

UTMB Editorial Style Guide

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In this guide, “editorial style” refers to a consistent pattern of spelling, capitalization, abbreviation and punctuation that supports the UTMB identity system by presenting a cohesive image of the university to internal and external audiences.

Because writing and editing are not exact sciences, a number of stylebooks offer advice to writers and editors in various disciplines. UTMB’s Public Affairs Office uses the *Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual* for the lion’s share of the publications it produces and as its primary guide when reviewing UTMB promotional materials. Other acceptable general-interest guides for UTMB promotional publications include *The Chicago Manual of Style (14th Edition)* and the *New York Public Library Writer’s Guide to Style and Usage*. Whichever guide you choose, remember to follow it consistently to achieve the level of professionalism required for UTMB publications.

The following UTMB Editorial Style Guide should be considered a supplement to such general style guides. It includes some UTMB-specific information, as well as some of the most-used style points from other sources. (Please note that this guide is for promotional and general information material only. The style points provided here and in the references mentioned above may not be appropriate for academic works such as dissertations and theses, journal articles, catalogs or similar documents.)

Academic degrees and professional certifications

- Use periods when abbreviating academic degrees (M.D., Ph.D., Dr.P.H., Ed.D., etc.)
- In general, periods are not used in abbreviations of professional certifications (RRT, CNM, FACOG, etc.)
- Use lowercase letters and apostrophes appropriately in degree descriptions that appear in running text.
 - Ex.: bachelor’s degree, *not* bachelors degree or bachelor degree
- When the full, formal name of a degree is required (as in catalogs), the name should be capitalized.
 - Ex.: Bachelor of Science degree, Master of Science degree, Master of Science in Nursing degree, etc.
- Do not use both “Dr.” and a degree following a person’s name.
 - Ex.: Jane Jones, M.D., *not* Dr. Jane Jones, M.D.

Capitalization

- Less is more. When overused, capitalization can distract readers. In general, only proper names, words at the beginning of a sentence and main words in titles are capitalized.
- Do capitalize the proper names of UTMB departments and divisions.
- *The* in the university name is capitalized only in display type, at the beginning of a sentence, in legal documents or for documents expressly for the UT System Board of Regents. It isn’t capitalized in running copy when it precedes the university name in mid-sentence in a promotional piece:
 - Ex.: Students at *the* University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston...
- *University* isn’t capitalized when used alone, even if the word refers to UTMB, unless it appears in a legal document, a document expressly for the UT System Board of Regents or material directly quoting an official regental policy or rule:
 - Ex.: The *university* is a major player in Galveston’s economy.
- Common nouns, even those that refer to a specific person, place or thing, aren’t capitalized:
 - Ex.: The *School of Medicine* is revamping its curriculum. The *school* hopes such changes will better prepare students for future practice.
 - Ex.: University Registrar Jean Jones can explain the UTMB grading system. The *registrar* is not in charge of financial aid, however.
- Job titles are capitalized only when they appear immediately before a person’s name. They are lowercased after a name. The names of endowed professorships and chairs are always capitalized, regardless of placement:
 - Ex.: *Professor* John Smith

- Ex.: Dr. John Smith, *professor* of internal medicine, ...
- Ex.: Dr. John Smith, Jane P. Jones *Professor* of Internal Medicine, ...
- Names of seasons aren't capitalized:
 - Ex.: fall 1995 term, summer session, spring semester
- Names of well-established, universally understood (among the intended audience, at least) geographic regions are capitalized:
 - Ex.: the Southwest, East Texas, the Gulf Coast, the East Coast
- Medical specialties are not capitalized, except as part of a department name or title:
 - Ex.: They practice family medicine.
 - Ex.: They're members of the Department of Family Medicine.

Composition titles

- Italicize titles of works such as books, newspapers, journals, magazines, ships and other vessels, and works of art. Do not use an underline in place of or in addition to the italic type.
- Parts of published works, including articles and chapters, are usually placed in quotation marks.

