

## Radford University Writing Style Guide

Like graphic standards, consistency and quality in copywriting conveys the university's story and brand identity. In the interest of keeping Radford University communications aligned with the practices of local and regional news organizations, the Department of Marketing and Communication developed a Highlander specific style policy. The Associated Press (AP) Stylebook serves as the chief style reference for written communications. Outlined below are exceptions to AP Style to accommodate Radford University-specific terms, practices or customs.

**Academic degrees:** Per AP, doctor/Dr. is used only for holders of degrees in dentistry, medicine, optometry, osteopathic medicine, podiatry or veterinary medicine. Other doctorates are denoted by the placement of the degree, in abbreviated form, after the name: *Amy Jenkins, Ph.D.*; *Rachel Fuller, Ed.D.*

Do not use two honorifics in one reference to an individual.

RIGHT: *Professor Rick Howell*

WRONG: *Professor Rick Howell, Ph.D.*

When used in the middle of a sentence, a degree abbreviation, like all appositives, should be surrounded by commas: *Bret Danilowicz, Ph.D.*, welcomed freshmen.

List multiple degrees in order of academic achievement. Generally, only doctoral degrees are listed.

- Lowercase: *bachelor's degree, master's degree, doctoral degree or doctorate.*
- Capitalize: *Bachelor of Arts, Master of Science, etc.*

Use an apostrophe in bachelor's degree, a master's, etc., but there is no possessive in Bachelor of Arts or Master of Science. However, an associate degree has no possessive.

All degrees should be punctuated with periods: B.A., B.S., M.F.A., etc. Three exceptions: the Master of Business Administration, MBA; the Bachelor of Science in Nursing, BSN; and the Master of Science in Nursing, MSN.

**Academic degrees with licensures and other credentials** Use only the most advanced degree.

RIGHT: *June Mitchum, Ph.D.*

WRONG: *June Mitchum, Ph.D., M.F.A.*

Educators often possess one or more professional licenses in addition to their degrees; this is particularly common for those in healthcare. Again, generally we align with AP in citing only the most advanced degree, mentioning any licensure later in the article if relevant.

RIGHT: *Allison Peters, Ph.D.* (first reference)

ALSO RIGHT: As a licensed family nurse practitioner, Peters was deeply involved in the new practice.

Exceptions:

- 1) Cite multiple degrees for an alumni: *Samantha Matthews '08, D.N.P.*
- 2) In some formal documents such as commencement guides, it's permissible to list an educator's licenses: *Daniel Miles, D.P.T., PT, NCS*

**Academic fields** Not capitalized unless a proper noun or adjective: the mathematics curriculum; *the psychology curriculum, the English curriculum, the French curriculum.*

**Academic and other titles:** Capitalize titles before a name on first reference: *Dean Maggie Dailey; Professor Rick Howell.*

Do not capitalize if used after a name: *Rick Howell, professor of physics.*

Do not use courtesy titles such as Mr., Mrs., Ms. or Dr.

**Acronyms** It is not necessary to note the acronym for something in parentheses if there is only one reference in the text that follows.

**Addresses** Refer to building first, then room number, then city, then state. *Heth Hall 107, Radford Virginia.* Postal abbreviations for states may be used only if a complete postal address is given: *P.O. Box 1160, Radford, VA 24141.*

**Administrative offices:** Capitalize the formal names of departments, divisions and offices: *Department of Political Science, Office of the Registrar.* Don't capitalize informal titles: *registrar's office, dean's office, history department.* Use lowercase for the words "department," "division" or "office" when they stand alone.

**Alumni and students** After graduating, alumni names should always be followed on first reference with their graduation years in short form, preceded with a closing apostrophe. Graduate degrees are set off by commas. *Justin Walsh '10; Mark Lawson, M.S. '97, Laurel Turner '87, M.S. '90.*

For alumni who earned a higher degree at another college or university, list the higher degree first: *Daniel Salyer Ph.D., M.S. '97*

Exception is a Radford bachelor's degree with a higher degree: *Chris Holmes '88, J.D.*

Current students should not be cited with a graduation year. Instead, refer to their class standing: *Samantha Lane '20 and Emily Lane '21* attended with their brother *Adam Lane, a senior.* Current students may also be denoted as members of the class they joined upon enrollment: *Adam Lane, Class of 2022.*

**Ampersand** Avoid using & unless it's part of an official name or title; spell out "and" instead. See **company names** entry below.

