Guidelines

Unless otherwise stated, manual style follows guidelines published in the *Gregg Reference Manual* and the WSU editorial style guide at [brand.wsu.edu/editorial/style/](https://brand.wsu.edu/editorial/style/)

The following style settings are **optional for departments during initial draft preparation**. The Office of Policies, Records, and Forms (PRF) adds these style settings when preparing drafts for review.

Applicability

This style guide applies the administrative policy manuals published by PRF:

 • [*Board of Regents Policy Manual* (*BORM*)](https://stage.web.wsu.edu/policies-prf-wds/index/manuals/board-of-regents-policy-manual/);

 • [*Executive Policy Manual* (*EPM*)](https://stage.web.wsu.edu/policies-prf-wds/index/manuals/executive-policy-manual/);

 • [*Business Policies and Procedures Manual* (*BPPM*)](https://stage.web.wsu.edu/policies-prf-wds/index/manuals/business-policies-and-procedures-manual/); and

 • [*Safety Policies and Procedures Manual* (*SPPM*)](https://stage.web.wsu.edu/policies-prf-wds/index/manuals/safety-policies-procedures-manual/).

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1.0 Capitalization

1.1 Titles of WSU Officers

Capitalize titles, e.g., Vice President—Finance and Administration, if referring to a specific position. Do not capitalize titles when referring to a group of like administrators in general, e.g., campus chancellors.

Capitalize Chair when referring to a specific department chair. When referring to a chair or director in general, do not capitalize. (See also [Miscellaneous](#miscellaneous).)

Do not use names of individuals.

1.2 Words to Capitalize

Capitalize Association, Board, Center, Club, Conference, Department, Hall, Office, Division, Senate, Street, University, etc. when these words are used as part of a title. Thereafter, use lower case for these words when they are used alone to refer to the place or group.

Examples:

 • Controller's Office—thereafter, "office"

 • Washington State University—thereafter "University" or WSU

 • College of Veterinary Medicine—thereafter "college"

 • Board of Regents of Washington State University—thereafter "the board" or "regents" or "BOR"

1.3 Lower Case

Use lower case for the following words: faculty, staff, administration, student body, campus mail code, a.m., p.m., federal, government, page, paragraph, chapter, state, or abbreviations.

More examples:

 • the state of Washington

 • the federal government

 • U.S. government

 • paragraph ten

2.0 Abbreviations

Abbreviate Washington State University to WSU (without internal spacing or periods) when it is important to save space and when there is no possibility of misunderstanding.

2.1 Do Not Abbreviate

 • Assistant or associate when used in a title, e.g., Assistant Director of Admissions

 • Months and days of the week when used in text

 • Percent (except the % symbol may be used in tables and forms)

2.2 Commonly-Cited Sources

Abbreviate commonly-cited sources: Italics *RCW, WAC, USDA*. If a source is not commonly cited in the manual*,* write out the full name of the publication.

2.3 Acronyms

Acronyms may be used for commonly used terms and office or department names. Write out the instance of the term or name the first time it is used in a policy, with the acronym in parenthesis behind it, e.g., leave without pay (LWOP); Human Resource Services (HRS). An acronym may be used for the term or name in all instances throughout a policy after that.

3.0 Punctuation

3.1 Introductory Words

Introductory words or their abbreviations (such as i.e. or e.g.) should be immediately preceded by a comma, semicolon, colon, hyphen, or dash and followed by a comma.

3.2 Hyphenation

Do not hyphenate titles, e.g., "vice president."

3.3 Parentheses

Use parentheses to set off references. Example: (*RCW* 43.13)

3.4 Reference

When a reference falls at the end of a sentence and refers only to that sentence, treat the reference as part of a sentence and place the period *after* the reference. Otherwise, place the period before the reference.

4.0 Numerals

Use figures (numerical characters) to indicate numbers over ten. Spell out number ten and under. **Exception:** Numbers in series and statistics are to be consistent (e.g., two books, six binders, and twelve pens).

Do not begin a sentence with a figure. Rewrite the sentence so that it begins with another word.

4.1 Numbers Below 100

Numbers below 100 are hyphenated when they consist of two words, e.g., thirty-nine.

4.2 Clock Times

Clock times are expressed in figures, e.g., 2:00 p.m.

