

The Lehman College Style Guide

**Office of Media Relations and Publications
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About this Guide

The principal purpose of the guide is to assist those who create any written content for the College. It covers all communications from the College, including print, online, and social media.

Lehman uses the AP Style Guide for all written products. If a specific topic or question is not covered in this guide, follow AP Style. Spelling guidelines are taken from the Merriam-Webster Dictionary. There are a few cases where the College diverges from AP Style, generally to follow a CUNY guideline or to use the preferred name of an external organization; these instances are outlined in this Style Guide.

Please direct questions or suggestions for items to be included in the next edition to media.relations@lehman.cuny.edu.

A

Academic Awards

Capitalize all words that are part of the official title except conjunctions and prepositions of three letters or less, unless it's the first word of an official name (e.g., He is winner of The 2008 Women's Forum Scholarship, but she won a mathematics scholarship from the Women's Forum in 2006; she is a Rhodes Scholar; he is a Fulbright Fellow).

Academic Degrees

B.A., B.S., M.A., M.S., Ed.D., and Ph.D. are expressed with periods. With most other degrees, don't use periods, e.g., MFA, MBA, MEd. Degrees are written out as bachelor's or master's degree in [subject] (no capitalization) or Master of Arts or Bachelor of Science (no possessive).

Academic Departments

Capitalize formal references to a department (e.g., Lehman College Department of Biological Sciences) but lowercase general references (e.g., history department, chemistry department).

Academic Majors

Most often cited in lower case, e.g., history major, with the exception of words spelled with a capital "E"; for example: English major.

Academic Titles

In general, capitalize formal titles (Professor, Chancellor) when they appear before names of individuals, and lowercase them following names of individuals. *For example:* Professor John Tytell or Chancellor Felix Matos Rodriguez; John Tytell, professor of history

Academic titles at Lehman are as follows: Lecturer, Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, Professor, Distinguished Professor, Distinguished Lecturer, and Professor Emeritus (male) and Professor Emerita (female)

Never use a courtesy title for an academic degree. Instead and follow with the abbreviation for the degree in the same reference (Dr. Smith, Ph.D.).

Descriptive or occupational titles (a department chair, a history professor) are lowercase.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

The first reference to an organization, institution, initiative, etc. should have its full name spelled out. Thereafter, the abbreviation/acronym alone generally is sufficient. If there is no second reference, do not include the acronym in parentheses. Acronyms do not use periods unless they are part of the official organization name.

In general, avoid the use of acronyms except where universally recognized (NYPD, NASA, CIA). Do not use an acronym simply to make a sentence shorter.

A.D. and B.C.

Are used and placed after the year, e.g., 53 B.C., but at times there will be material from other sources that uses C.E. (common era) and B.C.E. (before common era). More institutions, especially academic ones, are using C.E. and B.C.E.

Adviser/advisor

Use the “er” ending at all times.

Addresses

Use the address abbreviations Ave., Blvd., and St. with numbered addresses only. (Example: 250 Bedford Park Blvd.) Spell out when referring to a street name without an address (Goulden Avenue) and capitalize when it’s part of a proper name.

African American

Do not use a hyphen with any dual heritage terms, e.g., Mexican American, Japanese American. *See also: Race and Culture*

Alumni

Use “alumnus” for an individual male; “alumna” for an individual female; “alumni” for a group of males, females or a group composed of males and females.

Ampersand/&

Always spell out the symbol for the word *and*, except when provided as part of the formal title of a unit (company, firm, institution, e.g., Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation or AT&T) or event, lecture, etc.

AR

Stands for Augmented Reality (see VR/AR)

Association

Do not abbreviate. If used as part of a formal name, on subsequent reference the organization can be referred to as the association, with a lowercase a.

B

Buildings

Capitalize the proper names of campus buildings. Following is a list of all campus buildings:

The APEX

Bookstore

Carman Hall

Lehman College Center for the Performing Arts

Davis Hall

Gillet Hall
Leonard Lief Library
Science Hall
Shuster Hall
Student Life Building
Note the forward slash: Speech/Theatre Building
Music Building
Old Gym Building
Fine Arts Building
T3 or the Nursing/Student Health Center

C

Campus

Lowercase in all instances.

