

Editorial Style Guide

Mid-State Technical College – Updated Fall 2019

Mid-State’s editorial style guide is your go-to guide for writing at Mid-State. It clarifies how to render text in a consistent and clear manner for printed and electronic communications at Mid-State. It is not meant to be memorized but rather serve as look-up reference.

This guide contains everything from how to write numbers, building names, and abbreviations commonly used at Mid-State, to how we approach capitalization and punctuation and more. The preferred style of Mid-State Technical College follows that of the *Chicago Manual of Style* and *Merriam Webster’s online dictionary*: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/>. (See separate AP style sheet for press releases.)

If you have any questions about something in the guide, are not sure how to apply a guideline to your situation, or feel something is missing, reach out to Marketing & Communications, and we’ll be glad to help!

Abbreviations

- Do not use in running text (Professor Cowler, not Prof. Cowler).
- No periods (CASS, NTO, US).
- Acceptable abbreviation in first use if common (CIA, CEO, SAT, NCAA, AIDS, HMO, NASA, FBI). Otherwise, introduce by placing the acronym in parentheses after the first use of the spelled-out term. (Campus Activities and Student Senate (CASS)).
- Common Mid-State abbreviations: AITP, CASS, CRU, LEO, MSNA, MSRES, NTO, PTK, SEUSS, SSA, SSIC, WSG
- Never abbreviate school names or program names.
- LiNK is the name of our library and learning commons facilities at each Mid-State location. It is not an abbreviation. (Use *the* in front of *LiNK* but do not capitalize it: the LiNK)
- Proper use of the College’s name is Mid-State Technical College. Second mention in any communication is Mid-State. Do not use MSTC to abbreviate the College’s name.

Addresses

- In running text spell out North, South, East, West before the street name.
- In running text spell out Street, Avenue, Road, Drive, Boulevard.
- When rendering addresses for our campuses, do not use superscript for street numbers (32nd not 32nd ; 5th, not 5th).

Advisor

- Use advisor, not adviser.

African American, Asian American

- Not hyphenated.

Alumna, Alumnae, Alumni, Alumnus

- Alumna is feminine singular.
- Alumnae is feminine plural.
- Alumni is plural.
- Alumni is also masculine plural.
- Alumnus is masculine singular.
- Alum is singular and considered slang and accepted for casual usage.

Ampersands

- Do not use an ampersand in place of *and* unless it is part of a formal title or name. (School of Business & Technology, Student Services & Information Center)
- Mid-State School names use ampersands (School of Business & Technology) but cluster names do not (Business, Management, and Administration).

Annual Events

Use the full/official name of an annual event. Examples provided in the table below.

Event Name
CareerView
College Camp
Faculty Teaching and Learning Days (FTL Days)
Foundation Golf Outing
Kickoff Week
Program Showcase

Apostrophes

- Do not use apostrophes to form plurals (1940s, not 1940's; xs and ys, not x's and y's) unless it would be confusing without (thus A's, not As; P's, not Ps).
- Possessives of singular nouns ending in s are formed by adding 's (Russ's dog).
- Some grammarians say that plural nouns modifying other nouns do not need an apostrophe if they are used in a descriptive rather than a possessive sense (Parents Weekend is a weekend for parents, not a weekend possessed by parents).
- If you want to be safe, use the apostrophe unless it is not used in a formal name (Department of Veterans Affairs).
- Foot(') and inch(") marks should never be used for apostrophes and quotation marks. These are acceptable substitutions only in web publishing.

As Well As

- Use as well as to signal essential (restrictive) information in a sentence. Do not set off with a comma. Use phrase sparingly.

Board of Directors

- Capitalize the full and abbreviated forms: Mid-State Technical College District Board of Directors, Board, District Board.
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Buildings, Spaces, and Rooms

- Use the full/official name of a building or area as designated in the table below.
- Do not capitalize auditorium, bookstore (specific location), cafeteria, or gymnasium in running text.
- Do not use spaces or dashes for room numbers preceded by a building number (A112, L133).
- When identifying a Community Engagement Room by number, use a space between the room name and number, even in the abbreviated form (CER 634).
- Use slashes to indicate the use of both sides of adjoined rooms, and do not repeat the letter or room abbreviation (L133/134, CER 634/635).

