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Introduction
Overview

The University of North Carolina System is committed to maintaining a consistent brand. We strive to prepare communications to our many audiences that are engaging, accurate, timely, and relevant.

To accomplish this, the UNC System Office has developed this Style Guide to help those writing and designing on the UNC System’s behalf to promote consistent messages, while embracing the distinct visual identity, tone, and style of the UNC System. To complement this guide, we have also developed the Brand Strategy and Messaging Guidelines to assist with maintaining visual and language standards of the UNC System.

The Style Guide applies to all internal and external communications released by the UNC System, including, but not limited to, newsletters, reports for publication, presentations, website development, social media, and professional stationery. The standards presented here should be consistently applied in every form of communication representing the University.

Our goal is simple: to represent the University as a leader in the areas of instruction, research, outreach, and service to North Carolina. We can accomplish this goal most effectively through consistent branding and messaging that represent a strong and diverse system.
What is a brand?

A brand is more than a logo, fonts, or colors. It defines who we are, what we say, how we see ourselves, and how we want other people to think about the University of North Carolina System.

Our Goals

We seek to develop a cohesive image and tell the story of the UNC System—one that reflects the University’s overall mission of teaching, research, and outreach while addressing the UNC Strategic Plan themes of access, affordability and efficiency, student success, excellent and diverse institutions, and economic impact.
UNC System Nomenclature
Overview

A single, unified identity and language will help move our System forward. With a common nomenclature, we can deliver a clear and compelling brand.

INFORMAL SYSTEM NAME

University of North Carolina System
This name should be used most frequently for all first mentions.

UNC System
This name should be used for second reference or in supporting copy, once the University of North Carolina System name is used initially.

OFFICIAL LEGAL SYSTEM NAME

University of North Carolina
The official name should be reserved for legal documents, formal agreements, and proposals, as the first reference.

UNC
For all subsequent references, UNC alone can be used for informal documents.

ADDITIONAL NOMENCLATURE NOTES:

• As we build equity in the University of North Carolina System name, the word “System” should be used in all text.

• Individual schools within the System are referred to as “institutions” or “universities.”
University Name

The official name of the institution is the University of North Carolina.

**Formal Use**
In policy and formal use, it should always be spelled out with no abbreviations on first reference. On second reference, after the full name of the institution has been used, you may use UNC.

**Informal and Public-Facing Materials**
For public-facing written and online materials, use the University of North Carolina System on first reference.

Capitalize the “S” in System when referencing the 17 institutions. Capitalize the “U” in University when it stands alone and refers to the 17 institutions; lowercase it when it refers to an individual institution.

**Abbreviations**
When space is limited, such as a report spreadsheet comparing all institutions, use the following abbreviations for the UNC System.

- UNC System (preferred abbreviation to refer to a System total)
- UNC Sys (if characters are limited in reference to a System total)
- Sys Ofc (if characters are limited in reference to the System Office and not including the 17 institutions and affiliates)

Do no use these abbreviations in written reports, only charts and tables. UNCSO is never an acceptable abbreviation.
UNC Board of Governors

Reference to the Board of Governors in Reports, Legal Documents, and formal written correspondence outside the UNC System

First Reference: Board of Governors of the University of North Carolina System
First Reference (legal documents only): Board of Governors of the University of North Carolina

Subsequent References: “the Board” or “the UNC Board of Governors” (use the latter for clarity when the document also makes reference to other boards).

Abbreviation (use sparingly): UNC BOG

Examples:
Session Law 2017-XYZ requires the Board of Governors of the University of North Carolina System to establish a subcommittee on higher education. At its meeting on December 15, the Board established the subcommittee and appointed its members.

Session Law 2017-XYZ requires the Board of Governors of the University of North Carolina System to elect members of each institutions’ board of trustees. At its meeting on December 15, the UNC Board of Governors elected 34 new members of the boards of trustees.

Written Correspondence within the UNC System
First Reference: Board of Governors
Subsequent References: “the Board” or “the Board of Governors” (use the later for clarity when the document also makes reference to other boards)
Abbreviation (use sparingly): UNC BOG

Examples:
Dear Members of the Board of Governors,
The next meeting of the Board will take place on...

Dear Chancellors,
The next meeting of the Board of Governors will take place next week. The Board of Governors would like to invite members of your boards of trustees to attend.
Reference to Individual Members of the Board of Governors
The Secretary of the University will maintain a list of the preferred honorifics.

Reports, Legal Documents, and formal written correspondence outside the UNC System
First Reference: UNC Board of Governors member FirstName LastName
Subsequent References: [Mr./Ms./Dr., etc.] LastName

Board Meeting Minutes
Chairs
First reference (in attendance section): Chair FirstName LastName
Subsequent References: Chair LastName or “the chair”

Other Members
First reference (in attendance section): FirstName LastName
Subsequent References (other members): [Mr./Ms./Dr., etc.] LastName

Other Board Meeting Materials (Agendas, Name Plates, Roll Call, etc.)
[Mr./Ms./Dr., etc.] LastName

Reference to the NC General Statutes and Session Laws in Board Materials
Statutory References
Chapter 116 of the General Statutes (if referring to an entire chapter of the statutes)
G.S. 116-1
G.S. 116-1(a)
G.S. 116-1(a), (b), and (e)

References to Bills and Session Laws
For session laws passed in the last two years:
Subsequent references: S.L. 2017-57

For older session laws:
Subsequent references: S.L. 2011-145

For bills that are not yet session laws:
First reference: H.B. 257, Appropriations Act of 2017
Subsequent references: H.B. 257
Official University Seals

There are also two official seals. One represents the University, and the second is the official mark representing the UNC Board of Governors.

