Email Style Guide

Objective
The goal of the Emory Department of Medicine email style guide is to maintain a similar look and feel for all email messages that come from the department. Emails should be consistent with Emory University’s official branding.

From the Emory Communications website: “Adopted from Associated Press (AP) Stylebook—with its emphasis on simplicity and brevity, AP style is Emory’s preferred style for online communications. Refer to the AMA Manual of Style for medical and scientific references, and the Emory Style Manual for Emory specifics.” Note: While Emory generally recommends the use of AP style, Emory University School of Medicine favors the Oxford (serial) comma.

Best Practices

Use the Emory Department of Medicine logo and signature on all mass email communication
The Emory logo is an important part of our brand image. The logo ties your message to all other communications that your audience has received from the department.

Write in a concise, inverted-pyramid style
Use succinct language and a large amount of white space to allow for easy “skim-ability.” Place the most important information at the top and extra info toward the bottom. When possible, use bulleted lists.

Graphics should enhance—not distract from—your message
Any images should play a supporting role so that your message can be conveyed clearly and effectively, even if the image does not display. Never send an email that is simply one large image.

Use a consistent, 14-point (or larger) font
Readers will skip your message if they have to strain to read it. Use one to two clean, easy-to-read fonts for your text. Emory’s official web identity fonts/type families are Verdana, Arial, Georgia, and Trebuchet. Emails should, at a minimum, be written in 12-point font.

Use bulleted lists
Use one to two clean, easy-to-read fonts for your text (Cambria, Verdana, Arial). Email text should, at a minimum, be written in 12-point font. Readers will skip your message if they have to strain to read it.

Use bold sparingly
Bold should be used for headings and then sparingly for any other emphasis. Too much bold makes texts harder, not easier, to read and differentiate.

Use all-caps and italics very sparingly
All caps and Italicics can be difficult to read online and are often unnecessary. AP Style uses neither all caps nor italics. Follow AMA style when using italics for clinical and scientific terms.

**Do not underline or highlight text**
On the Web, underlining text implies a link. Underlining a sentence for emphasis is misleading and unnecessary.

**Use black or blue text**
Other colors are inconsistent and can make your message difficult to read. Viewers quickly delete messages that are difficult to scan.

**Do not use graphics for headlines, subheads, or body copy when you can use HTML**
Many readers choose not to download images, so they will miss part of your message. Don’t turn your entire message into a graphic; if readers do not choose to download your image, they will miss your message completely.

**Refer to the Emory Department of Medicine branded template**
The Marketing & Communications team has developed department- and division-specific templates for emails, PowerPoint presentations, flyers, etc. to make design easy.

These templates include customized headers and examples of consistent, branded messaging.

**Proofread and check links**
The Marketing & Communications team is developing a “proofreading protocol” for departmental emails, as well as a recommended proofreading protocol for divisions/teams. The communications specialist will proofread all outgoing communication, but it is recommended that submitters double-check their work for typos, branding inconsistencies, broken URLs, etc. prior to submission.

**Encourage social media engagement**
- Department of Medicine faculty and staff can be powerful “brand ambassadors” on social media. With “likes,” reposting, and comments, you can raise awareness of and generate interest in your message. When appropriate, invite faculty and staff to “like” or “follow” the Department of Medicine on social media.
- If you would like to share an update, photo, or Twitter “hashtag” to promote your event/group, the Marketing & Communications team can help boost your message on the Department of Medicine’s official social media pages.
- The Marketing & Communications team is developing a list of general social media guidelines and best practices for faculty and staff, which will be distributed across the department.
Text Guidelines

The email guidelines for text are not intended as a complete guide to grammar, punctuation, capitalization, or writing style. Although exceptions are allowed if needed for clarity or accuracy, in most cases, you should follow these guidelines.

Abbreviations for technical terms
- Use AMA style guide. Example: ECG for electrocardiogram (not EKG).