**Board of Visitors** *BOV* and *the board* on subsequent reference.

**Bullet points:** Introduce a bulleted list with a short phrase or sentence, followed by a colon. *Our partners: These are our partners: Our partners are:*

*Smith and Co.*

*Dewey, Frank and Turner, LLC*

Capitalize the first word following the bullet. Use periods, not semicolons, at the end of each item.

Use parallel construction for each item in a list. Don't mix and match sentence structures; the points should be consistent — either all sentences or all fragments.

- Start with the same part of speech for each item, such as a verb.
- Use the same voice (active or passive) for each item.
- Use the same verb tense for each item.
- Use the same sentence type (statement, question, exclamation) for each item.
- Use just a phrase for each item, if desired.

For a set of bullet points that consists of a simple list, no end periods are necessary.

*We want you to put your classroom knowledge to practice in our unique laboratory spaces:*

- *GIS and remote sensing lab*
- *Virtual reality lab*
- *Spatial analysis lab*

*The sequence of numbers after five includes:*

- *Six*
- *Seven*
- *Eight*

**Classes and courses** Use lowercase when you refer to classes and courses, unless you use the specific (and complete) title or the name carries a proper noun or numeral.

*I had a class in engineering management.*

*I'm taking Engineering Management 380.*

*I'm taking biology, Advanced Shakespeare and calculus.*

**Commonwealth** Capitalize **only** when using the full proper name Commonwealth of Virginia. Lowercase when using alone.

### Company names

- Follow the company's preference. Use Co. or Cos. or Inc. or Ltd. if it appears that way in the formal title of the organization.
- When you refer to a company without its formal title, use the term "company," not "co."
- Always spell out the word "company" in theatrical organizations.
- For possessives: *Ford Motor Co.'s profits*.
- Never use a comma before Inc. or Ltd. (Follow the company's lead about other punctuation and the use of "&" or "and.")
- Always use a comma before LLC.

### Competency-based education

**Comprise** Means "to be composed of": *The department comprises two offices.* **NOT** *The department is comprised of two offices.*

**Cities** Use both city and state for all cities on all references (diverges from AP.) *Radford, Virginia; Washington, D.C.; Atlanta, Georgia; Hamburg, Germany.* The exception is New York City, which is known simply as New York City (also diverges from AP.)

**Commas** AP does not use Oxford (serial) commas — the last comma in a series before a conjunction. *Tom, Dick and Harry left at 3 p.m. We appreciate your gift of time, talent or treasure.*

### Dashes and Hyphens

Use **hyphens** as joiners, such as for compound modifiers before a noun: *first-generation student, full-time employee.* AP also uses hyphens for ranges: *Jan. 1-4; 9-11 a.m.* Generally, there should be no space before or after a hyphen.

However, when denoting a range of time that extends from morning to afternoon, a space before and after the hyphen is acceptable: *9 a.m. - 3 p.m.* (This diverges from AP.)

Also, in larger display time and for design purposes on marketing pieces like postcards and posters, the hyphen may look better and be easier to read with a single space on both sides.

**Dashes** (long dashes) can denote an interjection or additional information in a sentence:

*He examined scores of schools where he could further his academic pursuits — like studying geology and climate change — and it became clear that Radford would be the best fit for him.*

Or a series within a phrase — this is useful when a phrase that would otherwise be set off by commas contains a series of words that must be separated by commas:

*By blending theory and practice, students master the latest technology – including Hadoop, Spark and Hive – and learn fundamental concepts and principles.*

**Dates** Use AP abbreviations for months in dates: *Jan. 29, 2023*. Only the months of March, April, May, June and July are not abbreviated; abbreviate Jan. Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov. and Dec. But spell out the month when using alone, or with a year alone.

For longer-form pieces such as web and news articles, it is also advisable to use the day of the week: Friday, Jan. 29, 2021; Friday, Jan. 29. For graphic-design-forward pieces and marketing communication, the day of the week may be omitted as appropriate.

**Degrees** Radford University awards the following degrees:

Bachelor of Arts (B.A.)