Campuswide, citywide, statewide

Does not take a hyphen, e.g., campuswide, systemwide, universitywide. However, we still avoid what appear to be clunky uses, often with proper nouns, e.g. CUNYwide, Universitywide, Lehmanwide, etc. In these cases, use the hyphen, CUNY-wide, etc.

Campus Musical and Performance Ensembles

Refer to these groups as follows:

Lehman Big Band
Lehman Brass Quintet
Lehman Chamber Players
Lehman College Community Band
Lehman College and Community Chorus
Lehman Jazz Combo
Lehman Latin Jazz Ensemble
Lehman Percussion Ensemble
Lehman Woodwind Quintet
Lehman Stages
The Lehman Players

Centuries

Spell out the first through ninth; use numbers above ninth (e.g., ninth century, 10th century). Do not write numbers with subscript (e.g. 10th).

Chair

The person in charge of an academic department is its chair, regardless of gender. Always lowercase, always gender-neutral. We do not use chairman or chairwoman.

Chairperson, Vice Chairperson

The titles of the two top appointed positions to the Board of Trustees are designated by

state law as Chairperson and Vice Chairperson, following the rules of capitalization for titles before and after a name. For consistency, they should be used for heads of any CUNY committees, groups, etc., that are so designated. For non-CUNY organizations, use whatever designations those groups officially apply to the positions.

City University of New York/CUNY

Should be written as The City University of New York.

Class Year

From any college, John Smith '98; when following immediately after the name with no comma preceding or following the graduation year.

The year refers to an undergraduate degree. For a bachelor's and master's degree earned from Lehman: John Smith, B.S. '94, M.A. '98. If the degree is not from Lehman, it must be clear what school or college the graduate is from, either in text preceding the name, or following the name, such as John Doe, Hunter College, '98.

College

Lowercase, except when part of a proper name or as a reference specifically to Lehman College. For example: As part of its strategic plan, the College is building new buildings.

Compound Modifiers

If the phrase is commonly recognized or has a clear meaning, do not use a hyphen (e.g. third grade teacher, early morning traffic). Hyphenate well- combinations before a noun, but not after (e.g. well-known judge, the judge is well known); same for other words that are hyphenated when used before nouns, but not after (second-rate play; play is second rate).

Course Titles

Use bold, roman (standard) type, and capitals for course titles. A period ends the phrase. *For example:* **ANT 250 (IAS 304): The Italian-American Community.**

Courtesy Titles

Do not use Mr., Mrs., or Ms. Use a person's full name on first reference and surname on subsequent references. For promotional material, advertisements, brochures, flyers, invitations, etc., such titles can be used when needed.

D

Dates

Use a comma to separate days and years: July 14, 1914

Do not use a comma to separate a month and year: July 1914

In general, spell out the day of the week: Monday, Tuesday, etc.

Department

Capitalize the formal name of a specific department. *For example:* The Department of Psychology is moving its offices. Lowercase department names in informal uses.

For example: He was a psychology department professor before turning to mathematics.

Lowercase everything except proper nouns/adjectives, or when the department is part of the formal name and cited in the complete form. *For example:* the history department, the Lehman College Department of Music, the department of music at Lehman

Distinguished Professor

Capitalized either before or after a name when it refers to the special CUNY University post.

Dr.

Only use Dr. as a title when the individual is a medical doctor or dentist.

It may be used in formal CUNY invitations, in congratulatory advertisements, etc. but only as requested.

E

Em Dash/En Dash

Em Dash: The width of an “m,” the em dash is used to amplify or further explain a thought within a sentence. There should never be any space before and after the dash.. *For example:* How much trash do you think 12,000 college students—plus faculty and staff—produce in one day?

