

Content is King

Writing for the web and school publications

Strong content is timely, relevant, well-written, concise and consistent. These guidelines will assist you as you write for the School of Management website, but the principles can be used in writing for any medium.

Less is more

Individuals are far more likely to read a concise page of information than several pages of material with more detail than they want or need. Whenever possible, keep your content to one “screen load.” Studies show most readers do not hit the page-down button or scroll bar. A webpage should not exceed three screen loads (equivalent to hitting the page-down button twice). To avoid overloading each page, use links for additional information or other UBCMS features to give readers who want more information the chance to drill down to the content they need.

Four eyes before posting

Never post new content on the live website until at least two people have carefully proofed the material. Spell checkers and grammar checkers are helpful, but not foolproof, and it’s easy to overlook an error in your own writing. The best writers employ this rule without exception.

Consistency is key

Some rules of grammar and punctuation vary according to style guide. To ensure consistency on our website and publications, we use the Associated Press Style Guide. This document includes guidelines for the top 25 style, grammar and punctuation inconsistencies found in School of Management materials. These guidelines will provide you with the most common AP style rules and other rules specific to UB and the School of Management.

Brand and personality

UB and the School of Management have an authentic personality, with defined traits informed by extensive research. As you write, remember the School of Management brand attributes, and always create content that is relatable and relevant to your specific readers. For more, consult UB’s [Copy Tips](#) and [Personality Attributes](#) pages.

If you have questions, contact Jacqueline Ghosen, assistant dean and director of communications, at 645-2833 or ghosen@buffalo.edu. This guide will be updated periodically, and we welcome your comments about how we can make it most useful for you.

School of Management Editorial Style Guide – Our Top 25

1. Do not use ALL CAPITAL LETTERS, bold and underlining in our web content.

To highlight specific information, use UBCMS components such as Call to Action or Callout.

2. Email – no hyphen, per Associated Press

I received an email. (*correct*)

I received an e-mail. (*incorrect*)

Also, avoid using “email” as a verb.

Send your application by email. (*correct*)

Email your application. (*incorrect*)

When listing an email in web content (as opposed to a “Contact Us” box), use the email alias and office name – not an individual’s email address and name. Also, make the email address visible and provide a live hyperlink.

For more information, contact the Alumni Engagement and External Relations Office at mgt-alumni@buffalo.edu or 716-645-3224.

3. When referencing the School of Management, spell it out fully. Never use SOM.

School of Management (*correct*)

SOM (*incorrect*)

Also, refer to the following when referencing the School of Management as part of UB.

UB School of Management (*correct*)

UB’s School of Management (*incorrect*)

University at Buffalo School of Management (*correct*)

University at Buffalo’s School of Management (*incorrect*)

4. Unless part of a headline, do not capitalize “university” or “school” when they’re not part of a proper name. This rule applies to “program,” “center,” “department,” “office,” etc.

Consult university guidelines for further clarification. (*correct, not proper name*)

The University at Buffalo has guidelines for clarification. (*correct, proper name*)

Consult University guidelines for further clarification. (*incorrect*)

The school’s curriculum is extensive. (*correct, not proper name*)

The School of Management’s curriculum is extensive. (*correct, proper name*)

The School’s curriculum is extensive. (*incorrect*)

Consider applying for the Professional MBA program. (*correct*)

Consider applying for the Professional MBA Program. (*incorrect*)

5. Do not capitalize options, concentrations or tracks.

Review the supply chains and operations management option. (*correct*)

Review the Supply Chains and Operations Management Option. (*incorrect*)

The health care management concentration is now available. (*correct*)

The Health Care Management Concentration is now available. (*incorrect*)

6. Avoid abbreviations or acronyms in web content. Spell out organizations on first reference. If the name is used again, include the acronym in parentheses after and use it for later references.

The Radical Underwater First United Sailors meets Saturday mornings. (*correct*)

RUFUS meets Saturday mornings. (*incorrect on first reference*)

The Radical Underwater First United Sailors (RUFUS) meets Saturdays. *(correct if RUFUS is used again)*

7. Spell out “telephone” completely in all running text references.

“Phone” or “Phone number” is not correct. In a list, acceptable abbreviation: Tel.

Area codes do not include parenthesis in AP style.

