

**Introduction: This is not a style guide**

This document is a style *sheet*, meant to gather style points and rules specific to UT Southwestern Medical Center (UTSW) and not covered in *The Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual*. (for example, names of buildings), or areas that *are* covered by the AP guide, but in which UTSW has proactively decided to take a different approach (for example, use of the serial comma).

The default reference style guide for online writing at UTSW has been and continues to be the AP guide. The consumer magazine, *UT Southwestern MED*, and most UTSW marketing materials use *The Chicago Manual of Style*. UTSW Public Relations and Media Relations use the AP Guide.

- The general dictionary of choice is *Webster's* (latest edition). A free, searchable version is available online at <http://www.merriam-webster.com/> while the resources at <http://www.dictionary.com> are also based largely on *Webster's*.
- The medical dictionary of choice is *Stedman's* (searchable version available free online at <http://www.medilexicon.com/medicaldictionary.php>).

**What is the purpose of this style sheet?**

Writing copy for a website can be particularly challenging as the Internet is fluid and constantly evolving. Users of a site expect content to be current, informative and factual. Users do *not* need to be distracted by variations in spelling, punctuation and voice.

This style sheet is designed to ensure consistency not only from page to page, but across all University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center websites, including (but not necessarily limited to) both the .edu and .org main sites.

**If in doubt ...**

Check the AP guide! This style sheet is essentially an addendum encompassing material not covered by AP and intentional exceptions to AP style.

**Important Note**

Throughout this style sheet, references to “the .org site” indicate the patient care Web site located at [www.utsouthwestern.org](http://www.utsouthwestern.org). References to “the .edu site” refer to the research and academic website located at [www.utsouthwestern.edu](http://www.utsouthwestern.edu). These shorthand references are **not** to be used in public-facing documents in print or online.

### **academic degrees**

Do not show degrees that are generally irrelevant in a medical setting (e.g., MBA) or not commonly understood (e.g., FACHE). To avoid “alphabet soup” readability issues. Never use more than two degrees after any one name. Example: Jason Gray, M.D., Ph.D.

### **content**

- Put important information first, in the headline and first paragraph if possible. .
- Use active verbs.
- If page text runs more than about 200 words, break up the content with subheads to help the user scan the page efficiently.
- Use bulleted lists wherever appropriate.
- For the .org site, keep the content to approximately a fourth-grade reading level. For the .edu site, the range will vary, but the target audience consists of people who have a college degree, and in many cases, multiple degrees. Don't forget that a significant portion of the .edu audience may be English-as-a-second-language (ESL) readers.

### **Family and Community Medicine**

On second and ensuing references, “Family Medicine” is acceptable. Do not use “Family Practice.”

### **headlines/subheads**

Use sentence style, capitalizing the first word and proper nouns. Do not use end punctuation except in the case of question marks.

### **information architecture**

Website users want information quickly, without having to scroll through a lot of text or being forced to click through many links. Though it may not always be possible to cut/shorten text, for the ease of online use (scannability) it can be re-presented from traditional print layout to an online layout featuring shorter paragraphs and more use of subheads and bullet points.

The main point of each page should be obvious and accessible at first glance, never buried below the scroll – especially since we do not control the user-end interface and can only estimate where the scroll *might* begin.

### **links**

Maintain your context when you provide a link. Do not use “click here” or “go here.”

- Incorrect: Click [here](#) for our *Clinical Center for Voice Care information sheet*.
- Correct: Our [informational brochure](#) provides more *Voice Center information*.

### **page title**

Page titles should be short, but descriptive. Don't forget, the page title is what will appear in the **Favorites** drop-down list if a user bookmarks the page.

### **Professorship/Professor**

Always capitalize. Example, the Ashbel Smith Professorship.

### **programs**

The names of medical programs are capitalized, including, where appropriate, the word “Program.” Example: *The UT Southwestern Transplant Program offers a full range of medical and surgical therapies.*

### **proper names**

Unless necessary, such as in contact information, do *not* list proper names of specific physicians, nurses, technicians, students, etc., in either site's content. . Employee turnover can make page maintenance difficult or prematurely outdate the page.

### **search engine optimization**

Search engine optimization (SEO) is the use of key words or phrases to increase a Website's (or Web page's) ranking on search engines. Key words and phrases can and should be used within the text and title of a page. When deciding on these words, think of terms your target audience would typically use to describe or find your services. Additional terms can also be added to increase searchability in the HTML code of each page, via a process called <META> tagging, but that process is not part of this style sheet and can be covered separately.

### **social media:**

There is a new **Social Media Guidelines** section in the 2010 AP guide addressing the use of tools like Facebook and Twitter, how they can be applied to work and how to verify sources found through them. The section also includes 42 separate entries on such terms as *app*, *blogs*, *click-throughs*, *friend* and *unfriend*, *metadata*, *RSS*, *search engine optimization*, *smart phone*, *trending*, *widget* and *wiki*.

### **spaces**

Per AP Style, use one space after a period or colon, not two. On the web, most presentations will collapse multiple spaces into one anyway unless a special HTML character, the non-breaking space (&nbsp;), is used.

### **text/instant message abbreviations**

Although the 2010 AP style guide includes a list of 20 of the most common text messaging/instant messaging abbreviations, this shorthand *is* not to be used in any UTSW writing, on the web or otherwise. Exception: page is actually *about* text or instant messaging.

