

Simmons
UNIVERSITY

Style Guide

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Simmons University Style Guide

The Simmons Style Guide covers style rules particular to Simmons University, as well as some selected grammar and punctuation rules. This guide applies to Simmons University print communications, publications, and web content.

If you have a general question about grammar or punctuation that is not specific to Simmons and not included in this guide, we recommend referencing the Chicago Manual of Style for print and the AP Stylebook for web.

The Simmons Style Guide will be periodically updated by University Communications.

If you have a question, suggestion for an addition, change, or correction, please email webmaster@simmons.edu.

If you have questions about social media, please review the [Simmons Social Media Policy](#) or contact the Lead Social Media Strategist at social@simmons.edu.

Simmons-Specific Rules

University Name

References to the University:

- For formal use and first mention, use “Simmons University.”
- For informal use and second mention, use “Simmons” or “the University.”

Capitalize the word “University” only when it refers specifically to Simmons:

- The University completed its very successful \$100 million “Campaign for Simmons.”

The possessive of Simmons is Simmons with an apostrophe after the final “s,” without an additional “s”:

- Simmons’ (not Simmons, Simmon’s, or Simmons’s)

Colleges

For formal use and first mention, the College name should be accompanied by “Simmons University.” The preferred format for the Colleges also includes “the” in the name of the College. Depending on context, “the” does not always need to be capitalized.

- Preferred: The Gwen Ifill College of Media, Arts, and Humanities at Simmons University
- Acceptable: Simmons University’s Gwen Ifill College of Media, Arts, and Humanities
- Preferred: The College of Organizational, Computational, and Information Sciences at Simmons University
- Acceptable: Simmons University’s College of Organizational, Computational, and Information Sciences
- Preferred: The College of Natural, Behavioral, and Health Sciences at Simmons University
- Acceptable: Simmons University’s College of Natural, Behavioral, and Health Sciences
- Preferred: The College of Social Sciences, Policy, and Practice at Simmons University
- Acceptable: Simmons University’s College of Social Sciences, Policy, and Practice

Do **NOT** refer to the Colleges with just “Simmons” before the College name:

- Simmons College of Natural, Behavioral, and Health Sciences

Second mention in externally-facing documents can use just the College name, without “Simmons University”; including “the” in the name is still preferred.

- The Gwen Ifill College of Media, Arts, and Humanities
Named College Allowance: The Gwen Ifill College
- The College of Organizational, Computational, and Information Sciences
- The College of Natural, Behavioral, and Health Sciences
- The College of Social Sciences, Policy, and Practice

Second mention in internally-facing documents can use the shortened identifier. Never use College acronyms in formal or externally-facing communications.

- Ifill
- *NOTE: GICMAH should never be used as a shortened identifier for the Gwen Ifill College of Media, Arts, and Humanities.*
- COCIS
- CNBHS
- CSSPP

When referring to Simmons alumna Gwen Ifill:

- Formal use and first mention: Gwen Ifill '77, '93HD
- Informal use and second mention: Gwen Ifill or Ifill

Schools and Departments

For formal use and first mention, spell out the full name of the school and precede the school name with “Simmons University”:

- Simmons University School of Business
- Simmons University School of Library and Information Science
- Simmons University School of Nursing
- Simmons University School of Social Work

Second mention and informal references can use the school name alone or the acronym:

- School of Business
- School of Library and Information Science (SLIS)

- When referring to SLIS in a sentence, do not precede “SLIS” with “the.”
- When referring to the SLIS West campus, refer to it as “SLIS at Mount Holyoke” with Mount spelled out and never abbreviated.
- School of Nursing
- School of Social Work (SSW)

Example: “Designed for licensed registered nurses (RNs), Nursing@Simmons delivers the renowned nursing degree programs of the Simmons University School of Nursing in an innovative, online format. As part of Simmons University, the School of Nursing prepares nursing students for rewarding careers in healthcare.”

For formal use and first mention of Simmons departments, precede the department name with “Simmons University”:

- Simmons University Department of Biology

Second mention in externally-facing documents can be shortened to:

- Simmons Department of Biology

Second mention in internally-facing documents can be shortened to:

- Department of Biology

Capitalize the first letter of each word when referring to the official name of a Simmons department:

- Children’s Literature Department
- Department of Biology

President, Trustees, and Leadership Team

References to President Wooten vary according to the context:

- Formal use and first mention: President Lynn Perry Wooten
- Informal use and second mention: “President Wooten”

Capitalize “trustee” only when it is used as a title before a name:

- Trustee Regina Pisa is chair of the Simmons board of trustees.
- Linda Paresky recently retired from her position as a trustee.

