



CAPELLA UNIVERSITY

BRAND GUIDEBOOK

Rules to Live & Learn by

Table of contents

2	Why am I reading this?
4	Capella University brand manifesto
6	Why we exist
8	Our purpose
9	Core belief
10	Our Learners
12	Our brand
14	Our persona
16	Our voice
19	How we talk
20	This not that
22	Our logo
30	FlexPath logo
32	Fonts
36	Imagery
40	Colors
44	Brand campaign

Why am I reading this?

Why? Well, in a nutshell, it's so you and everyone else who works on the Capella University brand get on the same page, and have a point of reference for how to present a unified brand look, feel, and voice. In this guide, you'll learn all of our brand standards for our logo, color palette, typography, photography, visual elements, symbols, tone, and look and feel. Basically, everything you need to communicate our identity, both internally and externally.

Use the book. Read it. Refer to it. Print it out and write in it. Bend it. Dog-ear the pages. Underline important things with one of those hideous bright pink highlighters. Do whatever you have to do. It's your guide. If it still looks like new at this time next year, we haven't done our job.

If you only take one thing from this guide, let this be it.

*Seriously. Take it. Print it out. Hang it on your wall. Live it. It's the Capella University Manifesto.
It's what we believe. It's what we're all about.*

Traditional higher education is failing. For adult Learners, it's too rigid. Too expensive. Impractical. Outdated. Too, well, traditional. We are not traditional higher education. **Proudly.** Because life is tough. Getting ahead is tough. And while education rightfully should be tough, it shouldn't be tough to pursue. **Solving this problem is why we exist.** Why we get up in the morning. Because **we believe what's good for our Learners is good for us.** And for employers. And, quite frankly, the world. So **everything we do, we do in service of our Learners.** Like creating programs that allow them to learn on their time, at their pace. And utilizing what they already know to **help them advance in their careers and their lives.** After all, they've committed everything to bettering themselves. **It's only fair we commit everything to them.** Because, like us, they are a different kind of breed. And they deserve better. **Their ambitions deserve better.** So we'll continue to make sure they didn't come this far, only to come this far.



Why we exist

Education is the great equalizer.

We firmly believe that. But, we recognize that there are problems with traditional education. In short, it is failing adult Learners.

Because it's:

not flexible enough

not affordable enough

not designed around adult Learners' needs

not tightly aligned with career advancement

not connected to what employers actually need

Solving these problems—all of them—is our reason for being.

Our purpose is the impact we want to make on the world.

To reshape higher education so adult Learners can achieve a better future.

We are pioneers in Competency Based Education and are leading the way in Direct Assessment. We're committed to innovating the educational experience to positively impact Learners' lives and support employers' goals.

We are driven by a core belief.

What's good for the Learner is good for us.

This belief guides everything we do. We're passionate about putting Learners first and designing a better way to help them learn.

Our Learners

Our Learners are motivated adults who desire to achieve and advance in their careers and in their lives. Traditional higher education isn't a good fit for them because they have distinctly grown-up needs. Adult Learners have families, jobs, and everyday responsibilities. They even learn differently. Because of their life and work experience, they want real-world applications of their knowledge.

Adult Learners are **self-directed, focused,** and **highly motivated** achievers. They **embrace challenges** on the way to attaining their goals. They're optimistic and **resourceful,** and are drawn to online education because it's flexible and fits into their busy lives.

Our brand

Getting our brand right internally is the key to getting it right in the world.

OUR POSITIONING

*The stake we uniquely own
in our Learners' minds*

The most direct path to advancing your ambitions

REASONS TO BELIEVE

How we dimensionalize "direct"

Relevant: You learn exactly what you need to be successful in your career.

Personalized: Flexible and supportive to fit your lifestyle

Efficient: No wasted time, money, or effort

OUR VALUE

The benefit we offer Learners

Professional Credibility: Respected and recognized degrees in the professions we serve

Flexibility: Flexible, online learning modules that let you move through your program anytime, anywhere

Value: The value/cost ratio makes a Capella University education a solid investment in your future

If our brand was a person, what would they be like?

