



EDITORIAL STYLE GUIDE

Strategic Communications Department
Seventh Edition – 2024

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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 LAU 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 (AACP) held its first meeting in Beirut in January. In past years, the AACP meetings have always been held in Chicago.

In the case of entities that are widely known by their initials (e.g., CIA, FBI, IT, UN, BMW, UAE), 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 except for the rare lower-case acronyms, such as a.m., p.m. and e.g.:

- It was 11:00 a.m., and the event was scheduled to take place at 1:00 p.m.

And where the acronyms might be confused with words when appearing in all-caps text:

- I.T. EXPANDS OPERATIONS TO ALL SCHOOLS
- STUDENTS THANK THE U.S. FOR FULL-TUITION SUPPORT
- LAU RECEIVES T.H.E. AWARD

Also, in all lower-case headlines where they might appear odd or ambiguous:

- LAU Receives T.H.E. Award

ACADEMIC DEGREES

Below are the correct forms when spelling out degree names:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bachelor of Architecture• Bachelor of Arts• Bachelor of Engineering• Bachelor of Science• Lebanese Baccalaureate• Doctor of Medicine | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Doctor of Pharmacy• Master of Arts• Master of Science• Master of Business Administration• Master of Laws |
|---|--|

The correct forms when abbreviating degree names are as follows:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• BA/BS/BE/BFA/BArch• MA/MS/MBA | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• PharmD• PhD |
|--|--|

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’ or alumna’s 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 them all separated by a comma:

- Karim Khater (BA ’95, MA ’98)

AMPERSAND (&)

These should be avoided except in bibliographies.

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” in *Investors’ Journal*.
- 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 the official names of campus buildings and facilities. Capitalize the word “room” when a room number is included:

- Room 138

If a room is named after an individual, spell it out and place its number in parentheses:

- The Najla Attieh Conference Room (1301)

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

- Nicol Hall, Gezairi Building
- The engineering building

CAMPAIGNS, SEMINARS AND TALKS

The titles of campaigns, seminars and events should be capitalized and italicized.

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.”

In cases where “LAU” is omitted, the name of the campus should be preceded by “the”:

- The event took place on the 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 and euros, place the symbol (\$/€) ahead of the numerals:

- \$500
- €300

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)
- €6 million (not €6,000,000)

Use lowercase for “euro” in text.

DASHES AND HYPHENS

Use an **em dash** for clauses, with no space on either side:

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

Use an **en dash** to separate numbers, dates, pages, etc.:

- December 5–December 12, 8:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.

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, place a hyphen following each modifying word:

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

PC keyboard shortcuts for:

- Em Dash (—) = Alt + 0151 *or* Ctrl + Alt + Minus sign
- En Dash (–) = Alt + 0150 *or* Ctrl + Minus sign

Mac keyboard shortcuts for:

- Em Dash (—) = Shift + Option + Hyphen *or* Option + Hyphen + Hyphen
- En Dash (–) = Option + Hyphen

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.
- The event was on Monday, January 8, 2024.

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 or indicate a specialty:

- 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.
- Mechanical Engineering Rami Khoury won the competition.

DOCTOR/Dr.

Use “Dr.” for medical doctors and for 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 on first mention:

- 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 articles (a, an, the), prepositions (in, at, on, of, to) and conjunctions (if, as) that are less than four letters:

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

Capitalize all nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs and pronouns:

- Tech Conference Imparts Timely Knowledge to Students
- Alumna Carves Her Career in Wood

Capitalize all the words in phrasal verbs, such as Sign In, Move Out, Call For, Take Off.

For camel case capitalize according to the official name: iPhone, eBay, YouTube, OneDrive.

For hyphenated compounds, capitalize both words:

- Adopting an Eco-Friendly Approach to Your Daily Life

If in doubt, run your headline in Capitalize My Title:

<https://capitalizemytitle.com/style/Chicago/> or

<https://capitalizemytitle.com/style/NYTimes/>

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.

MEDICAL DOCTOR/MD

The abbreviation for Medical Doctor is MD, no full stops.

