

The Editorial Style Guide

Durham Technical Community College

Updated January 2022

Introduction

The Durham Technical Community College *Editorial Style Guide* is the standard guide for all College faculty and staff. It addresses stylistic questions unique to the academic setting as well as specific issues for Durham Tech webpages and publications. When presenting an image that accurately represents the quality of Durham Tech and its faculty and staff, a consistent and coherent message is key. Therefore, the rules in this guide must be applied when producing a publication or document associated with the College, such as an article or webpage.

This document is divided into three sections. The first focuses on matters specific to Durham Tech and situations that are frequently encountered. The second reviews basic grammar and punctuation rules. The third section addresses ways to write about specific topics such as race, gender identity, and people with disabilities.

These guidelines draw heavily from *The Associated Press Stylebook* with some deference to *The Chicago Manual of Style*. The following guidelines also includes sources from *Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, *Webster's Third International Dictionary*, Modern Language Association, and United Press International. For questions not addressed in this manual, please contact the Marketing and Communications department.

All promotional materials for prospective students or the general public must be reviewed and approved by the Marketing and Communications department. For questions on brand and style guidelines, contact Nathan Hardin at hardinn@durhamtech.edu.

To learn more about our branding and visual identity guidelines, see the [Durham Tech Brand Guidelines](#) or contact Heather Remley at remleyh@durhamtech.edu.

Table of Contents

The Editorial Style Guide	0
Introduction.....	1
General, common Durham Tech usage	3
A1. Academic degrees	3
A2. Preferred spellings at Durham Tech.....	6
A3. College buildings and locations	8
A4. Capitalization.....	10
A5. Names	13
A6. Titles (includes academic, military, religion, etc.).....	15
A7. Numbers and numerals.....	17
A8. Times and dates.....	19
A9. Addresses and locations.....	21
A10. Plurals	23
A11. Titles (books, films, music, etc.).....	23
A12. The internet, computing terms	24
Grammar, punctuation	25
B1. Active/passive voice, verbs.....	25
B2. Pronouns	25
B3. Possessives	26
B4. Commas	28
B5. Prefixes, hyphens.....	28
B6. Parentheses	31
B7. Bullets.....	31
B8. Spacing, punctuation	31
General styles and rules	31
C1. Racial designations.....	31
C2. Gender Use.....	32
C3. Illness or disability.....	32
C4. Use of public records and affirmative action statements	33

General, common Durham Tech usage

A1. Academic degrees

a1.1. When referring to diplomas, degrees, and certificates awarded by Durham Tech, use the following styles including capitalization.

The following list includes frequently used abbreviations for academic degrees, boards, and organizations. No spaces or periods are needed between letters. If a publication has a mix of styles, use the College style as seen below.

Also refer to the list when needing to list the full name of the degree, board, or organization.

AA	Associate in Arts
ABOC	American Board of Opticianry
AND	Associate Degree in Nursing
AE	Associate in Engineering
AFA	Associate of Fine Arts
AGE	Associate in General Education
AS	Associate in Science
AAS	Associate in Applied Science
BA	Bachelor of Arts
BSN	Baccalaureate Degree in Nursing
BS	Bachelor of Science
CDA	Certified Dental Assistant
CDO	Certified Dispensing Optician
CDT	Certified Dental Technician
CAN	Certified Nurse Assistant
CNM	Certified Nurse Midwife (RN with advanced training)
CNOR	Certified Nurse Operating Room
CO	Certified Optician
COTA	Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant
COTA/L	Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant/Licensed

CPhT	Certified Pharmacy Technician
CRT	Certified Respiratory Therapist
CRTT	Certified Respiratory Therapy Technician
CST	Certified Surgical Technologist
DDS	Doctor of Dental Surgery
DMD	Doctor of Medical Dentistry
EdD	Doctor of Education
JD	Juris Doctor (Doctor of Law)
LDO	Licensed Dispensing Optician (what we actually are in NC)
LO	Licensed Optician (what we tend to use in NC)
LPN	Licensed Practical Nurse
MA	Master of Arts
MBA	Master of Business Administration
MD	Medicine Doctor (Doctor of Medicine)
MEd	Master of Education
MLS	Master of Library Science
MLIS	Master of Library and Information Studies
MS	Master of Science
MSN	Master of Science in Nursing
NP	Nurse Practitioner (RN with advanced training)
OTR	Occupational Therapist Registered
OTR/L	Occupational Therapist Registered/Licensed
PharmD	Doctor of Pharmacy
PhD	Philosophiae Doctor (Doctor of Philosophy)
RA	Restorative Aide
RDH	Registered Dental Hygienist
RN	Registered Nurse

RPh	Registered Pharmacist
RRT	Registered Respiratory Therapist
ST	Surgical Technologist

To make any of the above abbreviations plural, add a -s. [AAs, ASs, BAs]. Refer to section [a10](#) for more on plurals.

The word *degree* should not follow an abbreviation of the degree.

- Correct: She has a BA in history.
- Incorrect: She has a BA degree in history.

In cases where you use the degree's full name and the word *degree*, do not capitalize the word *degree*.

- Correct: Associate in Arts degree
- Incorrect: Associate in Science Degree

When referring to an academic degree in more general or shortened terms, capital letters are not needed. An apostrophe and s are needed when shortening degrees to *master's* and *bachelor's*, but there is no possessive for *associate degree*.

- Correct: associate degree
- bachelor's degree
- bachelor's in anthropology
- master's degree
- master's in engineering
- doctorate in physical education
- She has a doctorate in philosophy.
- She holds a master's in the subject.
- She holds an associate's degree.