Apostrophes
- Do not use an apostrophe with plural abbreviations of degrees or tests, or with dates. Example: MBAs, SATs, GPAs, 1990s, 1860s.
- To designate possession in a last name ending in s, such as Stephens, add an apostrophe without an additional s. Example: Stephens'.

Bullet points
- For bulleted lists, use bullet points, hyphens or numbers.

Capitalization
- Use lowercase letters except when uppercase is clearly required.
- Lowercase the words “department,” “university,” and “hospital” except when they are part of a proper name. Example: “The Emory Department of Medicine reserves the right to cancel” and “The department reserves the right to cancel” are both correct.
- Do not capitalize entire words or sentences. Readers consider this equivalent to shouting, and it is more difficult to read.

Commas
- Commas and periods always go inside quotation marks. Example: She said, “It will rain tomorrow.” “It will rain tomorrow,” she said.
- The academic community favors the serial comma; in a series, put a comma before the “and.” Example: The campus tour included the library, the gym, and the theater.
- Use commas with numbers larger than three digits. Example: The department has more than 1,300 employees.
- When a phrase lists only a month and year, do not separate the year with a comma. Example: February 2015 was a cold month.
- When a phrase refers to a specific date, set off the year with a comma. Example: July 1, 2015 is the target date.

Dashes vs. hyphens
- Use a hyphen to link two words that modify the word that follows them. Example: on-campus visit.
- Use “em” dashes to insert phrases in sentences. Example: With an “em” dash—using two hyphens or select symbols from the main toolbar—you can add information within a sentence.

Dates
- For dates, use ordinal numbers. Example: June 30, not June 30th.
Degrees
- Omit periods from academic degrees. **Example:** MD, PhD, RN, MPH

Exclamation points
- Professional emails use exclamation points sparingly, if at all. They can make writing seem both juvenile and falsely enthusiastic.

Internet
- Capitalize “Internet” and “Web.”
- When referring to any Web presence that contains more than one page or location, use the term “website.”
- “Web page” should only be used to refer to a single page within a site, or a single-page site with no internal links.

Links
- Always include a link if more information is available on the Web. Links in an email should be active ([www.medicine.emory.edu](http://www.medicine.emory.edu) vs. www.medicine.emory.edu) and should not include http:// when written.

Technical (clinical) terms
- When possible, refer to the [AMA style guide](http://). E.g., ECG for electrocardiogram (not EKG)

Time
- Use periods and lowercase letters to express morning or afternoon. For even hours, colons and zeros are not necessary. Numerals should only be used to express noon or midnight if you wish to create a hyperlink. Lowercase these designations.
  - 10 a.m.
  - 9–9:30 a.m.
  - 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.
  - The seminar will meet from 11 a.m. to noon.
Emory Campus, Center, and Building Names

The following list includes the proper names for various Emory medical facilities. Please make sure to use each facility’s proper, branded name in formal email communications (e.g., “Emory Saint Joseph’s Hospital,” not “Emory St. Joe’s”). For the complete list, refer to the Emory Style Manual.

“Emory Healthcare” is a formal name that combines the words “health” and “care.” Example: Emory Healthcare is the largest and most comprehensive health care system in Georgia, and it is part of Emory University’s Woodruff Health Sciences Center.

Emory Healthcare’s nonprofit network includes:
- Emory Clinic (no “the” in front of Emory)
- Emory Johns Creek Hospital
- Emory Saint Joseph’s Hospital
- Emory University Hospital
- Emory University Hospital Midtown (formerly Emory Crawford Long Hospital)
- Emory Wesley Woods Geriatric Hospital
- See the full list of locations

Emory faculty provide patient care at hospital affiliates, including:
- Grady Memorial Hospital
- Atlanta VA Medical Center
- Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta
- For more information, visit the Emory Healthcare website.

Emory’s Woodruff Health Sciences Center comprises:
- Emory Healthcare
- School of Medicine
- Nell Hodgson Woodruff School of Nursing
- Rollins School of Public Health
- Winship Cancer Institute
- Yerkes National Primate Research Center