

EDITORIAL STYLE

GUIDELINES

Common Issues and NECC Exceptions to the AP Stylebook

NECC Marketing Communications uses the Associated Press (AP) Style book. The latest AP Stylebook can be ordered through the college bookstore. Below are a few common issues, as well as a few limited exceptions to AP style. If you have any questions, 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 Office of Marketing Communications.
He works in the One-Stop Student Center.

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 Lane Glenn addressed the graduates.
Lane Glenn, president, addressed the graduates.

Advisor

Use advisor, not adviser

EXAMPLE: An academic advisor will help you choose 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 non-binary graduates, use alum or alums. When referring to a group of graduates of any gender identity, use alumni.

EXAMPLE: Joe is 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.

Commas

Use an oxford comma in a list of topics.

- EXAMPLE:** NECC has facilities in Haverhill, Lawrence, and Salisbury.
NOTE: This is an exception to the *AP Stylebook*.

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, rd or th.

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. You do not need to use “email” as a label.

EXAMPLE: For more information, contact us at marcom@necc.mass.edu

NOTES: *This is an exception to the AP Stylebook.*

See online, website

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 is 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*

Healthcare

One word in all cases

EXAMPLE: He graduated from Northern Essex and got a job in healthcare.

Hispanic-Serving Institution

As New England's first-designated Hispanic Serving Institution, we will use the adjective "Hispanic" especially in the context of our HSI status. For those looking for a gender-neutral alternative, "Latine" is an acceptable term that fits well within the syntax of the Spanish language. Based on feedback from our community, NECC does not use the term Latinx to refer to our Hispanic or Latino populations.

Months

Spell out all months.

EXAMPLE: The event will be held on August 14.

NOTES: *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.

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. If an NECC alum, include their graduation year.

EXAMPLE: John Doe '17 graduated from NECC's Nursing Program. After interviewing for several positions, Doe took a job in nursing.

NOTE: *In certain uses, Marketing Communications may use the friendlier style of first names on second and subsequent references.*

NECC, Northern Essex, Northern Essex Community College

In written copy, always use Northern Essex Community College (NECC) as the first reference, and Northern Essex or NECC on subsequent mentions.

In spoken form, please follow similar guidelines, particularly in formal settings or when giving a presentation. When speaking with locals in an informal setting, "Necco" is acceptable.

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. When appearing on a website, please ensure numbers are tappable for mobile users.

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

Pronouns

In stories about people who identify as neither male nor female or ask not to be referred to as he/she/him/her: Use the person's name in place of a pronoun, or otherwise reword the sentence, whenever possible. If they/them/their use is essential, explain in the text that the person prefers a gender-neutral pronoun. Be sure that the phrasing does not imply more than one person.

EXAMPLE: Sarah Brown, who uses they/them pronouns,...

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"!

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 6:00 p.m. in the Behrakis One-Stop Student Center.

The concert begins at 7:30 p.m.

Very

Avoid use of the word “very” as an intensifier. There are specific words that convey your intended meaning.

EXAMPLE: She ~~walked very quickly~~ to class.

She dashed to class.

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*



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