art & Theatre.
Incorrect: The GSU Art Department is located in the Center for Art & Theatre.
2.2 ACADEMIC TITLES

Titles are capitalized when written before a person’s name. Georgia Southern University publications may capitalize designations such as president, dean, chair, professor, or coach when they come directly before a name. **Titles after a name are lowercased.**

The title **Dr.** is used only for medical doctors. Per AP, we do not use titles like Mr., Ms., and Mrs., except in the case of an obituary, where titles of respect are customarily given.

Exceptions may be made in the case of departmental brochures, Web pages, or admissions pieces if the client desires their use as an indicator of faculty credentials. Their use as part of an attributed quote is also acceptable.

**Correct:** “Dr. Jones was the best professor I ever had,” said Jack Smith.
**Incorrect:** Mr. Jones was the best professor I ever had,” said Jack Smith.

Georgia Southern’s interim president is identified as Georgia Southern University Interim President Jean E. Bartels, Ph.D., on first reference.

**For all future mentions within the same text/article, you may use the following:**
Interim President Bartels
Dr. Bartels
Bartels
Bartels, interim president of Georgia Southern University

You may refer to the first couple as one of the following:
Dr. Jean Bartels and Mr. Terry Bartels
Interim President Jean E. Bartels, Ph.D., and First Gentleman Terry Bartels

**Vice President** has no hyphen. The correct usage for Georgia Southern University vice presidential titles is **Vice President for**, not **of** (e.g., Vice President for Business and Finance).

**Correct:** Director of Admissions Susan Davies; or Susan Davies, director of admissions
**Correct:** Professor of biology Jack Smith said the outline was well done. “His outline was terrific,” said Jack Smith, biology professor.
**Correct:** The office is announcing the promotion of chemistry Professor John Smith Jr.

Titles of academic rank, such as assistant professor, associate professor, or instructor are not generally used for a mass audience and therefore to be avoided. However, their use is acceptable for **internal** Georgia Southern audiences.
2.3 **ALMA MATER**

Lowercase alma mater in most cases. Capitalize and italicize only when referring to the song.

2.4 **a.m. AND p.m.**

Do not capitalize a.m. or p.m. Use a.m. or p.m. with periods and omit zeroes for top of the hour. No need to repeat a.m. or p.m. if within the same time period: 6-11 a.m.

If you use the word *from* please use the corresponding *to*: The lecture lasts from 8 a.m. *to* 10:15 a.m. or use an en-dash 8-10:15 a.m. Do not use a hyphen when using *from*.

Never use the redundant 12 noon or 12 midnight. Simply use noon or midnight.

**Correct:** 3 p.m. or 6:30 p.m.
**Incorrect:** 3PM or 3:00

**Correct:** The conference runs from April 5 to 10.
**Incorrect:** The conference runs from April 5-10.

2.5 **ALUMNI**

Alumnus, alumni, alumna and alma are all derivatives from the Latin root “alere”- to nourish and should be lowercase.

*Alumni* refers to a group of graduates of mixed gender.

An *alumna* is a female graduate. Multiple female graduates are *alumnae*.

An *alumnus* is one male graduate. Multiple male graduates are *alumni*.

Informally, one graduate is a “grad” or “alum” not “alumn,” though shortened versions should be used sparingly.

2.6 **Board of Directors, Board of Regents, the Georgia House of Representatives, the Georgia Senate, Georgia State Legislature, Congress, the House, the Senate.**

Capitalize in formal references. Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia or University System Board of Regents

**Correct:** The Georgia Southern University Foundation Board of Directors voted.
**Correct:** Ruby Wells was named to the board of directors.
**Incorrect:** Ruby Wells was named to the Board of Directors.
NOTE: Do not capitalize the words state, city, and government or federal unless they are part of an official name. (Also see 1.7).

2.6 BUILDINGS AND POPULAR CAMPUS NAMES

Capitalize the official name of campus facilities or popular spaces on campus in formal communication. On second reference, you may shorten the name with the appropriate designation: (Anderson Hall, Dining Commons, Biological Sciences Building, Zach. S. Henderson Library, Eagle Village)

- Garden of the Coastal Plain at Georgia Southern University may be shortened to Garden of the Coastal Plain or the Garden on second reference.
- Nessmith-Lane Conference Center may shorten to Conference Center.
- Pedestrium is a paved walkway through central campus. It is capitalized.
- Georgia Southern University Planetarium is shortened to the Planetarium on second reference.
- Beautiful Eagle Creek—Use full name, not simply Eagle Creek (See Section 7)
- The University Store
- The Center for Wildlife Education and Lamar Q Ball, Jr. Raptor Center – Note that there is no period after “Q.” The umbrella entity is the Center for Wildlife Education. On second reference, it may be called the Center, the wildlife education center or the wildlife center.
- Chick-fil-A is the correct spelling for the campus restaurant franchise.
- Hanner Building or Hanner Complex is the facility containing Hanner Fieldhouse and Hanner Gym. Hanner Fieldhouse is the primary basketball arena. Hanner Gym is the smaller gymnasium in the Hanner Complex.
- J.I. Clements Stadium is the Georgia Southern baseball stadium. The playing surface is Jack Stallings Field.
- Lake Wells and Lake Ruby are the two campus lakes. Lake Wells (named for former President Guy Wells) is the larger of the two adjacent to Lakeside Dining Commons. The smaller Lake Ruby is named for President Wells’ wife.
- Recreation Activity Center (RAC)
- Performing Arts Center (PAC)
2.7 CLASSES AND COURSES

Course titles are capitalized (e.g., Introduction to Writing).

