



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

Dual Degrees

USC Gould offers the following dual degrees:

- JD/Doctor of Pharmacy
- JD/Doctor of Philosophy in Economics (Caltech)
- JD/Master of Arts in Communication Management
- JD/Master of Arts in Economics
- JD/Master of Arts in International Relations
- JD/Master of Arts in Philosophy
- JD/Master of Arts in Political Science

- JD/Master of Business Administration
- JD/Master of Business Taxation
- JD/Master of Public Administration
- JD/Master of Public Policy
- JD/Master of Real Estate Development
- JD/Master of Science in Gerontology
- JD/Master of Social Work

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

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. In some instances, however, repeating a full name may be distracting. Use your best judgment, but always spell out the full name on first reference, followed by its abbreviation in parentheses: *American Bar Association (ABA)*. It is often preferable to use “the center” or “the institute” (or similar) on second reference rather than an acronym.

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**.

ages

Always use figures: *The girl is 15 years old. The law is 8 years old. The 101-year-old house.* When the context does not require *years* or *years old*, the figure is presumed to be *years*. Use

hyphens for ages expressed as adjectives before a noun or as substitutes for a noun: *A 5-year-old boy*, but *The boy is 5 years old*.

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 *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*. Also note: If “magazine” or “the” is not part of the proper name, then only the proper name is capitalized and italicized. Example: *Time* magazine (even though it’s shown with “magazine” on its website, its nameplate on the magazine cover only uses *Time*). Note that *U.S. News & World Report* uses the ampersand. See **articles** and **italics**.

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.

capitalization

Proper nouns (the names of people, companies, countries, etc.) should be capitalized. Capitalize common nouns such as *party*, *river*, *street* and *west* when they are an integral part of the full name of a person, place or thing: Democratic Party, Mississippi River, Fleet Street, West Virginia. Lowercase common nouns when they stand alone in subsequent references: *the party*, *the river*, *the street*.

The word school, when referring to the USC Gould School of Law, should not be capitalized on its own. See **USC department, centers and institute names**.

University Park Campus and Health Sciences Campus are both capitalized. Trojan Family is always capitalized. USC Board of Trustees is always capitalized.

Lowercase “degrees” when referring to the JD degree or LLM degree, for instance.

captions

Include a period after a caption only if it is a complete sentence.

Chief executive officer

CEO is acceptable on first reference. Spell out chief operating officer on first reference.

Example: *CEO Jane Smith met with Chief Operating Officer Frank Jones.*

class years

Use first-year students, second-year students, etc. Do not use 1L, 2L, 3L. See **graduation years/alumni and students**.

colleges, universities

On first reference, the full name of the college or university should be written out, followed by its abbreviation in parentheses. Subsequent references can be abbreviated. See also **USC schools and medical entities** and **USC department, centers and institute names**.

compound words/hyphenation

Use hyphens in compound constructions when necessary to prevent confusion but not when the meaning is clear. Examples: *stem cell research*, *smart-car charger*, *small-businessmen's conference*. Use a hyphen whenever ambiguity would result if it were omitted. Examples: He recovered his health. He re-covered the leaky roof.

When a compound modifier that would be hyphenated before a noun occurs instead after a form of the verb "to be," the hyphen must usually be retained for clarity. Examples: *The man is well-known*. *The woman is quick-witted*. *The play is first-rate*.

Compounds formed by an adverb ending in *ly* plus an adjective or participle are not hyphenated before or after a noun (*smartly dressed man*, *easily obtained form*). Note that some words that end in *ly* are not adverbs and can take a hyphen, such as *family*. Check [Merriam-Webster](http://www.merriam-webster.com) to clarify the part of speech, if necessary.

Common examples:

The first-year students attended the conference.

The school has more than 100 full-time faculty.

Students develop real-world skills in USC Gould clinics and practicums.

The students were in their first year.

The faculty work full time.

