UCLA Health

Marketing & Communications

Style Guide

Your guide to
digital and print content
at UCLA Health

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The UCLA Health Style Guide is a grammar and style reference for anyone who wishes to write or publish digital or print copy for the organization. The Style Guide is intended to guarantee consistency across internal and external communications and also includes sections on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, as well as COVID-19.

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Introduction

The UCLA Health Style Guide is a reference guide for anyone who wishes to write or publish digital or print copy for the organization.

Much of what you will find in this style guide is from the *AP Stylebook*, as it has been the policy of the organization to use its style guide. We have changed some of the guidelines to be more relevant to our organization's needs. This guide is a supplement to the *AP Stylebook* and does not replace it.

If you have questions about spelling, punctuation or other fine points of grammar, refer to this guide. Use it like a dictionary as well as a guideline for how to write for UCLA Health's publications — digital or print. Items are listed alphabetically.

UCLA Health Mission, Vision and Values

Our **goal** is to provide the best patient experience with every patient, every encounter, every time.

Our **mission** is to deliver leading-edge patient care, research and education.

Our **vision** is to heal humankind, one patient at a time, by improving health, alleviating suffering and delivering acts of kindness.

UCLA Health employees are committed to the **UCLA CICARE** approach with every patient, family or employee interaction. The CICARE approach adheres to the following:

Connect with the patient, family and colleagues by addressing them by their preferred names and pronouns.

Introduce yourself and your role.

Communicate what you are about to do, how long it will take and how it will affect the patient, family or colleague.

Ask and anticipate questions from the patient, family and colleagues.

Respond with immediacy to questions and requests from the patient, family and colleagues.

Exit every encounter with empathy and share what will come next.

Legally usable content

- Everything you write should be your own writing. If you quote another source, insert the source as well as the source URL so Marketing and Communications can evaluate the original content and, if appropriate, provide readers with a direct link to it.

- Only use medically reviewed information from reliable sources, such as .edu, .org and .gov sites.

- Never post pictures that you find using Google images or a similar search engine, or use photos pulled from Facebook, Twitter or other social media channels without permission. We may not have the usage rights and posting such pictures could pose legal problems.

Voice and tone

When we communicate with our audiences, we want to use a voice and tone that establishes our brand, but varies based on context.

- **Voice** = what our brand means to consumers:

  - We want to provide people with health-related information and empower them to make informed decisions about their health.

  - We are a team of passionate, dedicated, collaborative experts who support and serve patients and their diverse needs.

- **Tone** = how we change the sound of "our voice" based on the context of the communication. For example, on a web page about cancer, we will have the same voice about our brand, but we may be softer and more reassuring. On a web page about having a baby, we will be more excited and congratulatory.

Writing tips

While most of us possess some technical writing skills, we can all use a refresher course in good writing before preparing text for a publication. Here are some tips that will help you write clear, concise copy to communicate your message to your audience.

Consider your audience
Keep in mind your audience's reading level and knowledge of the subject. Two brochures on the same surgical procedure — one for patients and the other for physicians — require different writing styles. Put yourself in your audience's shoes — write in a way that draws the reader's attention to the substance of the writing.

Write at the appropriate reading level for the appropriate audiences; please try not to write higher than a sixth-grade reading level. Flesch-Kinkaid is a free tool to test the readability of your work.

Determine your purpose
Decide what you want your readers to do, think or feel after reading the publication. For example, you may want them to register for a conference, understand more about a service or procedure or feel comfortable coming to UCLA Health. Keep your purpose in mind throughout the entire piece.

Begin with an outline
Think about the main points in your message and how you want the information to flow. Draft an outline of your main ideas to help you get started. You may want to share the outline with a colleague for feedback before you begin writing.

Write, rewrite and write again
Revising is part of writing. After you've compiled your first draft, review it with a critical eye and edit it using the guidelines in this manual. Ask co-workers to critique the copy; be willing to incorporate suggestions. Consider reading it aloud to yourself to see if it makes sense. When you're done writing, read through it again as an objective editor. Ask yourself: If you were the reader would this appeal to you? Is it clear and easy to understand? Is there any information missing?

Proofread/spell-check
Proofread carefully in addition to using your computer's spell-check.

Check your facts
Fact checking your work is essential for good writing. Make sure that you are using reliable sources to confirm what you are writing is factual and accurate. Provide links to sources if appropriate.

Use active voice instead of passive voice, and put statements in a positive form
For example, write: "The department sponsored a lecture," rather than "The lecture was sponsored by the department."

Keep it specific and concise

Most people have a great deal of reading to do each day. Keep your text as concise as possible to make your piece more readable. Use details rather than generalities to explain a main point. Include concrete examples when possible. Eliminate repetition, remove unnecessary words and condense long phrases.

Avoid jargon, clichés and wordy prepositional phrases. As examples:

Avoid	Use instead
as a matter of fact	in fact
at this point in time	now, today
in close proximity	near
true facts	facts
past history	past
mutual cooperation	cooperation
is in the process of	is
utilized	used

Avoid using formal or scholarly tone unless necessary

A conversational tone is more readable and usually more effective for UCLA Health publications. Technical documents may require a more formal tone. Again, consider your audience.

Choose verbs carefully

Strong, descriptive verbs add color to copy and eliminate the need for wordy phrases.

Avoid	Use instead
have a need for	need
take into consideration	consider
announcement was made	announced
have a tendency	tend
take action	act
made a statement	stated

Avoid verbs ending in –ing

For example:

Avoid	Use instead
is planning to hold	plans to hold
will be leading the committee	will lead the committee

Do not use nouns as verbs

For example:

Avoid	**Use instead**
This policy will affect patients.	This policy affects patients.
The hospital and the company are partners.	The hospital partnered with the company.

Use bullets effectively

Bulleted text helps highlight information and makes the text more readable. Overuse of bullets, however, can make brochures and similar pieces look awkward. Bullets and lists are especially useful for digital content.

When the order isn't important, list the items alphabetically. Always capitalize the first letter of each bulleted item.

If the list includes any fragments, do not end items with periods.

Example:

The job duties include:

- Monitoring patients
- Taking vital signs

If the list comprises complete sentences, use periods at the end of each item.

