The Northwest State Style Guide was created as a reference tool to maintain consistency and clarity in writing for internal and external audiences. The guide largely follows The Associated Press Stylebook, with some changes included based on Northwest State Community College preference. Unless otherwise noted, AP style should be followed. Included in this NSCC Style Guide is an alphabetical listing of words and phrases with guidelines for usage, followed by a punctuation guide.

STYLE GUIDE

ACADEMIC DEGREES
If mention of degrees is necessary to establish someone’s credentials, the preferred form is to avoid an abbreviation and use instead a phrase such as: John Gold, who has a doctorate in psychology.

DO NOT capitalize academic degrees when spelled out.
  EXAMPLE: associate, bachelor’s

Use an apostrophe in bachelor’s degree, master’s, etc., but not with associate (no “s”). Remove possession if used formally.
  EXAMPLE: Master of Science, Bachelor of Arts

Use such abbreviations as B.A., M.A., LL.D. and Ph.D. only when the need to identify many individuals by degree on first reference would make the preferred form cumbersome. Use these abbreviations only after a full name, never after just a last name. When used after a name, an academic abbreviation is set off by commas.
  EXAMPLE: John Gold, Ph.D., spoke to the class.

If you are using the formal name of a degree, it is capitalized.
  EXAMPLE: He earned a Master of Science degree from Ohio University.

DO NOT precede a name with a courtesy title for an academic degree and follow it with the abbreviation for the degree in the same reference.
  WRONG: Dr. John Gold, Ph.D.
  RIGHT: Dr. John Gold, a chemist.

If two doctors are being referenced that are married, it should be: Drs. [Last Name].
  EXAMPLE: The Drs. Smith donated to the NSCC Foundation.

ACADEMIC DIVISIONS
Capitalize the formal names of divisions.
  EXAMPLES: John Gould is the dean of the Math, Science & Engineering Technologies Division. She is taking nursing classes at Northwest State.

DO NOT capitalize “board of trustees” or other widely used internal elements of an organization unless used as part of the formal title.
  EXAMPLE: board of trustees, NSCC Board of Trustees

ACADEMIC SUBJECTS
Avoid capitalizing an academic subject when it is used as a general field of study. Capitalize academic subjects when they are part of the official title of a college entity, when they are the name of a language, and when they are the official title of a course or a short title that includes the course number.
  EXAMPLES: The Arts & Sciences Division offers classes in chemistry, biology, and physics. He’s taking The Philosophy of Rhetoric with Professor Smith.

Don’t capitalize majors, like physics, that are not proper nouns, but do capitalize ones that are, like English.
EXAMPLE: She majored in communications and minored in Spanish.

ACADEMIC TITLES
Capitalize and spell out formal titles such as chancellor, chairman, etc., when they precede a name. Lowercase elsewhere. Abbreviate and capitalize common titles when used before a name.

EXAMPLES: Prof. John Gold
           Asst. Prof. John Gold
           Assoc. Prof. John Gold

DO NOT abbreviate titles if they follow a name or if they stand alone.

DO NOT abbreviate president, secretary, treasurer, principal, director, attorney, manager, one-syllable titles or any title that is not generally recognized in its abbreviated form.

Use Dr. only for physicians, dentists, members of the paramedical professions and clergymen who hold honorary doctorates. (See academic degrees.)

DO NOT capitalize an occupation or descriptive adjectives and nouns used before a name.

EXAMPLE: author John Gold

Capitalize titles preceding and attached to a name, but use lowercase if the title follows a name or stands by itself. Long titles should follow the name.

EXAMPLES: President John Gold
           John Gold, president of Northwest State Community College

ADDRESS
Spell out words such as avenue, boulevard and street. Spell out numbered street names of one hundred or less. Use the abbreviations NW, NE, SW, and SE in city addresses after the street name.

AGES
News style: Spell out ages nine and under, use figures for all else. When used as a modifier or a noun, use hyphens.

EXAMPLE: The 55-year-old student enjoys the four-year-old building.

ALUMNUS
Alumnus is a male graduate, alumni is its plural form.
Alumna is for a female graduate and its plural form is alumnae.
Use alumni when referring to a group of men and women. A student who attended but did not graduate should be referred to as a former student, not an alumnus or alumna.

