



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

# Brand Essentials

Making us all look good

**Chapter 6:**  
Editorial Style Guide



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# The University's editorial style guide

## About this style guide

This style guide has been produced by the University's publications team within Communications and Marketing (CAM). It is a reference tool for University staff, external suppliers and freelance copy-editors/writers. It outlines the English standard for all University of Edinburgh publications, including brochures and booklets, student prospectuses, reports and media releases. It also lists commonly misspelled words as well as listings of University of Edinburgh-specific terms and information.

Grammar rules are applied differently worldwide – most publishing houses and higher educational institutions have their own 'house style'. Please adhere to this editorial guide to maintain consistency. If you have any questions about this style guide, or suggestions for additions and amendments, please email [Barbara.Laing@ed.ac.uk](mailto:Barbara.Laing@ed.ac.uk).

## Additional guidance specific to publishing for print

- For spelling, consult the *Oxford Dictionary of English*.
- Reputable grammar reference books: *Butcher's Copy-editing* and *Hart's Rules*.
- For basic guidelines on copy-editing and proofreading, visit [www.ed.ac.uk/communications-marketing/resources/publishing](http://www.ed.ac.uk/communications-marketing/resources/publishing).

## Additional guidance specific to publishing for the web

- Guidelines on writing for the web can be found at [www.ed.ac.uk/communications-marketing/resources/publishing](http://www.ed.ac.uk/communications-marketing/resources/publishing).

# A

## @

Unless in an email address, the @ symbol should never be used to represent the word 'at'

## a, an

Use 'a' before all words beginning with a vowel or diphthong with the sound of 'u', but use 'an' before words beginning with an un aspirated (silent) h:

a eulogy, a European  
an heir, an honest person, an honour  
Preference: an historic occasion

## abbreviations (see acronyms, contractions)

An abbreviation is a shortened form of a word or phrase, used to represent the whole: EU for Economic Union, kg for kilogram

On the first mention, spell out the whole word or phrase and follow with the abbreviation in parentheses. After this the abbreviation can be used alone

Don't use full stops between abbreviated initials:

Economic Union (EU)

Abbreviate words such as company, corporation, incorporated and limited only when they follow the name of a company or corporate entity

Plurals of abbreviations should have no apostrophe: URLs, GPs

Don't abbreviate Professor to Prof

## accents, foreign words and expressions (see italics)

Don't use accents on foreign words if they have been anglicised or are widely used, but keep the accent if it makes a difference to pronunciation or understanding:

café, hôtel, régime *but* façade, fiancée, pâté

Italicise lesser-known phrases: *fin de siècle*, *mise en scène*

## accept, except

accept means to agree or to receive: I accepted all the proposals

except means not including: I tried all solutions, except the first offered

## accommodate, accommodation

## acknowledgement

*not* acknowledgment

## acronyms (see abbreviations)

An acronym is a word formed from the initial letters or groups of letters of words or a set phrase: AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome)

Well-known acronyms don't need to be written out in full: UCAS, UNESCO

Write out lesser-known acronyms in the first instance, then follow with the acronym in parentheses. After this the acronym can be used alone

Don't put full stops between letters

Communications and Marketing (CAM)

## AD, BC (see Common Era)

AD comes before the date, BC comes after it: AD35, 350BC

Both AD and BC are used after 'century': third century BC/AD

## addresses

Be consistent and use as little punctuation as possible: Mrs L R Smith, 114 Myrtle Road, Aberdeen AB12 9TT *not* Mrs. L. R. Smith, 114 Myrtle Rd., Aberdeen AB12 9TT

Spell out locations: Road, Street, Avenue *not* Rd., St., Ave.

