



# ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY

*Illinois' first public university*

Gladly  
we learn  
and teach

## **Editorial Standards**

for Illinois State University

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# Editorial Standards

## for Illinois State University

An Identity Committee created by the vice president of University Advancement exists to protect the University's image. One aspect of the committee's work is the creation of editorial standards. Through their use, individuals within the campus community will be able to maintain consistency and accuracy when communicating with Illinois State's constituencies, be it through print or the Web.

This document is unique to Illinois State and is the first reference to be used when creating or editing text. Beyond these standards, the University follows the 2015 edition of *The Associated Press Stylebook* and *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*.

Questions regarding a specific editorial guideline should be directed to [UniversityMarketing@IllinoisState.edu](mailto:UniversityMarketing@IllinoisState.edu).



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## Abbreviations and acronyms

The guidelines for abbreviations and acronyms apply to narrative text. Exceptions may be necessary when dealing with Web text or licensed university products.

- Avoid abbreviations and acronyms to prevent text from becoming confusing and cumbersome.
- ISU is never the preferred reference; however, it is allowed when communicating with an internal campus audience. When communicating with external audiences, Illinois State University or Illinois State should be used on first reference. Subsequent references may be Illinois State or the University. Note that university is capitalized when preceded by “the” as a definite article.
- Use ISU when it is part of a proper name, such as Festival ISU.
- Academic degrees may be abbreviated. Capitalize the letters that represent principal words in the degree when abbreviating. There is no space between the letters, and periods are required: B.S., B.A., Ph.D. (See Page 6 for additional degree guidelines.)
- Do not put <sup>TM</sup> or <sup>®</sup> next to words.

### SPECIFIC RULES FOR ABBREVIATIONS

- There is no need to include “Illinois” when referring to a community within the state. All Illinois cities stand alone in narrative text.
- There is no need to name the state for the following major cities: Atlanta, Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Dallas, Denver, Detroit, Honolulu, Houston, Indianapolis, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Miami, Milwaukee, Minneapolis, New Orleans, New York, Oklahoma City, Philadelphia, Phoenix, Pittsburgh, St. Louis, Salt Lake City, San Antonio, San Diego, San Francisco, and Seattle.
- Names of cities and countries should not be abbreviated in narrative text. Exceptions to this rule are when U.S. is used as an adjective, and when a city is known as St., such as St. Louis.
- Spell out the names of the 50 U.S. states in narrative text.
- Spell out street, lane, avenue, boulevard, circle, drive, parkway, road, north, east, south, and west in addresses within narrative text.
- Abbreviate junior and senior after an individual’s name, but do not use a comma to separate from text that follows: John Smith Jr. is an alum.
- Abbreviate company, corporation, incorporated, and limited when used after the name of a corporate entity. Do not insert a comma before Inc., Ltd., LLC, etc.
- Web is an accepted abbreviation for the World Wide Web. It is capitalized. (See separate entry for specific Web guidelines.)
- Ampersands are used only when they are part of a company’s or publication’s title, such as *U.S. News & World Report*. Use “and” instead of an ampersand when referring to academic departments, colleges, and campus units: Department of Sociology and Anthropology

### SPECIFIC RULES FOR ACRONYMS

- Acronyms are acceptable and may be used without full reference only for familiar entities, associations, governmental agencies, etc., such as the UAW, FBI, NASA, and NCAA.
- ZIP, as in ZIP code, should be all caps. It stands for Zoning Improvement Plan.
- There are no periods or spaces in acronyms. This includes professional credentials, such as RN and CPA.
- Acronyms that readers will not quickly and easily recognize should not be used. For example, ARH should be written as Association of Residence Halls.
- If an acronym must be used, spell out the full name on first reference and introduce the acronym using parentheses: Association of Residence Halls (ARH). The acronym may then be used in subsequent references.
- Whenever possible use a descriptive noun for subsequent references: The Association of Residence Halls is planning a party. All members of the association are invited.

## Addresses

There are specific regulations that apply to outgoing mail. These can be found on the University’s Mail Service Center’s website at [MailServices.IllinoisState.edu](http://MailServices.IllinoisState.edu). Examples of addresses for mail sent to and from campus and to students are shown below.

Note that building names, building room numbers, and street addresses should never appear as part of a return address. They are used on incoming mail only when the recipient is a student living on campus.

Do not add Illinois State University or use the campus ZIP code (61790) for mail being sent to students. Mail delivery will be delayed if either is included in the student address.

