The Lehman College

Style Guide

Office of Media Relations and Publication
Lehman College
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About this Guide

Whether you are communicating with an internal or external audience, this editorial guide is designed to help you make decisions that are in keeping with the College’s overall style for print and the Web.

From when to capitalize courtesy titles to the correct spelling of Lehman’s various buildings The Lehman College Style Guide attempts to answer, in brief, some of the most common uncertainties that can arise. A few frequent grammatical questions are also included.

The principal purpose of the guide is to assist those who write anything for the College, whether it’s a press release, a story for the website, a Tweet, or the text for a brochure or advertisement. Unlike style guides in the past, whether online or print, any and all communications from the College must conform to the same style.

Most recommendations are taken directly from The City University of New York Style Book. Recommendations on spelling are taken from the Merriam-Webster Dictionary. The Lehman College Style Guide adheres closely to AP Style. However, in many matters Strunk & White’s Elements of Style is given preference unless otherwise noted.

Please direct questions or suggestions for items to be included in the next edition to Yeara Milton, Multimedia Manager (yearch.milton@lehman.cuny.edu), or Joseph Tirealla, Director of Department of Media Relations (joseph.tirella@lehman.cuny.edu).
Academic Awards
Capitalize all words that are part of the official title except conjunctions and prepositions of three letters or less, unless it's the first word of an official name (e.g., He is winner of The 2008 Women’s Forum Scholarship, but she won a mathematics scholarship from the Women's Forum in 2006).

Academic Degrees
B.A., B.S., M.A., M.S., Ed.D., and Ph.D. are expressed with periods. With most other degrees, don't use periods, e.g., MFA, MBA, MSeD.

Academic Departments
Capitalize formal references to a department (e.g., Lehman College Department of Biological Sciences) but lower case general references (e.g., history department, English department).

The following is a list of all Lehman’s academic departments:

Africana Studies (as of July 2017)
Anthropology
Art
Biological Sciences
Chemistry
Counseling, Leadership, Literacy, and Special Education
Early Childhood and Childhood Education
Economics and Business
English
Earth, Environmental, and Geospatial Sciences
Health Sciences
History
Journalism and Media Studies
Languages and Literatures
Latin American, Latino, and Puerto Rican Studies
Mathematics and Computer Science
Middle and High School Education
Music, Multimedia, Theatre, and Dance
Nursing
Philosophy
Physics and Astronomy
Political Science
Psychology
Social Work
Sociology
Speech-Language-Hearing Sciences (Note use of hyphen)
Interdisciplinary Programs:
American Studies
Business and Liberal Studies
City and Humanities
Comparative Literature
Disability Studies
Italian-American Studies
Linguistics
Middle Eastern Studies
Urban Studies
Women’s Studies

Special Programs, Centers and Institutes:
Adult Degree Program
Bridge to the Baccalaureate Program
Bronx Institute
CUNY Institute for Irish-American Studies
CUNY Institute for Health Equity
CUNY on the Concourse
The Jaime Lucero Mexican Studies Institute
Geographic Information Sciences Program
Institute for Literacy Studies
Lehman Scholars Program
Minority Access to Research Careers (MARC)
Minority Biomedical Research Support (MBRS)
School/College Collaboratives
Tutoring and Academic Support

Academic Journals
Italicize the names of journals like you would a magazine (e.g., People, Newsweek)

Academic Majors
Most often cited in lower case, e.g., history major, with the exception of words spelled with a capital “E”; for example: English major.

Academic Titles
In general, capitalize formal titles—e.g., “Professor,” “Chancellor”—when they appear before names of individuals, and lowercase them following names of individuals. See Chancellor.

For example: Professor John Tytell or Chancellor James B. Milliken; John Tytell, professor of history

Academic titles at Lehman are as follows: Lecturer, Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, Professor, Distinguished Professor, Distinguished Lecturer, and Professor Emeritus (male) and Professor Emerita (female)
Professor is always preferred to Dr. and should be used on first reference. On second reference the abbreviation Prof. is fine to use as is just the last name of the person in question.

Lowercase descriptive or occupational titles—“a department chair,” “a history professor”—in all cases.

Acknowledgment

Acronyms and Abbreviations (period or no period?)

(1) Use periods when abbreviating names of countries.

