Editorial Style Guide

In determining editorial style for print and electronic publications, Pellissippi State uses the Associated Press Stylebook as its primary reference. Secondarily, the College uses Webster’s New World College Dictionary, Fifth Edition.

A style guide does not necessarily represent “more correct” choices in using the English language. The style guide does intend to create a consistent style and voice for the College to use across print and electronic media. It notes specific rules and usages to be applied by editors and authors in Marketing and Communications and by other campus communicators.

Since many people don’t have access to an AP Stylebook, this style guide points out several common AP style rules. Where this style guide conflicts with the AP Stylebook or Webster’s, this style guide takes precedence. For an excellent and comprehensive reference source to punctuation and grammar, see “Words into Type, Third Edition” (Prentice Hall), based on studies by M. Skillin, R. Gay and other authorities.

Questions about editorial style or the style guide can be directed to the publications coordinator, 865.539.7089 or publications@pstcc.edu.

Our Name

The official name of the College is Pellissippi State Community College. In publications on second reference, Pellissippi State is an acceptable use. In external communications or in publications, never use Pellissippi or PSCC.

Former names of the College, including Pellissippi State Technical Community College and State Technical Institute of Knoxville, are not correct in current references. These names should be used in historical contexts only. The acronym PSTCC should not be used.

Clarifying Terms and Areas of the College

General Biology II is a course. A degree is an Associate of Science, Associate of Applied Science, Bachelor of Arts, etc. Certificates are not considered degrees.

Pellissippi State offers three types of academic programs: Career, Transfer/University Parallel and Certificate. Examples of programs: Administrative Professional Technology, Health Sciences. Concentrations are areas of study within programs. Example: “The student is earning an Associate of Applied Science degree in the Administrative Professional Technology program with a Business concentration.”

In terms of organization, Pellissippi State has five campuses in two counties. There are five divisions of the College: Academic Affairs, Business and Community Services, Business and Finance, College Advancement, and Student Affairs. Each division consists of offices: Counseling Services, Human Resources, Marketing and Communications, Records, etc. Departments are academic: Business and Computer Technology, Natural and Behavioral Sciences.

See Academic Degrees, Career Programs, Certificate Programs, Concentration, Department, Division, Office, Transfer Programs, Unit Names.

AA/EEO Statement

Required to be included on publications and websites. There are two versions of this statement, one long and one short, and both are available through Marketing and Communications.

Pellissippi State Community College is an AA/EEO employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs and activities.

Academic Titles

Capitalize official titles of courses, programs and concentrations at Pellissippi State: General Biology II, Paralegal Studies (program), Video Production Technology (concentration). Do not capitalize programs and concentrations offered by other institutions.

Capitalize and spell out formal faculty and staff titles only when they precede a name. Lowercase elsewhere. College preference is to use the appositive: Rebecca Ashford, vice president of Student Affairs, was the guest speaker.
**Academic Degrees**

Uppercase degrees if spelled out: Associate of Science, Bachelor of Fine Arts. Lowercase and use an apostrophe in the short form: associate’s, bachelor’s, master’s. These uses are preferred over letter abbreviations: B.A., M.B.A., Ph.D. If using letter abbreviations, do not follow with the word “degree.”

Degrees are not listed after names except on business cards, upon request. The term “Dr.” is only used in reference to medical doctors. The exception is on formal publications, such as donor lists and invitations.

Pellissippi State degree programs and concentrations are to be listed by their official names, as stated in the latest College Catalog and Handbook.

**Acronyms**

In general, acronyms are not used on first reference. Tennessee Consortium for International Studies, not TnCIS. Exceptions are common references: FBI, not Federal Bureau of Investigation.

In AP style, acronyms are not placed in parentheses following first use. Acronyms may be used in subsequent references. This is the style used in press releases: The Tennessee Consortium for International Studies is housed at Pellissippi State Community College. TnCIS sends students to study abroad.

