

School of Data Science Style Guide

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Captions and Credits

Include captions (when applicable) and credits for all images, graphics, and photos, with credit in parentheses. Exception: circle crops can omit caption if it's obvious who the photo refers to.

Image Types

- A graphic is a chart or graph with plots, numbers, maps, tables, charts, and info grids.
- An illustration is an artistic interpretation, visual metaphor, or narrative designed to accompany text rather than chart evidence.
- A photo illustration is an image that includes more than one photo (collage, arranged photos, layered photos, etc).

Caption Text (per AP Style)

- Typically begin in the present tense, describing what is going on and who is pictured (if there's a second sentence that provides necessary context, use past tense).
 - If identifying multiple people, start from left and include text, "from left," separated by commas with no parentheses. (e.g., Lei Li, from left, with...)

Illustration or Graphic Credit

- Illustration credit: (Illustration by Margaux Jacks, University of Virginia School of Data Science)
- Graphic credit w/AI: (Graphic by Sarita San, University of Virginia School of Data Science, assisted by AI)

Photo Credit

- (Photo by Alyssa Brown, University of Virginia School of Data Science)
- (Photo by Lathan Goumas, University Communications) [Note how the credit is in parentheses even when there is no preceding caption in [this article](#).]

Stock Image/Photo Credit

If it's obviously a photo, use the photo credit. If you're not sure, use the image credit.

- Photo credit: (Stock photo)
- Image credit (Stock image)

Caption Examples:

Photos/Illustrations:

- Sahasra Molleti, second from right, poses with fellow students. Students at Oxford apply to residential colleges, each of which have their own unique characteristics.



Specifically, St. Anne's is a historically women's college known for its welcoming community. (Contributed photo)

- Six UVA graduates have received Rotary Global Grants, one-year scholarships designed for students pursuing graduate studies outside of the United States in one of Rotary International's seven focus areas. (John DiJulio illustration, University Communications) [This caption was for a [photo collage](#)]
- Second-year College of Arts & Sciences student Sahasra Molleti can be found spending her time in England learning about politics, economics and English traditions at the University of Oxford. (Illustration by Johnny Utterback, University Communications)

Graphics:

- After entering the University of Virginia last year, the author's career anxiety hit an all-time high. Fortunately, the UVA Career Center has the resources to navigate the career exploration process. (Graphic by Emily Faith Morgan, University Communications) [[link to source article](#)]

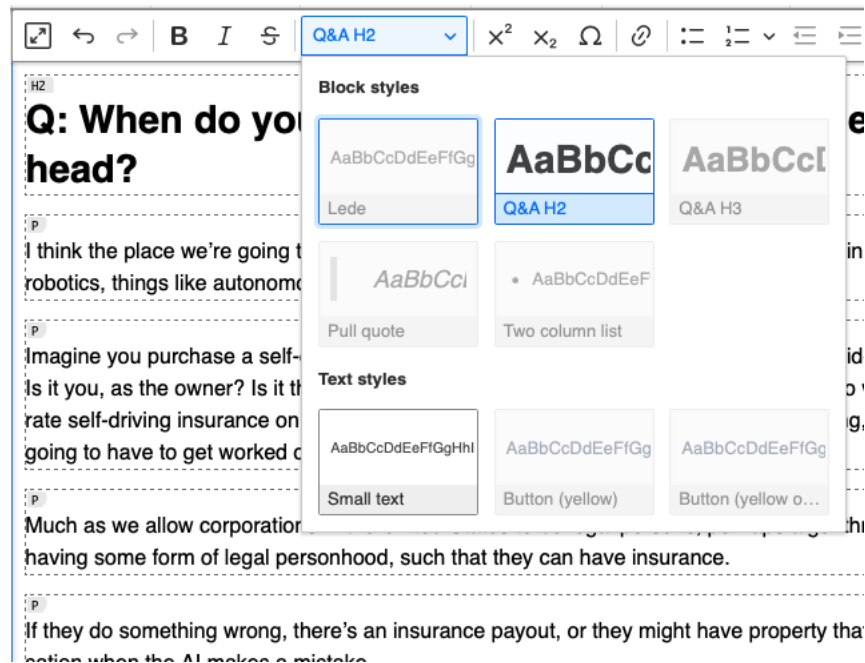
Styling and Formatting

Per AP Style, do not bold or italicize punctuation after a bold or italicized term unless the entire sentence is bolded or italicized.

- The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects **34% growth in data science jobs through 2034**, far outpacing average occupations. [Comma after 2034 is not bold].
- **Apply now to start your career in data science!** [The exclamation point at the end of the sentence is bold because the entire sentence is bold.]