Should an address be needed for global positioning system (GPS) purposes, use the following: Corner of West College Avenue and Main Street, Normal, IL 61761

### FORMAT FOR MAIL COMING TO A CAMPUS OFFICE / STAFF ADDRESS

John Doe, director (title is optional)

Illinois State University (optional)

College, department, or office name (optional)

Campus Box (insert four-digit mail code) (mandatory second line from the bottom)

Normal, IL 61790-(insert four-digit mail code) (mandatory bottom line)

## FORMAT FOR CAMPUS RETURN ADDRESS

Illinois State University (must be the top line; can be replaced by the Illinois State logo)

College, department, or office name

Campus Box (insert four-digit mail code)

Normal, IL 61790-(insert four-digit mail code)

## FORMAT FOR MAIL COMING TO A CAMPUS STUDENT ADDRESS

Student's name

Room number and residence hall name

Street Address

Normal, IL 61761-XXXX\*

\*The four-digit mail code will vary depending on the residence hall. Visit [MailServices.IllinoisState.edu](http://MailServices.IllinoisState.edu) for the list of mail codes.

## FORMAT FOR MAIL COMING TO AN OFF-CAMPUS STUDENT ADDRESS

Student's name

Street address and apartment number

Normal, IL 61761

## ADDITIONAL ADDRESS GUIDELINES

- Room numbers always appear before the building name: 201 Nelson Smith Building
- Use abbreviations for avenue, boulevard, street, etc., only with a numbered address: 1600 Pennsylvania Ave.
- Abbreviate compass points used in addresses: 562 W. 43rd St.

## EMAIL

Email addresses should use the "@IllinoisState.edu" domain. Only full names of units should be capitalized when referencing an Illinois State University email address. "IllinoisState" should be capitalized when used in email addresses. Email aliases can be obtained by contacting Web and Interactive Communications at [websupport@IllinoisState.edu](mailto:websupport@IllinoisState.edu).

Use the following examples as guides to email address capitalization:

[jsmith@IllinoisState.edu](mailto:jsmith@IllinoisState.edu)

[StudentAffairs@IllinoisState.edu](mailto:StudentAffairs@IllinoisState.edu)

[john.smith@IllinoisState.edu](mailto:john.smith@IllinoisState.edu)

- Capitalize "Email" when used before an address in a listing:  
Phone: (309) 438-8404  
Email: [rrbird@IllinoisState.edu](mailto:rrbird@IllinoisState.edu)
- Lowercase email in narrative text: Questions about the event can be sent by email to the director.

## ADDRESSES—WEB

The most marketable and concise Web addresses should be used. For this reason do not copy and paste an Internet address from the top of a website or page. Contact Web and Interactive Communications with questions regarding what Web address is preferred in a given situation.

A Web address Uniform Resource Locator (URL) is a term describing what is entered into a browser to access a site, page, or document.

- Any Web address appearing in a print piece should first be tested to ensure it functions.
- Illinois State University URLs for initiatives should appear as [IllinoisState.edu/xxx](http://IllinoisState.edu/xxx) with the "I" and "S" capitalized, and the xxx standing for the initiative.
- Always capitalize the first letter of each word and acronyms in university Web addresses: [CareerCenter.IllinoisState.edu](http://CareerCenter.IllinoisState.edu)
- Always capitalize full words that appear in a university Web address after the slash: [IllinoisState.edu/Admissions](http://IllinoisState.edu/Admissions)
- Web addresses are not underlined in printed text.
- Web addresses should not be hyphenated in text. Web addresses should not be broken between two lines unless absolutely necessary. Break after a slash if unavoidable.
- The <http://> part of the address is unnecessary and should not be included.
- The very last / in an address is also unnecessary and should be omitted.
- In referencing home pages, it is not necessary to include the name of the page if it is [index.xxx](http://index.xxx) or [default.xxx](http://default.xxx). Use the shorter and easier to remember address.

### Examples

Use [FineArts.IllinoisState.edu](http://FineArts.IllinoisState.edu)

Do not use [http://FineArts.IllinoisState.edu](http://http://FineArts.IllinoisState.edu)

Do not use [FineArts.IllinoisState.edu/](http://FineArts.IllinoisState.edu/)

Do not use [FineArts.IllinoisState.edu/index.html](http://FineArts.IllinoisState.edu/index.html)

- For custom addresses for print documents, contact Web and Interactive Communications.

Any website on campus should have four separate URLs that point to it:

[www.xxx.ilstu.edu](http://www.xxx.ilstu.edu)

[www.xxx.IllinoisState.edu](http://www.xxx.IllinoisState.edu)

[xxx.ilstu.edu](http://xxx.ilstu.edu)

[xxx.IllinoisState.edu](http://xxx.IllinoisState.edu)

- When launching your site, only the fourth address above should be what's visible in the address bar of your browser. The first three should forward to the [xxx.IllinoisState.edu](http://xxx.IllinoisState.edu) address.
- If a [xxx.IllinoisState.edu](http://xxx.IllinoisState.edu) address is not available, the [IllinoisState.edu/xxx](http://IllinoisState.edu/xxx) address should be used in print.

- Addresses that begin with an https:// are secure pages that require a login. Https addresses should be avoided in print; instead direct people to a standard http:// page introducing a secure site.

