

Public Relations Student Society of America

Style Guide



June 2011

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Introduction

The PRSSA Style Guide contains the official style guidelines for PRSSA publications and for reference when communicating to PRSSA Chapters and members. Refer first to this publication for questions on usage, then the following references.

References

- **Associated Press Stylebook (latest edition)**
 - PRSSA references the AP Stylebook for writing, editing and proof reading copy. If an item is not covered in the AP Stylebook, visit their website to search questions previously submitted to their editors: <http://www.apstylebook.com>.
- **Webster's New World College Dictionary (latest edition)**
 - PRSSA references the New World College Dictionary to resolve questions regarding spelling and definition. To access this dictionary and their thesaurus online, visit www.m-w.com.
- **PRSSA Branding Identity Guidelines**
 - The PRSSA Branding Identity Guidelines is used as a reference for the official fonts and formatting of the Society's communication vehicles. The manual can be accessed on the PRSSA website, <http://www.prssa.org>.

PRSSA Terminology

Listed below are the proper capitalization, spelling and format of common PRSSA terms:

- G.E.A.R.S. (Growth, Education, Advancement, Relationships, Students)
- PRSSA Bylaws, Policies and Procedures
- PRSSA/PRSA Relationship Month
- PRSSA student-run firm or student-run firm
- Spell out “public relations,” even on second reference. Confine the use of “PR” to marketing copy.
- Unless otherwise noted, “PRSSA” may be dropped from a term upon second reference.

Capitalization

The following words, phrases and events must be capitalized at all times:

- Affiliation, National Affiliation, Nationally Affiliated Student-run Firms
- Biweekly Update
- Chapter News
- Chapter
- Chapter News
- Chapter President
- Chapter Liaison
- Faculty Adviser
- *FORUM*
- Professional Adviser
- *FORUM* Editor in Chief (“editor in chief” on second reference)
- National Committee
- National Conference Committee
- PRSSA Annual Report (“Annual Report” on second reference)
- PRSSA Bateman Case Study Competition (“Bateman Competition” on second reference)
- PRSSA Blog (“Blog” on second reference)
- PRSSA Day-of Competition (“Day-of Competition” on second reference)
- PRSSA Headquarters (Headquarters on second reference)
- PRSSA Immediate Past President (“Immediate Past President” on second reference)
- PRSSA Internship Center, PRSA JobCenter
- PRSSA National Assembly (“Assembly” on second reference)
- PRSSA National Conference (“Conference” on second reference)
- PRSSA National President (“President” on second reference)
- PRSSA Leadership Rally (“Rally” on second reference)
- PRSSA Regional Conference/Conferences (when referring to the PRSSA-endorsed events)
- PRSSA Situation Analysis (“Situation Analysis” on second reference)
- Society

Events

When first referring to a Society event, “PRSSA” is placed before the title of the event, with the date (if appropriate) directly following “PRSSA.”

Correct: PRSSA 2011 National Conference; PRSSA 2012 National Assembly

Incorrect: 2011 PRSSA National Conference; 2012 PRSSA National Assembly

Datelines and News Releases

- For news releases, add city name in capital letters, usually followed by the state, country or territory where the city is located. Add the date enclosed in parentheses, followed by an “em” dash.
Example: AUSTIN, Texas (Oct. 18, 2010) – The University of Texas at Austin announces...
 - Refer to the PRSSA Graphic Standards Manual for the proper way to format an official PRSSA press release
- Use an “en” dash for a range of dates or time
 - Example: (1857–1900, May 15–June 11, 2–3 a.m.)
- Domestic and international large cities stand alone (e.g. NEW YORK). See list below:

ATLANTA	HOUSTON	PHILADELPHIA
BALTIMORE	INDIANAPOLIS	PHOENIX
BOSTON	LAS VEGAS	PITTSBURGH
CHICAGO	LOS ANGELES	ST. LOUIS
CINCINNATI	MIAMI	SALT LAKE CITY
CLEVELAND	MILWAUKEE	SAN ANTONIO
DALLAS	MINNEAPOLIS	SAN DIEGO
DENVER	NEW ORLEANS	SAN FRANCISCO
DETROIT	NEW YORK	SEATTLE
HONOLULU	OKLAHOMA CITY	WASHINGTON

- Do not abbreviate Canadian provinces and territories.