Q&A Article Styling

- Questions begin with a "Q" followed by a colon "Q:"
- Set questions to H2 (or H3 if there are existing H2s, like in [Admissions blogs](#) where the person's name at the top is an H2). See below for specifics:
 - For H2 level Q&A questions, go to "Style" in the menu and select "Q&A H2." This will make the text match the "look" of the smaller H3 font while maintaining the correct H2 structure for accessibility. See screenshot below.



- For H3 level Q&A questions, just select H3. Q&A H2 has been styled to match H3 so you don't need to do anything additional. Ignore the Q&A H3 style—it was created accidentally.
- In a departure from UVA Today style, we will not use an “A:” before answers.
- Q&As should always have an introduction to introduce the speaker and give additional context (as necessary) so readers can understand key concepts in the conversation that follows.
 - The last sentence of the introductory paragraph should include the following (or similar) construction: “In this Q&A, [name] speaks with us about...” or, “In this Q&A, we speak with [name] about...”
 - Example: See [Shiraz Robinson II Talks First Contact with Quantum](#)

Headlines

- Always use single quote marks rather than double quote marks in headlines
- Use numerals in most cases instead of spelling out numbers
- Be mindful of length — AP, for instance, limits their headlines to 100 characters
- Avoid using proper names unless it is a person who would be widely known by the intended audience

Links

When linking text, do not include outside punctuation in the link.



- A research team led by [Mona Sloane](#), assistant professor of data science and media studies, has been... [note that the comma after “Sloane” is not linked]
- In the article, “[The Earthly Limits of Data Center Resistance](#),” with... [note that the comma, the opening quotation mark, and the closing quotation mark are not linked]

Symbols

- Ampersand: Per AP Style, we do not use ampersands “&” except for the following instances specified by UVA Today Style:
 - College of Arts & Sciences
 - Virginia Guesthouse Hotel & Conference Center
 - Aquatic & Fitness Center
 - Kimpton Hotel & Restaurants
 - Housing & Residential Life
 - P&T [second reference for Parking and Transportation]
 - Rouss & Robertson Halls
 - Charles L. Brown Science & Engineering Library
 - Courts & Commerce
- Percent: Per AP style, we use the symbol “%” for percent
 - e.g., 80%
 - Exception: At the start of a sentence, spell out “Eighty percent of students surveyed...”

Acronyms

Even if UVA is spelled out in a heading, spell it out again at first reference in the body text. Then, use acronym.

- [Heading] Discover a degree designed for success, powered by University of Virginia excellence [body text] A B.S. in Data Science from the University of Virginia gives students...

Capitalization and Punctuation

Degrees

- Bachelor of Science [official program name, no apostrophe + s]
- Bachelor of Science in Data Science [official program name, no apostrophe + s]
- B.S. in Data Science [abbreviated official program name]

- bachelor's degree
- bachelor's degree in data science
- bachelor's in data science
- Master of Science [official program name, no apostrophe + s]
- Master of Science in Data Science [official program name, no apostrophe + s]
- M.S. in Data Science [abbreviated official program name]
- master's degree
- master's in data science
- master's degree in data science
- online master's program
- MSDS online program or online MSDS program
- Ph.D. (with periods, always).
 - In a departure from AP style, it's okay to use Ph.D. interchangeably with "doctoral student."
 - Bryan Christ is a doctoral student; Christ has a doctorate in data science; Bryan Christ has a Ph.D. in Data Science.
 - Navya Annapareddy is a doctoral student; Annapareddy will earn a doctorate in data science; Navya Annapareddy is a Ph.D. student.
 - If someone has a Ph.D. and is a medical doctor, use "Dr." before their name and do not follow their name with Ph.D.
 - When used after a name, an academic abbreviation is set off by commas: Jerry McMillan, Ph.D., spoke.
 - Correct: John Doe has a doctorate in engineering, or John Doe is a doctoral student. Incorrect: John Doe has a Ph.D. in engineering, or John Doe is a Ph.D. student.

Dates, Years, and Times

- Always avoid using st, nd, rd, or th when citing dates.
- Months:
 - When a month is used alone, spell out.
 - When a month is used with a specific date, abbreviate all months that are more than five letters (Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov., and Dec.)
 - Spell out March, April, May, June, and July.
 - Example: Feb. 2, March 2
- Year:
 - There is no need to include the year of an event when it occurs within the current year.
 - When a date occurs to a past or future year, include the year and set it off with comma (Jan. 18, 2019; April 8, 2019).

- When only month and year are necessary for a past or future year, spell out the month (August 2061).
- Times:
 - Use figures, although noon is acceptable, followed by a.m. or p.m.
 - For a time range that does not span a.m. to p.m., there is no need to use a.m. or p.m. twice.
 - 10 a.m.
 - 9-11 a.m.
 - 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. [Note that we include a.m. and p.m. here]
 - For event times, particularly with virtual and hybrid events, include ET to denote the School's location in the Eastern Time Zone.

