

USHE Program Alignment Style Guide

Acronyms and Abbreviations

Whenever possible, *avoid* acronyms (the first letter of each word that creates a new word) and abbreviations (a shortened version of a word or phrase) that might create a barrier between the writer and the audience.

Remember, program and course descriptions and objectives may stand alone in certain cases. If a lengthy or standard industry term is used multiple times in the description or objectives for a *single* program or course, spell the term out in the first use. Follow the term with the acronym in parentheses, and use the acronym in subsequent use.

To make an acronym plural, just add *s* (no apostrophe).

To make an abbreviation plural, add *'s* (apostrophe included) to abbreviations that have capital letters and periods and for plurals formed from single letters. Do not use apostrophes for plurals of abbreviations without periods, or for plurals formed from numerals.

Abbreviations made up of lowercase, single initials generally have periods after each letter; for example, a.m., p.m., or i.e.

Abbreviations of single words that contain either uppercase or lowercase typically end with a period; for example, Inc., misc., Mrs., Corp.

Abbreviations that are all uppercase generally do not have periods; for example, FAFSA, CPA, or US

Academic Degrees

For standard usage when referring to the specific degree or the person holding it:

- *Associate in Arts*
- *Associate of Applied Science*
- *Associate of Applied Technology*
- *bachelor's or bachelor's degree*
- *Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science in Biology (do not use an 's)*
- *bachelor's in business administration or bachelor's in English*

- *master's degree*
- *Master of Science or Master of Education*
- *Doctor of Philosophy*
- *For general reference: associate degree (no 's), bachelor's degree, master's degree,*
- *The following abbreviations are also used: B.A., B.S., M.A., M.B.A. or MBA, Ph.D., A.S., A.A.*

Capitalization

As a rule, general or non-specific nouns are not capitalized.

Nouns that identify specific or proper names or places should be capitalized.

The first and last words and all major words in headings or document titles should be capitalized.

(Major words are all words except personal pronouns, articles, conjunctions, and prepositions.)

Capitalize the formal names of educational programs. In general references, do not capitalize the word program in a program name.

- *The Practical Nursing program at Snow College is designed to qualify as the first year of the RN program.*
- *The paramedic program is a fulfilling education track.*
- *He is studying law enforcement at Salt Lake Community College.*

Capitalize course names on direct reference when they include a number or refer to a specific course. Do not capitalize course names when referencing generally. Do not capitalize the word course.

- *business communication or BTEC 1530 Business Communication*
- *The student should take the Business English course*
- *welding or WELD 1320 Gas Metal Arc Welding*
- *CNC Machining lab not CNC Machining Lab*

Do not capitalize certificate emphases.

Refrain from using the term World Wide Web, unless especially relevant. Always capitalize the full term.

Can be shortened to the web. Notice that web is not capitalized. Do not capitalize related terms: website, web page, webcam, internet, etc.

Numbers

Numbers should be consistently formatted for all related items in the document.

Numbers one through nine are spelled out; numbers 10 and above are written as figures.

Numbers in a list should all be written as you would write the largest number; for example, 2 chairs, 5 desks, and 15 computers.

- *Zero not o*
- *10 not ten*

Punctuation

Single-space after end punctuation (periods, question marks, and exclamation marks) and colons.

Hyphens should be used with compound adjectives that precede a noun. Otherwise, only use hyphens as denoted in the dictionary.

In a list of three or more, place a comma before and.

Apostrophes should be used to make a word possessive, not plural.

Do not use italics, quotation marks, or bolding for emphasis.

Do not use em dash (i.e., After two weeks of class, the students were excited—all 30 of them—to host their event.).

Use the en dash when designating a span or range of numbers or scores to represent conflict, connection or direction, or compound adjectives. Do not use an en dash when introducing a span or range with words such as from or between.

- *The 2018-20 academic year was the best yet.*
- *Students in this class will complete standards 15-17 of the standards of excellence.*
- *The change in curriculum occurred between 2001 and 2003.*

Use a hyphen when creating compound terms or modifying terms. Never use a hyphen in place of an en dash or an em dash. Place no space before or after; the only exception is a hanging hyphen.

- *She is a second-year senior.*
- *You will receive your student card at check-in.*
- *Tom was quick-witted and always spoke up in class.*
- *We studied third- and fourth-centered pieces.*

A slash (/) is used to express alternatives. Generally, there are no spaces before and after the slash:

- *on/off*
- *open-entry/defined-exit*

Spelling

Spell out the word *and* in text unless an ampersand, &, is part of a formal name.

Course work is two words.

Cybersecurity, not cyber security

Write healthcare as one word when used as an adjective and two words (health care) as a noun.

- *Your health care is important to me.*
- *The healthcare system is expansive.*

ongoing, not on-going

online, not on-line

prerequisite, not pre-requisite

postsecondary, not post-secondary

webpage, not web page (see website below)

website, not web site (a website is a group of webpages, e.g. ushe.edu is a website that contains multiple webpages)

Terminology

The following is a list of words commonly used in technical education:

- *Syllabus (written instruction for a course) or syllabi (plural)*
- *Certificate refers to institution credentials*
- *Certification or licensure refer to industry credentials*
- *Work-based activities*
 - *Work-based activities generally refer to learning activities external to the institution or in a setting that involves the public.*

- *Clinicals or externships pertain to particular work-based activities associated with a course.*

Links

Remove *http://* or *https://* and *www.* at the beginning of web addresses, unless necessary for the page to load.

Omit *the .html* extension from the end of the web address unless it is required for the page to load.

Do not capitalize. Always hyperlink web addresses; it is preferable to hyperlink text rather than typing out the full URL.