

EMPORIA STATE
UNIVERSITY

— Copywriting Guide + Checklist —

Updated Summer 2023

Copywriting Guide + Checklist

Every post, newsletter, web page and card that leaves the doors of Emporia State University is a chance to make a connection with someone and represent ESU. Most people are bombarded each day with messaging from brands, news sites, schools, non-profits, utility companies, you name it. Our messages are in a sea of noise from every other organization or business filling peoples' inboxes. By creating engaging, relevant and quality content, we can stand out from the crowd. Consistent and correct use of language, just like with our visual brand, builds recognition of Emporia State University and communicates the quality and character of our institution.

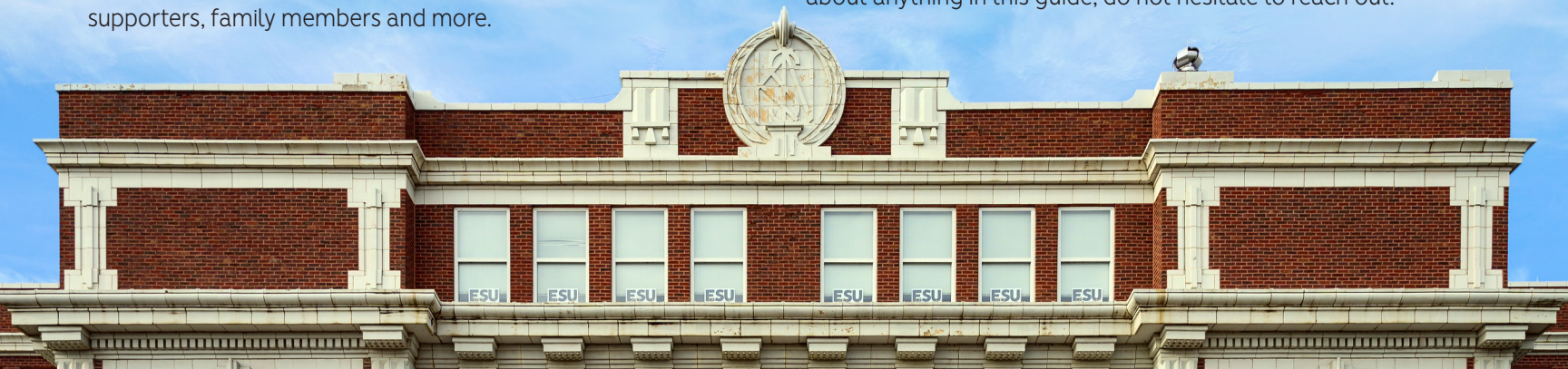
The standards described on these pages are a guide to best practices when creating copy and content representing Emporia State University to prospective students, alumni, shareholders, supporters, family members and more.

No matter what we're writing, we should be professional and considerate of our audience. When we work together to create clear and consistent messaging that uplifts the university, we are better able to tell our unique story.

If your content is an official Emporia State University communication that will leave the university (going to alumni, donors, prospective students, media), please send your content for review to the Marketing + Communication department.

Social media communication may deviate from these guidelines based on the platform. For social media-specific guidelines, see the social media best practices guide.

If you need assistance with communication or have questions about anything in this guide, do not hesitate to reach out.



Getting Started with Content Creation

Before you start, make sure you have a clear message in mind, and a clear audience for who needs to hear this message. Is this information valuable to your audience and why? What is the purpose and goal of sending this message to this audience? What action do you want them to take, and why should they take this action?

Taking the time to make sure you're sending the correct message to the correct audience will make drafting your communication easier and your communication campaign overall more effective.

Voice, Personality and Tone

Just as each of us has a voice and personality, so does Emporia State University. These aspects of our brand should be consistent and clear no matter who is writing, though our tone can and should change depending on our audience and the platform we're using to communicate to this audience.

Our Voice

Emporia State University's voice is authentic and inclusive, intelligent and well-spoken.

Our Personality

As a university voice, we are excitable and future-focused. We are bold and proud of what our university is able to achieve. We are thoughtful and caring.