Titles

- Professional titles are only capitalized immediately before names. This includes all professional titles, including staff titles and descriptive titles, in departure from UVA Today style and AP Style.
 - Thanks to Office Manager Karen Allison...
 - When asked, Director Kimberly Adams replied that...
 - The dean began her search for...
 - She and Dean Jones collaborated with...
 - In a departure from UVA Today style and AP style, we will capitalize “Professor” when it comes before a name.
 - She and Professor Falcetto joined other faculty members...
 - Associate Professor Prince Afriyie...
- Titles after names are always lowercase.
 - Chirag Agarwal, assistant professor of data science...
 - Scott C. Beardsley, president of the University of Virginia...
- Titles should appear after names whenever possible if titles are long to avoid an awkward construction:
 - Degi Betcher, director of admissions and recruiting, announced Wednesday...
 - Director of Admissions and Recruiting Degi Betcher [This is not incorrect, but it would be better to include the title after the name since the title is so long.]

Capitalization and Punctuation of Other Terms

- academic terms:
 - fall term
 - spring term
 - summer term
- capstone:
 - capstone program (per UVA Today style)

- the Data Science Capstone (official program title)
 - School of Data Science Capstone program (longer program title)
 - capstone project
- classes:
 - Official names of classes are capitalized; general subject areas are lowercase
 - I took my first machine learning exam in Computation for Data Science, a course centered on data structures. [[machine learning is a subject area, so it's lowercase]]
- Class of 2026
- commonwealth: lowercase unless part of a program name or event (per UVA Today style)
 - The report demonstrates the well-being of communities across the commonwealth.
 - Read more to learn about the Commonwealth of Virginia Campaign.
- concentrations: In a departure from AP style, SDS capitalizes concentrations. Lowercase the word “concentration” when it’s used generally:
 - To apply for the REGARDS Genomics Concentration...
 - the Educational Analytics Concentration
 - the School of Data Science Core Concentrations
 - the Design Concentration
 - UVA offers a variety of dynamic concentrations with an optional collaborative concentration.
- the Corner
- Double Hoo, Triple Hoo [capitalize both words; no hyphens, quotes]
- e.g., i.e.: Always use a comma after these abbreviations (see examples below), and do not use them interchangeably. Note: e.g. means “for example” and i.e. means “that is” or “in other words.” See [Merriam-Webster’s explanation](#) for more on this.
 - Content marketing (e.g., admissions blog, Instagram) emerged...[We use e.g. because we are listing examples of content marketing, not explaining what content marketing is.]
 - The packing includes all costs (i.e., shipping and handling are free). [We use i.e. because we are explaining what we mean by all costs, not giving examples of costs.]
- Grounds, off Grounds, Central Grounds
- teams/departments: When referring to official teams at UVA, capitalize the name of the team but lowercase “team.” Lowercase athletic teams. Capitalize the entire department, including the word “Department.”
 - Marketing and Communications team
 - Admissions team



- McIntire Department of Music
 - Department of Art, Art Department
 - Department of Athletics, Athletics Department
 - UVA women's rowing team, baseball team
- the Lawn, Lawnies

Hyphens

- Per AP style, use hyphens (not en-dashes) for ranges (1-3, April-May, etc.)
- Use spaced em-dashes sparingly – they are sadly associated with AI-generated content. (Commas often suffice, but if you need to use em-dashes, go for it. Just remember to include a space before and after the dash.)
- Use a hyphen for a compound modifier if it's needed to make the meaning clear:
 - better-qualified candidate
 - small-business owner
- No hyphen is needed when the two words in the term are commonly recognized together (like machine learning):
 - machine learning algorithm
 - real estate transaction
 - emergency room visit
- Never use a hyphen with an adverb (happily married couple)
- i.e. and e.g.: always follow with a comma
 - data engineering (e.g., data integration, wrangling)

Commas

- Please always use the Oxford (serial) comma to separate items in a list, in a departure from AP style and UVA Today style:
 - The School of Data Science offers bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degree options. [Note the serial comma after before the “and doctoral degree...”]

Bulleted Lists

- Introduce a list with a short phrase or sentence.
- Always capitalize the first word following the bullet.
- Bulleted text ends in a period only when it's a complete sentence. Do not use semicolons after bulleted text.
- If it's an incomplete sentence, make sure each bullet completes the sentence correctly.

Example of bulleted list where each bullet completes the intro text sentence:

The committee decided to:

- Update the staff directory
- Increase the annual budget
- Hire three new coordinators

[In example above, note that there are no periods because each bullet is not a complete sentence, but rather, is tied to the text that introduces the bullets.]

