



Editorial Style Guide

About the guide

This style guide is the primary editorial reference tool for University staff, external suppliers, and freelance copyeditors. It outlines the English standard for all University of Edinburgh content, with additions and minor alterations to address points around website accessibility and usability.

All entries in the guide are set out in alphabetical order, with links to other relevant sections or guides.

How to use the guide

The editorial style guide shows how we use words to be accessible, inclusive, and readable.

Use this PDF guide with the Editorial Style Guide website to create the best possible experience for our readers whenever you are writing or editing copy.

[Editorial Style Guide website](#)

Other useful writing guides

The Plain English Campaign provides free guides for writing in plain English.

[Plain English Campaign website](#)

The University's in-house Effective Digital Content course provides a playlist of short videos that can be watched any time you would like to learn more about writing for the web.

[Watch Effective Digital Content videos](#)

Content Design London's Readability Guidelines is a global research project that provides evidence for readability best practice when writing for digital content.

[Readability Guidelines, Content Design London](#)

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A

@

[See Punctuation, Editorial Style Guide](#)

a, an

Use 'a' before all words beginning with a vowel with the sound of u', but use 'an' before words beginning with a silent 'h.'

Example

- ✓ a eulogy, a European
- ✓ an heir, an honest person, an honour

Preference: an historic occasion

abbreviations

[See Abbreviations, Editorial Style Guide](#)

accents

Do not use accents on web pages where the primary language is English, such as in 'café', except where they appear as a name, eg José Manuel Barroso.

Most accented letters (special characters) should naturally copy from a text editor (eg MS Word) into the central CMS. If your special character isn't working, you will need to raise a support call.

[See Punctuation, Editorial Style Guide](#)

accept, except

Accept means to agree or to receive, except means not including.

Example

- ✓ I accepted all the proposals.
- ✓ I tried all solutions, except the first offered.

access

When giving directions to a building or other part of the University, always include information about access for people with disabilities.

acronyms

[See Abbreviations, Editorial Style Guide](#)

active vs passive

Avoid using passive verbs as they result in a vague, over-formal tone.

Example

- ✓ The professor will present her research at the conference.

not

- × Research will be presented by the professor at the conference.

[See also Using Plain Language, Editorial Style Guide](#)

AD, BC, CE, BCE

AD (Anno Domini) comes before the date. BC (Before Christ) comes after it, with no spacing. AD and BC need not be tagged.

Example

- ✓ AD967, 365BC

You can use CE (tagged as Common Era) or BCE (tagged as Before Common Era) in place of AD and BC. These abbreviations follow the year, with a single space.

Example

- ✓ 967 CE, 365 BCE

The dating system that you use (BC/AD or BCE/CE) will depend on the context of the writing; either is appropriate to use.

[See Abbreviations, Editorial Style Guide](#)

addresses

[See Contact details, Editorial Style Guide](#)

adverbs

Do not use hyphens after adverbs ending in -ly.

Example

- ✓ a badly prepared speech, genetically modified vegetables

Use hyphens after short and common adverbs, or when the phrase could be ambiguous.

Example

- ✓ a well-read book, a much-maligned composer

adviser

Not advisor

affect, effect

affect (verb): to have an influence on

Example

- ✓ The weather affected her plans.

effect (verb): to cause, bring about, accomplish or achieve

Example

- ✓ The visit effected a change in the system.

effect (noun): a result

Example

- ✓ The film had a profound effect.

A level

No hyphen, lower-case l

Hyphenate in adjectival sense.

Example

- ✓ A-level results

all right

- × not alright.

alumni

[See British English, Editorial Style Guide](#)

am

[See Times, Editorial Style Guide](#)

Americanisms

[See British English, Editorial Style Guide](#)

amid

- × Not amidst.

among

- × Not amongst.

ampersand (&)

[See Punctuation, Editorial Style Guide](#)

apostrophes

[See Punctuation, Editorial Style Guide](#)

archaeology

- × Not archeology.

artefact

- × Not artifact.

B

BA

Tag as Bachelor of Arts.

[See also Abbreviations, Editorial Style Guide](#)

BC/BCE

See AD, BC, CE, BCE.

BEng

Tag as Bachelor of Engineering.