En Dash: Wider than a hyphen but shorter than an em dash, always use the en dash, not a hyphen, to represent a span between a range of numbers. *Ex: 6–8 p.m. or 2019–2020 school year.*

Email and other e-technologies

Email is one word, lowercase. Other technology-related words like e-reader or e-commerce are written with a hyphen between e and the main word.

Emerita/Emeritae

Female, singular/plural

Emeriti

Male or mixed male and female, plural

Emeritus

Male, singular

Emeritus/Emerita

Place emeritus after the formal title: Professor Emeritus Jean Dayan or Jean Daylan, professor emeritus of chemistry.

En Dash

Wider than a hyphen but shorter than an em dash, always use the en dash, not a hyphen, to represent a span between a range of numbers. Ex: 6–8 p.m. or the 2019–2020 school year.

Equal Opportunity Employer

EOE

et al.

At the end of a list of names when more than one person has been omitted, preceded by a comma.

etc.

Preceded by a comma and used at the end of a list when two or more items have been omitted.

F

Faculty

The word will be treated as a plural noun in references to the University, without adding the word “members” to follow. There may be occasions when the collective sense is so distinct that a singular verb may seem more appropriate. In that case, be flexible.

Fall

Seasons are not capitalized except as part of formal titles and specific CUNY semester designations. *For example:* Spring 2015

First-year student

Preferred by some to freshman when referring to a specific individual, because it is gender neutral, but freshmen and freshman continued to be used as a class designation.

Follow-up, follow up

Follow-up is a noun and adjective; follow up is the verb form.

G

Grade Point Average

GPA, no periods

Please note: Lehman College does not publish any student’s GPA unless it is in reference to an award that is publicly given for achieving the highest GPA in a graduating class.

Geography and Directions

Compass directions are lowercase; regions are capitalized. (for example: the southern part of the city; Upper West Side; headed east; East Coast)

H

Headlines

Generally, capitalize the first letter of each word except articles, prepositions and conjunctions of less than four letters—a, an, and, of, the, to—and also cap the first letter in those words when they begin a line (as a rule, they shouldn't end a line). Numbers below 10 should be expressed numerically in a headline, not spelled out. When using quotes in a headline, only use single, not double quotes. Ex: President Trump Calls Mueller Investigation 'Witch Hunt'

Health care

Two words unless used in a formal name.

Hispanic/Latino

One who is, or whose ancestors were, from a Spanish-speaking country in South or Central America. The usage choice depends upon a person's or people's preference.

Historic

It's "a" historic event. Use the article "a" before consonant sounds that exist in common American usage—e.g., a house, a hospital, a history book. Use the article "an" before American vowel sounds e.g., an hour, an heir. A few words, notably herb, swing both ways.

Hyphen

Use a hyphen to separate numbers, such as telephone numbers, Social Security numbers, and ISBN numbers. *For example:* 718-960-5555 121-34-5555

Use a hyphen to link words with prefixes. *For example:* ex-wife or ex-factor

Use a hyphen to link compound modifiers: *For example:* man-eating shark (as opposed to *man eating shark*, which could be interpreted as a man eating the meat of a shark).

I

Internet

Do not capitalize internet.

Institutes and Centers

Bronx Data Center

Bronx Institute

Center for School/College Collaboratives

CUNY Institute for Health Equity

CUNY Institute for Irish American Studies
CUNY Institute for Mexican Studies Institute for Literacy Studies
Public Service Leadership Institute

Italics

Italicize the names of books, newspapers, and movies. opera, plays, poem, album, song, radio, and television program titles, and the titles of lectures, speeches, and works of art. Do not use quotation marks for academic and scientific journal titles.

J

Journals

Academic and scientific journals are written without quotation marks. Do not italicize.

L

Login

When used as a verb, it is spelled as two words “log in.” When used as a noun, it becomes login or logon. *For example:* Do not forget to log in to the website using the proper login.

M

Macaulay Honors College

On subsequent reference, the Honors College.

N

Name of Institution

Lehman College or Lehman College, CUNY. The Herbert H. Lehman College if necessary.