## adjectives and adverbs (see hyphens)

An adjective describes a noun: red, difficult, hot

An adverb modifies the meaning of an adjective, verb or other adverb: gently, very, well

When qualifying adjectives, a joining hyphen is rarely needed: heavily pregnant, classically carved, colourfully decorated

When used before a noun, write the compound with a hyphen: a well-founded rumour. If in doubt, use the hyphen in these phrases as little as possible, or when the phrase could be ambiguous:

The island is well regulated  
*but*  
It is a well-regulated island

## adviser

*not* advisor

## affect, effect

affect (verb): to have an influence on

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

effect (noun): a result

## all right

*not* alright

## Americanisms (see -ise endings)

Use British English and spellings (if in doubt consult the *Oxford Dictionary of English*): organisation *not* organization, centre *not* center (unless in official names e.g. World Health Organization, World Trade Center), holiday *not* vacation, shop *not* store

## amid

*not* amidst

## among

*not* amongst

## ampersand [&]

Generally use the word 'and' in preference to an ampersand, although either an ampersand or the word 'and' may be used in University College or School names: College of Science & Engineering, Moray House School of Education and Sport

## apostrophes

### with plurals/time periods

Don't use in plurals: the 1960s *not* the 1960's, CDs *not* CD's, three As and a B *not* three A's, I had dinner with the Joneses *not* the Jones's

Do use to indicate the plural of single letters: p's and q's, dotting the i's

Don't use if a period of time modifies an adjective: six months pregnant, 10 years old

Do use with time periods where the time period modifies a noun: two days' time, 12 years' experience

## apostrophes

### with possessives

Where an object or objects belong to one person or thing, the apostrophe goes before the 's': The University's halls of residence

Where an object or objects belong to more than one person or thing, the apostrophe goes after the 's': Students' Union, Freshers' Week; the graduates' certificates; the classes' timetables

When using plural nouns that don't end in 's' (children, women, sheep etc), the apostrophe goes before the 's':

The women's minibus runs until 11pm

The exception to this rule is its, yours, ours, theirs, hers etc:

The book was old and its cover was in tatters

Singular proper names/nouns ending in 's' follow the rule of writing what is voiced: Keats's poetry

**Note:** it is acceptable to omit the additional 's' provided you are consistent: Dickens' *Great Expectations*, Welles' *Citizen Kane*. If the 's' is soft, omit the 's' at the end: Rabelais' writings. The 's' is usually omitted when the last syllable of the name is pronounced iz: Moses' and in the names of the ancients like Socrates', Dionysus', Achilles' heel.

**Exception:** Jesus's

## archaeology

not archeology

## artefact

not artifact

## B

### benefited, benefiting

### biannual, biennial

biannual: twice a year

biennial: once every two years (or lasting two years)

### billion, million (see numbers)

Spell out the words billion and million where possible: £10 billion, six million people etc

Abbreviate to 'bn' and 'mn' in tables to save space: £6bn

### brackets (see parentheses and brackets)

### bullet points and lists

Usually, bullet points render normal punctuation unnecessary. Bulleted lists can be punctuated and presented in several ways – whichever option you choose, add a full stop at the end of the last point

Long lists and shorter lists containing very detailed points should be bulleted

Lists with fewer than three points can usually be better expressed in a full sentence

Bulleted lists may or may not be indented – just be consistent

#### Example 1

This is the most common type of bulleted list, where each point is a sentence fragment that will form a complete sentence if read together with the introductory line. Don't punctuate points made up of single words or very short phrases until the final full stop and note the lower-case letters at the start of each line

Desirable attributes include:

- creativity
- a level head under pressure
- tenacity
- a common-sense approach.

#### Example 2

If list items comprise long clauses or phrases, the first word of each point should be lower case, and points should be punctuated with semicolons and a final full stop

In terms of staff development:

- two-thirds of staff members felt no changes were necessary;
- two-thirds felt a strong sense of loyalty to the University;
- three-quarters felt they had benefited from cross-school collaborations;
- two-thirds were satisfied they had received adequate training.

#### Example 3

If an item in the bulleted list is a complete sentence, no introductory colon is required, the first word of each point should be capped and there should be a full stop at the end of each sentence

Key findings

- The most popular reason for choosing Edinburgh is its international reputation.
- Nearly 85 per cent of respondents are satisfied with their programme choice.
- More than 80 per cent of respondents are satisfied with the accommodation and facilities offered.