Classes and courses are capitalized only in reference to the specific name of a class or if the class uses a proper noun or numeral.

Correct: He is taking a literature and a geology class.
Correct: She passed the Intermediate Accounting III class.
Incorrect: She passed the intermediate accounting III Class.

2.8 CLASS YEARS

Capitalize Class when you refer to Georgia Southern University class years. Use the apostrophe and parenthesis to abbreviate class years.

Correct: The Class of 1956 will meet during homecoming weekend.
Correct: Jane Busch (’56) was elected board president.
Incorrect: The class of 1956 will meet during homecoming weekend.

2.9 COMMENCEMENT/CONVOCATION

Capitalize both when referring to Georgia Southern’s formal graduation ceremony and lowercase when referring to graduation ceremonies at other colleges.

Correct: She attended Georgia Southern University’s 100th Annual Commencement.
Correct: Commencement 2015
Incorrect: She attended Georgia Southern University’s 100th annual commencement.

2.10 STUDENT CLASSIFICATIONS

Do not capitalize terms such as first-year student, freshman, sophomore, junior or senior when they refer to an individual or class. First-year is hyphenated and may be used to refer to freshmen or freshman.

Correct: All Georgia Southern University first-year students must enroll in the program known as the First-Year Experience (FYE), which takes the upper case.
Incorrect: All Georgia Southern University first-year students must enroll in the program known as the first-year Experience (FYE).
2.11 DATELINES

Per AP, datelines on stories should contain a city name, entirely in capital letters, followed in most cases by the name of the state, county or territory where the city is located. You do not have to use the state with well-known city names. In dateline it is appropriate to abbreviate state. Do not use postal abbreviations.

Correct: KANSAS CITY, Kan., DARIEN, Ga. ATLANTA
Incorrect: Stamford, CT, Kansas City, KAN., DARIEN, GA

2.12 ETHNICITIES/RACE

Do not capitalize black or white. However, do capitalize African-American (black is acceptable for Americans of African descent.) Do not refer to black people of other countries as “African-Americans.”

Hispanic is the accepted term for Spanish-speaking people of mixed heritage. Latino is acceptable as well. Use a more specific identification when possible, such as Mexican-American, Cuban, Puerto Rican, Asian-American, or Native-American.

2.13 FIRST LADY

Although first lady is not a formal title we will capitalize when referring to Georgia Southern University’s First Lady. (This is an exception to the AP style rule.) (Also see Section 2.2)

2.14 HISTORICAL PERIODS

Capitalize the names of Historical periods. Spell out and use lowercase for first through ninth centuries. Use numbers for 10 and above with the appropriate ending, such as 10th, 23rd, with century in lowercase.

Capitalize Colonial when you refer to the period in U.S. history and lowercase to refer to a style of architecture. Capitalize only the proper nouns or adjectives in general descriptions of a period.

Correct: The Dark Ages
Correct: The ninth century scholar is revered for his writings.
Incorrect: The 9th century scholar is revered for his writings.
Correct: She writes about the 15th century.
Correct: ancient Greece, the Victorian era
Correct: The 15th-century Italian Renaissance artist has flourished.
(Hyphenate when used as an adjective.)
Incorrect: The great depression, 5th Century
2.15 HONORS

Lowercase cum laude, magna cum laude and summa cum laude. Do not use italics or quotes.

2.16 HONORS PROGRAM

The program is formally called the University Honors Program. Students in the highest level of the program are 1906 Scholars.

2.17 JEAN E. BARTELS, Ph.D. (see 2.2)

Georgia Southern’s interim president is identified as Georgia Southern University Interim President Jean E. Bartels, Ph.D., on first reference.

For all future mentions within the same text/article, you may use the following:
- Interim President Bartels
- Dr. Bartels
- Bartels
- Bartels, interim president of Georgia Southern University

You may refer to the first couple as one of the following:
- Dr. Jean Bartels and Mr. Terry Bartels
- Interim President Jean E. Bartels, Ph.D., and First Gentleman Terry Bartels

2.18 REGIONAL DESIGNATIONS

Capitalize regions in the United States (e.g., the North, the South, the Midwest, the Northeast, West, East Coast and Midwest or geographic regions like those within Georgia: Blue Ridge, Ridge and Valley, Coastal Plain, Piedmont and the Appalachian Plateau). Do not capitalize non-official regions such as north Georgia, south Georgia, central Georgia, south central U.S., eastern Montana.