4.3 Telephone Numbers

Use dashes to separate area code - telephone #, e.g., 509-335-2005.

4.4 Percentages

Express percentages in figures and spell out the word “percent” in running text, e.g.,

5 percent. Use the “%” symbol behind the number only in tables or lists.

5.0 Miscellaneous

5.1 Academic Department Chair

Use "Chair" to designate the chair (manager) of an academic department. (See also [Capitalization](#capitalization).)

5.2 Inclusive Language

Avoid sexist references. Rather than she or he (her or his) make the verb plural and use they (their).

5.3 Buildings

When referring to a campus building, use the full building name but drop the terms *building* or *hall* from the title except when doing so causes confusion.

 • French Administration

 • Clark

 • Avery

 • Murrow Communications

 • McCluskey Services

 • Johnson Hall

 • Johnson Tower

5.4 Contractions

Contractions are not used.

5.5 Citations

To cite another policy of any manual, use the manual acronym, chapter, and policy number. The chapter title is not necessary; *BPPM* 60.60 rather than PERSONNEL 60.60. When more than one policy of the same manual is being cited, use the manual acronym on only the first policy reference in the sentence. (Example: See *BPPM* 35.53, 95.19, and 95.20.)

5.5 Citations (cont.)

Provide the citation reference with no explanatory words if the citation provides authority for what is said in the previous passage. PRF adds active links to references during draft preparation and publication.

5.6 WSU System

Use the following campus and station designations:

 • WSU Spokane or Washington State University Health Sciences Spokane

 • WSU Vancouver or Washington State University Vancouver

 • WSU Tri-Cities or Washington State University Tri-Cities

 • WSU Pullman or Washington State University Pullman

 • WSU Everett or Washington State University Everett

 • WSU Global Campus

 • WSU Mount Vernon Northwestern Research and Extension Center

 • WSU Prosser Irrigated Agriculture Research and Extension Center

 • WSU Puyallup Research and Extension Center

 • Wenatchee Tree Fruit Research and Extension Center

 • Lind Dryland Research Station

 • Knott Dairy

**Note:** No hyphens, dashes, backslashes or other prepositions other than Tri-Cities.

5.7 Website Addresses

Omit "http://," "https://," and "www" in the text. ([WSU editorial style guide](https://ucomm.wsu.edu/editorial-style-guide/))

(When drafting and at publication, PRF adds full active links to the website addresses for functionality.)

6.0 Writing Style

6.1 Person

Most narration is in the third person. Directions may be in the second person with "you" understood. Avoid using "you" directly.

6.2 Tense

Generally, use present tense. Avoid future tense. Avoid the use of "shall" or "will."

6.3 Voice

Active voice is the rule; passive voice the exception.

6.4 Words to Avoid

| Do Not Use | Alternative to Use |
| --- | --- |
| per | in accordance with |
| due | because of |
| shall be | is |
| shall | is to; are to; must |
| will |  |
| you |  |

7.0 Image Figures

When example images are shown in a policy, use a caption to label each with a figure number as indicated below and include an "alt text" description for screen readers. References to the images in the policy or procedures are to include hyperlinks to the corresponding figures.

 Figure 1 – [Title of Figure 1]

 Figure 2 – [Title of Figure 2]

 Figure 3 – [Title of Figure 3]

8.0 Revisions

If a change is made in a policy, PRF changes the date unless the change is a minor editorial change, e.g., title or office name change.

PRF provides a list of the policy's revision history at the end of the document, with links to the applicable revision memos for a summary of the changes.

**Note:** Sections 9-14 below pertain to policy formatting, which most user may find more easily described in the policy templates, EPM Template and BPPM/SPPM Template.

9.0 Fonts

Monserrat is the font used for the official version of the online administrative manuals.

Arial is the font used for manual drafts, which are distributed in Microsoft Word and PDF. (The Monserrat font is not available in Microsoft Word. Arial is the acceptable substitute identified by the [WSU Brand guidelines](https://brand.wsu.edu/typography/) and PRF.)

**Note:** Most forms created by PRF are now designed using only the Arial font. However older forms, created in earlier forms software, used Helvetica or Arial for field names and Times or Times New Roman for disclaimers, certification statements, and extensive instructions. PRF updates the fonts when the forms are revised.

