**NMSU** **STYLE GUIDE**

This style sheet is intended to be a supplement to *The Associated Press Stylebook*. It includes items not addressed by the *AP Stylebook*, items that are specific to New Mexico State University and a few instances in which we depart from the AP style – plus a few AP style rules that are listed here for reinforcement.

These style guidelines are meant to favor simplicity and clarity over formality, with some deference to the academic world’s penchant for rank and titles. These guidelines should apply to articles prepared for campus periodicals as well as to news releases. Some special types of writing, such as resolutions, policies or citations, will require a more formal style.

Also, there may be a need to deviate from the guidelines in certain applications, such as using abbreviations in Hotline calendar listings that we would not use in a news story. Separate style rules may be needed to maintain consistency in those cases.

References used to determine university style:

*The Associated Press Stylebook* – This is the standard reference for all university publications.

*Merriam Webster Collegiate Dictionary, 11th edition*

*The Chicago Manual of Style*

*Words into Type*

*The New York Times Manual of Style and Usage*

**“A” Mountain**

**abbreviations and acronyms**  Follow AP style. Avoid using abbreviations or acronyms for organizations, even on second reference, except for *NMSU* and those that are household names *(NASA, FBI*, etc.)

**about**  is preferable to *some* when using approximate numbers.

**academic degrees**  Several variations are acceptable, but we should lean toward the simplest in most cases: *bachelor’s degree, master’s degree* and *doctorate*. The apostrophe goes in the same place for the plural: *master’s degrees*, not *masters’ degrees*. *Associate degree* is not possessive. In some instances it might be pertinent to specify *bachelor of science degree in biology* or *master of fine arts* or some such, but use the lowercase style for those also.

Avoid using *baccalaureate* as a substitute for *bachelor's degree*, but if you must, do not couple it with the word *degree*. Baccalaureate *means* bachelor’s degree. Similarly, it’s *doctorate* or *doctoral degree*, but never *doctorate degree*.

Avoid abbreviations of degrees; there are too many of them and most non-academic people don’t know what they mean. But if you have reason to use abbreviations, make sure you use the right ones. All Ph.D.s are doctorates, but not all doctorates are Ph.D.s. *Charley Johnson, who is one of only a handful of NFL players ever to earn a doctorate, served as head of the Chemical Engineering Department at NMSU.*

**academic departments**

Capitalize when referring to a specific academic department.

*The gift is a tremendous boost for the Agricultural and Extension Education Department* not *The gift is a tremendous boost for the* a*gricultural and extension education department.*

**academic titles** Follow AP style on capitalization. That is, capitalize official titles preceding names but lowercase those that follow names: *President John Doe,* or *John Doe, president of NMSU*. The exception to this would be when the title is an endowed chair and appears after the name: *Enrico Pontelli, Regents Professor and dean of the College of Arts and Sciences*. Note that modifiers accompanying titles such as professor, dean and chairman are *not* capitalized, even when the title precedes the name: *art Professor Julia Barello.* In most cases, it will be better to place the title after the name, because academic titles tend to be long or to require modifiers: *Joe Lakey, associate dean of the College of Arts and Sciences*, reads better than *Arts and Sciences Associated Dean Joe Lakey.*

Another reason for placing faculty titles after names rather than before them is this: *We should be specific when using titles that refer to faculty rank*. Use professor only for full professors, not as a generic term for faculty members. To avoid awkward constructions such as *economics Associate Professor Larry Blank*, use *Larry Blank, an assistant professor of economics*. In most cases, faculty rank is not important to the story and general or descriptive terms will do: *economist ... biologist ... who teaches biochemistry ... who heads the electrical engineering program at NMSU*, etc.

Do not capitalize descriptive terms that precede names: *astronomer Nancy Chanover.*

For department chairs, the correct reference is academic department head for (department name: *“Today we have three times the research funding we had 10 years ago,” says Brad Shuster, academic department head for biology.*

**accreditation statements**

New Mexico State University has been accredited since 1926. The university is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission and is a member of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.

Other accredited programs and certifying agencies are listed below by college. *(Last updated 2/9/2022)*

**College of Agriculture, Consumer and Environmental Sciences**

The **agricultural and extension education** department is accredited by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation.

The Cooperative Extension Service’s **NM Certified Public Manager Program** certificate is accredited by the National Certified Public Manger Consortium.

The **Plant Diagnostic Clinic** under the Extension Plant Sciences is accredited by the National Plant Diagnostic Network.

The Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics accredits the undergraduate level **Didactic program in Dietetics**, as well as the master’s level **Dietetic Internship** (Family and Consumer Sciences).

The **animal and range science department** is accredited by the Society for Range Management.

**College of Arts and Sciences**

The **chemistry and biochemistry departmen**t is accredited the American Chemical Society and provisionally by the American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology.

The **master of public administration** **program** in the Government Department is accredited by the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration.

Curricula in the **Music Department** is accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music. The curricula in all levels of **Music Education** is additionally accredited by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation.

The bachelor of science in **Physics** is accredited by ABET – Applied and Natural Science Accreditation Commission (ABET-ANSAC).

The Bachelor of Science in **Computer Science** is accredited by the ABET — Computing Accreditation Commission (ABET-CAC).

**College of Business**

Undergraduate and graduate degrees in **business and accounting** are accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB International).

The **PGA Golf Management** certificate and undergraduate degree is accredited by the Professional Golfers’ Association of America (PGA of America).

College of Health, Education and Social Transformation

The masters’ program in **Clinical Mental Health Counseling** is accredited by the Council for Accreditation for Counseling and Related Educational Programs.

The **Counseling Psychology** doctoral curriculum is accredited by the American Psychological Association.

The graduate certificate in **School Psychology** is accredited by the National Association of School Psychologists.

The Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology American Speech Language-Hearing Association accredits the **Communication Disorders** graduate level degree.

All **undergraduate teaching licensure programs** are accredited by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation, as well as the New Mexico Public Education Department

The undergraduate **Nursing** curricula is accredited by the New Mexico Board of Nursing. The undergraduate and graduate levels are also accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education.

The **Public Health Sciences** department is accredited by the Council on Education for Public Health.

The **Social Work** department is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education.

**College of Engineering**

The Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET) undergraduate accredited curricula is as follows:

ABET – EAC - **chemical, civil, electrical, engineering physics, industrial, aerospace, and mechanical engineering**.

ABET – ANSAC – **geomatics** (bachelor of science only)

ABET – ETAC - **information engineering technology**

**Addresses** Keep address style consistent with postal regulations, using no punctuation.

Marketing and Communications

MSC 3K

New Mexico State University

PO Box 30001

Las Cruces NM 88003-8001

**adviser** not *advisor.* This is the Associated Press preferred spelling used by media statewide.

# affect vs. effect Affect is a verb that means to influence: *The final exam will affect his final grade.* Effect is a noun that means result: *The effect of tuition increases on enrollment is uncertain.*

# afterward not *afterwards*.

# all right two words, never alright.

# alma mater

# alumni this Latin word has separate forms and plurals for male and female graduates. One male graduate is an *alumnus*; one female graduate is an *alumna*. Alumni (not *alums)* correctly refers to a group of male graduates or a group of both males and females, and *alumnae* is used for plural female graduates. All alumni referenced in NMSU alumni publications (i.e. *Panorama*) should have their alumni year listed after their last name: *Joe Smith ’58.*

# a.m., p.m. lowercase, with periods. Avoid redundant usage*: 8 a.m. this morning*.

**Americans with Disabilities Act**

To ensure access to educational events, meeting notices, news releases, syllabi and calendars should contain a contact and accommodation statement: *Contact \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (name of event organizer) before the event if you are an individual with a disability who is in need of a auxiliary aid or service to participate.*

**Arrowhead Center**

Arrowhead Center, New Mexico State University’s hub for technology commercialization and business assistance, was formed in 2004 to help prospective entrepreneurs identify markets, verify new technologies, write business plans and find financing. Through the center, companies have access to 150 business advisers, including university students, faculty members and retired business people. In exchange, the center receives a fee or equity share in the new companies.

# athletics it is the Department of Athletics or the Athletics Department, but the director of athletics. Coach is also lowercase, even when preceding a name: *volleyball coach Mike Jordan*

**backward, forward, toward** Not *backwards, forwards* or *towards*.

**BE BOLD.** Shape the Future.®Starting in 2018, this became the university’s tagline. In 2021, it received a federally registered trademark. For use, please contact Marketing Services at [mktgserv@nmsu.edu](mailto:mktgserv@nmsu.edu). (note: the previous tagline, “All About Discovery!” has been retired and is not to be used.)

**book titles** These should be in italics:

In 1972, he published *That All May Learn*, a history about New Mexico State from the university’s founding through 1964.

