



# Editorial Style Guide

Strategic Communications Department

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## BACKGROUND

Dear Reader,

The LAU Style Guide was developed by the university's Strategic Communications Department (Stratcom) to ensure consistency in grammar, style and language across all of LAU's publications, both in print and online.

This reference is essential for anyone writing, editing or copy editing any type of content for LAU, such as news, features, brochures, catalogs or reports. It provides guidelines on spelling, capitalization, punctuation, abbreviations, numbering and more.

The guide is based in part on *The Associated Press (AP) Stylebook*, as well as other university editorial style guides, but has been customized for LAU. For items not covered in this guide, you may refer to *The AP Stylebook*.

Thanks,  
The Stratcom Editorial Team

## Abbreviations, Acronyms

An abbreviation is formed by the first letter of each word in a construct and is read out letter-by-letter. An acronym is an abbreviation formed by the first letter of each word in a construct and pronounced as a word, such as SINARC, AKSOB, UNESCO and ARCSON.

Spell out each term the first time it is mentioned in an article, with the abbreviation/acronym following in parentheses. Use only the abbreviation/acronym thereafter:

- The American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy (AAPC) held its first meeting in Beirut in January. In past years, the AAPC meetings have always been held in Chicago.

In the case of entities that are widely known by their initials (e.g., CIA, FBI, IT), the abbreviation/acronym may be used on first reference.

The plural, non-possessive form of an abbreviation should be styled without an apostrophe:

- RSVPs

Do not use periods in abbreviations or acronyms, with the exception of the rare lower-case acronyms, such as a.m., p.m. and e.g.:

- It was 11 a.m., and the event was scheduled to take place at 1 p.m.

## Academic Degrees

Below are the correct forms when spelling out degree names:

- Bachelor of Architecture
- Bachelor of Arts
- Bachelor of Engineering
- Bachelor of Science
- Lebanese Baccalaureate
- Doctor of Medicine
- Doctor of Pharmacy
- Master of Arts
- Master of Science
- Master of Business Administration

The correct forms when abbreviating degree names are as follows:

- BA/BS
- PharmD
- BArch
- PhD
- BE
- MA/MS/MBA

Do not put spaces between letters in academic-degree acronyms – the correct form is PhD, not Ph D.

Do not capitalize “bachelor’s,” “master’s” or “doctorate” when it is not part of the complete degree name.

Use an apostrophe (') in bachelor’s degree, master’s degree (not bachelors/masters), etc.

## **Administration**

Capitalize when referring to a presidential administration by name:

- The Obama Administration

## **Ages**

With ages, as with other numbers, spell out the number from zero to nine, and use numerals for higher numbers:

- Her son turned nine when she turned 39.

With decades, do not use an apostrophe:

- She is in her 20s.

Use hyphens for ages expressed as adjectives, before a noun or as substitutes for a noun:

- The 20-year-old student is great.
- The dinner is for 12-year-olds.

## **AJCW, BCW or BUC**

When referring to LAU when it was called AJCW, BCW or BUC, style as such:

- Nadia Saad graduated from BUC (currently LAU) in 1978.

## **Alumni**

The correct forms are:

- Alumnus (singular male), alumna (singular female)
- Alumni (plural male or plural coed), alumnae (plural female)

Capitalize the official names of alumni chapters:

- Riyadh Alumni Chapter

On the first mention of any LAU alumnus' name in an article, include the degree and year of graduation in parentheses:

- Maissa Farah (BA '95)

If a person has more than one degree from LAU, mention the last one.

## **Ampersand (&)**

These should be avoided unless within a bibliography.

## **Apostrophes**

Apostrophes are used in most cases to indicate possession:

- It was Rima's car that was towed.

Apostrophes are also used in contractions of words, such as "it is":

- It's our time to shine.

Do not add an apostrophe to the possessive pronoun "its":

- I forgot its importance.

When pluralizing proper names ending in "s," do not add an "s" after the apostrophe:

- She visited the Boulos' summer home.

Add an "s" but not an apostrophe when forming the plural of a number or when forming the plural of an acronym or abbreviation:

- 1940s
- VIPs

Singular and plural nouns ending in s take only an apostrophe to form the possessive:

- The VIPs' entrance
- The students' projects

## **Article Titles**

Article titles should be placed in quotation marks and spelled out in title case.