Our Tone

Just as you would adjust your tone between speaking to your children and your boss, Emporia State can and should adjust our tone to the appropriate audience as well. For example, a news release to local media will have a different tone than a social media post or an alumni newsletter.

Consider your audience and communicate with them in a way they can understand and appreciate. Make sure to avoid jargon and explain things in a way that makes sense to your audience and interests them.

Writing Style

Emporia State University uses AP Style for writing copy and content across all platforms unless otherwise specified in the guide below.

Common Style Conventions

+ vs & vs and

In content titles and headlines, use “+” to signify the word “and.” In body content, use the word “and.” Never use “&” to signify the word “and.” If “+” is part of a proper name for a building, degree, etc. always use + in any instance.

Examples:

Webpage title: *ESU Facts + Figures*

Check out some helpful ESU facts and figures on emporia.edu/facts.

Abigail Morse Hall

Always use full name on first reference. Upon further reference, if you choose to shorten the name, use Abigail. Do not shorten to Morse Hall or Morse.

Abbreviations and acronyms

Do not follow an organization’s full name with an abbreviation or acronym in parentheses or set off by dashes. If an abbreviation would not be clear on second reference, do not use it.

Examples:

The Kansas Board of Regents is the governing body of Emporia State University. KBOR governs all six state universities in Kansas.

Academic departments

Emporia State University is organized by schools and disciplines/programs. The terms discipline and program can be used interchangeably. We do not have academic departments.

Examples:

The art discipline is in the School of Visual and Performing Arts.

The health and physical education major is part of the health, physical education and recreation program.

Academic degrees

Do not use apostrophes in formal degree names. Never use an apostrophe for an associate degree, formal or informal. Always capitalize the formal degree name, but never the informal degree.

Examples:

They have a bachelor’s degree.

They have an associate degree in communication.

They earned an Associate of Science degree.

They completed their Bachelor of Arts in May.

Academic titles

Capitalize and spell out formal titles such as provost, president, dean, etc. when they come before a name and are not offset by commas. Do not capitalize titles without a name.

Examples:

Dean James Ehlers gave a speech.

James Ehlers, dean, gave a speech.

The dean gave a speech.

Acronyms

See entry for [Abbreviations and acronyms](#).

Addresses

When writing addresses, spell out and capitalize street, avenue and boulevard only when part of a formal street name without a number. Use the abbreviations St., Ave. and Blvd. only with a numbered address. All similar words such as alley, drive, road, terrace, place, etc., are always spelled out. Capitalize them when part of a formal name without a number, but lowercase when used alone or with two or more names. Always use figures for an address number, but spell out and capitalize first–ninth when used as street names. Use figures for street names 10 or higher.

Examples:

The undergraduate admissions office is located at 1331 Market St.

The admissions office is located on Market Street.

Plumb Hall is located at 1 Kellogg Circle.

The student lives at 7 Fifth St.

Admission/admissions

Use the singular form when referring to the admission process.

Use the plural form when referring to the university office.

Examples:

The Office of Undergraduate Admissions can help your student with their application for admission.

Adviser vs advisor

AP Style uses adviser, not advisor. However, ESU diverts from AP Style in this instance to use advisor.

Albert Taylor Hall

Always use the full name on first reference. Upon further reference, if you choose to shorten the name, use Albert Taylor.

Alma mater

Always lowercase, unless at the beginning of a sentence, then only capitalize 'Alma.'

Alumnus, alumni, alumna, alumnae, alum

Use alum when referring generally to one person who attended a school when you do not know for certain their preferred pronouns. Use alumni when referring to a group of former students of all genders.

Examples:

I think they are an alum of Emporia State University.

The three of them are alumni of Emporia State University.

a.m./p.m.

Use lowercase with periods and no spaces. Avoid redundancies such as 6 p.m. tonight. If a.m. or p.m. occurs at the end of a sentence, use only one period at the end. For the sake of design, times may be written as AM or PM in headlines.

Art Annex

Always use the full name in any reference.

Beach Music Hall

Always use the full name on first reference. Upon further reference, if you choose to shorten the name, use Beach.

BizHornet Center

Always use the full name in any reference.