[See also Abbreviations, Editorial Style Guide](#)

benefited, benefiting

× Not benefitted.

biannual, biennial

Biannual: twice a year.

Biennial: once every two years (or lasting two years).

billion

Spell out the words in full wherever possible. Use bn (tagged as billion) as an abbreviation only if necessary.

Example

- ✓ £10 billion
- ✓ 6 billion people or £10bn
- ✓ 6bn not £6b

[See also Abbreviations, Editorial Style Guide](#)

brackets/parentheses

[See Punctuation, Editorial Style Guide](#)

BSc

Tag as Bachelor of Science.

[See also Abbreviations, Editorial Style Guide](#)

bullet points

[See Lists, Editorial Style Guide](#)

C

capitals

As a main principle, use initial capitals (each word begins with a capital) for:

- ✓ proper nouns: people's names, towns and cities, countries, names of organisations
- ✓ nationalities, languages and religions
- ✓ days of the week and months of the year

Capitalise job titles, course titles, names of institutions and so on.

Example

- ✓ the Principal
- ✓ the College of Science and Engineering
- ✓ the School of History and Classics

Subject areas

These should not be capitalised unless they form part of the title of a programme of study or course, or refer to the specific organisational area within the University.

Example

- ✓ The Informatics laboratories have been improved to world-class standard.
- ✓ She took philosophy as an outside subject in second year.

University

'The University of Edinburgh' with an initial capital T should be used when appearing by itself without surrounding text.

'the University of Edinburgh' with an initial lower case t should be used when the phrase is included in copy.

Example

- ✓ The University of Edinburgh – a great place to study
- ✓ Researchers from the University of Edinburgh have discovered

Seasons

- lower case.

Example

- ✓ spring, summer

Historical periods

– upper case.

Example

- ✓ a Georgian house, a Victorian lampshade, the Middle Ages.

Points of the compass

– lower case.

Example

- ✓ north, south

Titles/positions

Example

- ✓ The lord provost decided not to attend the dinner.

but

- ✓ Lord Provost Lesley Hinds was in attendance.

[See also Italics and capitals, Editorial Style Guide](#)

car park

- × Not carpark.

CD-ROM

Need not be tagged.

CE

See AD, BC, CE₂

charitable strapline

The University of Edinburgh is a charitable body, registered in Scotland, with registration number SC005336, VAT Registration Number GB 592 9507 00, and is acknowledged by the UK authorities as a “Recognised body” which has been granted degree awarding powers.

chemical formulae

Avoid where possible, writing the name of the chemical out in full.

Example

- ✓ ‘carbon dioxide’ instead of CO₂

Where used, chemical formulae should be written in plain text and need not be tagged.

Example

- ✓ CO₂

If your web page contains reference to a number of chemical formulae and their use is unavoidable, consider creating a glossary of terms. Provide a link to this glossary on each relevant page.

collective nouns

These stand for a single entity.

Example

- ✓ the total number is...
- ✓ the Scottish Parliament has...

The plural is more suitable when the emphasis is on the individual members of a group, and the singular when it is on the body as a whole.

Example

- ✓ A committee was appointed to consider the subject.
- ✓ The committee were unable to agree.

College

Capitalise when referring to a specific Colleges of the University of Edinburgh.

Example

- ✓ The College of Science and Engineering is having an open day on 3 March

but

- ✓ Open days are currently taking place in universities and colleges around the country.

Edinburgh's three Colleges are:

- the College of Science and Engineering,
- the College of Arts, Humanities & Social Science
- the College of Medicine & Veterinary Medicine

colons

[See Punctuation, Editorial Style Guide](#)

common sense

noun, two words: She has a lot of common sense.

Adjective, hyphenated: She took a common-sense approach.

compare with, to

To compare *with* is to draw attention to differences. To compare *to* is to stress similarities.

Example

- ✓ Compared with March, it's very cold this month. (This month is colder than March.)
- ✓ This year's weather has been compared to The Great Chill. (This weather is very similar to the Great Chill.)

complement, compliment

To complement means to make complete; to compliment means to praise.

