

College of San Mateo Editorial Style Guide

The *Editorial Style Guide* has been developed to promote clarity and consistency in style and content for CSM publications, correspondence and electronic communications. This resource is considered a work in progress and will be updated as needed. The following references are recommended for style issues not addressed in the guidelines and for spelling:

- [Chicago Manual of Style](#)
- [Merriam Webster Dictionary](#)

Official College Name

- College of San Mateo (not *The* College of San Mateo)
- The first reference to College of San Mateo is spelled out; CSM can be used for subsequent references. It's College with a capital C when referring to CSM.

Official District Name

- San Mateo County Community College District (not San Mateo Colleges or San Mateo College District)
- The first reference is spelled out in its entirety; in subsequent references, it is acceptable to use the SMCCCD or the District (capitalized).

Capitalization

- Official names are capitalized: college buildings, divisions, departments, programs, offices and committees.
Examples: Health and Wellness Building, the Planetarium, Language Arts Division, Math Department, Nursing Program, Admissions and Records, Safety Committee.
- Unofficial or shortened forms are not capitalized.
Examples: the center, the admissions office, the counseling office, the program.
- Capitalize Board of Trustees; subsequent references reference can be shortened to "Board."
Note that Board requires a singular verb.
Example: The Board approved the report at its December meeting.
- Titles should be capitalized when preceding a name and lowercase when following a name.
*Examples: Vice President Sandra Smith or Sandra Smith, the vice president;
Professor Clay Rodriguez will chair the meeting; He is a professor of art history.*
- Lowercase when referring to a title without a name.
Example: The dean of language arts will be attending.
- Capitalize course names: Math 125 Elementary Finite Mathematics
- Disciplines and majors are lowercase (exceptions are proper names as subjects)
Example: He majored in business and also completed a minor in English.
- Capitalize names of scholarships.
Example: CSM Student Ambassador Scholarship
- Capitalize Bulldogs when referring to CSM's Bulldogs; the Bulldogs

Semesters and Years

- No capitalization needed for fall, spring or summer.
Example: fall semester
- Capitalized when used in conjunction with the title of a publication or a specific semester/session (with year).
Examples: Fall 2016 Schedule of Classes, Spring 2017 Semester, Spring 2017

Dates

- Decades: *The 1990s (no apostrophe); The '90s; The nineties*
- Class years: *Class of 1990 or Class of '90*
- Centuries are lowercase: *21st century*
- When referring to a month and date, don't use the th as in October 16th: *October 16*

Time

- Use am/pm, not a.m./p.m. Lowercase is the standard.
- Use 12 noon (not 12 pm) or 12 midnight (not 12 pm), unless it's part of a time span.
Example: 10 am – 12 pm
- Eliminate the use of unnecessary zeros.
Example: 3–5 pm instead of 3:00–5:00 pm

Numbers

- Spell out numbers zero through nine and any number that begins a sentence. Use numerals for 10 or higher. (Exceptions to this rule include grade point average; course numbers, unit values.)
- Use comma for all numbers higher than 999.
- Percentages are expressed in numerals except at the beginning of a sentence. Spell out the word *percent*.
Examples: The pass rate of the course was 75 percent. Ten percent of the class was absent.
- Spell out ordinal numbers *first* through *ninth*; use figures for 10 and above.
Examples: Financial Aid is on the third floor. She is 12th on the wait list.

Academic Degrees

- When spelled out and used in general terms, degrees are not capitalized.
Examples: associate (not associate's)
bachelor's
master's
doctorate (Note: doctorate is a noun; doctoral is an adjective)
He earned a doctorate in Spanish. Her doctoral degree is from Yale University.
Example: She earned an associate degree in history.
- When using initials, use periods with no letter spacing. An exception is MBA; periods are typically not used.
Examples: A.A., B.A., M.S., Ed.D., Ph.D.

Titles of Works

- Italicize titles of books, newspapers, magazines, journals, films, radio and television programs, plays, poems, works of art and long musical compositions.
Examples: The Chicago Manual of Style, San Francisco Chronicle, The Social Network, The Lion King.
- Use quotation marks (but not italics) for lectures, presentations, essays, dissertations, articles, chapter titles, exhibit titles, songs and radio and television episodes.

Faculty

- Faculty can be singular or plural.
- Singular as a collective group: The faculty is scheduled to vote on the matter.
- Singular as an individual: She is a faculty member.
- Plural as several individuals: Science and math faculty are working together on a project.

Alumni

CSM uses this designation for all former students: graduates and non-graduates.

- alumnus – singular masculine
- alumna – singular feminine
- alumnae – plural feminine
- alumni – can be plural masculine or a collective group of men and women
- alum/alums for informal use

Emeriti

CSM uses this designation for faculty retirees.

- emeritus – singular masculine
Example: Professor Emeritus of Biology Michael Mendez
- emerita – singular feminine
Example: Professor Emerita of History Anna Sinclair or Anna Sinclair, professor emerita of history
(Capitalize emeritus and emerita before the name; lowercase after the name.)
- emeriti – plural
Example: Thirty emeriti attended the anniversary celebration.

Terms

- ASCSM (Associated Students of CSM)
- Bay Area
- campuswide
- CSM Theatre (not Theater)
- database
- email
- grade point average or GPA
(both are acceptable)
- homepage
- internet
- online
- RSVP (all capitals, no periods)
- part time, full time
hyphenate only when used as a compound modifier
Example: full-time faculty; she works part time
- voicemail
- web, web page, website
(a website is a collection of web pages)
- WebSMART

Phone and Fax Numbers

Phone and fax numbers should be written as follows:

(650) 574-1111

URLs

- URLs should be displayed completely in lowercase, with no capitalization.
Example: "CollegeOfSanMateo.edu/Admissions" would be "collegeofsanmateo.edu/admissions".
- In the display text for URLs, drop the "http://", "www.", and final "/".
Example: "<http://www.collegeofsanmateo.edu/marketing/>" would be "[collegeofsanmateo.edu/marketing](http://www.collegeofsanmateo.edu/marketing/)".
- When a URL ends a sentence, include a period at the end of the sentence.
Example: For more information, visit [collegeofsanmateo.edu/marketing](http://www.collegeofsanmateo.edu/marketing/).

Letter Spacing

Place one space after a period. No spaces before or after an em dash.

Quotation Marks with Punctuation

Periods and commas generally go inside closing quotation marks.

Bullet Points

Use bullets to highlight points or for ease of readability. Only add a period after each item if it is a complete sentence; otherwise no punctuation is needed at the end of each point. Lowercase the first word of each bulleted item unless it is a complete sentence or the word is a proper noun.

Example:

The center provides the following services:

- *career classes*
- *labor market information*
- *assistance find internships and employment*

Names of Colleges and Universities

Use full names of college and universities; when referring to a second reference, it's acceptable to use initials.

*Example: San Jose State University, SJSU (San Jose State is incorrect)
University of California, Berkeley or UC Berkeley
(UCB and Cal Berkeley are incorrect)*

CSM'S Instructional and Student Services Divisions (use ampersand in formal division names)

Instruction

Academic Support & Learning Technologies Division

Business & Technology Division

Creative Arts & Social Science Division

Math & Science Division

Kinesiology, Athletics & Dance Division

Language Arts

Student Services

Counseling, Advising & Matriculation

Enrollment Services

Spelling

Always use spell check but be aware that is isn't 100 percent foolproof. When in doubt, refer to the [Merriam Webster Dictionary](#).