**Affect/Effect**

“Affect” is a verb, meaning to influence or to change. “Effect” is a noun, meaning an impact or a result: This change will affect you. One effect might be a salary increase.

**African-American**

Hyphenate. The term “black,” lowercased, also may be used.

**Ages**

Use numerals.

**American Indian**

The term “Native American” also may be used.

**Apostrophes**

Plurals of a single letter: A’s, B’s.

Do not use apostrophes when referencing a decade as a noun: Unless you like grunge, the 1990s were not a historical high point in fashion.

Singular and plural possessives that do not end in “s” use an apostrophe and “s”: the student’s homework, the alumni’s contributions.

Singular and plural possessives that end in “s” use only an apostrophe: the alumnus’ success, the VIPs’ entrance.

Proper names that end in “s” use only an apostrophe: Jesus’ life, Dickens’ novels.

**Asian-American**

Hyphenate.

**Book Titles**

Use quotation marks, not italics or underline. This is also the rule for magazines, articles, albums, songs, poems and plays.

**Bookstore**

Uppercase only when referring to Pellissippi State Bookstore or if it is part of the formal name of a bookstore.

**Buildings**

First name only is acceptable for internal use: Goins 264. In press releases or other external references, use Goins Building or the full name, J.L. Goins Administration Building.
The official names of Pellissippi State facilities:
- Lamar Alexander Arts and Sciences Building
- Joe Armstrong Building
- Bagwell Center for Media and Art
- Jenny and Randy Boyd Building
- Clayton Performing Arts Center
- Educational Resources Center
- J.L. Goins Administration Building
- Information Center
- Ned R. McWherter Technology Building
- Physical Plant
- Student Recreation Center

The Joe Armstrong Building is located at the Magnolia Avenue Campus. The Jenny and Randy Boyd Building is located at the Strawberry Plains Campus. All other named buildings are located at the Hardin Valley Campus.

Certain names should never be abbreviated for external publications. Always use Clayton Performing Arts Center, not CPAC. Use Physical Plant, not PP. The Bubble is acceptable in casual internal use; for external use, refer to the Student Recreation Center.

Campuses
- Blount County Campus
- Division Street Campus
- Hardin Valley Campus
- Magnolia Avenue Campus
- Strawberry Plains Campus

In external communications, use a campus’ physical address only when promoting an activity or event that requires physical attendance on campus. Don’t use a physical address as a general identifier. Use the full, official name of each campus as an identifier.

Career Programs
Uppercase and use the full name of Career Programs offerings: Health Care Office Administration, Mechanical Engineering (concentration within Engineering Technology). See the Career Programs section of the latest Catalog and Handbook for the most up-to-date list.

Certificate Programs
Uppercase and use the full name of Certificate Programs offerings: Accessible Web Design, Pre-Allied Health. See the Certificate Programs section of the latest Catalog and Handbook for the most up-to-date list.

Chair
Preferred title for the presiding officer of a department or committee. Avoid “chairperson.”

College
Uppercase the stand-alone word only when referring to the institution of Pellissippi State Community College. The uppercase term “College” as a reference to Pellissippi State is used in all external communications except news releases. News releases comply with AP style, which uses lowercase “college” on second reference.

Commas
Do not use a comma before Jr., Sr. or Inc.

In quotes, the comma is always placed within the quotation marks: “That’s great,” he said.

Pellissippi State does not use the serial comma: Students can study in the Educational Resources Center, Goins Building College Center or Goins Building Cafeteria.

See Dates.

Commencement
Capitalize when referring to the Pellissippi State event. Lowercase general references, as with graduation. “Commencement” is the preferred term.
Concentration
A student’s area of focus within a specific degree program. Capitalize official titles of Pellissippi State concentrations: One of the Business concentrations is Culinary Arts. Do not capitalize concentrations offered by other institutions. See the Career Programs section of the latest Catalog and Handbook for the most up-to-date list.