- Use AP Style to abbreviate the names of states. States should only be abbreviated when following the name of a city — e.g., Plymouth, Mass., Jamestown, Va. There are some states that are never abbreviated. See list of all states below:

Alabama (Ala.)	Kentucky (Ky.)	North Dakota (N.D.)
Alaska (Alaska)	Louisiana (La.)	Ohio (Ohio)
Arizona (Ariz.)	Maine (Maine)	Oklahoma (Okla.)
Arkansas (Ark.)	Maryland (Md.)	Oregon (Ore.)
California (Calif.)	Massachusetts (Mass.)	Pennsylvania (Pa.)
Colorado (Colo.)	Michigan (Mich.)	Rhode Island (R.I.)
Connecticut (Conn.)	Minnesota (Minn.)	South Carolina (S.C.)
Delaware (Del.)	Mississippi (Miss.)	South Dakota (S.D.)
District of Columbia (DC)	Missouri (Mo.)	Tennessee (Tenn.)
Florida (Fla.)	Montana (Mont.)	Texas (Texas)
Georgia (Ga.)	Nebraska (Neb.)	Utah (Utah)
Hawaii (Hawaii)	Nevada (Nev.)	Vermont (Vt.)
Idaho (Idaho)	New Hampshire (N.H.)	Virginia (Va.)
Illinois (Ill.)	New Jersey (N.J.)	Washington (Wash.)
Indiana (Ind.)	New Mexico (N.M.)	West Virginia (W.Va.)
Iowa (Iowa)	New York (N.Y.)	Wisconsin (Wis.)
Kansas (Kan.)	North Carolina (N.C.)	Wyoming (Wyo.)

Boiler Plate

The following is the official PRSSA boiler plate. If used in a printed document, the Web address should be included in parentheses (www.prssa.org) as follows: “The Public Relations Student Society of America (www.prssa.org), headquartered...” When used in electronic documents, the boiler plate should include a hyperlink to the website.

About the Public Relations Student Society of America

The [Public Relations Student Society of America \(www.prssa.org\)](http://www.prssa.org), headquartered in New York, is the world’s pre-eminent, pre-professional public relations organization. Founded in 1968 by the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), the organization has grown to more than 10,000 members at more than 300 Chapters across the United States and one Chapter in Argentina. PRSSA membership benefits include scholarships and awards; and internship, job and professional development opportunities.

Titles

In most cases, PRSSA follows AP Style rules for titles. Listed below are PRSSA specific examples and exceptions.

- Always capitalize CEO or any corporate suite abbreviation before or after a name
- Always capitalize “PRSSA National President” and “PRSSA Immediate Past President”:
 - PRSSA National President said Adam Aisner ...
 - Adam Aisner, PRSSA National President, said...
 - PRSSA Immediate Past President Nick Lucido said...
 - Nick Lucido, PRSSA Immediate Past President, said...
- Capitalize titles before a name:
 - PRSSA Vice President of Public Relations Lauren Gray said...
 - Lauren Gray, PRSSA vice president of public relations, said...
- “FORUM” is always used in referring, by name, to the Editor in Chief:
 - FORUM Editor in Chief Amy Bishop said...
 - Amy Bishop, FORUM editor in chief, said...
- Note that “Chapter” and “Regional Conferences” are always capitalized:
 - Kendall Schmidt, vice president of Chapter development, said...
 - Haley Higgs, vice president of Regional Conferences, said...
- PRSSA never refers to National Committee vice presidents as “VP of...” or “VPs”
- Credentials should be placed between the name and the title in the following order: Robert Pritchard, APR, Fellow PRSA, professor, University of Oklahoma.
- When listing names and titles in copy, use semicolons to avoid confusion. Example: Jane Smith, Chapter relationship coordinator, PRSA; Tom Williams, APR, Fellow PRSA, professor, New York University; and Jacob Jones, APR, PRSA 2000 chair and CEO.