Dates

- In general, for economy of space, abbreviate months with more than five letters when the month precedes a specific day:
 - Ex.: Jan. 1, Feb. 3, March 21, April 15
- Don't use ordinal numbers in dates.
 - Ex.: Jan. 1, *not* Jan. 1st
- Months aren't abbreviated when they precede only the year or when written alone:
 - Ex.: September 1900
 - Ex.: The academic year begins in September.
- The alphanumeric format (Jan. 1, 2002) is preferred over the numerical format (1/1/02) for dates.
- Don't use apostrophes when writing decades.
 - Ex.: 1970s, *not* 1970's

Facts and figures

- Refer to the official UTMB campus map for proper names of buildings. The map is posted as a PDF file at http://www.utmb.edu/map/campus_map.pdf. The map is also available from Public Affairs at ext. 22618.
- Up-to-date statistics about the university can be found on the Office of Institutional Analysis web site: www.utmb.edu/ia. Certain figures are also available in "UTMB at a Glance," a brochure published annually by Public Affairs.
- Lists of UTMB's President's Council, UT System Office of the Chancellor and UT System Board of Regents are available online at www.utmb.edu and <http://www.utsystem.edu>, respectively. The lists are also available from Public Affairs at ext. 22618.

Internet terms

The following Internet terms are frequently seen in UTMB print publications. Additional web-related terms can be found online: http://www.utmb.edu/identity_system/resources/web_lexicon.htm.

- email—Lowercase without a hyphen, except at the beginning of a sentence. Email addresses are generally not case-sensitive and should be written in lowercase letters. When preparing a publication for print, delete any color or underlining applied in Word to create a hyperlink in the original text.
- Internet—Capitalize this proper noun.
- intranet—Unlike the Internet, there are many intranets. Lowercase this term.
- URL—Also known as a web address. URLs can be case-sensitive, so be sure to give the exact address (including capital letters) in any URLs referenced in your publication. In most cases, the user's browser will fill in the "http://" so you don't have to include it if you don't wish to. As with email addresses, any "hyperlink" typography (color and/or underlining) automatically applied by Word should be deleted before a print publication goes to press.

- World Wide Web—Like the Internet of which it is a part, there's only one World Wide Web. The term should be capitalized as a proper noun.
- web—Like an intranet, there are many webs. This term should be lowercased.
- web site, web page, home page—Lowercase these two-word terms. None includes a hyphen.

Jr., Sr., III

- In all but more formal pieces, such as programs and invitations, the comma before these suffixes is usually deleted. Commas traditionally aren't included before Roman numerals in personal names, regardless of where the name appears.
 - Ex.: John Jones III, John F. Kennedy Jr.
- If an individual has a strong preference that a comma be used before the suffix on his name, it is appropriate to follow that preference, even if it disagrees with the style guide. In this case, the comma should be used consistently on *all* names containing these suffixes in the publication.

Money

- Delete the decimal and cents when writing whole dollar amounts:
 - Ex.: \$100, *not* \$100.00. But, \$100.50 or \$100.75
- In running copy, use a combination of numerals and words for large dollar amounts such as million, billion, etc.
 - Ex.: The department received a \$1.5 million grant from the National Institutes of Health.

Numbers

- In general, spell out numbers *one* through *nine*; use numerals for numbers *10* and higher. Spell out ordinal numbers *first* through *ninth*; use figures for ordinal numbers *10th* and higher
- But, use numerals for:
 - ages (4-year-old boy, the girl is 2 years old)
 - tables
 - percentages (1 percent, 56 percent)
 - ratios (1:5, or 1 to 5)
 - dimensions (an 8x10 photograph)
- Always spell out numbers used at the beginning of a sentence, except when the number identifies a calendar year.

Percent

- Spell out *percent* in running text.
 - Ex.: More than 35 percent of UTMB employees responded to the survey.
- It's OK to use the % sign in tables.

Punctuation

- Use of the serial comma (the comma placed before conjunctions like "and" or "but" in a list) is optional, but the style chosen must be consistent within an individual publication or family of publications. In general, OUA recommends that the comma be deleted when it is part of a simple series and leaving it out would not cause any confusion on the part of the reader. (If you have a strong preference that the serial comma be used in your publication, please inform Public Affairs of that fact when you submit your material for institutional review.)
 - Ex.: We had fruit, eggs and cereal for breakfast. (comma not needed for clarity, but it can be used and still be correct)
 - Ex.: We had fruit and cream, ham and eggs, and cereal for breakfast. (comma necessary because items within the series contain "and"; deleting serial comma could be confusing for reader)
- Use only one space between sentences. (The two-spaces rule is appropriate for typewriters, but not for computer-set copy.)
- Commas and periods always go inside quotation marks.
- Colons and semicolons are always placed outside of quotation marks, parentheses and brackets.