OUR PERSONALITY: **Empathetic:** Striving to understand and support the needs of adult Learners and seeing the world through their eyes

Visionary: Having bold ideas about the future of education and having the determination and expertise to make them happen

Empowering: Providing the tools and connections to help Learners achieve their goals and reach their potential

An inspiring mentor

A mentor listens and understands. They know what you want and where you want to go. Because they've been there. They use their knowledge and experience to guide you in a purposeful and supportive way, and encourage you to find success on your own terms.

Because they've done and seen it all, they can help you envision a path forward, and inspire you to keep going—even when times get tough. Or maybe, more accurately, *especially* when times get tough.

A mentor demonstrates a positive attitude and acts as a positive role model. They believe in you. And, in turn, you trust in them.

Talk to me, not at me.

Our voice is how we express our personality.

It's not (just) what you say, but how you say it. Three words guide our voice in copy, in person, on social media, and in all of our conversations with Learners:

CONVERSATIONAL

RESPECTFUL

INSPIRATIONAL

Our voice

CONVERSATIONAL – A mentor talks to their mentee. They don't talk at them. Or lecture them.

Our communications should feel the same. Comfortable. Simple. Fluid. Plain-spoken. Never preachy or condescending. The way conversational language comes across is not always perfectly precise. And that's okay. Sometimes it's very descriptive and lengthy, but usually it's more brief. More staccato. More. Like. This. After all, a mentor, even a well-educated one, knows that getting the message across clearly is more important than showing off language skills.

RESPECTFUL – Our Learners deserve respect. Many of them are already well-accomplished, and as adult Learners, they have very unique, real-world needs. A mentor honors and recognizes this individuality and the value they have to offer. So our Learners should feel like we're talking to THEM—not to everyone.

INSPIRATIONAL – A mentor uses their knowledge and success to help others get more out of life. They've done and seen it all, so they're able to help their mentees stay focused on what could be. This is not done in an overly forceful way. It's more "I believe in you" than "you got this!" It's subtle, but there's a meaningful difference there. It's a gentler tone, yet there's an almost subliminal power that still elicits excitement for the possibility of what's next.

How we talk

Rule #1: We always capitalize the word “Learners.” It’s a sign of respect and an ownable piece of language for Capella University.

The following are some examples of what our language or voice should read/sound like. There are no hard and fast rules for this (save for rule #1, above), but there are some general guidelines. Keeping in mind the three tenets that guide the voice overall (Conversational, Respectful, Inspirational), you should also consider:

You and We. Us and Them.

Whenever possible, be sure to use inclusive language that lets Learners know they are not in this alone. Like any good mentor, we want them to know that we are with them every step of the way. And that we understand their desires as well as their obstacles. For instance:

EXAMPLE:

We have developed the most flexible learning formats.

(All about us)

We know you’re busy, so we developed the most flexible learning formats.

(About them and us)

This not that

The following are some examples of our current language versus our new voice:

CURRENT LANGUAGE:

EXPLORE DEGREE PROGRAMS

Find, compare, and save online programs to discover the right fit for you. You can filter by degree, academic area, or profession—with the ability to choose from more than 160 graduate and undergraduate specializations.

NEW VOICE:

FIND YOUR FUTURE HERE.

Our programs fit your life, not the other way around. Take a look here. Filter by degree, academic area, or profession to choose from more than 160 graduate and undergraduate specializations.

CURRENT LANGUAGE:

This quick and easy FlexPath Assessment will take approximately 5 – 7 minutes.

REQUEST MORE INFORMATION

Complete this form to receive our University Guide. An enrollment counselor who specializes in your area of study will contact you soon to answer your questions.

A DEGREE PROGRAM THAT FITS YOUR LIFE

FlexPath, Capella's self-paced learning format, swaps preset class times and weekly deadlines for a revolutionary approach that gives you the freedom to learn your way and earn your degree faster and more affordably than in a traditional program.

NEW VOICE:

We know you're busy. This FlexPath assessment will take 7 minutes, max.

WANT TO LEARN MORE?

Fill out this form for a University Guide. You'll also be contacted by an enrollment counselor who has the answers to all your questions.

WE'VE GOT JUST THE DEGREE FOR YOU.

FlexPath is exactly what it sounds like: a flexible, self-paced program. No more preset class times and rigid weekly deadlines; just a revolutionary approach with the freedom to learn your way, at your pace. You can even earn your degree faster and more affordably than in a traditional program.