Lower case compass directions—north, south, east, west and descriptive words like northern, southern, and eastern.

Correct: She moved from the Midwest to the East Coast.
Correct: The student from south Georgia has a Southern accent.

Correct: He flew west. The plane is heading east.
Incorrect: He flew to the western states. The plane is heading to the east coast.

Incorrect: southern California, lower east side of New York, the south side of Chicago (per AP they are widely known compass points and should be upper case).
2.19 SEASONS

Lowercase all seasons of the year, fall, winter, spring and summer unless used in conjunction with a specific semester or as part of a formal name.

2.20 SEMESTERS

Fall Semester 2006 (uppercase season when followed by a year; no comma); offered fall and winter semesters (lowercase seasons); spring/summer semester.

Correct: Registration is underway for Spring Semester 2015.
Incorrect: Spring semester 2015 registration opens in March.

2.21 SOUTHERN BOOSTERS

The name of this fundraising group for athletics was changed to the Georgia Southern University Athletic Foundation Inc. in 2009. References should be to this title or Athletic Foundation rather than the Southern Boosters.

2.22 SOUTHERN CONFERENCE

The athletics conference Georgia Southern was formerly affiliated with. It may be abbreviated as SoCon on second reference.

2.23 STATE NAMES

State names are capitalized. When referring to a location universally known to our alumni and campus (Atlanta, Savannah, Statesboro, Chicago, New York, Los Angeles) the state name is not needed. Otherwise, follow the city with the state name.

The names of the 50 U.S. states should be spelled out when used in the body of a story, whether standing alone or in conjunction with a city, town, village or military base. (See Section 1.7)

Punctuation: Place one comma between the city and the state name, and another comma after the state name, unless ending a sentence or indicating a dateline: He was traveling from Nashville, Tennessee, to Austin, Texas, en route to his home in Albuquerque, New Mexico. She said Cook County, Illinois, was Mayor Daley’s stronghold.

2.24 SUN BELT CONFERENCE

Sun Belt Conference is the athletics conference with which Georgia Southern is affiliated. (Sun Belt is two words, not Sunbelt.)
2.25 SWEETHEART CIRCLE

Not Sweet Heart

2.26 WEB WORDS

Each word in World Wide Web, commonly known as the Web, is capitalized. Capitalize when used in short form and in terms with separate words, the Web, Web page and Web feed.

Lowercase website, webcam, webcast and webmaster.

The word Internet is capitalized.

HTML is uppercase.

Online is one word and is lowercase: online

URL is uppercase.

Home page is two words.

Email is not hyphenated but use a hyphen with other “e” terms: e-book, e-business, e-commerce. Only capitalize email when it is the first word of the sentence.

In Web addresses, it may not always be necessary to use http:// or www. (Also see Section 6.6)

Email and website addresses are italicized and should read:

GeorgiaSouthern.edu and not www.GeorgiaSouthern.edu

NOTE: Use of the capital G and S, and omission of www.

2.27 ZIP CODE

Use all-caps ZIP for Zoning Improvement Plan, lowercase code.
3.1 DAYS, DATES, DECADES, MONTHS, YEARS

When a month is used with a specific date, abbreviate only Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov. and Dec., and spell out March, April, May, June and July. Do not abbreviate months when they stand alone or appear with only a year. Do not separate month from year with a comma. Separate the date from the year with a comma. You do not have to refer to year in copy unless the date is in a different calendar year than the present one or unless it is needed for clarification. If date is used in the middle of a sentence, commas should be used before and after the year. Example: The game will be played Sept. 10, 2016, in Atlanta.

Correct: The event will be held Saturday, May 14, 2015, at 6 p.m. in Russell Union.
Incorrect: The event will be held Sat., May 14, 2015 at 6PM in Russell Union.

Spell out “September 11” if in reference to the events of “9/11.”

Use only numerical dates; do not use ordinals (“st”, “nd”, “th,”) after the number in a date except when the month is not written.

Correct: May 5, 3, 6, 22
Incorrect: May 5th, 3rd, 6th, or 22nd

Correct: Please respond by Jan 2.
Incorrect: Please respond by Jan. 2nd.

Exception: Please respond by the 14th. (Shows the date only.)

Spell out ordinals first through ninth and use numerals with suffixes for 10th and above.

Correct: The first football game; the 14th championship
Incorrect: The twelfth football game, the 3rd championship

When referring to decades, change to numerals or you may capitalize the decade. Be sure to place apostrophes in their correct position when making references to years, as in the ’90s (not ’90’s), the 1920s, the mid-1930s.

An apostrophe can indicate a missing element (e.g., ’90s for 1990s). The ‘19’ is missing and is replaced by an apostrophe for shorthand.