BizHornets

Word for students who are part of the ESU School of Business and Technology. Always make this one word and capitalize the B and H.

Black and Gold

Follow the rules for “+” vs “and” and capitalize Black and Gold when used as a proper noun.

Examples:

On Fridays, we wear black and gold to work.

They showed their Black and Gold spirit.

Bobbie and Steve Sauder Center for Entrepreneurial Development

Always use the full name on first reference. Upon further reference, if you choose to shorten the name, use the center for entrepreneurial development (all lowercase) or the entrepreneurial center.

Breidenthal University House

Always use the full name on first reference. Upon further reference, if you choose to shorten the name, use Breidenthal or the president’s house.

Brukelman Science Hall

When referring to Brukelman specifically, always use the full name on first reference. Upon further reference, if you choose to shorten the name, use Brukelman. If referring to the entire science building, use Science Hall.

Bulleted lists

Capitalize the first word of every item in the bulleted list. Put a period at the end of each list item, even when it is not a complete sentence.

Butcher Education Center

Always use the full name on first reference. Upon further reference, if you choose to shorten the name, use Butcher.

Campus Woods

Always use the full name in any reference.

Center

When using as part of a proper name of a center, capitalize Center. When using only in general terms or as a second reference, do not capitalize.

Examples:

They work in the Center for Student Involvement. As part of their job at the center, they answer the front desk phone.

Center for Business and Economic Development

Always use the full name on first reference. Upon further reference, if you choose to shorten the name, use CBED.

Classes vs courses

Use classes, not courses, when referring to individual university class offerings.

Commas

AP Style does not use the Oxford or serial comma — the comma after the last item in a list.

Examples:

They have algebra, biology and English composition on Wednesdays.

Commencement

Capitalize when using to refer to a specific ceremony, but not when using generally. Graduation may be substituted for some specific audiences, such as future students or parents.

Examples:

The Emporia State University Fall 2023 Commencement Ceremony will take place on December 13.

They are struggling to decide what to wear to commencement on Saturday.

Corporate partners

ESU refers to all who provide value to ESU Athletics, whether monetary donations, services, etc. as corporate partners, not sponsors.

Cram Science Hall

When referring to Cram specifically, always use the full name on first reference. Upon further reference, use the full name or Cram. If referring to the entire science building, use Science Hall.

Cremer Hall

Always use the full name on first reference. Upon further reference, if you choose to shorten the name, use Cremer.

Cybersecurity

Cybersecurity is always one word.

Cybersecurity Research + Outreach Center

Always use the full name on first mention. Upon further reference, if you choose to shorten the name, use CYROC or the cybersecurity center.

Dashes + hyphens

AP style does not use the en dash. The em dash is used to signal abrupt change, to set off a series within a phrase, before attribution to an author or composer, after datelines and to start lists. AP style calls for a space on either side of an em dash. A hyphen is used as a joiner, such as for compound modifiers, as well as for date ranges. There should be no spaces surrounding a hyphen.

Dates

Always use figures, without st, nd, rd or th. When a phrase refers to a month, date and year, set off the year with commas.

Examples:

The first day of school is August 17.

The event will take place May 3, 2025.

Dorms, dormitory

Always use residence hall(s) instead.

Disability

When talking about people with disabilities, ask how they prefer to be described if possible. If not possible, use 'people with disabilities,' never 'handicapped' and avoid descriptions that connote pity, such as afflicted with, battling, etc. For more information on writing about people with disabilities, visit adata.org/factsheet/ADANN-writing.

Emporia State University

Always use the full name upon first mention. Upon further mention, if you choose to shorten the name, use Emporia State or ESU. Never use E-State, E State University or other shortened versions.

Esports

Unless at the beginning of a sentence or for official titles, esports uses a lowercase e and lowercase s with no space.

Examples:

Emporia State University's esports team is called Hornet Esports.

E-Ventures

Use e-ventures with lowercase e and lowercase v when speaking generally. When using the formal program name or title case, use E-Ventures with capital E and V. At the beginning of a sentence, use E-ventures.

Examples:

E-ventures is a growing field.

