

Color



This graphics toolkit was inspired by our personality, identity, and heritage. The consistent and intentional use of these elements will ensure your visual communications are rooted in the strength of our brand.

PRO TIP //

To ensure that any design element is properly imported into your design software, please use the “place” command in Adobe applications instead of copying and pasting the digital files. This will help avoid the potential, unintentional distortion or modification of the elements.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN:

Please read these guidelines carefully; this investment of time will provide the tips, guidance, and inspiration that enables our diverse and vibrant creative to find resonance as a unified and powerful brand.

Who This Is For

The Penn State graphics toolkit is intended for Penn State marketing and communications professionals and is appropriate for internal and external communications. Distribution of the graphics toolkit is limited to approved marketing firms contracted by the University for creative services.

What This Is For

These elements are intended to provide design solutions and allow all the flexibility that should ever be needed—everything from easy templates to the sophisticated and complex layering of multiple brand elements. Please don't reinterpret or create new versions of the official brand elements. These design tools should not be used on merchandise at this time.

Thank You

We welcome sharing your ideas, designs, and creative with us. Open communication, collaboration, and sharing will allow us to continue customizing and adapting our brand book properly. Please contact University Marketing with any questions about the proper use and application of these elements.

DON'T //

Please don't reinterpret or create new versions of the official brand elements. These elements are intended to provide design solutions, solve problems, and provide flexibility while maintaining consistency—everything from easy templates to the sophisticated and complex layering of multiple brand elements.

DESIGN ESSENTIALS // GUIDELINES

Color

Color is a foundational element in visual communications and a powerful tool when setting a piece's mood and tone. Careful selection and use of color in your marketing materials will help maintain a cohesive and unified Penn State brand identity.

One brand palette and two accent palettes are available to help you choose colors to match the mood and tone of your designs.

Your designs should feature at least one of the signature blues of the Pennsylvania Palette. Colors from the two accent palettes are designed to give you creative flexibility but should always maintain a secondary role in your designs.

Downloadable Swatch Libraries

For your convenience, the Penn State brand color palettes are provided as Adobe Swatch Exchange (ASE) files. Each ASE file contains all three palettes, specifically formulated for the color mode indicated in the file name (PMS, CMYK, RGB, HEX).

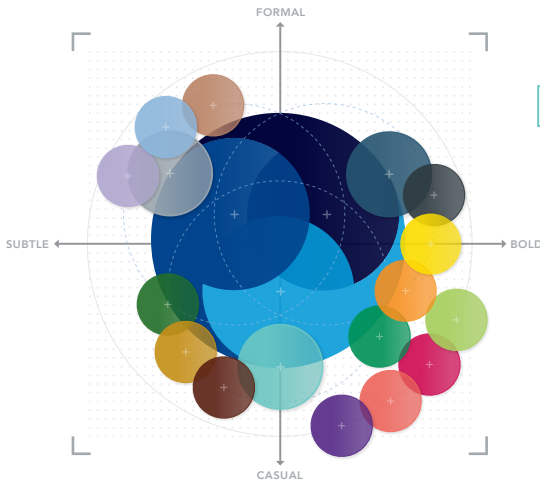
- **PMS Color Palettes:** *PSU_COLORv1_PMS_C.ase*
- **CMYK Color Palettes:** *PSU_COLORv1_CMYK.ase*
- **RGB Color Palettes:** *PSU_COLORv1_RGB.ase*
- **HEX Color Palettes:** *PSU_COLORv1_HEX.ase*

Visit the Adobe website for instructions about incorporating ASE files into your workflow, including how to save your swatch libraries to your individual Adobe CC Library (<https://helpx.adobe.com/indesign/using/swatches.html>).

Web Accessibility

Be sure to follow accessibility standards when working with color. All efforts must be made to meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, developed by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C).