Courtesy Titles
Do not use courtesy titles such as Mr., Mrs., Ms., etc. Exception: Courtesy titles are accepted for formal invitations.
See Dr.

Credit Hours
Use numerals.

Dates
Use Arabic figures, without the st, nd, rd or th. Exceptions are as design elements, occasionally on formal invitations and in reference to centuries: the 20th century.
When a phrase refers to a month, day and year, commas are required before and after the year: February 16, 1987, was a day like any other. Commas are not needed in reference to only a month and year: February 1987.

Department
Capitalize only when using the full, formal name of a Pellissippi State department: Liberal Arts Department. Do not reverse the names, as in Department of Liberal Arts.

The official names of Pellissippi State academic departments:
- Business and Computer Technology
- English
- Engineering and Media Technologies
- Liberal Arts
- Mathematics
- Natural and Behavioral Sciences
- Nursing

Disabled, Disability
Use these terms rather than “handicapped.” Use “people first language” that describes what a person has, not who a person is: She has autism. Incorrect: She is autistic.

Division
Capitalize when using the full, formal name of a Pellissippi State division: Business and Community Services Division. Do not reverse the names, as in Division of Business and Community Services.

The official names of Pellissippi State divisions:
- Academic Affairs
- Business and Community Services
- Business and Finance
- College Advancement
- Student Affairs
- Dr.

Use as a title only when referring to a medical doctor, not a Ph.D. Exception: The non-medical title “Dr.” is acceptable for formal invitations.

Email
Lowercase except at the beginning of a sentence. No hyphen.

Faculty and Staff Titles
Lowercase in a sentence unless used before the faculty or staff member’s name. College preference is to use the appositive: Rebecca Ashford, vice president of Student Affairs, was the guest speaker.
Faculty ranks:
Adjunct faculty member
Instructor
Assistant professor
Associate professor
Professor

Fall Semester
Lowercase. Also lowercase when referring to a specific term: fall 2014.

Federal
Lowercase unless part of a proper name: The federal government. Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Fellow
Lowercase: “She is a Guggenheim fellow.”

Fewer/Less
“Fewer” means a small number of individual things. “Less” means a smaller quantity of some entire thing: The less money John makes, the fewer dollars he spends.

Full-Time, Full Time
Hyphenate only when used as an adjective: She is a full-time employee.

Fundraiser, Fundraising
No hyphen.

Further/Farther
“Further” means in addition or moreover, and “farther” refers to distance: Money goes further than expected. I will be able to travel farther than I had planned.

GED
Do not use GED or General Educational Development Certificate. Instead, use Tennessee High School Equivalency Diploma or HSE.

Generational Suffixes
Do not precede with a comma: L. Anthony Wise Jr.

GPA
On first reference, using either GPA or grade point average is acceptable. The College does not use a hyphen in the term “grade point average.”

Grades
Capitalize, with no quotation marks, letters for course grades (A, B, C, D, F, I) and grade names such as Incomplete. Use an apostrophe to pluralize: She earned all A’s.

Health Care, Health-Care
Hyphenate only when used as an adjective: He is a health-care professional.

Home Page
Two words.

Hyphens
Do not use hyphens for phrases that contain adverbs ending in “ly,” such as “highly developed.”

Do not use hyphens with most compounds containing the prefixes non, pre, post and sub. Refer to Webster’s for specific applications.

Use hyphens to link modifiers to the same word: The lesson plan was created for fifth- and sixth-graders.
Insure, Ensure, Assure
Use “insure” only in reference to insurance. Use “ensure” to mean a guarantee or to make certain. “Assure” means to give confidence: I assure you, to insure your home with us is a way to ensure your well-being.

International Student
Use the phrase “students with an international background” to avoid having to clarify whether students have come to Pellissippi State directly from another country or have lived in the U.S. for some time. Or be specific and state where a student is from directly.

Internet
Upper case.

Its, It’s
“Its” is a possessive and does not have an apostrophe: The dog scratched its ear. The contraction “it’s” means it is: It’s good to see you.