Example of bulleted list where each bullet is a complete sentence:

When to talk to your instructor:

- I need help with or tutoring in their course.
- I have a question about the policies of their course.

[In the example above, note the periods after each bullet since each bullet is a complete sentence. This reflects AP style guidance that was updated in 2024.]

- Start with the same part of speech for each item (e.g., in a resume, each bullet under a position's accomplishments starts with a verb).
- Use parallel construction for all the items in a bulleted list:
 - Either active or passive voice
 - The same sentence type (statement, question, exclamation)

Example of a bulleted list with a parallel construction issue:

With TimelyCare, you'll experience support that is:

- Always available
- Personalized for your needs
- ~~Connect with students on the same journey~~

[The third bullet doesn't complete sentence that introduces the list. If you encounter something like this, either rephrase the item in question or incorporate it into preceding or following text.]

Example of a bulleted list with correct parallel construction:

Danks and his team will be asking the following questions:

- When should a human manager be held responsible for an AI system's actions?
- When should an AI be "blamed" (and what would that involve)?
- How should changes in AI-enabled capabilities in the workplace change our moral expectations and norms about human behavior?

[The list is introduced by a colon. All bullets begin with a capital letter. All three bulleted sentences end in a question mark.]

For more info on bulleted lists, [see recent AP Style Guidance on LinkedIn.](#)

Grammar and Usage

- **a/an:** Use “an” before a word or acronym that sounds like a vowel, even if it starts with a consonant.
 - an M.S. in Data Science
 - an 1894 event
- **advisor:** In departure from UVA Today style, which uses the spelling “adviser” SDS spells the word “advisor.”
- **backend/frontend:** one word (not back end or front end) when referring to software systems
- **bootcamp:** Departing from Merriam-Webster, we will use bootcamp as one word (bootcamp, not boot camp).
- **Datum/Data:** Datum is singular and data is plural.
 - Data are the fuel that drives this transformation.
 - Data science is the practice by which we transform society in a responsible way.
- **healthcare:** one word for this term (not health care)
- **names:** Use full name at first reference. At second reference, always use last name. Exception: text that is written by a student and posted on socials can use the first name on second reference. Exception: If two people have the same last name, use full names at second and subsequent references for clarity.
 - A paper by Medhasweta Sen was selected for the ICML Conference. Sen and her team investigated...
- **that vs. which:** that is used for information that is crucial to the sentence’s meaning (restrictive clause); which is used for information that is additional, and not necessary for the sentence (non-restrictive clause). Tip: you always need a comma before “which” but never before “that” in this context.
 - Working with big data calls for machine learning approaches that can be used to identify patterns within data. [In this sentence, you need “that can be used to identify patterns within data” or else you lose the meaning of the sentence.
 - AI-based models, which take a fraction of the time to run compared to physics-based models, have proven to be just as good if not better in many complex weather situations. [In this example, you could remove the entire clause “which take a fraction of the time to run compared to physics-based models” and the sentence would still make sense: AI-based models have proven to be just as good...

- **UVA/University of Virginia/the University:** Always spell out “University of Virginia” on first reference, even if “UVA” is present in the title. After spelling out the name, use UVA or the University interchangeably (uppercase “University” only when using it as a replacement for the University of Virginia, per UVA Today style).
 - “UVA was recognized as the best university in the whole wide world.”
 - “Acceptance rates at the University have remained steady.”
- **year one, year two, year three:** This refers to BSDS program year and is intended to avoid confusion with UVA’s use of first-year student, second-year student, etc. For example, a third-year UVA student is in year two of the BSDS program.
- **UVA Lingo:**
 - **Grounds:** While other institutions refer to their “campus,” UVA uses “Grounds.” You will also hear “off Grounds,” and “Central Grounds.” The latter refers to the historic center of the University’s physical space.
 - **The Lawn:** This is grassy expanse between the Rotunda and Old Cabell Hall. To be selected to live in a Lawn room is a significant honor, and undergraduate residents are called Lawnies. The two rows of buildings running parallel to the Lawn but facing outward are known as East and West Range, dedicated historical housing for graduate students.
 - **The Corner:** Originally just a single street corner, it has grown to the strip of shops and restaurants on University Avenue across the street from Central Grounds.
 - **First-year students, second-year/third-year/fourth-year: Undergraduates** are often known as freshmen, sophomores, etc. Jefferson believed learning was a lifelong process and felt that “senior” implied one had reached the conclusion of their learning. UVA therefore refers to undergraduate students by the year.
 - Note that “first-year,” “second-year,” etc. is an adjective and not a noun; do not refer to students as “first-years” unless in a quotation.
 - Check out this [UVA Today Lingo Video](#) and learn more about the meaning behind wahoos, lawnies, and Grounds.