

University of Aberdeen

# Style Guide

Version 1

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## **1.0 Introduction**

This guide has been produced to promote a consistent style for University of Aberdeen publications and for the University's website and is based on commonly accepted standards such as those adopted by *The Times* and the BBC.

Just as we have a visual identity to make sure that we present a strong, consistent image to the world, so should we follow some basic guidelines when writing for the University. Our writing should be easy to read, easy to understand and presented in a consistent style that is familiar to most readers.

## 2.0 Rules

### 2.1 Abbreviations

Rule	Wrong	Right
Use of abbreviations should be kept to a minimum. Where abbreviations are used, punctuation should be avoided.	eg. or e.g. ie. or i.e. etc. or e.t.c. pp. or p.p.	eg ie etc pp viz et al
Abbreviations 'ie' and 'eg' do not carry punctuation but are preceded with a comma and space.	The book is long i.e. over 3,000 pages.  The book is long ie over 3,000 pages.	The book is long, ie over 3,000 pages.
Measurements should be treated similarly, with no full stops.	m.p.h. a.m. p.m. cm. mm. min. hr.	mph am pm cm mm min hr
Geographical abbreviations follow a similar style.	U.K. U.S.A. U.A.E.	UK USA UAE
Points of the compass should not be abbreviated in straight text and generally carry lower-case initials (see also <a href="#">Area Names</a> ).	North, South, East, West N, S, E, W n, s, e, w	north south east west

### 2.2 Acronyms and initialisms

Rule	Wrong	Right
Acronyms and initialisms should be set in capitals and should have no full stops and spaces between letters.	B.B.C. N.A.L.G.O. D.I.Y.	BBC NALGO DIY

Acronyms should be avoided, wherever possible. Where the acronym may not be familiar to the reader or confusion may arise, the name should be written in full the first time it is used followed by the acronym in brackets.		Directorate of Information Technology (DIT)
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### 2.3 Addresses

Rule	Wrong	Right
<p>Addresses should be written in full (no abbreviations) and carry the postcode.</p> <p>Do not use punctuation between post town/city and postcode.</p> <p>Do not use punctuation at the end of each line of a stacked address, but when the address appears in continuous text, use commas where the lines would normally break.</p> <p>Full stops should not be used in postcodes.</p>	<p>CASS University of Aberdeen King's College AB24 3FX</p> <p>University of Aberdeen, King's College, Aberdeen, AB24 3FX.</p>	<p>College of Arts and Social Sciences University of Aberdeen King's College Aberdeen AB24 3FX</p>

### 2.4 Apostrophes

Apostrophes are used to indicate **possession** or **omissions** in words and phrases.

Rule	Wrong	Right
<b>Possession:</b> The rule is that the apostrophe always comes after the noun.	The Universitys halls of residence	The University's halls of residence
When something belongs to more than one person, then the apostrophe goes after the s. Singular nouns ending in s are treated no differently and 's should still be added.	<p>The graduate's certificates will be kept in departmental offices.</p> <p>Ross' essay was handed in late.</p>	<p>The graduates' certificates will be kept in departmental offices</p> <p>Ross's essay was handed in late.</p>

For plurals of nouns that don't end in s, the apostrophe goes before the s.	The womens minibus runs on Fridays.	The women's minibus runs on Fridays.
<b>Omission:</b> Apostrophes are also used to show that letters are missed out of a word or phrase, usually to make it easier to pronounce.	Theyre Wont	They're Won't
Never use an apostrophe to form a plural with numbers and letters.	1990's CD's	1990s CDs
<b>Its/It's:</b> <i>Its</i> means <i>belonging to it</i> . <i>It's</i> means <i>it is</i> .	The dog has it's bone. Its cold today.	The dog has its bone. It's cold today.