AWARD
Capitalize when part of the official name of an award.

EXAMPLE: Distinguished Alumni Award, Making a Difference Award

BUILDING
Lowercase unless part of a formal name. This includes specific areas inside of a building as well. Buildings that are named for a letter should feature that letter in single quotation marks to distinguish its use as the official name of a building.

EXAMPLE: She has five classes in the ‘A’ Building. The building was too cold.
Atrium, Voinovich Auditorium, Advanced Manufacturing Training Center, NSCC Library, NSCC Bookstore

CAMPUS
Lowercase.
CAMPUSWIDE
One word, no hyphen. Also applies to all compound words ending in wide (statewide, countywide, etc.).

COLLEGE
Always capitalize when referencing Northwest State Community College.
   EXAMPLE: Enrollment rates are up throughout the College.

Lowercase when referencing college in general.
   EXAMPLE: John Gold enjoys going to college.

COURSE TITLES
Capitalize official course titles in running text. No italics or quotation marks are necessary.
   EXAMPLE: John Gold Green is taking COM102 Intro to Interpersonal Communication.

COURSE WORK
Two words.

DATES
Always use Arabic figures, without st, nd, rd or th when used in a full sentence. Exception is when used in logos, headlines, or graphics.

When a phrase refers to a month, day and year, commas are required before and after the year.
   EXAMPLE: Graduation will take place May 6, 2011, at NSCC.

When including a day of the week with the date, use a comma after the day and after the date.
   EXAMPLE: The award ceremony is Wednesday, June 6, 2011, in the Voinovich Auditorium.

When including just a month and year, do not include a comma.
   EXAMPLE: The center will open in March 2013.

Do not use an apostrophe when referring to a full decade: 1960s.

Do use an apostrophe to designate missing numbers: ’50s.

DEPARTMENTS
Department names should be lowercase unless referring to formal College offices or departments.
   EXAMPLES: NSCC Financial Aid Office, financial aid office

DISABLED, DISABILITY
Preferred terms, rather than handicapped. Use “people first language” that describes what a person has, not who the person is.
   EXAMPLE: Rather than writing “she is autistic,” instead write “she has autism.”

Avoid: victim of, suffers with, afflicted by, wheelchair-bound, etc. Instead use: people with disabilities, he has a physical disability, people with mental illness, accessible seating, the disabled community, etc.

EMAIL
(n. and v.) Lowercase, no hyphen.

When listing an email, uppercase Northwest State only.
   EXAMPLE: johndoe@NorthwestState.edu
**EMERITUS, EMERITA**
Set off by commas. If before the name, uppercase. If after, lowercase.

**FRACTIONS**
Spell out amounts less than one, using hyphens: two-thirds, three-fifths, etc. Use figure for precise amounts more than one, and use decimals whenever practical: 1.5 miles, not 1 1/2 miles.

**FULL-TIME (ADJ.)**
Only hyphenate when used as an adjective before a noun.

**EXAMPLE:** John Gold is a full-time student.

**GPA**
No periods and all capitals, including when used as a first reference.

**HEALTHCARE**
One word in all uses.

**HIS/HER**
Refrain from using masculine pronouns for generic references that are not gender-specific. Pluralize the reference or eliminate the pronoun whenever possible.

**HOMEPAGE**
One word.

**INTERNET**
Always capitalized.

**INSTRUCTORS**
Northwest State does not have a formal policy dictating who is a professor, associate professor, assistant professor, etc. Use of instructor is appropriate for any faculty member, including full-time and part-time faculty (can also be referred to as adjunct faculty).

**INTRANET**
Always lowercase.

**LEGISLATIVE TITLES**
On first reference, use Rep. and Sen. before the name. Spell out lowercase representative and senator in other uses. When including party and state designations, set off with commas, not parentheses, and use AP abbreviation for the state. (See States)

**LOGIN (ADJ.), LOG IN (V.)**
Use your N Number to log in. Your N Number is your login information.

**MAJORS, MINORS**
Do not capitalize academic majors or minors unless they include a proper noun.

**MBA**
No periods. Use with an, not a.

**MONTHS**
News Style: Months with more than six letters are abbreviated.

NOT ABBREVIATED: March, April, May, June, July
NAMES
Use full first and last name and title upon first reference. (See also courtesy title.) Refer to subjects by last name after first reference, unless the style of the publication dictates that first name should be used.