Example

- ✓ You pay someone a compliment
- ✓ You have a full complement of students
- ✓ A book review may be complimentary.
- ✓ Two types of medical treatment, or two colours, can be complementary.

comprise, compose

To be made up of (**not** “comprised of”). The parts **compose** (make up) the whole. The whole **comprises** the parts.

Example

- ✓ The flat for rent comprises entrance hall, living room, kitchen, one bedroom and bathroom.
- ✓ The image on the poster is composed of a series of tiny photographs.

contractions

[See Abbreviations, Editorial Style Guide](#)

cooperate, cooperation

No hyphen or space.

coordinate, coordination

No hyphen or space.

courses

A course is a unit of teaching and learning formally offered within the University which carries credit which may contribute to a University award (certificate, diploma or degree). Do not use the word course when you mean programme or degree.

Example

- ✓ Scottish History 1

Covid-19, Coronavirus

Not COVID-19 using all capitals, or Corona virus.

Use ‘Covid-19’ over ‘Coronavirus’, especially in the first instance. After that you can use ‘Coronavirus’ for variety if the tone is conversational.

Need not be tagged.

[See also Abbreviations, Editorial Style Guide](#)

criterion (singular); criteria (plural)

D

dashes v hyphens

[See Punctuation, Editorial Style Guide](#)

days of the week

[See Dates and days, Editorial Style Guide](#)

dates

[See Dates and days, Editorial Style Guide](#)

DClinPsychol

Tag as Doctor of Clinical Psychology.

[See also Abbreviations, Editorial Style Guide](#)

degrees, degree classes

No full stops. See individual entries for tagging guidance for specific degree abbreviations.

Example

- ✓ MA (Hons)

Use colons to separate

Example

- ✓ 2:1, 2:2

department

There are no academic departments at the University of Edinburgh – simply refer to the subject area.

Example

- ✓ English Literature or Ecology
- ✓ The oldest/largest/highest-ranked centre for the study of chemistry in the UK.

not

- × The oldest/largest/highest-ranked Chemistry Department in the UK.

dependant (noun), dependent (adjective)

Example

- ✓ In the event of his death, the man's dependants gave permission to remove his organs.
- ✓ The passenger was dependent on the air crew saving his life.

different

Different from, not different to or different than.

disinterested

Means impartial; uninterested means having no interest in.

Dr

No full stop. Need not be tagged.

[See also Abbreviations, Editorial Style Guide](#)

DSc

Tag as Doctor of Science.

[See also Abbreviations, Editorial Style Guide](#)

E

e-

Lower case and hyphenated in most phrases.

Example

- ✓ e-science, e-learning, e-commerce

But

- ✓ email

When using in a header try to avoid putting at the beginning of a sentence which would require the 'e' to be capitalised. If unavoidable capitalise only the 'e' and not the letter after the hyphen.

Example

- ✓ Conference on e-learning 2007 (preferable)
- ✓ E-learning Conference 2007 (acceptable)

ECA

Tag as Edinburgh College of Art.

[See also Abbreviations, Editorial Style Guide](#)

EdD

Tag as Doctor of Education.

[See also Abbreviations, Editorial Style Guide](#)

eg

Avoid. Use "for example" instead.

[See also Abbreviations, Editorial Style Guide](#)

ellipsis

[See Punctuation, Editorial Style Guide](#)

email

Not e-mail or Email, unless at the beginning of a sentence.

Always quote email addresses in text; don't hide in hyperlinks. Where appropriate, email addresses should be formatted in contact boxes when using EdWeb.

emphasis

don't be tempted to over-emphasise and end up saying the same thing twice.

Example

- × significant landmark
- × added bonus

See also unique.

enquiry, inquiry

enquiry: the act or instance of asking or seeking information;

inquiry: an investigation, especially an official one.

enrol, enrolling, enrolment

etc

Avoid. State full list or use alternative phrases. If unavoidable, use 'etcetera'.

Example

- ✓ 'Each month' rather than 'in January, February, etc'
- ✓ 'Ball games' rather than 'football etc'

EUSA

Tag as Edinburgh University Students' Association.

[See Abbreviations, Editorial Style Guide](#)

Exclamation mark

[See Punctuation, Editorial Style Guide](#)

F

Fairtrade

Fairtrade (one word, initial capital): refers to the mark sanctioned by the Fairtrade Foundation.

fair trade (two words, lower case); refers to the general concept of fair prices being paid to producers in developing countries.

