

Samford Style Reference Guide

April 2025

The Office of Marketing and Communication follows Associated Press (AP) Style, but some exceptions are made, which are included here. This document also lists common mistakes.

You can reference AP Style at apstylebook.com.

Active academic degrees, abbreviated and spelled out

BA	Bachelor of Arts
BFA	Bachelor of Fine Arts
BM	Bachelor of Music
BME	Bachelor of Music Education
BS	Bachelor of Science
BSBA	Bachelor of Science in Business Administration
BSE	Bachelor of Science in Education
BSN	Bachelor of Science in Nursing
DNP	Doctor of Nursing Practice
DPT	Doctor of Physical Therapy
DrPH	Doctor of Public Health
EdD	Doctor of Education
EdS	Educational Specialist
JD	Juris Doctor
MAcc	Master of Accountancy
MACC	Master of Arts in Christian Counseling
MATS	Master of Arts in Theological Studies
MBA	Master of Business Administration
MDiv	Master of Divinity
MHA	Master of Healthcare Administration
LLM	Master of Laws
MM	Master of Music
MME	Master of Music Education
MPH	Master of Public Health
MS	Master of Science
MSE	Master of Science in Education
MSEM	Master of Science in Environmental Health, Policy and Management
MSHIA	Master of Science in Health Informatics and Analytics
MSL	Master of Studies in Law
MSN	Master of Science in Nursing
MSOL	Master of Science in Organizational Leadership
MSPAS	Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies
MSSLP	Master of Science in Speech-language Pathology
MSW	Master of Social Work
PharmD	Doctor of Pharmacy
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
ThM	Master of Theology

Inactive academic degrees, abbreviated and spelled out*

AuD	Doctor of Audiology
DMin	Doctor of Ministry
MAT	Master of Athletic Training
MCL	Master of Comparative Law
MPA	Master of Public Administration
MSDS	Master of Science in Design Studies
OTD	Occupational Therapy Doctorate

**These degrees are no longer active but are listed to help reference alumni or faculty.*

Lowercase informal references to degrees: master's degree, bachelor's degree, associate degree.

Lowercase academic disciplines following a degree listing that are not proper nouns, like philosophy, religion, etc. The academic discipline is capitalized if it is part of the degree title, like Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) or Master of Science in Education (MSE) These degrees are included in the list on the previous page.

When a degree is abbreviated, do not use periods between each letter (BS, MSW, PhD, etc.)

Do not use the word "degree" after the listing of a degree title.

CORRECT:

Patrick earned his Master of Business Administration last year.

Sandra, who graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in May, is now working in the field.

INCORRECT:

Hannah earned a Bachelor of Science degree in health sciences in December.

Todd will graduate with his Doctor of Pharmacy degree.

Concentrations should be lowercase.

When referencing the degree(s) an individual holds, add the degree's abbreviation after the name. If the person holds a doctorate, do not use the prefix "Dr." Use a comma between the name and degree abbreviation.

CORRECT:

Jane Sander, PhD, spoke to the new cohort of nursing students.

This year's commencement speaker was assistant professor Justin Kirk, DPT.

INCORRECT:

Dr. Sanders spoke to the newest cohort of nursing students.

This year's commencement speaker was assistant professor Dr. Justin Kirk.

List only the highest degree behind names.

CORRECT: Ned Reynolds, PhD

INCORRECT: Ned Reynolds, PhD, MPH, BS

If there are two doctoral degrees, list both. For example: Mary Milligan, MD, PhD

adviser

Although many use the word "advisor," Webster's dictionary and AP Style say "adviser."

African American

No hyphen. AP Style recommends using Black instead of African American. However, we recommend you ask your source what he or she prefers.

ampersand (&)

Use an ampersand when it is part of an organization's formal name. In other instances, spell out "and."

CORRECT:

Howard College of Arts and Sciences

Moffett & Sanders School of Nursing

U.S. News & World Report

annual giving solicitations

Use state postal abbreviations for all mail panels.

VISA, MasterCard

ZIP is always capitalized, and code is always lowercased: ZIP code

Belltower

One word and capitalized when referring to the university's e-newsletter.

In all other uses, it should be two words and lowercase: bell tower.

bestselling

books of the Bible, abbreviations

While they should be spelled out in copy, books of the Bible can be abbreviated in parentheses or notes when citing specific chapters or verses.