The skills developed are applicable in the real world.

The school is top-notch.

Other examples:

top-ranked school (but USC Gould is a top 20 law school)

non-degree option

four-week intensive

entry-level position

self-guided tour

course listings

Avoid course numbers and number of units. That information is included in the Schedule of Classes and on the portal rather than on the website, which is aimed at prospective students who do not need that level of detail.

dates/times

Use August 15 instead of August 15th, for instance. Use a colon to separate hours from minutes, but do not use :00. Examples: *1 p.m.*, *9:30 a.m.* For a time ranges: *9–11 a.m.*, *9 a.m.–3 p.m.*

decision-making, decision-maker

Downtown Los Angeles (or Downtown L.A.)

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.

ensure, insure

Ensure means to guarantee or ascertain something: *They tried to ensure that there were no errors*. Insure means to provide insurance: *Her jewelry was insured against theft and fire*.

entitled vs. titled

Do not use “entitled” to mean “titled.” Entitled means “a right to do or have something.”

etc.

Always has a period at the end and a comma preceding it.

every day (adverb); **everyday** (adjective). *She visited him every day. It was an everyday occurrence.*

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.

See also **academic degrees, endowed chair titles, graduation years, Jr., Sr.**

hours

Use a colon to separate hours from minutes, but do not use :00. Examples: *1 p.m., 9:30 a.m.*

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.

Capitalize:

- all nouns (including proper nouns)
- pronouns (you, she, he, it, we, they)
- verbs
- adjectives (quality, quantity and other descriptive words)
- adverbs (words ending in “ly”)
- subordinating conjunctions (as, because, although)

Lowercase:

- the word *to* as part of an infinitive.
- all articles (*a, the*)
- prepositions (*to, at, in*) unless four or more letters long (*from, with*)
- coordinating conjunctions (*and, but, or*)

Inc., Co., LLC

Do not set off with commas.

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.*

interprofessional

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.

Jr., Sr.

Abbreviate as Jr. and Sr. only with full names. Do not set off with commas. *Martin Luther King Jr.*

L.A.

Use periods when abbreviating Los Angeles. When referring to Downtown L.A., capitalize Downtown.

longstanding**master's degree****months**

When used with a specific date, Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov. and Dec. are abbreviated (March, April, May, June and July are only abbreviated in tabular material). Spell out when used alone or with a year only. When a phrase lists only the month and year, do not separate with a comma. When a phrase uses a month, day and year, set off the year with commas: *January 1972 was a cold month; Jan. 2 was the coldest day of the month; His birthday is May 8; Feb. 14, 1987, was the target date.*

multidisciplinary**numerals**

Spell out *one* through *nine*; use figures for 10 and above. Numbers that begin a sentence, including fractions, are spelled out. Ages, including those under 10, are written in figures: *There are 11 homes on the street. Twelve homes are located on another street. The family owns three cars. She is 3 years old. Three-fourths of the attendees supported the resolution.*

Also:

- At the beginning of a sentence, use *One hundred twenty*, not *One hundred and twenty*.
- Do not superscript numbers — i.e., do not write *122nd*. Instead it should be *122nd*.
- “To the *n*th degree” italicizes the *n*.
- Use commas in thousands: *123,500; 2,364*.
- Spell out millions, billions and trillions and always use numerals: *The city grew from 7 million to 11.5 million. The universe is 14 billion years old. The deficit reached \$700 trillion.*
- Use figures for dollar amounts and measurements: *\$3 million grant, 3-inch plywood.*
- Centuries follow AP style. Lowercase and write out numbers one to nine. Example: *ninth century*. Use figures for 10 and up. Example: *14th century*. When used as a modifier, there is no hyphen between the number and the word *century*. Example: *17th century poem*.

policymakers**possessive**

No additional *s* is added when using the possessive form of words ending in *s*: *James' book*, *Charles' book*.