**bulleted lists**  When listing items in bulleted form, capitalize the first word of each item and end each item with a period, whether it is a complete sentence or not:

*The agenda for the Board of Regents includes:*

*- Approval of the 2022-23 budget.*

*- Discussion of a proposed nepotism policy.*

*- An executive session to consider the chancellor’s contract.*

Keep all items in a bulleted list consistent in form; do not mix fragments with sentences, for instance, or start some items with verbs and others with nouns.

NOTE: For news releases, use dashes rather than bullets, because special symbols like bullets usually are lost when releases are converted to plain text for e-mailing.

**campus buildings and physical features** Capitalize the *official names* of all university buildings, streets, parks, etc., when using the full names. Follow any quirky spellings when doing so, but lowercase and revert to standard spelling when using generic descriptions. *Mark and Stephanie Medoff Theatre* becomes *the theater* on second reference.

If a question arises as to the proper name of a campus building or facility, check with the Office of Space Planning for a ruling on the correct name and spelling, then add it to this style sheet for future reference.

**campus organizations** Many of these require a description in addition to a name, because they aren’t familiar to the general public: *The Round Up, the NMSU student newspaper. Associated Students of NMSU, the student government*. (On subsequent references, use either *ASNMSU* or *student government*.)

**campuswide** One word. Also systemwide.

# century Lowercase: *the 21st century*. Hyphenate when used as an adjective:

# *He teaches* *18th-century literature*.

**child care** is two words with no hyphen in all cases, an exception to Webster’s.

**chile,** not *chili,* when referring to peppers.

**college names**

[Capitalize the full names of each college on first reference but use lower case *college* or the six *colleges* on subsequent references. Here are the proper names of the colleges at New Mexico State:]

[These should always be capitalized:]

*College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences*

*College of Arts and Sciences*

*College of Business*

*College of Engineering*

*College of Health, Education and Social Transformation*

*Honors College*

*NMSU Online*

University and college naming:

When referring to the various campuses of New Mexico State University, here are the preferred styles:

Group:

Community Colleges:

*New Mexico State University Community Colleges*

*NMSU Community Colleges*

All campuses:

*New Mexico State University campuses*

*NMSU campuses*

Individual:

*Doña Ana Community College*

*New Mexico State University Alamogordo*

*New Mexico State University Grants*

*New Mexico State University Las Cruces*

Or

*DACC*

*NMSU Alamogordo*

*NMSU Grants*

*NMSU Las Cruces (or NMSU main campus)*

Or

*New Mexico State University’s Doña Ana Community College campus*

*New Mexico State University’s Alamogordo campus*

*New Mexico State University’s Grants campus*

*New Mexico State University’s Las Cruces campus*

*New Mexico State University’s main campus*

**compose, comprise, consist** *Comprise* means to encompass or contain: *The United States comprises 50 states.* It is never followed by *of*, as in *comprised of.* Most of the time it will sound more natural to say *is composed of* or *consists of.*

**composition titles** For our own publications, the rule of thumb is to italicize the titles of major works and use quotation marks for titles of shorter ones. Specifically:

Italicize the titles of books, magazines, newspapers, academic journals, plays, motion pictures, operas and other long musical compositions, collections of poetry and long poems, paintings and statues.

Put quotation marks around the titles of magazine articles, short stories, songs, speeches, radio and television programs, short poems and unpublished works.

**NOTE: For news releases**, follow the AP guidelines for capitalization and use of quotation marks. Do not use italics. Magazine and newspaper names are not put in quotation marks. Titles of books, plays, songs, poems and television programs are.

**course work**  Two words.

**courtesy titles, doctor**  In general,do not use courtesy titles *(Mr., Mrs., Miss, Ms.)* or the title *Dr.*, either on first or subsequent references. If it is pertinent to note that a person has a doctorate, do so in a descriptive way: *Smith, who has a doctorate in physics, has studied ...* Exceptions can be made for formal applications such as resolutions and citations. Definitely do not use “Dr.” in conjunction with another title ex. *Agricultural and Extension Education Department Head Dr. Steven Fraze.*

# curriculum, curricula *Curriculum* is the singular form, while *curricula* is the plural form.

# data A plural noun, it usually takes plural verbs and pronouns: *These data are inconclusive.*

# database One word.

# dates Do not use “on” before dates: *The bust was dedicated September 11* not *The bust was dedicated on September 11*. Do not use “of” with dates: *The Pan Am Center will receive a much-needed face-lift beginning in January 2005* not *The Pan Am Center will receive a much-needed face-lift beginning in January of 2005.*

**degree programs**

NMSU’s main campus offers traditional face-to-face degree programs, including 88 bachelor’s degree programs, 59 master’s programs, 13 graduate certificate programs, 30 doctoral programs and one specialist in education program. Associate degree programs are administered by the community colleges.