- Incorrect: associate's degree
- a Bachelor's degree
- Master degree
- She has a Doctorate's in philosophy.

a1.2. Graduation honors.

When writing the following honors, lowercase each word:

cum laude

magna cum laude

summa cum laude

A2. Preferred spellings at Durham Tech

For consistency, please use the following spellings and usage.

admission (when referring to anything other than the college's department)

advising (not advisement)

advisor (not adviser)

a lot (not alot)

alumni (not alumnuses)

appendixes (preferred to appendices)

bilingual (not bi-lingual)

cannot (not can not)

catalog (not catalogue)

child care (not childcare)

classroom (not class room)

class work (not classwork)

coeducational, coed (not co-educational)

cooperative (not co-operative but use Co-Op or co-op when abbreviating)

coordinator (not co-ordinator)

corequisite (not co-requisite)

co-sponsor (not cosponsor)

counselor (not counsellor)

course work (not coursework)

curricula (not curriculums)

database (not data base)

day care (not daycare and not day-care)

daytime (not day time)

decision-making

dropout (as a noun); drop out (as a verb)

email (not e-mail or Email)

ensure (preferred to insure except when the reference is insurance-related)

extracurricular (not extra-curricular)

fieldwork (not field work)

first-come, first-served (not first come, first served)

fliers (not flyers)

fundraiser, fundraising

grant writing (as a noun): grant-writing (as an adjective, grant-writing experience)

health care (not healthcare)

intercultural (not inter-cultural)

international (not inter-national)

lifelong (not life-long)

microcomputer (not micro-computer)

Mini-Session (not mini-session, minisession, or Minisession)

multicultural (not multi-cultural)

Multi-Purpose Room (not Multipurpose Room and not Multi-purpose room)

multipurpose (all other uses)

non-credit (not noncredit)

nonprofit (not non-profit)

online (not on line and not on-line)

paraprofessional (not para-professional)

postsecondary (not post-secondary)

preregistration (not pre-registration)
prerequisite (not pre-requisite)
preschool (not pre-school)
recordkeeping (not record keeping and not record-keeping)
résumé (not resume)
statewide (not state-wide)
syllabi (not syllabuses)
textbooks (not text books)
timeline (not time line and not time-line)
webpage (not web page)
website (not web site)
workforce (not work force)
work-study (when referring to the federal financial aid program)

Other Durham Tech wording preferences:

college (not school)
course
class (when referring to the group of people in a course or the actual class section meeting)
faculty member or instructor (not teacher or professor) (Note, some staff members can also be instructors.)
first-year, second-year (etc.) student (not freshman, sophomore, etc. This only applies to a student's status at Durham Tech, not other schools or colleges.)

For the College's specifications pertaining to its name, see [a4.4](#).

A3. College buildings and locations

The following are the full names of campus buildings and special rooms. Always use the full name unless otherwise noted.

Note, the abbreviations are used without periods.

First Mention

Subsequent Mentions

American Tobacco Campus	ATC
Building 6	Building 6
Center for Academic Excellence	CAE
Center for the Global Learner	CGL
Duke Street North	DSN
GlaxoSmithKline Technology Center (Building 9)	Tech Center
Educational Resources Center (Building 5)	ERC
Edward L. Phillips Building (Building 3)	Phillips Building
Facility Services Building (Building 7)	Facility Services
George W. Newton Industrial Newton Center and Engineering Technologies Center (Building 4)	Newton Center
Harold K. Collins Building (Building 2)	Collins Building
Northern Durham Center	NDC
Main Campus	Main Campus
Orange County Campus	OCC
Phail Wynn, Jr. Student Services Center (Building 10)	Wynn Center
Small Business Center	SBC
Teaching-Learning Center	TLC
The Chesterfield	The Chesterfield
Nathaniel B. White Building (Building 1)	White Building
William G. Ingram Center for Applied Learning and Technology	Ingram Center

Use the full name on first reference. If needing to refer to the location again in the document, put the acronym in parentheses after the full name. This may be modified to fit editorial standards for media publications.

The exhibit is housed in the Educational Resources Center (ERC). The ERC also contains the Library.

When referring to a specific room, list the building name, building number, and the room number. If a room has a specific name, capitalize the name of the room.

That course is offered in Collins 2-311 this semester.

The Center for the Global Learner is in the Nathaniel B. White Building (Building 1). The Multi-Purpose Room is in the Phail Wynn, Jr. Student Services Center (Building 10). The College Café is always in the Wynn Center.

The Student Government Association will meet in the Barbara Baker Activities Room inside the Wynn Center.

A4. Capitalization

a4.1. Academic departments and programs.

Capitalize the title of the division, department, or program, but do not capitalize *division*, *department*, or *program* regardless of format, including when they are used alone.

Health Technologies department

Clinical Trials Research Associate program

the department

Student Engagement, Development, and Support division

For more on preferred spellings, refer to [A2](#) and a4.4.

a4.2. Academic professional titles.

Capitalize when used directly before or after a name. For more on titles, see [A6](#).

Executive Vice President Tom Jaynes

Tom Jaynes, Executive Vice President at Durham Tech

Executive Dean of Orange County Services Penny Gluck

Penny Gluck, Executive Dean of Orange County Services

a4.3. Class.

Capitalize the word *class* when used with a class year, but use lowercase in general class references.

Annie is a member of the Riverside High School Class of '14.

Jamie is a member of our class.

Use lowercase for high school or four-year university class designations: *first-year*, *sophomore*, *junior*, *senior*, or *graduate*.

Ken, a senior this year, plans to attend Durham Tech.

The sophomore class built a winning parade float.

a4.4. The College.

