



THINGS-TO-KNOW TIP SHEET

This tip sheet contains information and editorial style considerations for academic and non-academic matters specific to the Office of Strategic Communications and Penn State. While the majority of what you need to know about editorial style is covered in the University's approved style manuals, you also need to be aware of and understand Penn State's unique organizational structures and affiliations so your communications accurately and appropriately represent Strat Comm and the University as a whole.

The following information does not cover every nuance that might exist, so please discuss specific details with your supervisor, team lead, or unit associate vice president.

EDITORIAL STYLE AT PENN STATE

As a communicator in Strat Comm, you need to be familiar with and follow the editorial style guides Penn State uses for public relations and marketing materials.

- Typically, public relations and feature stories intended for [Penn State News](#) and Penn State Today follow [The Associated Press \(AP\) Stylebook](#). Exceptions and instances specific to Penn State are outlined in the [University Public Relations Editorial Style Guide](#).
- As a rule, online and print marketing materials follow [The Chicago Manual of Style](#).
- For editorial guidelines specific to Penn State, refer to <https://brand.psu.edu/additional-resources/editorial-standards>.

Note: Penn State follows the current edition of [Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary](#) for spelling, hyphenation, definitions, usage, etc.

The following information applies to both public relations and marketing communications and covers items specific to either Strat Comm or Penn State.

THE OFFICE OF STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

Use the following names when referring to Strat Comm and units within our division:

- The official name of our division is the *Office of Strategic Communications* (first reference), *Strat Comm* on subsequent references.
- Rachel Pell is the *Vice President for Strategic Communications*.
- Our *University Public Relations* unit (*Public Relations* on subsequent references) consists of our proactive, science, internal, social, and crisis/issues communications teams. You do not need to capitalize "public relations" if the reference is not specifically about our Public Relations unit.
- Our *University Marketing* unit (*Marketing* on subsequent references) manages Penn State's brand presence and visual identity, develops digital strategies, and sets the creative tone for the University. You do not need to capitalize "marketing" if the reference is not specifically about our Marketing unit.
- Our *Campus and Community Events* unit manages University-wide events such as commencement and various award ceremonies.
- Our *Licensing Programs* unit helps promote and protect the integrity of Penn State's brand by overseeing the use of the mark on officially licensed merchandise for the University.

THE PENN STATE NAME

It's important to remember a few simple rules about using the Penn State name in print and online communications.

- *Penn State* is the communicative name for the University. All communications originating from Penn State should use the communicative name rather than the full name. The full name (*The Pennsylvania State University*) is reserved for formal documents, legal contracts, some mailing addresses, form entries, and the University's statement of nondiscrimination. The communicative name can also help avoid confusion with the University of Pennsylvania (Penn).
- In public relations and marketing communications, always capitalize *University* when referring to Penn State. You do not need to capitalize university if the reference is a general one.
- It is not acceptable to refer to the University as *PSU*.
- Do *not* use *Penn State University* unless it's part of a formal title (example: The Penn State University Athletic Conference).
- Do not refer to Penn State and its campuses and affiliates as a *system* in communications.

PENN STATE AFFILIATES, CAMPUSES, COLLEGES/ SCHOOLS, AND ORGANIZATIONS

COMMONWEALTH CAMPUSES

- While *Commonwealth Campuses* is used internally and in Penn State News stories and by Strat Comm Public Relations, it should **not** be used in external marketing materials. In online or print marketing collateral, use the term *Penn State campuses*. This is particularly relevant for undergraduate enrollment pieces—where we promote “one University, twenty undergraduate campuses”—and when communicating to prospective students and parents who might not know we are a Commonwealth state.
- Do not refer to Penn State campuses as *branch* or *satellite campuses*.
- For guidelines on how to refer to each Penn State campus, check the [University's editorial style guide](#).

OUTREACH AND ONLINE EDUCATION

- Outreach and Online Education encompasses two organizations that share resources; however, each operates separately from the other, and each has its own leadership team.
 - [Outreach](#) is headed by the Vice President for Outreach and consists of programs such as Conferences and Institutes, Shaver's Creek Environmental Center, and WPSU.
 - » WPSU Penn State is a PBS and NPR member station and a service of Outreach. Although WPSU is part of Penn State, their news reporting is run independently from the University.
 - *Online Education* ([Penn State World Campus](#)) is headed by the Vice Provost for Online Education and offers more than 150 accredited undergraduate and graduate degrees, certificates, and minors.
 - » Use *Penn State World Campus* on first reference, *World Campus* thereafter.

PENNSYLVANIA COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY

- [Pennsylvania College of Technology](#) (*Penn College* on subsequent reference) is a public institution in Williamsport, Pennsylvania, and a special-mission affiliate of Penn State. Penn College specializes in applied technology education and workforce development.

PENN STATE HEALTH and PENN STATE COLLEGE OF MEDICINE

Penn State Health

- [Penn State Health](#) is a multi-hospital health system that includes the [Penn State Health Milton S. Hershey Medical Center](#) (the University's academic medical center) and [Penn State Health Children's Hospital](#).
- Penn State Health shares an integrated strategic plan and operations with the [Penn State College of Medicine](#).

Penn State College of Medicine

- An academic college, [Penn State College of Medicine](#) serves as the University's medical school and shares an integrated strategic plan and operations with [Penn State Health](#). With campuses in State College and Hershey, Pennsylvania, the College of Medicine has an extensive portfolio of funded research and includes students and trainees in medicine, nursing, and other health care professions.

PENN STATE LAW AND DICKINSON LAW

- Penn State has two separate and fully accredited law schools: [Penn State Law](#) on the University Park campus and [Dickinson Law](#) in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, although the long-term plan is for the two schools to be reunited as a single law school that would be called Penn State Dickinson Law. In marketing and public relations copy, the schools should continue to be referred to by their communicative names, Penn State Law and Dickinson Law, until the reunification is complete.

UNIVERSITY PARK CAMPUS

- *Penn State University Park* is one of the University's twenty-four campus locations. The University's largest campus, it is located in the borough of State College and surrounding townships. Although University Park has its own ZIP code (16802) and post office, it is not technically a geographic location.
- Do not refer to University Park campus as a *main* or *flagship* campus.

MISCELLANEOUS

PENN STATE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

- Much like other universities and organizations, the [Board of Trustees](#) approves major Penn State matters, including the overall budget and student tuition rates.
- Capitalize *Board of Trustees* on first mention; use the *board* or *trustees* thereafter.

PENN STATE MARK AND INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS LOGO

- The Penn State (or academic) mark is the University's institutional logo and represents Penn State in its entirety. The mark consists of the Penn State shield and typically has corresponding logotype.
- The Intercollegiate Athletics logo is the representative symbol for Penn State sports and athletics and is not to be used in place of the Penn State mark or to represent nonathletic programs.
- Usage guidelines for the Penn State mark and Athletics logo are available on the [Visual Identity Standards](#) website.

PENN STATE STUDENT AFFAIRS

- There is no "Office of Student Affairs" at Penn State. Refer to this unit as [Penn State Student Affairs](#) or *Student Affairs* in communications.