Example

- ✓ The University of Edinburgh is a Fairtrade university.

not

- × Fair Trade

fewer

Fewer refers to number; less to quantity.

Example

- ✓ fewer than 12 speeches; fewer than seven doctors
- ✓ I had less than £10; less than half the population

focused, focusing

Style is to use a single 's'.

Freshers' Week

- × Not Fresher's Week.

full time, part time

These should be hyphenated when used as an adjective or adverb, but not when used as a noun. References to modes of study will always be adjectives or adverbs, so should be hyphenated.

Example

- ✓ This is a full-time course.
- ✓ They were studying part-time.
- ✓ The whistle blew at full time.

Do not abbreviate (ft, pt) unless absolutely necessary.

[See Abbreviations, Editorial Style Guide](#)

G

gender-specific suffixes

Avoid the use of suffixes such as –ess or –rix:

Example

- ✓ actor, not actress
- ✓ manager, not manageress
- ✓ chair, not chairman

government

Lower case, unless referring to a specific government.

Example

- ✓ the Scottish Government

GP

Avoid – use 'doctor' or similar instead.

If it is unavoidable, tag as 'General Practitioner'.

[See Abbreviations, Editorial Style Guide](#)

graduands/graduates

A graduand is to be awarded a degree. A graduate has been awarded and holds a degree.

[See also British English, Editorial Style Guide](#)

groundbreaking

One word, no hyphen.

H

headings and titles - formatting

In report titles, headings and subheadings, use sentence case. Never use all capital letters.

The use of sentence case should follow normal grammatical rules where capital letters are used for the first letter of the first word and for names, proper nouns (such as people and place names) and abbreviations/acronyms.

Headings should also omit the full stop at the end.

Example

- ✓ Review of universities
- ✓ Review of universities in Scotland
- ✓ Review of the University of Edinburgh
- ✓ How to get a place at university

not

- × How To Get A Place At University
- × HOW TO GET A PLACE AT UNIVERSITY
- × How to get a place at university.

headings and titles – writing

Where you use headings to break up text, make sure the most important word is at the front.

Example

- ✓ Get a student card
- ✓ Find the EUSA office
- ✓ Email your photograph
- ✓ Renew your current card

not

- × How to get a student card
- × How to find the EUSA office
- × How to email your photograph
- × How to renew your current card

Question and answer style headings can be very useful, but be consistent in style – don't mix questions and statements.

Example

- ✓ How can I get a student card?
- ✓ Where is the EUSA office?
- ✓ Where do I email my photograph?
- ✓ Can I renew my current card?

not

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- × How can I get a student card?
- × Finding the EUSA office
- × Where do I email my photograph?
- × Renewing your current card.

[See also Headings, Editorial Style Guide](#)

helpdesk

One word

hi-res, hi-tech

Not high-

historic

'An historic' not 'a historic'.

honours

Lower case

Example

- ✓ He graduated with first class honours.
- ✓ She has an honours degree in philosophy

Avoid using 'hons' where possible, tag as 'honours' where used.

however

When used as a conjunction, this should be followed by a comma.

Example

- ✓ She needed to go, however, to catch the train.
- ✓ She would have to go however she could get there.

HTML

Do not tag unless the page's purpose is to explain what HTML is.

hyphens

[See Punctuation, Editorial Style Guide](#)

|

ie

Avoid, use 'that is' instead.

incur, incurring

infer/imply

To infer is to deduce something from evidence; to imply is to hint at something (and wait for someone to infer it). The speaker implies; the listener infers.

institution

Avoid. If you mean university, say university. If you mean something else, say whatever that something else is.

internet

Lower case.

-ise endings

Should be used in preference to –ize endings.

Example

- ✓ recognise
- ✓ economise
- ✓ organise

italics

[See Italics and Capitals, Editorial Style Guide](#)

its

It's means it is.

Its denotes the possessive.

Example

- ✓ It's in the library
- ✓ The car spun its wheels

J

judgement

Always used over judgment

L

language tagging

See tagging language.

latin plurals

Some are so common that many people don't know they are plurals, such as alumni, data, and criteria. However, many plural forms look pedantic and put the reader off.

