

UW School of Social Work

Marketing and Communications Style Guide

Updated 6/16/21

This style guide promotes consistency and professionalism in the UW School of Social Work's written marketing and communications materials, including its website. Except where noted, it aligns with UW brand/editorial guidelines.

Style and spelling references (in order of authority, after this style guide):

- UW brand/editorial guidelines: washington.edu/brand/editorial-elements
- UW equitable language guide: washington.edu/brand/editorial-elements/equity-lens
- *Associated Press Stylebook*, 55th Edition (2020–2022): apstylebook.com
- *GLAAD Media Reference Guide*, 10th Edition (2016): glaad.org/reference
- *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 17th Edition: chicagomanualofstyle.org
- *Webster's New World College Dictionary*: yourdictionary.com
- For academic and research publications, the School follows American Psychological Association (APA) Style: apastyle.apa.org

Abbreviations and acronyms

- Spell out abbreviations and acronyms on first reference. Exceptions: AARP, CEO, FAQ, FY (as in "FY2020"), MBA, NAACP, NPR, Pac-12, PST, URL.
- In text, avoid using "e.g." and "i.e." Instead, use "for example" and "that is."

Academic and job titles

Capitalize only when the title immediately precedes the person's name or if the title is a proper noun. Examples:

Associate Dean for Research Karina Walters chairs the committee.
Karina Walters, associate dean for research, chairs the committee.

Exception: In quote attributions and display copy.

"Our long-term goal is to enhance services for adults with mental illness."

— Ryan Petros, Assistant Professor of Social Work

Academic awards

Use uppercase when referring to the formal name of an award.

Academic degrees

- Use uppercase for formal proper names; use lowercase for informal descriptive names.

He earned a Master of Social Work degree in 2020.
She has a bachelor's degree in computer engineering.

- School of Social Work degrees (despite UW style):

Bachelor of Arts in Social Welfare (BASW)
Master of Social Work (MSW)
Doctor of Philosophy in Social Welfare (PhD)

Academic departments and disciplines

- Use uppercase for formal proper names; use lowercase for informal descriptive names.
Examples:

He teaches in the Department of Communication.
She is the dean of the business school.

- Capitalize “program” or “group” only when it is part of an official name.

Academic quarters

- Use lowercase. Example: She'll start at the UW in spring quarter 2021.
- Use “autumn” instead of “fall,” when referring to the academic quarter.

Age ranges

Use “ages x through x.” Example: The study focused on adults ages 30 to 55.

Ampersand

Use only as part of a formal name. Example: Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Exception: OK to use in website navigation bars to save space.

Bulleted lists

- List items should be grammatically parallel.
- Start each item with a capital letter.
- Use a period for all items if any single item is a complete sentence.
- Do not use semicolons after list items.

Captions

Use present tense in photo captions. Also use italic unless the design specifies otherwise.
Examples:

Students gather for the symposium.

Forefront is expanding the program over the next three years.

Citizenship and residency

- Do not use “citizen” to refer to a resident of a particular country or state.
- Use “undocumented” instead of “illegal” or “alien.”
- Use “Americans” only to refer to U.S. citizens (but “U.S. citizens” is preferable).

Commas

Do not use a serial comma unless it is needed for clarity.

Dashes

- Em dash (width of the letter “m”):
 - When indicating a break in the sentence, do not use a space on either side of the dash (despite UW style).
 - Use an em dash + space in front of pull quote attributions.
- En dash (width of the letter “n”):
 - Use between a compound-noun modifier and the term it modifies. Example: Civil War–related.
 - Use when one or more elements in a compound adjective is an open compound. Example: Seattle–San Francisco flight.
 - Use for numerical and date ranges. Example: 2011–2014. But when introducing a range with the word “from” or “between,” use “to” or “and” instead of an en dash. Example: She taught the course from 1995 to 2000.

Dates

- Use cardinal, not ordinal, numbers: April 1, not April 1st.
- Despite AP style, it is acceptable to spell out the month in text.
- Use a comma before and after the year if using month + day + year in a sentence. Example: The board met on September 25, 2014, to review the report.
- Do not use a comma when writing only the month and year. Example: The board will meet in December 2022.

Email and website addresses

- Omit “http://” and “www.” from website addresses. Example: socialwork.uw.edu.
- Embed URLs and email addresses as live links in running text. Do not spell out the actual URL or email address.

Emphasis

Use italic or boldface italic for emphasis, not all caps, underlining or exclamation points.

Headlines

Use sentence case for every heading level. Exception: If the heading includes a colon, capitalize the first word after the colon.