716-645-3206 *(correct)* (716) 645-3206 *(incorrect)* 716.645.3206 *(incorrect)*

8. “Username,” “online” and “password” are each one word, with no hyphen. As a noun “login” is one word, but as a verb it is spelled “log in.”

Log in with your username and password online. *(correct)*

Login with your user name and pass word on-line. *(incorrect)*

Memorize your UBIT login credentials. *(correct)*

9. In general, spell out whole numbers below 10 and use figures for 10 and above. Some exceptions apply; see below and see AP Style Guide for full list.

They had three sons and two daughters. *(correct)*

They had 3 sons and 2 daughters *(incorrect)*

They had a fleet of 10 cars and two buses. *(correct)*

They had a fleet of ten cars and two buses. *(incorrect)*

Exception: Use numerals when referring to course credit hours.

A 3-credit-hour course and a 4-credit-hour course *(correct)*

A three-credit-hour course and a four-credit-hour course *(incorrect)*

Exception: Use numerals for money, percentages, dimensions and ages.

\$2 million dollars; 5 cents

An 8-year-old girl; the boy, 7, was awarded; the man was 60 years old

He is 5 feet 6 inches tall; the 5-foot-6 man

The car is 17 feet long, 6 feet wide and 5 feet high

3.7 percent interest; 7 percentage points; .05 percent (see AP for fractions)

10. Avoid ampersands unless part of an official company name (i.e. Ernst & Young).

Management Science and Systems *(correct)*

Management Science & Systems *(incorrect)*

11. Eliminate exclamation points in business writing.

Join us for our senior celebration on May 11. *(correct)*

Join us for our senior celebration on May 11! *(incorrect)*

12. When listing bulleted items, be consistent. Either put a period at the end of each bulleted item or don't put one on any.

13. Compound Modifiers (Hyphenation and Capitalization)

When a compound modifier (two or more words that express a single concept) precedes a noun, use hyphens to link all words in the phrase.

Full-time job *(correct)*

Know-it-all attitude *(correct)*

Full time job *(incorrect)*

Know it all attitude *(incorrect)*

Exception: Do not hyphenate the modifier if it includes the adverb “very” or any adverb ending in “ly.”

Nationally ranked school (*correct*)

Nationally-ranked school (*incorrect*)

Note: Many words that are hyphenated before a noun are not hyphenated after (she has a full-time job; she works full time). Consult AP for details.

In headings and titles, capitalize all words in a compound modifier.

Information for Full-Time Students (*correct*)

Information for Full-time Students (*incorrect*)

In running text, do not capitalize all words in a compound modifier.

Full-time students should apply online. (*correct*)

Full-Time students should apply online. (*incorrect*)

14. Omit the comma in a simple series before “and” or “or.”

Nancy is interested in tax, law and accounting. (*correct*)

Nancy is interested in tax, law, and accounting. (*incorrect*)

15. Degrees

Spell out degrees in running text.

She has bachelor’s degree, and he has a master’s degree. (Note: apostrophe ‘s’)

She has a Bachelor of Science in accounting and Master of Business Administration. (note: no apostrophe ‘s’)

When listing names and credentials, eliminate periods in academic degrees.

BS, MBA, MS, PhD (*correct*)

B.S., M.B.A., M.S., Ph.D. (*incorrect*)

The style for indicating alumni degrees differs across UB. For consistency, use the following style for all School of Management events and publications, including Buffalo Business magazine and the school’s website: **After the individual’s name, type a comma and a space, and list the degree (BS, MBA, MS, PhD, EMBA, PMBA or CEL), followed by a space, a “smart” apostrophe (’) and the last two digits of the year. For those with more than one School of Management degree, list them in the order in which they were received, separated by commas. Only include School of Management degrees, with the exception of dual degrees (i.e. JD/MBA, MD/MBA).**

John C. Doe, BS ’88 (School of Management BS in 1988)

Jane A. Doe, BS ’86, MBA ’90 (School of Management BS in 1986, School of Management MBA in 1990)

Mary T. Doe, PhD ’93 (School of Management PhD in 1993, lower degrees elsewhere)

When used in a sentence, include a comma after the last degree.