Capitalize “board of trustees” when it is used as the subject of the sentence:

- The Board of Trustees voted to increase staff salaries by 3 percent next year.
- She is a new member of the board of trustees.

References to Interim Provost Russell Pinizzotto also vary according to context:

- Formal use and first mention: Interim Provost Russell Pinizzotto
- Informal use and second mention: "Interim Provost Pinizzotto"

References to deans:

- Formal use and first mention: Stephanie Berzin, Dean of the College of Social Sciences, Policy, and Practice
- Informal use and second mention: Dean Berzin

References to other members of the Leadership Team (example formatting):

- Formal use and first mention: "Associate Vice President of University Communications and Marketing Janet Walzer" or "Janet Walzer, Associate Vice President of University Communications and Marketing"
- Informal use and second mention: "Walzer" (not "Ms. Walzer")

Academic Degrees

Capitalize when the full name of the degree is used followed by its acronym. Second mention can use acronym only; do not include periods.

- Bachelor of Science (BS)
- Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP)
- Master of Social Work (MSW)

Do not capitalize general references; include an apostrophe "s":

- bachelor's degree
- master's degree

Academic Programs, Minors, and Courses

Capitalize proper nouns such as languages and geographic locations in academic programs, minors, or concentrations:

- English
- Spanish
- Africana studies
- East Asian studies

Capitalize the proper names of academic programs, minors, or concentrations in marketing materials, such as program webpages, catalogs, and newsletters, in order to identify these as formal programs.

Do not capitalize references to academic programs, minors, or concentrations in editorial running text, such as Simmons News articles, except for proper nouns such as languages and geographic locations:

- John Simmons received his MA in children's literature.
- Jane Simmons '18 studied Africana studies at Simmons University.

Capitalize course titles and include quotation marks:

- "Modern Europe II: 1890-Present"

NOTE: Use a slash, not "and" when referencing "gender/cultural studies."

NOTE: An "@" symbol is only used in a program name when referencing approved online programs; e.g., "Nursing@Simmons."

Class and Class Years

Capitalize the word "Class" only when it refers to a specific class:

- Class of 1965
- Our Class enjoyed its 30th Reunion.

For undergraduate alumnae, include an apostrophe before the class year:

- Jane Simmons '36

For graduate school alumni, include an apostrophe before the class year, and follow the class year with the degree designation; there is no space between the year and degree designation:

- Julie Simmons '77MSW

Abbreviated designations for master's degrees:

- EdS = Education Specialist
- MA = Master of Arts
- MAT = Master of Arts in Teaching
- MBA = Master of Business Administration
- MFA = Master of Fine Arts
- MHA = Master in Health Administration
- MPH = Master of Public Health
- MPP = Master in Public Policy
- MS = Master of Science
- MEd = Master of Science in Education

- MSN = Master of Science in Nursing
- MSW = Master of Social Work

Abbreviated designations for doctorate degrees:

- DNP = Doctor of Nursing Practice
- DPT = Doctor of Physical Therapy
- PhD = Doctor of Philosophy

For students who have completed a certification:

- Use “C” without a space between the year and the letter (‘03C).

For alumnae/i with multiple degrees from Simmons, put the degrees in chronological order and separate with a comma:

- Janice Simmons ‘87, ‘03MS

For alumnae/i with dual degrees from Simmons, put the degrees in alphabetical order (including the degree name, “Master of...” and then on the degree subject/area if the degrees are the same) and separate with a comma, with certificates always listed last:

- Ellen Smith ‘11MA, ‘11MS
- For Master of Arts in Children’s Literature and Master of Science in Library and Information Science: Library Services to Children
- Abby Simmons ‘19MSW, ‘19C
- For Master of Social Work with Certificate in Trauma Practice

For recipients of an executive education program:

- Use “EE” without a space between the year and the letter (‘02EE).

For honorary degree recipients who graduated from Simmons, separate the dates with a comma and use “HD” without a space between the year and the letter:

- Lisa Mullins ‘80, ‘05HD

NOTE: With some fonts, when typing an apostrophe at the beginning of a numeral, the computer defaults to a “backwards” apostrophe. To correct this, type two apostrophes in a row and delete the first one.