Gen	Is	Rom
Ex	Jer	1 Cor
Lev	Lam	2 Cor
Num	Ezek	Gal
Deut	Dan	Eph
Josh	Hos	Phil
Judg	Joel	Col
Ruth	Amos	1 Thess
1 Sam	Obad	2 Thess
2 Sam	Jon	1 Tim
1 Kings	Mic	2 Tim
2 Kings	Nahum	Tit
1 Chron	Hab	Philem
2 Chron	Zeph	Heb
Ezra	Hag	Jas
Neh	Zech	1 Pet
Esther	Mal	2 Pet
Job	Mt	1 Jn
Ps	Mk	2 Jn
Prov	Lk	3 Jn
Eccles	Jn	Jude
Song	Acts	Rev

building names

Common names are in bold. For all references to campus locations, including parking lot names, see the latest campus map at samford.edu/about/maps.

Academic Buildings

Art Lofts
Elinor Messer Brooks and Marion Thomas **Brooks Hall**
John H. **Buchanan Hall**
 Eleanor Ousley **Recording Studio**
Percy Pratt **Burns Hall**
James Horton **Chapman Hall**
College of Health Sciences
 Building 1
 Building 2
Cooney Hall
Divinity Hall
Dwight M. Beeson Hall
Robert I. **Ingalls Sr. Hall**
Lucille Stewart Beeson **Law Library**
Orlean Bullard Beeson Hall
William Self **Propst Hall**
 Conservatory
 Boyd E. **Christenberry Planetarium**
Memory Leake **Robinson Hall**
Thomas D. **Russell Hall**
Frank Park **Samford Hall**
Bonnie Bolding **Swearingen Hall**
Harwell G. Davis **University Library**

Athletics/Recreation

Bulldog Softball Field
Campus Recreation, Wellness and Athletics Complex
 Leo E. **Bashinsky Field House**
 Joey Davenport Family Court
 F. Page **Seibert Hall**
Intramural/Recreation Complex
Joe Lee Griffin Baseball Field
 Carl E. Miller Jr. Press Box
Pete Hanna Center
 Thomas E. and Marla H. Corts Arena
J. T. Haywood Field House
Pat Murphy **Courington Tennis Pavilion**
 Darwin E. Hardison Tennis Courts
Pete Hanna Stadium
 Bobby Bowden Field
 Leo E. **Bashinsky Press Tower**
Sullivan-Cooney Family Field House
Track and Soccer Stadium

Venues

Samford Art Gallery
Bolding Studio
Jane Hollock **Brock Hall**
Jane Hollock **Brock Recital Hall**
Benjamin F. **Harrison Theatre**
Andrew Gerow **Hodges Chapel**
A. Hamilton **Reid Chapel**
Leslie S. **Wright Fine Arts Center**

Services

Academy of the Arts
Air Force ROTC Detachment
Dwight M. and Lucille S. Beeson Center
Facilities Management
Louise H. and John G. Beard Health and Wellness Center
 Samford CARES
 University Health Services
Ralph W. Beeson University Center
 Caf (Dining Hall)
 Samford Shop (Bookstore)
 The Hub (Information Center)
Public Safety

Residence Halls

Central Residence Halls
 Audrey L. **Gaston Residence Hall**
 Marvin L. **Mann Residence Hall**
 John D. **Pittman Hall**
 Mamie Mell **Smith Residence Hall**
 Lena **Vail Davis Residence Hall**
Beeson Woods Residence Halls
 James Hall
 Lucille Hall
 Luther Hall
 Treetop Hall
 Malcolm Hall
 Evergreen Hall
 Wesley Hall
 Rosa Hall
 Ralph Hall
 Ethel Hall
 Orlean Hall
 Marvin Hall
 Dwight Hall
West Campus Residence Halls
 Alpha Delta Pi
 Alpha Omicron Pi
 Alpha Tau Omega

Chi Omega
Kappa Delta
Mountain View
Phi Mu
Pi Kappa Phi
Shelbourne Lane
Sigma Chi
Theta Alpha
Tri Delta
Zeta Tau Alpha
West Village Residence Halls
Building 100
Building 300
Student Apartments

Points of Interest

Ben Brown Plaza
Gertha Itasca Earwood Bolding Memorial Garden
Hazel P. **Boren Courtyard** and Garden
Martha F. and Albert P. **Brewer Plaza**
Centennial Walk
President's Home
University **Quadrangle**

capitalization

For presidents and deans, capitalize titles before but not after names:

CORRECT:
President Beck A. Taylor
Beck A. Taylor, president of Samford University
President Emeritus Andrew Westmoreland

For others, lowercase titles if at all possible

CORRECT:
assistant professor Stephen Chew
director Jane Smith
Paul Clooney, director of photography

Capitalized title if part of an endowment

CORRECT: Art Carden, the Margaret Gage Bush Distinguished Professor of Economics

Capitalize formal names of departments/offices/etc., but lowercase informal names

CORRECT:
Department of Political Science; political science department
Office of Admission; admission office
Samford Athletics, the athletics department

Capitalize Board of Trustees in all instances.

