



College of Education

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

WRITING STYLE GUIDE

December 2024

College of Education Writing Style Guide

The College of Education at Illinois is the academic home to preeminent educational leaders and provides foundational instruction for future educators and scholars. Maintaining a high standard of clarity and consistency in writing that originates from the College and its community of faculty, staff members and students is an essential duty of the Office of Marketing and Communications.

By following these guidelines, we strengthen the recognition of the College of Education's mission and values.

Our writing style guide is organized from most-specific (College-level) items to most-broad (Associated Press Stylebook-level) instances and should be referenced in this order.

In other words, first check to see if your question is covered in the College style section. If not, move to the university style section, and then to the AP Stylebook or Webster's New College World Dictionary.

Feel free to email communications@education.illinois.edu with any usage questions not specifically addressed in these writing style resources.

Writing style is continually changing, along with society and the landscape of higher education. Style definitions are added or updated regularly. We hope this guide serves as a tool to support faculty, staff, and units' written efforts on behalf of Education at Illinois.

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION STYLE

The following guidelines are specific to the College of Education and may be in addition to or different from some of the university's guidelines. Many items are commonly-used references within the College or the field of education, listed here for ease of use:

College of Education Abbreviations

The first written reference to the College should be **College of Education**. When writing for external-to-campus audiences especially, using the full **College of Education at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign** is encouraged.

Acceptable second references include **Education at Illinois**, **College**, or **Education**. Use of the acronym COE or CoE is acceptable only in limited internal communications and can be confused with the campus' Grainger College of Engineering.

Academic Department Abbreviations

Use in communications only where these departments are familiar to general audiences (e.g. publications to alumni, etc.) and/or use secondarily after referencing the full department name.

- **C&I** (Curriculum & Instruction)
- **EPOL** (Education Policy, Organization & Leadership)
- **EPSY** (Educational Psychology)
- **SPED** (Special Education)

Education Unit Abbreviations

Various units, centers and programs in the College with an acceptable abbreviation or acronym are:

- **SAAO** (Undergraduate Student Academic Affairs Office)
- **GSSO** (Graduate Student Services Office)
- **BER** (Bureau of Educational Research)
- **OCRL** (Office of Community College Research and Leadership)
- **CREA** (Center for Culturally Responsive Evaluation and Assessment)
- **INTC** (Illinois New Teacher Collaborative)
- **COTE** (Council on Teacher Education)
- **TIER-ED** (Technology Innovation in Educational Research and Design)
- **IECAM** (Illinois Early Childhood Asset Map)
- **ECC** (Early Childhood Collective)
- **EJP** (Education Justice Project)
- **MSTE** (Office for Mathematics, Science, and Technology Education)
- **YLF** (Youth Literature Festival)

University Primary School should be spelled out as such first reference, with **Uni Primary** acceptable subsequently. **Do not use the acronym UPS to refer to the school.**

Degree Names and Abbreviations

The College follows the [University of Illinois Alumni Association](#) method of listing and naming conventions for conferred degrees within copy in the following ways, with degree holder's name bolded:

Bachelor's degree: year followed by abbreviated academic department; no commas before and after the degree listing. (Example: **Jane Doe**, B.S. '02 C&I, begins her new teaching job in January.)

Master’s degree: degree type followed by the year and academic department; add commas before and after the degree listing. (Example: The work of **Jane Doe**, M.S. ’11 SPED, has transformed the field.)

Doctorate: degree type followed by the year and academic department; add commas before and after the degree listing. (Example: The work of **Jane Doe**, Ed.D. ’11 C&I, has transformed the field.)

Numerous College graduates within the last few decades have graduated with Department of Education Organization & Leadership (EOL) and Department of Educational Policy Studies (EPS) degrees, for instance, both of which merged into EPOL. In these cases, use the abbreviations of the historical, now-defunct academic departments when listing the degree.

