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# NSCC Editorial Style Guide

If you have any questions or need assistance with usage of our styles, please do not hesitate to contact marketing at [marketing@northshore.edu](mailto:marketing@northshore.edu)

This guide is a quick reference tool for website editors, marketing and communications professionals, and anyone else who wishes to write through official North Shore Community College (NSCC) channels. By adhering to the editorial style guide, writers can maintain consistency across channels and strengthen the NSCC brand. Writers can also leverage the NSCC [visual style guide](#) to ensure compliance with the College's style guidelines.

This guide covers many common editorial questions, but it is by no means a complete guide. For style questions not covered here, please consult The Associated Press Stylebook. You can find a brief overview of AP Style [here](#).

Please note that this is a living document that will be updated as needed. Entries are organized alphabetically.

## Editorial Style Guide

Website or email images should use alternative (alt) text to be accessible to those who use screen readers.

For guidelines on writing alt text, please refer to this [guide to best practices](#).

For information on how to add alt text to emails in Gmail, please refer to [this guide](#).

For information on how to add alt text to emails in Constant Contact, please refer to [this article](#).

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## Abbreviations

On first reference, spell out the full term followed by the acronym, initialism, or abbreviation in parentheses. For all subsequent references, use the acronym, initialism, or abbreviation.

Example: The Dual Language Liberal Arts Transfer Pathway (DL LAT) is a Spanish-English bilingual program. Located in Lynn, the DL LAT program supports students in developing academic proficiency in both languages while earning credits that transfer to four-year institutions.

Acronyms and initialisms may be used for the first reference if they are widely recognized.

Examples: NASA, FBI

For abbreviating degrees, please see the section titled “Academics.”

## College

On first reference, use the College’s full title followed by the acronym in parentheses. For all subsequent references, use North Shore Community College, NSCC, or simply the College. Please note that NSCC does not have any periods and College is capitalized.

Examples: North Shore Community College (NSCC) has campuses in Lynn and Danvers. Established in 1965, NSCC has touched the lives of more than a quarter million residents.

In 2021, Dr. William A. Heineman became the fifth President of North Shore Community College (NSCC).

In a second reference to a college other than NSCC, do not capitalize college.

The name of the College is never shortened to North Shore CC, and it is never written as Northshore Community College, Northshore, or any variation thereof.

## States

When a state name stands alone with no city or town listed, spell its name out entirely.

When a city or town name is listed, use AP Style state abbreviations.

Ala., Ariz., Ark., Calif., Colo., Conn., Del., Fla., Ga., Ill., Ind., Kan., Ky., La., Md., Mass., Mich., Minn., Miss., Mo., Mont., Neb., Nev., N.H., N.J., N.M., N.Y., N.C., N.D., Okla., Ore., Pa., R.I., S.C., S.D., Tenn., Vt., Va., Wash., W.Va., Wis., Wyo. These state names are never abbreviated in text: Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Ohio, Texas, and Utah.

Examples: North Shore Community College is one of the oldest community colleges in Massachusetts. Juan Pérez '22 grew up in Salem, Mass.

When writing a full address, use a two-letter state abbreviation and zip code.

Example: Send your letters to 1 Ferncroft Road, Danvers, MA 01923.

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## Degrees

Capitalize academic degrees and certificate programs when written out in full.

- Associate of Arts, abbreviated as AA
- Associate of Science, abbreviated as AS
- Associate of Applied Science, abbreviated as AAS
- Clock Hour Certificate, never abbreviated

- Credit Certificate, never abbreviated

Please note that the preferred form is to spell out degrees on first mention and avoid abbreviations. On subsequent mention, it is acceptable to use these terms:

- associate degree
- bachelor's degree
- master's degree
- doctoral degree

If it is necessary to shorten the degree name further, please use the following.

Please note that you should not use an apostrophe with associate and doctoral degrees.

- associate
- bachelor's
- master's
- doctorate

Use either doctorate or doctoral degree; never use "doctorate degree."

## Fields of Study

Do not capitalize fields of study, majors, etc, except for the names of languages and when part of a degree title.

Examples: They study Spanish. She studies biotechnology. He pursued a degree in horticulture.

He earned his Associate in Applied Science in Horticulture.

Capitalize the names of pathways and program titles. Capitalize “Pathway” when writing out the full name of the pathway, but do not capitalize “program” when writing out the full name of a program.

Examples: Part of the Agricultural and Food Services Pathway, the Nutritional Science

and Diet Technology program gives students foundational knowledge in food science,

nutrition, and dietetics.