Lowercase advisory board

Do not capitalize university, school, center or college unless it is used as the formal title.

CORRECT: The university was founded in 1841.

INCORRECT: The University was founded in 1841.

Capitalize names and pronouns that refer to God or Christ.

CORRECT:

Jesus, our Savior, lived the perfect life as He lived without sin.

God, in His mercy, sent His Son to die for our sins.

God is the Creator of heaven and earth.

Capitalize Bulldogs when referencing a group of student-athletes or the Samford community at-large.

CORRECT:

The Bulldogs were victorious once again.

Welcome back to campus, Bulldogs.

campuswide (adj.)

century

Lowercase, spelling out numbers less than 10

CORRECT:

the first century

the 21st century

check-in (noun); check in (verb)

class year

Use a curled apostrophe (the same appearance as a single closing quotation mark) for class year abbreviations. Do not spell out "Class of." For alumni of graduate programs, list the degree abbreviation before the year abbreviation. In this instance, include a comma after the person's name.

CORRECT:

Jane Doe '18

Jane Smith, JD '07

INCORRECT

Jane Doe, Class of 2018

For alumni who hold multiple degrees from Samford, use commas. If the degrees were earned in the same year, like for a joint degree, list all degrees abbreviations but only one graduation year.

CORRECT:

Anna Kate Brown '09, MBA '13
Caroline Smith '05, MSN '17, DNP '20
Kyle Waller, JD, MBA '22

When referencing graduation years of alumni who are married, list one year after the combined name if they graduated in the same year. If they graduated in different years, add the graduation year after each first name.

CORRECT:

Gavin and Stacey Winters '14 met at Samford.
Gavin '13 and Stacey '14 Winters met at Samford.

Listing individual degrees can be visually clunky, especially if one or both people hold multiple degrees. To avoid this, restructure the sentence for clarity, incorporating the information in later sentences.

If only one person in a couple is an alum, structure the sentence in a way that emphasizes the alum.

CORRECT:

Gavin Winters '14 and his wife Stacey give back to Samford.

Do not list a projected graduation date for students because we cannot guarantee that they will graduate and receive a Samford degree. (For example, if a student is expected to graduate in 2030, say the actual student classification.) For undergraduate students, use freshman, sophomore, junior and senior as their classification. For graduate students, reference their year in the degree program.

CORRECT:

Bill Milligan, a freshman from Cleveland, Ohio
Claire Duvall, a second-year Doctor of Pharmacy student

INCORRECT:

Steve Harmon, class of 2029
Jennifer Clark, PharmD '30

co-

Retain the hyphen when forming nouns, adjectives and verbs that indicate occupation or status.

co-author	co-host	co-worker
co-chair	co-sponsor	co-present

cocurricular (no hyphen)

commas (also see Oxford comma entry)

In a series:

CORRECT: Samford offers volleyball, soccer and basketball.

INCORRECT: Samford offers volleyball, soccer, and basketball.

After city/state:

CORRECT: She lives in Birmingham, Alabama, and attends Samford.

INCORRECT: She lives in Birmingham, Alabama and attends Samford.

After dates:

CORRECT: The concert is May 15, 2023, at the Wright Center.

INCORRECT: The concert is May 15, 2023 at the Wright Center.

NOT with Inc., Jr. or II:

CORRECT

The ranking from Forbes Inc. was released this morning.

Harry Brock III is vice president for business and financial affairs.

Martin Luther King Jr. was a civil rights leader.

INCORRECT

The ranking from Forbes Inc., was released this morning.

Harry Brock, III is vice president for business and financial affairs.

Martin Luther King, Jr., was a civil rights leader.

course titles

Course names/titles should be capitalized with no additional punctuation. Course names/titles should align with what is listed in the most recent course catalog.

CORRECT: Introduction to Population Health

dashes

Hyphen (-) Use with compound words, line breaks or phone numbers.