## Alumna, alumnae, alumnus, alumni, etc. usage

- Alumna = female
- Alumnae = plural female
- Alumnus = male
- Alumni = plural male, or male and female
- Alum = singular usage, male or female
- Alums = plural usage, male and female

## Campus facility names

A list of building names for major campus facilities is below. Note that the common name used by the campus community is provided to eliminate confusion for the person searching for a specific location. The location of each can be found by viewing the campus map at [Maps.IllinoisState.edu](http://Maps.IllinoisState.edu).

- |   |   |  |   |
|---|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adelaide Street Field</li> <li>• Allen Theatre</li> <li>• Alumni Center</li> <li>• Bill Waller Parking and Transportation Building</li> <li>• Bone Student Center</li> <li>• Bowling and Billiards Center</li> <li>• Braden Auditorium</li> <li>• Brown Ballroom</li> <li>• Campus Religious Center</li> <li>• Capen Auditorium</li> <li>• Cardinal Court</li> <li>• Carter Harris Building</li> <li>• Centennial East</li> <li>• Centennial West</li> <li>• Center for the Performing Arts</li> <li>• Center for the Visual Arts</li> <li>• Chiller Plant</li> <li>• Cook Hall</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DeGarmo Hall</li> <li>• Duffy Bass Field</li> <li>• Edwards Hall</li> <li>• Ewing Cultural Center</li> <li>• Eyestone School Museum</li> <li>• Fairchild Hall</li> <li>• Fell Hall</li> <li>• Felmley Hall</li> <li>• Gregory Street Tennis Courts</li> <li>• Hancock Stadium</li> <li>• Hayden Auditorium</li> <li>• Haynie Hall</li> <li>• Heating Plant</li> <li>• Hewett Hall</li> <li>• Honors Program</li> <li>• Horticulture Center</li> <li>• Horton Field House</li> <li>• Hovey Hall</li> <li>• Hudelson Building</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In Exchange</li> <li>• InfoCentre</li> <li>• Instructional Technology and Development Center</li> <li>• John Green Food Service Building</li> <li>• Julian Hall</li> <li>• Kaufman Football Building</li> <li>• Kemp Recital Hall</li> <li>• Linkins Dining Center</li> <li>• Manchester Hall</li> <li>• Marian Kneer Softball Stadium</li> <li>• McCormick Hall</li> <li>• MCN Nursing Simulation Laboratory</li> <li>• Metcalf School</li> <li>• Milner Library</li> <li>• Moulton Hall</li> <li>• Nelson Smith Building</li> <li>• Office of Energy Management</li> <li>• Office of Residential Life Building</li> <li>• Office of Sustainability</li> <li>• Old Union</li> <li>• Parking Garage, North University Street</li> <li>• Parking Garage, School Street</li> <li>• Parking Garage, South University Street</li> <li>• Planetarium</li> <li>• Professional Development Annex</li> <li>• Professional Development Building</li> <li>• Quad</li> <li>• Rachel Cooper</li> <li>• Redbird Arena</li> <li>• Ropp Agriculture Building</li> <li>• Schroeder Hall</li> <li>• Science Laboratory Building</li> <li>• Shelbourne Apartments</li> <li>• State Farm Hall of Business</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stevenson Hall</li> <li>• Stroud Auditorium</li> <li>• Student Accounts Building</li> <li>• Student Fitness Center</li> <li>• Student Services Building</li> <li>• Turner Hall</li> <li>• University Farm at Lexington</li> <li>• University Galleries</li> <li>• University High School (U-High is acceptable on second reference)</li> <li>• University High School Tennis Courts</li> <li>• University Residence</li> <li>• <i>Vidette</i> Building</li> <li>• Vitro Center</li> <li>• Watterson Dining Commons</li> <li>• Watterson Towers</li> <li>• Weibring Golf Club</li> <li>• Westhoff Theatre</li> <li>• Wilkins Hall</li> <li>• Williams Hall</li> <li>• Wright Hall</li> <li>• 209 North Fell Avenue Apartment Building</li> <li>• 210 North Main building</li> <li>• 211 North Fell Avenue Apartment Building</li> <li>• 211 North University Street Building</li> <li>• 300A Shelbourne Drive Building</li> <li>• 302 North School Street Apartment Building</li> <li>• 308 Kingsley Street Building</li> </ul> |
|---|---|--|---|