Punctuation 101

Apostrophes — Use to indicate possession (*the doctor's, the nurse's*), or omitted letters or figures (*don't, '50s*). Do not use to indicate plurals in numerals or acronyms: *1990s, HMOs, RNs.*

Capitalization of headlines and titles — Always follow sentence case. Capitalize the first word of the title/heading and of any subtitle/subheading; and capitalize any proper nouns. Use lowercase for everything else.

*Exception: The only publication that uses title case headlines is *U Magazine*. Title case rules: Capitalize the first word of the title/heading and any subtitle/subheading and all "major" words (nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs and pronouns).

Always use numerals in headlines and titles, even for numbers one through nine.

Example:

Updated 08/04/23

Against all odds, 3 siblings were born with the same genetic disorder.

Commas

> **In a series** — Use commas to separate elements in a series, but do not place a comma before the conjunction in a simple series of three or more: *We invited all patients, visitors and staff.*
>
> Put a comma before the concluding conjunction in a series, however, if an integral element of the series requires a conjunction: *I had orange juice, toast, and ham and eggs for breakfast.*
>
> Use a comma before the concluding conjunction in a complex series of phrases: *The main points to consider are whether the athletes are skillful enough to compete, whether they have the stamina to endure the training, and whether they have the proper mental attitude.*
>
> **Parenthetic expressions** — Sentences with brief descriptive phrases must use the apposition comma. *The Employee Survey, coordinated by a multidisciplinary task force, will be fielded in September 2020.*
>
> **With dates** — Use a comma between the day and year and after the year: *July 18, 2018, is the last day to submit research proposals.* Do not use a comma between the month and year: *July 2020.*
>
> **With quotes** — Commas and periods always go within quotations: *"Don't leave the gurney in the hall," the orderly said.*
>
> **With states** — Use commas before and after state names when used with city names: Phoenix, Ariz., and Tucson, Ariz.

Em dash (—) and en dash (–) — An em dash is roughly the length of a lowercase letter *m* and is generally used to replace colons, commas, hyphens, semi-colons and parentheses. Our style includes a space on either side of em dashes.

> **Example:** Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center — an academic medical center in Los Angeles — is respected around the world for research and patient education.

An en dash is roughly the length of a lowercase letter *n* and is typically used to denote a span of time or in the place of a colon to create compounds (see example below). Follow these guidelines:

Use em dashes:

- **Abrupt change** — to denote an abrupt change in thought or an emphatic pause.

- **Series within a phrase** — when a phrase that otherwise would be set off by commas contains a series of words that must be separated by commas.

Use en dashes:

- **To create compounds** — for example, *the California–Mexico border*.

- **To denote a span of time, if space is limited** — for example, *Monday – Thursday* or *9 – 11 am*. In all other cases, use *to*: *Monday to Thursday*. Refer to the **Time** entry for further clarification.

To insert an em or en dash in Word, choose Symbol from the Insert menu, click the Special Characters tab, highlight the dash and click Insert.

Ellipses (. . .) (sing. *ellipsis*) — In general, treat an ellipsis as a three-letter word, constructed with three periods and two spaces. Use an ellipsis to indicate the deletion of one or more words in condensing quotes, texts and documents. Be careful to avoid deletions that distort the original meaning. (As a general rule, try to avoid using ellipses in a quote – it is better to find a quote that works in its entirety.)

Hyphen (-) — Hyphens are joiners. Use them to avoid ambiguity or to form a single idea from two or more words.

As compound modifier — When a compound modifier — two or more words expressing a single concept — precedes a noun, use hyphens to link all the words in the compound except the adverb *very* and all adverbs that end in –ly: *a first-quarter touchdown, a bluish-green dress, a full-time job, a 2-year-old girl, an easily remembered rule*.

However, omit the hyphen when the phrasal adjectives are commonly used and understood without the hyphen and the meaning is quite clear without one: *a high school student, an affirmative action program, a primary care physician, the intensive care unit*.

Use with a two-thought compound — *socio-economic*.

Quotations — Periods and commas go within quotation marks; dashes, semicolons, question marks and exclamation points go within the quotation marks when they apply to the quoted matter only.

For quotes within quotes, alternate between double quotation marks ("or") and single marks ('or'):

Example: She said, "I quote from his letter, 'I agree with Kipling that "the female of the species is more deadly than the male" but the phenomenon is not an unchangeable law of nature,' a remark he did not explain."

Use three marks together if two quoted elements end at the same time:

Example: She said, "He told me, 'I love you.'"

Semicolons — Use in a sentence to separate two complete and related thoughts, or to separate items in a series when at least one of the items includes a comma. Think of a semicolon as a half pause that connects two sentences that could grammatically stand on their own.

Examples:
Dr. Smith went to Florida; it was her first vacation there.

The surgical team was made up of Dr. Kennan, who has served as department chair for three years; Dr. Jones, who has been with the hospital two years; and Dr. Johnson, who just transferred from an Atlanta hospital last month.

Linking policies

Digital content on our public-facing website or Mednet may link to external websites that meet the criteria below (ultimately determined by UCLA Health Digital Marketing team.) Please have links to external websites open in a new browser window.

- Websites that are owned by nonprofit health organizations and end in .org, such as the American Cancer Society (cancer.org)

- Websites of official UCLA content partners (i.e., content that is linked throughout the site)

- Any website that ends with "ucla.edu"

- Websites of businesses or organizations that are official marketing/community partners with UCLA Health (Bruin KidsClub, UCLA Athletics)

UCLA Health will not link to external websites that fall within any of the following criteria:

- Websites that are owned or managed by a political party, candidate or special-interest group or are of a political nature

- Websites containing any materials that may reasonably be considered offensive (sexual content or images or slurs against race, religious or political beliefs, age, gender, sexual orientation, national origin or physical attributes)

- Websites endorsing or selling products or services not sanctioned by UCLA Health

- Websites soliciting donations or funding

Links may be made to UCLA's website by outside contacts. All hypertext links should point to UCLA's homepage, uclahealth.org, unless another URL is otherwise agreed upon. We do not have control over websites that link to us, and the information about UCLA on these websites can become outdated. If you run across such a website, please contact the Content Manager, who will attempt to contact the other website and ask for the information to be updated or removed.