Note: The Herbert H. Lehman College is only used for certain formal communications. In general, Lehman College is preferred.

Namesake

Herbert H. Lehman

O

Online

One word in all cases when referring to the computer communication term.

OK

Not okay to use. Always use okay.

P

Percent

Spell out in most instances. This is a deviation from AP style. The “%” sign may be used when it accompanies numbers in headlines, graphs and charts.

Postgraduate

Professor, associate professor

Capitalize it before a name and don't abbreviate. Don't continue using the word or words in subsequent references, unless part of a quote. *For example:* John Jones, a Lehman College history professor, participated in the panel discussion with Professor Jane Doe and Associate Professor Neil Redfeld. Jones, Doe, and Redfeld also answered questions from the audience.

See also: Academic titles.

Pronouns

Do not use “him” to mean “everyone.” They/them/their is acceptable for use with a singular subject.

When interviewing someone, check their pronouns to ensure you refer to them per their preferences in your writing.

Punctuation

Lehman College follows these rules:

Apostrophe: Follow AP Style guidelines. For singular possessives that end in S, add 's unless the next word begins with s (hostess's invitation; the hostess' seat). For plural possessives, add only an apostrophe.

Colon: Capitalize the first letter of the first word of a full sentence after a colon; lowercase the first word of a fragment.

Comma: The Oxford, or serial, comma is used at all times.

Dashes: Dashes indicate a twist in the sentence or provide extra emphasis on the following or offset idea. Always an em dash, never have spaces between the dash and the word.

Exclamation point: Use only for emphatic expressions and use sparingly.

Quotation marks: Use quotation marks around full quotes. If using a partial quote, only use quotation marks around words the speaker actually said.

Do not use quotation marks around unnecessary fragments or a few ordinary words. (Example -- Correct: Smith said she would teach the same class next semester. Incorrect: Smith said “she would teach the same class” next semester.)

For quotes within quotes, alternate between double and single quotation marks.

Spacing: Use only one space between sentences and after colons.

Quotation Marks: In headlines, single quotation marks are used to enclose material that would have standard double quotes in text, e.g., composition titles.

R

Race and Culture

“Black,” “Brown,” and “Indigenous” should be capitalized when referring to people in a racial, ethnic or cultural context.

Room

In general, spell out and capitalize (e.g., Room 104).

S

School

Always lowercase, except when used in a proper name (Example: School of Education). Do not capitalize on subsequent references (e.g. the school).

Subscripts/Superscripts

Avoid both sub- and superscripts for st, th, rd, nd. Use 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th, etc., with the same font size as the number.

T

Telephone Numbers

Use a hyphen, not periods in telephone numbers. Never use parenthesis to set off the area code. (718-960-5555)

Time

Always use figures and set in lowercase type with periods. *For example:* 2 p.m. Only add minutes if indicating a time not on the hour. *For example,* 2 p.m., not 2:00 p.m.

When giving a range of time, if the event begins and ends at the same time of day, only note the time of day once. *For example:* 9:30–11:30 a.m., not 9:30 a.m.–11:30 a.m.

Use midnight or noon instead of writing out the figures.

Use the days of the week instead of ‘today’ or ‘tonight’ so that when the story is read on a different day, there is no question of when the event happened. *For example,* On Monday the school received a large grant. Incorrect: Today, the school received a large grant.

The Bronx

Preceded by the article in copy, but it is omitted in graphs, charts, etc. “The: is lowercase unless it begins a sentence.

Theater

Use this spelling unless the proper name is Theatre (Lovinger Theatre).

U

University

Always with a capital when referring to The City University of New York, lower case the "u" when referring to other universities after the first mention.

V

Versus, vs., v.

Versus in text, vs. in headlines, v. in court cases, which are also italicized.

Vice President

No hyphen; Vice President before a name. Lowercase after a name or standing alone.

W

Web/website

Do not capitalize web or any of the derivative uses (website, etc.) Words beginning with web are written as one word, no hyphen (website, webpage, etc.).