Internet Style

- When writing a Web address, do not include “<http://>” unless there is no “[www.](http://)” in the URL. This is an exception to AP Style. (e.g., www.companyname.org or <http://companyname.org>)
- Avoid spelling out Web or email addresses in copy, especially when the URL is long. Hyperlink text where possible in electronic publications and for email.

Formatting and Punctuation

- Capitalize the first word and all proper nouns in headlines. Bold headlines in editorial copy; in general, do not bold and underline or bold and italicize headlines.
- Italicize newspapers (*FORUM*) and magazines only; blogs, podcasts, webcasts, books, television shows, movies or other compositions should go in quotes.
- The symbol “&” may be used for marketing purposes when referring to professional interest groups; otherwise type out the word “and.”
- Use smart (curved) quotes and apostrophes (e.g. “ ” ’).
- Use one space between sentences instead of two.
- When typing out a phone number, the format should be: (xxx) xxx-xxxx.

PC Characters Codes

Em Dash	Alt + 0151	—
En Dash	Alt + 0150	-
Soft Hyphen	Hyphen key	-
Tilde	Alt + 0241 Or Ctrl + Shift + tilde (~), letter (for any letter)	ñ Ñ
Trademark symbol	Alt + 0153	™
Copyright symbol	Alt + 0169	©
Registered symbol	Alt + 0174	®
Degree symbol	Alt + 0176	°

Mac Characters Codes

Em Dash	Shift + Option, hyphen	—
En Dash	Option + hyphen	-
Soft Hyphen	Hyphen key	-
Tilde	Hold Option + “n”, then release and press letter Hold Option + “n”, then release press Shift + letter	ñ Ñ
Trademark symbol	Option + 2	™
Copyright symbol	Option + “g”	©
Registered symbol	Option + “r”	®
Degree symbol	Shift + Option + 8	°

PRSA Terminology

Refer to the capitalization section below for a more detailed list of PRSA terms. For any questions regarding PRSA Terminology, please contact the PRSSA vice president of public relations. Listed below are the proper capitalization, spelling and format of a fraction of the common PRSA terms used throughout the Society:

- comPREhension
- Diversity Tool Kit®
- Issues and Trends
- PRSA Board
- PRSA Board of Directors (“board” on second reference)
- PRSA Bylaws, Policies and Procedures
- PRSA Chapter
- PRSA Code of Ethics
- PRSA District
- PRSA Diversity Today
- PRSA Headquarters (“Headquarters” on second reference)
- PRSA (insert year) International Conference (“Conference” on second reference)
- PRSA Podcast Central
- *Public Relations Journal* (“*Journal*” on second reference)
- *Public Relations Strategist* (“*The Strategist*” on second reference)
- *Public Relations Tactics* (“*Tactics*” on second reference)

Capitalization

The following words, phrases and events need to be capitalized at all times:

- Accreditation, Accredited (when used in reference to the Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations or to an individual who has earned the APR designation)
- Accreditation Examination
- “Advance” and “Not Advance” when referring to a candidate’s Readiness Review results
- Champions for PRSSA (“Champions” on second reference)
- Examination (when “the” or “computer-based” is the modifier: “the Examination” or “the computer-based Examination”)
- Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations (“the Examination” on second reference)
- Readiness Review
- Universal Accreditation Board (“UAB” on second reference)



PRSSA Brand Usage in Social Media and Digital Communications

PRSSA Chapters must follow PRSSA style yet differentiate themselves when creating:

- Facebook group pages, fan pages, posts and event pages.
- LinkedIn pages.
- Tweets and other Twitter content.
- Emails (including subject lines) and event invites.
- Blog content.
- Press releases (including headlines).

Any copy promoting specific Chapter events or programs should reference PRSSA along with their Chapter name. This can be done through a specific PRSSA Chapter logo and/or copy. For example:



Contact

Send questions regarding the PRSSA style guide to Lauren Gray, PRSSA vice president of public relations, at laurenkgray2@gmail.com.

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