When in doubt about the content on an external website, please err on the side of caution to protect UCLA. Please feel free to contact the Marketing Department at requests.uclahealth.org for clarification.

Did you know?

All links to outside resources on uclahealth.org should open in a new, dedicated browser window.

Naming conventions for UCLA Health

Facility names

- **UCLA Health** (not UCLA Health System), which encompasses both the UCLA Hospital System and the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA

- **Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center**

- **UCLA Santa Monica Medical Center**

- **Resnick Neuropsychiatric Hospital at UCLA**

- **UCLA Mattel Children's Hospital**

- **David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA** (on second reference, use "David Geffen School of Medicine," "medical school," "school of medicine" or "UCLA's medical school")

- **UCLA Faculty Practice Group**

- **Jane and Terry Semel Institute for Neuroscience and Human Behavior at UCLA** (second reference can be shortened to UCLA Semel Institute)

- **UCLA Stein Eye Institute**

- **Doheny Eye Institute**

  o Includes three "Doheny Eye Center UCLA offices"

  o When referring to UCLA Stein Eye Institute and Doheny Eye Institute together:

    ▪ UCLA Stein Eye and Doheny Eye Institutes (preferred)

    ▪ UCLA Stein and Doheny Eye Institutes (acceptable when in context of U.S. News & World Report rankings)

- **Doris Stein Eye Research Center**

- **Stein Plaza buildings**

  o Jules Stein Building

  o Doris Stein Building

  o Edie & Lew Wasserman Building

- **UCLA Health Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center**

- **UCLA Medical Plaza buildings and locations**

  o Peter Morton Medical Building — 200 UCLA Medical Plaza

- o Vatche and Tamar Manoukian Building — 100 UCLA Medical Plaza

- o Wendy and Leonard Goldberg Medical Building — 300 UCLA Medical Plaza

- **UCLA Health/Motion Picture Television Fund (MPTF) medical clinics**

UCLA Health operates five health care centers in the Los Angeles area exclusively for the entertainment industry community.

  - o MPTF Bob Hope Primary Care

  - o MPTF Calabasas Primary Care

  - o MPTF Santa Clarita Primary Care

  - o MPTF Toluca Lake Primary Care

  - o MPTF Westside Primary care

  - o MPTF Age Well Primary Care

- **Broad Stem Cell Research Center**

  - o Use "Eli and Edythe Broad Center of Regenerative Medicine and Stem Cell Research at UCLA."

  - o "UCLA Broad Stem Cell Research Center" is acceptable on second reference.

Affiliation references
- **UCLA Health Training Center**, home of the Los Angeles Lakers

- **California Rehabilitation Institute**

  - o Use "Cal Rehab" on second reference

  - o Opened July 21, 2016

  - o Partnership between UCLA Health and Cedars-Sinai Medical Center and managed by Select Medical

  - o 138-bed physical medicine and rehabilitation hospital, located in Century City

- **UCLA Health Sports Performance**, powered by EXOS

- **UCLA Health at home with AccentCare**, home health services

Acronyms for internal correspondence
UCLA Health has its own particular alphabet shorthand. Recognizing that it's not always practical to write out the full name of our facilities, we offer this guide to acceptable acronyms to use (on second reference) **in internal correspondence only.**

RRUCLA: Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center
SMUCLA: UCLA Santa Monica Medical Center
RNPH: Resnick Neuropsychiatric Hospital at UCLA
MCH: UCLA Mattel Children's Hospital
FPG: UCLA Faculty Practice Group
DGSOM: David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA
JCCC: Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center

Grammar, spelling and style

A

Abbreviations — An abbreviation is the shortened form of a written word. In most cases, only abbreviate names on the second reference. Avoid using abbreviations that would not be easily recognized by most readers. Try to use abbreviations sparingly. Avoid using more than one abbreviation in a sentence. For information about how to abbreviate specific items, refer to their particular entry in this guide or the *AP Stylebook*.

Abortion — Use *anti-abortion* (not pro-life or anti-choice), *abortion rights* (not pro-abortion, anti-life or pro-choice) and *abortion doctor* or *abortion practitioner* (not abortionist).

Academic degrees/credentials — Only include highest-earned degree, with the exception of "MD, PhD," when both should be listed. In the event that the second-highest credential is relevant to the communication message, a second credential may be used. Use at the end of a full name on the first reference only and in captions. Always use initials.

Do not use technical certifications or memberships after a name. Technical certifications include certifications around a technical skill set, such as ACLS, BLS, PALS and others.

Only credentials that have been earned should be included. Do not include credentials that the individual is working toward, but has not yet earned.

Use commas when multiple credentials are listed.

When trying to establish someone's position as an expert in a story, refer only to his or her specialty rather than using the initials of his or her degree(s).

Do not use periods between letters of academic degrees: MD, not M.D.; PhD, not Ph.D. If the subject is an MD, PhD or DO, refer to him or her as "Dr." on second reference.

> **Examples:** John Smith, MD, seen here, with his patients; Jennifer Conner, BSN, joined UCLA General Pediatrics in 2016.

Academic departments and divisions — Lowercase the names of academic departments and divisions, except when used as a proper noun or when part of the official and formal name.

> **Examples:** Does UCLA have a marketing department?; the UCLA Department of Neurology; the dean of the division of social sciences; the UCLA Division of Humanities; the UCLA College of Letters and Science's Division of Life Sciences.

Accept, except — *Accept* has several different meanings but in general means one of three things: to willingly receive something, to give permission or approval to or to regard as proper or an ultimate truth.

Except refers to an exclusion or something outside of the ordinary.

Acronyms — An acronym is a word formed from the first letter(s) of a series of words. Omit periods between the letters. Generally, capitalize acronyms when the series of words form a proper name, such as CDC for Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, or the individual letters are pronounced, such as HMO for health maintenance organization. On first reference, spell out the acronym with the acronym appearing in parentheses.

> **Examples**: The word laser is an acronym for light amplification by stimulated emission of radiation.
>
> UNESCO (pronounced you-Ness-co) is an acronym for the United Nations Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organization.
>
> The University of California Office of the President (UCOP) issued a letter today to chancellors. UCOP requests all campuses to submit their institutional goals by noon tomorrow.

