



Charles R. Drew University  
of Medicine and Science

*A Private University with a Public Mission*

# Style Guide

Our standards for writing  
and communicating correctly  
and effectively.

# CDU Style Guide

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## Overview

This Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science Style Guide is an accompaniment to the CDU Visual Identity Guide. Where the Visual Identity Guide provides direction on the use of our graphic elements, such as our logo, colors and type fonts, the Style Guide governs our use of the written word in all applications, internal and external, in print and online.

Our Style Guide is not an exhaustive compilation of every grammar and syntax variation. Rather, it's a list of rules for our most frequently used language constructions in our everyday work.

The goal of our CDU Style Guide is not to serve as “grammar police” and correct everyone’s mistakes but rather, to help everyone write well and effectively so that our messages are easily understood by our various audiences. Also, the way we present ourselves determines the way we are perceived. And by being consistent in our identity—in word and in graphics—we present a more positive, professional impression to our students, alumni, the media and the community at large.

This Style Guide will be reviewed regularly to make sure it continues to cover those applications.

For any questions regarding this guide or its application, contact the Office of Strategic Advancement at (323) 357-3669.

## Style Sheet

CDU will follow the AP Stylebook, with some exceptions and modifications, which will be noted here. The AP Style is informal and intuitive, while still providing clear grammar and syntax guidelines. The Office of Strategic Advancement has a hard copy of the 2017 AP Stylebook, as well as access to the online version.

## Dictionary

CDU will also adopt a dictionary, the Webster New World College Dictionary, as it's easily accessible and has a common-sense approach to spelling and definitions. It also has most of its functions available online: <http://websters.yourdictionary.com>. Like the Style Guide for grammar and the Visual Identity Guide for graphics, this dictionary will be our final authority for spellings and definitions.

Use the first spelling and definition in each entry. The information in the dictionary should supersede the CDU Style Guide.

## Our Name

Our full and proper name is:

### **Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science**

Always include the middle initial and period: “R.”

Always use “and” rather than the ampersand (&).

In certain applications—in some advertising or where space is at a premium—you may use **Charles R. Drew University**.

### *Abbreviating our name:*

In applications where our name will be utilized several times in the same document or web page, use the full name the first time the school is mentioned and put our proper abbreviation/acronym in parentheses immediately following the full name:

### **Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science (CDU)**

For subsequent mentions in the same document, you may use the abbreviation. For word variety in subsequent mentions, you may also refer to CDU as “the University,” capitalizing the “U.”

However, for the last mention in the same document or web page, spell out the full name once again.

### *Special variations of our name with partners:*

#### **Charles R. Drew/UCLA Medical Education Program**

#### **Charles R. Drew University/OASIS Clinic**

## Identity Tone of Voice

Tone of voice is our style of communications, from the text on our website, to our collateral and advertising copy to how we speak to each other and the world at large. Much of this will be determined by our word choices and the language constructs we use. Tone of voice can be subjective—and people may see and hear different messages with the same words—but we should always strive to use a tone of voice that is reflective of our Mission, Vision and Values. Thus, our tone of voice will be:

- Honest
- Respectful
- Authentic
- Trustworthy
- Informal but not overly casual or familiar
- Positive, uplifting and inspiring

### *Do*

- Be consistent with the CDU Mission, Vision and Values.
- Be thought-provoking but fair.
- Be clear, direct and unambiguous.
- Use the simplest and most appropriate language for the topic, medium and audience.

### *Don't*

- Use too much clinical language or jargon.
- Use too much CDU lingo or too many “insider” references with audiences that are unfamiliar with the University.
- Let pride in accomplishment overtake propriety. When citing a success, keep it honest and go easy on superlatives.
- Be controversial for the sake of controversy.
- Be irreverent or sarcastic.
- Be afraid to use appropriate humor to make a point.



## Academic titles and degrees

For titles:

**“MD” rather than “M.D.” and “PhD” rather than “Ph.D.”**

For degrees:

**“BA” rather than “B.A.”**

## Acronyms

Minimize use of acronyms. But if the usage is well-known to the audience or enhances understanding, put the abbreviation/acronym in parentheses after the first mention and then use the abbreviation for subsequent references within the same document or web page:

**Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU)**

**WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC)**

## Capitalization

**People:** Capitalize a title only when it is used directly before a name. This rule applies to government positions (such as senator, mayor, assemblymember) and organizational positions (such as chair, president, general manager).

**XYZ Company Founder and President Nancy Sanders.**

**Nancy Sanders is founder and president of XYZ Company.**

**Pope Francis visited South America.**

**The pope blessed the crowds outside his window at the Vatican.**

**Company and product names:** Follow the organization’s preferences, usually available on their website, as to how it capitalizes and punctuates.

**iPod**

**MasterCard**

**PayPal**

**YouTube**

## Gender in Titles

Use titles that apply to both men and women.

