Website & Collateral Style Guide

Voice and Tone

Voice — is mission-driven, reflects the school's personality and is consistent across all platforms, web and print, regardless of audience

USC Gould's voice reflects the school's high quality, progressiveness, inclusiveness, collegiality and leadership in the field.

Tone — varies by audience and purpose

Tone for the website is welcoming, familiar ("you" and "our" versus "they" and "its"), objective and helps put the visitor into the narrative.

Overarching Web Content Goals

Focus on primary audience — prospective students

Content should be:

- easy to navigate and find desired information
- clear and concise
- consistent in tone, style and nomenclature
- engaging (selling the school without overpromising)
- scannable (easy to read and understand quickly)
- active instead of passive
- external-focused (use terms clear to prospective students) rather than internal-focused
- credible (back up claims)

Content should include:

- bulleted lists
- subheads
- short sentences
- short paragraphs (one idea per paragraph)
- keywords
- links that are descriptive of their destination, such as "apply now" instead of "click here"
- degrees of alumni mentioned (include JD, LLM, etc., to reflect degrees available)

Content should avoid:
- acronyms
- jargon
- hyperbole
- repetition

USC Gould Nomenclature

School Name
The full name of the school is USC Gould School of Law. USC Gould is also acceptable in most instances. USC Law should no longer be used in any reference to the school. Avoid using "the" before USC Gould School of Law or USC Gould.

Degrees
Do not use periods in degree abbreviations.

USC Gould Degrees	Abbreviations
Juris Doctor (not Doctorate)	JD
Master of Laws	LLM
Online Master of Laws	Online LLM
Two-Year Extended Master of Laws	Two-Year LLM
Master of Comparative Law	MCL
Master of Studies in Law	MSL or Online MSL
LLM in Alternative Dispute Resolution	LLM in ADR
Master of Dispute Resolution	MDR

JD Alternate Admission Paths
Following are the official names of USC Gould's alternate JD entry paths:
- Binding Early Decision
- 3+3 Accelerated Bachelor/JD
- Two-Year JD for International Lawyers
- Transfer
- LLM to JD Transfer

Non-degree Programs
Following are the official names of USC Gould's non-degree programs:
- Visiting JD Students
- Visiting International Program for Lawyers (program is part of the official name); can be abbreviated as VIP on second reference
- Summer Law and English (do not use the word program; use "and" instead of an ampersand); can be abbreviated as SLE on second reference

Centers and Institutes

Following are the official names of USC Gould's centers and institutes:

- Center for Law and Philosophy
- Center for Law and Social Science
- Center for Law, History and Culture
- Center for Transnational Law and Business
- Initiative and Referendum Institute
- Pacific Center for Health Policy and Ethics
- Saks Institute for Mental Health Law, Policy and Ethics

Certificates
Do not capitalize the word certificate unless it is used in a heading.

USC Gould offers the following certificates:
- Alternative Dispute Resolution (JD, LLM, standalone on campus)
- Business Law (JD, LLM, online for lawyers, standalone online for non-lawyers)
- Compliance (online LLM, standalone online)
- Media and Entertainment Law (JD, LLM, online LLM)
- Entertainment Law and Industry (standalone online)
- Public Interest Law (JD)
- Technology and Entrepreneurship Law (JD, LLM)
- Transnational Law and Business (JD, LLM)

Clinics and Practicums
Capitalize "clinic" as it is part of the name. Capitalize "practicum" as part of the official name.

USC Gould offers the following clinics:
- Immigration Clinic
- Intellectual Property and Technology Law Clinic (note that "law" is part of the name)
- International Human Rights Clinic
- Mediation Clinic
- Advanced Mediation Clinic
- Family Law Mediation Clinic
- Post-Conviction Justice Project (note the hyphen in Post-Conviction)
- Small Business Clinic

USC Gould offers the following practicums:
- Access to Justice Practicum
- Children's Legal Issues Practicum
- Medical-Legal Community Partnership Seminar and Practicum

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Areas of Concentration
Use "areas of concentration" instead of "specialization" or "track."