## Numbered lists

A numbered 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 appropriate ending punctuation

Applying to the University of Edinburgh is simple:

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

# C

## capital letters (see headings, titles)

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

- proper nouns (people's names, towns and cities, countries, organisations);
- nationalities, languages and religions;
- days of the week and months of the year;
- job titles, course titles, names of institutions (the Principal, the College of Science & Engineering, the School of Engineering etc)

The Informatics laboratories have been improved to world-class standard

She took philosophy as an outside subject in second year

Students undertaking the Cognitive Science MSc can carry out research in a number of areas, including robotics and neural computation. More than 50 modules are available, including Natural Language and Neural Computation

The 't' in 'The University of Edinburgh' should be capitalised when appearing by itself without surrounding text. However, the 't' should be lower case when the definite article is included within copy:

The University of Edinburgh – a great place to study

*but*

Researchers from the University of Edinburgh have discovered xyz

Subject areas should not be capitalised unless they form part of the title of a programme or course

Historical periods are upper case: Georgian house, a Victorian lampshade, the Middle Ages

Use initial lower case for seasons and points of the compass

## CD-ROM

## chemical formulae

These should be written in subscript: CO<sub>2</sub>

## collective nouns

These stand for a single entity: 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:

A committee was appointed to consider the subject

The committee were unable to agree

## colons and semicolons

A colon typically links a general or introductory statement to an example, a cause to an effect, or an idea to a conclusion:

This formula is confusing: do I look confused?

Informatics has some of the UK's best facilities: its laboratories are state of the art

Colons are also used to introduce a list:

Research topics include: gender and politics in France, French cinema and French literature

A semicolon is used to separate clauses or items in a list, or to indicate a pause longer than that of a comma and shorter than that of a full stop. Usually the two parts of the sentence divided by the semicolon balance each other, rather than lead from one to the other (in which case a colon is preferable):

The reporters raised their hands; the Prime Minister answered one last question

## Common Era (see AD, BC)

Common Era notation is identical to numbering used with Anno Domini notation – there is no year zero and the year 2010 is the same in both systems

The abbreviation BCE (Before Common Era) always follows the year number: 399 BCE (same notation as 399 BC). The abbreviation for Common Era (CE) is written as 2010 CE

**Note:** both AD/BC and BC/BCE systems are appropriate, however they should be used according to the context. For example, AD/BC can be used in academic writing containing historical or religious references, whereas BC/BCE would be more appropriate in, say, a media release

## common sense

noun (two words): He has a lot of common sense

adjective (hyphenated): He has a common-sense approach

## compare with, compare to

To compare with is to draw attention to differences; to compare to is to stress similarities

## complement, compliment

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

You have a full complement of students; two types of medical treatment, or two colours, can be complementary

You pay someone a compliment; a book review may be complimentary

## comprise, compose

comprises *not* comprised of

composed of

The new research centre comprises laboratories, office space and function rooms

*but*

The image on the poster is composed of a series of tiny photographs

## contractions (see abbreviations)

A contraction results from letters being missed out (an abbreviation is a shortened version): Mr is a contraction of M-iste-r

Don't use full stops in contractions or abbreviations: Dr *not* Dr.

Contracted words are acceptable in informal speech: you'll for 'you will' and we'll for 'we will' etc

## cooperate, cooperation

## coordinate, coordination

## © copyright (see ® registered trademark)

In Microsoft Word documents, © can be found under 'Symbol' under the 'Insert' dropdown menu. Alternatively, type the characters (c) and the symbol will appear automatically

## D

**dashes** (see en rules, hyphens)

**dates** (see AD, BC, Common Era)

Follow this style:

5 June

Monday 21 July, 2010

5–7 July 2010 (use en rule *not* hyphen)

1990s *not* 1990's; the 90s *not* the Nineties *or* the '90s

the 4th century BC/BCE; the 19th century

1991–1993 *or* between 1991 and 1993 *not* 1991-3

(use en rule *not* hyphen)

**days of the week**

Capitalise the first letter

Don't abbreviate unless in a table (keep to three letters each Mon, Tue, Wed etc)