Example

- ✓ Forums, not fora
- ✓ Syllabuses, not syllabi

[See also British English, Editorial Style Guide](#)

licence (n), license (v)

lists

All long lists should be presented in bulleted or numbered form. Shorter lists containing very detailed points should also be presented that way, for clarity.

However, this does not apply to links, which should not be bulleted by the editor. A CSS stylesheet may add automatic bulleting.

Use numbered lists where there is a clear order to the step, such as with a set of instructions. Otherwise, use a bulleted list.

- Lists should have at least three items.
- A bulleted list should not have more than nine items, unless there is a clear context understood by the reader, such as an alphabetised list of staff members, or months of the year.
- If you need to create an unfamiliar list of more than nine items, consider breaking it up with headings (see **headings and titles**)

A list should be introduced by a main clause, followed by a colon. The first word of each item should be lower case, and each item should have the appropriate ending punctuation.

For sentence fragments, use lower case initial letters (unless it is a proper noun or title) and do not use any ending punctuation.

Example

To apply to the University of Edinburgh, you need to:

1. order a prospectus
2. fill in the application form
3. email or post the form
4. call the number below for further information

In terms of ongoing development:

- two-thirds of students felt no changes were necessary
- two-thirds felt a strong sense of loyalty to the University
- University staff felt satisfied with the procedures
- students were satisfied they had receive adequate training

Where each point is a complete sentence, use initial capital and full stops.

Example

Key findings:

- The most popular reason for choosing Edinburgh is its international reputation.
- Nearly two thirds of respondents were happy with their choice.
- Over three quarters of respondents are satisfied with the accommodation.

[See also Lists, Editorial Style Guide](#)

LLB, LLM

LLB – tag as Bachelor of Laws

LLM – tag as Master of Laws

[See Abbreviations, Editorial Style Guide](#)

M

MA

Tag as Master of Arts.

[See Abbreviations, Editorial Style Guide](#)

Masters, Master's, Masters'

Example

- ✓ Master of Science
- ✓ Master's in Human Geography

Masters' should only be used when referring to more than one programme.

Example

- ✓ The GeoSciences Masters' programmes

Lower case 'masters' should be used when talking in general terms, as opposed to as specific programme or programmes.

Example

- ✓ Students studying for a masters degree are entitled to free entry.
- ✓ If you wish to study at masters level, please come to our open day.

material

Avoid using this term; be more specific:

Example

- ✓ Course notes, reading lists and textbooks are provided at the start of the semester.

not

- × Course material is provided at the start of the semester.

MBA

Tag as Master of Business Administration.

[See Abbreviations, Editorial Style Guide](#)

MBChB

Do not tag.

[See Abbreviations, Editorial Style Guide](#)

MCS

Tag as Master of Chinese Studies.

[See Abbreviations, Editorial Style Guide](#)

MClinDent

Tag as Master of Clinical Dentistry.

[See Abbreviations, Editorial Style Guide](#)

medieval

Not mediaeval.

miles/kilometres

Use miles in preference to kilometres. If kilometres are mentioned, use decimals.

Example

- ✓ Haddington is 2.7 kilometres away.

whereas

- ✓ North Berwick is four and a half miles away.

[See also Distances, Editorial Style Guide](#)

metres

not meters, or yards. Use m (tagged as metres) as an abbreviation only where necessary.

[See also Distances, Editorial Style Guide](#)

millions

Spell out the word in full wherever possible. Use mn (tagged as million) as an abbreviation only where necessary.

Example

- ✓ £10 million
- ✓ £10mn

not

- × £10m

[See Abbreviations, Editorial Style Guide](#)

MMus

Tag as Master of Music.

[See Abbreviations, Editorial Style Guide](#)

money

[See Money, Editorial Style Guide](#)

MPhil

Tag as Master of Philosophy.

[See Abbreviations, Editorial Style Guide](#)

Mr, Mrs, Ms

No full stop.

[See Abbreviations, Editorial Style Guide](#)

Do not tag.

MSc

Tag as Master of Science.

[See Abbreviations, Editorial Style Guide](#)

MSW

Tag as Master of Social Work.