USC Gould currently has the following areas of concentration:
- Alternative Dispute Resolution
- Business Law
- Media, Entertainment and Technology Law
- Public Interest Law

Academic Journals and Moot Court
Following are the official names of USC Gould's academic journals and moot court:
- *Southern California Law Review*
- *Southern California Review of Law and Social Justice*
- *Interdisciplinary Law Journal*
- Hale Moot Court Honors Program

Scholarships and Mentorships
Following are the school's special scholarship and mentorship offerings. Do not use the word "program" to describe any of these.
- Frank Rothman Scholars
- Honors Scholars
- Public Interest Scholars
- First Generation Professionals

Departments and Offices
Following are the official names of USC Gould's internal departments and offices:
- Academic Administration
- Academic Support
- Administrative Services
- Admissions
- Budget and Accounting
- Career Services
- Continuing Legal Education
- Development and Graduate Relations
- Events and Conferences
- Graduate & International Programs
- Human Resources
- Gabriel and Matilda Barnett Information Technology Center and The Asa V. Call Law Library
- Marketing and Communications (also referred to as Public Relations)
- Office of the Dean
- Student Services

Programs

Avoid using the word "program," unless the program is part of the official name, as the Judge Judith O. Hollinger Alternative Dispute Resolution Program and Hale Moot Court Honors Program. Otherwise "program" is confusing and too vague.

Exceptions:
- Non-degree Programs
- Graduate & International Programs
- Visiting International Program for Lawyers
- Loan Repayment Assistance Program

Use consistent nomenclature that is meaningful for the audience. See below:

Instead of: Use:

Academic programs	Degrees
Clinical programs	Clinics
Certificate programs	Certificates
Tracks, specializations	Areas of Concentration
Freestanding Certificates	Standalone certificates
1L, 2L, 3L	first-year, second-year, third-year students

Style Guide

The USC Gould School of Law and USC follow Associated Press style for online communications with some exceptions, noted below. If your question is not addressed below or in the AP Stylebook, refer to Miriam Webster.

abbreviations/acronyms
Avoid abbreviations and acronyms whenever possible. Always spell out the full name on first reference, followed by its abbreviation in parentheses: *American Bar Association (ABA)*.

Do not introduce an acronym if it does not appear later on the page.

When abbreviating Graduate & International Programs as G&IP, use an ampersand and no spaces. However, this abbreviation should only be used in very limited situations and avoided if at all possible. It is an internal designation that can be confusing to an external audience.

academic degrees
Academic degrees should be written without periods: BA, JD, LLM, MA, PhD, etc. Do not use "Dr." before a name, even in a medical context. When denoting an alumnus' degree, include only the graduating year for a bachelor's degree — no BA or BS. Always use the four-digit year (JD 2012, LLM 2017).

Examples:
- She received her JD from the USC Gould School of Law.
- Jane Doe, JD 2012, PhD 2017, currently is serving as executive director of Alpha Academy.
- Sally Smith 2013 joined the Peace Corps.

For joint degrees, use a slash between the degrees.
- Sam Jones JD/MA 2012

Following a surname, degrees (other than bachelor's) are preceded and followed by commas. If an individual has more than one degree or other designation following his name, each should be separated by commas: *John Smith, JD 2010, LLM 2013, works at Smith and Jones Law Firm*.

When listing multiple degrees, follow the order in which the degrees were received, but drop the bachelor's degree. See also **graduation years/alumni and students**.

ampersand
Avoid usage except for Graduate & International Programs.

articles
The titles of journal articles and research studies should appear in regular font (not italics) within quotation marks. For example: "Forum Selling" appeared in the January 2016 issue of

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Southern California Law Review.

Board of Councilors and Board of Trustees
Capitalize "Board of Councilors" and "Board of Trustees" when referring to the school's or the university's boards as well as other USC-affiliated boards. For official names of USC trustees, go to the [Trustees site](#).

books, journals, magazines, newspapers
Set in italics: *War and Peace, Time* magazine, *The New York Times, U.S. News & World Report*, the *Journal of Brain Research.* In the names of *The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal* and *The Washington Post,* capitalize and italicize *The*.

bulleted lists
Do not capitalize the first word or use periods unless each bullet is a complete sentence. Avoid semi-colons in a bulleted list.

email
No hyphen. Use a hyphen with other e- terms, such as *e-book, e-business, e-commerce*.

email addresses
Unless otherwise noted, keep email addresses in lowercase: *john.smith@gmail.com.*

endowed chair titles
Capitalize names of endowed chairs. Use lowercase *the* and capitalize *Chair* when the title is used as an active part of the sentence.

faculty bios
Except for endowed chair names, do not use Professor or Prof. before a faculty member's name in a bio. The appropriate academic title is listed below the faculty member's name in the header only. Avoid using phrases such as "for the past four years" as this makes it difficult to keep the page up to date. Instead, use "since 2013," for instance.