**dependant, dependent**

dependant is a noun: In the event of his death, the man's dependants gave permission to remove his organs

dependent is an adjective: The patient was dependent on the medics saving his life

**different**

different from, *not* different to *or* different than

**disinterested, uninterested**

disinterested means impartial; uninterested means having no interest in

## E

**e-**

Lower case and hyphenated in most phrases: e-science, e-learning, e-newsletter

**e.g.**

Try rephrasing to avoid, using 'for example' instead

**ellipsis [...]**

Use ... *not* .. (three full stops, *not* two, and use a space afterwards)

Instead of typing three dots in a row, hold down the ALT and semicolon [:] keys

**email**

*not* e-mail *or* Email

**enquiry, inquiry**

enquiry: the act or instance of asking or seeking information

inquiry: an investigation, especially an official one

**en rules** (see hyphens)

An en rule is two dashes (–)

An em rule (to be used sparingly, if at all) is three dashes (—)

En rules are used:

- in preference to hyphens for emphasis:

The three colleges that make up the University – Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences, Science & Engineering and Medicine & Veterinary Medicine – have a long tradition of excellence

- when the first part of a compound doesn't modify the meaning of the second part.

The en rule can be thought of as standing for 'and' or 'to':

mother–daughter relationship  
Labour–Liberal alliance  
London–Edinburgh train  
Monday–Friday, 9am–5pm

**Note:** The en rule shouldn't replace 'and' if the word 'between' is used:

The period between 1950 and 1960

*not*

The period between 1950–60

The em rule should rarely be used. It can be used to indicate the omission of a word or part of a word:

It was agreed that Dr S— would stand down after three months

**enrol, enrolling, enrolment**

**etc, etcetera**

no full stop in abbreviation

**exclamation mark [!]**

Use sparingly. It is unlikely this will be needed, even in direct speech

## F

**Fairtrade, fair trade**

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

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

**fewer than, less than**

Fewer refers to number; less refers to quantity

fewer than 12 speeches; fewer than seven doctors

I had less than £10; less than half the population

## G

### gender

Avoid the use of gender-specific suffixes such as -ess or -rix:

actor *not* actress; manager *not* manageress;  
chair *not* chairman

### government

Lower case unless referring to a specific government: the Scottish Government

## H

### headings (see capital letters, titles)

Use sentence case in headings and subheadings. Avoid using all capital letters or full stops

The use of sentence case should follow normal grammatical rules – capital letters should only be used for the first letter of the first word and for names, proper nouns (people and place names) and abbreviations/acronyms:

How to get a place at university  
*not*  
How To Get A Place At University  
*or*  
HOW TO GET A PLACE AT UNIVERSITY

### helpdesk

one word

### hi-res, hi-tech

*not* high-

### hyphens (see adjectives and adverbs, en rules, multi-)

Inventions, ideas and new concepts often begin life as two words and then become hyphenated, before finally becoming accepted as one word. For example, 'wire-less' and 'down-stairs' were once hyphenated

Keep usage to a minimum and introduce only to avoid ambiguity: 'four year-old children' has a different meaning to 'four-year-old children'

Do use hyphens:

- to form compound adjectives: three-year deal, top-ranking institution, first-degree programme;
- in compound nouns containing prepositions: brother-in-law;
- between some prefixes and root words: co-author, non-controversial.

Don't use hyphens:

- after adverbs ending in -ly or the adverb 'very':

a badly prepared speech  
genetically modified vegetables  
a very exciting speech

- in the following words:

cooperative, coordinate, email, groundbreaking, interpersonal, multidisciplinary, nationwide, ongoing, online, postgraduate, teamwork, undergraduate, website, wellbeing, worldwide

## I

### i.e.

Try rephrasing to avoid, using 'that is' instead

### incur, incurring

### international

lower case i, unless sentence structure requires it

### internet

lower case

### inverted commas (see quotation marks)

### -ise endings (see Americanisms)

-ise endings should be used in preference to -ize endings: recognise, economise, organise

### italics (see accents, foreign words and expressions, titles)

Use italics for:

- titles of publications (books, newspapers, magazines, journals, brochures), campaigns, television and radio programmes and advertisements, plays, films, conferences, CDs, works of art, exhibitions and vehicles (ships, aircraft, spacecraft and locomotives). Also use italics for foreign words that aren't anglicised (*enfant terrible*). If a foreign word is italicised, ensure it has the correct accents: *protégé*
- Essay, article, song and short poem titles should be roman and in single quotes:

The article 'Chicken Genomics' appears in the journal *Nature*

**Note:** unless in a bibliography, the definite article in a sentence referring to a newspaper should be lower-case roman except for *The Times* and *The Economist*. If the definite article doesn't refer to the newspaper, (e.g. the *Scotsman* correspondent) it should also be lower-case roman

## J

judgement

## K

## L

### Latin plurals

Some are common: alumni, data, criteria

Many plural forms look pedantic and put the reader off: forums not fora, syllabuses not syllabi

### licence, license

licence: noun

license: verb

**lists** (see bullet points and lists)

## M

### medieval

### miles, kilometres, metres

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

Haddington is 2.7 kilometres away  
*but*  
North Berwick is four and a half miles away

Use metres *not* meters *or* yards

Contractions can be used in tables: 10m

**million, billion** (see billion, numbers)

### money

£5, 75p, €10 not £5.00 or £0.75

Unless in a table, write out in full the name of foreign currencies: francs, yen (no initial capitals)

If dollars are not US dollars, say twenty-five New Zealand dollars or \$NZ25 if in a table

To get the euro symbol in Microsoft Word, hold down the ALT and number 2 keys

### multi- (see adjectives and adverbs, hyphens)

Adjectives beginning with the combining form 'multi' are not usually hyphenated: multicultural

If followed by a vowel, add a hyphen for ease: multi-ethnic, multi-user

## N

### nationwide

### NB

Try to avoid by spelling out as 'please note', however if you must use it don't add full stops

### no one numbers

one to nine: write out in full

10 and above: use digits

above 999, use comma: 1,000, 3,500, 23,000

If a number is at the start of a sentence, always spell it out in full, or rewrite the sentence if possible to avoid the problem

For neatness/consistency, spell out numbers if, in a range of two or more related numbers, at least one is higher than 10:

The class can have between seven and thirteen students

## O

**occur, occurred, occurring**

**online, offline**

**on to**

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

She climbed on to the deck (or the preposition 'onto')  
*but*  
Let's move on to the next point (not onto)

**out of date**

Hyphenate when used as an adjective:

The equipment used in the laboratory is out of date  
*but*  
The out-of-date equipment should be replaced as soon as possible

**outwith**

Scottish preposition meaning 'beyond' or 'outside'. Use sparingly

## P

**paragraphs**

Use one return in between paragraphs, not two

Don't indent paragraphs

**parentheses ( ) and brackets [ ]**

If a sentence is logically and grammatically complete without the information contained within the parentheses, the punctuation stays outside. When a complete sentence is within parentheses, the full stop stays within them

Use gloves when conducting chemistry experiments.  
(Gloves are stored in the top cupboard.)  
Use gloves when conducting experiments (unless no chemicals are involved).

Square brackets [ ] are used in direct speech to add an interpolation – a note from the writer, not the speaker – or to enclose extra information provided, often by someone other than the writer/speaker of the surrounding text:

Professor Elaine Watson said: "We are honoured and delighted that HRH The Princess Royal [the Vet School's patron] could be with us today."

Avoid complicated build-ups of brackets and parentheses. If the copy can't be simplified, follow ( [ ] ) sequence

**per cent**

The % symbol can be used in tables, with no space between the numeral and symbol: 15%

**phone numbers**

Use the international format: +44 (0)131 650 1000

**possessives (see apostrophes)**

**prerequisite**

**proactive**

## Q

**quotation marks**

Direct speech should be contained within double quotation marks; quotes within quotes should be within single marks:

"The new library facilities are excellent," said the Edinburgh student.  
"I said to her, 'Those figures don't tally' and he replied with..."

When multiple paragraphs of direct speech are quoted, the opening quotation marks should be used at the start of each paragraph and closing marks only at the end of the final paragraph

Punctuating sentences containing quotation marks can be confusing – try to punctuate according to sense.