Bachelor’s Degree Programs

College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences

agriculture and community development

agricultural and extension education

agricultural biology

agricultural economics and agricultural business

agronomy

animal science

conservation ecology

environmental science

family and consumer sciences education

fashion merchandising and design

fisheries and wildlife science

food science and technology

general agriculture

genetics and biotechnology

horticulture

hotel, restaurant and tourism management

human development and family science

human nutrition and dietetic sciences

natural resource economics and policy

range science

soil science

turfgrass science and management

College of Arts and Sciences

animation and visual effects

anthropology

applied studies

art

biochemistry

biology

chemistry

communication studies

computer science

conservation ecology

criminal justice

cybersecurity

digital film making

economics

English

foreign languages

gender and sexuality studies

genetics and biotechnology

geography

geology

government

history

individualized studies

journalism and media studies

justice, political philosophy and la

mathematics

microbiology

music

music education

philosophy

physics

psychology

theatre arts

College of Business

accounting

economics

finance

general business

information systems

international business

management

marketing

College of Engineering

aerospace engineering

chemical engineering

civil engineering

electrical engineering

engineering physics

engineering technology

geomatics

industrial engineering

information and communication technology

mechanical engineering

surveying engineering

College of Health, Education and Social Transformation

applied studies

communication disorders

counseling and community psychology

dance

early childhood education

educational leadership

elementary education

kinesiology

nursing

public health

secondary education

social work

sociology

special education

Master’s Degree Programs

College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences

agricultural biology

agricultural economics

agricultural and extension education

agriculture

animal science

family and consumer science

horticulture  
plant and environmental sciences

range science

water science and management

wildlife management

College of Arts and Sciences

anthropology

art

astronomy

bioinformatics and computational biology

biology

chemistry

communication studies

computer science

creative writing

criminal justice

data analytics

English

fine arts (studio art)

fine arts (creative writing)

geography

geology

government

history

mathematical sciences

molecular biology

music

physics

psychology

public administration

Spanish

College of Business

accounting

applied statistics

business administration

economics

experimental statistics

College of Engineering

aerospace engineering

chemical engineering

civil engineering

electrical engineering

environmental engineering

industrial engineering

mechanical engineering

College of Health, Education and Social Transformation

clinical mental health counseling

clinical psychopharmacology

communication disorders

counseling and guidance

education

educational leadership and administration

nursing

public health

social work

sociology

special education

Graduate Certificate Programs

College of Arts and Sciences

cultural resource management

museum studies

College of Business

finance

public utility regulation and economics

College of Engineering

digital communication

digital signal processing

energy systems

systems engineering

telemetering

College of Health, Education and Social Transformation  
autism spectrum disorders

family practice nursing

online teaching and learning

psychiatric mental health nursing

Doctoral Degree Programs

College of Agriculture and Home Economics

animal science

plant and environmental sciences

range science

water science and management

College of Arts and Sciences

astronomy

biology

chemistry

computer science

geography

mathematical sciences

molecular biology

psychology

rhetoric and professional communication

College of Business

business administration

economic development

economics

College of Engineering

aerospace engineering

chemical engineering

civil engineering

electrical engineering

industrial engineering

mechanical engineering

College of Health, Education and Social Transformation

counseling psychology

curriculum and instruction

educational leadership and administration

kinesiology and dance

nursing practice

nursing science

school psychology

special education

Specialist in Education Degree Programs

school psychology

**degree programs – NMSU-Online**

NMSU-Online offers fully online degree programs, including 13 bachelor’s degree programs, 30 master’s programs, 10 graduate certificate programs, and 2 doctoral programs.