Correct: The marching band was revived in the 1980s.
Incorrect: The marching band was reinstated in the 1980’s.
Correct: The ‘60s.
Correct: Significant events happened in the Eighties.
Incorrect: Significant events happened in the 80’s.
(Also see Section 5.4)

3.2 MEASUREMENTS

Use Arabic figures to indicate depth, height, length and width. Spell out the words inches, feet, kilometers, years, meters, etc. Do not use an apostrophe and quotation marks for feet and inches except in tabular material, sports material or technical writing. Hyphenate adjective forms before nouns.

Correct: It rained 2 inches yesterday in Statesboro, but Metter got 2 feet of snow.
Incorrect: It rained two inches yesterday in Statesboro.

Correct: The woman is 5 feet 2 inches tall. The 5-foot-2-inch woman.
Incorrect: The woman is five feet two inches tall.

Correct: A 20-foot RV
Incorrect: A twenty feet RV.

Correct: The 5-foot 2-inch woman has eyes of blue.
Correct: Her new carpet is 12 feet by 20 feet. The 12-by-20-foot rug
Correct: The 12-by-20-foot carpet fills the room.
Correct: The storm dumped 5 inches of snow.
Correct: The building has 70,000 square feet of floor space.
Correct: The 70,000-square-foot plant is completed.

3.3 MONEY

When writing about dollar amounts, it is acceptable to use dollar sign and Arabic numbers. Do not use a decimal and two zeroes. However, you may use the dollar sign with a decimal point to separate dollars from cents such as $10.25, $565.85.

For amounts less than a dollar use numerals and spell out cents.

Correct: $30
Incorrect: $30.00
Correct: 25 cents
Correct: It is worth 50 cents.
Correct: 10 cents’ worth
Correct: $999.25
Incorrect: It is worth fifty cents.
Use the dollar sign, number and appropriate word for amounts beyond thousands.

Incorrect: The new health center costs $10,500,000.
Correct: The new health center costs $10.5 million.
Correct: $1.23 million
Incorrect: $1,230,000 million dollars

3.4 NUMBERS

Generally spell out numbers one through nine. Beginning at 10, use numerals. Per AP, spell out numbers at the beginning of a sentence except for sentences that being with a year (e.g., 2010 was a good year for the University.).

Use figures for ages. Spell out first through ninth grades: fourth grade, fourth-grader (note hyphen). Use figures for grades 10 and above.

When referring to placement or rank, always use numerals written as No. 1, No. 10. Do not use 1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc. unless it is contained within a formal title.

Rather spell out “first place” or “third in line.”

Use figures for dimensions, percentages, distances, computer storage capacities, etc.

(For more refer to Associated Press Stylebook for numerals, weights, ages, distances, dimensions, speeds, sports scores, etc.)

Per AP: Use hyphens for ages expressed as adjectives before a noun or as substitutes for a noun. Examples: A 5-year-old boy, but the boy is 5 years old. The boy, 7, has a sister, 10. The woman, 26, has a daughter 2 months old. The race is for 3-year-olds. The woman is in her 30s (no apostrophe).

“No.1” is preferred in body text over “number one,” unless quoted.

Correct: He was my No.1 choice. (Note abbreviation for number)
Incorrect: He was my # one choice.

3.5 PERCENTAGES

In body copy use figures for percent and percentages and spell out percent except in scientific, technical and statistical copy. In tables, write percentages with the numeral and % symbol. For amounts less than 1 percent, precede the decimal with a zero: The cost of living rose 0.6 percent.
Correct: 4 percent, 2.5 percent (use decimals, not fractions), 10 percent, 4 percentage points

Correct: At least 95 percent voted in the election, and only 5 percent did not participate.
Incorrect: At least ninety-five percent voted in the election, and only five percent did not participate.

Correct: The professor said 60 percent was a failing grade.
Correct: 12 to 15 percent; between 12 and 15 percent

NOTE: Percent takes a singular verb when standing alone or when a singular word follows an “of” construction: He said 50 percent of the membership attended the meeting.

It takes a plural verb when a plural word follows an “of” construction: She said 50 percent of the members were there.

3.6 TELEPHONE NUMBERS AND AREA CODES

Telephone numbers should be written as 912-478-5549 (Note the use of dashes only).

3.7 TIME

Use figures and a.m. or p.m. with periods. Do not use :00 for top of the hour (e.g., 7 p.m., not 7:00 or 7 PM). No need to repeat a.m. or p.m. if within the same time period: 6-11 a.m.

If you use the word form, please use the corresponding “to.” Never use the redundant 12 noon or 12 midnight. Simply use noon or midnight.

Correct: The store is open 10 a.m.-1:30 p.m.
Correct: The store will open 10 o’clock Friday morning.
Incorrect: The recital begins at 9:00 a.m. (Omit the :00)
Incorrect: The recital begins at 8 a.m. Wednesday morning.
Correct: The recital will end at 12 p.m.