The ESU E-Ventures program helps students build skills for careers related to e-ventures such as game development, animation and more.

Face-to-face

Use hyphens to avoid confusion.

Financial Aid, Scholarships and Veterans Services

Always use the full name on first reference. Upon further reference, if you choose to shorten the name, you may use any individual part of the name.

Examples:

Please contact veterans services for more information about your form.

Please reach out to financial aid with questions.

First-generation vs. first generation vs. first gen

Do hyphenate when using as a compound adjective modifying a subject. Do not shorten unless part of a proper name.

Examples:

They are a first-generation student.

They are the first generation in their family to graduate college.

They are part of the First-Gen Advisory Council.

Fraternity + Sorority Life

Capitalize when using the full name and always use the full name on first mention. Upon further reference, use the full name or FSL. Do not use Greek life in reference to FSL. Do not capitalize fraternity or sorority outside of full name. Do capitalize full names of individual FSL organizations.

Examples:

They work in Fraternity + Sorority Life.

They are part of a fraternity.

They are a member of Chi Omega.

Fundraising and fundraiser

Always use as one word.

Future focused, forward ready

Use this phrase, with the comma, when referring to ESU's strategic direction.

Game day

Use two words when talking about ESU game days in reference to athletic events. Do not capitalize game day unless part of an event. At the beginning of a sentence, capitalize only the G in game day.

Examples:

ESU admissions is hosting the Game Day Visit Experience on Saturday.

Are you ready for game day at ESU?

Game day at ESU is on Saturday.

Graduate School

Always use the full name in any reference.

Greek Life

Do not use "Greek life" in any instance.

See entry for [Fraternity and Sorority Life](#).

Graduation

See entry for [Commencement](#).

H. A. Stephens Herbarium

Always use the full name on first reference. Upon further reference, if you choose to shorten the name, use ESU herbarium or the herbarium.

Health, Physical Education and Recreation (building)

Always use the full name on first reference. Upon further reference, if you choose to shorten the name, use HPER building.

Healthcare

Use as one word in reference to ESU programs or career aspirations.

High-impact learning

When writing for audiences outside academia (for example, prospective students, parents, etc.), use real-world experiences or hands-on experiences.

Hornet 365

Unless in link form, use two words for the ESU portal, Hornet 365.

Hornet Connection

Always capitalize Hornet Connection because it is a proper noun for Emporia State University's undergraduate enrollment event.

Hornet Nation

Refers to anyone who is in the Emporia State University community — friends, donors, alumni, employees, students, family. Can be used in salutation of mass messages. Always capitalize both Hornet and Nation when used in this capacity.

Hornets

Athletic teams are referred to as Hornets. The exception is women's basketball (see [Lady Hornets](#)).

Homecoming

Capitalize when used as the formal event name. Do not capitalize when referencing generally.

Examples:

Emporia State University Homecoming 2023 will take place October 27-28.

They attended several homecoming events last year.

Honors College

Always use the full name in any reference.
Never use Honor's College or Honors' College.

Hornet Fans

Use in communication from athletics to fans when sending official mass messages from the athletics department. Always capitalize both Hornet and Fans when used in this capacity.

Hornet TV

Use two words when referring to the ESU television display service on campus.

Hutchinson Pavilion

Always use the full name on first reference. Upon further reference, if you choose to shorten the name, use Hutch Pavilion.

Institute of Interdisciplinary Studies

Always use the full name in any reference.

International Education

Use the full name, Office of International Education, on first reference. Upon further reference, if you choose to shorten the name, use international education or OIE.

IT Help Desk

Help Desk is two words when referring to the IT department that handles questions from faculty, staff and students about technology.

John "Doc" Baxter Athletic Training and Human Performance Lab

Always use the full name in any reference.

Johnston Geology Museum

Always use the full name in any reference.

Justification

Use left-justified, right ragged, with no indentation. Do not hyphenate at the end of a line and try to avoid widow or orphan lines.

Kansas Business Hall of Fame

Always use the full name on first reference. Upon further reference, use the full name or KBHF.

Kansas Small Business Development Center

Always use the full name on first reference. Upon further reference, if you choose to shorten the name, use KSBDC.