# Capitalization

- Avoid excessive capitalization as it is cumbersome for the reader.
- University is capitalized when preceded by “the” as a definite article. Lowercase the word “university” in all other uses.
- Internet is capitalized.
- Web is capitalized.
- Capitalize all full and proper names of university colleges, schools, departments, divisions, offices, and units: Office of Admissions
- Colleges, schools, departments, divisions, offices, and units may be shortened in second reference. Keep the abbreviated name capitalized: The Division of Student Affairs has many staff positions. Employees within Student Affairs work in buildings across campus.
- Colleges, schools, departments, divisions, offices, and units are not capitalized on second reference: The College of Education is expanding. The college will soon need a larger building.
- Lowercase when referring to a function vs. a unit: The admissions process will be streamlined.
- Capitalize “City of Bloomington” and “Town of Normal.” City and town are lowercased when used alone and with any other cities or towns.
- Capitalize Laboratory School(s) and Lab School(s) when used in reference to University High School and Metcalf School.
- Capitalize the principal words in Board of Trustees when referring to the University’s governing body. Otherwise lowercase board of trustees and always lowercase board of directors.
- Professional titles are capitalized only when they precede a name. They are lowercased when they appear after the name.
- Titles are capitalized when they are below a signature.
- Titles are capitalized on business cards.
- Capitalize committee and scholarship names when using the full or abbreviated name.
- Capitalize Distinguished Professor in all references.
- Capitalize fellowships and professorships in all references.
- Capitalize alumni chapter names and professional organizations.
- Capitalize course names of all languages and all courses when the full name is used.
- Capitalize titles of books, plays, magazines, articles, newspapers, etc. Conjunctions are capitalized only if they start or end the title.
- Capitalize the following annual events: Homecoming, Homecoming Parade, Founders Day, and Founders Day Convocation. Lowercase commencement, finals week, graduation, and semester.
- Capitalize the principal words in the University slogan Spread the Red.
- Departmental majors, minors, degrees, sequences, and programs are not capitalized: Jane Smith is an accounting student in the College of Business.
- Do not capitalize the names of departments, divisions, offices, and units of companies or other universities.
- Seasons of the year are not capitalized.
- Capitalize Hall of Fame and Hall of Famer. Lowercase halls of fame.
- Keep “box office” or “ticket office” lowercased when used in a generic sense, but capitalize when used in a specific reference: Contact the Bone Student Center Box Office for tickets.
- Capitalize “Email” when used before an address in a listing, but keep it lowercased in narrative text.
- Lowercase the titles of professional certificates and licenses: forensic nursing certificate
- When referring to the STATE your Passion slogan or another version of this slogan in body text, “STATE” should be fully capitalized as well as the first letter of the final word in the phrase. This style only applies to university-sanctioned versions of the STATE your Passion slogan. See examples below.
  - STATE your Passion, Illinois State University and College of Arts and Sciences
  - STATE your Business, College of Business
  - STATE your Commitment, College of Education
  - STATE your Compassion, Mennonite College of Nursing
  - STATE your Dream, College of Fine Arts
  - STATE your Flavor, Campus Dining Services
  - STATE your Future, College of Applied Science and Technology
  - STATE your Place, University Housing Services

## NAMING CONVENTIONS

The following are specific brands and names with custom spelling. All examples below demonstrate the correct way to spell and capitalize these names:

- My.IllinoisState.edu—Illinois State University’s portal
- iPeople—Online Human Resources management software
- Go.IllinoisState.edu—Illinois State University’s prospective student portal

## Copyright

The University takes seriously the observation and enforcement of copyright laws. Consult *The Associated Press Stylebook* for information and guidelines about copyright laws, and the process of obtaining reprint permission. Milner Library is another resource, with information available at [Library.IllinoisState.edu](http://Library.IllinoisState.edu).

## Courtesy titles

- Courtesy titles are not used. The only exception to this rule is for a medical doctor. In that case, use Dr. on first reference only. Last name only is used on second reference in all cases.
- If using the last name in second references causes confusion, use first names instead.
- Capitalize professional titles when they precede a name, but lowercase if used after a person's name.
- Emeritus is added to a formal title to denote an individual has retired but maintains an academic rank or title. Place after the formal title: Professor Emeritus John Jones
- Emerita = female
- Emeritae = plural female
- Emeritus = male
- Emeriti = plural male, or male and female

## Dates

- Days of the week should not be abbreviated in narrative text. They may be abbreviated when in tabular format.
- Months are not abbreviated in narrative text.
- Include a comma with a full date: January 10, 1992

## Degrees

- Academic degrees may be spelled out or abbreviated.
- When abbreviated, the principal words in the degree are capitalized. There is no space between the letters, and periods are required: B.S., B.A., Ph.D. The one exception is that there are no periods in MBA.
- Capitalize the formal titles of degrees but lowercase the major in which the degree was earned: Bachelor of Arts in journalism, Master of Science in chemistry, Doctor of Education in educational administration
- When referencing degrees in a generic sense, there is no need to capitalize: My sister has a bachelor's degree.
- To note a degree year when writing about an alum, the year should follow a person's name without a comma for an undergraduate degree: Bill Jones '82

- Use commas to note a degree year when the degree received is a master's or doctorate: Bill Jones '82, M.S. '84, Ph.D. '90, '98
- Do not place the planned year of graduation next to the names of current students.