Act — Capitalize when using act as a piece of legislation.

> **Example**: The Dream Act

Addresses — Use abbreviations for street, avenue and boulevard when writing numbered addresses. All other street designations (lane, circle, alley, etc.) should be spelled out.

Do not spell out numbers in addresses. Only use the numeric form for the house or building number. However, street names that use ordinal numbers 1-9 should be spelled out and capitalized.

> **Examples**: 1234 Main St.; 7654 Willow Circle; 745 Fifth Ave.

Affect, effect — *Affect* is most commonly used as a verb, meaning *to influence*. There is seldom a need to use affect as a noun in daily language, unless describing an emotion. Use *affect* rather than *impact*, when illustrating the influence one thing has on another.

> **Example**: Supporting local businesses affects the local economy.

Effect can be used as either a verb or a noun. As a verb, it means *to cause*. In its noun form, it means *a result*.

> **Example**: The fall of the regime was the effect of widespread protests.

Ages — Numerals should always be used for living things. For inanimate objects or when used at the beginning of a sentence, spell out the number. When expressed as an adjective before a noun or as a substitute for a noun, use a combination of numerals and hyphens.

> **Examples**: John Doe, 35, is a rising star in the organization. John Doe is 35 years old.
>
> Thirty-five-year-old John Doe is on the fast-track to success in the organization.
>
> The five-year-old building is already in need of repairs.

AIDS, HIV — *AIDS* is acceptable in all references to "acquired immune deficiency syndrome." AIDS is caused by the human immunodeficiency virus, or HIV. *HIV* is acceptable in all references.

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All- — Use a hyphen when using this as a prefix.

> **Examples**: all-around; all-encompassing

Alumnus, alumni; alumna, alumnae — Alumnus is the singular, masculine form of alumni. Alumna is the singular, feminine form of alumnae. Use alumni when referring to a group of men and women.

Alzheimer's disease — Lowercase *disease*. Alzheimer's alone is acceptable on second reference.

American Medical Association — Use AMA on second and subsequent references.

Ampersand (&) — Use only when it is part of the name of an organization or a composition.

> **Examples**: *U.S. News & World Report; House & Garden* Magazine

am/pm — Not *a.m.* or *AM*. See **Time** entry.

Annual — Describes an event that happens once every year. Events cannot be considered annual unless they have been held for at least two successive years. If reporting on an event that is the first of an event to be held annually, note that rather than labeling it as an annual event. Do not use the description "first annual." Use *inaugural*.

Another — Do not use as a synonym for additional. Only use when it doubles the original amount mentioned.

> **Examples**: Twenty people have signed up for classes; another 20 are expected to sign up soon.

> Fifteen people agreed with the decision while another 15 dissented.

> **Wrong**: Three stores were severely damaged in the flood. Another 10 suffered only minor damages.

Ante- — The rules in **Prefixes** apply.

Anti- — Generally, all words containing this prefix should be hyphenated, **except** those below. Note that all physics terms that use this prefix should not be hyphenated.

- Antibiotic
- Antibody
- Anticlimax
- Antidepressant
- Antidote
- Antifreeze
- Antigen
- Antihistamine
- Antiknock
- Antimatter
- Antimony

- Antiparticle
- Antipasto
- Antiperspirant
- Antiphon
- Antiphony
- Antiseptic
- Antiserum
- Antithesis
- Antitoxin
- Antitrust
- Antitussive

Anticipate, expect — When one anticipates something, there is an implied element of preparation for the coming event. *Expect* does not imply that preparations have been made for what is to come.

Anybody, any body, any one, anyone — Generally, use one word. When the emphasis is placed on a single element, use two words.

> **Examples**: The right smoking cessation program can help anyone kick the habit.
>
> Any one of the many programs available could help you quit smoking.

Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder — No hyphens or slashes. *ADHD* is acceptable on second reference.

Autism, autism spectrum disorder — *Autism* is appropriate for first and successive references. The term *autism spectrum disorder* is appropriate for first reference, if dictated by the research or faculty member, but use autism for second reference. Avoid using *ASD* in all references.

Award-winning

B

Baby boomer — Refers to the generation born after World War II and in their late teens and early 20s during the 1960s and 1970s. Always lowercase and only hyphenated when used as a compound modifier.

> **Examples**: He is a baby boomer; He is of the baby-boomer generation.

Bachelor of Arts/Science — *Bachelor's degree* can be used rather than the full title. See **Academic degrees** entry.

Bi- — The rules in **Prefixes** apply.

Biannual, biennial — Something that occurs biannually occurs twice each year. An event that occurs biennially occurs once every two years.

Bimonthly, biweekly — Bimonthly and biweekly refer to events that occur once every two months or once every two weeks, respectively. Semimonthly and semiweekly refer to events that occur twice each month or twice each week.

Breastfeed — One word

Broadcast — Use this for both present and past tense. *Broadcasted* is unacceptable.

By- — The rules in **Prefixes** apply.

C

Call letters — Capitalize all letters in the name of a broadcast station. Use a hyphen to separate the individual call letters from the base call letters. It is not always necessary to include the base call letters. They should be excluded on a second reference to the station.

> **Examples**: WRNR-FM; WJZ-TV

Capitalization — Capitalize the following:
- The first word of a sentence
- The first word after a bullet
- Proper nouns (official names of places, people or companies)
- Proper names (the Democratic Party, Fleet Street, etc.)
- Proper names of all UCLA properties
- Some common names. A common name is used when there is no official name for an area or place, but it has a well-known moniker.
  Examples: The Green Zone; Ground Zero.
- Derivatives of proper nouns such as *American*, *Marxism*, etc.
- Compositions, including names of publications, music, works of art, television programs, etc. Capitalization of compositions should match that of the original publication. When writing an original publication, use sentence case capitalization for the title. See **Headlines** entry.
- Titles, including but not limited to, Dr., Mrs., Mr. and Ms. With the exception of *Dr.*, use titles only on the first reference to a person. On second and subsequent references, use only the last name. See **MD** entry.