NOTE: The Master of Arts in Business degree that was previously offered by Simmons has been retroactively converted to a Master of Business Administration (MBA), with the expressed approval of the Registrar’s Office, and the Master of Business Administration (MBA) name should be used instead.

References to Previous Institution and Academic Unit Names

ALUMNAE/I-PRODUCED DOCUMENTS

These are recommendations for alumnae/i-produced documents such as résumés, biographies, etc. (as distinct from any publications produced by Simmons University) that name alumnae/i who graduated before 2019 or contain references to Simmons or any of its academic units.

We recommend that alumnae/i who graduated prior to 2019 use “Simmons University” when naming Simmons, with the option of adding “formerly Simmons College” in parenthesis.

- Simmons University (formerly Simmons College)

Similarly, we recommend that alumnae/i use the current name of any school, college, or academic unit they may have graduated from, with the option of adding the former name in parenthesis.

- School of Library and Information Science (formerly the Graduate School of Library and Information Science)

Alumnae/i who wish to continue to use “Simmons College” or the former names of University academic units in résumés, biographies, etc. may do so, but with the caveat that official University documentation may not reflect those former names.

UNIVERSITY-PRODUCED DOCUMENTS

These are requirements for publications produced by Simmons University (digital and print) that name alumnae/i who graduated before 2019 or contain references to Simmons or any of its academic units.

University publications should always refer first to “Simmons University,” never “Simmons College.” If a graduate insists on using “Simmons College” in a biography, résumé, etc., and wishes Simmons to do the same, the first reference to Simmons should still be “Simmons University,” but subsequent references can be shortened to “Simmons.”

Similarly, University publications should always refer first to the current name for schools and other academic units of the University. If a graduate insists on using the former school or academic unit name in a biography, résumé, etc., it is preferable to use the degree name and/or area of study rather than the former school or academic unit name.

- Jane Simmons graduated from Simmons in 2012 with an Master of Science in Library and Information Science
- and not:
- Jane Simmons graduated from Simmons College’s Graduate School of Library and Information Science in 2012.

In publications where former institution or academic unit names must be used, we advise that the author(s) make clear to the reader the distinction between current and former names, for example, by adding an explanation in parenthesis.

- (In 2018, Simmons College became Simmons University and established four colleges, in which the institution’s graduate schools now reside.)
- (Simmons’ School of Management became the School of Business in 2018, and is part the University’s College of Organizational, Computational, and Information Sciences.)

NOTE: For information about how to refer to alumnae/i class years, and for a complete list of degree abbreviations, please see the “Class and Class Years” section on page 6.

NOTE: In formal lists, such as in the Commencement Program listing, all references should be “Simmons University,” including for graduates’ previous degrees.

Graduates

- “Alumna” is one female graduate of the University.
- “Alumnus” is one male graduate of the University.
- “Alumnae” is used when referring to undergraduates only.
- “Alumni” are graduate school graduates.
- “Alumnae/i” are undergraduate and graduate populations—a mixed group of bachelor’s, master’s, and/or doctoral recipients or total graduate population.
- We recommend using the term “alumnae/i” for all general college or school references, since all the colleges and schools include both graduate and undergraduate students.
- “Alumni Day” is an event for graduate alumni only.

Offices and Building Names

Capitalize the first letter of each word when referring to the official name of a Simmons office or building:

- Office of Residence Life
- School of Social Work

Do not capitalize informal references:

- residence life office
- social work school

Do not capitalize campus names:

- academic campus
- residence campus

Do not include an “s” at the end of Office of Admission.

Grammar and Punctuation

Em Dashes

When using dashes to set out a section of a sentence, do not use two hyphens. Instead, use an em dash symbol.

Ways to insert an em dash:

- In Microsoft Word, from the “Word” menu at the top of the screen: Insert > Symbol > More Symbols... > Special Characters.
- On Windows, press and hold the ALT key and enter 0151, then release the ALT key.
- On Mac OS, press the OPTION key + SHIFT key + - (dash) key.

EM DASHES IN PRINT

Do not include a space before or after the em dash:

- The workshop included a variety of tips—from job hunting to networking—for recent graduates.

EM DASHES ON THE WEB

Include a space before and after the em dash:

- The workshop included a variety of tips — from job hunting to networking — for recent graduates.