Bachelor of Science (B.S.)

Bachelor of Business Administration (B.B.A.)

Bachelor of Fine Arts (B.F.A.)

Bachelor of Music (B.M.)

Bachelor of Nursing (BSN; note, no periods)

Bachelor of Social Work (B.S.W.)

Master of Arts (M.A.)

Master of Science (M.S.)

Master of Science in Athletic Training (M.S.A.T.)

Master of Business Administration (MBA; note, no periods)

Master of Healthcare Administration (M.H.A.)

Master of Science in Nursing (MSN; note, no periods)

Master of Occupational Therapy (M.O.T)

Master of Social Work (M.S.W.)

Doctor of Counseling Psychology (Psy.D.)

Doctor of Education (Ed.D.)

Doctor of Health Sciences (D.Hsc.)

Doctor of Nursing Practice (D.N.P.)

Doctor of Occupational Therapy (O.T.D.)

Doctor of Physical Therapy (D.P.T.)

For further information and for associate degrees and certificates, visit the State Council of Higher Education (SCHEV) website at <https://research.schev.edu/degreeinventory> and search for Radford University.

**Esports** No hyphen.

**Family** Both **Radford family** and **Highlander family** are used to describe the close and enduring bonds among members of the university community past and present. Family in this usage is not capitalized.

**Freshman, freshmen**

**Headlines** Never put a period after a headline or subhed, even if it is a complete sentence.

**Healthcare** One word.

**Hotel** The structure on Tyler Avenue is known officially as The Highlander. “The Highlander Hotel Radford” can be used if there’s a need to identify its location.

WRONG: *The Highlander Hotel*

WRONG: *Highlander Hotel*

ACCEPTABLE: *The Highlander hotel* (if needed to differentiate it from the Radford mascot. Note that hotel is lowercase.)

**Hurlburt Student Center** On first reference, refer to the student center as Hurlburt Student Center (The Bonnie.) The Bonnie may be used alone on subsequent references.

**Interim** Usually not officially part of a title, so do not capitalize unless it occurs at the beginning of a sentence.

RIGHT: In 2022, interim Provost Marvin Denver arrived at Radford.

WRONG: In 2022: Interim Provost Marvin Denver arrived at Radford.

**Pronouns and gender** From the AP Stylebook, 2023 edition:

Growing numbers of people, including some transgender, nonbinary, agender or gender-fluid people, use *they/them/their* as a gender-neutral singular personal pronoun.

As much as possible, AP also uses *they/them/their* as a way of accurately describing and representing a person who uses those pronouns for themselves.

Here are some guidelines and perspectives:

*They* as a singular pronoun may be confusing to some readers and amount to a roadblock that stops them from reading further. At the same time, though, efforts to write without pronouns to avoid confusion may make people feel censored or invisible.

How to balance those priorities? Try to honor both your readers and your story subjects. As in all news writing, clarity is paramount.

Often a sentence can be sensitively and smoothly written with no pronoun. For example: *Hendrick said the new job is a thrill* (instead of *Hendrick said Hendrick is thrilled about the new job* or *Hendrick said they are thrilled about the new job*).

When using *they/them/their* as a singular pronoun, explain if it isn't clear in context: *Morales, who uses the pronoun they, said they will retire in June*.

Be sure that the phrasing does not imply more than one person. Rephrase if needed to avoid confusion about the antecedent.

Don't refer to *preferred* or *chosen* pronouns. Instead, *the pronouns they use, whose pronouns are, who uses the pronouns*, etc.

Don't make assumptions about a person's gender identity based on their pronouns, or vice versa. Don't assume a person's pronouns based on their first name.

*They/them/their* take plural verbs even when used as a singular pronoun, and the singular reflexive *themselves* is also acceptable when referring to people who use *they/them/their*.

**Regions** Capitalize known regions and geographical entities. Some examples:

Appalachia

East Coast

Eastern Shore

Northern Neck

Northern Virginia  
Southside Virginia  
Southwest Virginia  
Western Virginia

**Radford University Carilion** A location, learning location or educational site; do **not** refer to as a campus. The abbreviation RUC is permissible on subsequent reference without citing the acronym (RUC) on first reference.