Exception: For formal invitations, programs you may opt to use zeroes: 8:00 a.m.-10 a.m., or for alignment of a schedule in a list or column use :00 for times that fall at the top of the hour to make it consistent with times that do not fall on the hour. The word “on” is seldom necessary when referring to a time or date: She left Friday.

Incorrect:
9 Recital
9:45 Intermission

Correct:
9:00 Recital
9:45 Intermission
SECTION 4 • PLURAL AND POSSESSIVES

Do not use an apostrophe to denote the plural of someone’s name. However, there are conflicting rules about how to show possession when writing common and proper nouns that end in “s.” Use an apostrophe to show possession. Some writers add only an apostrophe to all nouns ending in “s” and others add an apostrophe plus “s” to every proper noun, whether it is Jones’s or Adams’s hair. The best advice is to choose a style and stay consistent.

4.1 PROPER NAMES

Form the plural of most proper names by adding s.

Correct: The Deals, the Bartels and the McKnights traveled to Washington.

To form the plural of most proper names that end in es or s or z, add es.

The Williamses, Jameses, Gonzalezes, Joneses, Christmases.

4.2 PLURALS

Form plurals of the following by adding s, e.g., the 1940s, 727s, low 20s, Size 5s, ABCs, IOUs, in twos and threes YMCAs, ifs, ands and buts, MBAs, GPAs, SATs.

For nouns plural in form but singular in meaning add just an apostrophe (e.g., United States’ economy, mathematics’ rules).

For single letters add an apostrophe and an s, e.g., the three R’s, p’s and q’s, B.S.’s, Ph.D.’s A’s and B’s.

4.3. POSSESSIVES

There are different rules on how to form the possessive of names ending with s. Some proper nouns that end in s may look clumsy when you add an apostrophe and an s. You may be better off adding just an apostrophe. Be consistent with whatever style you choose.

To form the possessive of singular nouns add an apostrophe and an s. This general rule covers most proper nouns.

Some prefer:
David Williams’s home
Dickens’s novels
Texas’s theme song
Karl Marx’s writings
Others prefer:
James’ hat
Dickens’ novels
The Joneses’ address
Kansas’ schools
Traditional exceptions include Jesus’ name, Moses’ Ten
Commandments. Other exceptions include names of more than one
syllable with an unaccented ending pronounced eez (e.g., Ramses’
tomb, Euripides’ plays).

For plural possessives, add an apostrophe and s (e.g., men’s basketball, women’s soccer, girls’
softball). For plurals that end in s, add an apostrophe only (e.g., five friends’ trip, three dogs’
bones).

For nouns ending in s, add apostrophe s unless the next word begins with s.

Correct: The boss’s desk
Correct: The boss’ seat
Incorrect: The boss’s seat

SECTION 5 • PUNCTUATION BASICS

5.1 APOSTROPHE

An apostrophe can indicate possessive, contraction or missing letters/number. Ex: ‘90s
(1990s) The ‘19’ is missing and is replaced by an apostrophe for shorthand. Or it can show
possession: John’s dog is missing.

To write “the 1990’s” indicates that the 1990s own something. Normally that is not what you
mean.

Do not use an apostrophe to form plurals (e.g., He earned two Bs last semester. He lived
through the 1930s. The airplanes are 757s. This month’s temperatures will be in the low
40s.).

Correct: John’s dog is missing.
Correct: He was born in the 1990s.
Incorrect: Johns’ dog is missing.
5.2 APPOSITIVES

Use commas correctly with appositives (e.g., John Smith is shown dancing with his wife, Jane, at the 1906 Gala.). He has only one wife, so we use commas.

Pat Brown and his brother Phil are both graduates of Georgia Southern.

Pat has three brothers, so it is necessary to specify which one and therefore we do not use commas. If Phil were his only brother, we would use commas. If we do not know how many brothers he has, we write “a brother, Phil.”

5.3 COLONS

Colons are used at the end of a sentence to introduce lists, tabulations, texts, etc. Capitalize the first word after a colon only if it is a proper noun or the start of a complete sentence. Insert only one space after a colon.

5.4 COMMA

The use of commas in a list is often a point of contention, with professors, students, journalists and editors. Per AP, and Georgia Southern style, use commas within a list or simple series, and not before the word “and” before the last item in the series.

Correct: She loves dogs, cats and horses.
Incorrect: She loves dogs, and cats, and horses.

Exception: Include the comma if the list is of a compound nature and clarification calls for it.
Correct: She likes to eat turkey, ham and cheese, and roast beef sandwiches.
Incorrect: She likes to eat turkey, ham, and cheese, and roast beef sandwiches.

Correct: For information check with the offices of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, Business Administration, Health and Human Sciences, and Information Technology.

