



THE UNIVERSITY  
*of* NORTH CAROLINA  
*at* CHAPEL HILL

BRANDING AND IDENTITY GUIDELINES  
**REFERENCE GUIDE**

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# Editorial Style

# Editorial Style

Consistent writing helps unify campus messages and helps our audiences better understand the University. Carolina generally follows Associated Press style, but we do make some exceptions. They are listed below. For guidance on editorial style issues not covered below, contact **Natalie Vizquete**, director of content development, at 919-962-3761 or [nvizquete@unc.edu](mailto:nvizquete@unc.edu).

## AP STYLE EXCEPTIONS

### Academic Degrees

Not all readers are familiar with academic degrees, so reserve the title Dr. for M.D.s and other medical degrees.

Consult The Associated Press Stylebook entry for academic degrees for other specifics, including how to appropriately establish a person's credentials by using a title or phrase and how to properly use apostrophes (bachelor's and master's).

Examples of degrees Carolina awards include the following: bachelor of arts (B.A.) (a bachelor's); bachelor of science (B.S.); doctor of education (Ed.D.); doctor of law (J.D.) (a doctorate); doctor of medicine (M.D.); master of arts (M.A.) (a master's); master of business administration (M.B.A.); and master of science (M.S.).

### Academic Departments

Use lowercase except for words that are proper nouns or adjectives. For example, the political science department or the Department of Political Science.

Avoid "of" when possible: the English department instead of the department of English; or when department is part of the official and formal name: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Medicine's pediatric department.

Capitalize the full names of schools and major centers and institutes on first reference but not those of programs and curricula.

When using a list of schools or units together, lowercase. Example: Established with the schools of medicine, pharmacy and public health, ...

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## **Academic Titles**

Teaching faculty ranks include: professor, professor of the practice, associate professor, assistant professor, instructor, teaching assistant professor, teaching associate professor, teaching professor and teaching assistant. Some teaching faculty also hold clinical or adjunct faculty positions.

Do not precede a name with a long title.

Capitalize and spell out formal titles when they come before a name, such as Chancellor Guskiewicz.

A person teaches in a subject, but has knowledge of a subject: an instructor in mathematics and a professor of computer science.

Do not assume any faculty member is a full professor. Check with the department if necessary. Sometimes titles reflecting recent appointments or promotions do not immediately appear in campus directories or websites.

Lowercase academic titles after a name or when used alone. Be sure to include the full proper title. (Kevin Guskiewicz, the University's chancellor; Barbara Rimer, dean of the Gillings School of Global Public Health)

Exceptions include the names of endowed professorships on first reference—preferably after the name of the faculty member. Capitalize all of the words in the proper title of the professorship. (Wendy Boss, William Neal Reynolds Professor of Plant Biology)

## **Alumni**

Identify all alumni with the class year. Include graduate designations for alumni who did not earn undergraduate degrees from Carolina. Examples: Mary Brown Jones '93, Peter Marks '66 (JD).

## **Bell Tower**

Acceptable on first reference to the Morehead-Patterson Bell Tower. Always capitalize both words.

## **Board of Governors**

The governing body elected by the North Carolina General Assembly that oversees the 17-campus University of North Carolina System. Use the full name on first reference; BOG may be used on subsequent references.

## **Board of Trustees**

A 13-member governing body that oversees the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Use the full name on first reference; BOT may be used on subsequent references. The student body president serves as an ex-officio member of the Board of Trustees. Refer to [bot.unc.edu](http://bot.unc.edu).

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## **Carolina Next: Innovations for Public Good**

Carolina's strategic plan that will guide the University's decision-making and investments for the next three years. Spell out entirely on first reference. Carolina Next is acceptable on second reference.

## **Chair**

By policy, the University prefers gender-inclusive language in publications, websites, documents and policies. Therefore, University style uses chair instead of chairman.

## **Chancellor**

The leader of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Each of the UNC System's 17 campuses has a chancellor, all of whom report to the UNC System president.

Capitalize when used before a name.

On first reference, refer to Chancellor Kevin M. Guskiewicz. Guskiewicz should be used on subsequent references. In more formal writing, such as in invitations or programs, Chancellor Guskiewicz is acceptable on second reference.

## **Chase Dining Hall**

The Chase Dining Hall at Rams Head Plaza was rededicated in 2015. It had previously unofficially been referred to as Rams Head Dining Hall when the multipurpose Rams Head Center opened in 2005. Chase Dining Hall is acceptable in all references.

## **College of Arts & Sciences**

Use the full name with ampersand on first reference; the College (capital C) may be used on subsequent references.