University of North Carolina seal

UNC Board of Governors seal

Use of official seals is restricted to authenticating official UNC System documents, such as UNC Board of Governors awards, citations, actions, and Board or presidential publications.

The University of North Carolina Board of Governors seal is reserved for special programs, awards, resolutions, documents, and collateral materials generated by the Board of Governors. The seal is not appropriate for use on documents created by the UNC System staff for Board of Governors meetings.

Neither version of the seal should be used on general documents, advertisements, presentations, posters, promotional items, and websites, nor as a casual logo or decorative element.

University seals may not be used in any other manner or context without written permission. For assistance, contact Camille Barkley, Associate Vice President for Strategic Communications, at (919) 843-5037 or by email at ncbarkley@northcarolina.edu.
University Affiliates

By state statute, the following organizations are affiliated entities of the University of North Carolina:

UNC Health Care System
UNC Center for Public Television (UNC-TV)
The North Carolina Arboretum
The UNC Press

Also under the UNC System:
The North Carolina State Approving Agency (NCSAA)
Go Global NC
The North Carolina State Education Assistance Authority (NCSEAA)
Approved Names and Preferred Abbreviations for UNC System Institutions

Approved names and preferred abbreviations for the 17 institutions that make up the UNC System are provided below. Contact individual institutions with specific questions about university names or marks.

**Appalachian State University**
“Appalachian State University” (first reference)
“Appalachian” (second reference, preferred abbreviation)
"App State" for informal (i.e., social media) or direct quote use only
“ASU” (never acceptable as a reference unless space is limited, i.e., charts, tabs, and tables)

**East Carolina University**
“East Carolina University” (first reference)
“ECU” (second reference, preferred abbreviation)

**Elizabeth City State University**
“Elizabeth City State University” (first reference)
“ECSU” (second reference, preferred abbreviation)

**Fayetteville State University**
“Fayetteville State University” (first reference)
“FSU” (second reference, preferred abbreviation)

**North Carolina A&T State University**
“North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University” (first reference)
“North Carolina A&T State University” or “North Carolina A&T” (second reference)
“N.C. A&T” (preferred abbreviation)

**North Carolina Central University**
“North Carolina Central University” (first reference)
“NCCU” (second reference, preferred abbreviation)

**North Carolina State University**
“North Carolina State University at Raleigh” (full official name, for official documents only)
“NC State University or NC State” (first reference, preferred abbreviation)
“NCSU” (never acceptable)

**University of North Carolina at Asheville**
“University of North Carolina at Asheville” (first reference)
“UNC Asheville” (second reference, preferred abbreviation)
“UNCA” (never acceptable as a reference unless space is limited, i.e., charts, tabs, and tables)
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
“University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill” (first reference, full name, formal form)
“UNC-Chapel Hill” (second reference, preferred abbreviation)
“Carolina” (familiar)
“UNC-CH” (never acceptable as a reference unless space is limited; i.e., charts, tabs, and tables)

University of North Carolina at Charlotte
“University of North Carolina at Charlotte” (first reference, full name)
“UNC Charlotte” (second reference, preferred abbreviation)
“UNCC” (never acceptable as a reference unless space is limited; i.e., charts, tabs, and tables)

University of North Carolina at Greensboro
“The University of North Carolina at Greensboro” (first reference, full name)
“UNC Greensboro” (second reference, preferred abbreviation)
“UNCG” (acceptable with familiar audiences, casual use)

University of North Carolina at Pembroke
“The University of North Carolina at Pembroke” (first reference, full name)
“UNC Pembroke” and/or “UNCP” (second reference, preferred abbreviation)

University of North Carolina Wilmington
“University of North Carolina Wilmington” (first reference, full name)
“UNC Wilmington” or “UNCW” (second reference, preferred abbreviation)

University of North Carolina School of the Arts
“University of North Carolina School of the Arts” (first reference, full name)
“UNCSA” (second reference, preferred abbreviation)
“UNC School of the Arts” (preferred abbreviation, familiar audiences)

Western Carolina University
“Western Carolina University” (first reference, full name, formal, national/external audiences)
“Western Carolina” (less formal, for internal and external groups familiar with the institution)
“WCU” (informal name, preferred abbreviation)

Winston-Salem State University
“Winston-Salem State University” (first reference, full name)
“Winston-Salem State” (preferred abbreviation)
“WSSU” (preferred abbreviation)

North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics
“North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics” (first reference, full name)
“NCSSM” (second reference, preferred abbreviation)
Logo Use

The University of North Carolina System logo is for use on all visual communication materials officially recognized by or associated with the UNC System.

