The SHSU Editorial Style Guide is a tool to help university communicators maintain uniformity in writing and follow a style that is consistent and appropriate for print and online materials written for and about the university. The style guide was also developed to save time, helping avoid lengthy discussions amongst co-workers about when to abbreviate something or where to use a comma and all things SHSU.

To help alleviate guess work, our team has incorporated basic rules for writing in this style guide using The Associated Press Stylebook and Webster's New World College Dictionary as primary references. Many of the following entries are based on rules and usage outlined in the AP Stylebook. Updated annually, the Stylebook sets the standard for most news organizations. University Marketing and Communications adheres to AP style for word usage, spelling, grammar and punctuation, with a few exceptions that are unique to SHSU. For spelling questions, consult Webster's New World Dictionary, as recommended by the AP Stylebook.

The SHSU Editorial Style Guide is a work in progress and will be updated annually. Please feel free to contact us with any comments or suggestions.

Thank you!
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Use the article “a” before consonant sounds and “an” before vowel sounds:

- a historic event
- an honorable person (the h is silent)

Major college ceremonies, events and named activities are capitalized.

- Commencement (do not refer to the ceremonies as graduation)
- Convocation (held in August to open the academic year)
- Ring Ceremony
- Raven’s Call
- Sammypalooza
- Founders Day
- Firefest
- Tree of Light
- Homecoming

But the same words are lowercase when they refer not to one specific event but to such events as general occurrences:

- Successful reunions depend on alumni loyalty.
- Old-fashioned homecomings are popular.

1. Academic Degrees: The preferred style is to spell out all degrees offered by the university: bachelor’s degree instead of BA or BS; master’s degree instead of MA or MS, doctoral degree instead of PhD.

   Use abbreviations if spelling out the degree is unwieldy or space is limited. Lowercase all academic degrees except when using the abbreviations. Using the word “degree” after the title is strongly preferred for clarity.

   Example: bachelor’s degree, bachelor of arts degree, BA degree, master’s degree, doctoral degree, Bachelor of Fine Arts in photography, Master of Arts in English, Master of Business Administration, etc. Doctoral degree includes Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), Doctor of Education (EdD) and other academic credentials. The word “degree” is not used after “doctorate.” Use Dr. in first reference as a formal title before the name of an individual who holds a doctor of medicine or doctor of osteopathic medicine. Example: Dr. Stephen McKernan.

2. Some degrees often drop periods in modern usage. If, for example, MBA is used in a publication, it is preferable to drop the periods in other degrees mentioned. SHSU drops the periods in these cases. Example: BA and MBA

3. Use italics for *summa cum laude*, *magna cum laude* and *cum laude*. 
4. Academic Credentials: Generally, avoid listing degrees after a person’s name (otherwise it can lead to alphabet soup). However, you may spell out his or her degree or provide a description. Example: Susan Jones, who holds a doctoral degree ... ; Dr. Charles Henley, who holds a medical degree ... If it is essential to your communication to indicate doctoral designations, do so after the name by adding PhD, DO, EdD.

Academic Subjects Lowercase the names of subject areas in text, unless the name is a proper noun, such as French.

Adviser Preferred spelling, although both adviser and advisor are acceptable.

Alumni alumnus = one male graduate
alumna = one female graduate
alumni = a group of male graduates and/or mixed-gender graduates
alumnae = a group of female graduates

Ampersand Do not use “&” in place of “and” in running text. Avoid using the ampersand (&) except in specific business names (e.g., Tiffany & Co.) specific college names or departments (College of Arts & Media, Marketing & Communications) or to shorten web menu headings.

Applied Anatomical Research Center The Applied Anatomical Research Center at Sam Houston State University. A research facility with a predominant focus on the study of applications of forensic sciences to the human body. SHSU is one of seven Human Decomposition Facilities in the world—six in the USA.

Athletic Facilities Elliott T. Bowers Stadium – Football
Bernard G. Johnson Coliseum – Basketball
Bearkat Softball Stadium
Kelly & Ina May McAdams Tennis Center
Meredith & Miriam York Track and Field Center
Joseph Pritchett Field – Soccer
The Woodforest Bank Athletics Center
The Brian and Danielle Osterhaus Training and Rehabilitation Center

Austin Hall First used in October 1852, Austin Hall is the oldest continuously used state-owned higher education facility west of the Mississippi.

Bell Tower The Ruth and Ron Blatchley Bell Tower.

Bearkat The university mascot.
Bearkat Alley  The official tailgate area during football season.

Bearkat Plaza  The Bearkat Plaza is the open, outdoor space situated between the Lowman Student Center Mall area and the Lee Drain Academic Building.

