



MVCC

MOHAWK VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

WRITING STYLE GUIDE

Guidelines for writing style.



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The Mohawk Valley Community College Writing Style Guide exists to support the MVCC brand by providing a consistent tone of professionalism in all College communications.

This Style Guide will be a useful tool in helping anyone preparing internal or external communications, including, but not limited to, news releases, posters, one-sheets, brochures, catalogs, postcards, banners, and advertisements. Strictly following these guidelines unifies the College's voice and fosters clarity and practicality.

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The Writing Style Guide was developed by the MVCC Marketing and Communications Department to provide consistent language to the College for use in all publications. Many entries follow Associated Press style, but other style guides also were consulted, including those from local publications, local colleges, other community colleges, and SUNY.

Be advised that this Writing Style Guide will be updated periodically to incorporate new usages as language evolves.



A

Acronyms

Do not use periods in acronyms, including MVCC, GPA (grade point average), US, BCE/CE (Common Era), etc. [Deviation from AP Style] See **States**.

Spell out what the acronym stands for on first reference with the acronym in parentheses. Acronym can then be used on all following references.

Exceptions for acronyms that are well-known (FBI, CIA, MVCC, etc.).

Addresses

Follow AP Style, including always spelling out “Drive” when it’s used. (1101 Sherman Drive OR “...campus on Sherman Drive;” 1101 Floyd Ave. OR “...campus on Floyd Avenue”)

Advisor

Ages

Always use numbers.

Also

“Also” should not split an infinitive verb (ex. Correct usage: “She also will be taking English next semester.” Incorrect usage: “She will also be taking English next semester.”)

Alumni

Use “alumnus” for a single male. Use “alumna” for a single female. Use “alumni” for plural men, women, or a combination of both [deviation from the plural Latin usage]. “Alum” or “alums” can be used informally.

And

Always use “and,” not an ampersand symbol (&); acceptable as use as a graphic element.

C

Cancel, Canceled, Canceling, Cancellation

Only “cancellation” has two “l’s.”

Central New York

Always capitalize.

Class Year

Always use for MVCC alumni. Make sure the apostrophe is facing away from the year (ex. Joe Smith '05).

Course Names

Courses are either to be referred to as their name - English: Composition - or by their abbreviation - EN101. Never use spaces between the the abbreviated category and the course number.

D

Dates

AP Style is preferred when space allows. When full dates are used (ex. July 9, 2015), abbreviate months as follows:

Jan.	April	July	Oct.
Feb.	May	Aug.	Nov.
March	June	Sept.	Dec.

When using only the month and year, spell out all of the months (ex. September 2015). All event notifications should follow this order: time, date, place (ex. The Cultural Series event will take place at 7 p.m. Jan. 1, 2019, in Schafer Theater). Exceptions can be made for usage on formal invitations.

Degrees

Always use “associate,” never “associate’s” degree. Don’t include periods in the acronyms for associate degree designations (AA, AS, AAS, AOS).

Preferred style is that degrees are “earned,” not “received” (ex. Joe Smith earned an associate degree in Nursing from MVCC in 2005.).

Capitalize the name and abbreviations of academic degrees whether they follow personal names or stand by themselves (ex. Joe Smith, Doctor of Law; Mary Wilson, D.Eng.; She recently earned a Ph.D.). Do not use degree designations with names unless it’s relevant to the story. Refer to it as “a bachelor’s,” “master’s,” or “doctoral” degree. Don’t capitalize doctorate, doctoral, bachelor’s, master’s, or other degrees. The plural form of a degree is the same as the singular (ex. bachelor’s degrees). Refer to the person as a doctor only if they are a medical doctor. Refer to a person with a Ph.D. as professor if they hold that title, or add Ph.D. after the name. Use periods with degree abbreviations for advanced degrees, including Ph.D., J.D., Ed.D., Psy.D., etc.

E

Email

All one word, not capitalized in copy.

F

Faculty Names

Only use middle initial if they ask for it or give it for use. Always use it for President Randall J. VanWagoner when he is addressed formally.

First-come, First-served

G

Grade Point Average

Always use “GPA” - all capitals and no periods.

H

Health care

Always two words except in official names (ex. Sitrin Healthcare).

L

Locations

For external communications, always spell out the name of buildings. If a room is included in the copy, use this style: Payne Hall room 366. For internal communications, use of abbreviations is accepted in this style: PH366 (no space in between building abbreviation and room number).

M

Media

Treat as a collective noun (ex. The media is invited.). Also the preferred usage for all forms of the plural of “medium.”

Mohawk Valley Community College

Spell out the name of the College of first reference. Use “MVCC” on all following references. When referring to MVCC as “the College,” capitalize “college.”

Money

Follow AP Style. Always use the dollar sign (\$) in front of a numerical monetary value. If the value is a whole number, do not include the decimal or the tenths and hundredths value places (ex. Use \$13, not \$13.00). For cents or amounts of \$1 million or more, spell out the words “cents,” “million,” “billion,” etc. (ex. \$26, \$26.52, \$100, \$8 million, 6 cents).

N

New York State

Always capitalize. Preferred usage over “State of New York.”

Numbers

Follow AP Style, except as a graphic element. Spell out zero through nine, and use numerals for 10 and above. If the number begins a sentence, always spell it out.

Use numbers for units of measurement, including feet, height, and weight, ages, money, percentages, and temperatures.

O

Offices

Capitalize the name of an MVCC office when referring to it as listed in the directory. Follow writer’s discretion in publications.

P

Percentages

Follow AP Style. Always use “percent” and never use the percent sign (%) (ex. 54 percent).

