

AUA American University
of Armenia

Editorial Style Guide

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Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Academic Degrees, Ranks, Position Titles, and Other Abbreviations	4
Academic Degrees	
Academic Ranks	
Position Titles and Degrees	
Standardized Admission Tests	
Other Abbreviations	
Names of Persons, Places, and Buildings	7
First Name/Last Name of Persons	
University Buildings and Rooms	
Colleges, Programs, Centers, and Offices	
Spelling, Capitalization, and Punctuation	9
Spelling	
Capitalization	
Numbers, Dates, and Times	
Headlines and Composition Titles	11
Other	12
Ampersands	
Ellipsis	
Dashes	
Periods and Commas	
Exclamation Marks	
Italicization	
Bullets	
Quotations	
Appendix	14

Introduction

The American University of Armenia (AUA) Editorial Style Guide is adopted to ensure brand consistency through the uniform application of punctuation rules, capitalization, abbreviations, acronyms, and headlines, as well as recommended spelling for use by AUA.

When writing or editing a press release or article for the AUA Newsroom or the Insider, use brief sentences, short paragraphs, and simple language that everyone can understand. Keep the headline or title of the article brief but catchy to grab the attention of readers. AUA primarily produces news journalism (announcing or reporting events) and feature articles (taking a deeper look at events, people, or topics of interest to AUA and the broader community).

The guidelines set forth in this reference manual generally follow the [Associated Press \(AP\) Stylebook](#). There are, however, exceptions that are adopted to better suit the unique circumstances and meet the needs of the University. In such cases, AUA's editorial standards supersede those of AP. For topics not covered in this manual, the AUA Office of Communications suggests following the rules and standards recommended in the AP Stylebook.

Academic Degrees

When referring to degrees and depending on the content of the article, use either Bachelor of Arts degree, Master of Science, Master of Arts, etc. or bachelor's degree, master's degree, doctoral degree, the latter options not capitalized, as shown.

When using the full name of a degree, capitalize all of it. For example, Bachelor of Arts in Business; Bachelor of Arts in Politics and Governance; Master of Science in Industrial Engineering; Master of Science in Economics; Master of Public Health; etc. There is no need to use the abbreviation in parentheses next to the name of the degree, unless you will use it again in the same text.

When using academic degree abbreviations, use periods (with no spaces in between): B.A., B.S., M.A., Ph.D., Ed.D., J.D., etc. An acceptable exception is MBA (for Master of Business Administration).

Do not add the word “degree” after an abbreviation of the degree nor after the full name of the degree. For instance, “so-and-so is pursuing a Ph.D. at the University of Toronto” and not “so-and-so is pursuing a Ph.D. degree at the University of Toronto.”

When mentioning the names of alumni/alumnae, show the abbreviated degree they earned at AUA with the year of graduation in the following format: Name Surname (LL.M. '98); or (MAHRSJ '22); (MATEFL '20); etc. Please note that this format is typical of many academic institutions and is not recommended for use in press releases or other communication disseminated to the media. Also, there is no comma between the name and degree information.

Academic Ranks

Ranks, such as professor, associate professor (docent), or assistant professor, are capitalized when used before a person's name, but not capitalized when used after the name or in other contexts without a name. For example, Associate Professor Aram Manukyan or Aram Manukyan, associate professor. The accepted practice with adjunct lecturer or instructor (which are not considered to be academic ranks) is not to capitalize, whether used before or after a person's name.

Position Titles and Degrees

Position titles follow the same rule as in the AP Stylebook, capitalized when they form part of a name and are used immediately before it. Position titles are not capitalized when used after a name or when generally referring to a position. Examples are CHSS Dean Dr. Mary Jones (or Dr. Mary Jones, dean of CHSS*); Synopsis Director of Operations Thomas Avakian (or Thomas Avakian, director of operations at Synopsis); AUA President Dr. Bruce Boghosian (or Dr. Bruce Boghosian, president of AUA).

However, it is recommended not to put long titles, authorships, and other associations before a person's name. Thus, for example, Dr. Armen Der Kiureghian, author of the book *Structural and System Reliability*, co-founder of AUA, and AUA interim president.