## Email signatures

In an effort to maintain an appropriate image for the institution as a whole, email signatures should be limited to work information and should be presented in a professional manner. Philosophical statements, words of wisdom, favorite quotes, personal messages, and clip art should not be included. These items not only make it more difficult for the recipient to find pertinent work information, but also are potentially offensive and inappropriate for work email.

### GUIDELINES

- A sample email configuration is as follows. The font and type size may vary. If desired, service statements related to an individual's department should appear above the signature information.  

```
Insert name  
Title, Department  
Illinois State University  
Phone: (XXX) XXX-XXXX  
Email: XXXXXXX@IllinoisState.edu
```
- Provide the sender's email with contact information. This courtesy makes it easier for recipients to respond, particularly when messages are forwarded and the original sender's address may be lost.
- Include a direct phone number to assist the recipient in responding.
- Include a department name.
- Professional credentials are optional.
- Wallpaper should not be used in email, as some email applications do not support it, and some selections may be considered inappropriate by the recipient.
- Use only one university logo per email. Email-size logos that have been approved are available for download at [UniversityMarketing.IllinoisState.edu/Identity](http://UniversityMarketing.IllinoisState.edu/Identity).
- Use only one university-related tagline or slogan.
- Remove taglines, slogans, and logos tied to an event that has passed. Replace with something upcoming or ongoing so that email signatures are current.

Email correspondence should be considered a public form of communication. The majority of messages sent electronically do not contain private information. In instances when such information is included in an email correspondence, a confidentiality statement must be added to the message.

### CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE:

This email and any attachments may be confidential. If you are not the intended recipient, be aware that any disclosure, copying,



distribution, or use of this email or any attachment is prohibited. If you have received this email in error, please notify us immediately by returning it to the sender and delete this copy from your system. Thank you.

## Illinois State University App

When referencing the official Illinois State University App, use the following language: "Download the official Illinois State University App for free from the App Store or Google Play Store."

When referencing a specific Guide within the App, use this language: "Download the official Illinois State University App for free from the App Store or Google Play Store and search for the (event name) Guide for (list 2-3 features)." For example: "Download the official Illinois State University App for free from the App Store or Google Play Store and search for the Homecoming Guide for schedules, maps, and more."

Always refer to the App as an "app." Never reference or use the name "Guidebook." Visit [IllinoisState.edu/App](http://IllinoisState.edu/App) for more information.

## Italic type

The following guidelines apply to narrative text.

- Italic type is used for titles of dissertations, plays, television shows, films, books, journals, magazines, newspapers, newsletters, long poems published as books, long musical works, operas, etc.
- Do not italicize commas, semicolons, and conjunctions such as "and" when they are used to separate different titles in a series.
- Use italic type for works of art and museum exhibits.
- Use italic type for non-English words and phrases that are not familiar to readers.

## Language

- Target audiences may not be familiar with the University environment. Text should therefore be written with the expectation that the reader is not a member of the academic community.
- Jargon, slang, and unnecessary technical verbiage should be avoided.
- Avoid redundancies and sexist language, including male-based and exclusionary words such as chairman. Remove gender bias from language instead, e.g., chair or chairperson.
- Avoid mention of a disability, unless it is relevant to the text.
- Do not refer to individuals as "handicapped," but rather "individuals with a disability."
- Use "accessible to individuals with disabilities," instead of "handicapped accessible."

## Mission statement

The University's mission statement is as follows:

We at Illinois State University work as a diverse community of scholars, with a commitment to fostering a small-college atmosphere with large-university opportunities. We promote the highest academic standards in our teaching, scholarship, public service, and the connections we build among them. We devote all of our resources and energies to creating the most supportive and productive community possible to serve the citizens of Illinois and beyond.

## Motto

The University's motto is "Gladly we learn and teach."

## Nondiscriminatory language

Text must be written to show equal respect regardless of gender, national origin, sexual orientation, ethnic background, age, religious belief, marital status, veteran status, disability, or any other category identified by affirmative action legislation.

## Numbers

- In general spell out numbers one through nine. Use numerals for numbers 10 and above.
- Delete th, st, nd, and rd when working with numbers: June 1 is correct vs. June 1st.
- When "th" or "st" must be included, do not use superscript: June 1st is correct vs. June 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Avoid beginning sentences with numbers. When unavoidable, spell out all numbers that start a sentence, except when a year begins the sentence: 2010 was a great year.
- Use numerals to indicate age.
- Use numerals for dimensions, but spell out the unit of measure: 6 feet, 3 inches
- Use numerals to indicate speed.
- Use numerals when writing percentages or millions of dollars.
- Use the word "percent" instead of the symbol.
- School years should be written with both full years separated by an en dash: 2012–2013

## Phone numbers

- Use “phone” vs. “telephone.”
- Use “fax” vs. “facsimile.”
- Include “TTY” when applicable.
- Enclose the area code in parentheses.
- Use a hyphen instead of periods when listing a phone number.

