

## Vermont Law School Style Guide

The VLS Communications Office has created this style guide to establish standards and provide guidance for writing and formatting of materials produced under the Vermont Law School name. This guide provides standards for spelling and usage of place names, departmental names, titles, and other terms commonly used in reference to the Vermont Law School community. It also provides guidance for commonly misused or misspelled words and terms.

With very few exceptions, *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 15<sup>th</sup> edition is the reference of choice for VLS. For style guidance not covered in the *CMS*, see *The Blue Book* for formal citations, or refer to *Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 11<sup>th</sup> edition. Press releases follow Associated Press (AP) style.

## A

### abbreviations and acronyms

- Use only generally recognized abbreviations and acronyms.
  - Jr
  - the U.N.
  - the FBI
  
- Spell out the full text of the abbreviated name the first time referenced, followed by abbreviation in parentheses.
  - The Environmental Law Center (ELC) is offering four new energy courses for the summer session. For more information or to request a catalog, please call the ELC.
  
- See also **Vermont Law School** or other individual name listings.

### academic degrees and majors

- Do not use periods with acronymic or abbreviated forms of academic degrees.
  - JD
  - MELP
  - LLM
  - PhD
  
- Do not capitalize academic degrees in text when referred to in general terms (as in running text). Title case is appropriate in list form or on a formal document, such as the degree itself, or when referring to a degree program.
  - bachelor's degree
  - juris doctor
  - but
  - Master of Environmental Law and Policy degree program
  
- Do not capitalize academic majors, except where proper noun is included.
  - She received a bachelor of arts in political science from the University of Vermont.
  - Before earning a juris doctor from Vermont Law School, he studied English literature at Harvard.

- In lists, such as a faculty directory, style faculty credentials as follows:  
 More than one degree from different institutions:  
 PhD 1966 Princeton University, MA 1962 Reed College  
 More than one degree from same institution:  
 PhD 1979, MA 1972 Stanford University  
 One degree:  
 JD 1975 Harvard Law School
- Also see **class year and degree identification**

### academic programs

- Capitalize the formal names of academic departments and programs. However, in informal names and descriptions, capitalize only proper nouns. Vermont Law School's formal and informal academic department and program names and acronyms are as follows:

Formal	Informal	Short Name or Acronym
Academic Success Program	academic success	ASP
Dispute Resolution Program	dispute resolution	DRP
Environmental and Natural Resources Law Clinic	environmental clinic, the clinic	ENRLC
Environmental Law Center	the center	ELC
Environmental Law Program	environmental program	
Environmental Tax Policy Institute	tax institute, the institute	ETPI
General Practice Program	general practice, the program	GPP
Institute for Energy and the Environment	energy institute, the institute	IEE
International and Comparative Law Programs	international law	ICLP
International Semester in Practice		International SiP
Judicial Externship Program	judicial externships	
The Julien and Virginia Cornell Library, Cornell Library	the library	Cornell Library
Land Use Institute	land use, the institute	LUI
Legal Writing Program	legal writing	
Part-time JD Externship Program	JD externships	
Semester in Practice		SiP
South Royalton Legal Clinic	legal clinic, the clinic	SRLC
Summer Session (but fall semester and spring semester)		
U.S.-China Partnership for Environmental Law	China partnership, the partnership	
<i>Vermont Journal of Environmental Law</i>	the journal	VJEL

- See also **academic degrees and majors** and **departments—administrative**

## acronyms

See **abbreviations and acronyms**

## addresses

The mailing address style for VLS is:  
Individual and/or Department Name  
Vermont Law School  
164 Chelsea Street, PO Box 96  
South Royalton, VT 05068

The package delivery (UPS, FedEx, etc.) address is:  
Individual and/or Department Name  
Vermont Law School  
68 North Windsor Street  
South Royalton, VT 05068

- See the *Student Handbook* under “Campus Safety Tips” for physical addresses of other VLS buildings. However, always use the PO Box for USPS delivery and return address.

## African American

- No hyphen: African American

## alumna, alumnae, alumni, alumnus

- alumna—singular, female
- alumnae—plural, females only
- alumnus—singular, male
- alumni—plural, men and women OR men only
- avoid the use of alum in all but the most informal of correspondence (to avoid confusion with the chemical element)
- Remember to include VLS alumni’s class years after their names in any publication.

## ampersand (&)

- Avoid, except when part of an official name of an organization, publication, department, or program.