## 2.5 Area names

Rule	Wrong	Right
Official area names which include points of the compass should carry a capital initial, otherwise lower case should be used	south Yorkshire the west midlands western Australia  North-East	South Yorkshire the West Midlands Western Australia  north-east (if used to refer to this area follow with Scotland to avoid confusion)
Points of the compass not used as part of an area name should not carry a capital initial	the South of Scotland  North-East Scotland	the south of Scotland  north-east Scotland

## 2.6 Bullet points

Rule	Wrong	Right
Don't use ending punctuation for single words of short phrases in a list.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students.</li> <li>• Academics;</li> <li>• Staff.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• students</li> <li>• academics</li> <li>• staff</li> </ul>
Where bullets form full sentences use an initial capital and full stop.	<p>This style guide has many functions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• its primary aim is to ensure consistency across the University's publications and the website and it will be made available to all staff</li> </ul>	<p>This style guide has many functions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Its primary aim is to ensure consistency across the University's publications and the website and it will be made available to all staff.</li> </ul>

## 2.7 Capitals

Rule	Wrong	Right
Names: capitalise names, course titles, names of institutions etc but try to keep to a minimum.	<p>principal</p> <p>school of education</p>	<p>Principal</p> <p>School of Education</p>
<p>Headings: Always write headlines and headings in lower case (after the first initial capital letter). The only exception to this is if there is a name within the heading.</p> <p>Specific guidelines apply to menus and major headings on the website – see the Web Editors' Guide.</p>	<p>New Menu At Zeste.</p> <p>NEW MENU AT ZESTE.</p> <p>New menu at zeste.</p>	<p>New menu at Zeste.</p>

<p>Subjects: use a capital letter only when referring to the titles of full programmes of study, otherwise lower case should be used.</p> <p>Exceptions to this are languages, which should always carry an initial cap and the prospectus, where a capital letter can be used if referring to a subject at the University of Aberdeen.</p> <p>See also <a href="#">Job Titles</a>.</p>	<p>It is a requirement to study History at A-level.</p> <p>bachelor of education</p> <p>english</p> <p>french</p>	<p>It is a requirement to study history at A-level.</p> <p>Bachelor of Education</p> <p>English</p> <p>French</p>
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## 2.8 Dates

Rule	Wrong	Right
<p>Dates should not be abbreviated in straight prose.</p> <p>Do not follow the number of the day with 'th', 'st' or 'nd'.</p> <p>The day should precede the month except in press releases when a media-specific style is used.</p>	<p>22<sup>nd</sup> July 2010</p> <p>July 22<sup>nd</sup> 20010</p> <p>22<sup>nd</sup> July '10</p> <p>July 22 2010</p>	<p>22 July 2010</p> <p>Monday 22 July 2010</p>
<p>When referring to <b>an academic or financial year</b>, use an oblique (/).</p> <p>When referring to a span across two <b>calendar years</b> use a hyphen without spacing</p>	<p>2010/2011</p> <p>2010- 11</p> <p>2010 - 2011</p> <p>2010/2011</p> <p>'10</p>	<p>2010/11</p> <p>2010-11</p> <p>2010</p>
<p>In straight prose, write out centuries up to the 10<sup>th</sup> century (ie first to ninth) in full.</p> <p>Write it out and hyphenate when they are used as adjectives.</p>	<p>6<sup>th</sup> century</p> <p>Nineteenth century</p> <p>17<sup>th</sup>-century armour</p>	<p>sixth century</p> <p>19<sup>th</sup> century</p> <p>seventeenth-century armour</p>
<p>Use spaces when referring to BC or AD.</p>	<p>200BC</p> <p>AD1993</p>	<p>200 BC</p> <p>AD 1993</p>

When referring to a particular decade use, eg 'sixties' or '1960s' (no apostrophe)	1960's	1960s
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## 2.9 Department names

Rule	Wrong	Right
Please use these names in full. Do not use abbreviations (CASS, CLSM etc) unless for internal purposes only. Note capitalisation.	CASS College of arts and social sciences  CLSM College of Life Sciences & Medicine	College of Arts and Social Sciences  College of Life Sciences and Medicine

## 2.10 Full stops

Rule	Wrong	Right
Full stops should not be used after headings, subheadings, paragraph headings etc..	Page heading.	Page heading
Only one space should be used in a sentence following a full stop	end of sentence. Start of new	end of sentence. Start of new
Minimise use of full stops in abbreviations. Use only for clarification or to avoid misinterpretation, eg, 'no' meaning 'no' and 'no.' meaning 'number'.	e.g. e.g	eg