[See Abbreviations, Editorial Style Guide](#)

MTeach

Tag as Master of Teaching.

[See Abbreviations, Editorial Style Guide](#)

MTh

Tag as Master of Theology.

[See Abbreviations, Editorial Style Guide](#)

multi-

Adjectives beginning with 'multi' are not usually hyphenated; exceptions include where it is followed by a vowel.

Example

- ✓ multi-ethnic, multi-user.

N

nationwide

Not nation-wide.

NB

Avoid; consider using a style element such as bold text, or a feature box.

NHS

National Health Service. Need not be tagged, depending on context.

[See Abbreviations, Editorial Style Guide](#)

no one

- × Not no-one.

not only...

When followed by 'but also', it must either follow the verb, or you must repeat the verb.

Example

- ✓ He hurt not only her feelings but also her pride.

not

- × He not only hurt her feelings but also her pride.

numbers

[See Numbers, Editorial Style Guide](#)

numbered lists

[See Lists, Editorial Style Guide](#)

O

occur, occurred, occurring

online, offline

No hyphen.

on to

The preposition 'onto' is still not accepted as part of standard English (unlike into). It is likely, however, to be accepted as part of British English before long.

It is important to distinguish between the preposition 'onto' (or 'on to') and the use of the adverb 'on' followed by the preposition 'to':

Example

- ✓ She finished fixing the windows and went on to the roof (ie continued to the roof).

but

- ✓ She climbed out of the window and went onto the roof (she climbed on top of the roof).
- ✓ She climbed out of the window and went on to the roof (she climbed on top of the roof).

out of date

Hyphenate when used as an adjective.

Example

- ✓ The equipment used on the oil rig was out of date.
- ✓ The out-of-date equipment used on the oil rig caused an accident.

outwith

This is a Scottish preposition. Do not use on the web. Use alternative such as outside or beyond.

[See British English, Editorial Style Guide](#)

P

parentheses

[See Punctuation, Editorial Style Guide](#)

part-time

See full time, part time

per cent

[See Punctuation, Editorial Style Guide](#)

periods of study

Avoid shortening.

Example

- ✓ Full version: 12 months part time, 9 months full time
- ✓ Shortened version (use only where necessary): 12 mth PT, 9 mth FT

PGDE

Tag as Professional Graduate Diploma in Education (note: **not** Postgraduate Diploma)

[See Abbreviations, Editorial Style Guide](#)

PgDip

Tag as Postgraduate Diploma.

[See Abbreviations, Editorial Style Guide](#)

PhD

Do not tag.

[See Abbreviations, Editorial Style Guide](#)

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phone numbers

The international format should be used.

Example

- ✓ +44 (0)131 650 9747

plain English

Should be used at all times. It is needed in all kinds of public information that people rely on to make decisions. Avoid extending sentences with redundant words.

Example

- ✓ You can register now, or wait until July.

not

- × You can register now, or alternatively wait until July.

[See Using plain language, Editorial Style Guide](#)

platitudes

Avoid using platitudes, such as: The University welcomes international students.

This is obvious. Instead, give evidence that the University provides a welcoming environment.

principal/Principal

Example

- ✓ The University's Principal, Professor Timothy O'Shea.
- ✓ He agreed in principle.

postcodes

Do not tag (within the central CMS, these should normally be formatted within a contact box).

postgraduate

No hyphen.

prerequisite

No hyphen.

proactive

Professor

Do not abbreviate to 'Prof' unless absolutely necessary. If the abbreviated form is used, tag as Professor.

[See Abbreviations, Editorial Style Guide](#)

programme

Not capitalised unless it is part of a course title.

Example

- ✓ the Honours Degree Programme in Computing Science

Q

question marks

[See Punctuation, Editorial Style Guide](#)

quotation marks

[See Punctuation, Editorial Style Guide](#)

R

ranges (numerical)

Example

- ✓ students aged 18–21

or

- ✓ students aged from 18 to 21

not

- × students aged from 18–21

[See also Numbers, Editorial Style Guide](#)

regard, regards

regard (noun): She had no regard for rules

regards (noun): Give her my regards

as regards (concerning): As regards content, the paper will cover three topics

with/having/in regard to: He made enquiries in regard to the post *not* in regards to

RSVP

Avoid. Use 'please respond/reply' instead.