* Note that AUA requires writing a term or name in full the first time you use it, immediately followed by the acronym in parentheses. For example, Association of Certified Public Accountants (ACPA).

AUA deviates from the AP Stylebook when using Dr. to denote a doctoral degree in various fields. Ph.D. (abbreviated from Doctor of Philosophy) should not be used together with Dr. placed before a name. Thus, Dr. Lawrence Paul, Ph.D., is incorrect. The correct use is Dr. Lawrence Paul or Lawrence Paul, Ph.D., the latter form recommended for use in official pamphlets, banners, etc.

Standardized Admission Tests

Most standardized admission tests are used without periods. Examples of those most used at AUA are TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language), ACT (American College Test), IELTS (International English Language Testing System), GRE (Graduate Record Examination), GMAT (Graduate Management Admission Test), LSAT (Law School Admission Test), etc. These are understood by the common reader and no expansion of the acronyms is needed.

Do not add the word “test” or “exam” after any of the above acronyms.

Other Abbreviations

When writing/editing news stories, do not abbreviate.*

- State names (as in Virginia, not VA; California, not CA). The only exception is abbreviating the District of Columbia as D.C. (which is not a state)
- Alumni or alumnae, not alum
- The days of the week and months (write out Wednesday, not Wed.; August, not Aug.). When used with a specific date, abbreviate in three letters only (Jan., Feb., Sep., Oct., Dec., but May)
- Percent, not %
- And, not &
- USD for U.S. dollars, not US\$ — for example, USD 9 million
- For example, not e.g. (*exempli gratia* in Latin)
- In other words, or that is to say, not i.e. (*id est* in Latin)
- Generic street names when used without a specific address, for example Northern Avenue, Baghramyan Street, Republic Square, etc.
- Christmas, not Xmas
- United States — Use periods in the abbreviation, U.S. within texts. In headlines, it's US (no periods)
- United Kingdom — Use periods in the abbreviation, U.K. within texts. In headlines, it's UK (no periods)
- United Nations — Use periods in U.N., for consistency with U.S. within texts. In headlines, it's UN (no periods)
- His/Her Excellency — Use periods in the abbreviation H.E. (no space between)

* These abbreviations are acceptable for use in social media posts and banners.

First Name/Last Name of Persons

There is no exception to the rule of capitalizing proper names. In practice, once you have stated a person's full name the first time (perhaps even with rank and title), use their last name only in subsequent uses.

With names containing Jr. and Sr. suffixes, do not use a comma between the person's last name and Jr. or Sr., as in John O. Smith Jr.

University Buildings and Rooms

Capitalize the names of campus buildings and dedicated rooms.

- Paramaz Avedisian Building
- Main Building
- K. George and Carolann S. Najarian MD Building
- Mashikian Student Residence
- AUA Center
- Mihran and Elizabeth Agbabian Hall
- AGBU Papazian Library
- Faculty Lounge
- Large Auditorium
- Manoogian Hall
- Akian Art Gallery
- Albert & Terry Bezjian Cafeteria
- Kevork & Cecile Keshishian Student Union

- Flo Thomasian Speck Collaborative Study Space
- Zoryan Institute and AUA Center for Oral History

Colleges, Programs, Centers, and Offices

Capitalize the full official name of the college, program, department, office, or unit when used for the first time in text.

The full names of AUA **colleges** are shown below with their respective standardized acronyms:

- Zaven P. and Sonia Akian College of Science and Engineering (ACSE)
- College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHSS)
- Manoogian Simone College of Business and Economics (MSCBE)
- Gerald and Patricia Turpanjian College of Health Sciences (TCHS)

Examples of **offices** at AUA are shown below:

- Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA)
- Office of Admissions
- Office of Alumni Relations
- Office of Communications
- Office of the Registrar

The full names of AUA **research centers** are presented below:

- Acopian Center for the Environment
- Center for Research and Applied Linguistics (CRAL)
- Engineering Research Center
- Legal Resource Center (LRC)
- Meghriyan Institute for Preventive Ophthalmology
- Paul Avedisian Center for Business Research and Development (CBRD)
- Turpanjian Institute of Social Sciences (TISS)
- Center for Ethics in Public Affairs (ETICA)
- Zvart Avedisian Onanian Center for Health Services Research and Development
- Center for Excellence in Journalism (CEJ)