John Smith, BS ’91, MBA ’95, serves as president and CEO. (*correct*)

John Smith, BS ’91, MBA ’95 serves as president and CEO. (*incorrect*)

16. Place periods in the abbreviation for the United States.

U.S. (*correct*)

US (*incorrect*)

17. Spell out “percent” instead of using its symbol.

Student enrollment increased 20 percent. (*correct*)

Student enrollment increased 20%. (*incorrect*)

18. **“Website” is one word with a lower case “w” (unless used in a headline or at the beginning of a sentence).** Also, webpage, webcam, webcast and webmaster. But, web address and web browser.

The School of Management launched its new website. The web address is mgt.buffalo.edu. *(correct)*

The School of Management launched its new Web site. The webaddress is mgt.buffalo.edu. *(incorrect)*

Note: When listing our web address, do not use www. Simply list mgt.buffalo.edu.

19. Dates and Times

For dates, use cardinal numbers vs. ordinals, meaning eliminate numeral suffixes (“th” “st,” “rd” and “nd”).

Dec. 8 *(correct)*

Dec. 8th *(incorrect)*

July 3 *(correct)*

July 3rd *(incorrect)*

When a month is used with a specific date, abbreviate only Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov. and Dec. For month and year alone, spell out and do not use a comma.

Feb. 12, 2015 *(correct)*

February 2015 *(correct)*

February 12, 2015 *(incorrect)*

February, 2015 *(incorrect)*

Place a comma after the year if you list a full date and the sentence does not end after the date. Example: Johnson will visit UB on Sept. 5, 2009, and stay for five days.

Punctuate times using AP guidelines for consistency.

8 a.m. *(correct)*

8:00 a.m. *(incorrect)*

8 AM *(incorrect)*

5:30 p.m. *(correct)*

5:30 PM *(incorrect)*

9 to 11 a.m. *(correct)*

9 a.m. to 11 a.m. *(incorrect – for efficiency, eliminate the first “a.m.”)*

When listing times, dates and locations together, order as follows: time of day, date, place. Example: The reception will be held at 5 p.m. May 4 in the Alfiero Center atrium.

20. Advisor (rather than adviser, an exception to AP style)

21. Résumé – Use accent marks. Special characters are available.

22. Seasons

Do not capitalize the seasons in running text.

My favorite time of year is fall. *(correct)*

My favorite time of year is Fall. *(incorrect)*

I am taking a class in the spring 2016 semester. *(correct)*

I am taking a class in the Spring 2016 semester. *(incorrect)*

23. States

Always spell out state names in running text. Include a comma between the city and state and after the state, unless ending a sentence.

Students traveled to Sacramento, California, for the case competition. *(correct)*

Students traveled to Sacramento, Calif., for the case competition *(incorrect)*

Students traveled to Sacramento, California for the case competition *(incorrect)*

Only use Postal Service abbreviations with full addresses including ZIP code.

New York: Capitalize Western New York, Upstate New York, etc. when referring to these regions. Avoid using WNY. When necessary to distinguish the state of New York from the city of New York, use New York State (capital “S” is a UB exception to AP).

24. Academic Titles

When listing an individual’s title on a contact page, list in title case (capitalize first letter of each word).

David Costello

Assistant Dean and Director of Information Technology

Ann Cohen

Associate Professor

Department of Accounting and Law

In a sentence, do not capitalize a title unless it comes before the name.

Satish Tripathi, UB president, said... *(correct and preferred)*

UB President Satish Tripathi said... *(correct, but not preferred)*

Satish Tripathi, President of UB, said... *(incorrect)*

Exception: When a professor has a “named” or endowed professorship, it is capitalized both before and after a name.

Kee Chung, Louis M. Jacobs Professor of Financial Planning and Control, said ... *(correct)*

25. Always use specific, concrete language and omit unnecessary words. Strong writing is concise.

Tuesday, June 27, 2017 *(incorrect, omit unnecessary words)*

June 27, 2017 *(correct)*

Because of the fact that... *(incorrect, omit unnecessary words)*

Because *(correct)*

The program is designed to prepare students... *(incorrect)*

The program prepares students... *(correct, say what the program does, not what it’s designed to do)*

Please refer to the academic calendar. *(incorrect, omit “please”)*

Refer to the academic calendar. *(correct)*

A period of unfavorable weather set in. *(incorrect, vague)*

It rained every day for a week. *(correct, specific and descriptive)*

1,000,000 dollars *(incorrect)* \$1 million *(correct)*

\$4.00 *(incorrect)* \$4 *(correct)*