CORRECT

726-444-5555

INCORRECT

(726) 444-5555 or 726.444.5555

En dash (–) Use this to separate dates and times. Examples: 1990–95 or 8–9

Em dash (—) Used to introduce an explanatory or emphatic element; to indicate a sudden break in thought or speech; to create a break in continuity greater than that suggested by the comma; and to set off multiple nouns, when the nouns are the referents of a pronoun that is the subject of a summarizing clause. Do not leave a space on either side of the dash. (This varies from AP style.)

data

Data takes a singular verb and pronoun.

CORRECT:

The data is accurate.

It shows that enrollment has increase.

dates

When a month is used with a specific date, abbreviate only Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov., and Dec. Spell out March, April, May, June and July. If desired, you can spell out any month in an invitation. Also, spell out the month when used alone or with a year alone.

When referencing a date within the current calendar year, the year can be omitted from the date.

Include the year when the date references a time before or after the current calendar year.

CORRECT:

The building first opened on May 11, 2005.

Sally Walker expects to graduate on April 31, 2027.

decision-making**email**

No hyphen, one word, lowercase

e-newsletter

Include the hyphen

esports**Family Weekend**

Capitalize in all instances.

fast track, fast-track program

Only hyphenate when used as a modifier.

CORRECT

The fast track offers an accelerated program for students.

Samford is offering more fast-track programs.

Tommy enrolled in the fast-track Master of Public Health.

firsthand**flextime**

For God. For learning. Forever.

fundraising, fundraiser**Gospel**

Capitalize when referring to the four books of the Bible, as well as the overall message of Christ.

Lowercase when referencing gospel music.

headlines

For news and magazine stories, use title case

health care

Exceptions include proper nouns, including of degree names (like Master of Healthcare Administration) or center names (like Healthcare Ethics and Law Institute).

Homecoming, Homecoming Weekend

Capitalize in all instances.

homepage not home page

hyphen

No hyphen is needed if the modifier is commonly recognized as one phrase, like chocolate chip cookie, public land management, first quarter touchdown and real estate transaction.

Additionally, no hyphen with double-e combinations.

preeminent	reelect	reenter
preexisting	reenact	reestablish

Exceptions for when to use the hyphen include:

Student's year when used as a modifier

CORRECT: Harry Potter is a first-year student at Hogwarts.

Square footage when the number used as a modifier

CORRECT: The 150,000-square-foot building

italics or quotation marks

Capitalize and set in italics the titles of the following:

Books, plays, collections of poetry, long poems, journals, magazines, movies, newspapers, television programs, podcasts titles, video games, operas, paintings, works of art, CDs

Samford, Cumberland Lawyer and *Beeson* are in italics. Do not capitalize the m in magazine.

Capitalize (but don't italicize) the titles of the following:

Art and design exhibitions, performances (e.g., Faculty Gala and Choral Vespers), performance group names (e.g., The Midtown Men), generically titled performances (e.g., Ten-minute Play Festival), book series, untitled musical compositions (e.g., Symphony in B Major), languages, conference

Capitalize and enclose in quotation marks the titles of the following:

Articles and parts of books, short poems, short stories, songs, theses and dissertations, episode titles

Juneteenth

Capitalize in all instances.

judge

Capitalize before a name when it is the formal title for an individual who presides in a court of law. Do not continue to use the title in second reference. While judges can be referenced as “The Honorable...” as a sign of respect, the title “Judge” is preferred.

kick off (verb); kickoff (noun)

livestream/livestreaming

One word, no hyphen, lowercase

long-standing

longtime

May term not May Term or May-Term

nonrefundable

Oxford comma

Use commas to separate elements in a series, but do not put a comma before the conjunction in most simple series: *The flag is red, white and blue. He would nominate Tom, Dick, Harry or Jeannette. She goes to school, plays league soccer and takes private dance lessons.* As with all punctuation, clarity is the biggest rule. If omitting a comma could lead to confusion or misinterpretation, then use the comma.

percent

Use % sign when paired with numeral, with no space. ex. 96%

premier is defined as first (adjective); **premiere** is defined as the first public performance (noun).

preprofessional programs

pre-architecture	prelaw	preveterinary medicine
prebusiness	premedicine	prepharmacy
pre dentistry	pre-engineering	pre-optometry

When you use the “pre” prefix, look first in Webster’s dictionary to see if your word is there. If so, go with the way Webster’s spells it. If it’s not in Webster’s, look at your AP Style Guide for special exceptions. If it’s not in AP, apply these rules: add a hyphen if the word following “pre” begins with a vowel. Leave it unhyphenated if the word starts with a consonant.

problem-solving (noun)

postsecondary

postgraduate

Project SAMson, not Project Samson

rankings

In body copy, use 1st, 2nd, 10th, 12th, etc. (Samford is 1st in Alabama.)