Caregiver — *Caregiver* is preferable to *caretaker* when referring to the care of people.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention — The abbreviation *CDC* is acceptable on the second reference and takes a singular verb.

Certified registered nurse practitioner — The abbreviation *CRNP* is acceptable in all references.

Cesarean section — C-section is acceptable on second reference.

City — Follow rules of capitalization. When using more generalized terms, always lowercase.

Click here — MUST be avoided. Most web users intuitively know to "click" at a hyperlink. The link should be the part of the text that describes the function. Use term *Learn more*

Clinical trial phases — Lowercase *phase*. Use the Arabic numeral, not Roman numeral.

>   **Example:** phase 2 clinical trial

Co- — Hyphenate when creating a word that indicates status. In other combinations, do not hyphenate.

>   **Examples**: co-pilot; co-author; coexist; cooperation

Note that *cooperation* and similar words are exceptions to the rule that prefixes should be hyphenated when the following word begins with the same vowel.

Coinsurance — Not *co-insurance*.

Complementary/Complimentary — *Complementary* refers to the ability of a person or item to enhance or add to another. *Complimentary* is in reference to something that is free of charge.

Composition titles — Except for books that are primary catalogs of reference material (dictionaries, directories, encyclopedias, etc.), put quotation marks around titles of books, magazine articles, lectures, seminars, films and TV shows, computer games, poems and songs.

>   **Examples**: "Prescription for Excellence"; "The Mary Tyler Moore Show";
>   The Washington Post; New England Journal of Medicine

Comprise vs. compose — *Comprise* is a verb that means "to include or contain" or "to consist of." Therefore, *comprised of* is incorrect. Use *comprise* to introduce the complete list of items that make up a whole.

>   **Example:** UCLA Health comprises Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center; UCLA
>   Santa Monica Medical Center; UCLA Mattel Children's Hospital; Resnick
>   Neuropsychiatric Hospital at UCLA; David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA;
>   UCLA Faculty Practice Group and more than 200 community health clinics.

Compose means "to make up or form the basis of."

>   **Examples:** A team composed of UCLA oncologists and geneticists
>   discovered a new gene associated with breast cancer.
>
>   The cloth is composed of cotton and polyester.

Comma — See **Punctuation 101**.

Coordination of benefits — Spell out initial reference. May be shortened to *COB* upon subsequent references in the same article.

Comparison of benefits — Always spell out.

Copay — No hyphen. Not *copayment*, *co-pay* or *co-payment*.

CT scan — The abbreviation is acceptable for all references. The abbreviation stands for *computerized tomography*. Never write *CAT scan*, which is the popular pronunciation.

D

Dates — Only abbreviate the following months: Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov., Dec. Always capitalize all months. Always use the cardinal number, not ordinal (1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc.).

> **Example**: Oct. 3, 2011

Days of the week — Always capitalize. Never abbreviate unless they are used in a tabular calendar.

Dialogue – Always use dialogue spelling even when you are writing about a dialog box.

Disabled, handicapped, impaired — Never mention a person's disability unless it is crucial to the story. Of the three terms mentioned, the preferred term is *disabled*. If used, refer to the person as a *person with a disability*, not as a disabled person.

Diseases — Never capitalize unless they are known by the name of the person who identified the disease or they come at the beginning of a sentence.

> **Examples**: arthritis, not Arthritis; Alzheimer's disease

Doctor — Abbreviate to Dr. when describing those with doctorate degrees. Academic credentials follow their names on the first reference only. The abbreviation should be used only on second and subsequent references. Never write *Dr. John Smith, MD*. See **MD** entry.

Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine — The abbreviation *DO* is acceptable in all

references. See **Academic Degrees** and **Doctor** entries.

Doctor of Dental Surgery — The abbreviation *DDS* is acceptable in all references. See **Academic Degrees** and **Doctor** entries.

Doctor of Podiatric Medicine — The abbreviation *DPM* is acceptable in all references. See **Academic Degrees** and **Doctor** entries.

Download — One word.

Drug addiction — Do not refer to someone as a "drug addict." Use "someone with a drug addiction" or "someone experiencing a drug problem."

Drug references — In general, trade or brand names of drugs or products must be avoided. Use the generic name whenever possible. Refer to the [Physicians' Desk Reference](#) to determine a drug's generic name. Only refer to the trademark name if it is essential to the story. When a trademark name is used, capitalize it.

E

Each other, one another — Two people look at each other, more than two look at one another. When the number is undefined, either phrase can be used.

ED — emergency department. Do not use emergency room, or ER.

Either … or; neither … nor — The nouns that follow these words do not constitute a compound subject; they are alternate subjects and require a verb that agrees with the closer subject.

    Examples: Neither they nor he is going; neither he nor they are going.

Email — Never hyphenate.

Everyone/every one — Two words when it means each individual item. One word when used as a pronoun meaning all persons.

Extra- — The rules in **Prefixes** apply.

F

Facebook — When posting to Facebook, follow all grammatical and spelling standards as explained in this guide and *the AP Stylebook*.

First quarter/First-quarter — Hyphenate when used as a compound modifier.

> **Examples**: The company released a financial statement for the first quarter; The company released a first-quarter financial statement.

Food and Drug Administration — FDA is acceptable on second reference. Please note: It is not the Federal Drug Administration

Form titles — Use the proper name at the top of the form to name the PDF document for online posting. Avoid spaces in file names and use dashes or hyphens if needed to separate words.

> **Examples:** *ReleaseofInformation.pdf*; *RegistrationandPrescriptionOrderForm.pdf*

Also, ensure the revision date appears at the bottom left of the document for easy identification. Use the Adobe Acrobat icon or label with [PDF], so users know they will download a document.

Full- — Hyphenate when used to form compound modifiers

> **Examples**: full-dress; full-page; full-fledged; full-scale; full-length

Fully funded — Commercial health plans. Use only when necessary. Do not hyphenate -ly adverbs. Avoid *fully-funded* and *fully-insured*.

Full time/full-time — Hyphenate when used as a compound modifier.

Fundraise, fundraiser, fundraising

G

Governor — Capitalize and abbreviate as *Gov.* (singular) or *Govs.* (plural) when used as a formal title before one or more names.