Kellogg Circle

Always use the full name in any reference. Always spell out and capitalize "Circle" as part of the address for ESU.

King Hall

Always use the full name on first reference. Upon further reference, if you choose to shorten the name, use King.

King Lake

Always use the full name in any reference.

Kosover Family Tennis Complex

Always use the full name on first reference. Upon further reference, if you choose to shorten the name, use Kosover.

Lady Hornets

The Emporia State University women's basketball team is referred to as the Lady Hornets.

Livestream

Follow AP guidelines which say livestream is one word.

Live at the Hive

ESU's tailgate event name. Always capitalize the full name. Outside of campus, the Live at the Hive tailgate experience should always be referred to as "Live at the Hive, presented by Busch Light."

Majors

Lowercase majors, disciplines, programs, specializations or concentrations unless it is a proper noun (such as languages).

Examples:

They are an English master's student.

They are a business major.

They are working on their Bachelor of Science in computer science.

Memorial to Fallen Educators

Always use the full name in any reference.

Memorial Union

Always use the full name on first reference. Capitalize when using the full name, Memorial Union. Upon further reference, if you choose to shorten the name, or if speaking informally, use the union.

Examples:

The meeting takes place in the Memorial Union.

We will eat lunch in the union.

Non-traditional student

In general, ESU refers to non-traditional students as TradPlus. If using the phrase "non-traditional student," use with a dash between "non" and "traditional."

On-campus vs on campus

On-campus is an adjective that describes something. On campus is a noun phrase.

Examples:

They applied for an on-campus job. Job is the noun and on-campus is an adjective which describes the type of job. They work on campus. On campus is the noun phrase which receives the action of the verb (work).

One Room School House

Always use the full name in any reference.

Phone numbers

Use figures and hyphens.

Peterson Planetarium

Always use the full name on first reference. Upon further reference, if you choose to shorten the name, use the planetarium.

Plumb Hall

Always use the full name on first reference. Upon further reference, if you choose to shorten the name, use Plumb.

Police and Safety

Always use the full name in any reference.

Pre-professional programs

For all pre-professional programs at Emporia State University, use a hyphen between pre- and the program. Capitalize the 'P' in "pre-" only when beginning a sentence and do not capitalize the name after, unless part of a proper noun.

Examples:

Pre-medical programs at Emporia State University prepare students for medical school.

They were awarded ESU's Pre-Medical Fellowship.

President

Follow AP style for academic titles above. Capitalize president when it comes before a name, but lowercase it elsewhere.

Examples:

President Ken Hush is speaking at the event.

Jess, ASG president, was elected in the spring.

Lyman Kellogg was the first president of ESU (then Kansas State Normal School).

Pronouns

When speaking generally, use gender-neutral terms. If you do not know for certain what pronouns the subject of your writing uses, use gender-neutral terms or avoid using pronouns. For more detailed information about pronouns and identities, visit thesafezoneproject.com/resources/vocabulary.

Examples:

I met an alum at the baseball game yesterday. They graduated from ESU in 2001.

Jess Smith is an ESU alum. Smith graduated from Emporia State in 2001.

Prophet Aquatic Research and Outreach Center

Always use the full name on first reference. Upon further reference, if you choose to shorten the name, use PAROC.

Registration

Use the full name, Office of the Registrar, on first reference. Upon further reference, if you choose to shorten the name, use the registrar's office or registration.

Roosevelt Hall

Always use the full name on first reference. Upon further reference, if you choose to shorten the name, use Roosevelt.

Sauder Alumni Center

Always use the full name on first reference. Upon further reference, if you choose to shorten the name, use Sauder, alumni center or Sauder Center.

Schallenkamp Hall

Always use the full name on first reference. Upon further reference, if you choose to shorten the name, use Schallenkamp.

Schmidt Museum of Natural History

Always use the full name on first reference. Upon further reference, if you choose to shorten the name, use the natural history museum.

Scholarships

Capitalize when used with the full name of a scholarship only. Upon further reference or if the entire formal name of the scholarship is not used, capitalize only the proper noun in the scholarship name.