UNC System logos can and should be used by all staff regularly on work products. Appropriate templates are provided to all employees and are available on the UNC System Intranet.

Staff should not distribute the logo for use outside of the UNC System. If an outside entity requests the logo (including business associates or vendors), please forward the request to Communications for approval. If use is approved and does not imply endorsement of an external entity, Communications will provide the correct file type based on printing or electronic media needs.

Logo Placement

The UNC System logo should always be placed in the upper left corner of the page. If the upper left corner is not available, the top, center is the second most preferred location for proper placement. When placing the UNC System logo with other logos, placement will depend greatly on available space.

If the other logos are affiliated with the UNC System, the System logo should be at the top of the page and/or first line in from the left, above all other logos. If other logos represent organizations not affiliated with the UNC System, then the UNC System logo may be placed anywhere on the page, as long as it is not overlapping, touching, or being covered by another image.

Regardless of placement, the UNC System logo should have equal space all the way around its edges. Employees may download the logo suite from the Branding Resources app on the UNC System Intranet.
Identity
Identity Overview

The 17 edges in the custom state shape represent the 17 institutions within the System.

PRIMARY LOGO

The horizontal logo format is preferred and should be used for most print and electronic media. This version of the logo features the state shape to the left of the wordmark. The one color or reversed out versions of the logo should be used only when necessary.
CLEAR SPACE

To ensure proper clear space around the logo for legibility and prominence, all photos, text, and graphic elements must follow the guidelines illustrated here. Use the height of the state shape within the logo (as shown) to help maintain proper clearance.

MINIMUM SIZE

To maintain full legibility, never reproduce the logo at widths smaller than 2 inches (for print) or 144 pixels (for screen).
SECONDARY LOGOS

These secondary marks can be used in either less formal settings, or any instance in which the primary mark will not fit in the space allowed. These marks should never appear on the same page as the primary logo.

INITIATIVE LOGOS

The following format should be replicated when customizing the logo for any University initiatives, such as NC Promise or UNC Lab Schools.
Logo Restrictions

It is important that we remain consistent in how we present our logo. Shown here are some common misinterpretations, which we can avoid by never altering or distorting the provided artwork in any way.

Don’t remove any portion of the logo.

Don’t represent the logo in any other color than what is outlined in these guidelines.

Don’t stretch, condense, or change the dimensions of the logo elements.

Don’t apply drop shadows or other visual effects to the logo.

Don’t reverse out the logo in any other color than white.
Color
Color Overview

The color palette reflects the state flag and our North Carolina pride. Use these colors exclusively to ensure that all communications represent a cohesive brand.

These colors are built in to the brand templates.

HEX: #bc1f52  
RGB: 188-31-82  
CMYK: 21-99-56-6  
PANTONE: 7425C

HEX: #0f4876  
RGB: 15-72-118  
CMYK: 99-76-30-14  
PANTONE: 7693C

HEX: #fec524  
RGB: 254-197-36  
CMYK: 0-23-93-0  
PANTONE: 123C

HEX: #f0f3f5  
RGB: 240-243-245  
CMYK: 4-2-2-0  
PANTONE: 649U

HEX: #dbe2e9  
RGB: 219-226-233  
CMYK: 13-7-4-0  
PANTONE: 651C

HEX: #353f43  
RGB: 54-64-68  
CMYK: 75-61-57-46  
PANTONE: 432C
Editorial Style
Editorial Style

Editorial style refers to a set of guidelines that editors use to help make words as consistent and effective as possible.

This guide is widely used by academic, public relations, and news authorities in determining grammar, punctuation, and capitalization.

Abbreviations

The first mention of any organization, agency, or group should be spelled out. If the organization is not well known, indicate the abbreviation (with periods) or acronym (without periods) in parentheses immediately following the first reference and refer to the organization by its abbreviation or acronym thereafter.

Use abbreviations for Dr., Gov., Lt. Gov., Mr., Mrs., Rep., the Rev., Sen., and certain military designations when used before a full name. You may abbreviate company, corporation, incorporated, and limited when used after the name of a corporate entity.

Academic Degrees

If mentioning an academic degree is necessary to establish an individual’s credentials, the preferred form is to avoid an abbreviation and use the full degree title.

- John Jones earned a bachelor’s degree in history from the University of North Carolina at Pembroke. Abbreviate degrees when they appear after a full name on second reference, or when the need to identify many individuals by degree on first reference would make the preferred form cumbersome. When used after a name, the academic abbreviation is set off by commas.

- John Jones, M.D., has practiced . . .

  Do not use a courtesy title (Mr., Mrs., Dr., etc.) with an academic degree and then follow the name with the degree abbreviation.

- John Smith, Ph.D., not Dr. John Smith, Ph.D.

  Except for Ph.D., and similar compound abbreviations, all degree abbreviations should be written without periods. Bachelor of Science (BS), Master of Science (MS), Master of Arts (MA), Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.), Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA), Bachelor of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies (BA IS), Associate in Science (AS).

  The terms “bachelor’s degree” and “master’s degree” require apostrophes.
**Capitalization**

The University style follows the basic rules of the American Heritage Dictionary for capitalization.