Board of Regents  The Texas State University System is governed by a nine-member Board of Regents appointed by the governor and confirmed by the Senate. Board terms are staggered so that three members of the Board are appointed every two years during the legislative session. A non-voting student regent is also appointed annually to the board for a one-year term.

Buildings  Capitalize the word “building” as part of the name: the Dan Rather Communications Building. When referring to a room in a building, give the building’s name and the room number and capitalize “Room”: Pirkle, Room 234.

For the academic buildings with numerical identification, use Roman numerals. (i.e. Academic Building III, Academic Building IV)

Chancellor  Brian McCall, is the chancellor of the Texas State University System, the first university system established in Texas, comprising seven institutions with more than 86,000 students and 16,000 faculty and staff.

Chair  Use this term to describe the head of an academic department at Sam Houston State. This is a deviation from AP style, which prefers chairman or chairwoman. Do not use those terms unless they are part of an official title.

Chair, endowed  A professor who holds the chair in a discipline should be referred to as the professor of the discipline, keeping the name of the chair capitalized, even in shortened casual references. Example: Peter Roussell, Philip G. Warner Endowed Chair in Mass Communication, led the discussion, or Peter Roussell holds the Philip G. Warner Endowed Chair in Mass Communication.

Class Years  When writing the year out fully, capitalize “class.” Example: The 800 members of the Class of 2020 arrived on campus yesterday.

Always identify current students and alumni by their class years. This designation is set off with an apostrophe before the numerals: Jan Gorman ’64 is an alumna of SHSU.

Note: An apostrophe is not a single opening quote. In other words, if the punctuation curls toward the right, it’s wrong. If its tail is pointing left, it’s right. 2009 becomes ’09 (not ’09)
Coach  Capitalize when used before a name: Coach K.C. Keeler. Lowercase in all other uses.

Colleges  Capitalize the name of each college:
- College of Business Administration (COBA)
- College of Criminal Justice (CJ)
- College of Education (COE)
- College of Arts & Media (CAM)
- College of Health Sciences (COHS)
- College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHSS)
- College of Science & Engineering Technology (COSET)
- College of Osteopathic Medicine (COM)

The abbreviation for each college may be used after the second reference.

Commencement  SHSU holds three commencement ceremonies for graduate and undergraduate students: May, August and December.

Common Reader  The overarching goal of the Common Reader Program is to provide a campus-wide common intellectual experience, leading to informed and educated perspectives about complex subjects.

Course work  Two words. Not coursework.

Date and Time  Always spell out days of the week, unless being used in a compact, tabbed format (such as a schedule of courses or calendar). Example: Judy’s final exam is on Wednesday, May 12. Note: In tabular formats where space is limited, abbreviate days: Monday (M), Tuesday (T), Wednesday (W), Thursday (Th), Friday (F), Saturday (Sa), Sunday (Su) – without periods. Spell out months when standing alone or used with a year. Abbreviate only Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov. and Dec. when used with a specific date. (March, April, May, June and July are always spelled out). Always use periods in “a.m.” and “p.m.” when specifying a time. Use a colon when referencing a certain time within the hour. Example: December is Cathy’s favorite month. Pat’s class starts on Aug. 21 at 10:30 a.m.

Daylight Saving Time  Not savings and do not capitalize.

Dean  Capitalize when used as a formal title before a name: Dean Phillip Lyons. Lowercase otherwise: Mitchell Muehsam, dean of the College of Business Administration.

Dean’s List  Should always be lowercase when used in a sentence.
Departments
Capitalize the formal names of departments and offices; do not capitalize informal names and incomplete designations:
- Department of Accounting
- Department of Economics and International Business
- Department of General Business and Finance
- Department of Management and Marketing
- Department of Educational Leadership
- Department of Counselor Education
- Department of Library Science
- Department of Art
- Department of Dance
- Department of Theatre and Musical Theatre
- Department of Communication Studies
- Department of English
- Department of World Languages and Cultures
- Department of History
- Department of Political Science
- Department of Psychology and Philosophy
- Department of Sociology
- Department of Agricultural Sciences
- Department of Biological Sciences
- Department of Chemistry
- Department of Computer Science
- Department of Geography and Geology
- Department of Mathematics and Statistics
- Department of Population Health
- Department of Family and Consumer Sciences
- Department of Kinesiology
- Department of Nursing
- Department of Military Science (ROTC)

Degrees
See Academic Degrees

Divisions
Capitalize the names of all university divisions:
Academic Affairs
Finance & Operations
University Advancement
Enrollment Management
Student Affairs
Information Technology
Athletics

Donations
Refrain from using the word “donation” in copy. Instead, refer to as: gifts/giving, support/supporting, and sometimes contributions/contributing.
East Texas  Capitalize both words when referring to this region.