Bachelor Degrees

College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences

hotel, restaurant and tourism management

human development and family science

College of Arts and Sciences

criminal justice

gender and sexuality studies

journalism and media studies

College of Business

general business

information systems

marketing

College of Engineering

geomatics

information and communication technology

College of Health, Education and Social Transformation

counseling and community psychology

public health

sociology

Master’s Degrees

College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences

agricultural and extension education

family and consumer sciences

College of Arts and Sciences

criminal justice

data analytics

English (technical and professional communication)

music

music education

Spanish

College of Business

business administration

business administration (health services management)

economics

econometrics

public policy

public utility policy and regulation

College of Engineering

aerospace engineering

chemical process industry

civil engineering

electrical engineering

electrical engineering

industrial engineering

information technology

mechanical engineering

College of Health, Education and Social Transformation

clinical psychopharmacology

education

educational leadership administration

nursing leadership and administration

public health

social work

sociology

special education

Graduate Certificates

autism spectrum disorder

bilingual education

early childhood education alternative licensure

family nurse practitioner

online teaching and learning technologies

psychiatric/mental health nurse practitioner

public health

public utility regulations and economics

systems engineering

teaching English to speakers of other languages

Doctorate Degrees

College of Health, Education and Social Transformation

curriculum and instruction

nursing practice

**department names** See academic departments.

# directions and regions In general, lowercase *north, south, east, west, northeast, northern,* etc., when they indicate compass direction. However, capitalize when they designate regions: *West Texas, Northern and Southern California, South Florida, the South Side of Chicago, the Lower East Side of New York, North Dallas, Northern New Mexico*.

With names of nations, lowercase unless they are part of a proper name or are used to designate a politically divided nation: *northern France, eastern Canada, the western United States,* but *Northern Ireland, South Korea, South Africa. Southwestern America offers a splendid laboratory for Interdisciplinary Studies.*

**Doña Ana County** Needs an ~ over the “n” in Dona. To insert this symbol, go to insert/symbols and select the “Latin-1” subset. Select the **ñ** character and click “insert.”

**Earth** Capitalize when used as the proper name of our planet: *He is studying the atmosphere on Earth.* Lowercase in other uses.

**email** Not ­E-mail. Also esports. Use a hyphen with other e- terms.

# emeritus/emerita This word often is added to formal titles to denote that individuals who have retired retain their rank or title. When used, place *emeritus* (in italics) after the formal title, in keeping with the general practice of academic institutions: Bob R. Leonard, professor *emeritus;* Professor *Emerita* Beverly Carl.

# endowed chairs See academic titles.

# ensure, insure, assure Use *ensure* to mean guarantee: *Steps were taken to ensure accuracy.*

Use *insure* for references to insurance: *The policy insures his life*.

*Assure* means to make a person sure of something, or to convince*: “I assure you, this team has been playing with a lot of emotion,” he told the reporters.*

# faculty A collective noun, which takes a singular verb. Refers to an entire group of educators who staff a department or school. When not referring to the whole group, use *faculty members*. Examples: *The faculty is meeting here. Faculty members are meeting here. The faculty is discussing the issue. The faculty has considered the proposal.*

Do not use *Faculty are ...*

# farther vs. further *Farther* refers to physical distance: *He walked farther into the woods. Further* refers to an extension of time or degree: *She will look further into the mystery.*

# fewer, less In general, use *fewer* for individual items, *less* for bulk or quantity.

# fractions Spell out amounts less than one using hyphens between the words: *two-thirds, three-fourths, four-fifths*, etc. Use figures for precise amounts larger than one, converting to decimals whenever practical: *1 1/2, 3 3/4, 2 5/8, etc.*

# full time vs. full-time Hyphenate when used as a compound modifier: *She has a*

# *full-time job.* Open when used as an adverb. *He works full time.*

**fundraising** and **fundraiser** are one word in all cases. This is a change from previous recommendations.

**governor** Lowercase except when referring to the governor: Gov. Bill Richardson but *That’s a statement coming from the governor.*

**GPA** Acceptable in all references for grade-point average.

# groundbreaking One word in all uses.

# historian, historic, historical, history A *historic event* is an important occurrence, one that stands out in history. Any occurrence in the past is a *historical event*. Always use *a* – not *an* – before each of these words: *a history, a historian, a historic event*, etc.

**homepage** One word.

**homecoming** lowercase in most references unless referring to a specific event:

*During homecoming week, the Crimson Crew brought back the tradition of wearing beanies.* But: *Homecoming 2004 will be held Oct. 28-30.*

**Honors College**

New Mexico State University established the state’s first Honors College in 2003. The Honors College supplements the degrees offered by the university’s six colleges with a core curriculum leading to honors distinctions. Honors courses are taught in seminar formats by the university’s top faculty. Other components of the Honors College are the Crimson and Centennial Scholars programs and the Office of National Scholarships and International Education, formerly the Fellowships Office.