The full names of AUA **degree programs and certificate programs** are shown below:

- Bachelor of Arts in Business (BAB)
- Bachelor of Arts in English and Communications (BAEC)
- Bachelor of Arts in Politics and Governance (BAPG)
- Bachelor of Science in Computer Science (BSCS)
- Bachelor of Science in Data Science (BSDS)
- Bachelor of Science in Engineering Sciences (BSES)
- Bachelor of Science in Economics (BSE)
- Bachelor of Science in Environmental and Sustainability Sciences (BSESS)
- Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN)

- Master of Laws (LL.M.)
- Master of Arts in Human Rights and Social Justice (MAHRSJ)
- Master of Arts in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (MATEFL)
- Master of Arts in Multiplatform Journalism (MAMJ)
- Master of Business Administration (MBA)
- Master of Engineering in Industrial Engineering and Systems Management (MEIESM)
- Master of Arts in International Relations and Diplomacy (MAIRD)
- Master of Public Affairs (MPA)
- Master of Public Health (MPH)
- Master of Science in Computer Science and Information Science (MSCIS)
- Master of Science in Economics (MSE)
- Master of Science in Management and Analytics (MSMA)
- Certificate in Translation (CTr)
- Certificate in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (CTEFL)
- Graduate Certificate in Tourism and Hospitality Management (GCTHM)
- Executive Certificate in Management (ECM)
- Certificate in Data Analytics (CDA)

Spelling, Capitalization, *and* Punctuation

Spelling

American English should be used in all communications, except when referring to a name that uses the British spelling of a word. For example, the United Nations Development Programme (not Program).

Capitalization

In general, avoid unnecessary capitalizations. Use a capital letter only if you can justify it by one of the principles listed here. Do not capitalize for emphasis. Using italics or **bold** letters is a better way to accomplish the same function.

In general, references to academic fields of study, areas of concentration or research interest, and other such subject matter or topics are not capitalized, unless referring to specific lecture, course, book, or article titles (including AUA colleges, programs, majors, or minors, as shown earlier). In all cases, the exact wording of the title must be used, without quotation marks. For example, “so-and-so holds a master’s degree in computer science”. Conversely, “so-and-so graduated from AUA with a B.S. in Data Science.”

When referring to AUA (after first use) simply using the word university or referring to a specific

program in second or third use, we capitalize University or Program. Note, these are specific and not general uses of the word university or program.

Similarly, the seasons of the year are not capitalized, unless referring to a specific semester, such as Spring 2023.

Examples of other capitalizations: commencement (not Commencement); Class of 2022 (not class of 2022); diaspora (not Diaspora).

Numbers, Dates, and Times

As a general rule, spell out **numbers zero through nine**. Use figures for numbers 10 or higher (e.g., more than 50 students worked on this project for three months). Exceptions to this are use of numerals in tables, graphs, or other data presentations (even if such numbers are under 10).

Other common exceptions include **age** (9-year-old boy); **dollars, cents, or AMD** (\$5; 9 cents; 3 AMD); **temperature** (it is 2 degrees outside); and **population** (Armenia has a population of 3 million).

Add space between number and unit (e.g., 50 cm).

With **dates**, AUA does not use ordinal numbers. For example, May 21, not May 21st; June 23, not June 23rd; the application deadline is March 31. The next AUA commencement will be held on May 27, 2023.

For **numerals higher than 999**, use commas to separate each group of three digits (except for years and numbers in addresses). For example, “The population of my village is 19,301;” “There were over 3,000 people at the event;” “I used to live at 1601 Amiryan Street.”

When referring to age as an adjective, use hyphens. For example, “Our 16-year-old students need more time to adjust to the AUA environment.”

Spell out **numbers used at the beginning** of a sentence. For example, “Forty thousand people gathered in Liberty Square in Stepanakert,” but do not spell out a year even if it appears at the beginning of a sentence. For example, “1991 is the year of declaration of the independence of Armenia.”

For **times of day**, AUA uses a.m. (ante meridiem) or p.m. (post meridiem) in lowercase, with periods. For example, the public lecture on this topic is scheduled for 6:00 p.m. on Friday, November 4; the Student Union is reserved for six hours, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.; the workshop took place 1:00 - 3:30 p.m. Note there is space between the numbers and a.m./p.m.