**Example 1**

When a long sentence is quoted, introduced by a short phrase, or more than one sentence is quoted, attach the closing full stop to the long/last sentence and keep it within the closing quotation marks:

The Director of Studies said, "Under no circumstances are students allowed to take mobile phones into the examination hall. That is against University regulations."

**Example 2**

When a quotation forms part of a longer sentence, the quotation mark usually precedes all punctuation except an exclamation mark or question mark belonging to the quotation:

Physicists are searching for the Higgs boson or so-called 'God Particle'.

**Example 3**

When the quoted words form a complete sentence that ends at the same point as the main sentence, add the full stop before the final quotation mark:

He said simply, "It cannot be done."

## R

### ranges (numerical)

(see en rules)

students aged 18–21 (en rule *not* hyphen)  
*or*  
students aged from 18 to 21  
*not*  
students aged from 18-21

### regard, regards

regard (noun): She saved him without regard for herself

regards, or best wishes (noun): Give her my regards

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

with/in/having regard to (as concerns): He made enquiries in regard to the teaching post

*not* in regards to

### ® registered trademark symbol

(see © copyright symbol)

In Microsoft Word documents, ® can be found under 'Symbol' under the 'Insert' dropdown menu. Alternatively, type the characters (r) and the symbol will appear automatically

## S

### semicolons (see colons and semicolons)

### spaces

In a paragraph of text, use a single space at the end of a sentence not a double space

### spin-out

adjective and noun

### stationary, stationery

stationary (adjective): immobile

stationery (noun): paper, envelopes, notepads etc

### supersede

## T

### tautology

A tautology essentially says the same thing twice. Resist the temptation to over-emphasise a point: significant landmark, added bonus

### that, which

There is much confusion over when to use 'that' and when to use 'which'

#### Example 1

As a general rule, in restrictive relative clauses, where the relative clause serves to define or restrict the reference to the particular person or thing being described, 'that' (preferable) or 'which' can be used:

Any research paper that/which gets young scientists thinking outside the square is worth publishing.

In non-restrictive relative clauses, which serve only to give additional information, 'that' cannot be used:

The research paper, which outlines the latest developments in stem cell research, took two years to write.

#### Example 2

Another general rule worth following is to use 'that' for defining clauses and 'which' for non-defining clauses

Defining clauses have no punctuation:

After inspecting the line of robots on the table, the professor picked up the second one that was built by an MSc student

Non-defining clauses must be between commas:

After inspecting the line of robots on the table, the professor picked up the second one, which was built by an MSc student

### times

am and pm should have no full stops and there should be no space between the numeral and letters am or pm:

4am, 8pm, 5.15pm

Write out fractions of hours in full:

(nouns): half an hour; one and a half hours; one and three-quarter hours  
(adjectival sense): a half-hour wait, a one-and-a-half-hour wait

24 hours a day

### titles (see capital letters, headings, italics)

Italicise titles of publications (including books, newspapers, magazines and journals), campaigns, television and radio programmes and advertisements, plays, films, conferences and CDs

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

The article 'Chicken Genomics' appears in the journal *Nature*

Job titles should have initial capitals: Head of Marketing

## U

### UK, US (see abbreviations)

no full stops between letters

### under way

not underway

### up to date, up-to-date

The message was up to date  
*but*  
We received an up-to-date message

### URLs (see web addresses)

## V

### vice versa

no hyphen or italics

### voicemail

## W

### web addresses

Web addresses that start with <http://www> should be published with [www](http://www) only:

[www.google.com](http://www.google.com)

Web addresses that start with something other than <http://> (e.g. <https://>) or do not include the usual 'www' should be published in full:

<http://maps.google.com>  
<https://www.myed.ac.uk>

If possible, list websites in bold. If a website occurs at the end of a sentence, add a roman full stop:

For more information, visit **www.ed.ac.uk**.

### website

### wellbeing

### which (see that, which)

### while

*not whilst*

### who, whom

Who forms the subjective case and so should be used as the subject in a sentence:

Who taught second-year physics?