**internet** Not capitalized.

**internet terms**

*email, esports* (Other “e-” terms are hyphenated)

*internet* (not capitalized)

*online* (one word)

*website* (one word)

*World Wide Web* (capitalized)

See the AP Internet Guide in The Associated Press Stylebook for a more complete listing.

# it’s vs. its *It’s* is a contraction for *it is* or *it has*: *It’s up to you, It’s been a long time. Its* is the possessive form of the neuter possessive pronoun: *The company lost its assets.*

**judgment** Not *judgement*.

**Kickoff, kick off** One word as an adjective and noun. Two words as a verb.

**laptop** One word.

**land-grant** NMSU is a land-grant university, a Hispanic-serving university and a NASA Space Grant institution.

**Legislature**Capitalize: *the state Legislature.*

**liaison**

**likable** Not *likeable.*

**lion’s share**  Avoid this term, not just because it’s a cliché, but because it is almost always misused. In the story it comes from, the lion’s share is not just the biggest share, it’s the whole thing.

# Los Alamos National Laboratory

# -ly Do not use a hyphen between adverbs ending in -ly and adjectives they modify: *an easily remembered rule, a badly damaged ship, a fully informed person.*

# magazine names Capitalize the name but do not place it in quotes – use italics. Lowercase *magazine* unless it is part of the publication’s formal title: *The New York Times Magazine, Newsweek magazine, Time magazine.* Check the masthead if in doubt.

**majors** Not capitalized unless they are a proper noun such as English, French, Spanish. *Their endowment provides scholarships for freshmen studying chemical engineering*

not *Their endowment provides scholarships for freshmen studying Chemical Engineering.*

# midnight, noon Do not put a *12* in front of either of these.

# minorities In deciding whether to refer to race or other group identities, use news judgment. Include these details only when they are clearly relevant.

# Black  Use the capitalized term as an adjective in a racial, ethnic or cultural sense: *Black people, Black culture, Black literature, Black studies, Black colleges*. *African American* is also acceptable for those in the U.S. The terms are not necessarily interchangeable. Other commonly used terms include Hispanic or Mexican American, Latin American, Native American, and Asian or Asian American.

**more than** is preferable to *above* or *over* when referring to quantities.

**myriad** Forget it. It’s wrong to put *of* after it, but sounds wrong without it.

**National Academy of Sciences** Not National Academy of Science.

**New Mexico Department of Agriculture**

The New Mexico Department of Agriculture is the only state cabinet agency headquartered outside Santa Fe. It is located on campus and reports to the governor and NMSU Board of Regents. This agency is sometimes confused with the College of Agriculture and Home Economics, one of six colleges at the university. NMDA is a regulatory agency responsible for stopping the spread of animal and plant diseases, as well as regulating gas pumps statewide.

**New Mexico State University**

In external news and publications, always spell out *New Mexico State University* on first reference. Thereafter, use New Mexico State or NMSU when space is a factor, as in headlines or listings with multiple agencies: *NMSU’s Physical Science Laboratory*.

If the use of “State” could result in confusion with a state government agency, use an alternate format: *university or campus police* to distinguish from the New Mexico State Police.

# numbers In text, and in general, spell out numbers one through nine. Use numerals for 10 and above. Some exceptions are percentages, ratios, monetary amounts, temperature readings, ages, physical dimensions, and sports scores: *44 percent, 104 percent, $4* (not four dollars)*, 4 C or four degrees centigrade* (not 4 degrees centigrade), *They won the baseball game 4-2, She is 4 years old, The porch is 9 feet by 11 feet*, etc.

Large Numbers: When large numbers must be spelled out, use a hyphen to connect a word ending in y to another word; do not use commas between other separate words that are part of one number: *twenty, forty, twenty-one, forty-one, one hundred forty-four, one thousand four hundred forty-four, one million four hundred forty-four thousand four hundred forty-four.*

Sentence Start*:* Spell out a numeral at the beginning of a sentence. If necessary, rewrite the sentence to avoid this. The only exception to this rule is when a sentence is started with a number that identifies a calendar year:

Wrong: *2,444 first-year students entered NMSU last year.*

Right*: Last year 2,444 first-year students entered NMSU.*

Right*: 2003 was a very good year.*

Plural Numbers: Add an “s” with no apostrophe to form plurals: *She remembers the 60s.*

Centuries: The “10 and above” rule applies: Spell out centuries below 10; use numerals for 10 and above. Lowercase century: *the 20th century, the fourth century*, etc.