Building or Space Name
A Building
Community Engagement Room
Diesel Technology Center
District Office
E Building
I Building
I/T Building
L Building
LiNK
Student Services & Information Center (SSIC)
T Building
Testing Center
The Salon@Mid-State

Bulleted and Numbered Lists

- When using running text to introduce a bulleted list, use a colon. The phrase introducing the list does not need to be a complete sentence if the bulleted items complete the thought.
- Begin each item with a capital letter.
- Ensure items in list are grammatically parallel (all verb statements or all noun statements with similar construction).
- No punctuation is needed at the end of the items if each is a simple noun or noun statement and not a complete sentence. (Medical secretary)
- Use end punctuation at the end of the items if they are verbal phrases or complete sentences. (Work as a medical secretary.)
- Consider using numbers instead of bullets when the items represent a set order, e.g., a set of instructions.

Campus

- Capitalize campus when identifying a Mid-State campus formally (on the Wisconsin Rapids Campus) but not for more general references (come to campus, on campus).

Capitalization

- Capitalize official names of departments (Enrollment Management, Marketing & Communications, President's Office, Workforce & Economic Development), but use lowercase when referring more generally to the functions themselves (I work in admissions, continuing education offering, marketing the college, and enrollment of students). See also **Departments**.
- Capitalize:
 - Geographical areas and localities (the Midwest, the South Side of Chicago)
 - Government bodies (the US Congress, the Stevens Point City Council)
 - Historical periods (the Depression, the Enlightenment)
 - Names referring to a deity (God, Jehovah)
 - Sacred books (the Bible, the Koran)
 - Words denoting family relationships used in place of the person's name (Grandmother Jones)
 - Registered trademarks (Xerox)
- Use lowercase for job titles that are not official names or that appear after a proper name (Shelly Mondeik, president). If title comes before the name and treated as part of the name, do capitalize (President Shelly Mondeik).
- Use lowercase for:
 - Departments or offices that are not the official names (the alumni office)
 - Common nouns used with numbers to designate chapter, rooms, pages, etc. (chapter 1, room 234, page 555)
 - Simple direction (the west coast of Michigan)
 - Seasons (spring, summer, fall, winter)
 - Semester sessions (fall 2017, fall semester, fall term—same for spring and summer; also winterim).
- Avoid typing in all caps.
- In non-running text:
 - For short phrases in lists, tabular matter, bibliographies, indexes, mailing addresses, and similar situations use title case (Wisconsin Rapids Campus).
 - When phrases are longer and more sentence-like, use sentence case (This session will be offered at the Wisconsin Rapids campus). Aim for consistency in individual publication or type of publication.
- Capitals in hyphenated words: If the first word of a hyphenated word is capitalized, also capitalize the "subsequent elements" unless they are articles, prepositions, or coordinating conjunctions.

- See also **Board of Directors; College; Commencement; Conferences; Course Titles; Degrees; Departments; Fellowships, Funds, Grants, and Awards; headlines, and Programs.**

Captions for Photos

- Use (left), (from left), (l to r) or some other indicator if there might be confusion about who's who.
- Do not use middle initial if the full name with initial is already in the story.
- Do not use periods in captions that are not sentences. (Commencement ceremony)

Central Wisconsin

- Lowercase central (Mid-State is located in central Wisconsin).

Cities

- Foreign cities commonly associated with a specific country do not need a country identification (e.g., London, Bangkok, Tokyo, and Toronto).

Comma (Serial)

- Use a comma before *and* or *or* in a series (red, white, and blue—not red, white and blue; cash, check, or credit card—not cash, check or credit card).

Commencement

- Capitalize Commencement when referring to Mid-State Technical College's.

Conferences, Lecture Series, Symposia, etc.

- Capitalize formal names (Mid-State Speaker Series, the Administrative Professionals Conference).

College

- Always capitalize College when referring to Mid-State Technical College.

Corporations

- Use the name used by the company, including abbreviations and ampersands. Inc. or Ltd. may usually be dropped, and "the" should not be capitalized.
- Do not abbreviate *company* or *corporation*.

Course Titles

- Capitalize in roman (non-italic) type.
- Do not use quotation marks.