In most cases, we advise using a dark gray body text color (#474747) on a white or near white background. Do not use the color palettes for body text. Our palettes may be used sparingly for larger text, like headings or headlines. Always be sure to check the contrast level between your text and background values. Be sure to incorporate accessibility guidelines into your workflow, especially when using color for web text. Several online color checkers exist that can help, for example, the [WebAIM Color Contrast Checker](#) tool is a valuable resource for maintaining accessibility.


PRO TIP //

Always choose the right color mode for the intended output:

Print = PMS or CMYK

Electronic = HEX or RGB

Do not use software tools (i.e., an eyedropper or color picker) to sample the displayed colors in this PDF. Only use the provided ASE files or manually enter the exact values listed in this document.

To ensure quality standards are met, please go through the proper channels to have your materials professionally printed. Visit Penn State's Multimedia and Print Center website for more information (<https://multimediacenter.psu.edu/>).

Quick Reference

Note: The Pantone Matching System® (PMS) spot color numbers listed below are for printing on "coated" (C) paper.

THE PENNSYLVANIA PALETTE


	NITTANY NAVY	BEAVER BLUE	PENNSYLVANIA SKY	LIMESTONE	CREEK	SLATE
PMS-C	282C	287C	2925C	429C	7472C	2377C
CMYK	100/90/13/68	100/76/0/18	85/21/0/0	21/11/9/23	54/0/27/0	84/54/29/28
RGB	4/30/66	30/64/124	0/156/222	162/170/173	62/163/158	49/84/112
HEX #	001E44	1E407C	009CDE	91959C	3EA39E	314D64

THE CLASSIC ACCENT PALETTE

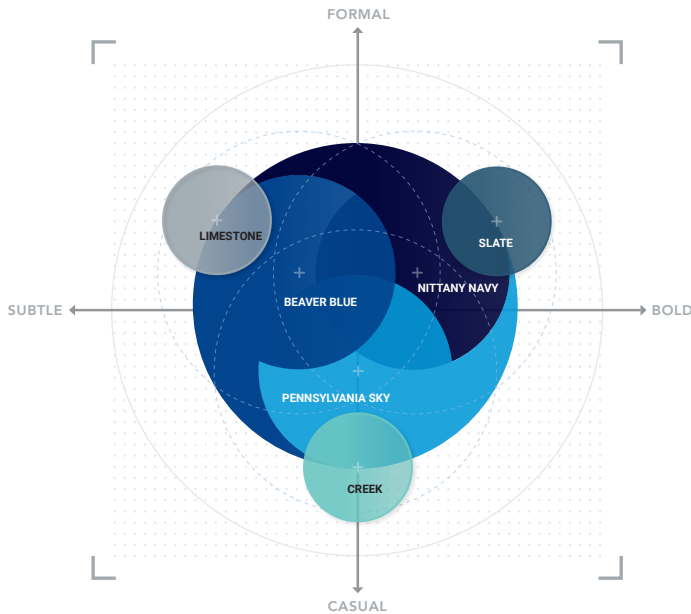

	PENN'S FOREST	OLD COALY	LAND-GRANT	LION'S ROAR	LION SHRINE	STATELY ATHERTON	PUGH BLUE	ORIGINAL 1887
PMS-C	364C	425C	498C	1245C	4655C	2092C	284C	7636C
CMYK	71/4/100/45	48/29/26/76	23/78/77/65	6/35/99/18	8/41/51/20	29/32/0/0	40/14/0/0	0/100/45/12
RGB	74/119/41	84/88/90	106/48/40	191/130/38	184/137/101	184/172/214	150/190/230	188/32/75
HEX #	4A7729	54585A	6A3028	BF8226	B88965	AC8DCE	96BEE6	BC204B

THE VIBRANT ACCENT PALETTE


	BRIGHT KEYSTONE	INVENT ORANGE	DAWN OF DISCOVERY	PERPETUAL WONDER	GREEN OPPORTUNITY	FUTURE'S CALLING
PMS-C	109C	144C	7416C	3555C	7725C	2291C
CMYK	0/9/100/0	0/52/100/0	0/75/60/0	80/100/1/6	97/0/86/15	38/0/82/0
RGB	255/209/0	233/131/0	242/102/94	73/29/112	0/135/85	153/204/0
HEX #	FFD100	E98300	F2665E	491D70	008755	99CC00