## apostrophe (’)

- Be sure to use curly apostrophe ( ' ) rather than straight prime ( ' ) or minute mark ( ' ). Note that text that is copied and pasted from email, websites, or otherwise modified in transition may replace curly apostrophes with straight marks, so remember to check.
- It may be easier to see the difference between a curly apostrophe and straight mark in a serif font, such as Times New Roman or Garamond  
                   apostrophe ' prime ' minute mark '
- Use the curly apostrophe leaning to the right before any abbreviated class year.  
                   Jane Jones '10
- In Word, press Ctrl and press the apostrophe button twice as a shortcut to ensure a curly apostrophe that leans in the correct direction.

### **assure, ensure, insure**

- assure—to set the mind at ease, to make confident (of something), to promise
- ensure—to make certain
- insure—to issue an insurance policy

## **B**

### **bar (the legal entity)**

- Do not use initial capital 'B' unless as part of a proper name of an organization.  
                   She passed the bar exam in August.  
                   He has a meeting with the president of the Vermont Bar Association.

### **Barrister's Bookshop**

- Formally, use either Barrister's Bookshop or Barrister's Bookshop Inc.
  - Note that you may find older references with the spelling, Barrister's Bookshoppe, but this is not the form for current use
  - NOT Barristers or Barristers'
  - NOT Book Shop, Book Store, or Bookstore
- Informally, Barrister's or simply the bookshop

### **Board of Trustees, board**

- Do not use initial capitals unless referring to formal name of Vermont Law School's Board of Trustees. Do not capitalize in shortened form or in reference to other organizations' boards.

The VLS Board of Trustees will meet in May.

He has been a member of the board since 2003.

She is the president of the board of trustees of the Vermont Nonprofit Coalition.

- Treat as singular.  
                   The Board of Trustees participates in commencement ceremonies.

**C****campuswide**

- one word; no hyphen

**capitalization**

- Generally, follow *Chicago Manual of Style* rules.
- In most cases, do not capitalize school or law school, even if referring to Vermont Law School, if not part of the full name Vermont Law School.
- combinations of proper nouns and generic nouns in plural form:
 

the White River	the White and Connecticut rivers
General Practice Program	the General Practice and Legal Writing programs
Windsor County	Orange and Windsor counties
the Green Mountains	the Green and White mountains

 Unless the generic nouns precede the proper nouns:
 

Mount Mansfield	Mounts Mansfield and Washington
Lake Champlain	Lakes Willoughby and Champlain
- Title case: capitalize prepositions and conjunctions of five or more letters; do not capitalize those of fewer than five letters.
  - Learning from Environmental Justice: A New Model for International Environmental Rights
  - It's Not About the Money: The Role of Preferences, Cognitive Biases, and Heuristics Among Professional Athletes
- Common capitalizations:
  - Internet
  -
- See also: **named spaces, academic degrees and majors, academic programs, departments—administrative, titles—conferences and lectures, titles—professional, titles—publications**

**China partnership**

- Informal name for U.S.-China Partnership for Environmental Law
- See **departments and programs—academic, U.S.-China Partnership for Environmental Law**

**class year and degree identification**

- Include class year when naming VLS alumni in publications.
- Leave a space between the name and degree year. Do not set class year in parentheses or separate with a comma.
- Be sure that the apostrophe mark before the abbreviated year curves away from the number. (In MSWord, this is achieved by pressing **Cntrl + '**  twice.)
- Do not leave a space between degree abbreviation and class year. When listing multiple degrees from VLS, separate with a slash mark.

John A. Smith '99  
 John A. Smith JD'99  
 John A. Smith MSEL'99/JD'02

**comma**

- Use a serial comma (before the last item in a series, after and or or).  
 trustees, faculty, staff, and students  
 first, second, and third  
 beef, chicken, or vegetarian

**copyright**

See \_\_\_\_\_ for details about copyright notices and use. ????

**courses**

- Title capitalize course titles without italics or quotation marks.

**D**

**dashes**

- Use an en-dash (longer than a hyphen; the width of the letter 'n') in ranges of numbers or dates, and do not type spaces between numbers and the en-dash.  
 The symposium will take place October 23–25.  
 Approximately 90–100 participants are expected.
- Use an em-dash (double the length of an en-dash) for parenthetical remarks where a comma would not be strong enough. Do not include any spaces around the em-dash.  
 We raised a total of \$3,147,534—a new one-year record for Vermont Law School.  
 There are abundant opportunities for recreation—running, hiking, skiing, biking, fishing, canoeing—all within a short distance.
- Also see **hyphens**.