CAPELLA UNIVERSITY

This is not a logo. It's our brand.

Okay. Technically, yes, it is a logo. But it's bigger than that. It IS our brand. Use it wisely, as the logo is the physical embodiment of Capella University and everything we stand for. (No pressure though.) A simple way to think of it is the logo is like our "stamp of approval." So make sure everything the logo goes on, in, around, above, or beneath adheres to all the rules in this book. And then, of course, make sure you follow these rules about the logo itself:



HERO LOGO HORIZONTAL

It's important to use consistent logo treatments to build familiarity and maintain a unified image. When designing materials and communications for Capella University, please refer to these pages to find the approved logo that best suits your needs.



HERO LOGO STACKED



STACKED LOGO VARIATION

When horizontal spacing becomes an issue, this stacked variation may be used. Extreme vertical layouts such as skyscraper web banners would be an example.

HORIZONTAL LOGO VARIATION

A second version of our stacked logo is allowed in online executions when all other logo variations have been exhausted.



THE CAPELLA UNIVERSITY SHIELD

It's the most iconic part of the Capella University brand. To some, it instantly says "Capella." But to others—future Learners—it doesn't have the same meaning. It should only be used when it is very clear that the materials on which it appears are coming from Capella University. For example, using it for internal communications and even such things as video would be acceptable applications.

Our learning formats are flexible. Our logo guidelines, less so.

Look, we pride ourselves on being flexible for our Learners, but when it comes to the logo, we are less willing to bend. It is our identity we are talking about, after all. So we want to make sure it's consistent. And while the following examples of what not to do seem pretty obvious, we just wanted to point out some of the common misinterpretations we've seen over the years. In short, if the logo usage you want doesn't appear on the previous pages, then you're better off not using it.



DO NOT alter the size relationship between the shield and the typography



DO NOT alter the position of the shield

DO NOT distort the logo horizontally or vertically



DO NOT alter the logo with a drop shadow

DO NOT adjust the colors of the logo



DO NOT rotate the logo in any direction

DO NOT use the logo at unreadable sizes



FLEXPATH

FlexPath

FlexPath LOGO

When possible, use the full FlexPath logo.

It should appear in its approved colors of red or white.

Only when either of those colors are not options may the black version of the logo be substituted.

Use this version of the FlexPath logo when showcasing both learning formats (GuidedPath and FlexPath).

GuidedPath does not have its own logo, so it's important they carry the same weight and remain equals.

When using FlexPath as text only (within body copy), be sure to use the proper typographic treatment—one word, with the “F” and “P” capitalized.



FlexPath LOGO LOCKUP

Only the horizontal Capella University logo may be used in a lockup with the FlexPath logo.

**You may have noticed
this typeface as you read
the previous pages.**

It's called Lato.

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

1234567890

Lato Light

Lato Light Italic

Lato Regular

Lato Italic

Lato Bold

Lato Bold Italic

Lato Black

Lato Black Italic

LATO REGULAR

Lato is our hero sans serif font, primarily chosen because of its approachable feel. It has a softness to it that feels very much like our mentor voice it will be delivering. It's not too rigid and blocky, and has unique features to many of its letter forms. In other words, it has characters with lots of character.

The heavier weights are ideal for headlines in outward-facing communications like digital banners. While it is bold, it never feels like it is screaming at people. It's the perfect companion to our brand voice.

The lighter weights work best as informational copy in places such as our Visitors Center, while the mid-weights are a great complement to both.

Sentence case is the primary way to use this font, but all caps can help your design in such places as labels and action buttons.

This one, too.
It's called Libre Baskerville.

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890

Libre Baskerville

Libre Baskerville Italic

Libre Baskerville Bold

Libre Baskerville is our hero serif font. Like Lato, it's very approachable. It gives the reader a sense of comfort, much like our mentor voice. Additionally, it is a very classic and sophisticated font that's also part of our Capella University logo. Due to its welcoming feel, it is best used for conversing with our Learner. And while our sans serif font (Lato) is used for announcing and grabbing someone's attention, Libre Baskerville will help our brand communicate one-on-one in places like our Visitors Center and in email communications. Lastly, like you may have seen in this guide, it's a nice complement to Lato—serving as a subhead or calling attention to something important.