## 2.11 Hyphenation

Rule	Wrong	Right
Keep hyphenation to the minimum to avoid ambiguity. Distinguish between 'a man-eating tiger' and 'a man eating tiger'; 'four year-old children' and 'four-year-old children'. Words such as 'makeup' and 'childcare' can be run together and written without a hyphen. 'Part-time' and 'full-time' need hyphens (both as nouns and adjectives), but 'postgraduate' and 'undergraduate' do not.	Part time Full time student Post-graduate Under-graduate student	part-time full-time student postgraduate undergraduate student
Ages as adjectives are hyphenated.	21 year old John Smith. John Smith is 21-years-old.	21-year-old John Smith. John Smith is 21 years old.

## 2.12 Italics

Rule	Wrong	Right
Italicise Latin names, foreign words, ship names and titles of periodicals, works of art, films, plays, newspapers and books in preference to using quotation marks	'The Times' War and Peace	<i>The Times</i> <i>War and Peace</i>

## 2.13 Job titles

Rule	Wrong	Right
Job titles should be capitalised where it is a specific person such as 'Professor Smith is a Lecturer in Physics'. General jobs such as 'a professor' should be in lower case.	A Lecturer in Music. Professor Smith, lecturer in music. John Smith, head of admissions.	A lecturer in music. Professor Smith, Lecturer in Music. John Smith, Head of Admissions.
Titles which precede a name should also have initial capitals.	vice-chancellor	Vice-Chancellor

Use Professor in full but Dr abbreviated.	Prof Smith Doctor Jones	Professor Smith Dr Jones
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## 2.14 Latin plurals

Rule	Wrong	Right
<p>Many Latin plurals are commonly used in preference to the singular form: <i>data</i>, or conversely the singular form is pluralised: <i>forums</i>.</p> <p>Being overly prescriptive can be off-putting to the reader, so where language has evolved we have adopted the approaches evident in common parlance.</p>	<p>fora</p> <p>formulae</p> <p>syllabi</p> <p>data are</p> <p>a datum</p> <p>an alumuni</p> <p>a criteria</p>	<p>forums</p> <p>formulas</p> <p>syllabuses</p> <p>data is</p> <p>data</p> <p>an alumnus</p> <p>a criterion</p>

## 2.15 Numbers

Rule	Wrong	Right
<p>Numbers, including ages, up to 10 should be spelled out in full, ie <i>there are eight students</i>, but figures should be used for 10 and above. However, figures should be used for statistics, money, weight, measurements.</p>	<p>There are 29 schools, 1 college and ten universities.</p> <p>You will receive either £nine or £92.</p> <p>The child is 6 years old.</p>	<p>There are 29 schools, one college and 10 universities.</p> <p>You will receive either £9 or £92.</p> <p>The child is six years old.</p>
<p>Never start a sentence with a number, always spell it out.</p>	<p>End of sentence. 12 people took part in the study...</p>	<p>End of sentence. Twelve people took part in the study...</p>
<p>'Per cent' should be written as two words in full except in diagrams and tables. The symbol may also be used in headlines.</p>	<p>90%</p>	<p>90 per cent.</p>
<p>For purposes of clarity, numbers above 999 should carry a comma</p>	<p>There were 4285 students.</p> <p>The project cost £15000.</p>	<p>There were 4,285 students.</p> <p>The project cost £15,000.</p>

Million/Billion should be written in full the first time it is used, thereafter a symbol of lowercase 'm' or 'bn' (no space) can be used. For thousands, 'k' should not be used, instead use digits separated by a comma (eg £100,000).	First reference: 15million. Thereafter: 15 m. 15k.	First reference: £15 million. Thereafter: 15m. 15,000.
Decimal points should be preceded by a digit.	.345	0.345
For currency, use either £ or p, but not both.	£3.50p	£3.50 56p
Spaces should not appear between figures and abbreviated measurements.	5 mm 10 cm 20 g	5mm 10cm 20g
Do not use spaces for % (only use symbol in tables, otherwise write per cent), temperatures or times .	6 % 30 ° F 50 ° C 9 am	6% 30°F 50°C 9am