U.S.  U.K.

(2) Use periods when abbreviating certain academic degrees.

B.A.  M.A.  Ph.D.

(3) Use periods with abbreviations for states.

N.Y.  N.J.  C.T.

(4) Use periods with abbreviations that appear in lowercase letters.

e.g.  a.k.a.  p.m.

(5) Do not use periods in university or college abbreviations.

CUNY  BMCC  CSI

Please note: In general, with the exception of CUNY, the first reference to an organization, institution, initiative, etc. (even those within The City University of New York) should have its full name spelled out. Thereafter, the abbreviation/acronym alone generally is sufficient.

At CUNY, pronounceable abbreviations (acronyms) do not use periods, as well as—in a difference from AP style—many unpronounceable abbreviations.

If there are numerous different abbreviations in a long story each first reference should be followed by its common abbreviation/acronym in parentheses.

A.D. and B.C.

Are used and placed after the year, e.g., 53 B.C., but at times there will be material from other sources that uses C.E. (common era) and B.C.E. (before common era). More institutions, especially academic ones, are using C.E. and B.C.E.

Adviser/advisor

Use the “er” ending at all times.
Affect, effect
Affect as a verb means to influence. For example: *Will a warming earth affect storm patterns?*

Effect as a verb means to cause. For example: *The new administration will effect changes in the system.*

As a noun, effect is a result. For example: *The effect was stunning.*

Affect as a noun is used much less often, but has a distinct meaning in the study of psychology.

African-American
Use the hyphen when the phrase is a noun or modifier. A hyphen is used with dual heritage, e.g., Mexican-American, Japanese-American.

Alumni
Use “alumnus” for an individual male; “alumna” for an individual female; “alumni” for a group of males; “alumnae” for a group of females; and “alumni” when referring to a group composed of males and females.

a.m./ p.m.
Always lowercase and set with periods.

*For example: a.m./ p.m.*

Ampersand/ &
Always spell out the symbol for the word *and*, except when provided as part of the formal title of a unit (company, firm, institution, e.g., Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation or AT&T) or event, lecture, etc.

AR
Stands for Augmented Reality (see VR/AR)

Assistant professor, associate professor
Capitalized when they go before a person’s name (e.g., Assistant Professor Joan Smith) but lower case when following a person’s name (e.g., Joan Smith, an associate professor in the biological sciences department)

Association
Do not abbreviate when part of a formal name; on subsequent reference in text the organization can be referred to as the association, with a lowercase a.

Avenues and Streets
First through Ninth for avenues and streets; uses figures beginning with 10th.

*For example: Second Avenue; 12th Street*
B

Bachelor of Arts

Bachelor’s Degree
B.A., bachelor’s

Backward
Not backwards

Buildings
Capitalize the proper names of campus buildings. Following is a list of all campus buildings:
The APEX Bookstore
Carman Hall
Lehman College Center for the Performing Arts
Davis Hall
Gillet Hall
Leonard Lief Library
Science Hall
Shuster Hall
Student Life Building
Note the forward slash: Speech/Theatre Building
Music Building
Old Gym Building
Fine Arts Building
T3 or the Nursing/Student Health Center

C

Campus
Lowercase in all instances.

Campuswide, citywide, statewide
Does not take a hyphen, e.g., campuswide, systemwide, universitywide. However, we still avoid what appear to be clunky uses, often with proper nouns, e.g., CUNYwide, Universitywide, Lehmanwide, etc. In these cases, use the hyphen, CUNY-wide, etc.

Campus Musical and Performance Ensembles
Refer to these groups as follows:

Lehman Big Band
Lehman Brass Quintet
Lehman Chamber Players
Lehman College Community Band
Lehman College and Community Chorus
Lehman Jazz Combo
Lehman Latin Jazz Ensemble
Lehman Percussion Ensemble
Lehman Woodwind Quintet
Lehman Stages
The Lehman Players

Chair
Always lowercase, always gender-neutral. The person in charge of an academic department is its chair, regardless of gender. We do not use chairman or chairwoman.

Cellphone

Centuries
Spell out the first through ninth; use numbers above ninth (e.g., ninth century, 10th century). Always use superscript as in the example given.