Dashes

- Use en dash (–) for a range (pages 40–48, 1991–92) and to join adjectives when one of the adjectives is already a compound (New York–Boston route). Note: Mac computer command for this is option + hyphen. PC computer command is alt + 0150 (number lock on).
- Do not use a space before or after em/en dashes.
- Use em dashes (—) for material that amplifies, explains, or disagrees. Commas may also be used for the same purpose. Note: Mac computer command for this is option + shift + hyphen. PC command is alt + 0151.
- Use a closed en dash (–) between times (10–11 a.m., 10–11:30 a.m.) Use an open em dash (add spaces) when a.m. or p.m. is needed in the earlier time (10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m). See also **times**.
- Hyphens, not en dashes, should be used in sports scores (11-0).

Dates

- Use an en dash (–) to show a range of dates, and do not repeat 19 or 20 when identifying years (1998–99 and 1997–2002 and 2001–02). Do not use a space before or after an en dash. See also **Slashes**.
- If the day of the month appears, use a comma before and after the year (by the January 15, 2001, deadline). Do not use a comma between the month and the year alone (by the January 2001 deadline).
- Do not use st, nd, rd, th, even if the dates are adjectives (March 1 event, not March 1st event).
- Times come before days and dates in running text (at 9 p.m. Friday; at 9 a.m. Monday, June 7).
- Months are not abbreviated.
- Use numerals for decades (1960s or the '60s).

Degrees

- Do not use periods in PhD, BS, MM, etc.
- Do not capitalize associate degree, bachelor of science, master of arts, etc.
- Do not capitalize academic degree or major except for languages and proper nouns. (Her majors are English and communication and her minor is Asian studies. He received a bachelor of arts in biology.)
- Honorary degrees should be spelled out (Lisel Mueller, honorary doctor of fine arts '85).
- Use an apostrophe in master's degree and bachelor's degree. Associate degree should be without the possessive (no "s").

Departments

- Official names of College departments, schools, and divisions are capitalized.

Department Name	Notes
Academics	
Auxiliary Services & Procurement	
Bookstore	Capitalize when referring to the department, not physical stores or locations
Business Services	
Campus Administration	
Career Services	
Disability Services	
Education Services	
Enrollment Management	
Facilities	
Financial Aid	Also Financial Aid Office
Foundation & Alumni	Also Foundation & Alumni Office
Help Desk	
Human Resources	
Information Technology	
Learning Resources	
Marketing & Communications	
President's Office	
Safety & Security	Also Safety & Security Office
School of Advanced Manufacturing & Engineering	
School of Business & Technology	
School of General Education & Learning Resources	
School of Health	
School of Protective & Human Services	
School of Transportation, Agriculture, Natural Resources, & Construction	
Student Services	
Student Support	
Workforce & Economic Development	

Ellipses

- Use three dots with spaces around each (. . .), but close up the space between an ellipses point and a quotation mark (" . . .).
- If a sentence ends with ellipses, also use a period. (. . . and the game was over . . .)

Email

- See **Web and Email**.

Faculty

- May be singular or plural, depending on the context.

Fellowships, Funds, Grants, and Awards

- The formal name is capitalized (Fulbright Fellowship), but informal references (Fulbright grant) are not.
- Lowercase the “s” in National Merit scholarships and National Merit scholars.
- Always use complete and correct name.

Foreign Words

- Italicize unless the word is commonly used (no italics: cum laude, alma mater).

Fundraising

- Render as one word, no hyphen.

Fractions

- Write out and hyphenate (two-thirds, three-fifths) in text.
- A fraction and a whole number appear as numerals with no space between them and the fraction should be set in fraction case ($6\frac{3}{4}$).

Grades, Grade Point Average

- Put letter grades in quotation marks but not number grades (“C” but also 2.0).

Headlines

- Title case capitalization is preferred over sentence case in headlines. (Mid-State Student Wins National Award)
- For press releases, use AP style, which calls for sentence case. (Mid-State student wins national award.)

Healthcare vs. Health Care

- Health care (noun): Use for a set of actions by a person or persons to maintain or improve the health of a patient/customer.

Examples:

- I have developed a plan for my patient's health care.
- A heavier emphasis on preventive health care by patients and providers will improve health outcomes and quality of life.
- The RNs in this practice provide the majority of the health care for their patients.
- Special case—hyphenated adjectival form:
 - Health-care services have become more expensive and more complex over the last 50 years.
 - The health-care needs of the patients in this hospital wing are much higher than the needs of the average patient.
- Healthcare (noun or adjective): Use for a system, industry, or field that facilitates the logistics and delivery of health care for patients/consumers.