## 2.16 Plurals

Rule	Wrong	Right
<p>Activities of groups such as research institutes, teams or schools should be reported as 'the School is' not 'the School are'. Words such as 'alumni' and 'media' are plurals, but note exceptions under <a href="#">2.14 Latin plurals</a>.</p> <p>All organisations and institutions are singular, and should be referred to as 'it', not 'they'.</p>	<p>The University of Aberdeen are</p> <p>The team are</p> <p>The university is reviewing their</p>	<p>The University of Aberdeen is</p> <p>The team is</p> <p>The university is reviewing its</p>

## 2.17 Qualifications

Rule	Wrong	Right
<p>Titles and qualifications should not carry full stops or spaces within them.</p> <p>Where qualifications appear after a name, they should be separated by a space but no comma.</p>	<p>B.A. BSc. Ph.D Pg Cert. Pg Dip.</p> <p>Mr. Smith</p> <p>Dr. Smith</p>	<p>BA BSc PhD PgCert PgDip</p> <p>Mr Smith Dr Smith</p> <p>Ltd BSc (Hons) FRICS</p>
<p>As a noun use 'A level' (lower-case 'l' and no hyphen), but as an adjective use 'A-level' (with a hyphen).</p>		<p>A level A-level courses Highers</p>

## 2.18 Quotation marks

Rule	Wrong	Right
<p>Use the correct open/closed inverted commas/quotation marks. Use double inverted commas in preference to singles.</p>	<p>'quotation' He said: 'We are doing all we can to make her say "yes" to her mother.'</p>	<p>"quotation" He said: "We are doing all we can to make her say 'yes' to her mother."</p>
<p>Full stops and other punctuation go inside the quotation marks if a completed sentence is quoted, outside if only part of a sentence is quoted (unless the punctuation forms part of the speech)</p>	<p>"Hello," said John</p> <p>The man said "Is it strange"?, but no one listened</p>	<p>"Hello", said John</p> <p>The man said "Is it strange?", but no one listened</p>
<p>When a quotation continues into another sentence, marks are not closed until the end of the final sentence.</p>	<p>"The University of Aberdeen always takes the welfare of its students extremely seriously."</p> <p>"New measures have been introduced to combat....."</p>	<p>"The University of Aberdeen always takes the welfare of its students extremely seriously."</p> <p>"New measures have been introduced to combat....."</p>

## 2.19 S or Z

Rule	Wrong	Right
Use s (British) rather than z (American) for words ending 'ise'.  The only exceptions are capsized and seize.	Recognize  realize	Organise  Recognise

## 2.20 Time

Rule	Wrong	Right
Avoid use of the 24 hour clock. There is no need for full stops or spaces between the number and am or pm. Use <i>12 noon</i> .	10 a.m  10 am  10:00  19:00	10am  7pm

## 2.21 Specific points

Rule	Wrong	Right
Aberdeen University is not allowed.  <i>The University of Aberdeen</i> should be used at all times (the only exception is AUSA)	Aberdeen University,  Aberdeen Uni	University of Aberdeen
When referring to the University of Aberdeen in body text without using the full name, the word 'University' should carry an initial capital.  When referring to universities in general, use lower case.	the university has produced this style guide (when referring to Aberdeen).  students at Universities in Scotland....	the University has produced this style guide.  students at universities in Scotland....
Note use of capitals and hyphen for the title 'Vice-Chancellor' and 'Vice-Principal'.	Vice chancellor Vice-chancellor	Vice-Chancellor