## Publication taglines

Accessibility statements are needed on all university publications, including program announcements, brochures, flyers, etc. For more information, visit [DisabilityConcerns.IllinoisState.edu](http://DisabilityConcerns.IllinoisState.edu).

- Include the following equal opportunity statement when appropriate: An equal opportunity/affirmative action university encouraging diversity
- Include the following accommodation statement when appropriate: If you need a special accommodation to fully participate in this program/event, please contact (name, host department) at (phone number, voice). Please allow sufficient time to arrange the accommodation.
- Publications should include a tagline regarding format options, with a text telephone number (TTY) included if available: This document is available in alternative formats upon request by contacting (name, host department) at (phone number, voice).

### ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES

- Include notice that the piece was printed on recycled paper when applicable.

## Punctuation

Abbreviated rules of punctuation are presented below. For a more thorough explanation, consult *The Associated Press Stylebook*, which has a complete punctuation guide.

### APOSTROPHE

(See Page 9 for use as a possessive.)

- Use caution when keying in an apostrophe. The correct usage will be curly vs. straight and faces to the left: ‘08
- Use an apostrophe to indicate omitted letters and figures: ‘95
- An apostrophe is not needed when indicating eras or forming plurals of acronyms: 1990s
- An apostrophe is not needed in Founders Day.

### COLON

- Use a colon before a listing if the introductory statement can stand alone as a sentence.
- Capitalize the first word after a colon only if it is a proper noun or the start of a complete sentence. Do not capitalize the first word if it is part of a series of items or a phrase.
- Place the colon outside quotation marks, unless the colon is part of the quote itself.

### COMMA

- Use a comma if its omission slows a reader’s comprehension.
- Use a comma between independent clauses of compound sentences connected by the following conjunctions: and, but, or, so, yet
- Use commas to separate elements in a series, including before the final conjunction: The flag is red, white, and blue.
- Use a comma to separate a series of adjectives equal in rank: a wet, slick road
- Use commas to set off a person’s age in text, as well as hometown.
- Use a comma in numbers greater than 999.
- A comma is not needed after short introductory adverbial phrases: In May students will graduate.
- A comma is not needed between the season and the year, or between the month and the year.
- A comma is not needed before attribution if a quoted statement ends with a question mark or exclamation point: “Will you come with me?” she asked.

## DASH

Note that there are two types of dashes: the “en dash” and the “em dash.”

- The en dash is shorter and used between spans of time: The drought will last 4–6 years.
- The em dash is longer and used to denote parenthetical thought: The race—postponed by rain—had few athletes.
- Use em dashes for a phrase that would normally be set off by commas but contains a series that must be separated by commas.
- Eliminate spaces on both sides of the dash. This holds for en and em dashes.

## ELLIPSIS

- Use an ellipsis to indicate the deletion of one or more words in condensing quotes, text, or documents.
- Leave a regular space on both sides of the ellipsis.
- An ellipsis is not used to start or end a direct quote.
- When an ellipsis is used following a complete sentence, end the sentence with a period. Insert a space before the start of the ellipsis.

## HYPHEN

- Limit the use of hyphens.
- Use a hyphen to avoid ambiguity.
- Use a hyphen to form a single idea from two or more words, including compound modifiers that precede a noun.
- Use a hyphen with compound adjectives: faculty-based committee
- A hyphen is not needed with adverbs ending in “ly” that are used to modify a noun.
- Use a hyphen to designate dual heritage: Italian-American
- Use a hyphen to avoid duplicated vowels and consonants: shell-like
- Use a hyphen in compounds in which the second element is a proper noun or a numeral: mid-1995
- Use a hyphen to join double prefixes: sub-subparagraph
- Use a hyphen if the word changes meaning without it: recover, re-cover
- Hyphenate Bloomington-Normal in all references.
- Use a hyphen when expressing age as a phrase: Jon is a 5-year-old boy.
- Use a hyphen when giving dimensions as an adjective before a noun: A 5-foot-11-inch man was arrested.
- A hyphen is not needed when a combination of adjectives create an open compound: first grade teacher
- Follow *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary* when determining the use of a hyphen in words that have the prefix “co” or “non.”

## PERIOD

- Place a period inside quotation marks.
- Place a period inside parentheses or brackets if the enclosed text is a complete sentence. If it is not, the period goes outside.
- Use periods in degree notations: B.S., Ph.D.
- Periods are not used in acronyms.