graduation years/alumni and students
Alumni degrees are set off by commas following the name, with the class year following the degree: *Jane Smith, JD 1957, is a donor to the school. Jane Smith, LLM 1983, has been named president of the alumni association.* Use four-digit year (JD 2012, LLM 2017).

headlines
Title case is the preferred style for headlines and subheads/deck heads. Capitalize the first and last word in a title, regardless of the part of speech. Use single quote marks in headlines.

initials
When a person uses initials for their first name, each letter should be followed by a period and a space unless that person specifically prefers no spacing between initials. For example: *P. D. James, M. F. K. Fisher*. If the initial is the last name, no period should be added. For example: *Malcolm X gave dozens of speeches*. Well-known and commonly used abbreviations of names contain no periods. For example: *FDR, LBJ, JFK*.

italics
Italicize book titles, movie titles, academic journal names, play titles, radio and television show titles (when referring to the series itself and not an individual episode), names of newspapers and magazines, album titles. For an article in a journal, or an episode of a television series, use quotation marks.

names
For faculty and staff names, check how the name is written on the individual's school profile page. If a profile page isn't available, check how the name is listed in the USC directory.

C. L. Max Nikias
Always include Nikias' full name on first reference — C. L. Max Nikias. Do not break "C." and "L." on two lines. Always include Niki C. Nikias' middle initial on first reference. (Avoid referring to her as the "first lady.")

numbers
Write out numbers one to nine and use figures for 10 and up. However, always use figures for:
- age (At age 5, she learned to read.)
- percentages (Only 5 percent of students receive no financial aid.)
- dollar amounts ($3 million grant)
- measurements (3-inch plywood)

programs
Avoid using the word "program" except for named entities that contractually require use of the word (e.g., the Judge Judith O. Hollinger Alternative Dispute Resolution Program or Hale Moot Court Program) or in special circumstances for clarity such as Non-degree Programs or for longstanding names (such as Graduate & International Programs, Visiting International Program). Instead of "clinical programs," use "clinics." Instead of "certificate programs," use "certificates."

said / says
Use the present tense *says* (and similar verbs such as *explains*) in copy that is not time-dependent. Use past tense when quoting about events that have already occurred. Avoid *smiled, joked, exclaimed, stated,* etc.

technological terms

Following are spellings and capitalization rules for some common technological terms:

- *BlackBerry, BlackBerrys*
- *cellphone*
- *download*
- *e-book*
- *email*
- *e-reader*
- *Facebook*
- *hashtag*
- *IM*
- *internet*
- *iPad, iPhone, iPod (but capitalize at the beginning of a sentence)*
- *LinkedIn*
- *smartphone*
- *social media*
- *Twitter, tweet, tweeted, retweet*
- *webmaster*
- *World Wide Web, website, Web page*
- *YouTube*

telephone numbers

Follow the format 213-XXX-XXXX.

tense

Use present tense except for past event coverage or other contexts in which it is clear that the action/activity being described occurred in the past.

USC department, center and institute names

Refer to the department's Web page for preferred wording. If USC is not part of the preferred name, use the possessive: *USC Lusk Center for Real Estate, USC's LGBT Student Resource Center, USC Institute for Creative Technologies, USC's Population Dynamics Research Group*

USC schools and medical entities
On first reference, write out the full name; use acceptable shortened versions on subsequent references.

First Reference	Subsequent References
Keck Hospital of USC	Keck Hospital
Keck Medical Center of USC	Keck Medical Center
Keck Medicine of USC*	Keck Medicine
Keck School of Medicine of USC	Keck School
Ostrow School of Dentistry of USC	Ostrow School
USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism	USC Annenberg or USC Annenberg School
USC Davis School of Gerontology	USC Davis or USC Davis School
USC Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences	USC Dornsife or USC Dornsife College
USC Gould School of Law	USC Gould or USC Gould School
USC Leventhal School of Accounting	USC Leventhal or USC Leventhal School
USC Libraries	USC Libraries
USC Marshall School of Business	USC Marshall or USC Marshall School
USC Norris Cancer Hospital	Norris Cancer Hospital
USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center	Norris cancer center
USC Price School of Public Policy	USC Price or USC Price School
USC Roski School of Fine Arts	USC Roski or USC Roski School
USC Rossier School of Education	USC Rossier or USC Rossier School
USC School of Architecture	USC School of Architecture
USC School of Cinematic Arts	USC School of Cinematic Arts
USC School of Dramatic Arts	USC School of Dramatic Arts
USC Dworak-Peck School of Social Work	USC Dworak-Peck School
USC Thornton School of Music	USC Thornton or USC Thornton School
USC Viterbi School of Engineering	USC Viterbi or USC Viterbi School