EXCEPTIONS: children under 12 years of age, people who share the last name, and the elderly.

NEWSPAPER OR PERIODICAL NAMES
Italicize names, include location in parentheses if necessary for proper identification. Capitalize “The” if included in the publication name.

Northwest State Community College
Acceptable abbreviations include NSCC and Northwest State. DO NOT use NW State, NW State Community College, Northwest or NWSCC.

Northwest State Community College Foundation
Use the complete name or NSCC Foundation on first reference. After the first reference, Foundation is acceptable. Lowercase foundation when not specifically referring to the NSCC Foundation.

EXAMPLES: The NSCC Foundation awarded 250 scholarships this year. The Foundation supports the mission of the College by providing funding, equipment and furnishings. The region has several foundations that do excellent work.

NUMBERS
News style: spell out whole numbers below 10 or at the beginning of a sentence. Spell out first through ninth. For percentages, dimensions and ages, use figures for all.

Non-news style: Spell out whole numbers from one to ninety-nine and any of these followed by hundred, thousand, million, etc.

For percentages use figures but spell out percentage.

ONLINE
One word.

PART-TIME (ADJ.)
Hyphenate as an adjective when used before the noun.

EXAMPLE: John Gold is a part-time student.

PERCENT
Spell out the word percent; do not use the symbol unless in tables, footnotes, captions, and headlines.

PROGRAM
Uppercase formal names of academic programs, but do not capitalize the word program. When referring to a program as a major or minor, do not capitalize.

EXAMPLES: The Associate of Science Degree in Mechanical Engineering is growing. The mechanical engineering program is growing. The IT Specialist Certificate program is growing. He is taking classes to become an IT specialist.

R.N.
Use following a name, offset with commas.
ROOM
Capitalize before a room number.

R.S.V.P.
Use uppercase letters with periods.

SEASONS
Do not capitalize.
EXAMPLE: Northwest State will make changes during the fall of 2015.

SEMESTER
Always lowercase.

SMARTPHONE
One word.

STATES
When used alone, spell out. When used with a city, follow with a comma.
Wash., W.Va., Wis., Wyo.

Do not abbreviate: Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Ohio, Texas and Utah.
The state, not The State, unless referring to the State of Ohio.

STATEWIDE
One word, no hyphen.

STREET
Spell out unless used with a numbered address.

TIME
Use figures except for noon and midnight. Remove :00 whenever possible. Use lowercase and periods to denote time of
day (a.m. and p.m.). DO NOT use figures and words together (noon, not 12 noon).

UNITED STATES
Spell out whenever possible. When abbreviating, include periods: U.S.

WEBSITE
www.NorthwestState.edu. Capitalize letters when two or more words are part of the website.

ZIP CODE
Use all uppercase for ZIP and all lowercase for code

PUNCTUATION
ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS
In most cases, spell out in first reference and abbreviate any following references.
EXAMPLE: Students in the Associate Accelerated Program are encouraged by their professors.
As an ASAP student, you will learn tools to help you succeed.

AMPERSAND
Spell out “and” unless the ampersand is part of a proper name.
APOSTROPHES
Apostrophes are used to show possession or indicate a contraction, not to make words plural.
  RIGHT: It’s a nice day outside. The students didn’t know what to do when class was canceled. He has six pencils.
  WRONG: We gave them five pen’s, six pencil’s and a notebook.

BULLETED LISTS
Do not finish items in bulleted lists with a period unless multiple complete sentences are included in the bullet.

COMMAS
A comma should always be used in a series of three or more.
  EXAMPLE: Northwest State offers classes in Archobld, Whitehouse and Van Wert.
Use a serial comma before the concluding conjunction in a complex series of phrases.
  EXAMPLE: The items are available in black and white, red and yellow, and blue and green.

ELLIPSIS
Space before and after three periods.

LISTS
Alphabetize all items in a list unless order or hierarchy demands otherwise.

QUOTES
Always set quotes off in separate paragraphs and give attribution within the quote. Attribute quotes using last names (full name on first reference), unless more than one person shares the same last name. In that case, the full name should be used.

SPACING
Remove all double spaces at the end of each sentence.