Imagery that tells a story

Our approach to photography tells a story about our Learners and the lives they lead. All of our photos should be curated with an authentic and relatable lens, as if the subjects are in a moment and we're a fly on the wall.

Our photography should never look too polished or posed. Some thoughtful and visually pleasing disarray in the set and wardrobe is welcome. The subjects are rarely seen looking to the camera, or wearing any exaggerated facial expressions.

All photography should feel inspirational, yet deeply genuine. We should get a sense that the subjects are motivated and quietly confident while striking a balance between home and work life.

Warm Modern

Our photography should signal “visionary” with rich neutrals and high contrast in color. The photos should be crisp and saturated, with a warm tone. Even cool tones should feel warm—like grays with a slight hint of brown. Each photo should have a pop of bright, yet soft white to offset the dark. These highlights will add a hint of inspiration without being stark or harsh. This warm, modern photography complements our brand colors and feels approachable and uplifting—feelings you get from an inspiring mentor.

Dos and Don'ts

When selecting images, keep in mind the importance of authenticity. The context of each photo should be clear—no blurry or blank backdrops. The subjects should not appear overly emotional or posed. The subjects shouldn't be studio models, but rather genuine and real-looking members of Capella University's target audience.

We pride ourselves in really knowing who our Learner is, and it's important that our imagery shows that. Choosing an image of a nurse or a mom or a businessman sounds simple, but choosing one that tells a story of who that person really is, is what we strive for.

In short, we want people to feel like there is more to the moments, and that the lives we are depicting have greater stories. If you can create that narrative, you are on the right track.

PMS: 1797
CMYK: 20/100/100/11
RGB: 182/32/37
HEX: b62025

PMS: 1815
CMYK: 37/93/79/57
RGB: 91/32/37
HEX: 5b131a

PMS: Neutral Black
CMYK: 71/65/64/69
RGB: 38/38/38
HEX: 262626

PMS: 877
CMYK: 47/39/39/3
RGB: 141/141/141
HEX: 8d8d8d

PMS: Warm Gray 1
CMYK: 12/11/14/0
RGB: 222/217/211
HEX: ded9d3

PMS: Cool Gray 1
CMYK: 3/2/2/0
RGB: 245/245/245
HEX: f5f5f5

White

Primary Colors

These principal colors are silent ambassadors for our brand's personality.

Bright red is optimistic, attention-grabbing, and timeless. It plays a vital role in establishing a clear and powerful image, and in defining Capella University's brand.

Dark red is an inviting secondary color that can be paired with bright red while maintaining enough contrast from it. We like to think of this dark red as a go-between for the bright red and our spectrum of neutral primary colors. Black, white, and grays elevate and modernize our primary color palette. These neutrals can be used for copy, whitespace, and backgrounds to add variation and simplify designs. This palette creates a powerful differentiator for the brand. When used consistently, it creates another level of distinction.

Secondary Colors

This secondary palette provides greater range for our brand experience.

These rich jewel tones should be used thoughtfully to complement and accent our primary color palette. Warm gold alongside cool blues and purple works great in imagery to maintain a fresh, approachable look.

PMS: 7463
CMYK: 100/80/41/35
RGB: 13/51/84
HEX: 0f3354

PMS: 7699
CMYK: 82/49/43/17
RGB: 53/101/115
HEX: 356573

PMS: 467
CMYK: 17/28/68/0
RGB: 214/179/107
HEX: d6b36b

Brand campaign

This or that.

Here or there.

One or the other.

There are a lot of “Ors” in this world.

But sometimes, adult Learners could use a little more “And.”

That’s why we’ve reshaped online education.

Because “And” is what they really need.

They’re busy people with busy lives AND lots of ambition.

After all, no one should have to choose to live OR learn.

Capella University. Live. And learn.

Live  Learn

“Live & Learn” is the name of the current marketing campaign for Capella University. The main thrust of the idea, as you might have guessed, is the flexibility that Capella University provides to its Learners, allowing them to both live their busy, fulfilling lives, and also learn. Thus, Live & Learn. The campaign imagery is all very realistic and indicative of Learners’ lives. Headlines, when there are any, are very simple and conversational, in keeping with our brand voice.

In short, the same rules that apply to the brand apply to this campaign.