Names

- Use last names to refer to people on second reference.
- Do not use honorifics such as “Dr.,” “Mr.,” “Ms.” or “Professor” unless they are part of a direct quotation or are needed to differentiate people with the same last name.
- Always abbreviate these titles when they precede a person’s full name: Gov., Lt. Gov., Rep., Rev., Sen.

Native/Indigenous identity

- Capitalize “Native” and “Indigenous” when they refer to a specific person or a group identity. Use lowercase for more generic uses, such as “native to the region” or “indigenous plants.”
- Try to use the person’s preferred identifier—for example, “American Indian,” “Native,” “Native American,” “Native Alaskan,” “First Nations” or “Puyallup.”
- In general, try to be precise by referring to the specific tribe, nation or community rather than using a more general term.
- In writing that is not focused on Native experiences, avoid using metaphors such as “tribe,” “totem pole” or “spirit animal.”

Numbers

- Spell out one through nine.
- Use numerals for 10 and above and when preceding a unit of measure or referring to ages. Exception: In casual expressions, such as “A picture is worth a thousand words.”
- Spell out numbers that begin a sentence.

Percent

Use the % symbol in charts and graphs. Use the % symbol in a sentence when paired with a numeral, with no space. Examples:

Average hourly pay rose 3.1% from a year ago.

More than 80% of social work graduates stay in Washington state.

Phone numbers

Use hyphens in all cases (despite UW style): 206-616-9504.

Pronouns

- Use the subject’s preferred gender and pronoun(s).
- OK to use “they” as a gender-neutral pronoun.
- Avoid using “he/she” or “his/her.”
- Instead of using “he or she,” try to use “they” in plural form.

Pull quotes

- Avoid modifying a direct quote for use as a pull quote. OK to modify regular text for use in pull text.

- When including an attribution line, place it below the quote, separated by a line space. Use an em dash followed by a space in front of the name.

Race and ethnicity

- In identifying race or ethnicity, opt for adjectives rather than nouns. Example: “a Hispanic person” rather than “a Hispanic.”
- OK to use “Latinx” if it is a person’s preferred descriptor (despite AP style).
- Do not hyphenate compound nationalities such as “African American.”
- Capitalize “Black” but leave “white” lowercase. Do not use “Caucasian.”
- Avoid using “diverse” as a synonym for “nonwhite.” A group can be diverse, but an individual cannot.

Rankings

When referring to a ranking for the School, use the following style:

In 2012, *U.S. News and World Report* ranked the UW School of Social Work third among the nation’s nearly 220 advanced social work programs.

School of Social Work

- Spell out “School of Social Work” on first reference; use “the School” on second reference. Do not use “SSW.”

- Mailing address:

School of Social Work
University of Washington
Box 354900
Seattle, WA 98195-4900

- Street address:

4101 15th Avenue NE
Seattle, WA 98105-6250

Sexual orientation and gender identity

- Do not use “sexual preference”; use “sexual orientation” instead.
- Do not use “homosexual”; use “gay” or “lesbian” instead.
- Use “queer” if a person or organization prefers that identifier. Be cautious in using it as a general descriptor because it can carry offensive connotations out of context.
- See the *GLAAD Media Reference Guide* for additional usage information:
www.glaad.org/reference.

Time

Use “a.m.” and “p.m.” Example: 10:15 a.m.

If it’s an exact hour, no “:00” is required.

University of Washington

- Spell out on first reference; use “the UW” or “the University” thereafter.
- In adjective form, omit “the”:

UW students celebrate W Day in October.

- “University of Washington” refers to the university as a whole or all three campuses.
- Omit the article in front of “UW Bothell” and “UW Tacoma.” Do not use “UWB,” “UWT” or “branch campus.”
- OK to use “the Tacoma campus” or “the Bothell campus.”
- Do not use “UW Seattle,” “main campus” or “Seattle campus.”

URLs

- Make URLs into live links.
- In a layout, avoid breaking a URL at the end of a line. If unavoidable, break after a slash. Never hyphenate a URL.
- Omit “http://” and “www.” from URLs.

U.S. states

- When the name of a state stands alone in a sentence, spell it out.
- When using the name of a city and state together, abbreviate the name of the state per AP style (not USPS two-letter style). Example: Seattle, Wash. Exceptions: Always spell out Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Ohio, Texas and Utah.
- When using the name of a city and state in running text, use a comma after the state abbreviation. Example: The organization has been based in Bellingham, Wash., since 2011.
- OK to omit the state name following the names of major cities.