**“Assemblymember” rather than “assemblywoman.”**

**“Spokesperson” rather than “spokesman.”**

**“Firefighter” rather than “fireman.”**

## Numbers

**Spell out vs. write out:** Spell out numbers one through nine, and use cardinal numbers (10, 20, 35, etc.) for 10 and higher. There are, however, some exceptions. Below are some of the most common:

**Dollars: \$4**

**Cents: 9 cents**

**Percentages: 74 percent**

**Speed: 25 mph**

**Temperature: 8 degrees**

**Dates:** Use cardinal rather than ordinal numbers:

**July 4, 2017, not July 4<sup>th</sup>, 2017.**

**Dollars:** Don't include a period and two zeroes when it's an even figure: **\$11.**

**Time:** Don't include colon and two zeroes when it's an even hour: **5 p.m.**

**At the beginning of a sentence:** Avoid leading a sentence with a number, if you can. But if you must lead the sentence with a number, spell it out—e.g., “Twelve drummers drumming.” If the number is too long written-out, rewrite the sentence. But never spell out years.

**Telephone numbers:** Use parentheses for area code: **(323) 563-4800.**



## Publications and Titles

For books, journals, magazines, articles, movies, etc., capitalize all the principal words, including prepositions and conjunctions of four or more letters, as well as the first and last words.

Put quotation marks around all such titles except the Bible, books that are catalogues of reference material (almanacs, dictionaries, encyclopedias, etc.), newspapers and magazines.

**“Hamlet”**

**“The Star-Spangled Banner”**

**“Hidden Figures” (book or movie)**

**The Wall Street Journal**

**The New York Times**

**Journal of the American  
Medical Association**

## Punctuation

Capitalize the first word after a colon if it is a proper noun or the start of a complete sentence.

**All the evidence pointed to one person: Larry.**

**Mom finally told us the secret to her tasty cookies: It was a cup of butter.**

**Three hundred kindergarteners went on the picnic: The park was a madhouse.**

## Quotation marks

Do not use for emphasis or to call attention to a word or passage.

**Correct: That’s just weird.**

**Incorrect: That’s just “weird.”**

Single quotation marks are used only for a quote within a quote.

**Mrs. Jones said, “I told him ‘don’t go to the movie by yourself.’”**

The period and the comma always go inside the quotation marks.

**At the spelling bee, I forgot how to spell “accommodate.”**

**“I’m tired of your complaining,” she said to her son.**

Use quotes around a word or phrase to indicate irony sparingly.

**With three failing grades on his report card, Alex was definitely “Student of the Year.”**

The question mark and exclamation point go inside the quotation marks if they apply to quoted material. They go outside when they apply to the entire sentence.

**Larry asked, “Can we go to the zoo next week?”**

**Who knows what it means to say, “A rolling stone gathers no moss”?**

**“This is ridiculous!” the old man screamed in exasperation.**

**He told me you had never seen “Star Wars”!**

The dash, colon and semicolon, with very rare exceptions, usually in dialog or citations, also go outside the quotation marks.

**“She told him he was”—and this is where Sally got really mad—“an absolute idiot.”**

**He said it in no uncertain terms: “Leave now!”**

**At karaoke night, Lauren had too much wine and actually tried to sing “The Star-Spangled Banner”: “Oh, say can you see by the dawn’s early light what so proudly we hailed at the twilight’s last gleaming?”**

**Andrew’s favorite book was “This Side of Paradise”; he could quote entire pages.**

## Series

In a series consisting of three or more elements, separate only the first two with a comma.

**Please pick up bread, milk and eggs at the grocery store.**

If the series includes names and titles, or longer phrases with commas or other punctuation within the phrases, separate with semicolons. Depending upon the amount of punctuation, it may also be preferable to use a semi-colon between the second and third elements for clarity.

**Speaking on the panel today will be John Smith, MD, PhD; Mary Jones, MPH, EdD; and Larry Edwards, MD, MBA.**

If the series includes longer phrases with commas or other punctuation within the phrases, separate them with semicolons.

**The hurricane tore through Pensacola, Florida; Valdosta, Georgia; and Hilton Head, South Carolina.**

You may also consider rewriting the sentence for clarity and brevity.

## Some Special Words

Here are some frequently used words, along with their spelling.

**Alumni, alumna** – “Alumnus” refers to a single male graduate. “Alumna” refers to a single female graduate. “Alumni” refers to more than one male graduate. “Alumnae” refers to more than one female graduate. “Alum” (singular) or “alums” (plural) can be used in informal applications.

**Email** – one word

**Healthcare** – one word

**How-to** – hyphenated word when used as a noun or an adjective

**Website** – one word

## States

Write out names when used alone: “California.” If the city or county precedes the state, abbreviate the state: Ala., Ariz., Calif., Fla., Ga., Md., etc. Don’t use postal style like “VA.” Never abbreviate these eight states: Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Ohio, Texas and Utah.

## Time

**Use a.m. or p.m. with periods: 6 p.m.**

**Use cardinal numbers (3 p.m.) except for noon and midnight.**