Whom forms the objective case and so should be used as the object in a sentence:

Whom did she marry?  
To whom do you wish to speak?

**Note:** There is continuing debate about whether to use 'who' or 'whom'. The use of 'whom' has steadily declined and is rarely used unless in formal contexts: To whom it may concern

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: Who do you wish to speak to?

### workplace

### worldwide

# Glossary of common terms

Below is a list of common terms specific to higher education and the University of Edinburgh

## A level

noun: A level  
adjectival sense: A-level results

## alumni

alumna: female graduate  
alumnus: male graduate  
alumni: plural of either

## charitable strapline

The University of Edinburgh is a charitable body registered in Scotland, with registration number SC005336.

For usage guidelines, [www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/communicationsmarketing/resources/university-brand](http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/communicationsmarketing/resources/university-brand).

## college

Capitalise when referring to a specific University of Edinburgh College:

The College of Science & Engineering is having an open day on 3 March  
*but*  
Universities and colleges around the country are currently holding open days

## contact details

List contact information in this order:

Name  
Title  
Section  
Telephone or tel (not phone)  
Fax  
Email  
Website

## degrees, degree classifications

no full stops: MA (Hons)

Use colons to separate 2:1, 2:2

## departments

There are no academic departments at the University of Edinburgh. Try to refer to the School name where possible. If referring to a subject area within a School, use initial caps, but only in this instance:

English Literature, Psychology, Nursing etc  
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

## EUSA

Edinburgh University Students' Association

## Freshers' Week

*not* Fresher's

## full time, part time

Hyphenate as an adjective:

The tutor has a part-time job

Two words as an adverb (preference):

The tutor works full time

Two words as a noun:

The referee called full time on the game

## graduand, graduate

A graduand is to be awarded a degree; a graduate holds a degree

## honours

lower case

He graduated with first-class honours  
She completed an honours degree in philosophy

## HRH

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

## masters, MSc

Use lower case 'masters' if generally talking about a degree, but 'Masters' if it refers to a specific course:

He graduated with a Theoretical Physics MSc/with a Masters in Theoretical Physics

## postgraduate, undergraduate

no hyphen

## Principal

The Principal, Professor Peter Mathieson

For ease, refer to 'the Principal' in the second instance

## school

Capitalise when referring to a specific University of Edinburgh School:

The School of Chemistry has some of the UK's finest facilities

## staff

Can be singular or plural (preference)

## university (see 'capitals' in main style guide)

The University of Edinburgh  
*never* Edinburgh University

Always use initial capitals when specifically referring to Edinburgh, but not if speaking generally:

Student numbers are growing at the University  
*but*  
She took it for granted that she would go on to study at university

## Vice-Chancellor, Vice-President, Vice-Principal

# Guide to proofreading

Proofreading a document gives you a final chance to check the copy for any inaccuracies and to ensure nothing has been overlooked/misunderstood in the design process. It can be challenging to proofread your own copy and it's advisable to ask someone else to do this, preferably a professional proofreader. You can contact the Publications team in CAM for further advice on this.

The following offers you a brief guide.

**Always print out the document** – it is easier to catch mistakes on paper than it is on screen.

**Read the document at least twice** – firstly to check for sense and that all the relevant information is on the page; and secondly to focus purely on the words, checking for spelling, punctuation, grammar and typos.

Once you have read the document, scan it from start to finish to ensure the page furniture such as headings, folios, tables etc is consistent throughout.

Use this quick checklist as a general guide:

## Folios and page numbers

Do all pages have folios? Are the pages numbered correctly? Are all fonts consistent?

If there is a Contents page, check that the chapter or section page numbers match up with those throughout the document.

## Headings and colours

Are the fonts, heading sizes and colours consistent?

## Full stops

Check that full stops on captions, standfirsts (introductions) and pull quotes are consistent.

## Spacing

Is spacing under headings, photos, in tables, after bullet points, and at the bottom of text columns, consistent throughout?

## Advertising and logos

Are advertising elements in the correct position? Check that logos, or requested information such as photo credits, writer's bylines, charity straplines, copyright symbols, is included.