## **Commencement**

Capitalize in all uses associated with the University's Commencement ceremonies held each May and December, including Winter Commencement and Spring Commencement. Graduation is acceptable as an alternative and preferred for social media. Lowercase graduation. Refer to [commencement.unc.edu](http://commencement.unc.edu).

## **Comprehensive Annual Financial Report**

Annual report is acceptable on second reference.

## **Dean E. Smith Center**

Use Dean E. Smith Center on first reference; Smith Center on subsequent references. The Smith Center is popularly known as the Dean Dome but that is not appropriate for most website content or news releases.

# Editorial Style

## **First-Year Student, Freshman, Freshmen**

The gender-neutral term “first-year student” is preferred by the University administration for freshman in all uses. If a story or content also mentions first-year transfer or graduate students, try to make the distinction as clear as possible.

## **Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute**

Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute on first reference; FPG or FPG institute on subsequent references.

## **Frank Porter Graham Student Union**

Frank Porter Graham Student Union is the proper name of the building. The Carolina Union, part of Student Affairs, is an organization of students, professional staff and part-time student staff who provide programs, services and facilities to the campus community. The Carolina Union Activities Board also plans events sponsored by the union.

Student Union is also acceptable on subsequent references.

## **Lux, Libertas**

Can be used two ways: lux, libertas or lux et libertas. Latin translates to “light and liberty.”

## **Old Well**

Do not capitalize “the,” as in the Old Well.

## **PlayMakers Repertory Company**

Note that the “M” is uppercase when referring to the company, the department of dramatic art’s professional theater.

## **Police (University)**

University Police or UNC Police. In a case that involves police on other campuses or law enforcement agencies, distinguish with UNC-Chapel Hill police as needed.

## **Principal investigator**

Spell out principal investigator. Do not use PI as that is not a term that the general public readily associates with research.

## **South Building**

Always capitalize both words.

## **Student Courts**

Cases involving the Honor Code or the Campus Code are heard by the Undergraduate Honor Court and by the graduate, medical, dental and law courts. No court is formally called the Honor Court.

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## **Tar Heels**

Always two words. Informally used, Heels may stand alone—for example, Go Heels! in a campus publication or on a website.

## **UNC Health System**

The not-for-profit integrated health care system, owned by the State of North Carolina and based in Chapel Hill. The system exists to further the teaching mission of the University and to provide state-of-the-art patient care. Refer to [unhealthcare.org/site/aboutus](http://unhealthcare.org/site/aboutus).

## **UNC Hospitals**

UNC Hospitals is a public academic medical center first established in 1952 under the name N.C. Memorial to provide patient care, educate health care professionals and advance medical research in partnership with the UNC School of Medicine. The medical center is composed of N.C. Memorial Hospital, N.C. Children's Hospital, N.C. Neurosciences Hospital and N.C. Women's Hospital. Refer to [unhealthcare.org/about-us](http://unhealthcare.org/about-us).

## **University**

Uppercase University when used to refer specifically to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Do not capitalize common uses of university. Example: Chartered in 1789 by the General Assembly, Carolina is the nation's first state university.

## **University Day**

The proper name of an annual event commemorating the laying of the cornerstone of Old East. Always capitalized.

## **University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill**

For press releases and other formal instances, use the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill on first reference. UNC-Chapel Hill, Carolina or the University is preferred for subsequent references.

For websites, UNC-Chapel Hill or Carolina is acceptable for first reference. Capitalize the University.

Do not use UNC on its own in press releases, websites and printed material.

#UNC is acceptable for social media.

Exceptions include the department of athletics and the General Alumni Association. Both use University of North Carolina on first reference. Also consider that including UNC in front of the names of schools or units is often redundant and not necessary. Exceptions might include when UNC is considered part of the proper name of the unit or an essential part of its branding identity.

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## **University of North Carolina System**

Refers to the 17-campus University of North Carolina System, led by UNC Interim President William L. Roper and governed by the UNC Board of Governors.

The University of North Carolina is preferred for formal uses. The University of North Carolina System is for informal uses. The UNC System is acceptable on subsequent references. Always capitalize System. Refer to [northcarolina.edu/About-Our-System](http://northcarolina.edu/About-Our-System).

## **Websites and URLs**

If you are listing a website address on a printed document or in a digital space, do not use <http://> or [www.](http://www) in front of the address. Examples of appropriate uses: [und.edu](http://und.edu), [college.unc.edu](http://college.unc.edu), [gazette.unc.edu](http://gazette.unc.edu).

## **MORE INFORMATION**

For more information and to view the **University's Branding and Identity Guidelines**, visit [identity.unc.edu](http://identity.unc.edu).