When referring to Durham Tech, capitalize *College* when used apart from *Durham Tech* but not when it refers to college in general. For more specifics on how to use Durham Tech on first and second references, see [a5.1](#). For more on how to use The College as a possessive, refer to [b3.6](#).

Students at the College love the Wynn Center.

The College addresses the need for workforce development.

Banks is having a great college experience at Durham Tech.

a4.5. Committees and boards.

When *committee* is a term used in an official committee name, it is capitalized when the name is used in full. Otherwise, lowercase *office* or *committee*.

Correct: The Council on Committees

The committee's decision is final.

Incorrect: Viva the Arts Committee (official name is Viva the Arts)

The word *board* is not capitalized with the exception of the Durham Tech Board of Trustees and the Durham Tech Foundation Board of Directors. For more specifics of how to use these board names on first and second reference, see [a5.1](#).

Correct: The company is looking for a new board of governors.

The Durham Tech Board of Trustees approved the minutes.

Incorrect: The Board listened to the speaker's presentation.

The Durham Tech Foundation board of directors presented their strategy.

Note that there are no other boards affiliated with the College. (For example, our advisory committees are committees and should not be referred to as boards.)

a4.6. Counties.

When referring to one county, capitalize both the name of the county and the word *county*. When talking about more than one county, only capitalize the name and make the word *county* plural. For related rules on locations, see [A9](#).

Main Campus is located in Durham County.

Durham Tech serves Durham and Orange counties.

a4.7. Course titles.

Capitalize the subject aside from prepositions but not the word *course*.

Computer Integrated Machining

Calculus II

Italian Renaissance Art

a4.8. The following are always capitalized:

First-Year Experience
The College Success course (ACA 122)
President's Lecture Series
Teaching-Learning Center
The Testing Center
Durham Tech Library
ConnectSession
ConnectCenter
ConnectMail
Self-Service
Eagle Connect program

a4.9. Headings, headlines, and subheadings take an initial cap only.

Correct: Students receive scholarship to local university
Incorrect: Foundation Granted \$150,000 For Scholarship Funds

a4.10. Honorific titles.

When used in text without a specific name, all honorifics should be lowercase. Refer to [A6](#) for more rules on titles.

The general disagreed violently with the senator, and only the chaplain could prevent them from coming to blows.

a4.11. Majors and minors.

Majors and minors are not capitalized in text except in the case of proper nouns. The *m* in *major* is not capitalized.

psychology major
history minor
French major
Jewish studies minor

a4.12. President's List.

The term *President's List* is capitalized.

Annie made the President's List first semester.

a4.13. Scholars and scholarship titles.

Scholarship names should always be capitalized.

Durham Tech Promise

Jack Kent Cooke Foundation Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship

The following titles should have principal words capitalized:

Scholar of Global Distinction

Goodnight Scholars

a4.14. Special Events.

Capitalize *Scholarship Breakfast*, *Achievement Breakfast*, and *Durham Tech Commencement*.

A5. Names

a5.1. Durham Tech usages (board names, etc).

On first reference of the College, use *Durham Technical Community College* as space permits.

Durham Tech or *the College* are acceptable on second reference. See [a4.4](#) for when to use *the College* versus *the college*.

Do not use *DTCC* or *Tech* as an abbreviation at any time.

Durham Technical Community College offers more than 100 credit program options.
Students at the College are very satisfied with the range of program choices.

The College's full name must be used on first reference of the Durham Tech Foundation and its Board of Directors and the College's Board of Trustees if it is also the first time you are referring to the college. Otherwise, using *Durham Tech* when mentioning these entities is acceptable.

There are no other boards affiliated with the College. (For example, our advisory committees are committees and should not be referred to as boards.)

Correct: The company is looking for a new board of governors.

The Durham Tech Board of Trustees approved the minutes.

Incorrect: The Board listened to the speaker's presentation.

The Durham Tech Foundation board of directors presented their strategy.

For official College communications, J.B. Buxton should be used with periods. In informal communications (i.e. internal emails), JB may be used in correspondence. A full spelling of John (J.B.) Buxton should only be used for historical or biography communications and should include parentheses. Do not use quotations around J.B. on any reference.

See the Preferred Spellings section, [A2](#), for related rules.

a5.2. Acronyms.

Aside from well-known acronyms, do not use acronyms in place of a group/organization's full name on first reference. Do not include the acronym after the full name if the acronym won't be mentioned again in the document. An acronym should follow in parentheses after a group/organization's name.

President J.B. Buxton presented a \$5,000 check to Children's Hospital of Durham.
[*Children's Hospital of Durham receives one mention only.*]

Lisa Banks presented a \$5,000 check to Children's Hospital of Durham (CHOD). The gift was one of many CHOD received that evening.

Durham Tech students have participated in several NASA projects.

a5.3. First, last names.

Use a person's full name on first reference and only their last name on second reference.

Mary Lewis submitted a grant request. Lewis would use the funds towards her program.

If two or more relatives with the same last name are mentioned in the same piece but aren't referenced more than once, use only their first names and relation to the subject when you reference them.

Lindsey Johnson was throwing a party. Johnson's parents, Mitch and Lisa, were out of town.

If the relatives are mentioned frequently or if two or more unrelated people with the same last name are mentioned, use the person's first name in subsequent references.

Jack Mitchell threw the ball, which his neighbor, Lauren Mitchell, caught. Lauren threw the ball back to Jack.

In cases of names with *Jr.*, *Sr.*, and numbers like *III*, use adjectives like *older* or *younger* or nouns that indicate how they relate the subject to clarify to which individual you are referring. This is a case when using a person's full name on second reference is acceptable if it helps avoid confusion.

