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 ‘cafe’, 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 Italic and capitals, Editorial Style Guide

car park

× Not carpark.

CD-ROM

Need not be tagged.

CE

See AD, BC, CE,

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

cooperae, 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

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ed.ac.uk/editorial-style
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

e-mail
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.
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
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 (i.e. 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

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.
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
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ed.ac.uk/editorial-style
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

semicolon
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.
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.