When no academic department is listed in the TED database for a College graduate’s degree, use the year and the “ED” wording to indicate an “Education” degree. This occurs often for graduates who received their degrees several decades ago. Examples:

- **Bachelor’s degree:** ’68 ED
- **Master’s degree:** Ed.M. ’69 ED
- **Doctorate:** Ph.D. ’73 ED

College Marketing and Messaging

In 2013, the College of Education launched the image campaign, **Great Minds Think Illinois**. This campaign celebrates the high level of excellence and impact of our students, faculty, staff, and alumni. It is unique to our College, and its relevancy has persisted and is used across social media including the hashtags **#GreatMinds #ThinkEdIllinois**, in environmental graphics within the Education building, and throughout digital and printed materials. The GMTI mark is available as a graphic image file. **No attempts should be made to recreate it in other typeface or font styles.**

COMMON EDUCATION-SPECIFIC WRITING STYLE ITEMS

- **African American**, no hyphen.
- **Alumna, Alumnae:** female singular and plural, respectively.
- **Alumnus, Alumni:** male singular and plural, respectively. Use alumni for groups consisting of males and females.
- **Asian American**, no hyphen.
- **Author**, do not use as a verb: Papers are “co-written” but not “co-authored.” Also, it is the author “of” the study, not the author “on” the study.

- **College of Education Building address:** spell out 1310 **South Sixth Street** or abbreviate to **S. Sixth St.**; do not use 6th Street.
- **Comma usage:** do not use serial commas unless needed for clarity.
- Departments of **Education** Policy, Organization and Leadership and **Educational** Psychology
- **Grade level abbreviations:** use **pre-K, K-12, P-20** as appropriate to the content; lowercase **kindergarten**. Spell out **eighth grade student** or use **grades seven and eight**, rather than 8th grader, whenever possible.
- **Gutgsell Professor:** Edward William and Jane Marr Gutgsell Endowed Professors, not Gutsgell (sp).
- **I Hotel** and **I Hotel and Conference Center**, not I-Hotel with a hyphen nor iHotel lowercase.
- The **principal** of the school has strong **principles**.

See the campus' [Strategic Communications and Marketing Editorial and Style Guide](#) for additional guidelines.

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN STYLE

The College of Education follows the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign's Office of [Strategic Communications and Marketing Editorial and Style Guide](#), which is fairly robust and based on the Associated Press Stylebook and Webster's New World College Dictionary. When writing non-research paper works for general audiences, the university's writing style guidelines supersede reference- and research-based guides such as The Chicago Manual of Style, American Psychological Association (APA) Stylebook, etc.

Campus Name

The first reference to the campus should be **University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign**. Acceptable second and subsequent references include:

- University of Illinois
- U. of I.
- Illinois

Using the acronym UIUC to refer to the university is NOT recommended in communications whether internal or external. Do not capitalize "university" when the word appears by itself as a noun or an adjective. **Correct:** The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign is a world-class research university. The university is one of the largest recipients of National Science Foundation funding in the United States. [See more about campus name guidelines at the StratCom website.](#)

COE Exceptions to U. of I. Writing Style

The following items (not an exhaustive list) indicate writing style guidelines the College of Education practices in print and digital deliverables **that are exceptions, or contrary to** the university’s writing style guide:

- **College:** we capitalize the word “College” in copy when referring to the College of Education at Illinois, in all instances.
- **Academic Titles:** in writing, the College does distinguish among faculty levels and types: assistant professor, associate professor, professor, teaching professor, emeritus professor, etc.
- **Em dash:** use this symbol—sparingly—to set off words or phrases within sentences for affect. (Campus writing guidelines rather use the en dash with a space before and after.)
- **Headlines:** each word is first-letter capitalized, sans words that are articles (a, an, the, of, etc.) in the College’s marketing-oriented news articles, announcements, events, and in mass email communications to faculty, staff, and students. (The university’s rule for headlines is to only capitalize the first letter of the first word.)
- **Academic Programs:** the College typically capitalizes the names of departmental programs (Elementary Education, Learning and Education Studies, for example), whereas the university recommends not capitalizing academic program names.
- **Times:** when used in both print and digital event invitations and printed event programs, the College uses the more formal “:00 p.m.” for “5:00 p.m.” rather than the university’s shortened style of “5 p.m.”

Additional Writing and Editing Resources

The university’s Office of Strategic Communications and Marketing is a resource for writing that leverages the campus’ world-class reputation. For writers looking to make a strategic connection with audiences, StratCom has guidance on the right **personality, voice and tone** to represent the campus in your writing. They also provide approved **messaging for key audiences** of the university.

The College and the university encourage its writers and editors to use the most current edition of the **AP Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law** for a comprehensive listing of style guidelines to follow when writing news stories and announcements.

The campus’ **Writers Workshop** supports all writers in the campus community—faculty, staff, and students—across all forms of academic and professional writing, at any stage of the writing process. They offer writing groups, writing-related presentations, and writing consultations with feedback on essays, research papers, personal statements, cover letters, theses and dissertations, manuscripts for publication, presentations, digital compositions, and anything between and beyond.