### **titles (multiple)**

On first reference, spell out and use full title(s). Example: Alfred Gilman, M.D., provost, executive vice president for academic affairs and dean of UT Southwestern Medical School. On second and ensuing references, "Dr. Gilman" is sufficient.

### **URLs (web addresses)**

Do NOT show the <http://www>. prefix before an address. Example, UTSouthwestern.org instead of <http://www.UTSouthwestern.org>.

### **voice**

First person voice can be used in the case of "we" and "our," such as *Our team of specialists includes four nationally-recognized nurses*. However, "you" should not be substituted for "the patient" because site users may not necessarily be the patient.

### **web, website**

As of 2010, AP has changed the rule about words like web, website, webmaster, etc. Formerly, the style was to use two words and an initial cap ("Web site"); however, due to reader input, it has been changed to one word, no capitalization

### Exceptions to AP style on UTSouthwestern.org and UTSouthwestern.edu

- **advisor**, not adviser
- **cutlines**: When identifying multiple people in a single cutline, use left, right, etc. in parentheses. Example: *Ruth Eyre (center)*. Remember to use the title “Dr.” before the names of persons with a Ph.D. or M.D., as is done in main body copy.
- **Doctor (Dr.)**: On first reference, both medical doctors (M.D., D.O., etc.) and academic doctors (Ph.D.) do not have a courtesy title but do have the degree listed after the name. The courtesy title is used in both cases on all ensuing references. Example: *Kelly Chin, M.D. was talking to Steve Krause, Ph.D. Dr. Chin and Dr. Krause are long-time colleagues.*
- **doctorate**: do *not* use Ph.D. as a noun. Correct example: “He received his medical degree from UT Southwestern Medical Center and his doctorate from Massachusetts Institute of Technology.”
- **endowed chairs, professorships and directors of endowed centers**: When mentioning a faculty member who is holder of a chair or professorship or is director of an endowed center, use that information on the page, preferably (but not necessarily) on first reference.
- **fax**: Note, AP now states “fax” can be used as a noun or a verb.
- **serial commas**: Use serial commas before conjunctions in a list of terms (e.g., “red, white, and blue” but not “red, white and blue”)

## Terminology specific to UT Southwestern

### University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center

Spell out UT Southwestern Medical Center on first reference on every individual page of the website. On second and ensuing references, use UT Southwestern, the university, or the medical center. Alternatively (and preferably), the acronym UTSW," while not used in print publications should be used after first reference online, especially where length of text becomes a space issue.

### UTSW hospitals

UT Southwestern Medical Center has one hospital, separated into two buildings: UT Southwestern University Hospital and UT Southwestern University Hospital – Zale Lipshy.

- Use UT Southwestern University Hospital on first reference, then University Hospital on second and ensuing references.
- Only use St. Paul to describe the location of University Hospital, not in the official name or any further references in the text. Example: *“Labor and Delivery is located on the fifth floor of UT Southwestern University Hospital, in the St. Paul building.”*
- Use UT Southwestern University Hospital-Zale Lipshy on first reference, then University Hospital-Zale Lipshy on second and ensuing references.

### buildings at UT Southwestern

*(Please see hospital entry for complete guide on UT Southwestern hospitals)*

Use the complete name of a building on first reference, then the shortened version on second.

**buildings** listed by campus, showing first reference and second/ensuing references

#### Exchange Park and North Campus

- Paul M. Bass Administrative and Clinical Center; Bass Admin & Clinical Center
- Bill and Rita Clements Advanced Medical Imaging Building; Clements Imaging Building
- W.A. Monty and Tex Moncrief Radiation Oncology Building; Moncrief Building
- Seay Biomedical Building; Seay Building
- The Harold C. Simmons Comprehensive Cancer Center; Simmons Center

#### South Campus (Note: this is not to be called Main Campus)

- James W. Aston Ambulatory Care Building; Aston Building
- Sprague Building; Sprague Building

#### West Campus

- Clinical Buildings 1 and 2; Clinical Buildings 1 & 2
- Health Professions Building; Health Professions Building
- Outpatient Building; Outpatient Building
- Professional Office Buildings 1 and 2; Professional Office Buildings 1 & 2

### orthopaedics

Use the “ae” version in spelling

### Strauss family gifts

The Strauss family never wants the size of a gift published.

### departments/divisions

On the .edu website:

- Capitalize on first reference. Examples: *Pharmacology Department, Department of Pharmacology, the Division of Applied Science*

- Do not capitalize on second reference. Example: *The department has nine professors.*

On the .org website:

- Avoid referring directly to department and division titles. Consumers are more likely looking has been mapped according to overall medical services and programs..for a clinical service than a specific academic department, so the site

**Appendix 1: Content Submission Template**

*A softcopy of the original version of this template is available in the shared DropBox file at **UTSW – Content/Content Template/UTSW – Content Template.doc.***

<p><b>Primary Nav:</b> list main site area location, e.g. Education/Medical School/About Us <b>Sub Nav:</b> e.g. Mission and History</p>
<p><b>Writer:</b> List your full name (e.g., Shyam Patel, Mick Doherty, etc.) <b>Other Contacts:</b> Provide the name of the “Account Manager” or key department/division contacts associated with this content (if applicable).</p>
<p><b>Content Description:</b> This should provide a description of the content including its objective/purpose. Any functionality requirements such as a light box, reveal, or pop-up content should be specified here.</p>

All copy should be entered here as Arial 11 over 14. All formatting should be applied with styles only.

**Information forthcoming:** naming conventions for Word documents to be uploaded to DropBox; details on how to access and use DropBox.