

GUIDELINES AS TO HOW WE REFER TO UMASS AMHERST

UMass Amherst is one of five campuses in the University of Massachusetts system. This complicates the way we write about UMass, UMass Amherst, the University, and campus, and the like. Generally, when referring to the system we write: the University of Massachusetts system. The word University (upper case) refers to the system of all five campuses. The word university in lower case can refer in context to either the system or the campus or other institutions that are university-like in general. When we refer to this campus, we should use the word campus to avoid confusing the campus with the system because they are not the same thing. We can write: “the campus is alive with students” when we mean UMass Amherst. We can write: “the system (or the University of Massachusetts or the University) Trustees are exceptional representatives of the Commonwealth.” We can say “our campus” when we mean UMass Amherst. We can say “the University” when we mean the system. An exception involves athletics. For historical reasons, UMass is the name for our athletic program, and to confuse things further UMass is also the name the system uses to describe itself. Although we try to include Amherst in copy that uses UMass, some athletic contexts use the UMass tag alone to refer to our sports teams and program. Sports tags are traditionally short, and so UMass, as in Go UMass!, will likely survive intact in these contexts.

In summary, then, the system is described using the word University and when referring to our campus we should use the following language: the University of Massachusetts Amherst, UMass Amherst, or the campus in communications and publications. We can use university, in lowercase, when we are talking about UMass Amherst in general contexts, however, we should never use University, upper case for this campus, because the system is legally and organizationally the University.