## Fieldwork

Use fieldwork rather than "field work" when referring to observation or hands-on learning in the field.

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## Class Years

This is the preferred style for those who have completed programs at the College: John Doe '14.

Capitalize references to class years.

Example: John Doe is in the Class of 2014.

## Gender

Please note the following usage guidelines for referring to alumni. Use alumni when referring to a group of mixed genders.

	Feminine	Masculine	Gender Neutral
Singular	Alumna	Alumnus	Alum
Plural	Alumnae	Alumni	Alums

Examples: Cheryl Jones is a NSCC alumna. George Jones is an NSCC alumnus. Cheryl, George, and other alumni met for dinner at a local restaurant. While there, they ran into Shane Hernandez, who is also an alum.

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## Buildings

Use the full name when referring to a building in copy.

Example: The admissions office is located in the Health Professions and Student Services Building.

## Bertolon Simulation Health Care Center of Excellence

Use the Bertolon Simulation Health Care Center of Excellence on first mention and the Center in subsequent mentions.

Note that the Henderson-Bertolon Simulation Center is located within the Bertolon Simulation Health Care Center of Excellence. When referring to the Henderson-Bertolon Simulation Center, always use its name in full.

## Frederick Berry Building

Use the Frederick Berry Building on first mention and the Berry Building in subsequent mentions.

## Room Numbers

When referring to a room number, use the abbreviated building name and a hyphen followed by the number.

Example: Meet us in room LW-120.

Building Name	Abbreviation
McGee Building South Wing	LS
McGee Building West Wing	LW
McGee Building East Wing	LE
Modular Building	LM
Greenhouse	LG
Math and Science Building	DS
Health Professions and Student Services Building	DH
Frederick Berry Building	DB
Friends Building	DF

# Campus

Capitalize the campus only when using it with Danvers Campus or Lynn Campus.

Example: It's important to have academic support services available on campus. At the Danvers Campus, the Tutoring Center is located inside the library.

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## English as a Second Language and English

### Language Learners

The College uses both the terms English as a second language (ESL) and English language learners (ELL). Generally, ELL refers to learning English (typically while integrated into English-speaking classes), while ESL refers to learning English through a course or program explicitly designed for the subject.

When referring to a program or course, use ESL. When referring to a demographic, use ELL.

Examples: English language learners (ELL) will be a large portion of NSCC's future students. The College anticipates growth in its ESL programs over the next five years, thus the number of ESL students will increase.

When referring to a student who is learning English, use specific details rather than a label.

Example: Growing up, Dominique and her family spoke exclusively French, so she initially found it difficult to adjust to her new life in the Boston suburbs. By taking English as a second language (ESL) courses at North Shore Community College, she developed her English skills and gained confidence in her new language.

## Gendered Terms

Avoid reference to gender unless it's relevant to the topic.

When possible, use terms that are nongendered. For example, use chair instead of chairman and firefighter instead of fireman or firewoman.

## Hispanic-Serving Institution

Note the capitalization hyphen in Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) as well as Minority-Serving Institution (MSI).

# Pronouns

If writing about someone who identifies as neither male nor female or does not use he/him or she/her pronouns, use the person's name in place of the pronoun. If it's necessary to use they/them/their, make sure the phrasing doesn't imply more than one person, and briefly explain that the person uses gender neutral pronouns.

Use "pronoun" instead of terms like "preferred pronouns."

Example: Gabriel, who uses they/them pronouns, is pursuing a career as a respiratory therapist.

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# Addresses

Always use figures in numbered addresses.

Abbreviate Ave., Blvd, St., and directional cues when used with a numbered address. Spell out words such as alley, drive, and road.

Street names and directional cues used without a numbered address should be capitalized and spelled out completely.

Example: The parade continued down Main Street.

If a street name is a number, spell out First through Ninth and use figures for 10th and higher.

Examples: First Street, 11th Street

## Ages

Always use figures.

If an age is used as an adjective or a substitute for a noun, hyphenate it.

Example: The 21-year-old enrolled in classes. The 35-year-old teacher decided it was time for a career change.

When describing an age range, do not use apostrophes.

Example: She is in her 40s.

## Dates and Times

Always spell out the name of the month; do not use abbreviations like Oct. or Jan.

Do not use ordinal numbers such as 2nd or 3rd.

Example: The group met on October 2 to discuss the new style guidelines.

When describing a future event, include the day of the week.

Example: The event will be held Friday October 31, 2025 at 3 PM.