Chief Executive Officer, CEO
Spelled out and capitalized as Chief Executive Officer on first reference; use initials, CEO for subsequent uses.

Chairperson, Vice Chairperson
The titles of the two top appointed positions to the Board of Trustees are designated by state law as Chairperson and Vice Chairperson. All University material follows this format when the titles appear before the names. After the names or standing alone in other instances the titles will be in lower case. For consistency, they should be used for heads of any CUNY committees, groups, etc., that are so designated. For non-CUNY organizations, use whatever designations those groups officially apply to the positions.

Chancellor
Always capitalized when appearing before the name of the CUNY Chancellor.

Chief Financial Officer, CFO
The title is always spelled out on first reference and capitalized when place before a name. For example: Chief Financial Officer John Smith…

Child Care
Without a hyphen both as a noun and a modifier.

city
Lowercase when standing alone, including as a reference to New York City.

For example: the City of New York, New York City

Class Year
From any college, John Smith (’98); when following immediately after the name and is always enclosed in parentheses. The year refers to an undergraduate degree. It does not require the full, four-digit year, but two digits need to be preceded by an apostrophe, not a single opening quote. For a master's degree earned from a college, John Smith, M.A.,
(‘98). It must be clear what school or college the graduate is from, either in text preceding the name, or following the name, such as John Doe, Hunter College, (B.A.,’98).

Co. and Inc.
The abbreviations are used in company names in the first reference and are NOT preceded by a comma. For example: XYZ Inc. is correct. XYZ, Inc. is not.

Comma
Lehman College uses the serial comma, also known as the Oxford comma.

Always use a comma to separate all items in a series

For example: The department offers students the opportunity to study health, nutrition, recreation, and health services administration.

Or: The American flag is red, white, and blue.

Use a comma to enclose years:

For example: The legislation was passed by Congress on July 14, 1914, and signed by the President the next day.

Committee Names
Use capitals for first letters of each word (exemptions are always prepositions and articles of 3 letters or less).

Colon
(1) A colon introduces an element or a series of elements. Unless it is a proper noun, lowercase the first word following the colon.

For example: Students are required to present three forms of identification: driver’s license, passport, and birth certificate.

(2) If the colon is introducing two or more sentences, uppercase the first word following the colon.

For example: Henrietta was faced with a hideous choice: Should she reveal what was in the letter and ruin her reputation? Or should she remain silent and compromise the safety of her family?

Copyright Issues
Use of all images (and content, if not original) on the Web must contain copyright information. Use photo credits where credit is due.

Course Titles
Use bold, roman (standard) type, and capitals for course titles. A period ends the phrase.
For example: ANT 250 (IAS 304): The Italian-American Community.

**Courtesy Titles**
Do not use Mr., Mrs., or Ms. Use a person’s full name on first reference and surname on subsequent references. For promotional material, advertisements, brochures, flyers, invitations, etc., such titles can be used when needed.

**D**

**Dates and Days**
Use a comma to separate days and years: July 14, 1914
Do not use a comma to separate a month and year: July 1914
In general, spell out the day of the week: Monday, Tuesday, etc.

**Dash**
See *em* and *hyphen*

**Department**
Capitalize the formal name of a specific department.

*For example:* The Department of Psychology is moving its offices.

Lowercase department names in informal uses.

*For example:* He was a psychology department professor before turning to mathematics.

Lowercase everything except proper nouns/adjectives, or when the department is part of the formal name and cited in the complete form.

*For example:* the history department, the Lehman College Department of Music, the department of music at Lehman

**Distinguished Professor**
Capitalized either before or after a name when it refers to the special CUNY University post.

**doctor, Dr.**
The professional title or abbreviation Dr. is commonly used before the name of a medical doctor or dentist. Many style guides, including the AP’s, had long suggested that it be used only for those in the medical professions. That position has softened and its use before those holding a doctorate has become acceptable as long as it is evident what the degree relates to (e.g., historian, sociologist).
It is not our preference to use Dr. before the names of any and all holders of doctorate degrees, but it does not need to be removed, for instance, in formal CUNY invitations, in congratulatory advertisements, etc. And, at times, there may be a strong preference for its use in text. In such a case, it should be used in the first reference, reverting to the last name thereafter.