Gerald Jones, Jr., met his father, Gerald Jones, Sr., and his son, Gerald Jones, III, at the diner for lunch. The eldest Gerald and his grandson Gerald always get the hamburger combo, while Gerald Jones, Jr., prefers the fish sandwich.

If the last name is hyphenated, use the full last name on second reference.

Dr. Christine Kelly-Kleese gave a presentation in the Wynn Multi-Purpose Room. After she finished, Kelly-Kleese took questions from the audience.

If the person's last name has two parts not joined together by a hyphen, include both surnames on second reference. If there is confusion as to whether the name in the middle is a middle name or part of the person's last name, either consult the individual or, when applicable such as with a scholar, author, etc., consult the person's website or works that mentioned/cited them.

Julie Andrews plays Maria von Trapp in the "The Sound of Music," which is based off the real von Trapp family.

a5.4. Nicknames, middle names.

If the person requests their nickname be included, the nickname should be in quotes and either follow a person's middle name if it's provided or be placed between the first and last name. Middle names do not need to be in quotes.

Dr. Jessica "Jess" Wilkins researched extensively about how climate change impacts wildlife.

Mike Carlisle Jackson went for a walk around his neighborhood.

Nicknames and middle names are helpful to include if the subject often uses their nickname or middle name instead of their first name.

For more on making names plural and possessive, see [b3.3](#).

A6. Titles (includes academic, military, religion, etc.)

a6.1. Job descriptions.

A person's title and credentials generally follow their name.

Sven Krypton, Assistant Instructor of Dianetics [*not* Assistant Instructor of Dianetics
Sven Krypton]

If a person has more than one role at the College, use their applicable role unless otherwise requested.

Penny Gluck, Executive Dean of Orange County Services, talked about all of the upcoming Orange County events. [Penny is also the Executive Director of the Center for Community and Workforce Engagement.]

Abbreviating a person's title is acceptable when space is limited such as in a headline.

Instructor Albert Smith receives country's top honor

If needing to look up a person's title, refer first to the Staffing Chart at durhamtech.edu/directory. If the person is not included in the Staffing Chart, use the directory but bear in the mind that the title needs to be listed in your document in accordance with this guide.

a6.2. Academic titles.

The honorific *Dr.* should only be used on first reference to a medical doctor or an academic who has earned a doctorate. An exception is when the title is used in a direct quote.

Dr. Jim Mulligan gave the opening speech. Mulligan reflected on his time at Durham Tech.

Abbreviations such as *Dr.* or *Esq.* (for *Esquire*) should not appear with any other title or with abbreviations indicating scholastic degrees.

Note, when referring to the College's president, use only their *President* title.

Correct: Ford Maddux, AB, PhD

Incorrect: Dr. Ford Maddux, AB, PhD

Correct: John L. Smith, Esq.

James A. Jones, Jr., Esq.

Incorrect: John L. Smith Esq., AM

Correct: President Bill Ingram

Incorrect: President Dr. Bill Ingram

a6.3. Mr., Mrs., Ms.

The titles of *Mr.*, *Mrs.*, and *Ms.* are never to be used.

a6.4. Jr., Sr., numbers.

Abbreviations such as *Jr.*, *Sr.*, and *III* are applied only when a person's full name is given. The abbreviations *Jr.* and *Sr.* are the only ones set off by commas.

Mr. James Jefferson, Jr., was once governor.

Dexter Harrison III spoke at the commencement.

Exception: Dr. Phail Wynn Jr. and the Phail Wynn, Jr. Student Services Center don't take a comma after *Jr.*

a6.5. Political.

Names of political officeholders should be prefaced by their titles on first reference.

Use the surname in other references, although use of title is permitted in direct quotations.

President Barack Obama shook hands with members of the audience. Obama then proceeded down the aisle.

Common title abbreviations include *Gov.*, *Govs.*, *Rep.*, *Reps.*, *Sen.*, and *Sens.*, and can be used before a person's first name on first reference. Proceed with the person's state abbreviation or *U.S.* If referring to a member of Congress, specify the state they represent.

N.C. Gov. Roy Cooper

U.S. Sens. Richard Burr and Thom Tillis, of North Carolina

When using a title in a general sense, spell out and lowercase the word.

The senator spoke to the students.

a6.6. Military.

Military titles should always precede the name with the branch of service following. Titles are usually abbreviated but do not take the same all-uppercase usage as the listing of the armed services themselves.

Sgt. Vincent Carter, U.S.M.C.

Capt. Alan Shepard, U.S.N.

a6.7. Do not capitalize the title *coach* and its variants.

The Dallas Cowboys announced the firing of head coach Wade Phillips.

a6.8. Religious.

When referring to a person of position in a church or other religious setting, refer to the individual's preference in accordance with their religion (*the Rev.*, *Pastor*, etc.) and only use the title on first reference. An exception is when the title is used in a direct quote.

A7. Numbers and numerals

a7.1. General rule, ordinals.

Numbers from zero to nine should be spelled out. Numbers 10 and higher should appear as numerals. The same applies to the ordinal use of those numbers.

Ordinals should not be superscripted.

first

12th [not 12th]

ninth

A comma should be used when writing a number over 999.

1,000

3, 400, 696

a7.2. Numerals are acceptable when used from 0 to 9 or 1st to 9th for the following: political or military designations, ratios, clothing sizes, speeds, dates, and page, chapter, or scene numbers.

1st Ward

3rd Regiment

outnumbered 3–1

Students turned to page 34 to begin reading Act 1, Scene 3, of the play.

a7.3. Numbers 10 and greater should be spelled out when they start a sentence. Avoid these placements when possible.

Seventy-five students danced in the quad Friday.

a7.4. Ages.

Use numerals to indicate ages. Note the punctuation used in the examples.

