



NECC Editorial Style Guide: Common Issues and NECC Exceptions to the *AP Stylebook*

NECC Marketing Communications uses Associated Press (AP) Style guidelines. The latest AP Stylebook can be ordered through the college bookstore. Below are a few common issues, as well as a few exceptions to the AP style. If you have any questions about AP style, please [email us](#) and we'll be happy to help.

Academic Degrees

It is associate degree, not associate's degree (no possessive), but it is bachelor's degree, master's degree (possessive). There is no possessive in Bachelor of Science or Master of Arts.

example: John graduated in May with his associate degree.

Mary graduated in May with her bachelor's degree.

Academic Departments and College Offices

Capitalize all departments and college offices.

example: She works in the Marketing Communications Department.

He works in the One-Stop.

note: This is an exception to the AP Stylebook.

Academic Programs

Capitalize the names of academic programs when using the complete name.

example: She was curious about the Business Management Program and the Paralegal Studies Program.

Academic and Professional Titles

Capitalize a title when it comes before a person's name. Do not capitalize a title that comes after a person's name.

example: President David Hartleb addressed the graduates.

David Hartleb, president, addressed the graduates.

Advisor

Use *advisor*, not adviser

example: An academic advisor will help you pick out your classes.

note: This is an exception to the AP Stylebook.

Alumnus/Alumni; Alumna/Alumnae

When referring to a male graduate of the college, use alumnus (alumni when plural). When referring to a female graduate of the college, use alumna (alumnae when plural). When referring to a group of male and female graduates, use alumni.

example: Joe was an alumnus of the college.

He and other alumni were attending the event.

Campus, College

Capitalize the word campus when using it with Haverhill Campus, Lawrence Campus. Do not capitalize the word campus when used on its own. Capitalize the word college only when used with Northern Essex Community College. Do not capitalize the word college when used on its own (as a common noun).

example: The info session was held on the Lawrence Campus.

The info session was held at Northern Essex Community College.

The info session was held on campus.

The info session was held at the college.



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Committee

Capitalize the name of the committee when part of a formal name.

example: The policy was approved by the Academic Affairs Committee.
He was chair of the Student Affairs Committee.

Composition Titles

Italicize all composition titles, and capitalize the principle words. (Capitalize articles if they are the first or last word in a title, and conjunctions and prepositions of four or more letters) This includes: titles of books, poems, songs, CDs, movies, plays, lectures, speeches, TV shows, computer games, and works of art.

example: The book club was reading *Three Cups of Tea* by Greg Mortenson and David Oliver Relin.
note: For press releases only, titles should be in quotes, not italicized.

Course Titles

Capitalize titles of all courses.

example: This semester, she is taking English Composition I, Biology I, and Intro to Psychology.

Days of the Week

Spell out all days of the week.

example: The concert will be held on Saturday, May 8.
note: See dates, months

Dates

When using a specific date, use Arabic numerals (figures) for dates without the *st*, *nd*, and *rd*.

example: The event will be held on May 23.
note: See days of the week, months

Decades

Use Arabic numerals (figures) for decades. For plural use of decades, add “s” without the apostrophe. Use an apostrophe to indicate missing figures in a decade.

example: He was born in the 1980s
She came to Northern Essex in the ‘90s
note: See years

email

One word, no hyphen

example: For more information, contact us at marcomm@necc.mass.edu
note: This is an exception to the AP Stylebook.
note: See online, website



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Emeritus/Emeriti; Emerita/Emeritae

At Northern Essex, the rank of emeritus is an honor that recognizes sustained excellence in performance, character and meritorious service to the college. To be considered, candidates must have officially retired. When referring to a retired male of the college who has attained this status, use emeritus (emeriti when plural). When referring to a retired female of the college who has attained this status, use emerita (emeritae when plural). When referring to a group of retired males and females, use emeriti.

example: Joe was an emeritus of the college.

He and other emeriti were attending the event.

note: This is an exception to the AP Stylebook

Fall Semester

Lower case

example: Classes begin in September for the fall semester.

note: See spring semester, summer semester

Health Care

Two words, all cases

example: He graduated from Northern Essex and got a job in health care.

Months

Spell out all months.

example: The event will be held on August 14.

note: For press releases only, when you are using a specific date, abbreviate the following months: Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov., and Dec. When using these months alone, or with years, spell them out: Jan. 23; January; January 2010.

note: see days of the week, dates

Names

Use first and last names for people for the first reference. For the second and subsequent references, use the person's last name.

example: John Doe graduated from NECC's Nursing Program in May of 2009.

After interviewing for several positions, Doe took a job in a local hospital.

note: In certain uses, such as Faces on the website, Marketing Communications may use the friendlier style of first names on second and subsequent references.

Online

One word, no hyphen

example: Visit us online at www.necc.mass.edu.

note: See website, email

Phone Numbers

Use hyphens with phone numbers, not periods.

example: Please call us at 978-556-3000.



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Punctuation

excessive punctuation

Avoid excessive punctuation. A single explanation point suffices.

example: Don't miss this wonderful opportunity!

punctuation and quotation marks

The comma and the period always go inside the quotation marks.

example: She said, "I'll meet you after class." "I'll meet you after class," she said.

punctuation and question marks, exclamation points, dashes, and semicolons

The question mark, the exclamation point, the dash, and the semicolon go inside the quotation marks when they apply to the quoted matter only. They go outside when they apply to the whole sentence.

example: "I am graduating in May!" she said.

I can't believe she said "You were accepted into the program"!

serial comma

Use commas to separate all elements in a series.

example: She was heading to NECC to apply, assess, and register.

note: This is an exception to the AP Stylebook.

Spring Semester

Lower case

example: Classes start in January for the spring semester.

note: See fall semester, summer semester

Summer Semester

Lower case

example: Classes start in May for the summer semester.

note: See fall semester, spring semester

Times

Use a.m. and p.m., lower case and with periods. Use a colon to separate hours and minutes. Use Arabic numerals (figures) for all times except noon and midnight.

example: The info session starts at 6 p.m. in the Behrakis One-Stop Student Services Center.

The concert begins at 7:30 p.m.

Years

Use Arabic numerals (figures) for years. When referring to a specific year, use the entire year, not just the last two digits.

example: He will graduate in 2012.

note: See decades

Website

One word, no hyphen

example: Visit our website at www.necc.mass.edu.

note: This is an exception to the AP Stylebook.

note: See online, email