**Seasons** Do not capitalize seasons: *spring 2021, winter 2021, spring semester 2022.*

**Semesters** Do not capitalize semesters: *fall semester 2022, fall semester.*

**Titles and Attribution** After being cited on first reference, titles need not be repeated for attribution.

RIGHT: *President Bret Danilowicz agreed with the remarks.*

RIGHT: *Danilowicz agreed with the remarks.*

WRONG: *President Danilowicz agreed with the remarks.*

**Time** In keeping with AP, use numerals followed by the morning or evening designation: *8 a.m., 8:30 p.m., noon, midnight.* (Not *12 a.m.* or *12 p.m.*)

**Theatre:** Use this spelling in all references. (Diverges from AP.)

**University** Do not capitalize university after the first reference. *Radford University; the university.*

**University-wide, campus-wide** (but nationwide, statewide, worldwide, etc.)

**University president** Use the following format when references the university president:

RIGHT: *President Bret Danilowicz*

RIGHT: *Bret Danilowicz, Ph.D.*

WRONG: *President Bret Danilowicz, Ph.D.*

**Well-being** Hyphenated in all usage.



## **LOCATIONS AND ENTITIES**

Allen Building

Artis Center for Adaptive Innovation and Creativity (Artis Center on subsequent reference)

Artis College of Science and Technology (Artis College on subsequent reference)

Armstrong Complex

Bolling Hall

Bondurant Auditorium

Bonnie Tower

Buchanan House

Center for Accessibility Services (CAS on subsequent reference)

Center for Diversity and Inclusion (CDI on subsequent reference)

Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning (CITL on subsequent reference)

Center for the Sciences

College of Education and Human Development (CEHD on subsequent reference)

College of Humanities and Behavioral Sciences (CHBS on subsequent reference)

College of Visual and Performing Arts (CVPA on subsequent reference)

Cook Hall

The Douglas and Beatrice Covington Center for Visual and Performing Arts

Dalton Hall

Davis College of Business and Economics (Davis College on subsequent reference)

Davis Hall

Dedmon Center

Draper Hall

First-Gen Center

Floyd Hall

Fountain

Governors Quad

Governor Tyler House (not Tyler House, not The Governor Tyler House)

Harvey Center for Learning and Writing (Harvey Center on subsequent reference)

Hemphill Hall

Heth Clock Plaza  
Heth Hall  
Heth Lawn  
Heth Plaza  
Highlander Success Center  
Honors College  
Hurlburt Student Center (The Bonnie is permissible on subsequent reference)  
Ingles Hall  
Jefferson Hall  
Joseph P. Scartelli Atrium (Scartelli Atrium on subsequent reference)  
Kyle Hall  
Madison Hall  
Main Quad  
Martin Hall  
McConnell Library  
McGlothlin Center for Global Education and Engagement (McGlothlin Center on subsequent reference)  
Military Resource Center (MRC on subsequent reference)  
Moffett Hall  
Moffett Lawn  
Moffett Quad  
Muse Hall  
Muse Lawn  
Norwood Hall  
Office of Undergraduate Research and Scholarship (OURS on subsequent reference)  
OneCard (not One Card)  
OneCampus (not One Campus)  
Patrick D. Cupp Memorial Stadium (Cupp Stadium on subsequent reference)  
Peery Hall  
Peters Hall  
Preston Hall  
Pocahontas Hall  
Radford University Bookstore (Bookstore or the Bookstore on subsequent reference)

Reed and Curie Halls

Russell Hall

Sandra C. Davis and William C. Davis Performance Hall (Davis Performance Hall on subsequent reference)

Stuart Hall

Student Government Association (SGA on subsequent reference)

Student Health Center

Student Recreation and Wellness Center (SRWC on subsequent reference)

Substance Use and Violence Education Support (SAVES on subsequent reference)

The Christopher S. Huther Courtroom (mock courtroom on subsequent reference)

The Highlander (hotel and conference center)

The Highlander statue (not the Bronzeland)

The HUB at Radford (The HUB on subsequent reference)

Trinkle Hall

Tyler Hall

Vinod Chachra IMPACT Lab (IMPACT Lab on subsequent reference)

Walker Hall

Washington Hall

Whitt Hall

Young Hall