Like/Such As/As
Avoid the word “like” to begin a list or to introduce an example. Use “such as” instead: Pellissippi State offers a variety of degree programs, such as Paralegal Studies and Nursing. “Like” shouldn’t be used in the place of “as”: John tripped over the duck, as anyone would.

“Like” can be used to make comparisons: Jane’s hair is gold, like the sun.

Log In, Login
Use two words as a verb: Log in to the program. Use one word as a noun or adjective: Your login information is required to access myPellissippi.

Major
A student’s program of study for a degree. Capitalize official titles of Pellissippi State majors: Engineering Technology. Do not capitalize majors offered by other institutions.

Exception: Some majors are always capitalized, because they include a proper noun, such as with an English or Spanish major.

Mascot
Pellissippi State’s official mascot is the panther.

However, the Canada geese (not Canadian geese) and Muscovy ducks that make their home on the Hardin Valley Campus are often viewed as unofficial mascots.

Military Ranks
Use ordinals when rank is placed before a name: 1st Sgt. David Smith, Petty Officer 2nd Class Jane Doe.

Spell out and lowercase military ranks when used without a name or after a name: Jane’s goal is to make first sergeant.

Mission of The College
The mission of Pellissippi State Community College is to serve its community by providing college-level and non-credit courses and learning support instruction using a variety of delivery methods, including distance learning. The College provides support for teaching and learning, training and workforce development, and opportunities for life, civic, and cultural enrichment.

Names
In general, use only last names on second reference: John Smith, then Smith. When it is necessary to distinguish between two people with the same last name, use both names on all references: John Smith and Jane Smith.
**Numbers**

Per AP style, spell out whole numbers under 10: The students spent five minutes lost in the Goins Building.

Exceptions: when used as percentages, as military ranks, as dimensions, as dates or exact times, in addresses, in reference to money or in academic course numbers. English 1010, a 5-by-8 rug, a $5 bill, 2 a.m.

Spell out all numbers that begin a sentence. Forty years was a long time ago. The only exception is for years: 1974 was the year Pellissippi State was founded. Recasting the sentence is preferable.

Spell out school grades for first through ninth grades. Use figures for 10 and above. Arabic figures are used without the st, nd, rd or th, except in references to centuries (20th century) and military ranks (1st Sgt. David Smith), as design elements, and occasionally on formal invitations.

See Military Ranks, Dates, Percent and Times.

**Office**

Refers to non-academic units: Financial Aid, Marketing and Communications. Uppercase when used with the name of a specific office: Access and Diversity Office. Do not reverse the formal names of offices. Exceptions: Office of the President, Office of the Vice President of...

Lowercase when referring to a physical location: Come to the Access and Diversity office.

**Panther**

Pellissippi State’s official mascot is the panther.

**Part-Time, Part Time**

Hyphenate only as an adjective: She is a part-time employee.

**Pellissippi State Community College**

Always use the full name on first reference. On second reference, use Pellissippi State. Do not use Pellissippi or PSCC.

**Percent**

Spell out the word “percent.” Don’t use the symbol %, except in tables and charts. Use numerals in expressing percentages: The tuition increase will be between 5 and 10 percent.

**President**

Lowercase in a sentence unless used before the president’s name: President L. Anthony Wise Jr. welcomed the students. L. Anthony Wise Jr., president of Pellissippi State, said he was looking forward to a new school year.

Uppercase “President” as a stand-alone is acceptable on formal invitations.

**President’s Name**

Use the abbreviated name, Anthony Wise, internally. Use the full name, L. Anthony Wise Jr., in press releases and other external or formal references.

**Program**

A student’s major degree or certificate area, not to be confused with a concentration. The term “program,” lowercase, is sometimes used generically.

See: Career Programs, Certificate Programs, Concentration and Department.

**Punctuation**

Double space: Do not use double spaces between sentences.

Em dash: Leave one space between an em dash and the surrounding words: The alumnus — who graduated top of his class — now is a Pulitzer Prize winner.