The boy is 4 years old.

The 4-year-old boy is playing ball.

Sam Jones, 42, played football when he was in high school.

a7.5. Telephone numbers.

Numerals should be used for telephone numbers.

It is acceptable to have just extensions if the piece is for internal use of faculty and staff only, meaning not meant for the viewing of students or the community/outside organizations. Always place a comma after the extension if it is not at the end of the sentence.

If you are interested in participating in the professional development workshop, call ext. 8083.

Contact the Financial Aid Office at ext. 1503, for more information.

The full number plus the area code must be listed on anything intended for students and/or public viewing such as webpages, flyers, brochures, etc. Use hyphens for the phone numbers and commas to set off the extension.

Marketing and Communications department: 919-536-7246, ext. 5206

For information about our RSVP program, call 919-536-7200, ext. 5301, during the week.

a7.6. Decimals and fractions.

Numerals are generally acceptable when needing to include decimals and fractions for statistics, data, recipes, and similar purposes. Avoid using them when possible, mainly when writing long-form items such as blog entries, stories, or articles.

1/4 cup of sugar

He read half his book last night. [Rather than: He read 1/2 his book last night.]

a7.7. Percentages.

In text, refer to the rules outlined in [a7.1](#) for numerals and in a7.6 for decimals, and use the word *percent* instead of the symbol unless you are writing a scientific or statistical piece. Numbers and the % symbol can be used in tables.

A grade point average of 3.8 is the equivalent of 95 percent.

Enrollment in the program was up five percent from last semester.

40% (used in a table)

a7.8. Measurements and temperatures.

When including any measurement unit in text, spell out the abbreviation. Refer to rule [a7.1](#) for how to write the numbers. See the following for including temperatures.

She runs two miles each day.

Numerals and symbols are appropriate when referring to a specific temperature in text.

It was 70°F outside today.

a7.9. Monetary values.

Numerals and a \$ should be used when discussing how much something costs.

\$1 million grant

The student spent \$395 on her textbooks for the semester.

a7.10. Rankings.

When listing a ranking, abbreviate and capitalize the word *number* to No., and use the numeral. Do not use the # sign.

Durham Tech moved from No. 7 to No. 1 on the list of Best Deals in Community Colleges.

A8. Times and dates

a8.1. Months.

Generally, it is acceptable to spell out the month when referring to a specific date. When you are listing several dates or are limited on space, abbreviate all the months that have more than five letters. Accepted abbreviations are *Jan.*, *Feb.*, *Aug.*, *Sept.*, *Oct.*, *Nov.*, *Dec.* If the list of dates repeats months, you do not have to list the month with each date.

Information sessions will be held July 10; Aug. 12; Oct 9, 12, and 20; and Nov. 12 and 23.

The fall semester begins August 13.

Do not abbreviate months written alone or with a year only.

Steve anticipates a cold January.

The program will start August 2020.

a8.2. Punctuation.

When writing a date consisting of month, day, and year, place a comma after the day and the year. Do not use a comma to separate only a month and year.

Durham Tech hosted its 2019 Commencement ceremony on May 14, 2019, at the Durham Performing Arts Center.

The food pantry will hold its next major food drive in February 2020.

a8.3. Do not use zeroes when referring to an even hour, and always lowercase *a.m.* and *p.m.*

3 a.m.

6 p.m.

a8.4. Do not use a day of the week when describing a past event.

Jim read from the minutes of the prior meeting held June 10. The next meeting will be Monday, June 12.

a8.5. Omit the word *on* when writing the date of an event.

Sam Smith died Nov. 17. [Not Sam Smith died on Nov. 17.]

Joe Jones and Carol Smith were married Dec. 2, 2001.

a8.6. Do not use ordinals in dates.

Sept. 11 [not Sept. 11th]

For more about ordinals, refer to [a7.1](#).

a8.7. Date and time ranges.

Shorten a range of years to eliminate the initial repeated digits, unless three or more digits will change in which case you would include both years.

1962–81

1999–2003 [not 1999–03]

Do not use *a.m.* or *p.m.* back-to-back when giving a range of times.

7–9 p.m. [Not: 7 p.m. –9 p.m.]

Date and time ranges may be signified with either *from . . . to* or with an en dash, but do not mix the two forms. In Word, the en dash can found in the “Symbol” menu item or created by holding down the Alt key and typing 0151.

The museum is open from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

The museum is open 9 a.m. –5:30 p.m.

[Not: The museum is open from 9 a.m. –5:30 p.m.]

Richard served in the Army from 1941 to 1945.

Richard served in the Army 1941-45.

[Not: Richard served in the Army from 1941-45.]

a8.8. Shortening years, decades.

An apostrophe with the tail pointing away from the digits (or a single closing quote) should precede a contracted year.

'98 [Not: '98]

Do not use a 's when referring to a decade.

2000s [Not: 2000's]

'90s [Not: 90's]

A9. Addresses and locations

a9.1. Addresses.

Use *Ave.*, *Bvd.*, and *St.* only with a numbered address.

1600 Pennsylvania Ave.

Spell out these three words when used alone and also lowercase the street type when combined with at least one other street name.

Dan's house is on Pennsylvania Avenue.
Lucy Laney and Walker boulevards

Always spell out similar words (*alley, drive, road, terrace, etc.*).

Always use numerals for a street number and street names Do not superscript ordinals in street names.

7 5th Ave. (Not 7 5th Ave.)
100 Gibson Road

For more on how to write numbers, see [A7](#).

a9.2. States.

Generally, it is acceptable and recommended to include the full state name even when listed with a city.