**dates**

- Use a comma before the year when using full month, day, and year format.  
 March 9, 2001
- Do not use a comma when using only the month and year.  
 January 2003
- Do not include ordinals with dates.  

do not use:	<b>use:</b>
December 31 <sup>st</sup>	December 31
July 22 <sup>nd</sup>	July 22
May 3 <sup>rd</sup>	May 3
June 5 <sup>th</sup>	June 5

**degrees — see academic degrees and majors**

**departments – administrative**

- With rare exceptions, “Office” or “Department” follows the department name, rather than being preceded by “Office of” or “Department of.”
- Capitalize only when referring to formal name of departments. Do not capitalize when referring to the departmental function generically.

<b>Formal Office Name(s)</b>	<b>Informal or Generic Name</b>	<b>Acronym</b>
Admissions Office or Admissions	admissions	
Barrister’s Bookshop	Barrister’s, the bookshop	
Buildings and Grounds Department or Buildings and Grounds	B&G	B&G
Business Office	business	
Career Services Office or Career Services	career services	
Communications Office ( <i>includes Marketing, Web Communications, and Media Relations</i> ) or Communications	communications, marketing, media relations (not interchangeable)	
Housing Office or Housing	housing	
Human Resources Office or Human Resources	human resources	HR
Information Technology Department or Information Technology	IT	IT
Office of the Dean or Office of the President and Dean	dean’s office (or collectively, deans’ offices)	
Office for Institutional Advancement ( <i>includes Alumni Relations</i> )	advancement (not development), alumni	OIA

**dual degree, dual degree program**

- Do not hyphenate

**E**

**emeritus, emerita, emeriti**

- emeritus—male, singular
- emerita—female, singular

- emeriti—plural, whether males, females, or males and females
- Note that emeritus standing is a bestowed honorary title and does not simply mean “retired.”

**Energizer(s)**

- The informal nickname for Research Associates of the Institute for Energy and the Environment
- Initial capital E
- no quotation marks

**ensure** – see **assure, ensure, insure**

**Environmental Law Center**

- Informally = ELC, the environmental law program

**Environmental Law Media Fellowship, Environmental Law Media Fellow**

- Informally = media fellowship, media fellow

**F**

**faculty**

- Except as a modifier, treat as plural in sentence structure.  
The faculty have all received invitations.  
The faculty meetings occur on a monthly basis.
- Also see **titles – professional**.

**G**

**gender-specific/gender-neutral language**

- Avoid terms that are gender-specific whenever appropriate. Also avoid overuse of his/her, he/she, and the like. Examples:

<b>gender-specific</b>	<b>gender-neutral</b>
chairman, chairwoman	chair (rather than chairperson)
stewardess	flight attendant
policeman	police officer
waiter, waitress	server

**H**

**honors**

- Use no italics or quotations.  
cum laude  
magna cum laude

summa cum laude

### hyphenated words and compound words (when to use and when not to use a hyphen)

- class rank
  - Hyphenate first-year, second-year, or third-year when used as a modifier.
    - He is a first-year law student. (Informally, He is a first-year.)
    - Second-year studies might include participation in the Semester in Practice.
    - Send an invitation to the entire third-year class.
  - Do not hyphenate in other cases.
    - He is in his third year of law school.
- decision making (n.), decision-making (adj.)
  - The course teaches skills in decision making.
  - We will learn about the steps in the decision-making process.
- five-year-old girl (adj.), a five-year-old (n.), she is five years old (adj.??)
- first-come, first-served (Do not use first-come, first-serve.)
- fund raiser, fund raising (n.), but a fund-raising project (adj.)
- health care (two words, no hyphen)
- kickoff (n.), kick-off (adj.), kick off (v.)
  - The campaign kickoff will be held on August 3.
  - The kick-off party will begin at 3 p.m.
  - The event will help kick off a great campaign.
- policy maker, policy making (n.), but a policy-making institution (adj.)
- compound words beginning with prefixes such as “co” and “pre.”
  - do not hyphenate compound words beginning with the prefixes unless doing so is awkward or creates a confusing meaning, or if the prefix is followed by a capitalized word, numeral, or compound word. Generally, see *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary* for guidance.
    - coauthor
    - cochair
    - cosponsor
  - but
    - co-worker
    - co-opt
  - prelaw (as in *preLaw Advisor*)
  - preemptive
  - prerequisite
- but
  - pre-Raphaelite

### I

Institute for Energy and the Environment (IEE)

- Use full, formal name upon first use followed by “(IEE)”
- Thereafter, may be “the institute” or “the IEE”

### L

**legal cases**

- Italicize (or underline, if italics not available) names of legal cases.