The Capella University shield is the most iconic part of our logo, which is precisely why we've created a campaign icon that not only uses the shield, but that can harmoniously live alongside it. It's ownable, unique, and it's at the heart of our Live & Learn campaign. It perfectly encapsulates the flexibility that Capella University provides for our Learners.

IMAGE SELECTION

When choosing split-screen imagery that will be used with the Live & Learn lockup, continue to follow the same rules of the Capella University brand photography guidelines. All images should portray the same person on both sides—equally living and learning. This will make it clear to our Learners that they can seamlessly do both. Be sure to choose images that have enough tone in them for the typography to remain readable, while also pairing images with contrasting backgrounds. Keep in mind where the logo lockup will be overlaid. And while the entirety of the image itself is important, it's best when the lockup doesn't cover those parts that are critical to the storytelling (faces, laptops, important action). In contrast, it shouldn't look like the photo was posed around the lockup, either. This will take away from the authenticity of the image.

*“Living” photos always on the left. “Learning” photos always on the right.
The Capella University ampersand unites the two.*

Living

Our Learners lead full lives, balancing family, work, and passions. Our “Living” photography should show that we understand that. Every facet of their lives, from having lunch with friends to household chores, impacts their pursuit of higher education. Authentic and empathetic photography plays a big role in how our campaign comes to life. When we are truthful in photos, it shows that we understand our Learners and celebrate the moments in their busy lives. Our photography should feel genuine, with realistic sets, wardrobe, and casting. It should follow the Capella photo tone guidelines with warm modern filters and colors that complement the brand color palette.

Learning

Our Learners are determined to achieve their degrees so, above all, our “Learning” photography should capture this spirit. It should feel like we’re catching glimpses of our Learners as they take time to get some learning done throughout their busy days. They appear focused, but never stressed, and there are no limits to where or when they can get coursework done. Our photography should feel authentic and gently aspirational, with natural light and pleasing set design. These photos should follow Capella’s brand imagery guidelines.



LIVE & LEARN LOCKUP

Our brand campaign will use artwork that has been designed to complement the Capella University brand. It shares the same colors and shield weight, and should only be used as shown in the approved lockups on these pages. Consistent usage will help us establish our campaign, while simultaneously reinforcing the Capella University brand.

ALTERNATE USAGE

Our unique ampersand can be used alone at times. It should, however, be followed by the full version of the lockup during the communication. Example: the ampersand can be used alone to establish a concept where the full message of Live & Learn is the payoff (television, online video, digital banners, etc.)

ALTERNATE USAGE

When being used as a tagline or when it appears too near the Capella University logo, it is okay to use the version of the Live & Learn lockup without the shield outline. Multiple shields in close proximity do not enhance the look of our communications and are not recommended.

Live & Learn

Live & Learn

Live & Learn

DO:



DO NOT:



Live

Learn



Live

Learn

STACKED LIVE & LEARN LOGO

It is always preferred that the horizontal Live & Learn lockup is used. But for those times when horizontal spacing becomes an issue, this stacked variation may be used. Extreme vertical layouts such as skyscraper web banners would be an example. Only use this logo when all other logo variations have been exhausted.

& vs. and

The ampersand plays a significant role in the Live & Learn campaign. So much so that we've created an original, ownable ampersand for use in all printed, shared, and broadcasted materials. In fact, there is a specific keystroke on every Capella University employee's computer that will create this special ampersand.

But you may find there are times when it's not technically possible to use the Capella University ampersand. In such cases, using the word "and" is acceptable.

Another instance when we find it necessary to use "and" is when the phrase follows a direct comparison to "live or learn." For instance: "Because Learners shouldn't have to decide whether to live or learn. They deserve to live and learn."

Headlines and copy should always be short, smart, and conversational because, quite frankly, our busy audience deserves—and wants—brevity!

The experience we strive to deliver.

Four principles guide us in the development and refinement of our brand experience at every touchpoint:

OUTCOMES-ORIENTED: Designed to help you achieve your career goals

PERSONALIZED: A learning journey that flexes and adapts to your needs, not the other way around

FRICTIONLESS: Delivering a seamless and direct path at every touchpoint

MODERN: Fresh, forward-thinking, and connected to the latest in technology, education, and professional development