North Carolina is an exception in the following cases:

- When referring to a lesser-known city (See rule under the chart for more)
- When referring to a state politician or similar usage (N.C. Gov. Roy Cooper)
- When referring to a state organization if the organization abbreviates the name

Another exception is when you need to abbreviate the state for space purposes. Should that need occur, refer to the following chart for the correct abbreviation.

Alabama – Ala.	Indiana – Ind.	Montana – Mont.	Pennsylvania – Pa.
Alaska	Iowa	Nebraska – Neb.	Rhode Island – R.I.
Arizona – Ariz.	Kansas – Kan.	Nevada – Nev.	South Carolina – S.C.
Arkansas – Ark.	Kentucky – Ky.	New Hampshire – N.H.	South Dakota – S.D.
California – Calif.	Louisiana – La.	New Jersey – N.J.	Tennessee – Tenn.
Colorado – Colo.	Maine	New Mexico – N.M.	Texas
Connecticut – Conn.	Maryland – Md.	New York – N.Y.	Utah
Delaware – Del.	Massachusetts – Mass.	North Carolina – N.C.	Vermont – Vt.
Florida – Fla.	Michigan – Mich.	North Dakota – N.D.	Virginia – Va.
Georgia – Ga.	Minnesota – Minn.	Ohio	Washington – Wash.

Hawaii	Mississippi – Miss.	Oklahoma – Okla.	West Virginia – W.Va.
Idaho	Missouri – Mo.	Oregon – Ore.	Wisconsin – Wis.
Illinois – Ill.			Wyoming – Wyo.

Apart from addresses, it is not necessary to add a state name or abbreviation behind a large, well-known city. Smaller cities and towns that border the College may also omit the state abbreviation.

Nancy moved to Denver. [Colorado *assumed*]

Nancy moved to Denver, N.C.

Nancy moved back to Raleigh temporarily while she looks for a home in Cary.

a9.3. Countries.

With the exception of the United States of America and the United Kingdom, do not abbreviate the names of countries.

U.S. [but *USA* with no periods]

UK

A10. Plurals

a10.1. Add –s to make single letters, like grades, and multiple letters, like degree abbreviations, plural. For more on degree names and their abbreviations, see [A1](#).

Annie got three As on her report card.

The RAs are planning six programs this year.

a10.2. Numerals.

Only a –s is needed to make numerals plural. For more on numbers, see [A7](#).

the 1980s

Boeing 757s

temperatures in the low 40s

A11. Titles (books, films, music, etc.)

Refer to these guidelines for titles of books, computer and video games, operas and plays, artistic and literary works, albums and songs, movies and radio and television shows, and lectures and speeches.

a11.1. Capitalizations, proper names.

Capitalize the first word of the title, principal words, and prepositions and conjunctions of four or more letters. (Ex: "Gone With the Wind")

Use the proper spelling or capitalization of the subject if it is atypical. For example, the "TODAY" show on NBC is formally spelled in all caps. If there are any questions about a subject's styling of its name, refer to the subject's official website for its proper style.

a11.2. Punctuation.

Titles of longer pieces should be italicized: conferences, magazines, books, newspapers, academic journals, films, television shows, long poems (epics like *Beowulf*), plays of three or more acts, operas, musical albums, and works of art.

Quotation marks should be used for shorter works: lectures, events, and presentations, short poems and stories, song titles, magazine and newspaper articles, essays, speeches, chapter titles, short films, and television and radio shows episodes.

In headline writing, don't italicize, and use only single quotes for titles.

The only exceptions are religious text and software titles, which require no formatting.

F. Scott Fitzgerald wrote *The Great Gatsby* and short story "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button."

She covered Adobe Photoshop during her "Photoshop 101" presentation at the *Digital Works* conference.

a11.3. Foreign titles.

Keep a foreign title in its original language, and follow it with the English translation, if known, in parentheses, unless the English title is widely used.

UK version: *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*

U.S. version: *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* (This is the best one to use, given the series' popularity and name recognition in the U.S.)

A12. The internet, computing terms

a12.1. Omit *http://* and *www.* from the beginning of a link to a website or domain, unless the website won't work without it. Always test the link to make sure.

durhamtech.edu [Not: <https://www.durhamtech.edu>]

Be sure the link directs the reader to the correct page.

a12.2. When describing where to find a page, put the webpage's names in quotation marks.

Choose "Alumni," then "Volunteer."

a12.3. Computing terms

email

home page
internet
logon, log on – *Logon* is used as a noun or modifier; *log on* is a verb.
online
Website, webcam, webcast, webmaster, web page, webfeed, the web.

See [A2](#) for more preferred spellings.

Grammar, punctuation

B1. Active/passive voice, verbs

b1.1. Definitions.

Active voice is when the actor is the subject of the sentence. The actor is the object of sentences written in the passive voice, meaning the actor receives the action. Active sentences are preferred because using the active voice makes the sentence clearer and more concise.

Active: Susan went to the store to get some milk.

Passive: Milk was gotten from the store by Susan.

Active: Jack climbed the beanstalk

Passive: The beanstalk was climbed by Jack.

b1.2. Headlines, active verbs.

Article headlines should use active verbs. Keep headlines as concise as possible while being accurate. Please stay away from a question-and-answer format in your documents. For more about headline writing, see [a4.9](#).

Durham Tech students partner with NASA

B2. Pronouns

b2.1. Collective nouns

Collective nouns are words that indicate a group of people or objects: board, committee, chorus, class, etc.

Generally these nouns are seen as singular entities, so they would be replaced with a singular pronoun.

The group voted on its proposal. [*Its* refers to *the group*. The group is collectively voting on the same proposal.]

An exception would be if members of the group are acting individually.

