

Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute uses the Associated Press stylebook with select exceptions. Those exceptions, along with other commonly asked questions regarding editorial style, are noted below. For more information, contact the Division of Strategic Communications and External Relations.

## **academic degrees**

The preferred form is to avoid an abbreviation and use a phrase instead. (Jane Jones has a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering.)

When spelling out specific degrees such as Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science, Master of Arts, Master of Science, Doctor of Philosophy, or Doctor of Engineering, capitalize as shown in this sentence.

Use periods in abbreviations, except when abbreviating the master's of business administration, which is commonly known as the MBA. Note that there is no space after a period within an abbreviated degree: Ph.D. not Ph. D.

For a complete list of degrees offered at Rensselaer, see the list, "Degrees Offered," in the Rensselaer Catalog ([catalog.rpi.edu](http://catalog.rpi.edu)).

## **academic titles**

Capitalize professor, dean, chairman, president, etc. when they precede a person's name. Otherwise, lowercase.

When a person holds an endowed chair, give the full name of the professorship, capitalizing the whole name, whether or not it precedes the individual professor's name: Amos Eaton Professor of Computer Science. For a complete list of named professorships, see the current Rensselaer Catalog ([catalog.rpi.edu](http://catalog.rpi.edu)).

For individual professors' official titles, see the list, "The Faculty," in the Rensselaer Catalog ([catalog.rpi.edu](http://catalog.rpi.edu)). This list is updated annually.

## **alumnus, alumni, alumna, alumnae**

An alumnus is a male graduate, several are alumni. An alumna is a female graduate, several are alumnae. A mixed group is referred to correctly as alumni; at Rensselaer, to be inclusive we refer to a mixed group as "alumni and alumnae."

## **a.m., p.m.**

Lowercase, with periods.

## **capitalization**

Capitalize "Institute" when it refers to Rensselaer, but lowercase "the university."

Capitalize the full names of the schools within the Institute: School of Architecture; School of Engineering; School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences; Lally School of Management; School of Science.

Capitalize the full names of departments and centers: the Department of Materials Science, the Center for Computational Innovations, etc.

Lowercase informal references: the school, the center, the department, etc.

Capitalize formal titles when used immediately before a name. (Rensselaer President Shirley Ann Jackson spoke at the ceremony.) Lowercase formal titles when used alone or in constructions that set them off from a name by commas. (Shirley Ann Jackson, president of Rensselaer, spoke at the ceremony.) Lowercase and spell out titles when they are not used with a person's name. (The president will speak at the ceremony.)

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Remember that some formal titles at Rensselaer must be capitalized whether or not they precede the name. These include chaired professorships and the title of Institute Professor. (Joseph Smith, Amos Eaton Professor of Computer Science, and Jane Jones, Institute Professor of Science, spoke at the ceremony.)

Do not capitalize occupation titles. (He is editor of the newspaper.)

### **commas**

Use serial commas, an exception to Associated Press style. (The flag is red, white, and blue.)

### **composition titles**

Set the names of publications, movies, television shows, and plays in italics. An article or chapter within a book or magazine should be enclosed in quotation marks. (“For the Love of Physics,” an article about Robert Resnick, appeared in *Rensselaer* magazine.)

### **dates**

Use Arabic figures, without st, nth, rd, or th: March 4, not March 4<sup>th</sup>.

### **Grand Marshal, Grand Marshal Week**

The Grand Marshal is the highest elected student officer, the equivalent of a student body president, and presides over the Student Senate. GM Week, held in the spring, is the week of student elections and occasion for many events.

### **junior, senior**

Abbreviate as Jr. and Sr. only with full names of people. Do not precede by a comma: Martin Luther King Jr.

### **New York**

Use New York state when you need to distinguish between the city and the state. Note that “state” is not capitalized unless it is part of the name of an organization. (The New York State Department of Transportation oversees New York state highways.)

### **numerals**

Spell out numbers smaller than 10. Use figures for 10 and above. Exceptions: Always use figures for ages (She is 2 years old.) and percentages (5 percent) and spell out a number, other than a year, that begins a sentence. (Twelve students earned awards.)

### **President of the Union**

The President of the Union is the highest student representative in the budgetary branch of student government. He or she is also chair of the Rensselaer Union’s executive board. The PU is elected each year during GM Week.

### **ROTC**

Reserve Officers’ Training Corps.

### **spelling conventions**

adviser, not advisor  
campuswide, universitywide  
fundraising, fundraiser  
health care  
startup  
underway is now one word in all uses  
website, webcast, and webmaster, but the Web, Web page, and Web feed

### **state names**

In a recent change to the AP stylebook, states are spelled out. (Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute is located in Troy, New York.)