Commas: Include commas in all four-digit numbers, except when listing years and SAT scores.

# off of The of is unnecessary: *He fell off the stage*, not *He fell off of the stage*.

# OK Not okay or O.K.

# on-campus, off-campus Hyphenate only when used as a compound modifier. *She used the sources available from the on-campus libraries. He decided to live off campus.*

# online One word, no hyphen, no matter what the usage.

# over In most cases, try to use the phrase *more than: The course required more than eight hours of study each week.* While over is generally used for spatial relationships such as *The plane flew over the city*, it can be used with numerals at times: *She is over 30.*

**“open to the public”** No need to say so in most cases. Generally the events we write about are open to the public, and if there are restrictions (an event to which alumni are invited, for instance), the story should make that clear. Do include the admission charge if there is one, or say the event is free if there is none.

# overused words Try to avoid overusing descriptive words such as unique, excellent, state-of-the-art, acclaimed, world-class, etc.

**part time vs. part-time** Apply the same rules as *full time* and *full-time*. In other words, hyphenate only when used as a compound modifier: *She has a part-time job* but *She works at the restaurant part time.*

**People, persons** Use *person* when speaking of an individual. *People* is preferred to persons in all plural uses.

**percent** Always spell out percent (rather than %) anduse figures with percents: *44 percent, 2 percent,* etc.

**Physical Science Laboratory** Not Physical Sciences Laboratory.

**predental, preveterinary, prelaw, premedicine, preveterinary** etc. No need to hyphenate these.

**President’s Associates** Not Presidents’ Associateswhen referring to this organization that supports scholarships for NMSU students.

**punctuation** Follow AP style. Some common mistakes are worth pointing out here:

* **No comma** before the conjunction in a series, except where it is needed for clarity.
* **No hyphen** is needed in compound modifiers when an adverb ending in “ly” is

followed by an adjective: *steadily growing enrollment, easily remembered rule.*

* **No hyphen** is needed to join figures with the words *million* or *billion*, even if used as a modifier: *$14 million building.* However, if you are using the word *dollar* instead of figures and a dollar sign, compound modifiers do need hyphens: *a million-dollar smile*, *hotter than a two-dollar pistol.*
* **Put a space** before and after *dashes* **–**and *ellipses ...*
* **Quotation marks** Periods and commasshould always go within punctuation marks.
* **Special symbols:** For news releases, avoid the use of symbols such as bullets, em dashes or accents on Spanish words. They often are dropped or replaced with gibberish in the process of converting to plain text for e-mailing.

# ratios Use figures and hyphens: *the ratio was 4-to-1, a ratio of 4-to-1, a 4-1 ratio*. The word *to* should be omitted when the numbers precede the word *ratio*.

**renowned** Notreknown**.** *Klipschorn speakers are world renowned.*

# Rio Grande Since *Rio* means “*river*” in Spanish, *Rio Grande* stands alone. Don’t use *Rio Grande River*.

# ROTC Acceptable for all references to the *Reserve Officers’ Training Corps*. If reference to a specific service branch is necessary, use the following forms: *Army ROTC* or *Air Force ROTC* (no periods). Do not use the abbreviations *AROTC or AFROTC.*

**Sam Steel**

Sam Steel was shot in 1893, weeks before he was to become the first university graduate and the first college graduate in New Mexico Territory. His family members later attended and graduated from the university. The correct spelling of the name is *Steel* (no final “e”). (The campus street sign for Sam Steel Way on the west end of campus has an incorrect spelling.)

# Sandia National Laboratories

# says, said *Said* is the preferred attribution for most news releases, but *says* is the preferred attribution for articles written for NMSU publications such as *Panorama*. The exception is when you are quoting a statement that someone made at a particular event.

**schools**

New Mexico State University has five schools:

*Klipsch School of Electrical Engineering*, College of Engineering

*School of Nursing*, College of Health, Education and Social Transformation

*School of Social Work*, College of Health, Education and Social Transformation

*School of Teacher Preparation, Administration and Leadership*, College of Health, Education and Social Transformation

*School of Hotel, Restaurant and Tourism Management*, College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences

**seasons** Lowercase all seasons and seasonal terms such *as fall, spring, winter, wintertime*, etc., unless they are part of a formal title*: Winter Olympics, Summer Olympics,* etc. (what about fall semester, spring 2004 semester?)