The group gathered their belongings. [*Their* refers to *the group*. The group's members would be getting their own belongings instead of other people's belongings.]

Specifying who is in the group could help avoid confusion as to which pronoun to use.

Members of the board closed their meeting. [*Members* is a plural noun, so it would receive a plural pronoun.]

For more on the College's guidelines with pronouns, see [C2](#).

B3. Possessives

b3.1. Singular common nouns.

When a singular common noun ends in *-s*, add an *'s*. An exception is when the noun is followed by a word that begins with a *-s*. Then, you would add only an apostrophe.

actress's role

boss's tyranny

actress' spark

boss' signature

b3.2. Plural nouns.

For plural nouns ending in *-s*, add only an apostrophe.

Romanians' struggle

squirrels' nest

For those not ending in *-s*, add *'s*.

women's rights

alumni's donations

b3.3. Names.

Singular names ending in *-s* require an apostrophe and a *-s* to denote possession.

Jesse Helms's amendment

When referring to a group of people with the same last name, like a family, generally add *-s'*.

When the singular form of the name ends with a *-s*, *-z*, *-ss*, *-sh*, *-ch*, *-es*, or *-x*, add *-es'*. Refer to

the Rodriguezes' (Singular: Rodriguez's)

the Denvers' (Singular: Denver's)

b3.4. Joint possession.

Try to avoid joint possession when possible to make for a smoother sentence flow. In cases that are unavoidable, refer to the following.

When two or more people possess the same item, possession is only given to the last person listed.

Ross and Rachel's marriage crumbled.

Mark and Missy's cabin was ready for the weekend.

When two or more people possess more than one item, possession is given to all people listed.

Mitch's and Jack's trailers [Both Mitch and Jack have their own trailers.]

Alternate versions: Their trailers

The trailers of both Mitch and Jack

James's, Lucy's, and Julie's dogs [James, Lucy, and Julie all have their own dogs.]

Alternate versions: The dogs adopted separately by James, Lucy, and Julie

Their dogs

b3.5. Acronyms.

Add -'s for possessive form. For degree acronyms, refer to [A1](#). For the general rule regarding acronyms, visit [a5.2](#).

The RA's job is to be a leader.

b3.6. Inanimate objects.

When referring to Durham Tech, never make the school's name possessive. General references to "the College" can be possessive. For more on how to refer Durham Tech, see [a4.4](#).

The budget of Durham Tech [Rather than: Durham Tech's budget]

The College's library

No -'s is needed if the noun that's doing the possessing is a building, object, or piece of furniture.

car door [Rather than: car's door]

hotel room [Rather than: hotel's room]

couch arm [Rather than: couch's arm]

B4. Commas

This section covers uses of commas not previously mentioned. Refer to the rules on numbers, [A7](#), and times and dates, [a8.2](#), for additional uses.

b4.1. Coordinating conjunctions.

And, but, for, nor, or, so, and yet are coordinating conjunctions, which connect words, phrases, and clauses. Think FANBOYS to help remember them.

When one of these words connects two independent clauses (clauses that can form their own sentences), you need to use a comma before the conjunction.

Correct: Susan went to the store, and she got some milk. [“Susan ... store” and “she ... milk” can each be their own sentence.]

Incorrect: Susan went to the store and she got some milk. [This is considering a run-on sentence since there is no comma.]

Correct: Susan went to the store and got some milk.

Incorrect: Susan went to the store, and got some milk. [“Got some milk” can’t be a full sentence.]

b4.2. Lists.

When you have a simple list of people or objects, use commas to separate them including a comma before the conjunction (Oxford comma). When you list items or people that are grouped together as you list them or people with long titles, a semicolon can be used to avoid confusion.

Susan, Rick, and Mark kayaked down the river.

Susan, her husband, Bill, and their two kids; Rick and his wife, Lucy; and Mark, his cousin, and his brother went kayaking.

In attendance will be Michelle Johnson, Vice President of Marketing and Public Relations; Mitch Jones, Executive Chair of the Marketing Committee; and Dustin Hobbs, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

B5. Prefixes, hyphens

b5.1. Modifiers.

When two or more words precede a noun and need to act as one adjective, use a hyphen to separate the descriptive words. Hyphens generally aren’t needed when the phrase stands on its own, or doesn’t precede a noun.

on-campus housing [Housing is located on campus.]

off-campus parking [Parking can be found off campus.]

three-credit-hour class [This class counts for three credit hours.]

John works a part-time job. [John works part time.]

Do not use a hyphen in a compound modifier beginning with the word *very* or any adverb ending in *-ly*.

very green complexion
poorly planned wedding

Always use a hyphen (in any situation) in compounds beginning with *all-*, *self-*, *half-*, *high-*, and *low-* and ending with *-odd*. Other common prefixes include *cross-*, *long-*, *much-*, *ever-*, *still-*, and *pro-* when it is used to denote a position.

all-encompassing wisdom
knocked on 20-odd doors
pro-environment

Fractions and measurements also are hyphenated when used as a modifier:

two-thirds majority
10-foot pole
6-year-old girl

For more on numbers, refer to x.

b5.2. Award winners.

When referring to someone who has won a prize or award, use a hyphen when the fact is used as a modifier.

Nobel Prize-winning physicist Arno Penzias
Pulitzer Prize-winning cartoonist Jules Feiffer

Do not use a hyphen when the recognition is used as an appositive noun.

Nobel Prize winner Arlo Penzias
Jules Feiffer, Pulitzer Prize winner

b5.3. General rules, words.

Generally, you would use hyphens to avoid double vowels, triple consonants, or repetition of letters.

anti-intellectual
bell-like
co-own

Exceptions include *cooperate*, *coordinate*, and *preempt*.