Do not use hyphens in telephone numbers. Use brackets only for clarification of alternative digits in international dialling codes.	01224-272 014 (01224) 27 2014 01224 272 014	01224 272014 +44 (0)1224 272014
Keep email or web address hyperlinks as a single entity wherever possible. If it's unavoidable to break them across rows, break after the forward slash.  Never insert hyphenation to reflect a break as the hyperlink will not function.	<a href="http://www.abdn.ac.uk/">http://www.abdn.ac.uk/</a>	<a href="http://www.abdn.ac.uk/">www.abdn.ac.uk</a>
Do not include 'http://' in web addresses unless the address doesn't begin with www in which case 'http://' must be prefixed	<a href="http://www.aberdeensportsvillage.com/">http://www.aberdeensportsvillage.com/</a> <a href="mailto:studentmail.abdn.ac.uk">studentmail.abdn.ac.uk</a>	<a href="http://www.aberdeensportsvillage.com">www.aberdeensportsvillage.com</a> <a href="http://studentmail.abdn.ac.uk/">http://studentmail.abdn.ac.uk/</a>
Express 'email' as one word (no hyphen), using upper case 'E' only when at the start of a sentence.  Email can be used as both a verb and noun.	E-mail e-mail	email
Express 'online' as one word.	on-line	online
Express 'website' as one word with lower-case initial.	web site Web site web-site	website

<p>Do not underline words.</p> <p>Use italics to differentiate Latin names, foreign words, ship names and titles of periodicals, works of art, films, plays, newspapers and books.</p> <p>Italicise 'the' only if it is part of the name/title.</p>	<p>HMS Hercules</p>	<p><i>HMS Hercules</i></p>
<p>Avoid the use of fully capitalised headings/text — capitals are harder to read and impede comprehension.</p> <p>Use bold or italic to emphasise text and/or increase the size of the heading.</p>	<p><b>HARD-TO-READ HEADING</b>  THIS TEXT IS HARD TO READ AND THE USE OF CAPITAL LETTERS IMPEDES COMPREHENSION</p>	<p><b>Easy-to-read heading</b>  This text is much easier to read as readers recognise the words more easily by their shapes</p>
<p>Fonts – the University fonts are Arial or Calibri for documentation (12pt in normal text) and Verdana for the web. Sans serif fonts are easier to read and should be left justified.</p>	<p>Times New Roman</p> <p>This sentence is fully justified rather than aligned to the left</p>	<p>Arial</p> <p>This sentence is aligned to the left</p>

## 3.0 Quick Reference

### 3.1 A-Z

[A](#) | [B](#) | [C](#) | [D](#) | [E](#) | [F](#) | [G](#) | [H](#) | [I](#) | [J](#) | [K](#) | [L](#) | [M](#) | [N](#) | [O](#) | [P](#) | [Q](#) | [R](#) | [S](#) | [T](#) | [U](#) | [V](#) | [W](#) | [X](#) | [Y](#) | [Z](#)

#### A

Wrong	Right
Aberdeen University	University of Aberdeen
@	Should never be used in place of 'at'
advisor	adviser (but advisory)
alot (never) allot (unless in the context to distribute between or among)	a lot (two words meaning many)
all ready (unless used in context 'we are all ready to')	already (means 'by now', 'even now', or 'by then' eg 'the course has already started')
alright	all right
A-Level/ A-level	A level (no hyphen, lower case l)
amidst	amid
amongst	among
an historic collection	A historic collection (use only if h is silent, eg an honour)
any way (unless meaning 'any method')	Anyway (meaning regardless)

#### C

Wrong	Right
carpark	car park
co-operate	cooperate
co-ordinate	coordinate
college of arts & social sciences	College of Arts and Social Sciences
college of physical sciences	College of Physical Sciences
college of life sciences & medicine	College of Life Sciences and Medicine

**D**

<b>Wrong</b>	<b>Right</b>
degree classes – 2.1, 2.1	2:1, 2:2
desk top	desktop
Dr.	Dr (no full stop)

**E**

<b>Wrong</b>	<b>Right</b>
E-mail/e-mail	email
e-learning, e-commerce	eLearning, ecommerce
e.g.	eg (use for example in preference)
Etc.	etc (avoid if possible)
extra curricular	extracurricular