Voice

- Use active voice whenever possible.
- In news briefs, use a straightforward journalistic style that does not overstate the facts.
- Avoid jargon and overly technical language.

School-approved boilerplate language

- **School profile for social media:** News and views from the University of Washington School of Social Work, an internationally recognized leader in advancing science-driven social change.

- **Longer School profile:** The University of Washington School of Social Work is an internationally recognized leader in advancing social justice by discovering, testing and implementing scientifically and culturally sound solutions to the most intractable problems of our time.

Pride points

Established in 1934 at the height of the Great Depression, the School of Social Work educated a generation of social work leaders for relief and recovery programs that grew out of Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal. Today, the School is a recognized leader in solving the most demanding social issues of our day through rigorous research, academic innovation and public engagement.

- Consistently **ranked in the top three** among the nation's 220 schools of social work
- One of the UW's most diverse professional schools, with **47% of students from underrepresented minorities**
- More than **640 students** studying for BASW, MSW and PhD degrees
- Nearly **\$5 million in student support** awarded annually
- Administering \$24.8 million gift from Ballmer Group to fund student grants in behavioral health at 13 participating universities in Washington state
- More than **600 field sites** for BASW and MSW students
- Nearly **80% of graduates remain in Washington** to join the social work labor force
- Home of **15 research and innovation centers**
- More than **\$31 million in research funding** and **\$25 million in training and innovation grants** in FY2019
- **Ten UW Distinguished Teaching Award recipients**
- **Thirteen fellows** of the American Academy of Social Work and Social Welfare
- More than **\$73 million raised** in the UW Be Boundless campaign
- Recipient of the **first endowed deanship** in social work at a U.S. public university

Word list

Note: Additional terms can be found at [washington.edu/brand/editorial-elements/word-list](https://www.washington.edu/brand/editorial-elements/word-list).

adviser
African American (noun, adj)
Alaska Native
Alliance for Child Welfare Excellence; the Alliance
alumna (female, singular); alumnae (female, plural)
alumni (men or both men and women)
alumnus (male, singular)
American Academy of Social Work and Social Welfare (AASWSW)
American Indian
The Annie E. Casey Foundation
antidepressant
anti-social
anti-war
Asian American
Asian Pacific Islander
Be Boundless
biannual (twice a year)
biennial (every two years)
bilateral
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
bimonthly
bipartisan
campuswide
canceled, canceling, but cancellation
caregiver, caregiving
Center for Integrative Oncology and Palliative Care Social Work
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
child care
Child Well-Being Data Portal
citywide
co-author
co-founder
co-host
Communities That Care
community-wide
Congress
congressional
Council on Social Work Education (CSWE)
COVID-19

data (plural)
datum (singular)
decision maker
decision making
Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF)
dorm—avoid; use “residence hall”
Eddie Uehara or Edwina S. Uehara
elderly—avoid; use “older adult” or “elder”
e-newsletter
faculty—treat as singular collective noun
field education (avoid “practicum”)
follow up (v)
follow-up (noun, adj)
Forefront Suicide Prevention
freshman—avoid; use “first-year student” unless referring to the “freshman class”
fundraiser, fundraising
Grand Challenges for Social Work initiative
health care (noun, adj) (despite UW style)
Healthy Generations Hartford Center of Excellence
homeless—use as adjective only; also, “person experiencing homelessness” is preferable to
“homeless person”
home page
Indigenous (when referring to people or cultures)
Indigenous Wellness Research Institute (IWRI)
Internet
interprofessional education (IPE)
intranet
Karen Fredriksen Goldsen
LGBTQ, LGBTQ+
listserv
monthlong
multicultural
multidiscipline
multi-issue
multimedia
multiyear
National Association of Deans and Directors of Schools of Social Work (NADD)
National Association of Social Workers (NASW)
National Institute on Aging (NIA)
National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)
National Institutes of Health (NIH)
Native (when referring to people or cultures)
Native American
The New York Times

nonexempt
nonprofit
nontechnical
online
overrepresented
Partners for Our Children
policymaker, policymaking
re-entry
Seattle Children's
The Seattle Times
Social Development Research Group (SDRG)
startup
statewide
toward
underrepresented
underway (adj, adv)
university-wide; University-wide (when referring to the UW)
UW Medicine
Washington Legislature
Washington state
Washington State Department of Children, Youth and Families
Washington State Department of Social and Health Services
web, the
web-based
webcam
webcast
webfeed
webmaster
webpage
website
well-being
work-study
yearlong