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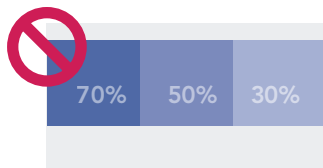


THE PENNSYLVANIA PALETTE

The colors of the Pennsylvania Palette are fundamentally central to the Penn State brand—just as the growth of our university continues to play a central role across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

The signature brand blues—Nittany Navy, Beaver Blue, and Pennsylvania Sky—are not only tied to our identity; they also reflect the active impact and strong roots Penn Staters have in communities across the Commonwealth.

In almost all cases, at least one of the Penn State signature blues should be the primary color(s) in your designs. Using these recognizable colors will help ensure consistency with Penn State’s core visual identity.

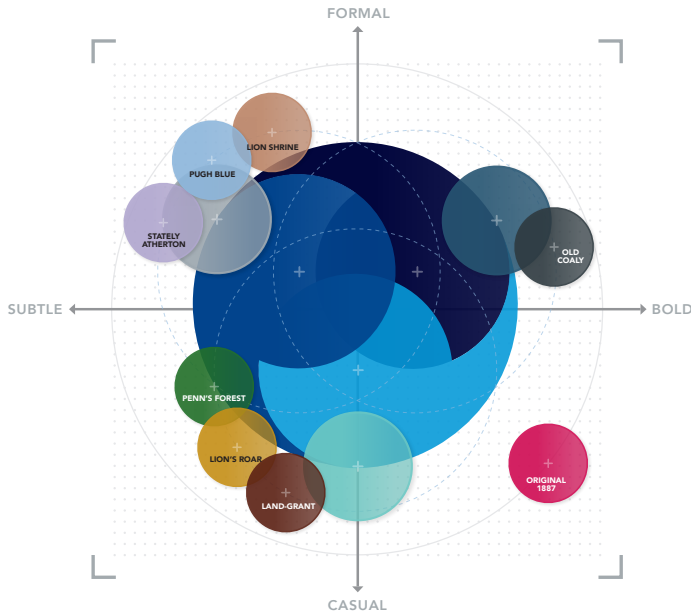


Don’t use tints of Beaver Blue. Anything less than 100 percent opacity will begin to appear purple.



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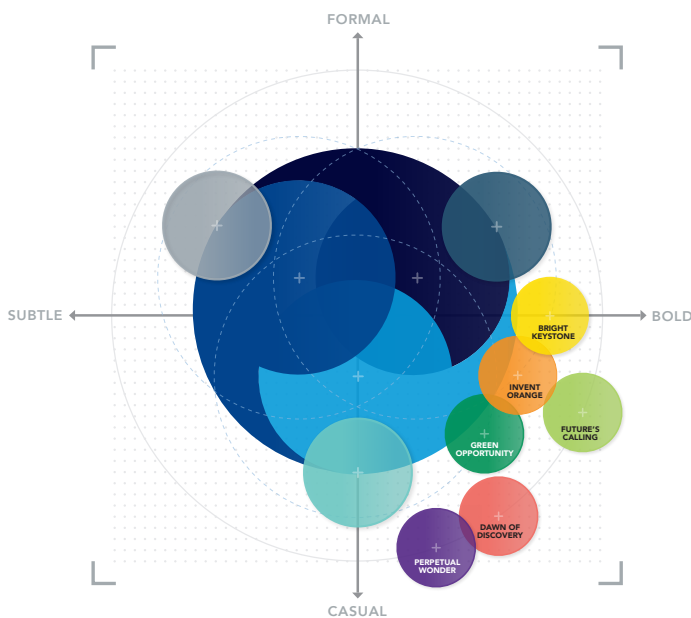
To ensure quality standards are met, please go through the proper channels to have your materials professionally printed. Visit Penn State’s Multimedia and Print Center website for more information (<https://multimediacenter.psu.edu/>).