- She published the article “LAU Sees Returns on Investment in New Infrastructure.”
- We are proud to announce the publication of “A Partnership that Lasts: LAU and the Makhzoumi Foundation”

## Awards and Prizes

Capitalize the formal titles of awards and prizes, and use lowercase for the words “award” and “prize” when they stand alone:

- During the annual Student Honor Society ceremony, the Rhoda Orme Award is presented.
- The award goes to Dr. Sabbagh.

## Buildings and Rooms at LAU

Capitalize official names of campus buildings and facilities. Capitalize the word “room” when a room number is included:

- Room 138

Only capitalize the word “building” or “hall,” etc. if it is part of the official name of the construction:

- Nicol Hall
- The engineering building

## Campaigns, Seminars and Talks

The titles of campaigns, seminars and events should be capitalized but not italicized or in quotations.

## Campuses at LAU

When referring to one of LAU’s campuses, the word “campus” is not capitalized. The correct forms are “LAU Beirut campus” and “LAU Byblos campus.”

## Capitalization

Capitalize common nouns such as “university” or “faculty” when they are part of a full name:

- The Faculty of Arts and Sciences

Use the lowercase when it stands alone in subsequent references:

- The lecture took place at the university.
- She is a longtime faculty member.

## Classes

Use lowercase for classes, such as “freshman” or “sophomore.”

“First-year,” “second-year,” “third-year,” etc. are also acceptable.

## Colon (:)

The first word following a colon is capitalized if the subsequent quote/phrase is a full sentence.

- There is only one rule: One must never speak ill of others.

## Comma (,)

Use commas to separate full clauses in sentences that include conjunctions such as “but” and “and”:

- We wanted to go to the beach, but it was raining.

Do not use the “Harvard” or “serial” comma:

- He had red, green and blue pens (not red, green, and blue).

Do not use a comma to separate items that form a unit:

- He likes to snack on nuts, fruits, and cheese and crackers.

## Committees, Councils, Boards, Associations, Societies and Clubs

Capitalize those words when they are part of an official name; use lowercase otherwise:

- University Research Council
- Rana Semaan chairs the committee.

## Contractions

While they are not forbidden, it is more professional to avoid contractions (“aren’t,” “can’t,” “don’t,” etc.), except in direct quotations or when providing instructions:

- If you can’t write your name in Arabic, it’s OK to leave that part blank on the form.

Do not write “can not”; the correct spelling is “cannot.”

## Courses at LAU

Use the official name of a course as per the LAU Academic Catalog, and capitalize it:



- Computer Applications
- Creative Writing

## Currency

With US dollars, put the symbol (\$) ahead of the numerals:

- \$500

For Lebanese pounds, put “LL” before the numeral, without a space separating them.

- LL500

For very large amounts, use the words “million,” “billion,” “trillion,” etc. instead of the zeros:

- \$7 million (not \$7,000,000)

Use lower case for “euro.”

## Dashes and Hyphens

Use en dashes to connect two parts of a sentence set off by an aside. Always leave a space on the two sides of an en dash.

- They brought 12 sandwiches – two for each of the six participants – to the event.

Use hyphens to link all the words in a compound modifier except the adverb “very.”

- The program included four theater-related presentations.

It is a well-known program.

- In a series of two or more words that modify the same noun, put a hyphen following each modifying word.

The seminar was run by human- and animal-rights groups.

## Dates

Avoid starting a sentence with a date.

Include the full year; do not abbreviate or spell out, and do not use an apostrophe:

- The 1990s (not “’90s” or “nineties”)

Abbreviate years to two digits (preceded by an apostrophe) when referring to the graduating class:

- The alumni chefs at the LAU dinner were Jean Mouallem (BA '78) and Rola Sharqi (BS '99).

Spell out months in all cases:

- April 15, 1999

Do not use the ordinal designations “nd,” “rd,” “st” and “th” in dates:

- March 2 (not March 2nd)

Use a comma as follows when citing a full date:

- She was born on July 11, 1956 in Beirut

Use numerals when referring to a century, and use the lowercase for the word “century”:

- 18th century, 10th century, etc.