Noun Examples:

- I hope to work in healthcare one day.
- Healthcare's number and diversity of players grew significantly over the course of the twentieth century.
- Modern healthcare requires both skilled clinicians and savvy, experienced business professionals to be effective and successful.

Adjective Examples:

- The healthcare IT industry has been booming as a result of the strong demand for population analytics and effective electronic health record (EHR) systems.
- Healthcare reform has been a tough but important process to address many of the systematic failures of the healthcare system.
- Many former Wall Street professionals are moving into healthcare finance as a result of the industry's massive growth.

Hyphenation

- In general, do not hyphenate words beginning with prefixes co, non, pre, post, or re, unless there would be confusion (co-op, post-master's) or the root begins with a capital letter (post-Renaissance). Hyphen use is highly usage driven. When in doubt, the dictionary is your best source for information about hyphen use with the word in question.
- Hyphenate words beginning with the prefix self.
- Do not hyphenate compounds with vice (vice president or vice chair).
- Hyphenate College-wide, but not campus wide.
- Do not hyphenate fundraising, freelance, yearlong, African American, Asian American.
- Two-word phrases:
 - Hyphenate a two-word phrase that precedes a noun it describes, especially if confusion is possible without the hyphen (first-generation student, problem-solving skills, well-lit room).
Exception: If the phrase is highly recognizable and confusion is not likely, it is acceptable not to hyphenate, even when the phrase precedes the noun (high school student).
 - If the phrase uses an adverb ending in **ly**, do not hyphenate (annually occurring event).
 - If the phrase is not placed before a noun it describes, do not hyphenate (room is well lit, skills in problem solving).

Including

- Use including to signal nonessential/nonrestrictive clause. Use with comma.

In Demand

- InDemand (no space) is a design treatment and should not be used in regular copy (running text, headlines).
- Use in demand (two words) when you need the verb form (be in demand).
- Use in-demand (hyphenated) when describing a noun that follows (in-demand career).

Initials

- Use a period after each initial.
- Use middle initials in publications unless a person prefers otherwise.
- When using two initials separate them by a space (A. B. Dick).

The Internet

- See ***Web and Email***.

Invitations

- Do not require end-of-line punctuation.
- Numbers greater than 10 may be spelled out.
- Street number may be spelled out.
- Either: 00 or o'clock may be used in times.
- Use lowercase a.m. and p.m. and set off with periods. See also **Times**.

Line Breaks

- Do not break proper names.
- Do not break a hyphenated word except at the hyphen.
- Do not have more than two consecutive lines end in a hyphen.
- Do not allow ed, ly, st, or other two-letter breaks to begin a line.

Locations

- Use the full, official name of any Mid-State location. When referring to them collectively, use *campuses* (at any Mid-State campus, at all Mid-State campuses). See also **Campus**.

Location Name	Notes
Adams Campus	
Marshfield Campus	
Stevens Point Campus	
Wisconsin Rapids Campus	

Midterm

- One word, no hyphen.

MSTC

- Do not use this acronym. (You will see mstc used in Mid-State’s website address and email addresses—these should be the only places it’s used.)

Names with Jr., Sr., II, and III

- No comma separating the name and Jr. or Sr. or II or III (Eugene Hotchkiss III).

Non-Discrimination Policy Disclaimer

- Include the following disclaimer in all Mid-State external text-based communications, whether digital or print pieces—as well as on internal documents whenever possible/practical:

Mid-State does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its program, activity, or employment. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policies: Vice President – Human Resources; 500 32nd Street North, Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54494; 715.422.5325 • AAEO@mstc.edu.

Numbers

- One through nine are spelled out; 10 and above in numerals except that numbers of the same category should be treated alike within the same context.
- First through ninth spelled out; thereafter, 10th, 11th, etc.
- Use numerals with dollar sign (\$3), temperature (8 degrees), scores (7-3), page (page 2), room (room 7), chapter (chapter 6) and percent (7 percent).
- Spell out percent in running text.
- In most numbers of one thousand or more, commas should be used between groups of three digits, counting from the right (37,560; 1,512; 1,000,000).