For 12:00 p.m. or 12:00 a.m., use noon and midnight instead of numbers (simply because most people are confused with these times)*.

*The format am, pm (without periods and spaces) is acceptable for use in event banners.

Headlines *and* Composition Titles

- In **headlines** (titles of articles we publish in the AUA Newsroom) and **composition titles** (titles of books, movies, plays, poems, albums, radio and TV programs, lectures, speeches, works of art, etc.), capitalize all words in a title, except articles (a, an, the); prepositions of three or fewer letters (for, of, on, up, etc.); and conjunctions of three or fewer letters (and, but, for nor, or, so, yet, etc.), unless any of those start or end the title.
- Use single quotation marks, not double quotation marks in headlines.
- Make every word and every character count. AP headlines are limited to 40-50 characters; use those characters wisely. Try to make each headline as close to the maximum length as possible.
- Millions, billions. These figures can be abbreviated in headlines. For example, \$45 million would be \$45M, and \$5 billion would be \$5B.
- Avoid using uncommon abbreviations.
- Capitalize prepositions of four or more letters (above, after, down, inside, over, with, etc.) and conjunctions of four or more letters (because, while, since, though, etc).

Ampersands

Ampersands should not be used in place of “and” unless they are part of a company’s formal name or if the article is referring to a social media post banner that contains &.

Ellipsis

Ellipsis (...) is used to indicate the deletion of one or more words or phrases in quotes. It is not used together with a period except when a complete sentence precedes the ellipsis (then space, followed by the next sentence, which begins with an ellipsis). Add space before and after an ellipsis when used in the middle of a quote.

Dashes

En dashes (–) are not used in AUA Newsroom or Insider articles. Em dashes (—) are used to provide additional information; to set off a series; and to start lists. Add space on both sides of an em dash. Please do not use a hyphen (-), double hyphen (--) or an en dash (–) instead of an em dash.

Periods and Commas

Periods and commas, when used at the end of a quote, should be inside the quotation marks. For example: She said, “I was happy to take part in

this competition.” A rare exception is the semi-colon, which, if used, must be placed outside the quotation marks.

Use a comma before the word “and” when listing three or more items in a sentence. For example: “AUA faculty, staff, and students participated in the event.”

When a direct quote is longer than a sentence, you may use a colon instead of a comma (e.g., She shared: “I would like to express my gratitude to...”).

Exclamation Marks

Use only when included in a quotation or avoid altogether.

Italicization

Italicize the names of books, conferences, plays, journals, periodicals, albums, films, television shows, etc. Put chapter titles, article titles, and the like in “quotation marks.”

For example: AUA faculty and alumni have published an article titled “Human Resource Management during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Evidence from Armenia” in the *Journal for Eastern European Management Studies*.

Bullets

AUA does not recommend using bullets in short Newsroom or Insider articles. Instead, use a colon (:) or em dash (—) for listing items, separated by a comma (if short) or semicolon (if longer).

Quotations

Use a comma to introduce a complete one-sentence quotation within a paragraph. For example: Wallace said, “She spent six months in Argentina and came back speaking English with a Spanish accent.” Use a colon to introduce quotations of more than one sentence.

Do not use a comma at the start of an indirect or partial quotation: He said the victory put him “firmly on the road to a first-ballot nomination.”

Text Use

- Keep text to a minimum for visual clarity.
- Titles should not exceed **60 characters**.
- Drop articles from titles (a, an, the).

Capitalization Rules

- Capitalize all words with **four or more letters**
- Do **not** capitalize short prepositions, conjunctions, or articles unless they are the first word of the title.

Styling for Short Words

Italicize prepositions, conjunctions, and articles of **three letters or fewer** (e.g., of, in, on, at, by, to).

Hyperlinks and Calls to Action

If the banner contains a hyperlink, always include the clear call-to-action:

Apply here; Register here, etc.

Branding Consistency

- Follow official brand colors, fonts, and logo placement rules.
- Avoid clutter; prioritize readability over decoration.

For all cases not covered here, follow AUA's *Editorial Guide*.

In situations requiring further clarification, consult the design team and follow their recommendations.