Phone Numbers

Always include area codes. Use this style - 315-792-5330 - for external communications and this style - x5330 - for internal communications.

Prerequisite

All one word; no hyphens.

Program Names

Capitalize official MVCC degree programs. Do not capitalize it if it’s a general program or a program

from another institution (ex. Joe Smith '05 earned a certificate in Airframe and Powerplant Technology. Joe Smith earned a degree in electrical engineering.).

S

Semesters

Seasonal semesters are always capitalized (ex. Fall semester and Spring semester) when referred to as a specific semester.

Sports Teams

MVCC's athletic teams are the Hawks.

The mascot's name is Mo.

When teams are designated by men's or women's, use an apostrophe (ex. "women's basketball," not "womens basketball").

States

Follow AP Style:

Alabama	Ala.
Arizona	Ariz.
Arkansas	Ark.
California	Calif.
Colorado	Colo.
Connecticut	Conn.
Delaware	Del.
Florida	Fla.
Georgia	Ga.
Illinois	Ill.
Indiana	Ind.
Kansas	Kan.
Kentucky	Ky.
Louisiana	La.
Maryland	Md.
Massachusetts	Mass.
Michigan	Mich.
Minnesota	Minn.

Mississippi	Miss.
Missouri	Mo.
Montana	Mont.
Nebraska	Neb.
Nevada	Nev.
New Hampshire	N.H.
New Jersey	N.J.
New Mexico	N.M.
New York	N.Y.
North Carolina	N.C.
North Dakota	N.D.
Oklahoma	Okla.
Oregon	Ore.
Pennsylvania	Penn.
Rhode Island	R.I.
South Carolina	S.C.
South Dakota	S.D.
Tennessee	Tenn.
Vermont	Vt.
Virginia	Va.
Washington	Wash.
West Virginia	W.Va.
Wisconsin	Wis.
Wyoming	Wyo.

T

Time

Follow AP Style. When a time is indicated, do not use the minute places if the time is on the hour (ex. 9 a.m., not 9:00 a.m.). Always use this style when referring to morning or evening after the time: a.m./p.m. (always lowercase and with periods). If morning or evening is indicated in the copy, do not use a.m./p.m. to avoid redundancy. For 12 p.m., use "noon," and for 12 a.m., use "midnight."

Titles

Capitalize all MVCC faculty and staff titles no matter where they are in the sentence. For people with

outside titles, only capitalize their title if it comes before their name.

U

Upstate New York

Never use this phrase. Always use the official region name.

V

Veterans Services

Follows federal department name style. Also correct: Student Veterans Association.

W

Webpage/Website

One word; not capitalized in copy.

Do not include “www.” in front of website URLs in copy. Include a period after the URL if they end a sentence.



Appendix 1: Official Names of MVCC Offices

Office of the President

Alumni Office
Center for Corporate and Community Education
(CCED)
Events and Guest Services
Executive Director of Organizational Development
Foundation
Human Resources
Institutional Advancement
Marketing and Communications

Rome Campus

Office of the Dean
Student Services Center

Vice President for Administrative Services

Auxiliary Services
Business Office
Department of Public Safety (DPS)
Facilities and Operations
Follett Bookstore
Information Technology
Institutional Research and Analysis
Office Services
Payroll
Purchasing
Sodexo

Vice President for Learning and Academic Affairs

Academic Development and Innovation
Academic Systems
Art Department (ARTD)
Athletics, Physical Education, and Recreation
Department (APER)
Business, Cybersecurity, and Computer Sciences
Department (BCCS)

Dual Credit
Education and Language Studies Department
(EDLS)
Educational Technologies
Health Professions Department (HLTP)
Humanities Department (HUEN)
Institute for Emergency Preparedness and Public
Service
Mathematics and Natural Sciences Department
(MNSC)
Rome Campus Library
Social Sciences and Public Services Department
(SSPS)
Physical Sciences, Engineering, and Applied
Technologies Department (PSAT)
Utica Campus Library

Vice President for Student Affairs

Academic Advisement
Admissions
Adult Learner Services
Assessment and Testing Center
Career Services
College-Community-Connection (C3)
Collegiate Science and Technology Entry Program
(CSTEP)
Counseling Services
Financial Aid
Health Center
International Student Services Office
Judicial Affairs/New Directions Program
MVCC Math Corps.
Office of Accessibility Resources (OAR)
Office of Civic Responsibilities
Office of Records and Registration
Residence Life
Science and Technology Entry Program (STEP)
Student Activities
Student Engagement and Leadership
Student Enrollment and Retention Services
Student Service Center
University Partners and Transfer Center (UPTC)
Veteran Education Services



Appendix 2: Official Names of MVCC Spaces

Academic Building (AB)

Alumni College Center (ACC)

Commons
Follett Bookstore
Hawks Nest Resident Dining Hall

Bellamy Hall

Butterfield Hall

Daugherty Hall

Huntington Hall

Education Outreach Center (EOC)

Information Technology and Performing Arts Building (IT)

Beebe Construction Services Lounge
Denise DiGiorgio Lounge
Excellus Blue Cross Blue Shield Training and Conference Center
Mandia Family Learning Commons
Michael I. Schafer Theater
The Community Foundation of Herkimer and Oneida Counties Atrium
Virginia M. and Edward Juergensen Gallery

Payne Hall (PH)

Penfield Hall

Plumley Complex (PC)

Festine Auditorium

Robert R. Jorgensen Athletic and Event Center (JC)

Field House
Mike Briggs Fitness Center

Science and Technology Building (ST)

FABLab

thINCubator

