

PRSSA Style Guide

2016–2017



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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: 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 Brand Identity Guidelines**
 - The PRSSA Brand 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.

PRSSA Terminology

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

- 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.
- Use "email", "website" and "nonprofit" due to AP Stylebook changes.

Capitalization

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

- Affiliation, National Affiliation, Nationally Affiliated Student-run Firms
- APR (Accreditation in Public Relations)
- Biweekly Update
- Chapter (including Chapter president, Chapter liaison, etc.)
- Chapter News
- Faculty Adviser
- *FORUM*
- National Committee
- National Conference Committee
- Professional Adviser
- Progressions
- PRSSA Annual Report (“Annual Report” on second reference)
- PRSSA Bateman Case Study Competition (“Bateman Competition” 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 Leadership Rally (“Rally” on second reference)
- PRSSA National Assembly (“Assembly” on second reference)
- PRSSA National Conference (“Conference” on second reference)
- PRSSA National President (“President” on second reference)
- PRSSA Regional Conference/Conferences (when referring to the PRSSA-endorsed events)
- PRSSA Situation Analysis (“Situation Analysis” on second reference)
- Publications Editor in Chief (“editor in chief” on second reference)
- Regional Conference
- Society
- Student-run Firms

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 2014 National Conference; PRSSA 2015 National Assembly

Incorrect: 2014 PRSSA National Conference; PRSSA National Assembly 2015

Social Media Abbreviations

Listed below are the proper abbreviations used solely for Twitter and Instagram (limited characters and hashtags allowed) on first or later reference:

- Abbreviate public relations as “PR”
- Abbreviate PRSSA Bateman Case Study Competition as “Bateman”

- Abbreviate PRSSA Day-of Competition as “PRSSADOC”
- Abbreviate PRSSA Headquarters as “PRSSAHQ”
- Abbreviate PRSSA National Assembly as “PRSSANA”
- Abbreviate PRSSA National Conference as “PRSSANC”
- Abbreviate PRSSA Regional Conference as “PRSSARC”

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, 2012) – The University of Texas at Austin announces ...
 - Refer to the PRSSA Brand Identity Guidelines for the official PRSSA press release format
- 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	DETROIT	MINNEAPOLIS	ST. LOUIS
BALTIMORE	HONOLULU	NEW ORLEANS	SALT LAKE CITY
BOSTON	HOUSTON	NEW YORK	SAN ANTONIO
CHICAGO	INDIANAPOLIS	OKLAHOMA CITY	SAN DIEGO
CINCINNATI	LAS VEGAS	PHILADELPHIA	SAN FRANCISCO
CLEVELAND	LOS ANGELES	PHOENIX	SEATTLE
DALLAS	MIAMI	PITTSBURGH	WASHINGTON
DENVER	MILWAUKEE		

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

Boilerplate

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

About the Public Relations Student Society of America

The [Public Relations Student Society of America](http://www.prssa.org) (www.prssa.org) is the foremost organization for students interested in public relations and communications. Founded in 1968 by its parent organization, the [Public Relations Society of America](http://www.prsa.org) (PRSA), PRSSA includes more than 11,000 student members and advisers, and is active at more than 340 colleges and universities.

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 Emma Finkbeiner said...
 - Emma Finkbeiner, PRSSA National President, said...
 - PRSSA Immediate Past President Laura Daronatsy said...
 - Laura Daronatsy, PRSSA Immediate Past President, said...
- Capitalize titles before a name:
 - PRSSA Vice President of Public Relations Joshua Lachica said...
 - Joshua Lachica, PRSSA vice president of public relations, said...
- Note that “Chapter” and “Regional Conferences” are always capitalized:
 - Victoria Leigh Ward, vice president of Chapter development, said...
 - Nicole Price, 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 Jones, Chapter relationship coordinator, PRSA; Tom Williams, APR, Fellow PRSA, professor, New York University; and Bob Smith, APR, Fellow PRSA, director, Smith and Associates.

Internet Style

- When writing a web address, do not include “http://” unless there is no “www.” 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:

- PRSay
- Diversity Tool Kit®
- Issues & Trends
- PRSA Board
- PRSA Board Liaison
- PRSA Board of Directors (“board” on second reference)
- PRSA Bylaws, Policies and Procedures
- PRSA Chapter
- PRSA Code of Ethics
- PRSA District
- PRSA Headquarters (“Headquarters” on second reference)
- PRSA (insert year) International Conference (“Conference” on second reference)
- *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)
- Chapter (when referring to both PRSSA and PRSA Chapters)
- 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

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



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

- Facebook groups, pages, posts and events.
- LinkedIn pages.
- Tweets and other Twitter content.
- Pinterest, WordPress and Tumblr.
- Emails (including subject lines) and event invites.
- Blog content.
- Press releases (including headlines).

If you have questions please contact PRSSA National Headquarters at prssa@prsa.org or (212) 460-1474.



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33 Maiden Lane, 11th Floor
New York, NY 10038-5150