Grade, -grader — Hyphenate in combining forms: a fourth-grade pupil, a 12th-grade student, a first-grader, a 10th-grader.

Groundbreaking — One word.

H

Health care — Two words.

Headlines – In most cases, capitalize only the first word and proper nouns in headlines. Exception: The first word after a colon is always uppercase in headlines. **Note: Other exceptions may include specific style choices for magazines and other publications.**

High-tech

HIPAA — *Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act* of 1996. Not *HIPPA.*

HMO — Widely used acronym for *health maintenance organization*, a health plan product.

Holidays and holy days — Always capitalize the name of the holiday or holy day.

Hospitals — Write out the full name of each UCLA hospital, except in internal documents that consumers will never read. See **Naming conventions for UCLA Health**.

Hospital units, divisions, floors — Capitalize when presented as part of the full and official name. In UCLA materials, this typically means "UCLA" is included in the name. Otherwise, units, floors, divisions and departments should be lowercase.

> **Examples:** Please direct Helena Hall to the pediatric intensive care unit.
>
> The UCLA Neonatal Intensive Care Unit was recognized by The Joint Commission for best practices in maternal and neonatal care.
>
> The medical intensive care unit (MICU) is located on the fifth floor.

Exception: However, when presented as part of a cover title for a floor/unit brochure, the floor/unit name should always be capitalized, even without the UCLA qualifier as it is presented within the clear context that we are talking about UCLA. The rest of the title still follows sentence case capitalization.

Example: Your guide to the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit

Hours of operation — Spell out days of the week, followed by a colon. Use an en dash to denote a time span. Follow rules in the **Time** entry.

Example: Monday – Thursday: 10 am – 4:30 pm

Hyper- — The rules in **Prefixes** apply.

I

Impact — While grammatically correct to use its verb form when referring to something that has had an effect on one's life, avoid using it in this manner. It can cause confusion in the medical setting as it has a medical definition (when something is *impacted*, it is either blocked or there is something lodged in a bodily passage; it can also mean that two pieces of bone have been driven together or that a tooth is wedged between the jawbone and another tooth).

Instead, use *affect*.

Do not use impactful, which is considered jargon.

In/into — *In* indicates location. *Into* indicates movement.

Examples: She was in the ER; Her family walked into her room from the hall.

In-network — Hyphenate when used as an adjective.

Innovative — Avoid this term in all health plan content unless it can be sourced to a specific, non-UCLA Health document identifying the program, facility or project noted as innovative.

Inoculate

Inquire/inquiry — Never *enquire* or *enquiry*.

Insurance, insurance plan — Use *health plan* or *health plan product*, avoid *insurance product* except where required by law.

Intensive care unit – ICU on second reference is okay.

Inter- — The rules in **Prefixes** apply.

Internet/intranet — Lowercase *internet* and *intranet*.

Intrauterine device — Abbreviate only on second reference to *IUD*.

J

The Joint Commission — *Joint Commission* on second reference.

Junior/senior — Only abbreviate at the end of a full name. Do not put a comma before Jr. or Sr.

>   **Example**: Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

L

Languages — Capitalize the proper names of languages and dialects.

-less — Never use a hyphen before this suffix.

Liaison

Likable — Never *likeable*.

-like — Do not precede this suffix by a hyphen unless the letter *L* would be tripled.

>   **Examples**: Businesslike; shell-like

Like — Follow with a hyphen when used as a prefix meaning *similar to*.

>   **Examples**: Like-minded; like-natured

Like v. as — Use *like* as a preposition to compare noun and pronouns. It

requires an object.

Example: Jim blocks like a pro.

The conjunction *as* is the correct word to introduce clauses.

Example: Jim blocks the linebacker as he should.

Like v. such as — *Like* is used to compare an object to something similar.

Example: The meeting included a group of doctors like Barbara *(indicating Barbara was not in the group, but the doctors were similar to her).*

Such as should be used when explaining an object that is included in a group.

Example: The meeting included a group of doctors such as Barbara, Marisol and Jesus (indicating Barbara was among the doctors in the group).

Login, logon, logoff — Write as two words when using as verbs. As they are written in this entry, they are nouns.

Examples: The login is 12345; Please log in to your computer.

Long term, long-term — Hyphenate when using as a compound modifier.

Examples: We will win in the long term; He has a long-term assignment.

M

MD — The acceptable abbreviation on all references for *medical doctor*. Although the abbreviation is acceptable in all references, only use this abbreviation on the first mention of a medical doctor after their full name. For subsequent references, use the abbreviation *Dr.* before their last name. **Do not** use periods with degrees, as in M.D., Ph.D.

Example: First mention: John Smith, MD; second mention: Dr. John Smith

Medicaid — Always capitalized, as it is a proper noun.

Medicare — Always capitalized, as it is a proper noun.

Mid- — The rules in **Prefixes** apply, except when followed by a figure, such as *mid-40s*.

Military titles — Capitalize a military rank when used as a formal title before an individual's name. On the first reference, use the appropriate title before the full name of a member of the military. Subsequent references should use only the service-member's last name.

Months — See **Dates** entry.

Multi — Prefix rules apply, but in general, no hyphen. Some examples: multicolored, multimillion, multilateral, multimillionaire

N

National Institutes of Health — *NIH* on second reference.

Nationalities and races — Capitalize the proper names of nationalities and races. Uppercase Black, lowercase white. Never use yellow, red or mulatto to describe a person's ethnicity.

No. — Use *No.* as the abbreviation for *number* in conjunction with a figure to indicate position or rank.

> **Example:** UCLA Health hospitals rank No. 1 in Los Angeles.

Non-English-speaking (adj.) — Hyphenated

Nonstudent — One word

Numerals — Spell out numbers one through nine or at the beginning of a sentence. Use ordinal numbers (1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc.) when the sequence has been assigned in forming names (the 4th Ward). When writing out a headline or a chapter name, always use the numeral, even for numbers one through nine. When referring to money, use numerals. For cents or amounts of $1 million or more, spell the words cents, million, billion, trillion etc.

> **Examples:** $26.52, $100,200, $8 million, 6 cents.

O

OB/GYN — The acceptable abbreviation for *obstetrician/gynecologist*. The abbreviation is acceptable in all references.