Eat ’em up Kats  Said to show Bearkat pride.

Emeritus  An honorary title bestowed after retirement.

General’s Market  An all-you-can-eat dining facility on the south end of campus. This facility houses independent dining stations, where all the food is stored, prepared and cooked right in front of you.

Grade point average  Do not hyphenate or put periods in the initials GPA.

Greek Life  Capital G, Capital L

GPAC  Refer to as Gaertner Performing Arts Center on first reference. GPAC is acceptable on second reference.

Heritage Magazine  The official magazine of Sam Houston State University.

KatSafe  The emergency notification system used by the university.

Life Member  Always use a capital L and capital M

Sam Houston State University has three locations:
1. Sam Houston State University
2. The Woodlands Center
3. College of Osteopathic Medicine

LSC  Refer to as Lowman Student Center on first reference. LSC is acceptable on second reference.
March to the Grave

This event has been a SHSU Tradition since 1893, in celebration of Sam Houston’s birthday on March 2. Faculty, staff, students and alumni march from Old Main Pit down University Avenue to Sam Houston’s grave site, where a ceremony is held.

Member Statement

Member Texas State University System. This statement is used in all external university communications.

Motto

The SHSU motto is “The measure of a Life is its Service.”

The “m” in measure is always lowercase.

Museum

Always refer to as Sam Houston Memorial Museum.

N

NGL

Refer to as Newton Grisham Library on first reference. NGL is acceptable on second reference.

Numbers

Follow AP style for numerals. Spell out whole numbers less than 10 and use figures for 10 and higher.

For four-digit numbers, use a comma to separate thousands from hundreds, except when in addresses.

Spell out the word “percent.” Use figures when stating percentages, no matter the number, except at the beginning of a sentence.

O

Old Main

Old Main was a two-story, Victorian Gothic building that contained classrooms, administrative offices, and, on the second floor, the Memorial Auditorium. Facing downtown Huntsville, it was the first permanent building constructed by the state for teacher training, described in a 1983 memorial brochure as “the most beautiful building owned by the State of Texas.” It was destroyed by fire in 1982.

Old Main Market

Located just behind Belvin-Buchanan Hall, Old Main Market is a cafeteria style with a fresh food concept—that is a restaurant with no kitchen. This facility houses independent dining stations, where all the food is stored, prepared and cooked right in front of you.
**Orange Keys**
The Orange Keys are official ambassadors of SHSU and serve as hosts for university functions such as banquets, luncheons, meetings, speakers, visitation days and career fairs.

**Phone Numbers**
The preferred method of writing 10-digit phone numbers is to use periods in the place of parentheses and dashes. Example: 936.294.1833.

**President**
Capitalize before a name: President Alisa White. But lowercase elsewhere: Alisa White, president of Sam Houston State University; the president of the university.

**Raven’s Call**
The ceremony has been an annual campus tradition since 2012 and honors the lives of fallen students, faculty and staff who have passed away within the previous year.

**Residence Hall**
Not dormitory or dorm.

**Sammy the Bearkat**
The official mascot of SHSU.

**Seasons**
Do not capitalize winter, spring, summer or fall, unless part of a formal name: Winter Olympics. Do not capitalize seasons as part of an academic period: spring semester, spring break, spring 2019.

**School Colors**
The official colors for Sam Houston State University are orange and white.

**SHSU Online**
Two words.

**Southland Conference**
SHSU is one of 13 members of the Southland Conference which includes Abilene Christian University, Houston Baptist University, the University of Incarnate Word, University of New Orleans, University of Central Arkansas, Lamar University, McNeese State University, Nicholls State University, Northwestern State University, Sam Houston State University, Southeastern Louisiana University, Stephen F. Austin State University and Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi.
That/Which  If you’re using which properly, it typically is preceded by a comma:

- The announcement about his department’s hiring efforts, which was reported in the media, pleased the director
- The director was pleased with the announcement in the media that reported on his department’s hiring efforts.

Theatre  Use this spelling in all references.

Titles  Job titles that precede a name should always be capitalized.
Job titles that follow a name should always be lowercase.

Today@Sam  The name of SHSU’s news website is one word.

University  On first reference, Sam Houston State University. On subsequent references, use Sam Houston State, Sam Houston or SHSU.
When using as a standalone word, do not capitalize the word “University.”
Example: The university will begin fall registration on April 4.

University Trademark  Please refer to “What is a Trademark” section in the SHSU Brand Guide.

UPD  Refer to as Sam Houston State University Police Department on first reference. UPD is acceptable on second reference.