The official name of the institution is the University of North Carolina. On first reference, it should always be spelled out with no abbreviations for formal documents. Use the University of North Carolina System for everyday use.

System is capitalized when using the abbreviated form: UNC System.

Uppercase the word “University,” on second reference, when it stands alone and refers to the 17-institution System; lowercase university when it refers to a single institution.

Capitalize “Board” when it stands alone and refers to the UNC Board of Governors.

Academic departments, administrative offices, and facilities are capitalized when the complete office and official designation is used. They are lowercase on second reference.

- Division of Student Affairs
- the division (second reference)
- Department of Film Studies
- film studies department

Lowercase fields of study except when a proper noun is part of the name.

- biology
- English

Lowercase academic degrees

- bachelor’s, master’s, doctorate

Capitalize official names of organizations and major historical events.

Capitalize the following when the complete title is used, and lowercase on second reference.

- Agencies
- Boards and Committees
- Programs
- Course titles
- Named awards

Capitalize all words except articles (the, a, an), conjunctions (and, or, for, nor), and prepositions (of, in, on) in the titles of books, plays, lectures, etc.

Lowercase the words “division,” “school,” “department,” “office,” “committee,” “college,” etc. on second and subsequent abbreviated reference.

Lowercase the names of seasons, except at the beginning of a sentence.
**Apostrophes**

Form the possessive singular of nouns by adding “‘s.”

- Jeff’s pencil
  
  One exception to this rule is singular proper nouns ending in “s” for which only the apostrophe can be used.

- Dickens’ computer
  
  Plural possessives are formed by adding “‘s” unless the word has a special plural construction that does not end in “s.”

- Students’ rights

- Women’s studies
  
  Plurals of words should not contain apostrophes.

- Keep up with the Joneses

- Thousands of items, not thousand’s

**Commas**

All UNC System communications, with the exception of press releases distributed by media relations, use the Oxford or serial comma. Use commas to separate elements in a series and a comma before the conjunction in a simple series.

- The flag is red, white, and blue.

- He would nominate Tony, Mary, or Carol.

Put a comma before the concluding conjunction in a series when there is more than one conjunction in that series.

- We invited professors from the biology, English, and philosophy departments.

**Hyphenation**

Use a hyphen to connect two or more words when used as a modifier.

- He works full time.

- He has a full-time job.

- She is teaching an off-campus course.

- She teaches off campus.

Suspend hyphens in a series.

- Do you want first-, business-, or economy-class tickets?
Quotation Marks with Other Punctuation

Place a comma or period inside the quotation marks. The semicolon and colon are placed outside the quotation marks. Place question marks or exclamation points inside or outside quotation marks, depending on the quote.

- Did the president say, “The committee will meet this afternoon?”
- The president asked, “Will the committee meet in Conference Room B?”

Titles

Capitalize a title when it appears before a person’s name. Lowercase a title following a person’s name, or when it stands without a name.

Avoid courtesy titles, such as Mr., Mrs., Miss, or Ms.

Titles (and, in most cases, first names) should be dropped on second reference and thereafter. Exceptions are familiar and frequently used occupational titles, such as coach or chancellor.

Use quotation marks to designate titles of short stories, short poems, articles, individual chapters in books, individual songs, conference presentations or papers, and radio and television shows.

Italicize titles of books, films, long poems, magazines, plays, record albums, large musical works, newspapers, and continuing radio/TV series.

States and Addresses

Spell out state names or use postal ZIP Code abbreviations should be used when abbreviating a state name in text copy.

- CA, MN, WS, SD (instead of Calif., Minn., Wis., S.D.)

Use Postal Service state abbreviations with no periods in addresses.

Items should be listed in the following order.

(Name)
(College, if applicable)
(Office, Agency or Center, if applicable)
(Department)
(Institution)
(Street or Building, Room or Suite)
(City, State, Zip Code)

Example:

John Jones
Communications Division
UNC System Office
910 Raleigh Rd.
Chapel Hill, NC 12345-1234
Dates
Spell out the name of a month when it stands alone or with only the year. When a month is used with a specific date, you may abbreviate Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov., and Dec. (only), or spell out.

Put a comma before and after the year when used with month and date, but do not use a comma when a time period is expressed with month and year.

- The celebration will be held in March.
- The events of December 2006 are provided in this document.
- The celebration on December 31, 2013, will be exciting.

In decades identified with their centuries, use figures and omit apostrophes.
- 1950s
- The 80s

Time of Day
Use lowercase noon and midnight, not 12 a.m. or 12 p.m. Use 5 a.m., not 5:00 a.m.

Do not capitalize a.m. or p.m. Use periods after each letter.

Do not use a.m. or p.m. at the end of a sentence.

Use a comma after a.m. or p.m. when used in a sequence with day, date, and location.

- The show will start at 5 p.m., on Friday, Dec. 7, in Chapel Hill.

For a span of time, either 5-7 p.m. or 5 to 7 p.m. is acceptable.
Numbers
Spell out numbers zero through nine; use numerals for 10 and higher. Use either all numerals or all words when several numbers appear together in a passage.