Commas are not used before “Inc.” in a company name, or before “Jr.” or “Sr.” as suffixes for proper names. (See Section 6.5)

Use a comma to separate a city and state or city and country: Reno, Nevada. Add a comma after state in a sentence: Show me the Reno, Nevada, map. I saw the tower in Paris, France, and the palace in London, England, last week. (See Section 1.7)
A comma is not necessary between a month and year (September 2008), but is needed when specifying a date (Sept. 1, 2008) (See Section 3.1)

5.5 CONTRACTIONS

Avoid the excessive use of contractions. Those listed in the dictionary are acceptable in informal contexts. Use an apostrophe to form contractions and for their omitted letters (I’ve, it’s, don’t, it’s, rock ‘n roll, n’er do well).

NOTE: The apostrophe should face the direction of the missing text/information.

5.6 DASH

Spaces should not separate numbers before and after dashes when dates are used to show the length of an event. When using a dash to show emphasis a long dash or “m” dash is used.

Correct: Sept. 12-13
Correct: It was a long—long and tedious—day.

5.7 ELLIPSES

Ellipses are used primarily to indicate the deletion of one or more words in condensing quotes, texts or documents. They may also be used to indicate a hesitation or pause in speech or to illustrate that a writer has not completed a thought.

Do not use ellipsis to indicate emphasis. Use instead a colon or dash.

Per AP Stylebook treat ellipsis as a three-letter word, constructed with three dots with a space before and after the ellipsis.

Correct: He does not have enough votes … to win.
Incorrect: He does not have enough votes..to win.

5.8 HYPHENS

Words used as adjectives immediately before a noun need a hyphen (e.g., he was the best-dressed man. She scored a game-high 40 points.).

However, used after a noun, do not hyphenate. (e.g., He was the man best dressed at the party.)
Hyphenate primary and secondary school grade levels as in tenth-grader or she is a second-grade teacher.

Hyphens are not needed between adverbs and their object (solidly built).

### 5.9 PUNCTUATION WITH STATES, COUNTRIES AND DATES

Use a comma to separate a city and state or city and country:

**Correct:** Show me the Reno, Nevada, map. I saw the tower in Paris, France, and the palace in London, England, last week.

**Correct:** He was born in Chicago, Illinois, 50 years ago.  
**Incorrect:** He was born in Chicago, Ill. 50 years ago.

Commas should be used after a date (month, day and year in a sentence) and place (city, state and/or country)

**Correct:** On March 12, 2015, spring will arrive.  
**Incorrect:** On March 12th, 2015 spring will arrive.

A comma is not necessary between a month and year, but is needed when specifying a date.

**Correct:** September 2008  
**Correct:** Sept. 1, 2008  
**Incorrect:** September 1st 2008

### 5.10 QUOTATION MARKS

**Punctuation goes inside quotation marks.**  
Quotation marks are used for the names of songs, plays, movies, television shows and short stories.

**Correct:** “We are doing well,” she said. “How are you?” asked John.  
**Incorrect:** “We are doing well”, she said. “How are you? asked John.”

**Correct:** Her favorite movies are “The Last King of Scotland,” “Adaptation” and “Fantastic Four.”

In running quotations, a new paragraph should start with open quotation marks.

**NOTE:** Single quote marks should be used in headlines.
5.11 TITLES: BOOKS, ITALICS AND QUOTES

Names of books, journals and periodicals should be italicized. In addition to periodicals, italicize Latin botanical names or uncommon foreign phrases (e.g., *Elliottia racemosa; nom de plume*). Italics also may be used to emphasize words within text.

Italicize the specific names of ships and aircrafts. (*USS Constitution*)

Names of Web pages and email addresses should be italicized.

Names of poems, songs, short stories, magazine articles, book chapters, movies or plays are placed in quotes.

SECTION 6 • USAGE

6.1 A vs. AN

The letter “a” is used before hard consonant sounds – a dog, a cow. The word “an” is used before soft vowel sounds – an hour, an education, an honor, an NBC series.

6.2 ALUMNI DESIGNATIONS

- **alumna** = singular female
- **alumnae** = plural female
- **alumnus** = masculine singular
- **alumni** = plural male or plural to include both male and female.
- **Alum** = masculine or feminine singular (use sparingly)

6.3 AND, &

Spell out “and.”

Use ampersand (&) only if part of a formal name. (Johnson & Johnson)

6.4 AREA CODES

Telephone numbers should be written as 912-478-5549.

NOTE: Please use dashes only.
6.5 FACULTY/STAFF

Faculty is a collective noun and nouns that denote a unit such as family, team, faculty, class and student body take singular verbs. Hence, references to the faculty group should be “faculty is” – “the University faculty is engaged in research.”

When the reference is to the individuals who are part of a particular unit, a plural verb is used (e.g., Faculty members are voting on a new curriculum.

TIP: Use faculty members and staff members to avoid awkward sentence construction.

6.6 JR AND SR., II AND III

Jr. and Sr. and other personal suffixes should not be preceded by a comma.