**Em Dash**
The width of an “m,” the em dash is used to amplify or further explain a thought within a sentence. There should never be any space before and after the dash. All dashes in any Lehman communication should be an Em Dash.

*For example:* How much trash do you think 12,000 college students—plus faculty and staff—produce in one day?

**Email**
e.g.
Latin for “for example;” do not confuse with i.e., which stands for “that is.” Requires comma both before and after: “He showed her the different colors he had in stock, e.g., blue, green, and yellow.”

**Emerita**
Female, singular

**Emeritae**
Female, plural

**Emeriti**
Male or mixed male and female, plural

**Emeritus**
Male, singular

**Emeritus/Emerita**
Place emeritus after the formal title: Professor Emeritus Jean Dayan or Jean Daylan, professor emeritus of chemistry.

**Emigrate, immigrate**
You emigrate from a country and the word is used when the concentration is on that country; when the focus is on the new country, immigrate is used.

**Ensure, insure**
Ensure means to make sure of while insure is guaranteeing against loss, as you do with an insurance policy.
Entitled and titled
Are not interchangeable.

For example: He was entitled to the promotion. The book was titled Gone With the Wind.

Often simply the title of the work will suffice, especially when it is a book title in italics or enclosed in quotation marks.

Equal Opportunity Employer
EOE

et al.
At the end of a list of names when more than one person has been omitted, preceded by a comma.

etc.
Preceded by a comma and used at the end of a list when two or more items have been omitted.

F

Facebook

Faculty
The word will be treated as a plural noun in references to the University, without adding the word “members” to follow. There may be occasions when the collective sense is so distinct that a singular verb may seem more appropriate. In that case, be flexible.

Fall
Seasons are not capitalized except as part of formal titles and specific CUNY semester designations.

For example: Spring 2015

First Name, Last Name
Use first names in subsequent references for children through age 17, last names for adults age 18 and above. If more than one child has the same first name, or more than one adult has the same last name, use their full names. If that doesn't clarify who’s who, add some other distinguishing bit of information

For example: (Boy Scout Chris Jones, football quarterback Chris Jones).
First-year student
Preferred by some to freshman when referring to a specific individual, because it is gender neutral, but freshmen and freshman continued to be used as a class designation.

Follow-up, follow up
Follow-up is a noun and adjective; follow up is the verb form.

G

Grade Point Average
GPA, no periods

Please note: Lehman College does not publish any student’s GPA unless it is in reference to an award that is publicly given for achieving the highest GPA in a graduating class.

Great Recession
The recession that began in December 2007 and officially ended in June 2009, according to the National Bureau of Economic Research.

H

Headlines
Generally capitalize the first letter of each word except articles, prepositions and conjunctions of less than four letters—a, an, and, of, the, to—and also cap the first letter in those words when they begin a line (as a rule, they shouldn't end a line).

Deks/dropheads are treated like sentences, whether they have a verb or not; capitalize the first word and proper names. But don't put a period at the end unless more than one sentence is used.

Health care
Two words except in formal names, such as our own program at York College.

Hispanic/Latino
One who is, or whose ancestors were, from a Spanish-speaking country in South or Central America. The usage choice depends upon a person’s or people’s preference.

Historic
It’s “a” historic event. Use the article “a” before consonant sounds that exist in common American usage—e.g., a house, a hospital, a history book. Use the article “an” before American vowel sounds e.g., an hour, an heir. A few words, notably herb, swing both ways.

Hyphen
Use a hyphen to separate numbers, such as telephone numbers, Social Security numbers, and ISBN numbers.

    For example: 718-960-5555    121-34-5555
Use a hyphen to link words with prefixes.

*For example:* ex-wife or ex-factor

Use a hyphen to link compound modifiers:

*For example:* man-eating shark (as opposed to *man eating shark*, which could be interpreted as a man eating the meat of a shark).

*Or:* wild-goose chase as opposed to *wild goose chase*, which could be interpreted as a goose chase that is wild)

I

i.e.
Latin for “that is” and requires a comma both before and after a comma. Do not confuse with e.g., which means “for example.”

*For example:* He found the topic provocative, i.e., it caused a heated discussion in the class.

**Internet and Website**
(1) Capitalize Internet and Web

(2) Use one word and lowercase for website:
   The department’s website is under construction.