Separate with a hyphen if the word to which the prefix is appended is capitalized.

pro-Little Debbie cakes

Words that are often hyphenated, minus exceptions in usage:

mothers-in-law, father-in-law, etc.

BAND-AID

cure-all

drive-in

far-flung

go-between

grant-in-aid (grants-in-aid)

in-house

quick-witted

second-rate, third-rate, etc.

shelter-in-place

single-handed

short-lived

strong-willed

trigger-happy

T-shirt

white-collar

word-of-mouth

year-end

b5.4. When not to use a hyphen.

Aside from the exceptions in this section, words formed with the addition of a prefix (*anti-*, *bi-*, *co-*, *inter-*, *intra-*, *multi-*, *post-*, *pre-*, *sub-*, *ultra-*, *un-*, *under-*, etc.) do not take a hyphen and are written as one word. Words commonly punctuated incorrectly include: *biweekly*, *coauthor*, *cocurricular*, *interdepartmental*, *intracampus*, *multicultural*, *preregistration*, *postgraduate*, *postmodern*, and *semiannual*. When in doubt, refer to *Merriam-Webster* dictionary.

Specific words or groups that don't require hyphenation include:

chemical compounds

foreign language phrases (unless hyphenated in the original language)

pro bono

geographical terms ending in *wide* [statewide elections]

compounds formed from unhyphenated proper names [Latin American]

B6. Parentheses

b6.1. Though not a preferred method, parentheses are acceptable when setting off non-essential information particularly if the information is brief. Consider making another paragraph or forgoing the parentheses if the information is at least a sentence long.

The majority of our students are part time (working full or part time while enrolled).

Acceptable: Most Durham Tech students are North Carolinians. (Of course, there are exceptions.)

Preferred: Most Durham Tech students are North Carolinians. Of course, there are exceptions.

Most Durham Tech students are North Carolinians with some exceptions.

B7. Bullets

b7.1. When you need to use bullets, refer to the follow guidelines:

Use a colon at the end of the introductory sentence.

Capitalize the first letter of each bullet.

Make sure, when possible, the first word in each point matches each other in tense.

The only time you need to use punctuation is if the bullet points are their own sentences.

Program Highlights [Heading]

- Students will learn from highly trained instructors.
- They will qualify for their national credential upon course completion.
- Students will have access to cutting edge technology.

B8. Spacing, punctuation

b8.1. Use only one space following periods, commas, semicolons, colons, exclamation points, question marks, and quotation marks.

Are you coming to the picnic? If so, I'll see you there.

"Have a good weekend," she said as she hung up the phone.

b8.2. There should be no space before or after an ellipsis nor should there be spaces between the periods in an ellipsis.

"I ran up the river...and back to my house," Ross said.

General styles and rules

C1. Racial designations

Use the following as a general guide, but if unsure, ask the individual their preference. Only address a person's race when appropriate, such as talking about international students, for applicable reports, etc.

c1.1. No general usage guide allows for capitalization of skin color when used in reference to race, except in the name of an organization. Use *African American* (no hyphen) when possible and appropriate.

c1.2. Use Asian American.

c1.3. Use Native American, not American Indian.

c1.4. Latino/Latina, Latinx, Hispanic.

Each term carries a different meaning. Latino, Latina, and Latinx refer to someone of a Latin American origin, with Latino referring to a person with a male identity, Latina to someone with a female identify, and Latinx as a gender-neutral option. Hispanics are people from Spanish-speaking countries.

Latinx/Latina/Latino and Hispanic American all can refer to a person of Latin American descent living in the United States. Latinx is preferred for use as a collective noun or adjective form. Use regional designations and nationalities, such as Latin American, Peruvian, Bolivian, Mexican, Cuban, Puerto Rican, and Columbian, when they are more accurate and specific than a general designation might be.

C2. Gender Use

Use the following as a general guide, but if unsure, ask the individual their preference. Only address a person's sexual orientation when appropriate.

c2.1. General use, pronouns.

When you are unsure of the identity of a person, use the singular *they* or *their*.

Someone left their laptop.

When discussing a group of people, use *it* as a group is considered a single entity.

The group decided where it wanted to eat lunch.

For a singular person, *he* or *she* is generally appropriate. However, a person may wish you to use *they* or another pronoun instead, so consult the subject if you are unsure.

C2.2. LGBTQIA+ designations.

LGTQIA+ stands for *Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual (Bi), Transgender, Queer or Questioning, and Intersex, Asexual, and Ally*. The "+" acknowledges that the community expands beyond these labels.

A person's identity is always lowercased, unless used in an organization's name.

C3. Illness or disability

Only address a person's disability or illness should it be relevant and with the person's permission.

As a general rule, you should try to emphasize the person not the disability or illness. However, it is recommended to check with the individual about their preference.

a person with autism (not autistic person)

a person in a wheelchair (not a wheelchair-bound person)

C4. Use of public records and affirmative action statements

c4.1. Public records statement.

All email correspondence should have the following added after the signature block:

Email correspondence to and from this address may be subject to the North Carolina Public Records Law and shall be disclosed to third parties when required by statutes. (NCGS Ch. 132)

c4.2. Affirmative action statement.

Our official affirmative action statement reads as follows:

Durham Technical Community College is an Affirmative Action, Equal Opportunity, ADA, Section 504 Institution and does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, color, age, religion, national origin, or disability.

Because of the length of the official statement, the following shortened statement may be used:

Durham Technical Community College is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity/Section 504/ADA Institution.

One of these statements should appear on all official publications of the College.

Questions regarding the use of these statements should be directed to the college's Affirmative Action officer or to Marketing and Communications department staff.