THE CLASSIC ACCENT PALETTE

The Classic Palette is grounded in the history and heritage that has shaped Penn State into the university we know today.

Although most colors in the Classic Palette lean toward subtle, experimentation with different color combinations can produce various moods and effects.



THE VIBRANT ACCENT PALETTE

The Vibrant Palette celebrates the insights, ideas, and breakthroughs that Penn Staters deliver every day. These colors speak to the ongoing imagination and optimism of the Penn State spirit.

Colors in the Vibrant Palette skew bold and casual on the mood map but are flexible enough to be used in a wide range of communications.



Don't overwhelm your design with accent colors. Accents can be most powerful when used sparingly to highlight an important element, draw attention to a call to action, or to help add organizational structure to elements. To meet accessibility standards, color should never be the sole indication of distinction.

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Technical Notes

Naming Convention

Our file naming convention allows the discernment of the technical specifics of any file, even if removed from the context of its originally provided folder structure. To provide clarity, each section of the file name is separated with an underscore.

The first three-to-four letters are in CAPS and indicate the category of the element (Example 1: SHLD = Shield Elements).

The second three-to-four letters are in CAPS and indicate the name of the actual element, followed by the version number, indicated with a lowercase "v" and a numeric character (Example 2: LMSv1 = Limestone, version 1).

The third portion of all file names indicates the color mode of the file (Example 1: CMYK).

The fourth and final portion of all file names indicates the actual brand color provided (Example 1: BLK = Black. Example 2: WHT = White). In some cases, this fourth portion might also include a few letters indicative of a version of the element (Example 3: GEO_HUBv1_CMYK_sldWHT.ai. "sld" = the solid version of the HUB graphic)

The letters after the period indicate the type of file provided. Adobe Illustrator files (AI) are inherently vector, meaning they provide infinite scaling potential. Portable Network Graphics (PNG) is a format for graphics that contains content that cannot be generated by mathematical formulas and is generally not intended for printing. If transparency exists in a file, this format retains this information. PNG files provided in our toolkit are provided in high resolution but should not be scaled over 100 percent to avoid pixelation or the compromising of an image's quality.

COLOR KEY //

- Beaver Blue | BVR
- Nittany Navy | NVY
- Pennsylvania Sky | SKY
- Slate | SLT
- Creek | CRK
- Limestone | LMS
- Black | BLK
- White | WHT



Color Modes

CMYK

This color mode is used for full color printing and is also called “four-color” and “process” printing. This color system can also be used for digital printing. “CMYK” is an acronym for Cyan, Magenta, Yellow, and Black.

RGB

This color mode is used for computer monitors, video, etc. “RGB” is an acronym for Red, Green, and Blue.

PMS

The Pantone Matching System® (PMS) is comprised of thousands of numbered swatches and is best used for one- or two-color print jobs. PMS colors are also called “spot” colors. This system creates the most accurate color match and the sharpest details.

Working with a Vendor

When working with a vendor, take care to provide the type of file that is appropriate for the work being done. A print vendor typically requests a PMS or CMYK file and will specify the color formula appropriate for the job. A web or video vendor typically requests RGB files and can also use their software to accurately display colors using the proper hex codes provided with all colors in our brand and accent palettes.

Using Mood Maps

Our brand elements include a reference to mood maps (on the website and in the downloaded guidelines), which help provide context and application tips. Our mood map convention allows for categorization between subtle and bold, and between formal and casual. Look for the mood map icon for indications of where our design elements map, tips on how to leverage flexibility, and in some cases, how to avoid layering elements that have contrasting mood mapping. It’s worth noting that most of our brand elements provide the flexibility to adjust beyond their initial mood mapping, if needed.

brand.psu.edu

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