In display copy, use #1, #2, #12, etc. (#1 in Alabama)

Do not use superscript in any instance.

résumé or resume

Résumé is preferred to avoid confusion with the verb "resume." However, resume is also acceptable.

RSVP

Should not be accompanied by the word "please." "Please RSVP" is the equivalent of "please, please reply."

room numbers

315 Samford Hall, not Samford Hall 315 or 3rd floor, Samford Hall

Sabbath

Capitalize in all references.

SamTram shuttles**school/center names**

Do not use "the" before proper names of schools and centers.

CORRECT

Brock School of Business

Moffett & Sanders School of Nursing

Wright Center

INCORRECT

the Brock School of Business

the Moffett & Sanders School of Nursing

the Wright Center

Exceptions to this rule are schools and centers that have not yet been named for donors.

CORRECT:

the School of the Arts

the College of Health Sciences

the Center for Science and Religion

When not using the proper name of a school, use of "the" is appropriate.

CORRECT

the law school

the education school

In body copy, it is Samford University's Moffett & Sanders School of Nursing.

In display copy when the information is stacked, please remove the 's. In display copy when the information is not stacked, it's your preference on whether or not you add the 's.

Do not use abbreviations. MSOP, BSOB, HCAS, are not meaningful monikers to the majority of outside audiences. This also applied to divisions, departments and centers.

Scripture

Capitalize when referencing the Bible.

Scripture, formatting and punctuation

For Scripture references across chapters that go through the end of the chapter, include the number of the last verse to avoid confusion.

CORRECT: Exodus 29:25-30:38

INCORRECT: Exodus 29:25-30

Series of references from within the same chapter should be separated by commas. Two or more consecutive verses are separated by a hyphen. A series of references that space chapters or books are separated by a semicolon.

CORRECT: Exodus 15:24; Psalm 4:5, 8, 10; John 3:16-17, 4:2-12; Acts 1:3-4, 7-10, 2:20-3:3

INCORRECT: John 3:16, 17

References to the five books in the Bible consisting of only one chapter should not include chapter numbers.

CORRECT: Obadiah 15; Philemon 4-7; 2 John 10; 3 John 2; Jude 17

INCORRECT: Obadiah 1:15; Philemon 1:4-7; 2 John 1:10; 3 John 1:2; Jude 1:17

For Scripture quoted in the text, terminal punctuation follows the parenthetical reference. If a Scripture quotation concludes with a question or exclamation, the question mark or exclamation point may remain inside the quotation marks and a period following the reference.

CORRECT:

“God so loved the world” (John 3:16).

“Where can I go from your Spirit?” (Psalm 139:7).

Use Psalm when referencing a chapter; use Psalms when referencing multiple chapters.

CORRECT:

Psalm 110

Psalms 110-120

Scripture references should not be relegated to a note, but rather, should appear in parentheses following the appropriate phrase or clause in a paragraph.

seasons of the year

Lowercase spring, summer, fall and winter and derivatives such as springtime unless it is part of a formal name such as Winter Olympics.

CORRECT: spring 2023, fall semester, summer term

skill set

smartphone and smartwatch

student-athlete
always hyphenate

3D not 3-D

theatre

Because Harrison Theatre is literally written in stone on the building, Samford uses the British spelling to remain consistent throughout its written communication. The official name of the department is Department of Theatre and Dance.

time

a.m.

p.m.

Use an en dash between numerals -

Do not use :00 (Example: 8-9:30 a.m.)

titled

CORRECT: The book is titled *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*.

INCORRECT: The book is entitled *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*.

upper-division students

Use when referencing the population of the undergraduate student body who are not freshmen.

CORRECT

The program empowers upper-division students to mentor incoming freshmen.

Construction is underway on two upper-division residence halls.

URLs

Omit <http://www>.

Lowercase all website links.

CORRECT: samford.edu

INCORRECT: Samford.edu

Washington, D.C.

website, webpage

Always one word

well-being

always hyphenate

Word of God

Capitalize if it is a synonym for the Bible or Jesus. Lowercase if this is a common name for communication from God (God's word to Moses)