10.0 Policy Identification

Each policy has a policy heading, except for the associated forms and handouts. **Note:** An appendix generally includes a policy heading.

10.1 Location

Policy headings for *BORM* and *EPM* policies are located in the top center of the policy.

Policy headings for *BPPM* and *SPPM* online policies are located flush left in the top left of the policy.

Policy headings for *BPPM* and *SPPM* drafts are located flush right in the top right of the page, except for the name of the manual, which is located flush left in the top left of the policy.

10.2 Content

Policy headings for *BORM* and *EPM* policies include:

1. University name
2. Name of manual
3. Policy number
4. Approval date (month day, year)

Policy headings for *BPPM* and *SPPM* policies include:

1. Name of manual
2. Chapter name
3. Policy number
4. Approval date (MM-YY)
5. Name of responsible/contact office
6. Contact telephone / e-mail

11.0 Title Numbering and Formatting

All policy and section titles are formatted in title case, bold, and flush left alignment. Font size depends on the title level.

11.1 Main Title

Font Size 18

Example: **Policy on Policies**

11.2 First-Level Title

Font size 14; lead with sequential number.0; include first-level title

Example: **1.0 Overview and Purpose**

11.3 Second-Level Title

Font size 12; lead with sequential number.sequential number; second-level title is optional

Example: **1.1 Optional Title**

11.4 Third-Level Title

Font size 11; lead with sequential number.sequential number.sequential lowercase letter; third-level title is optional

Example: **1.1.a Optional Title**

11.5 Fourth-Level Title

Font size 10; lead with sequential number.sequential number.sequential lowercase letter.sequential lowercase Roman numeral; fourth-level title is optional

Example: **1.1.a.i Optional Title**

11.6 Fifth-Level Title

Font size 9; lead with sequential number.sequential number.sequential lowercase letter.sequential lowercase Roman numeral (sequential capital letter); fourth-level title is optional

Example: **1.1.a.i (A) Optional Title**

12.0 Body Text Formatting

Body text is plain, font size 12; aligned flush left, with the following exceptions:

12.1 Emphasized Words

Words to be emphasized and names of form fields in body text are bold.

12.2 Publication Titles

Publication titles are in italics, e.g., *Business Policies and Procedures Manual*, *Revised Code of Washington*. Also italicize abbreviations for the publications, e.g., *BPPM*, *RCW*. Do not italicize a number afterwards (e.g., *BPPM* 95.20).

12.3 Bulleted and Numbered Lists

To promote accessibility, use bulleted or numbered lists in sentences where three or more phrases are separated by commas. **Note:** Lists may be used with just two items if applicable.

Use bulleted lists when listing three or more items in which the sequential order of the items is not important. Use numbered lists when the sequence or order of the information matters.

All items in the list should be parallel—start each bullet or number with the same part of speech or sentence construction.

Bulleted and numbered lists are indented as follows:

 x First-level bullets are indented 1/8 inch from left margin, with text indented 1/4 inch from bullet;

 x Second-level bullets are indented 1/8 inch from left margin of first-level bullet text, with text indented ¼ inch from bullet;

 x Third-level bullets are indented 1/8 inch from left margin of second-level bullet text, with text indented ¼ inch from bullet.

 x Fourth-level bullets are indented 1/8 inch from left margin of third-level bullet text, with text indented ¼ inch from bullet.

**Bullet Symbols**

First level bullets = • (arial char 165, size 12))

Second level bullets =  (wingdings 162, size 6)

Third level bullets =  (wingdings 119, size 9)

Fourth level bullets = o (wingdings 9633, size 6)

(Copy the bullet symbols above and paste into documents as needed.)

13.0 Margins

For preparing drafts, set .875-inch margins on the inside and outside of the page. Half-inch margins top and bottom.

For online manuals, margins are set by the parameters of PRF's WordPress CMS template, in accordance with [WSU Brand requirements](https://brand.wsu.edu/web-digital/).

14.0 Form Fields

Form field titles are indicated in title case in procedures. If directing users to enter data in a specific field, add bold to the field name (e.g., "Enter name in **Name** field"). When used as headings, form field titles are displayed in the style of the appropriate title level.