**iProducts**
When referring to any Apple products use the company’s trademarked punctuation such as iPhone or iPad. In general respect corporate trademarks if they are commonly known. However, trademarked brands that are not household names or simply make a mockery of the rules of English usage can be ignored.

**Institutes and Centers**
   Bronx Data Center
   Bronx Institute
   Center for School/College Collaboratives
   CUNY Institute for Health Equity
   CUNY Institute for Irish American Studies
   CUNY Institute for Mexican Studies
   Institute for Literacy Studies
   Public Service Leadership Institute
Its and It’s

*Its* is a possessive pronoun.

*It’s* is a contraction, which stands for *it is* and needs an apostrophe.

*It’s* time to do the laundry.
The college and all *its* associated entities report to the university.

Italics

Titles of books, journals, magazines, newspapers, films, television programs, and collections of poetry may be set in italics.

Specific episodes, names of songs, short stories, or poems use quotations.

*For example:* *Let It Be* is the last studio album the Beatles released before breaking up. The first track on *Let It Be* is “Two of Us.”

Academic and scientific journals also stand alone without quotation marks.

In headlines: Book titles and other composition titles are enclosed in single, not double, quotation marks.

Journals

Academic and scientific journals stand alone without the quotation marks that are used with a number of other compositions.

L

Login

When used as a verb, it is spelled as two words “log in.” When used as a noun, it becomes login or logon.

*For example:* Do not forget to log in to the website using the proper login.

M

Macaulay Honors College

On subsequent reference, the Honors College

Mail Room

Two words

Midnight

Not 12 p.m. or 12 midnight
**N**

**Name of Institution**
Lehman College, Herbert H. Lehman College, or Lehman College, CUNY

*Note: Herbert H. Lehman is only used for certain formal communications. In general, Lehman College is preferred.*

**Namesake**
Herbert H. Lehman

**O**

**Non-**
In general, no hyphen when used as a prefix.

**Online**
One word in all cases when referring to the computer communication term.

**OK**
Not okay to use. Always use okay.

**P**

**Pathways**

**Pass/fail**

**Pell Grant(s)**

**Percent**
Not “per cent.” Avoid use of % except in charts and other graphics.

**Period**
Use a period to mark the end of a complete sentence.

*For example:* Topics and credits will vary and be announced each semester.

If a complete sentence is enclosed in parentheses, place the period inside the parenthesis.

*For example:* Fill out the application and return it to Shuster Hall, Room 300.

If the sentence is included within another sentence, place the period outside the parenthesis.
For example: Students must apply for admission before November 15 (don’t forget to print out the application).

Plurals
Most nouns form the plural by adding “s.” If they end in ch, j, s, sh, x, or z, add “es.” Some nouns ending in “y” receive an “ies” ending. If uncertain, consult a dictionary. For proper nouns, add “s” or “es” to form the plural.

For example: Jones—Joneses / Afghan—Afghans

For years and acronyms, just add “s,” with no apostrophe.

For example: 1990s, CPAs, MRIs

Possessives
Form the possessive singular of nouns by adding apostrophe and “s.”

For example: The cat’s meow

The same rule applies to proper nouns, letters, and numbers.

For example: Phyllis’s car, Stacey’s shoes

Exceptions to the general rule are nouns in plural form, but singular in meaning. These take an apostrophe with no “s.”

For example: Politics’ true meaning, economics’ forerunners

The same rule applies when the name of a place or an organization is a plural form ending in “s.”

For example: Veterans and Reservists Affairs’ website

Postgraduate

Presidents and Deans
Current listing on the Web.

For CUNY: http://www.cuny.edu/about/administration/presidents.html

For Lehman: http://www.lehman.edu/president/senior-administrators.php

Professor, associate professor
Use it in the uppercase before a name and don't abbreviate. Don’t continue using the word or words in subsequent references, unless part of a quote.

For example: John Jones, a Lehman College history professor, participated in the panel discussion with Professor Jane Doe and Associate Professor Neil Redfeld. Jones, Doe and Redfeld also answered questions from the audience.
Punctuation
Lehman College follows the following rules:

Apostrophe: *The Elements of Style* rule is observed: Charles’s poems, etc.