## Disciplines

Do not capitalize disciplines – for example, economics, nutrition and medicine – unless they are mentioned as part of a school or department title.

- Though she was good at biology, her passion took her into journalism.
- He had been studying chemistry for years, both at the Department of Natural Sciences and at the Gilbert and Rose-Marie Chagoury School of Medicine.

## Doctor/Dr.

Use “Dr.” for medical doctors, and those with a PhD or PharmD degree.

## Ellipsis (...)

When indicating words left out of a quotation in the middle of a sentence, use an ellipsis. Always treat an ellipsis as a three-letter word – that is, add a space before and after it.

- “It is true ... That is exactly what happened.”

## Foreign Words

Italicize foreign and transliterated words:

- She showed *raqs sharqi* moves.

Latin expressions like “per se” and “status quo” should not be italicized.

## Headlines, Subheads and Headers

Use title case when writing headlines, that is, the first letter of each word should be capitalized except for prepositions, articles and conjunctions.

- SOE Lecturer Makes Strides for Women in Sciences
- Breast Cancer Campaign by Alumna and ARCSON Faculty Going Strong

Subheads – also known as sub-headlines or taglines – should be in sentence case, that is, only the first letter of the first word and proper nouns should be capitalized.

## His Excellency

Do not use unless in a quote, when it should be spelled out.

## Islamic Words

Islamic and/or Arabic titles such as “mufti,” “ayatollah” and “sheikh” must be capitalized in the same way as English titles, only when directly preceding the person’s name. The prophet of Islam, Muhammad, must always be introduced as the Prophet Muhammad (the first letters capitalized).

Non-titles such as “Quran,” “Sharia” and “Umma” should be capitalized.

## LAU

The official name of the institution is the Lebanese American University. Its abbreviation, “LAU” (not “the LAU”), is used even on first reference.

## Less vs. Fewer

Use “fewer” and “less” in reference to countable and uncountable nouns, respectively. As a rule of thumb:

“Fewer” is followed by a plural noun, for example: “fewer resources.” “Less” is followed by a singular noun, for example, “less money.”

- Use less salt in your food.
- This material contains fewer salts than the others.
- We need less ambiguity in our communications.
- Please use fewer adjectives.

## Mr./Mrs./Ms./Miss

Avoid these courtesy titles, except in direct quotations or if a person specifically requests being referred to by one.

## Names

After individuals have been identified by their full name the first time, refer to them by only their last name (preceded by “Dr.” if relevant) after that.

- After 25 years in the United States, Dr. Elise Salem has come back to LAU, where she once taught. “It was my time, my fate,” Dr. Salem said.

With Dr. Jabbra’s name, include his middle initial (G.) on the first reference.

- Joseph G. Jabbra is the president of the university. Dr. Jabbra has been an excellent leader of the institution.

When pluralizing proper names ending in “s,” do not add an “s” after the apostrophe:

- She visited the Boulos’ summer home.

## Numbers

Use numerals for numbers 10 and higher (unless the number occurs at the beginning of a sentence). Spell out numbers nine and below.

- She returned to Beirut 14 years ago.
- He joined the Department of History eight years ago.

The above guideline also applies to ordinal numbers:

- It is the 12th time.

Do not start a sentence with a numeral; spell it out.

- Eight students participated in the panel.

When citing a percentage, use numerals in all cases:

- There is a 5 percent chance that the results will be inconclusive.

## Offices at LAU

For offices at the university, refer to them as the “International Services Office,” “Admissions Office,” “Business Office,” etc., as opposed to “Office of International Services,” “Office of Admissions,” etc.

Only use “Office of...” for the vice president, provost and deans’ offices.

- She had an appointment about study abroad opportunities at the International Services Office.
- The guests toured the Office of the Vice President for University Advancement.

The full names of any offices should be capitalized, as seen above.

## Percentages

Use numerals followed by “percent” (not “%” or “per cent”):

## Periods (Also Known As “Full Stops” in the UK)

These must always be followed by one space.

When using parentheses, periods go inside if it is a full sentence. For fragments within parentheses, the period is on the outside (as it is here).

## Publications, Films, Music and Works of Art

Titles of all published books, magazines and newspapers are set in italics. Titles of paintings, plays, films and other works of art are also italicized:

- The *International Herald Tribune* is available at the newsstand on Hamra Street.
- She loved the film *Nour* after seeing it screened on campus.