*Roe v. Wade*

*Rapanos v. United States*

Or, within a publication title that is already italicized, set in regular (Roman) text:

*Rapanos and Wetland Mitigation Banking*

**letter grades**

- Do not use quotation marks around letter grades.  
She received a B in Torts.
- Do not use apostrophe in plural grade letters.  
He received two As, two Bs, and a C last semester.

**M****N****named spaces**

- Capitalize only when referring to formal name of the building or space. Do not capitalize when referring to the generic function of the space.

<b>Formal Space Name(s)</b>	<b>Less Formally:</b>	<b>Function</b>
Abbott House	Abbott	Business Office, Registrar, Financial Aid, Admissions
Anderson House		Communications, Human Resources
Curtis House		OIA, Alumni Programs
Davis House		Magic Mountain Day Care, apartment
Dearing House		Barrister's Bookshop, Career Services
Debevoise Hall	Debevoise	mailroom/production, classrooms, ELC, Administration, ENRLC, faculty offices
Eaton House		IEE, China partnership
Eaton House Barn		Buildings & Grounds
Fay House		Gym
Fiske Courtroom	courtroom/Oakes 110	moot court, special events

Hoff Lounge	Hoff	gatherings, conference room, study
Jacobs House		China partnership, IEE annex
James L. and Evelena S. Oakes Hall	Oakes Hall, Oakes	classrooms
Jonathon B. Chase Community Center	Chase Community Center, Chase	multi-purpose, events
Julien and Virginia Cornell Library	Cornell Library	library
Kirsch House		faculty housing
Law Review		<i>Vermont Law Review</i> offices
Legal Advocacy Building	190 Chelsea	Currently student offices, recreation. Future home of SRLC and ENRLC.
Old Schoolhouse		Legal Writing, faculty offices
Pierce House		SRLC
Rogers House		GPP, SiP, JD and Judicial Externships, faculty offices
Waterman Hall	Waterman	faculty, admin offices
Waterman Committee Room	committee room	conference room
Yates Common Room	Yates	gatherings, study

## numbers

- Spell out numbers up to nine. Use digits for numbers 10 and above.
- Exception: When referring to numbers of items within the same paragraph, if one calls for digits, use all digits.  
For its 2007 Orientation, Vermont Law School welcomed 203 JD degree candidates, 25 MELP degree candidates, and 7 LLM degree candidates.
- Centuries: Use same rules as for spelling out numbers. Only hyphenate between number and “century” if it is acting as a modifier. Spell out if number begins sentence. Hyphenate two-part ordinals if spelled out.  
19th century  
20th century  
21st-century technology  
Twenty-first century students have a wealth of study resources at their fingertips.

## P

### pronunciations

- Debevoise = DEB uh voyz
- 

## Q



- A one-time conference or specific lecture title, even if part of a series, is enclosed in quotation marks, in title caps, not italicized. For a conference that is part of a series, this may be the substantive title or the “theme” title of the conference.

The law school hosted the 2008 National Association of Environmental Law Societies Annual Conference, “Picking Up the Pieces: Reclaiming Global Environmental Leadership.”

The Second Annual Energy Summer Conference, “The Race Against Time: Meeting Future Energy Needs in a Carbon-Constrained World,” was held at VLS on July 20.

Oliver Houck presented “The Control and Uncontrol of Nature in New Orleans” during our Hot Topics in Environmental Law lecture series.

## U

### **U.S.-China Partnership for Environmental Law**

- Formerly known as the VLS-Sun Yat-sen University Partnership for Environmental Law in China
- Informally, **China partnership**  
NOT “China program,” though it is internally and very informally referred to in this manner.

### ***U.S. News & World Report***

- Italicize
- Use “&” rather than “and”
- No space between “U.S.” and “News” if full name, *U.S. News & World Report*, is used, but
- Do include a space between “U.S.” and “News” if shortened name version, *U.S. News* is used. (Avoid using shortened name unless after first mention of name or space constrictions don’t allow for use of full name.)

## V

### **Vermont Law School**

- In most instances, use the full name on the first reference.
- Subsequent references may refer to VLS (informally), the school, or the law school.

## W

### **website**

- Use **website**, not Website, web site, or Web site