Events

Capitalize specific Simmons events:

- Commencement
- Convocation
- Move-In Day
- Orientation
- Reunion

Capitalize conferences:

- Simmons Leadership Conference

Use quotation marks for conferences that have a theme:

- The Simmons Leadership Conference “What Matters Most,” featured several dynamic speakers.

Frequently Used Acronyms

Acronyms should be introduced with the first reference, e.g., "School of Library and Information Science (SLIS)." The acronym can then be used in subsequent references.

NOTE: There is additional guidance on using college acronyms (COCIS, CNBHS, CSSPP, Ifill) and school acronyms (SLIS, SSW). Please see pages 2 through 4 for more information.

There are no periods used in the following acronyms:

- CEC: Career Education Center
- CGO: Center for Gender in Organizations
- COCIS: The College of Organizational, Computational, and Information Sciences
- COF: Colleges of the Fenway
- CNBHS: The College of Natural, Behavioral, and Health Sciences
- CSSPP: The College of Social Sciences, Policy, and Practice
- Ifill: The Gwen Ifill College of Media, Arts, and Humanities
- MCB: Main College Building
- SLIS: School of Library and Information Science
- SSW: School of Social Work

Not approved acronyms:

- B-School: School of Business
- GICMAH: The Gwen Ifill College of Media, Arts, and Humanities
- SON: School of Nursing

References to Gender

Simmons strives to maintain a gender-inclusive tone in its communications and recommends using neutral language throughout and avoiding gendered terms unless referring to a specific individual's gender or pronouns.

Replace "daughter" with "student" to avoid assumptions about gender expression and familial relationships:

- "Your **student** will meet with **an** advisor," rather than, "Your **daughter** will meet with **her** advisor."

The Simmons mascot, Stormy the Shark, is non-gendered. Instead of using gendered pronouns, simply refer to Stormy by name:

- Stormy loves Orientation! See photos of students with our beloved mascot.

References to Race and Ethnicity

Race is generally defined as a group of persons related by common descent or heredity. Ethnicity is generally defined as a social group that shares a common and distinctive culture, religion, language, etc. When referring to the race or ethnicity of an individual or group, use references that reflect the preferences of each group's members.

- Capitalize the first letter of a race or ethnic group; e.g., Black, Asian, Latinx, Polish, etc.
- "ALANA" is an acronym that stands for our population of "African-American, Latinx, Asian, and Native American" students.

Serial Commas

SERIAL COMMAS IN PRINT

Use a serial or "Oxford" comma before the words "and" and "or" when used in a series of three or more items:

- Employee benefits include health insurance, dental insurance, MBTA pass discounts, and tuition reimbursement.

SERIAL COMMAS ON THE WEB

Do not use a serial or "Oxford" comma before the words "and" and "or" when used in a series of three or more items, unless not doing so would cause confusion:

- Employee benefits include health insurance, dental insurance, MBTA pass discounts and tuition reimbursement.

NOTE: The College names always use the Oxford comma, both in print and on the web.

Simmons History

Refer to the University Archives website at www.simmons.edu/library for information on the official history of Simmons University, including a list of University presidents, milestones for building projects and fundraising campaigns, timelines, and more.

Simmons Sharks

When referencing a group of Simmons students as "Sharks," use a capital "S":

- We can't wait to meet our future Sharks!
- The Simmons Sharks beat UMass 5-2.

U.S. News & World Report Ranking

U.S. News is one word; “and” is represented by an ampersand symbol; the complete title is italicized:

- *U.S. News & World Report*

The first reference to this publication should be “*U.S. News & World Report*,” with no space between “S.” and “News.”

“*U.S. News*” may be used for second mention and is italicized with a space between “S.” and “News.”

Web Linking

Never use the phrase “click here”—instead, hyperlink words in context. Linking terms in context makes your content more attractive to readers. A link that reads, “click here” offers the reader no idea what content they will be accessing.

- “Watch our [latest video](#)”
- and not:
- “To watch the latest video [click here](#).”

Web Terminology

- The word “email” is one word and lowercase.
- The words “e-newsletter” and “e-commerce” are hyphenated and lowercase.
- The words “internet,” “intranet,” and “web” are not capitalized.
- “Live stream” is two words.
- The word “online” is one word and lowercase.
- “URL” is used to refer to website addresses.
- “Web page” is two words and lowercase.
- “Website” is one word and lowercase.

Miscellaneous

- Use “cancel” and “canceling” with one “l” and “cancellation” with two.