Reference crossover years as 2024-25.

For full hour times, use only the first number and omit zeros.

Example: 3 PM

When referring to a season or semester designation, use lowercase.

Examples: The course will be offered in fall 2025. She is taking a class next summer.

## Numerals

Spell out numbers one through nine; use numerals for other numbers. If you begin a sentence with a number, it must be written out.

## Phone Numbers

For accessibility purposes, all phone numbers should be written as (555) 555-5555. Note the parentheses around the area code, the space between the area code and the next digits, and the hyphen.

## Percentage

Use the % sign with a numeral. Do not include a space. Spell out numerals and the word percent when it begins a sentence.

Examples: Almost 90% of participants agreed. Fifty-five percent of students were included.

## Over vs. More Than or Less Than

When deciding whether to use “over” vs. “more than” or “less than,” please note that “more than or less than” is preferable. If you are using multiple numbers in one sentence, you can use “more than” first, and then “over” second.

Example: North Shore Community College is a nationally recognized leader and innovator of excellent, accessible, and affordable higher education with more than 50 programs and over 30 certificate offerings.

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## Ampersands

For many screenreaders, ampersands are difficult to read. For this reason, limit the use of ampersands in copy unless used in a formal name, title, or brand name.

Examples: Agricultural and Food Services Pathway, Procter & Gamble

## Apostrophes

If a possessive ends in the letter s, add an apostrophe.

Example: Dr. Santos' classroom

## Books, Periodicals, and Other Compositions

Do not underline or italicize books, periodicals, reference materials, song titles, poems, lectures, speeches, television shows, games, or other compositions.

Use quotation marks around the titles of books, songs, shows, games, lectures, and speeches.

Example: "Medical Terminology for Health Professions" is a required text for the course.

Do not use quotation marks for catalogues, magazines, newspapers, or the Bible.

Example: The Boston Globe highlighted recent NSCC alumni.

Do not use quotations around the names of magazines, newspapers, the Bible or books that are catalogues of reference materials.

Examples: The Washington Post first reported the story. He reads the Bible every morning.

## Bullet Points

If the list is a part of the previous sentence, do not capitalize the entries.

If the list includes full sentences, capitalize and use a period.

For single words, do not capitalize and do not use punctuation.

Examples:

Students should bring

- notebooks
- pens
- pencils

Students will learn the following:

- Hard work pays off.
- You can achieve anything.
- The sky's the limit.

## Commas

In a departure from AP Style, the College uses the serial (Oxford) comma. This comma typically precedes and, or, or but in a list.

Example: While touring the Danvers Campus, we met with many faculty, staff, and students.

## Dashes

Do not use spaces before or after an em dash (—).

Do not use an en dash (–) with number ranges and to indicate “to” or “through.” Spell out the intended word.

## Sentence Spacing

Use a single space after a period. Never use two spaces after a period.

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## myNorthShore

The name of the College’s online portal is stylized as myNorthShore.

Example: A student will receive a myNorthShore account during the enrollment process.

# Other Terms

Here are the correct spelling and capitalization rules for some common technological terms:

- BlackBerry, BlackBerrys
- download
- eBay Inc. (use EBay Inc. when the word begins a sentence)
- e-book
- e-book reader
- e-reader
- email
- cellphone
- Facebook
- Google, Googling, Googled
- hashtag
- IM (IMed, IMing; for first reference, use instant messenger)
- internet
- iPad, iPhone, iPod (use IPad, IPhone, or IPod when the word begins a sentence)
- LinkedIn
- social media
- smartphone
- Twitter, tweet, tweeted, retweet
- World Wide Web, website, Web page
- webmaster
- YouTube

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Spell out titles in full.

Capitalize titles when they precede a name. Titles should be lowercase if they follow a name, appear without a name, or are set off by commas before the person's name.

Examples: He spoke to Associate Professor John Doe. Next, he spoke to Dr. Stephanie Seketa,  
dean of liberal studies.

The exception to the above rule is the title of President, which should always be capitalized.

Lowercase adjectives that designate the status of a title.

Example: President-elect

## President

The President's name is Dr. William A. Heineman.

In the first reference, use President William A. Heineman, Ed.D. In subsequent references, use President Heineman.

As mentioned above, the title of President is always capitalized.

## Offices and Centers

Use lowercase when referring to campus offices.

Examples: Visit the admissions office to learn more.

Centers are capitalized.

Example: The Student Support Center is open today.

## Scholarships

When referring to students, the preferred term is awardee, not recipient.