For titles of poems, use quotation marks:

- Maya Angelou’s “Phenomenal Woman” was read at the ceremony.

## Quotations

Use double quotation marks (“”), not single (”), to surround the exact words of a speaker or writer in any piece of writing.

Punctuation goes inside the marks.

- She said, “I can’t wait to read a copy of *LAU Magazine*.” I told her, “You’ll have to wait until it’s published!”

When using quotes within quotes, use single marks (’):

- She said, “In her book, Jones wrote, ‘this phenomenon is not an unchangeable law of nature,’ without going into details.”

## Religions

Always capitalize religions, faiths and religious works:

- The Bible is the main book of Christianity, and the Quran is the main book of Islam.

## Schools, Departments, Offices, Centers and Institutes at LAU

Capitalize the names of schools, departments, offices, centers and institutes only if their formal name is used.

- She joined LAU as acting dean of the School of Engineering and Architecture.
- He joined the Admissions Office last year. As part of the admissions staff, he attends their weekly meetings.

## Seasons, Semesters, Sessions

Use lowercase for “spring,” “summer,” “fall,” “winter” and “semester” in all instances:

- He will arrive in the middle of the spring semester.

## Titles

Capitalize academic and professional titles only when they appear directly before the proper name:

- The reception was hosted by President Jabbra.

Lowercase when a title is used alone, or when it is used after a name:

- The president of LAU, Joseph G. Jabbra, hosted a reception.
- Please welcome Sally Fakhoury, program director.

For temporary or past titles, do not capitalize the qualifying word (such as “acting” or “former”):

- The reception was hosted by acting Dean Jihane Mawas.

But capitalize “Interim” as it’s part of the title

- The session kicked off with Interim Dean Saqr.

## APPENDIX

### **Advisor/Adviser**

Both “advisor” and “adviser” are correct, but “advisor” is the preferred spelling.

### **Afterward/Toward**

Not “afterwards” or “towards”

### **AKSOB**

(Acronym for Adnan Kassar School of Business)

### **(ARCSON)**

(Acronym for Alice Ramez Chagoury School of Nursing)

### **Amid**

Not “amidst”

### **Backward**

Not “backwards”

### **Beqaa**

### **Byblos**

Not “Jbeil”

### **Catalog**

Not “catalogue”

### **Biannual/Biennial**

“Biannual” means twice a year, whereas “biennial” means once every two years.

### **Center**

Not “centre”

### **CEO/COO**

Use “CEO” for Chief Executive Officer and “COO” for Chief Operating Officer.

### **Chair/Chairperson**

Not “chairman”/“chairwoman”

### **Curricula**

As the plural of “curriculum”

### **Drop Out (verb) /Dropout (noun)**

I am worried I'll have to drop out of the class.  
He was a college dropout.

### **Enrollment**

Not "enrolment"

### **Gemmayzeh**

### **Gilbert and Rose-Marie Chagoury School of Medicine**

Use full name in first mention. Thereafter "school of medicine" or "medical school" in articles, and "school of medicine" in website entries.  
Do not use SOM.

### **LAU Beirut campus / LAU Byblos campus**

Not "LAU Byblos" or "LAU Beirut"

### **LAU Executive Center@Solidere**

### **LAU Medical Center–Rizk Hospital**

(LAU Medical Center-RH). Do not use LAUMC-RH

### **LAU New York Headquarters and Academic Center**

(LAU NY)

### **Memoranda**

As the plural of "memorandum"

### **Program**

Not "programme" except when it is part of the official title (e.g. the UN Development Programme).

### **Rafic Hariri International Airport**

### **SoAS**

(Acronym for School of Arts & Sciences)

### **SArD**

(Acronym for School of Architecture and Design)

### **Sidon**

Not "Saida"

### **SOE**

(Acronym for School of Engineering)

### **SOP**



(Acronym for School of Pharmacy)

**SPIII**

LAU's Third Strategic Plan, abbreviated

**Stratcom**

(Abbreviation for the Strategic Communications Office)

**Syllabi**

As the plural of "syllabus"

**Symposia**

As the plural of "symposium"

**Theater**

Not "theatre"

**Tyre**

Not "Sur"