## Ragged or justified copy

If ragged (ranged left/right) copy is used, is it consistent throughout? If copy is justified, check hyphenation is consistent throughout.

## Widows and orphans

In body copy, try to avoid single words at the top of a text column (widow) and, less importantly, the first line of a paragraph starting at the very bottom of a text column (orphan).

## Tables

Are all columns lining up? Is the use of bold or italicised type within the table consistent?

## A few common things to watch out for:

### Double spaces after full stops

Always use one space between sentences.

### Americanisms and foreign words

Avoid American spellings such as realize, organization, color etc; if in doubt refer to *The Oxford English Dictionary*. If foreign words have been anglicised – such as cafe – don't italicise them or give them an accent.

### Hyphenation

Check our editorial style guide if in any doubt about how to use hyphens or en-rules.

### And vs ampersand (&)

Spelling out the word 'and' is preferable, unless in a College or School name where either an ampersand or the word 'and' may be used: College of Science & Engineering, Moray House School of Education and Sport.

## If in any doubts, contact CAM:

Barbara Laing

Publications Manager

E [barbara.laing@ed.ac.uk](mailto:barbara.laing@ed.ac.uk)

T 50 9848

# Guide to copy-editing

The aim of copy-editing is to ensure that copy is clear, concise and easy to follow, consistent in editorial house style throughout, and without any ambiguity, wasted words or repetition. You can find the University's editorial house style at: [www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/communications-marketing/resources/publishing](http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/communications-marketing/resources/publishing).

It can be challenging to copy-edit your own work, and it is advisable to ask someone else to do this, preferably a professional copy-editor. You can contact the Publications team in CAM for further advice on this.

The following offers you a brief guide.

**Try to keep the original writer's voice as much as possible.** Avoid changing the meaning of a sentence, statement or phrase unless you are confident the original is erroneous. If you think the piece needs a complete rewrite or it has gone way over the agreed word count, ask your manager whether it should be sent back to the writer with clear instructions, or whether you are permitted to rewrite/cut it yourself. Address this before the copy is designed to save time.

**Never assume the reader knows as much as you do about the subject.** Would someone who is unfamiliar with this subject understand it? Don't 'dumb it down' but make sure it is easy to understand and nothing is ambiguous. Writers can often be too close to their subject, so examine the copy as if you are a reader coming to the information for the first time.

**Cut out any superfluous material.** Can something be said in a more concise way? The copy should always be clear and easy to read.

**Avoid flamboyant language and use adjectives carefully.** Consider if there are too many and may be standing in the way of clarity.

**Avoid repetition.** Repetition of phrases or words is easy to overlook. Consider if there is an alternative way of saying something if the same phrase keeps popping up.

**Check for consistency.** Are quote marks single or double? Do tenses jump around? Are people called by their first names or surnames throughout? Are their correct titles – Professor, Mr, Ms, etc – applied consistently and correctly? Do proper nouns have initial capitals or lower case throughout?

**Does the copy flow** in an ordered, sensible fashion, or do topics jump around?

## Marking up raw copy

Once you have finished copyediting, you need to explain things clearly to a designer. For example, where to place photographs and logos, if copy needs to be in bold or italics, if certain copy needs to be placed on a certain page etc.

If you want to bring the designer's attention to something, write any instructions in square brackets [ ] or chevrons < > preferably in a different colour to make it stand out, for example:

[Designer: Please make text bold with a grey screen behind it and a reversed out head]

<Designer: Please insert logo below this text>

To understand and use copyediting marks and symbols correctly, refer to *The Cambridge Handbook for Editors, Copy-editors and Proofreaders*.

## If in any doubts, contact CAM:

Barbara Laing  
Publications Manager  
E [barbara.laing@ed.ac.uk](mailto:barbara.laing@ed.ac.uk)  
T 50 9848

Communications and Marketing  
5 Forrest Hill  
Edinburgh  
EH1 2QL

+44 (0)131 650 2252

[communications.office@ed.ac.uk](mailto:communications.office@ed.ac.uk)