Colons: Capitalize the first letter of the first word of a full sentence after a colon; lowercase the first word of a fragment.

Comma: The Oxford, or serial, comma is used at all times.

Dash: Always an Em Dash, never have spaces between the dash and the word.

Period: One space, not two, between the end of one sentence and the beginning of the next.

Quotation Marks: In headlines, single quotation marks are used to enclose material that would have standard double quotes in text, e.g., composition titles.

For punctuation, consult *The Chicago Manual of Style*.

R
Rhodes Scholar

Room
In general, spell out and capitalize (e.g., Room 104).

Q

Quotation Marks
Place punctuation inside quotation marks.

S

Said or Says
The nature of the material dictates the choice. The best guideline: There should be consistency within an article, avoiding the back and forth of past and present. A news item or announcement will most often use "said" for attribution, while a feature story in a CUNY magazine such as Salute to Scholars, may be better served by present-tense attribution. At CUNY, we can have multiple choices dealing with the same information. A news story, for instance, would use "said" when quoting someone, but a promo blurb for a video of the individual making the statement would use the present tense.
**Spacing**
Spaces between sentences: Always one space—not two—between sentences and other punctuation.

**Subscripts/Superscripts**
Avoid both sub- and superscripts for st, th, rd, nd. The preference is 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th with the same font size as the number.

**Telephone Numbers**
Use a hyphen. Never use parenthesis to set off the area code.

718-960-5555.

**Time**
Always use figures and set in lowercase type with periods.

*For example:* 2 p.m.

When giving a range of time, if the event begins and ends at the same time of day, only note the time of day once.

*For example:* 9:30-11:30 a.m. (NOT 9:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m.)

There should be NO spacing between the em dash or hyphen.

**That, Which**
Both are relative pronouns. Use “that” to introduce an essential clause. Use “which” to introduce a non-essential clause.

*For example:* The Lehman College Art Gallery has launched a new website that will help educators. (*essential clause*)

and

Besides reaching the finish line, the most memorable part of the experience was enjoying the music and cheers, which gave the race a relaxed vibe. (*non-essential*)

**The**
Capitalize if part of a composition title.

*For example:* The New York Times.

Lowercase when used with organizations.
For example: The decision was based on the bylaws that govern the City University of New York.

The Bronx
Preceded by the article in copy, but it is omitted in graphs, charts, etc.

Theater
Use this spelling unless the proper name is Theatre. Ex. Lovinger Theatre.

Toward, Towards
In American English, the preferred usage is without the “s.” This also applies to other directional words, such as upward, downward, forward, backward, and afterward.

U

U.S. Supreme Court

underrated, underground
Usually, no hyphen.

undocumented alien
Undocumented suggests there may be no illegality involved, which may not be the case, but illegal alien declares illegality and that, too, can be erroneous. When writing about illegal situations we should use the word illegal, but in situations of uncertainty, undocumented should suffice.

United Nations
U.N., but UN in headlines

United States
Is spelled out as a noun, abbreviated U.S. as a modifier. U.S. with periods in headlines, too.

University
Always with a capital when referring to The City University of New York, lower case the "u" when referring to other universities after the first mention.

University Faculty Senate

Upper East Side
Referring to the geographic area in Manhattan

Upper West Side
Referring to the geographic area in Manhattan

U.S.
As a modifier; used with periods in headlines, unlike UN.
V

Versus, vs., v.
Versus in text, vs. in headlines, v. in court cases

Veterans Day
No apostrophe

Vice Chair
No hyphen; lowercase after a name or standing alone.

Vice Chairperson
No hyphen; lowercase after a name or standing alone.

Vice President
No hyphen; Vice President before a name. Lowercase after a name or standing alone.

W

Wall Street

Washington, D.C.
Washington in subsequent reference, or in first reference when it's clear the reference is
to the nation's capital.

Web
webcast
webpage
website

West Side
Referring to the geographic area in Manhattan

West Side Highway
Referring to the highway in Manhattan

winter

workday, workforce, workout, workplace, workweek

world-class
Hyphenated when before what it modifies, two words when after.

X

X-ray
Noun, verb, and adjective.

Y

year-end
yearlong
year-round
York College
YouTube

Z

zero, zeros

ZIP code
ZIP in upper case, code in lower.