Examples:

They were awarded the Virginia Endly Memorial Scholarship.

They paid for their tuition entirely with their Endly scholarship award.

They received many scholarships.

School of Applied Health Sciences

Always use the full name in any reference.

School of Business and Technology

Always use the full name in any reference.

School of Humanities and Social Sciences

Always use the full name in any reference.

School of Library and Information Management

Always use the full name on first reference.

Upon further reference, use SLIM.

School of Science and Mathematics

Always use the full name in any reference.

School of Visual and Performing Arts

Always use the full name in any reference.

Science Hall

Always use the full name on any reference, unless referring specifically to Cram or Brukelman.

Semester

Lowercase in all instances, even when referring to a specific semester.

Examples:

They will graduate in the fall 2024 semester.

The spring 2023 semester began on January 18.

Silent Joe

Always use the full name in any reference.

Singular Hall

Always use Singular Hall on first reference. Upon further reference, if you choose to shorten the name, use Singular.

Spacing

Use single space between lines as well as one space at end of sentences instead of two.

Stormont Maintenance Center

Always use the full name on first reference. Upon further reference, if you choose to shorten the name, use Stormont.

Student Advising Center

Always use the full name on first reference. Upon further reference, if you choose to shorten the name, use SAC or advising.

Student-athlete

Student-athlete is hyphenated and does not need to be capitalized in sentences.

Student Recreation Center

Always use the full name on first reference. Upon further reference, if you choose to shorten the name, use the rec center or the recreation center.

Student teach vs. student-teach

Do not hyphenate in a phrasal verb (a verb combined with an adverb). Do hyphenate when using as a noun.

Examples:

They student teach next semester.

They are a student-teacher.

Tailgate

See [Live at the Hive](#).

Tech Site

Use two words, capitalized, when referring to ESU's technology support panel.

Theatre/theater

ESU deviates from AP style in use of "theatre" as the preferred spelling unless referring generally to the halls in which productions take place.

Examples:

The theatre program puts on three shows a year.

The show will take place in the Karl C. Bruder Theatre.

There are three different theaters on ESU's campus.

The Teachers College

Always use the full name on first reference. Upon further reference, if you choose to shorten the name, use TTC.

Never use Teachers College, the Teachers College, The Teacher's College or Teacher's College.

Towers Complex

Always use Towers Complex on first reference when referring to the entire complex (North Tower, South Tower, Singular, Trusler). Upon further reference, if you choose to shorten the name, use Towers. If referring to a specific hall in Towers Complex, use the name of the hall.

Trusler Hall

Always use Trusler Hall on first reference. Upon further reference, if you choose to shorten the name, use Trusler.

Undergraduate admissions

Use the full name, Office of Undergraduate Admissions, on first mention. Upon further reference, if you choose to shorten the name, use undergraduate admissions.

Union Square

Always use the full name in any reference.

University

The word university is not capitalized when referring to Emporia State unless as part of the official, full name Emporia State University.

University Mall

Always use the full name in any reference.

URLS

Omit https://, http:// and www. when citing URLs unless a site will not work without them. If a URL is long and/or complicated, request a vanity link from IT. All words in URLs should be lowercase, unless the site will not work without uppercase letters. Examples:

To apply, visit emporia.edu/apply.

VIP Experience at Live at the Hive

Use this phrase to refer to the tented area for Live at the Hive.

Visser Hall

Always use the full name on first reference. Upon further reference, if you choose to shorten the name, use Visser.

Voice

Use active voice in your copy.

Examples:

Paul Edwards created Corky. (active)

Corky was created by Paul Edwards. (passive)

William Allen White Library

Always use the full name on first reference. Upon further reference, if you choose to shorten the name, use WAW Library.

WebDAC

Contacts within each department who submit changes to the emporia.edu website.

Welch Stadium

Always use the full name on first reference. Upon further reference, if you choose to shorten the name, use Welch.

Wilson Park

Always use the full name in any reference.

Wooster Lake

Always use the full name on first reference. Upon further reference, if you choose to shorten the name, use Wooster.

Questions? Contact Us.

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