Ages, large numbers, and monetary figures should be noted with Arabic numerals.
- 22 years old, a 40-year-old man (note the hyphens)
- 10 billion
- $5, $22.50, 10 percent (spell out percent)

Spell out numbers when they begin a sentence, or rewrite the sentence to avoid having to spell out a large, a hyphenated number, a monetary figure, or a percentage.

Spell out fractional amounts that are less than one in text copy; using hyphens between the words.
- two-thirds, three-sixteenths

Convert to decimals whenever practical.
- 4-3/16 should be 4.188

In general, spell out the word percent. The symbol % can be used in scientific, technical, and statistical copy.

Electronic Communications
- When writing out a URL, drop http://.
- Break a URL before or after the discrete units that begin the url.
- Don’t break the URL with a hyphen.
- If a sentence ends with a URL, add a period to the end.
- The word email is not hyphenated.

Here is a list of commonly used computer and Internet terms, acronyms, and software programs:
- Bluetooth, download, e-book, email, e-reader, Facebook, Foursquare, Google, Googled, hashtag, IM, Instagram, iPad, LinkedIn, metadata, online, Pinterest, RSS, smartphone, social media, tablet computer, text message, trending, Tumblr, Twitter, Vine, voice mail, VoIP, WAP, webcam, webcast, webmaster, website, Web, webpage, web feed, widget, wiki, Wikipedia, and YouTube.
Typography
Typography

Calibri is the primary font for the UNC System and should be used on all written communications. 11-point font size and single spacing is preferred for all internal memos.

Templates, located on the UNC System Intranet, allow for versatility when it comes to using text within the brand.

Calibri

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Emphasized Text

Calibri

Body Copy

Calibri

Calibri

Headline,
Calibri

Subhead,
Calibri

The UNC System Style Guide
Stationery
Stationery
To order printed stationery items or download electronic letterhead, visit the Branding Resources app on the Intranet.

Letterhead

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To order printed stationery items or download electronic letterhead, visit the Branding Resources app on the Intranet.
Stationery

The UNC System Office stationery includes letterhead, envelopes, mailing labels, and business cards. Stationery is standard for all divisions and should be used for all official UNC System business correspondence.

**Printed Stationery**
Each division is responsible for making stationery printing orders, including coordinating purchase and payment. Contact: Jessica Trevena, Customer Service Rep., Correction Enterprises 919-716-3646, jessica.trevena@ncdps.gov

**Electronic Stationery**
Download the electronic stationery template from Branding Resources app on the UNC System Intranet. When using electronic stationery, it is best to convert your document on the stationery template to PDF before attaching it to email. In addition to ensuring that content is not altered, this will also promote consistent placement of items on the letterhead template.

**Email Correspondence**
All individuals within the UNC System must use the standard email signature in all business electronic correspondence. Your email signature should include your name, title, System office, address, phone/fax numbers, email address, System web address, and the primary logo. The only other images that may be included in the email signature is the UNC System social media links. Inspirational quotes and other types of information are inappropriate to include. Use Calibri font in 11 pt. size. Bold and uppercase your name and include email version of primary logo.

**EXAMPLE**

JOHN A. DOE
Director of Planning
The University of North Carolina System
P.O. Box 2688 | Chapel Hill, NC 27515
p: 555.555.5555 | f: 555.555.5555
johndoe@northcarolina.edu
www.northcarolina.edu
Brand Resources
Photography

These images depict the wide range of activities and locations across the 17 institutions in our System. We should also utilize landscape imagery of North Carolina to represent our state.
Brand Templates

All templates can be downloaded from the Branding Resources app on the UNC System Intranet. Calibri is the proper font to use in all templates and each template has font and font size set in the template. Color choices are also set within the template.

Internal Memo
A template for internal memos is available and customizable for each division. 11-point font size and single spacing is preferred for all internal memos.

Report Cover Sheet and Template
The report template provides a standard cover sheet with a logo and document page structure. This style consistency is recommended for all public reports, including Board of Governors meeting materials. Specific Board reports are also available.

PowerPoint
To maintain a consistent look for all audiences, the UNC System Office has developed a series of templates to use for presentation needs. Please use Calibri font for PowerPoint presentations. The UNC System PowerPoint Templates are stored in the Branding Resources App on the Intranet.

Effective PowerPoint slides use graphics and text to tell a story. Mix storytelling, demonstrations, graphics, and/or video to maintain interest. Keep presentations short and concise.

Note: To reformat the old PowerPoint templates into the version, go to the UNC System Intranet, Branding Resources, and click on the instructions for reformatting template.

Presentation tips:
• Limit slides to six bulleted items. Each item should not exceed the length of one line. Do not overload slides with too much text or too many images.
• Keep similar topics together. Organize points from the most to the least important. Tell a story in a logical sequence. Avoid descriptions and unnecessary details.
• Do not place more than two images on a slide.
• Refrain from using clip art.
• Use font size 28-34 for slide body text.
Website
Website

The UNC System website is one of our strongest communication tools for reaching our audiences with information about University programs and initiatives. Maintaining a consistent and user-friendly website with a professional “look and feel” is important to the UNC System’s overall branding efforts.