[See Abbreviations, Editorial Style Guide](#)

S

salutations

When a person is introduced for the first time, use their full title – first and second name, thereafter just the title and second name is required – ie Professor Smith, Dr Collins.

The Chancellor, HRH Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh

University of Edinburgh

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Patron of the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Medicine, HRH The Princess Royal

School

Capitalise when naming a specific school within the University:

Example

- ✓ The School of Biological Sciences is having an open day on 3 March.

but

- × Open days are currently taking place in schools around the University.

seasons

Lower case.

Example

- ✓ spring, summer

[See also Italics and Capitals, Editorial Style Guide](#)

semicolons

[See Punctuation, Editorial Style Guide](#)

spaces

[See Punctuation, Editorial Style Guide](#)

SQA

Tag as Scottish Qualifications Authority.

[See Abbreviations, Editorial Style Guide](#)

stationary

Immobile

stationery

Paper, envelopes, notepads etc.

Students' Union

supersede

Not supercede

T

tagging

[See Abbreviations, Editorial Style Guide](#)

tagging language

Text in a language other than English should be tagged as such to ensure it is correctly read by the screen reader. This may include names eg José Manuel.

tautology

A fault in style – particularly in marketing copy where there is the temptation to over-emphasise – which can be defined as “saying the same thing twice”:

Example

- ✓ significant landmark
- ✓ added bonus

that, which

The overlapping use of ‘that’ and ‘which’ is becoming more acceptable; however, there are instances in which one should be used in preference to the other. Strictly, ‘that’ should be used for defining clauses and ‘which’ for non-defining. Defining clauses have no punctuation, while non-defining clauses must be between commas:

Example

- ✓ He stopped the second car that was driven by a woman.
- ✓ He stopped the second car, which was driven by a woman.

times

[See Times, Digital Editorial Style Guide](#)

titles

Capitalise job titles when referring to a specific person or role.

Titles of essays, articles, songs and poems should be in single quotation marks.

U

UCAS

Tag as University and Colleges Admissions Service.

[See Abbreviations, Editorial Style Guide](#)

UK, USA

No full stops between letters. Must be tagged as United Kingdom, United States of America.

[See Abbreviations, Editorial Style Guide](#)

uncooperative

No hyphen.

undergraduate

No hyphen.

under way

Not underway

uninterested

means having no interest in; disinterested means impartial.

unique

Cannot be qualified, such as by words such as almost, quite or very.

University

Always capitalise when referring to the University of Edinburgh.

[See also Referring to the University, Editorial Style Guide](#)

Example

- ✓ Student numbers are growing at the University

The University of Edinburgh

Not Edinburgh University.

[See also Referring to the University, Editorial Style Guide](#)

up to date

Hyphenated when used as an adjective.

Example

- ✓ The message was up to date
- ✓ We received an up-to-date message

URL

Avoid if possible, using 'website address' or similar instead. If used, do not tag unless the purpose of the copy is to explain Uniform Resource Locators.

[See also Links, Editorial Style Guide](#)

V

veto, vetoes

Vice-Chancellor, Vice-President, Vice-Principal

Hyphenated.

vice versa

No hyphen.

voicemail

One word.

W

waive

To relinquish rights; not wave.

web addresses (URLs)

[See Links, Editorial Style Guide](#)

website

Not web site or web-site.

wellbeing

Not well-being.

which

see that, which.

while

not whilst.

who or whom

If in doubt, ask yourself how the clause would read in the form of a sentence using 'he/she' or 'him/her'.

If the clause makes more sense with 'he' or 'she', then 'who' is right. If it makes more sense with 'him' or 'her', then 'whom' is right.

Example

- ✓ Who taught second-year physics? (She taught second-year physics)
- ✓ Whom did she marry? (She married him)
- ✓ To whom do you wish to speak? (I wish to speak to her)

However, accepted practice in modern English is to use 'who' instead of 'whom' and, where applicable, to put the preposition at the end of the sentence.

Example

- ✓ Who do you wish to speak to?

withhold

workplace

one word.

worldwide

not world-wide.