prefixes

Generally, do not hyphenate prefixes when used with a word starting with a consonant: *prenatal*, *antibiotic*, *subcommittee*. Exceptions: (1) Use a hyphen if a prefix ends in a vowel and the word that follows begins with the same vowel: *co-owner*, *sub-basement*, *anti-intellectual*; (2) Use a hyphen if the word that follows is capitalized: *pro-American*, *mid-November*.

anti- — As a prefix, hyphenate in almost all cases including *anti-virus* and *anti-spyware*. Exceptions: *antibiotic*, *antibody*, *anticlimactic*, *anticlimax*, *antidepressant*, *antidote*, *antifreeze*, *antigen*, *antihistamine*, *antimatter*, *antiperspirant*, *antipollution*, *antipsychotic*, *antiseptic*, *antiserum*, *antithesis*, *antitoxin*, *antitrust*, *antitussive*.

self- — Always takes a hyphen when compounded: *self-assured*, *self-evident*, *self-made*.

When in doubt, check [Merriam-Webster](#) for the acceptable hyphenation or closed form.

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.”

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)

percent

In copy, use the word *percent* rather than the percent symbol (%). Use the symbol for graphics and tables. Percent always takes a numeral: *2 percent*

policymakers**race and ethnicity**

African-American, black, white, Latino and Hispanic are all acceptable. Respect an individual's preferred term if a preference is expressed. Always use hyphens for African-American, Asian-American, etc. Examples: *She taught African-American studies. Irish-Americans voted in large numbers.* Exception per AP style: *French Canadian*

résumé

Use accents to avoid confusion with the word “resume” (meaning “continue” or “restart”). CV or curriculum vitae may be used as an alternative.

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.*

Southern California**standalone****states**

Abbreviate the name following AP style. Use the state's postal abbreviation in full addresses only when including the ZIP code. *Joe Smith was raised in Anaheim, Calif. Joe Smith was raised in California. The center is located at 8700 Beverly Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90048.* No comma after postal abbreviation. Washington, D.C., always takes a comma after Washington and a comma after D.C. if in the middle of a sentence.

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.

that vs. which

These words are frequently misused. *That* should be used when additional information is being added that is defining, distinguishing or essential to the sentence. *Which* should be used when additional, but nonessential, information is being supplied (the sentence fragment containing *which* is preceded and followed by commas). If a sentence loses meaning without the additional information, *that* should be used. If the addition of the given sentence fragment doesn't change the meaning of the sentence (if it is nonessential), *which* should be used: *Dogs, which have four legs, are usually very affectionate* (nonessential: Dogs generally have four legs); *Dogs that have only three legs tend to hobble* (... *that only have three legs* is essential to the overall meaning); *Sailboats, which harness the wind to move through the water, dot the coast every weekend*; *Sailboats that use large, colorful spinnakers sail downwind very rapidly*.

there is / are

Avoid passive language whenever possible. Example: Instead of *There are 13 students in the clinic*, write *The clinic includes 13 students*.

titles

Titles are capitalized when they precede the name but not when they follow the name: *USC Provost Michael Quick*, but *Michael Quick, USC provost*; *USC Trustee Jane Doe*, but *Jane Doe, USC trustee*

When titles are long, avoid overcapitalization by placing the title after the name: *Andrew T. Guzman, dean of the USC Gould School of Law and the Carl Mason Franklin Chair in Law*

President Emeritus, University Professor, University Archivist, Distinguished Professor, Provost Professor, Presidential Professor and named-chair titles are always capped — before and after a name.

toward

Not *towards*

underway

One word in all uses

U.S.

Use periods when abbreviating United States.

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 |

Washington, D.C.

Use periods in D.C.

Web, website

websites

You do not always need to include “http://” or “www” with a URL. Double-check website addresses to be sure. The last forward slash is not needed in most Web addresses.

wellbeing

ZIP code

Not Zip code, zip code or Zip Code

* * * * *

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*