Communications is responsible for general oversight and organization of the content on the website and works closely with Information and Technology Services, developers, and division stakeholders.

Accessibility

Your web pages should provide all audiences, regardless of physical or technological readiness, access to information. Information on accessibility can be found through the Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) of the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C). Vision-impaired users need to be able to transform text that they find illegible into a format they can read. Low-vision users need to be able to increase the type size, and along with colorblind users, need control over text and page background colors for maximum contrast.

Our website is equipped with an accessibility module to assist users. A link for reporting accessibility issues is in the footer of each page.

Pay attention to the following type and layout attributes in your publications to accommodate users with visual disabilities.

- **Emphasis** - If you use color alone to achieve typographic emphasis, users who cannot distinguish the colors will miss the emphasis. Instead, use bold formatting. Try to avoid italics because they can be difficult to read on some monitors. Also avoid using colored backgrounds.

- **Images** - Images should have “alternate text” associated with them so that visually-impaired users who cannot view the images may still understand the content. In addition, images should include an alt tag that contains a clear description of the image.

- **Tables** - Use simple tables with meaningful titles sparingly. Many blind users rely on software that reads web pages aloud or outputs information to a speech synthesizer or Braille display. Current software looks at the HTML code of the pages and reads tables in cell-by-cell (linear) fashion. This means that each cell of the table becomes a line or paragraph of text that is read in sequence. A complex layout containing multiple nested tables will produce confusion with unrelated information appearing from nowhere, disrupting the natural flow of the content.
Website

Creating Microsites

A microsite is an individual web page or a small cluster of pages which are meant to function as a discrete entity within an existing website.

Microsites can add to an organization’s brand when used properly; however, microsites should only be created if they complement the University’s website and do not compete with it.

Maintaining several microsites can introduce problems with brand consistency, and potentially confuse users by: (1) making them think they are visiting a site not associated with the University, (2) introducing a new navigation structure, and (3) potentially presenting an entirely different look and feel. If you are interested in establishing a microsite, you must discuss your plans with Communications prior to working with IT staff. Although we will consider the use of microsites on a case-by-case basis. A request for a microsite would generally need to address the following criteria.

Is the content for a microsite strong enough to have its own brand?

If you have a program or initiative that is branded so strongly that it has its own logo and brand elements (e.g., UNC Online), then you may want to consider creating a separate microsite just for this item. If this is not the case, it’s usually best to keep everything within the main website.

Why are we creating a separate microsite instead of putting this into the main site?

Most people think that by creating a microsite their content will be more helpful and useful to target audiences. This isn’t generally the case. Most visitors will likely search for information on the University’s main website because it is a reliable and official source of information and first to appear in search results. In addition, most microsites are not entirely self-contained. If content will eventually lead users back to the University’s main website, then perhaps the content would better serve visitors through a different creative presentation strategy.

Who is my target audience, and why do I need a microsite to reach them?

Microsites are designed to focus on a main theme or topic “and to target” a specific group or cause. Microsites often use a different approach to users than a traditional website, presenting information through storytelling or engaging and experiential presentation. Content should be unique and inform, educate and engage users. It should not simply duplicate information on the main site. The purpose of most microsites is to roll out a campaign, launch a product, or communicate about an event.

*Sources: Wikipedia, Spinweb, boagworld, clickwrite, walkersands
Website

Creating Content
Creating content for a website is very different than writing for other media. Most users scan web content instead of reading to the end of the page. Keep your user in mind when developing content. Think about what they want to accomplish, and how you can help them get the information they need.

• Make sure the title of the page is relevant to the information on it.
• Use the title of the page, or a shortened version of it, as the link for that page.
• Use an introductory paragraph when necessary. Otherwise, let the header be the introduction to the content on the page. Never “welcome” people to a page or section of the website.
• Provide easy-to-read and easy-to-scan content.
• Lead with your topic or idea.
• Use sentence fragments sparingly.
• Remove ambiguity—have someone else read the information prior to posting to see if it really makes sense.
• Be clear and direct when writing copy and headlines.
• Avoid using jargon or acronyms.
• Use an active voice.

FOR EXAMPLE:
Avoid: The tuition increase proposed by the campus was approved by the Board...
Preferred: The Board approved the tuition increase the campus proposed...

Website Writing Guidelines
• Assign one topic to each paragraph.
• Write short paragraphs, fewer than 50 words. One-sentence paragraphs are acceptable.
• Use headings and subheadings whenever possible to direct users and organize content.
• Avoid using clever headlines or puns.
• Be mindful that writing is a creative endeavor. There is not single, right way.
• Keep content current. Outdated or incomplete content can damage the credibility and usefulness of the entire site. If the content is needed, but rarely viewed, consider archiving it.
• Each piece of content and each image should support the UNC’s mission, key messages, and goals.
Website

Lists and Tables

• If the order does not matter, use bullets. If the order does matter, number the items.
• Try to limit lists to nine items or fewer. If your list ends up with more than three tiers, consider rewriting it.
• Always capitalize the first letter of bulleted items. If the bulleted item is a complete sentence, capitalize the first letter and add a period. In a bulleted list, the bullet is the punctuation. No other punctuation is needed to separate items.
• Avoid using tables as a design element. In particular, avoid using tables heavy with data and statistics.
• If you use tables, include your most important labels/information in the first column, as people tend to scan the left side of tables first.