Except in the president’s communications: Michel E. Mawad, M.D.

Mr./Mrs./Ms./Miss

Avoid these courtesy titles in general with the following exceptions:

In direct quotations.

If a person specifically requests to be referred to by one.

In an obituary.

In cases where the individual is the only one without a title:

- Dr. Mawad and Mr. Matar signed the agreement in the presence of Provost Nasr, Dr. Badr and Dr. Ghanem.

If honoring a donor.

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. Mawad’s name, include his middle initial (E.) on the first reference:

- Michel E. Mawad is the president of the university. Dr. Mawad has been an excellent leader of the institution.

NUMBERS

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

- She returned to Beirut 14 years ago.
- He joined the Department of History eight years ago.
- How Counseling the 9- to 16-Year-Olds Can Mitigate Trauma (headline)

The above guideline also applies to ordinal numbers:

- It is the 12th time.
- LAU Ranks 2nd in the Times Higher Education Asia Rankings

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 and Programs Office,” “Admissions Office,” “Business Office,” etc., as opposed to “Office of International Services,” “Office of Admissions,” etc.

Only use “Office of…” for the vice presidents’, provost’s and deans’ offices:

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

The full names of 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 published papers, use quotation marks:

- The research paper “A Simplified Model for Unsteady Pressure Driven Flows in Circular Microchannels of Variable Cross-Section” was published in *Applied Mathematical Modelling*.

Same for poems:

- 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.

The 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, TERMS

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

- He will arrive in the middle of the spring semester and stay through the summer term.
- The course will be launched in fall 2023.

TITLES

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

- The reception was hosted by President Mawad.

- LAU hosted President Emeritus Joseph G. Jabbra.

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

- The president of LAU, Michel E. Mawad, hosted a reception.
- Please welcome Sally Fakhoury, program director.
- We are joined by Dr. Joseph G. Jabbra, president emeritus.

Omit the use of Dr. after a title:

- Dean Elie Haddad, *and not* Dean Dr. Elie Haddad.

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

A

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”

Arab

Not arab.

Arab world not Arab World

B

Backward

Not “backwards”

Beqaa

Biannual/Biennial

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

Byblos

Not “Jbeil”

C

Catalog

Not “catalogue”

Center

Not “centre” except if that is the official name of that particular center. (e.g. Centre for Clinical Interventions)

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”

D

Drop Out (verb) /Dropout (noun)

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

E

Enrollment

Not “enrolment”

G

Gemmayzeh

Gezairi Building

Not “Jezairi”

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*.

L

LAU Beirut campus / LAU Byblos campus

Not “LAU Byblos” or “LAU Beirut”

LAU Medical Center–Rizk Hospital (with en dash)

Use full name in first mention. Thereafter LAU Medical Center–RH.
Do not use LAUMC–RH.

LAU Medical Center–Saint John’s Hospital (with en dash)

Use full name in first mention. Thereafter LAU Medical Center–St John’s Hospital or LAU Medical Center–SJH can be used.

LAU New York Headquarters and Academic Center

(LAU NY)

M

Memoranda

As the plural of “memorandum”

P

Program

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

R

Rafic Hariri International Airport

Rafic Hariri High School

Rafik Hariri University Hospital

S

SoAS

(Acronym for School of Arts & Sciences)

SArD

(Acronym for School of Architecture and Design)

Sidon

Not “Saida”

SOE

(Abbreviation for School of Engineering)

SOP

Although this acronym is often used by the School of Pharmacy, reference to the school in articles should be spelled out on first mention, and referred to as “the school,” if the meaning is clear, thereafter.

*Do not use *SOP*.

SPIV

LAU’s Fourth Strategic Plan, abbreviated

Stratcom

(Abbreviation for the Strategic Communications Department)

Syllabi

As the plural of “syllabus”

Symposia

As the plural of “symposium”

T

Theater

Not “theatre” except if that is the official name of that particular theater (e.g. Theatre Monnot)

Tyre

Not “Sur”

Toward

Not “Towards”