## POSSESSIVES

- Add ‘s for plural nouns not ending in s, and singular nouns not ending in s: women’s rights, horse’s food
- Add ‘s for singular common nouns ending in s: hostess’s invitation
- Add an apostrophe only for plural nouns ending in s: boys’ books
- Add an apostrophe only for proper names ending in s: Agnes’ meal
- An apostrophe is not needed in descriptive phrases: citizens band radio

## QUOTATION MARKS

- Use quotation marks for the titles of short written works, such as magazine articles, speeches, papers, and unpublished manuscripts; short musical works; poems not published in book form; and conferences and meetings.
- Quotation marks are not needed for titles of academic courses.
- Quotation marks are not needed for an annual event: Bone Distinguished Lecture Series
- Quotation marks are not needed for website tabs. These headings should be capitalized.

## SEMICOLON

- Use in listings of phrases that contain commas.
- Use to join closely related independent clauses that are not joined by a conjunction.

## Quantity

- When indicating greater numerical value, the use of “over” and “more than” are both acceptable: The ball weighed more than (over) 7 pounds.
- Use “fewer” with items that can be counted, and use “less” in reference to amounts: With fewer tourists in town, there was less traffic congestion.

## Spacing

Narrative text should have a single space following a period.

## Spelling conventions

The following commonly used words are spelled in accordance with the University's editorial standards.

- advisor
- cocurricular
- course work
- flex dollars
- student-athlete
- Uptown Normal

## Time

- Use lowercase letters, periods, and no spaces in a.m./p.m. when indicating time of day: The meeting starts at 8 a.m.
- Use the en dash when giving a range of time: The meeting will run from 7–9 a.m.
- Zeros are not used for the hour in text.
- Avoid confusion between 12 p.m. and 12 a.m. by using noon and midnight.
- Do not separate the time and day with a comma: 7 p.m. Monday or 2–3 a.m. Thursday. But use commas when the time is followed by more than one day: 3 p.m., Monday–Friday,
- Use commas before and after a date when it is preceded by a day: Monday, June 5,

## University name

The University's full, formal, official name is Illinois State University. ISU is never the preferred reference; however, it is allowed when communicating with an internal campus audience. When communicating with external audiences, Illinois State University or Illinois State should be used on first reference. Subsequent references may be Illinois State or the University. Note that university is capitalized when preceded by "the" as a definite article.

## University text—generic

On February 18, 1857, Governor William Bissell of Illinois signed a bill creating a normal school and establishing the Board of Education of the State of Illinois as its governing body. The bill stipulated that the permanent location would be the place that offered the most favorable inducements. Jesse W. Fell took up the campaign for Bloomington and obtained financial backing totaling \$141,000. Abraham Lincoln, acting as attorney for the board, drew up the bond guaranteeing the Bloomington citizens would fulfill their financial pledges.

Illinois State Normal University was consequently founded as the first public institution of higher education in the state. Established as a teacher education institution, Illinois State has developed into a multipurpose university with degree programs at the bachelor's, master's, and doctoral levels.

The University is one of 12 public universities in Illinois. Its 34 academic departments offer more than 150 fields of undergraduate study in the Colleges of Applied Science and Technology, Arts and Sciences, Business, Education, and Fine Arts, and the Mennonite College of Nursing. The Graduate School coordinates 42 master's, seven certificate, one specialist, and 10 doctoral programs. The University's academic programs are supported by the services and collections of Milner Library, which contains more than 3 million holdings and special collections.

The University enrolls students from throughout Illinois, 48 states, and 71 countries. Students are mentored by faculty members dedicated to superior teaching, including numerous teacher-scholars recognized at national and international levels for their research and contributions to their field.

Conveniently located in Central Illinois, the University is situated at the intersection of three major highways, as well as along the Chicago-St. Louis railroad corridor. Due to its easy access in a region of strong economic growth and its multidimensional profile, Illinois State is able to respond to the varied needs and interests of its constituents and to contribute to the development of its students as responsible citizens.

# Web

All of the editorial standards within this document apply to Web text. The following guidelines deal with specific Internet references as used in text.

The following standards assist in maintaining consistency and accuracy when communicating with Illinois State's constituencies through the Web.

Questions regarding the work of the Identity Committee in general, or a specific guideline, should be sent by email to [UniversityMarketing@IllinoisState.edu](mailto:UniversityMarketing@IllinoisState.edu).

## ACCESSIBILITY

All of Illinois State University's websites adhere to the Section 508 guidelines outlined in the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Illinois Information Technology Accessibility Act. Those with further questions on the guidelines expressed in Section 508 can visit [www.section508.gov](http://www.section508.gov).

Some of the most important aspects of the 508 guidelines that govern the creation of Illinois State websites are as follows:

- Screen reader accessible tables and PDF files. Note that physically scanning a print document may render it unreadable to screen reading programs. It is preferable to open a source document and either "Save as ..." or "Print" as a PDF.
- Pictures that contain important information relevant to the page must have <Alt> tags.
- Any audio and video appearing on the Web must be either captioned or accompanied by a written transcript.
- Visual accessibility standards are outlined in the *Graphic Standards* manual available at [UniversityMarketing.IllinoisState.edu/Identity](http://UniversityMarketing.IllinoisState.edu/Identity).