Design and Formatting — Links

• A hyperlink is a word, group of words, or an image that a user can click on to get more information, whether it is another web page, a PDF, or other document.
• Avoid using “Click here,” as hyperlink text.

FOR EXAMPLE
Avoid: Click here for meeting materials
Preferred: August 8, 2017, Board of Governors meeting materials
  • Links should be five to seven words. If you have more than five links together, group them.
  • Avoid saying “Use the links above.” Grouping them is more helpful for the user.
  • Consider placing links in a way a visitor would use them.

File Formats for Documents and Images

• File format and the name of the file are two important components to consider when placing documents on the web. All files should be in PDF, Word, or .txt formats, with PDF being preferred.
• Files should also be named relevant to the information they provide. Avoid using special characters (/, &, #, etc.) or spaces. Instead of spaces, use an underscore.

FOR EXAMPLE
Avoid: 2378549.rtf
Preferred: 08-15-2012_bog_meeting.pdf

Consistency of website images is also important in enhancing website quality. Web images should be 72 or 96 dpi (dots per inch) resolution. Using photos that are too small or too large can cause undesirable design and technical issues that result in a web page that does not reflect the System’s brand.
Website Theme

The University of North Carolina System website theme reflects the organization’s identity on the web. The theme is the foundation of the website and incorporates color, logo, layout, fonts, and voice. It is important to adhere to the theme at all times to maintain consistency in our brand and website-user experience.

Color
Color plays an important role in the aesthetics of the website as well as in creating an intuitive guidance system for our users. Color can illustrate levels of importance, a call to action, and/or determine visual focus. For accessibility purposes we cannot rely on color alone. Please familiarize yourself with our organization’s guidelines on Accessibility Compliance.

Brand Colors
Brand colors create the aesthetic of our theme. They should be used to enhance the layout and visual elements of our website with consistency (refer to page 20 for brand colors).

Functional Colors
Functional colors are used to indicate interface elements such as links, buttons, alerts, statuses, and calls to action. These colors should remain consistent throughout the website for user recognition (refer to page 20 for brand colors).

Fonts
The fonts for the University of North Carolina System website are chosen for clarity and accessibility on the web. They should be used consistently.

It is also important to use headers correctly for accessibility. Correctly formatting text using headers with the correct hierarchy helps screen readers organize information for users.

Example:

Header 1

Paragraph 1 Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Repellendus voluptas id quis quas eaque, reprehenderit possimus laboriosam laudantium pariatur earum. Voluptatum labore quae laudantium eaque nihil eveniet velit voluptate adipisci

Header 2
Paragraph 2 Praesentium veniam numquam possimus voluptatum harum voluptate officia saepe in ducimus nisi. Quidem velit at veniam id blanditiis, aliquid modi possimus omnis hic et commodi ab amet itaque vitae quae!
**Layout**

Layouts determine the arrangement of information on a page. These elements include navigation, headers, content and footers. Maintaining a consistent layout enhances usability by creating a familiar flow throughout the site.

**Voice**

Web content should reinforce the brand across the site. This includes tone, titles, and nomenclature.

**More about tone**

Titles should be used consistently to avoid confusion. Example North Carolina State University not NC State, UNC System Board of Governors not Board of Governors?

Consistent nomenclature is also important. Examples would include website verbiage such as “email” not “e-mail” or eMail.

**Website Pattern**

A website pattern begins with singular web components such as text, buttons, form fields, or images. These elements combine to build simple elements like a form or a more complex group of elements like a template or a page. The University of North Carolina System website pattern is a guide for content creators, designers, and developers to assist in maintaining the organization’s brand on the web.
Social Media
Social Media

The use of social media in professional communications is continuously expanding, maximizing outreach to target audiences. More organizations are embracing social media as an integral part of their communications plans, and for obvious reasons. Social networking allows organizations to interact, educate, engage, and encourage dialogue with key stakeholders, and promotes information faster and more efficiently than traditional distribution methods.

Social media encompasses Internet forums, blogs, social networks (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.), podcasts, and photograph and video sharing. Not all social media platforms are appropriate for every circumstance. It is important to consider your audience and message when determining whether to use social media, and if so, which platform(s) may best meet your needs.

**UNC System Social Media Presence**
The UNC System Office has one official page for each social media platform. The two main factors that contribute to the establishment of a social media page are legitimate audience and content frequency. Communications is responsible for establishing and overseeing the content and messages of the UNC System’s presence on social media sites.

**Official Social Media Accounts**
Facebook: @uncsystem
Twitter: @UNC_System, @MargaretEdu, @UNCOncine
LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/company/university-of-north-carolina
Instagram: UNC_System

### Social Icon

![UNC System Logo](image)

### Recognized Hashtags

#UNCSytem
#NCHigherEd
#UNCBOG
Social Media Strategy

The purposes for using social media are to distribute information about the UNC System (including its various divisions, affiliated entities, and UNC System institutions), and to drive traffic to the website to establish it as a reliable and official source of information. Our Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram accounts are also focused on engagement with our audiences.