**F**

<b>Wrong</b>	<b>Right</b>
Freshers Week/ Fresher's Week	Freshers' Week
field work	fieldwork
figure head	figurehead
fulltime/ full time	full-time
fund raising	fundraising

**G**

<b>Wrong</b>	<b>Right</b>
Government	government (lower case unless Scottish Government)
ground-breaking	groundbreaking

## H

Wrong	Right
help desk	Helpdesk (note that at the University, the helpdesk is now referred to as the Service Desk.
Homepage	home page
Honours	honours (lower case)

## I

Wrong	Right
i.e.	ie (try to rephrase to avoid if possible)
Internet	internet (lower case)
inter-departmental	interdepartmental
inter-disciplinary	interdisciplinary
inter-personal	interpersonal
inter-related	interrelated
-ize endings	- ise (except capsize/ seize)
land-mark	landmark

## M

Wrong	Right
mediaeval	medieval
Mr.	Mr (no full stop)
multi-disciplinary	multidisciplinary
multi-national	multinational

## N

Wrong	Right
Nation-wide	nationwide

**O**

<b>Wrong</b>	<b>Right</b>
Off-line	offline
on-going	ongoing
On-line	online
organize	organise

**P**

<b>Wrong</b>	<b>Right</b>
parttime/ part time	part-time
<b>Wrong</b>	<b>Right</b>
Principle	Principal (when referring to University Principal)
Post-doctoral	postdoctoral
Post-graduate	postgraduate
Prof	Professor
program	Programme (unless referring to a computer program)

**R**

<b>Wrong</b>	<b>Right</b>
roundup	round-up

**S**

<b>Wrong</b>	<b>Right</b>
school children	schoolchildren
School of (see list below)	
sixth form college	sixth-form college
spinout/ spin out	spin-out
sub-committee	subcommittee

## T

Wrong	Right
team-work	teamwork

## U

Wrong	Right
Up-load	upload
Under-graduate	undergraduate

## V

Wrong	Right
vice chancellor	Vice-Chancellor (hyphenate)
vice president	Vice-President (hyphenate)
vice principal	Vice-Principal (hyphenate)

## W

Wrong	Right
Web-site	website
well-being	wellbeing
with-hold	withhold
work-place	workplace
World-wide	worldwide

### 3.2 List of Degrees (cross referenced with awards)

- BA  
Bachelor of Arts
- BEng  
Bachelor of Engineering
- BSc  
Bachelor of Science
- LLB  
Bachelor of Laws
- LLM  
Master of Laws
- MA  
Master of Arts

- MB ChB  
Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery/Chirurgery
- MMus  
Master of Music
- MSc  
Master of Science
- MTh  
Master of Theology
- MPhil  
Master of Philosophy
- PgDip  
Postgraduate Diploma
- PhD  
Doctor of Philosophy
- MSc  
MSc by Research
- Diploma
- Certificate
- MMus  
Master of Clinical Dentistry
- MTh
- Med
- LLM
- Master of Chinese Studies
- MBA
- MSW
- MPhil
- MTeach
- PGDE
- PGC (IT)E
- EdD
- DClinPsychol

Pay particular attention to Masters:

*Masters, Master's, Masters'*

Dependent on the official title of the: Master of XXX, Master's in XXX. Masters' should only be used when referring to more than one programme.

### 3.4 (Pre-University) qualifications

- SQA Highers
- GCE A Levels
- HNC HND

### 3.5 Colleges and Schools

When presented as a title the following forms should be used:

### *Colleges*

- College of Arts and Social Sciences (CASS)
- College of Life Sciences and Medicine (CLSM)
- College of Physical Sciences (CoPS)

### *Schools*

- School of Biological Sciences
- School of Divinity, History and Philosophy
- School of Education
- School of Engineering
- School of Geosciences
- School of Language and Literature
- School of Law
- School of Medical Sciences
- School of Medicine and Dentistry
- School of Natural and Computing Sciences
- School of Psychology
- School of Social Science
- Science and Engineering

### *Other:*

- Research Institute of Scottish and Irish Studies
- The Suttie Centre for Teaching and Learning in Healthcare
- The Rowett Institute of Nutrition and Health