- Question marks and exclamation points are placed inside quotation marks if they pertain only to the material in quotations. Otherwise, they go outside.
 - Ex.: Do you know where I can find “Old Red”? (question mark pertains to sentence as a whole, rather than only to the material in quotation marks)
 - Ex.: The visitor asked, “Where can I find Old Red?” (question mark pertains only to the material in quotation marks)
- Use exclamation points only when a statement truly merits strong emotion—and then use only one. Using exclamation points too often diminishes their effectiveness.
 - Ex.: The sky is falling! (statement merits strong emotion)
 - Ex.: We have a new employee. (exclamation point would detract from simple statement)
- Use an en dash in ranges of numbers, dates or times. The en dash can be typed on Windows computers by pressing the CTRL and NUM– keys simultaneously. There should be no space on either side of the en dash.
 - Ex.: 1–2 p.m., Jan. 1–Feb. 1

The Sealy & Smith Foundation

The preferred format for all references to the foundation.

Spelling

The following are preferred spellings for words frequently encountered in UTMB publications. Also refer to the “Internet terms” section of this style guide:

- field house—two words
- health care—two words
- house staff—two words
- inpatient—one word
- orthopaedic—to be consistent with UTMB’s Department of Orthopaedic Surgery and Rehabilitation
- outpatient—one word
- toward—rather than “towards”
- under way—two words

Telephone numbers

- Because so many new area codes have been added to the greater Houston area in recent years and because UTMB has facilities in other parts of the state, area codes are recommended on all telephone numbers if there’s any chance your publication will be seen outside the Galveston campus.
- Area codes should be placed in parentheses and separated from the telephone number by one space.
- Do not include “1” before toll-free numbers. Instead, write the number just as any other long-distance number, with the appropriate area code in parentheses. Consider designating such numbers “toll-free” in text, since new toll-free area codes have been added in recent years.

We no longer capitalize *fax* as if it were an acronym.

Time

- In general, delete the :00 on hours:
 - Ex.: 10 a.m., *not* 10:00 a.m.
- The :00 can be included if the time is presented in a table that includes times that don’t fall on the hour.
- UTMB preferred style is to lowercase *a.m.* and *p.m.*, using periods as shown. An acceptable alternative is to type *AM* and *PM* as small-capital letters without periods. In either case, there should always be one space between the numerals and *a.m.* or *p.m.*
 - Ex.: 1 p.m. or 2 AM, *not* 1p.m., 2 am, 3 PM
- Use *noon* or *midnight* for 12 o’clock, vs. 12 a.m. or 12 p.m. Avoid the redundant *12 noon* and *12 midnight*.

Theme line

Here for the health of Texas.

- The theme line is always written in Times Roman italic type.
- Always lowercase the “h” in “health” and include a period at the end.
- The theme line can be used on any university publication, but its use is not required.

Watch your language

Keep diversity in mind

Strive to make your publications as inclusive as possible. When producing a bilingual publication, make sure the piece is written as well in the non-English language as it is in English. (Consider enlisting the help of a professional translator who is well-trained in writing the non-English language you’re using.) Photographs should feature a broad mix of people to give readers a realistic view of UTMB’s diversity.

Gender

Although it is was once standard practice to use masculine terms to include men and women, that practice is becoming outdated. When possible, make sentences inclusive of both genders. For example, rather than saying, “The student will submit his application to the registrar,” say, “Students will submit their applications to the registrar.” (Note: A common “work around”—and one gaining support of more liberal style references—uses the plural pronoun “they” in place of “he” to achieve gender-neutral language. While “they” is inclusive, its reference to a singular noun will likely be seen by many readers as an agreement mistake that didn’t get caught in proofreading. For this reason, Public Affairs recommends rewriting the sentence in the plural if possible.)