Offices

- Capitalize when formal name (Office of the Registrar), but use lowercase for the informal form (registrar’s office). See **Departments**.

Postsecondary

- Postsecondary, not post-secondary.

Programs

- Always capitalize Mid-State’s academic program names and avoid abbreviations and shortened forms. For the current list, see mstc.edu/programs.

The Salon@Mid-State

- Include The in the name and render Salon@Mid-State with no spaces.

Slashes

- Use slashes :
 - With fractions.
 - Between lines of quoted poetry.
 - In internet addresses (URLs) and file pathnames.
 - To signify *or* or *and/or*—use sparingly as the intended meaning is not always clear.
 - With two-year spans as an alternative to an en dash (2017/18).
 - With dates in informal writing (6/1/11).
 - In abbreviations (\$7/hour instead of per; c/o instead of a period).
- In most cases, use a closed slash—no spaces on either side of the slash (leadership/talent development). When one or more elements consist of two or more words, use an open slash—one space on either side of the slash (dual credit / transfer credit).

States

- State names should be given in full when standing alone.
- When state names follow a city in running text, they should be spelled out.
- Use a comma before and after state names when they appear with the city name. (...Chicago, Illinois, ...)
- OK to abbreviate states in lists, tabular matter, bibliographies, indexes, and mailing addresses. For mailing addresses, use the US Postal Service abbreviations. For all others, use *The Chicago Manual of Style* abbreviations. See this source for these lists: <https://www.scribd.com/doc/58260290/State-Abbreviations-The-Difference-Between-AP-and-Chicago-Styles>.

Student Status References

- International students is preferred to foreign students.

Telephone Numbers

- In running text, use periods for separation in phone numbers (877.575.6782).
- Do not use parentheses around the area code.
- Always include full phone number, never just an extension.

TelePresence

- On first mention, define as TelePresence videoconferencing. Always render as one word, with uppercase T (in Tele) and P (in Presence), and use with *via* in running text (*via TelePresence*).

Times

- Lowercase a.m. and p.m. and set off with periods. Always use a space to separate these from the numbers/time. (10 a.m. or 10:00 a.m.)
- In a range, use a.m. and p.m. as needed for clarity (10–11 a.m., 10–11:30 a.m., 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.). See also **dashes**.
- Use noon, not 12 p.m. or 12 noon.
- Do not use a dash in place of to in a range of times introduced by from. (From 5 to 7 p.m., not from 5-7 p.m.)

Titles of Dissertations and Theses

Capitalize and set in roman (non-italic) type and within quotation marks. (“In Search of the Good Life: Language, Education, and Ethics”)

Titles of Legal Cases

- Italicize and use v. for “versus” (Brown v. Board of Education).

Titles of Organizations

- Words such as club, team, and conference are lowercase when used alone.
- The exception is College when referring to Mid-State.

Titles of People

- Capitalize formal titles preceding a name (Instructor Robert Lemke, Dean Flot), but use lowercase after a name (Robert Lemke, professor of economics and business) or if it is a functional title (program director Jane Smith).
- Titles should be uppercase when not in running text (in lists and on business cards).

Titles of Publications

- Set in italics: Titles of books, periodicals, (including online magazines), movies, television series, plays, works of art, musical compositions, collections of poetry, and long poems published separately.
- Set in roman (non-italic) type and within quotation marks: Titles of lectures, speeches, episodes of television and radio series, songs, poems, articles from newspapers and periodicals, chapters, short stories, essays, and individual parts of books.
- Underlining is not appropriate in printed material.

Web and Email

- Do not hyphenate email; lowercase it except at the start of a sentence or as a title.
- http:// and www. are not needed at the start of a web address unless there is confusion about whether it is a web address.
- Do not capitalize internet or web.
- Italicize titles of online publications.
- The College’s domain name is mstc.edu.

User-Interface Instructions

- When writing instructions to help a user navigate a computer user interface, use bold text to indicate elements (words and phrases) on the screen that the user should look for, click on, or interact with. (Click **submit** to send your completed form.)

Work-Study

- Work-Study at Mid-State is part of the Federal Work-Study program. When referring to the program, capitalize and hyphenate. When using the term as an adjective or a more general reference to the type of work, continue to hyphenate but use lowercase. (Many students are employed through Work-Study at Mid-State—getting a work-study job is a great way to make college more affordable!)