Correct: Andy Brown Jr.
Correct: Andy Brown III

6.7 WEB ADDRESSES

When writing Web addresses for publication, it may not always be necessary to use http:// or www. Check the specific site to be accurate.

Correct: The information can be found online at GeorgiaSouthern.edu

NOTE: The capitalized G and S to make it easier to read and to stay consistent.

Incorrect: The information can be found online at www.georgiasouthern.edu

SECTION 7 • MISCELLANEOUS

Accept/Except
Accept means to receive and except means to exclude.

Advisor
This is the accepted spelling for someone advising a student or group of students.

All right, not alright

Approximately If “about” will do, use it
**Athletics**
An athletics director, director of athletics, or an athletics program is correct. An “athletic director” is a director who is agile and likes to exercise.

**Bald eagle (bald eagle)**
The term is not capitalized. Neither is owl, hawk or falcon. Some specific types have proper names attached, such Harris hawk, in which case “Harris” is capitalized.

**Beautiful Eagle Creek**
Use full name, not simply Eagle Creek (See 2.7)

**Bi and semi**
Bimonthly means every two months.

Semi-monthly means twice a month.

Biweekly means every other week.

Semi-weekly means twice a week.

Biannual means twice a year and is a synonym for the word semiannual. Biennial means every two years.

**Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia or University System Board of Regents.**
On second reference it is acceptable to use the Regents or the Board. (See Section 2.6)

**Botanical Garden**
It has been renamed the Garden of the Coastal Plain at Georgia Southern University.

**Capital/Capitol**
Capital refers to a city where a seat of government is located and is lowercase. It also refers to a place at the center (e.g., Why is Detroit called the world’s auto capital?)

Capitol is uppercase and refers to a building where a state legislature meets or the building in Washington, D.C. where the U.S. Congress meets.

**Carnegie Doctoral/Research University**
Georgia Southern is designated as such by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. The Foundation’s designation uses a slash (/) rather than a hyphen between the words “Doctoral/Research.”

**Compliment/Complement**
Compliment is an expression of praise or courtesy. Complement denotes completeness or to supplement something. (e.g., The dean complimented the professor on her award. The award complements her salary.)

**Coursework**, not course work
Cellphone/smartphone
Android, BlackBerry, iPhone, iPad, iPod, iOS, Wi-Fi

Co-worker, not coworker

Disabled/Handicapped
In general, do not describe an individual as disabled or handicapped unless it is clearly pertinent to a story. If you must use a description, try to be specific and use people-first language, such as students with disabilities rather than disabled students.

**TIP:** If writing about accommodations for students with disabilities, use the term accessible: Accessible parking spaces are available.

Do not use victim of cancer, suffering from cancer, or stricken with cancer. Instead, say “he has cancer.”

Wheelchair user: People use wheelchairs for independent mobility. Do not use confined to a wheelchair, or wheelchair-bound.

Dormitory, dorm
The Department of Housing strongly prefers the term residence hall. The word dorm is outdated and should not be used unless referring to a past building.

Eagles
Team name/mascot. Individual team members are also Eagles. (e.g., Smith is an Eagles linebacker). Women’s teams are Eagles unless there is a male counterpart, in which case they are Lady Eagles (basketball, tennis, soccer).

Emeritus
This is a title formally awarded to a retired member of the faculty and may be used, if granted, as an alternative to “Retired professor John Smith.” Properly, the title is Professor Emeritus John Smith or John Smith, professor emeritus of biology.

It is not a catch-all title for “retired.” Be sure the person has been granted the title before using it.

Ensure/Insure/Assure
Ensure means to guarantee. The word “insure” is for references to insurance. The word “assure” means to give a person confidence that an event will happen.

Entitled/Titled
Entitled means someone has a right to something. Do not use “entitled” to refer to a written work. Rather, it is titled “Gone with the Wind,” not entitled.

Everyday/Every day
Everyday is an adjective. (e.g., An everyday event.) However, the sun rises every day.

Flighted show
A flighted show is a demonstration by bird handlers at the Center for Wildlife Education. It is not “flight show” or “bird show.”
Fundraising is one word.

Full time, full-time
Hyphenate only when used as an adjective before a noun.

Correct: Rebekah is a full-time student.
Correct: He works full time at the Physical Plant.
Incorrect: He works full-time at the Physical Plant.

Groundwater
Groundwater is the accepted spelling rather than using two words.

GUS the mascot, uppercase

Head count is preferred over headcount, though the single-word spelling is often seen in University System materials. (Just be consistent.)

Health care is two words.

Its/It’s
Its is possessive and it’s is a contraction of it is.

Judgment, not judgement.

Kickoff/Kick off
Kickoff is a noun meaning the start of an event. Kick off is the act of starting. (e.g., The Foundation will kick off its annual fundraising campaign tomorrow. The kickoff for A Day for Southern is a 7 a.m. breakfast.)