One — Hyphenate when used in writing fractions.

    Examples: one-half; one-third

Ordinal indicators — st, nd, rd, etc. Do not superscript.

    Example: Mr. Pence was the 10th Republican governor to approve Medicaid expansion under the Affordable Care Act.

Online — Not *on-line* or *on line*. Use only when necessary as it is usually implied.

Orthopaedics — Not *orthopedics*

Outpatient — Not *out-patient*.

Out-of-network — *Out-of-network* (adjective), not *non-network.*

Out-of-pocket — *Out-of-pocket* (adjective).

Overall — A single word when used as an adjective or adverb.

P

Page numbers — Never abbreviate *page* as *pg.* Follow with figures. Page should be uppercase.

    Example: Page 13

PCP — *Primary care physician*. Spell out on initial reference.

PDF — *Portable Document File*. Use the abbreviation *PDF* in all references.

Percent — Use the % symbol after a number, with no space. Do not use the word percent.

    Example: The number of cases declined 10% compared to the year prior.

Period — Only use one space after a period at the end of a sentence.

Personifications — Always capitalize.

> **Examples**: Mother Nature; Old Man Winter

Phone numbers and extensions — Always use hyphens to separate the area code, the prefix and the last four digits. Do not use parentheses.

> **Example:** 310-825-2585 x1057.

Photo captions —
- Do not italicize photo captions.
- Include highest-earned academic degree at the end of a full name on first reference only. See **Academic degrees** entry.
- Captioning a single photo
  - If photo includes only two subjects, add "left" after name of subject on left; subject on the right does not require location tag
  - If there are more than two photo subjects, start caption with "From left:"

  Examples:
  - Pamela Jacobs, RN, left, reviews her department's annual agility test results with Peggy Casey, BSN.
  - From left: Pamela Jacobs, RN; Peggy Casey, BSN; Sheila Shirazi, physical therapist; and J-Way Poserio, respiratory therapist.

- Captioning photos that appear in a grid
  - Bold directional (e.g., **Top right**, **Bottom right**, etc.) and add colon.
  - If the photo includes only two subjects, add "left" name of subject on left; subject on the right does not require location tag. Do not bold "left."
  - If photo includes more than two subjects, include "From left:" at start of caption. Do not bold "From left:"

  Examples:
  - **Top right:** Jennifer Chang, MD, left, offers support to a patient.
  - **Bottom left:** From left: Ardis Moe, MD, reviews a chart with Margrit Carlson, MD, and Jessica Mits, RN.

Physician assistant — The abbreviation *PA* is acceptable on second reference.

pm — Not *p.m.* or *PM*. See **Time** entry.

Portal — Point of entry for a website or section of a website.

POS — Acronym often used to identify a *point of service* health plan product.

Post-mortem — Hyphenate.

Postoperative — Do not hyphenate.

Post-traumatic stress disorder — Hyphenate *post-traumatic*. *PTSD* acceptable on second reference.

Pre-authorization — Hyphenate. Do not use pre-certification.

Pre-existing conditions — Not *preexisting* or *preex*. Always hyphenate, never shorten.

Prefixes — In general, do not hyphenate when using a prefix with a word starting with a consonant. The three following rules are consistent, but do have some exceptions:

1. Except for *cooperate* and *coordinate*, use a hyphen if the prefix ends in a vowel and the word that follows begins with the same vowel.
2. Use a hyphen if the word that follows is capitalized.
3. Use a hyphen to join doubled prefixes *(sub-subcommittee)*.

For exceptions to any of the above rules, check the specific entry in this guide.

Preventive — Not *preventative*.

Primary care doctor, Primary care specialty — Do not hyphenate *primary care*.

Pro- — Use a hyphen when coining words that denote support for something.

      Examples: Pro-labor; pro-peace; pro-busine

R

Referral — Occurs when a participating primary care physician refers a covered member (patient) to a participating specialist. Not the same as *pre-authorization*.

S

Says/said – Both *says* and *said* can be used to attribute direct quotes and paraphrased comments, but it's important to be consistent throughout a document or article. Pick one and stick with it throughout. *Says* is less formal, so as a general rule, use *says* when wanting to set a more casual tone. For attributions directly related to something that happened in the past, use said. Example: During his meeting with family, Dr. Robinson *said* the patient's prognosis looked good.

Seasons — Lowercase unless part of a formal name or at the start of a sentence.

Stages of cancer — Lowercase *stage*; use numerals 1-4.

> **Example:** stage 4 cancer

States — Spell out the names of states when listed alone in textual material. State names may be abbreviated if they appear in datelines, photo captions and lists, or to fit typographical requirements for tabular material. Be consistent with whichever format is chosen throughout the publication.

The following states are never to be abbreviated: Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Ohio, Texas and Utah.

Systemwide — One word, no hyphen

T

T cell (n.)**, T-cell** (adj.) — Capitalize *T*. No hyphen for the noun form. Hyphenate when used as an adjective.

> **Examples:** He had a healthy number of T cells; His T-cell counts increased over time.

That/which (pronouns) — Use *that* and *which* in referring to inanimate objects and to animals without a name. Use *that* for essential clauses, important to the meaning of a sentence, and without commas: *I remember the day that we met*. Use *which* for nonessential clauses, where the pronoun phrase is less necessary, and use commas: *The team, which finished last a year ago, is in first place*.

Time — Use figures except for noon and midnight. Use a colon to separate hours from minutes. Avoid redundancies, such as *11 am this morning*. Never use the *o'clock* construct. When describing a span of time that lasts for an hour or more, follow these guidelines:

1. If the span of time falls completely within the morning or completely in the afternoon, only place the time designations on the last time noted.

   Examples: 9 to 11 am; 4:30 to 6 pm

2. If the time period spans noon or midnight, place time designations on both times.

   Examples: 10 am to 2 pm; 11:30 pm to 1 am

3. 24/7 — indicates 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

See **Hours of Operation** entry.

Titles — In general, confine capitalization to formal titles used directly before an individual's name. Otherwise, lowercase titles, regardless of the importance of the position.

   Examples: The committee told President Obama that they disagreed with him; The financial director of the hospital, Bob Smith, released the quarterly financial report.