See: Apostrophes, Commas, Hyphens, Quotations.
**Quotations**

Commas and periods should always be within the quotation marks: “This is great,” he said.

Use single quotation marks (’) in headlines and for quotes within quotes: “Pull from Shakespeare’s ‘Friends, Romans, countrymen’ speech when writing your essay on Caesar,” the professor instructed.

**Room**

Capitalize only before a room number: Room 264, Goins Building.

**Semester**

Lowercase: spring semester, fall 2014.

**Service-Learning**

Hyphenate the Pellissippi State program.

**Social Media**

Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, Tumblr, Pinterest, Instagram. Use blog, not weblog.

**Social Security**

Uppercase: Social Security number.

**Telephone Number**

In news releases, use the traditional format with parentheses around the area code: (865) 694-6400. Online and in most print publications, use periods in place of dashes and no parentheses: 865.694.6400.

**Tennessee Board Of Regents**

The Tennessee Board of Regents is Pellissippi State Community College’s governing body. TBR is an acceptable use on second reference.

The TBR system consists of 46 institutions in the state of Tennessee, including six state universities, 13 community colleges and 27 colleges of applied technology.

**Tennesse Community Colleges**

Tennessee's Community Colleges is a system of the 13 community colleges within the Tennessee Board of Regents system.

Tennessee's Community Colleges requires co-branding in external marketing pieces, including posters and brochures, and on websites and in press releases. The required statements and logos for co-branding are available from the Marketing and Communications Office.

**Theatre**

Pellissippi State’s Theatre performances and events are referred to using the spelling “theatre,” not “theater.”

**Their/There/They’re**

“Their” is a pronoun meaning belonging to them: Their papers are scattered all over the floor.

“There” is an adverb meaning at that place: Go over there and pick up all the papers.

“They’re” is a contraction meaning they are: They’re picking up those papers right now.

**Times**

Use numerals to designate time. Use lowercase a.m. and p.m., with periods. Avoid the term “o’clock” and redundancies like 10 a.m. in the morning. To avoid confusion, use the terms “noon” and “midnight,” not the numeral 12. To avoid redundancy, drop the term “a.m.” when referring to a span of time that begins in the morning and ends at noon: The event runs 10 to noon.

**Transfer Programs**

Uppercase Transfer Programs offerings: Economics, Theatre Arts. See the Transfer/University Parallel Programs section of the latest Catalog and Handbook for an up-to-date list.
Unit Names
Capitalize the names of official areas: Cafeteria, Goins Building College Center, Courtyard, Manufacturing Tech Lab, West Chevrolet Auditorium.
See: Offices, Departments, Divisions.

Vice President
No hyphen.

Web

Web Addresses
As a general rule, when referring to websites, Pellissippi State drops the protocol http:// when it is followed by www. However, some websites do not use www. In that case, the http:// protocol should be included. Casually, references often simply begin with the site’s address, dropping both the http:// and the www. altogether.

Some Pellissippi State Web pages require a secure protocol. On these pages, always use the protocol https:// even if the protocol is followed by www. For example: https://giving.pstcc.edu.

When a Web address ends a sentence, finish with a period.

Who, Which, That
Use the pronoun “who” or “whom” to refer to humans only: “The student who drew the masterpiece was gratified to earn a scholarship.”

Use “which” or “that” for inanimate or non-human objects. Use “which” (with a comma) when a clause is nonrestrictive: The Muscovy duck, which has a damaged foot, has taken up residence outside of the Goins Building. Use “that” in a restrictive clause: The duck that has a damaged foot is now living near the pond.

Who’s/Whose/Whom
“Who’s” is a contraction, meaning who is: Who’s going to clean the sidewalk? “Who’s” can occasionally be used as a shortened form of “who has”: Who’s had lunch?

“Whose” is the possessive form of “who”: Whose hat is this?

“Whom” is the objective form of “who”: She is the person to whom you need to speak.