**Southwest** Lowercase when referring to direction but capitalize when referring to the region. *He is producing a comic book series set in the Southwest.* Same applies to other regions – Northeast, Midwest, Northwest, etc.

**spring break** No need to capitalize. *It was a week before the beginning of spring break*.

**states** Spell out state names in body text.

# state of Lowercase in “state of” constructions: He is licensed in the state of New Mexico. Also, do not capitalize when referring to a level of legal or political jurisdiction: state Sen. Bill Ratliff, state Rep. Pete Patterson, the state Transportation Department.

# subjects Lowercase academic course subjects, unless they are a language or are followed by a roman numeral: English, French, Algebra I.

**telephone numbers** Do not use parentheses: 505-646-6100.Always include the area code 505 in numbers used in news releases, even though most of our releases go to newspapers and broadcast stations within that area code. If extension numbers are given, use a comma to separate the main number from the extension.

# television Spell out in all uses. Do not use *tv, TV* or *T.V*.

**that vs. which** *That* is the preferred pronoun to use when introducing essential clauses that refer to inanimate objects or animals without a name. *Which* is the preferred pronoun to introduce nonessential clauses that refer to inanimate objects or animals without a name. Note: *Nonessential clauses* must be set off by commas.

Examples: *The ruling that overturned the holiday schedule resulted in protests. The unpopular ruling, which was announced Tuesday, resulted in protests.*

**theater**, not *theatre,* unless used as part of a proper name, such as *Hershel Zohn Theatre.* In such cases, revert to the generic *theater* on second reference.

**times and dates of events** In general, list time, day of week, date and place, in that order: *4 p.m. Monday, Aug. 8.*

Use *noon* and *midnight* rather than *12 p.m.* or *12 a.m.*, and never use *12 noon* or *12 midnight.*

When using times for events that occur at the start of the hour, do not include :00. For example: *The meeting will begin at 11 a.m., and should last until 4 p.m.*

Use lowercase *a.m.* and *p.m*., with periods between the letters. Do not use *AM, A.M., PM, P.M*.

Also, avoid such redundancies as *4 a.m. in the morning*,

*8 p.m. at night,* etc. If necessary, use *4 a.m. today* or *8 p.m. Monday,* etc.

If a beginning and ending time are needed, use *from* and *to* rather than hyphenating, and don’t use *a.m.* or *p.m.* on the first number unless the time stretches from one to the other: *from 8 to 11 a.m., from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., from noon to 3 p.m.,* etc.

When referring to dates within the current year, in most cases it is not necessary to state the year. State the year when referring to events in upcoming or previous years, or when needed for clarity.

**towns, cities and states** Always spell out the names of states in body copy. In general, in releases prepared for media in this area, there is no need to add New Mexico after New Mexico place names, except to avoid confusion (to differentiate between Anthony, New Mexico and Anthony, Texas, for instance, or between Las Vegas, New Mexico, and Las Vegas, Nevada). When writing for out-of-state publications, always specify the state.

# toward Not towards.

**twofold** Not two-fold

# T-shirt Not Tshirt, T shirt, tee shirt, etc.

# underway One word.

**United States** U.S. is now acceptable as a noun or adjective. Formerly it was acceptable only as an adjective and the noun “the United States” had to be spelled out. Now “the U.S.” is permitted.

# *The United States is the best country in the world,* or, *The U.S. is the best country in the world*. Adjective form: *Jeff Bingaman is a U.S. senator. He is studying U.S. history.*

**university** Do not capitalize this other than when it is the first word in a sentence. *People who made planned gifts to the university were honored as members of the 1888 Society* not *People who made planned gifts to the University were honored as members of the 1888 Society*.

**universitywide** Not university-wide. Same with citywide and statewide.

**U.S. Department of Agriculture**

New Mexico State University has two U.S. Department of Agriculture facilities on campus:

*Jornada Experimental Range* (offices and labs are located in Wooton Hall; range research is at USDA facilities 25 miles north of Las Cruces)

*Southwestern Cotton Ginning Research Lab* (one of only three such ginning research centers in the nation, located on the west end of campus.)

# vice Use two words, with no hyphen: vice president, vice chair, vice regent, vice chancellor.

# website One word, lowercase. *For more information, visit our website at www.nmsu.edu.*

**-wide**

citywide

statewide

universitywide

# X-ray Use in all cases, as a noun, verb and adjective. Not *x-ray*.