Titles of compositions and broadcasts should always be capitalized. For more guidance, see the following entries: **Capitalization**; **Composition titles**.

Trauma center levels — Use Roman numerals.

   Example: Level III trauma center.

Tumor grades — Use numerals 1-4.

Updated 08/04/23

Twitter — An individual post is called a *tweet*. When posting to Twitter, feel free to abbreviate and truncate words as necessary. Take care to maintain the original meaning of the tweet and to avoid confusing or uncommon abbreviations.

U

URL — The address of a web page. In print, exclude "www."

Example: uclahealth.org, not https://www.uclahealth.org/ Check that URL functions without "www" before publishing. Also, make sure the link is active and sends the reader to the correct website.

U.S. News & World Report

Username — One word.

V

Veterans Affairs — Not *Veterans Administration*. *VA* on second reference.

W

Washington, D.C. — Use *Washington* on second reference or *District of Columbia*.

web page — Two words with lowercase *w.*

website — One word with lowercase *w.*

Weeklong

Well-being

Who/whom — *Who* is the pronoun used for references to human beings and animals with a name. It is grammatically the subject (never the object) of a sentence, clause or phrase.

Examples: The woman who rented the room left the window open; Who is

there?

Whom is used when someone is the object of a verb or preposition.
> **Examples**: The woman to whom the room was rented left the window open; Whom do you wish to see?

Word-of-mouth

World Health Organization — Use the abbreviation *WHO* on second and subsequent references.

X-Y-Z

X-ray — Capitalize *X*. Not *xray* or *x-ray*.

Year-end

Yearlong

Years — Use figures without commas: *2011*. Use commas only with a month and day: *Nov. 30, 2011*. Use an *s* without an apostrophe when referencing spans of decades or centuries: *1900s, 1870s*.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Below is a brief list of commonly used equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) terms used in communications and marketing. For a more comprehensive list of terms, visit the [Health Equity, Diversity & Inclusion glossary](#) page.

Anti-racism – Active process of identifying and opposing racism by changing systems, organizational structures, policies, practices and attitudes to provide equitable opportunities for all people on an individual and systemic level.

Black/African American – Black is a general term based in social constructs that describes diverse populations of African descent. African American is a term to identify people who are descendants of enslaved African people brought to the United States during the transatlantic slave trade.

BIPOC – Collective term used to describe people who self-identify as Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC).

Updated 08/04/23

Densely populated – Use this instead of inner urban.

Disability – A physical, mental, cognitive or developmental condition that impairs, interferes with or limits a person's ability to engage in certain tasks or actions or participate in typical daily activities and interactions. Use disability instead of outdated terms such as handicapped, differently-abled, victim, special-needs or unfortunate. Refer to "a person with a disability" as opposed to a "disabled person."

Hispanic, Latinx or Latino – Use Latino unless the word is part of a proper name of a project, program or organization. The term Latino is widely accepted within academia and beyond and the term Latino aligns with our centers within the health sciences, UCLA campus and government agencies. Some people may prefer one term over another when referring to themselves, so it is best to ask.

LGBTQ+ – Use as an acronym for "lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning" with a "+" sign to recognize and include the diverse sexual and gender identities experienced within our community, including intersex and asexual people.

Pronouns – Use the person's preferred pronouns. In stories about people who identify as neither male nor female or ask not to be referred to as he/she/him/her, use the person's name in place of a pronoun or use they/them/their. Be sure that the phrasing does not imply more than one person.

Students of color – Use this phrase instead of minority students.

Underrepresented minority (URM) – an underrepresented racial or ethnic minority.

Underrepresented in medicine (URiM) – Use this instead of underrepresented minorities when referring to people of color in medicine. Underrepresented minorities is an older term that inappropriately describes people of color without acknowledging that certain racial groups are not represented in medicine due to decades of systemic racism that has led to more educational and social barriers for certain racial groups to be equally represented in medicine and other STEM fields. Therefore, the most appropriate term is "underrepresented in medicine" or URiM.

COVID-19

Antibody test/serology test – These terms can be used interchangeably. The test is conducted to see if someone previously had COVID-19, or has built up antibodies to SARS-CoV-2.

California Department of Public Health - Use *CADPH* upon second and subsequent references.

Updated 08/04/23

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – *CDC* is appropriate on second reference.

Coronavirus – Use COVID-19 on all mentions.

COVID-19-related - Because the disease's name is hyphenated, hyphenated phrases like *COVID-19-related* should use an en-dash between the disease name and the linked term. When in doubt, simply rewrite to avoid; for example, *decisions related to the COVID-19 outbreak*.

Diagnostic test – A test conducted to see if someone currently has COVID-19. Use this term rather than PCR test.

Elective v. essential procedures – Elective procedures and surgeries can be scheduled in advance and are not for a life-threatening condition. Urgent or emergency surgeries and procedures, also known as essential, are for an acute or life-threatening condition, such as appendicitis.

Face covering/face mask – A face covering is what people should wear outside of a medical setting; a face mask is what providers will wear in the clinic.

Hand-washing

Los Angeles County Department of Public Health – In a COVID-19-related story with multiple references to the department, *LACDPH* may be acceptable on second reference.

N95 masks

National Institutes of Health – Note that *Institutes* is plural. *NIH* is appropriate on second reference. The agency is a part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Nonessential – Properly written without a hyphen. But when possible, avoid describing human beings as nonessential without further clarification or context.

Physical distancing – This term is preferred to social distancing.

Remote learning – This term is preferred over online learning.

Safer at home, safer-at-home – The emergency order issued by Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti and other local leaders on March 19, 2020 and by California Gov. Gavin Newsom on Nov. 19, 2020, directing residents to remain in their residences, with exceptions for critical tasks such as securing food and health, safety and medical necessities, as well as caring for children, elder adults, family, friends and people with disabilities. No quotation

marks or capitalization needed. As an adjective, use hyphens: *We are following the mayor's safer-at-home order.*

SARS-CoV-2 – The name of the virus that causes COVID-19. Note capitalization and hyphenation.

Variants – All variants of the original SARS-CoV-2 virus are lowercase. Example: delta, omicron.