Any questions or requests for assistance on accessibility issues should be directed toward Web and Interactive Communications by emailing [websupport@IllinoisState.edu](mailto:websupport@IllinoisState.edu).

## HTML emails

The visual and style standards outlined on [UniversityMarketing.IllinoisState.edu/Identity](http://UniversityMarketing.IllinoisState.edu/Identity) should also be followed for any official HTML emails produced and distributed by the University. The following should be included in an HTML email:

- A graphic header using Illinois State University branding

Issues of branding should fall to what is outlined within the *Visual Web Standards* manual, the University's official visual standards document for websites.

## HEADINGS

Headings should be used on pages to provide increased readability for the site visitor.

- Every page should begin with a Heading 1 <h1> tag. The first subheading should be a Heading 2 <h2> tag and subheadings below that should use a Heading 3 <h3> tag.
- If a page needs headings below a Heading 3, it may be a sign that the page is too long and could be better served by breaking it into multiple pages.
- Headings should appear on pages in title case.

## iGUIDE

To create a sense of unity across Illinois State websites, all Illinois State University Web pages should feature the iGuide at the top of each page. Refer to the *Visual Web Standards* manual for additional information regarding the iGuide.

## LINKS

### Documents

Documents should be converted to PDF format before linking within the site.

### In-text links

Links within the body of text should always be [red and underlined](#).

Avoid using all caps to draw attention to a link. This will create a distinction between links and regular text.

Avoid using links such as "Click here" or "Visit this Web page." Text in links helps to determine search keywords and ranking and should be purposeful. These links are also meaningless to users with screen readers.

Avoid: To download the University Catalog, [CLICK HERE](#).

Ideal: [Download the University Catalog](#) to learn more about our course offerings.

### Navigation

Navigation links should be kept concise.

Avoid: About the Office for Enrollment Management and Academic Services

Ideal: About, About us, or About the office

Acronyms should still be avoided if possible, but may be used if facing space limitations.

Navigation links should be in title case. Names of departments should be capitalized.

## TERMINOLOGY

- Lowercase “online” and write as one word.
- Lowercase “website” and write as one word.
- “Internet” and “Web” used by themselves are capitalized.
- Avoid using phrases like “Web page” and “home page.” Instead direct users to a specific website.

## TITLES

Page titles appear at the top of the browser window and are used to identify a given page in a bookmark. They also assist in search rankings. Ideally page titles should be formatted as shown below:

Home page: Name of Site/Department/Unit—Illinois State University

Interior pages: Name of the page—Name of site/department/unit—Illinois State University

The page title and heading 1 <h1> of a page should match. Providing a meaningful page title helps ensure that users will be able to search for the page.

## UNDERLINING

Underlining plain text on a website should be avoided. However all in-text links should be underlined. This is controlled from a site’s CSS (Cascading Style Sheets).

Underlining is used on the Web to denote something being linked. If text must be emphasized, please use bold (<strong> tags) instead.

## WEB WRITING TIPS

- Use simple sentence structures.
- Web text information should be presented in short “chunks” with one main point. Chunks are small, manageable units of information (one to seven pieces of relevant and related information) that fill the screen with 100 words or less in two or three paragraphs.
- Start with the conclusion first, as well as a short summary of the remaining contents, instead of leading up to the main point.
- Update your website’s content regularly.
- Don’t use a promotional writing style with subjective claims (“hottest ever”). This type of writing imposes a cognitive burden on visitors who don’t want to spend their time filtering out

promotional language to get to the information.

- Use meaningful headers to label short chunks of information and to convey to the visitor the main point of the information presented in the chunk. Headers that are emphasized in some way (bold, larger type, etc.) make it easier for the visitor to scan the Web page.

Bold and italic type, used sparingly, is the best format for textual emphasis on the Web.

Emphasize only key information-carrying words and avoid highlighting entire sentences or long phrases because visitors can only pick up two or three words.

Avoid capitalizing entire words for emphasis because this increases reading time and puts excessive strain on the eyes.

Do not underline text for emphasis. Underlining should be reserved for links.

Emphasize minor textual points to make them stand out, and make sure they are useful even without the surrounding text.

- Consider presenting minor points in a list format (bullets or numerical) to further chunk this extra information. Lists draw in the scanning eye.
  - Use numbered lists when the order of entries is important and unnumbered lists when the sequence of the entries is not important.
  - Limit lists to two levels: primary and secondary.
- Some, but not most, Web visitors will want to read extra information on a topic, and the Web is the perfect place for delivering detailed information, but only on a third- or fourth-level page.



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**ILLINOIS STATE  
UNIVERSITY**

*Illinois' first public university*

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