Lifelong is one word, as are monthlong, yearlong and weeklong.

Long term, long-term
Correct: The University is in the Sun Belt Conference for the long term.
Correct: This is a long-term commitment.
Incorrect: The University is in the SunBelt Conference for the long-term.

Mid
Do not hyphenate unless preceding a capitalized word or number: midday, mid-October, mid-1990s.

More than, Over
Both words can be used interchangeably per AP Stylebook.

MyGeorgiaSouthern
One word. Note uppercase M, G and S. Acceptable short version: MyGS
MyGeorgiaSouthern is the main website where all University information resources for current students, faculty and staff are available. Members with MyGeorgiaSouthern credentials can sign on just once into this one-stop portal to gain access to resources such
as Google Apps (Gmail, Drive and Calendar), WINGS (student information system and registration), Campus Life, Financial Aid, Human Resources, Technology Resources and many others.

**Usage:** use “MyGeorgiaSouthern” when referring to the portal
(not “My.GeorgiaSouthern” with a period)

Use “my.georgiasouthern.edu” (with the period) or “http://my.georgiasouthern.edu/” when referring to the URL of the portal.

The same spelling applies to other internal brands and/or services using the “My…” naming convention, e.g. MyTechHelp, MyScholarships, etc

**None**
It may take either singular or plural form. Use as a singular noun when it means “not one,” and use as a plural noun when it means not any or no amount.

Correct: None of us is planning to attend.
Correct: None of the deans, students or staff are going to the meeting.
Incorrect: None of the deans, students or staff is going to the meeting.

**Nonprofit**
AP uses nonprofit as one word, no hyphen. Georgia Southern uses the same spelling.

**Okay**, not OK or O.K., when referring to a situation where all is well.

**On-campus and off-campus**
Off-campus is used as an adjective and has a hyphen: “He lives in off-campus housing.” Off campus, as in “he lives off campus” does not. Likewise, the same rule applies to on-campus and on campus.

**Online** is correct usage in all cases, not on-line.

**Part time, part-time**
Hyphenate only when used as an adjective before a noun.

Correct: He works part time at the bookstore and is a part-time employee.
Incorrect: He works part-time at the bookstore and is a part time employee.

**Percent**
Percent is one word. Use numerals and spell out the word “percent.” It takes a singular verb when standing alone or when a singular word follows an “of” construction: The professor said 60 percent was a failing grade. He said 50 percent of the membership attended the meeting.

It takes a plural verb when a plural word follows an “of” construction: She said 50 percent of the members were there.

Examples: 4 percent, 2.5 percent (use decimals, not fractions), 10
percent, 4 percentage points, a range: 12 to 15 percent; between 12 and 15 percent. For amounts less than 1 percent, precede the decimal with a zero: The cost of living rose 0.6 percent.

**Phonathon** is the accepted spelling for the University's annual telephone fundraiser.

**Positioning statement**
The University’s current positioning statement for marketing purposes is “Georgia’s large-scale, small-feel research university.”

**Prepositions at the end of a sentence**
It is a misconception that prepositions cannot be used to end a sentence. Just apply common sense and use them for clarity. Compare:

- What did you fall on?
- What did you fall?

**Room numbers**
Capitalize room numbers when used alone, as in: “The meeting is in Room 112 of Henderson Library.” It is not necessary to use “room” at all, if you write: “The meeting is in Henderson Library 112.”

**Some/Any (countable nouns)**

- There is some water in the bucket.
- There are some dogs here.
- Is any food left?
- Do you have any food?

**Split Infinitive**
Their use should be avoided, but let clarity be your guide. For example, "to boldly go where no man has gone before,” or “guests are asked to please arrive on time.”

**Student-athlete** not student athlete (always hyphenate)

**T-shirt** (note the capital T)

**Theater/theatre**
Except in the case of a proper name, use theater when talking generally about a facility. Use theatre when referring to Georgia Southern’s theatre majors, theatre program or the Black Box Theatre.

**That, Which, Who, Who’s, Whose**
Per AP use **that** and **which** in referring to things and to animals without a name.

Use **that** for essential clauses, important to the meaning of a sentence, and without commas: I remember the day that we met.

Use **which** for nonessential clauses, where the pronoun is less necessary, and use commas: The team, which finished last a year ago, is in first place.
TIP: Clauses using “which” are usually separated from the main idea by a comma or commas. If the clause can be removed and not alter the meaning of the sentence, “which” should be used.

*Underway* is one word.

*Who* is the pronoun used for references to human beings and to animals with a name. It is grammatically the subject (never the object) of a sentence, clause or phrase: The woman who rented the room left the window open. Who is there?

*Who’s* is a contraction for who is (e.g., Who’s there?)

*Whose* is the possessive: I do not know whose coat it is.

*Toward,* meaning in the direction of, not *towards*; afterward, *not afterwards*; forward *not forwards*.

*YouTube* (One word, capital Y and T)