Individual divisions should submit to Communications any content or materials they wish to distribute through official UNC System social media. The Director of Marketing Communications is available to assist in content and message development and in coordination with approved unit's social media efforts.

DO NOT establish social media pages or department event hashtags for your division until you have met with the Director of Marketing Communications. Doing so may deter users from “using” official UNC System accounts and dilute our efforts to establish a reliable and official source of information. In addition, it is important that Communications is aware and involved in social media planning and messaging. This ensures effective reach and collaboration with multiple social platforms.

Social Media Content Development

Content for social media distribution should be timely, relevant, and interesting. Communications will accept content from individual divisions.

Social media is an effective way to reach a large community when used so in a thoughtful and strategic way. Communications staff is available to assist you in developing content that supports a strong and successful social media experience.

Social Media: Your Personal Responsibility

University employees are allowed to have personal social networking sites. These sites must remain personal in nature and be used to share personal opinions or non-work related information. In addition, employees should never use their work email account or password in conjunction with a personal social networking site.

Be transparent: If you decide to talk about or post material related to the University or one of its constituent campuses, please be clear that you are not speaking as a UNC employee. For example, you could say, “The views expressed in this blog/post/etc. are my own and do not necessarily reflect the views of my employer.”

Use good judgment: Your online activities may impact your personal reputation, image, and ability to effectively interact with coworkers. Of course, you are free to share your personal views, but be aware of how your postings may impact you and your coworkers’ ability to contribute to the system.

Think before posting: Privacy does not exist in social media. Public posts are indexed in search engines, and private comments can be forwarded or copied and easily made available to the public. Use privacy settings to restrict personal information on otherwise public accounts, but be aware of the limited protection this provides.
Working with Communications
Working with Communications

The main goal of the Communications Office is to illustrate the positive impact of the work of the UNC System to a wide audience and advance the reputation of the System. The Communications office is responsible for disseminating messages and information to internal and external audiences, including the news media.

The Communications Office also offers strategic communications consulting and reputational and issues management support to all divisions within the UNC System. In addition, Communications provides brand education as a critical part of maintaining a strong reputation. Branding resource training and brand ambassador sessions are available upon request.

The office also serves as the primary contact for media inquiries, including public records requests. For media consultation, contact the Josh Ellis, Associate Vice President for Media Relations, at (919) 962-4629, or by email at jnellis@northcarolina.edu.

Proofing and Approval Processes

All official documents representing the UNC System, including legislative reports, Board of Governors reports, newsletters, etc., must be edited and approved by the Communications Office. Review of documents includes not only an edit for clear and concise writing, but also an approval of branded elements of logo, colors, and style.

Allow a minimum of five (5) working days for review. Board material reviews will be set by the Office of the Secretary. Contact the Communications Specialist for scheduling all other document reviews.
Media Relations

The UNC System Office is dedicated to building and strengthening relationships with the news media to responsibly promote the University and its accomplishments and inform the public about policy, positions, and general news. Communications is responsible for coordinating and overseeing all media relations efforts on behalf of the University.

Media Inquiries

Inquiries requesting information or comment regarding University policy or position should be directed to Josh Ellis, Associate Vice President for Media Relations, at (919) 962-4629 or by email: jnellis@northcarolina.edu.

News Releases

All news releases are distributed through the Communications Office. If you have questions about how best to make information available to the public, please contact the Associate Vice President for Media Relations.
Legal Requirements

The UNC System Office follows state guidelines and requirements for printing using state funds.

Printing Cost Statement
State of North Carolina regulations require a cost statement on printed documents in quantities of 200 or more that utilize state funds and are intended for external distribution. Only documents printed for the sole purpose of sale to the public are excluded from use of the cost statement. The term “cost” includes printing costs in the form of labor and materials and other identifiable design, typesetting, and bindery costs.

The following statement should appear on the back or inside back cover of the publication:
0000 copies of this public document were printed at a cost of $000 or $000 per copy (G.S. 143-170.1).

If an agency fails to comply with this section then the agency’s printing budget for the fiscal year following the violation shall be reduced by 10 percent. (G.S. 143-170.1 (a3)).

Printing with non-state funds
Printing with non-state funds must comply with the University logo policies and other publication guidelines.

EEO/AA Statement
University publications must display a statement of nondiscrimination. All documents for external audiences must contain one of the following:

Admission to, employment by, and promotion in the University of North Carolina and all of its constituent institutions shall be on the basis of merit, and there shall be no unlawful discrimination against any person on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, or veteran status.
Communications Contacts

Communications is a part of the Office of the President and reports to the Chief of Staff. The Communications team is available to answer any questions about the Style Guide and to provide assistance with creative needs, website development, writing and editing, and media inquiries. For general questions or support, email communications@northcarolina.edu.

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Resources
Associated Press Stylebook
American Heritage Dictionary
Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) of the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C)
General Writing Resources
Purdue University Online Writing Lab
APA style and scholarly publishing
The Elements of Style, Fourth Edition | William Strunk Jr. and E. B. White