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Punctuation

ampersand (&)
Avoid this symbol unless it is part of a proper noun (company name, etc.). The only USC Gould unit that uses the ampersand is Graduate & International Programs.

brackets
Use brackets for a phrase or word inserted into someone's direct quote; otherwise use parentheses: "*My team [the Los Angeles Dodgers] might win the pennant." He said his team (the Los Angeles Dodgers) might win the pennant.*

colon
Capitalize the first word of the phrase that follows a colon if it's a complete sentence. If what follows the colon is a fragment, the first word is lowercase.

commas
Do not use the serial (aka series or Oxford) comma. Use commas to separate elements in a series, but do not put a comma before the conjunction in a simple series: *The flag is red, white and blue; He would nominate Tom, Dick or Harry.*

Put a comma before the concluding conjunction in a series, however, if an integral element of the series requires a conjunction: *I had orange juice, toast, and ham and eggs for breakfast.*

Use a comma before the concluding conjunction in a complex series of phrases when needed for clarity: *The main points to consider are whether the athletes are skillful enough to compete, whether they have the stamina to endure the training, and whether they have the proper mental attitude.*

dashes
em-dashes — Use as parentheses. Do not use two single hyphens. Spaces on either side: *Since launching in 1997, the department has pushed many boundaries — and made crucial, lifesaving advances — in the treatment of brain cancer and other neurological diseases.* (Word processing programs commonly convert two hyphens into an em-dash automatically. Or PC shortcut: *control alt -* ; Mac shortcut: *alt command -*)

en-dashes — Use without spaces between numbers and dates only as abbreviation for "to" or "through": *Oct. 12–15*. (PC shortcut: *alt-* ; Mac shortcut: *command -*)

ellipsis (...)
In general, treat an ellipsis as a three-letter word, constructed with three periods, a space before and a space after, as shown here. Use an ellipsis to indicate the deletion of one or more words in condensing quotes. Be careful to avoid deletions that would distort the meaning. An

ellipsis also may be used to indicate a thought that the speaker or writer does not complete. If the shortened sentence before the mark can stand as a sentence, it should do so, with an ellipsis placed after the period or other ending punctuation (four periods, with a space only after the first period). When material is omitted at the end of a paragraph and also immediately following it, an ellipsis goes both at the end of that paragraph and in front of the beginning of the next, according to this style.

exclamation point (!)
Avoid overuse. Use the mark to express a high degree of surprise, incredulity or other strong emotion. Place the mark inside quotation marks when it is part of quoted material. Do not use a comma or period after the exclamation point.

hyphens
See compound words/hyphenation in previous section.

italics
Italicize titles of books, journals, magazines, films, television series.

parentheses
Place a period outside a closing parenthesis mark if the parenthetical material is not an independent and complete sentence (such as this fragment). (An independent parenthetical sentence such as this one takes a period before the closing parenthesis.)

percent (%)
In copy, use the word *percent* rather than the percent symbol (%). Use the symbol for graphics and tables.

periods
Use only one space after periods used as end punctuation.

quotation marks
In addition to direct quotes, use quotation marks with titles of articles, names of studies, conferences and book chapters.

Commas and periods are always placed within quotation marks: *"I wonder what he'll major in," she said. "She'll major in political science."*

Question marks and exclamation points are placed within quotation marks if the quoted material is in the form of a question or an exclamation. Otherwise, they are placed outside the quotation marks. *"What will he major in?" Have you read the article "The Supreme Court Then and Now"?*

Semicolons and colons are placed outside quotation marks. *My favorite chapter was "The Ramifications of* Citizens United*"; it was enlightening.*

semicolon

In a sentence with a semicolon, the second clause is always a complete sentence and must always begin with a lowercase letter (unless it's a proper name): *My favorite chapter was "The Ramifications of* Citizens United*"; it was enlightening.*

Semicolons may also be used to separate elements in a series when the items in the series are long or when individual segments contain material that also must be set off by commas: *He is survived by a son, John Smith, of Chicago; three daughters, Jane Smith, of Los Angeles, Mary Smith, of Denver, and Susan, of Boston; and a sister, Martha.*

slash

Use without spaces: *he/she*