STYLE GUIDE

University of Reading

INTRODUCTION

This guide is here to help anyone who writes on behalf of the University. It ensures that all of us write in a clear, consistent style.

The style guide includes three sections:

- Guidance on voice and tone, which outlines the effect we want to create when we communicate with people – and how to achieve it.
- Guidance on style, which covers our grammatical and punctuation preferences plus other helpful information about writing for the University.
- A comprehensive A–Z guide that includes our preferred spelling and style for a variety of University-relevant words.

How to use our style guide

This digital guide is an interactive, practical tool. You can jump to cross-references and easily search the entire document. Alternatively, you can print the document and keep it at your desk for easy reference.

This guide includes style preferences that are specific to the University. If you're looking for more general information, please refer to the *Guardian* style guide, which is free online. Where you see a rule in this guide that conflicts with a *Guardian* rule, use the University guidance.

We created our style guide using evidence from a variety of sources, including previous guides, existing style preferences and common usages seen more widely. We also formed a staff working group that met regularly to debate all aspects of the document as we wrote and vetted the various guidelines and rules.

It will evolve, too. The Content Team will update the document on a yearly basis to reflect any changes required in the style and A–Z sections. Contact the Content Team if you would like to suggest an update.

What's not included in our style guide

This is not a guide for academic work. It does not apply to curriculum or syllabus materials, or academic research. Check with your University department for specific academic preferences, or for more information, see the Library's guide on citing references.

Acknowledgements

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Feedback

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VOICE AND TONE

Voice

A voice is a way of speaking and writing that an organisation develops over time. It becomes a recognisable part of the organisation's identity.

Our University's voice has two defining attributes: direct and confident.

We're direct

This means our language is **active**, **to the point** and **honest**.

We use active verbs instead of passive ones. For example:

⊘ Visit our award-winning campus.

⊗ The University of Reading has won many awards for its campus environment, which you are invited to visit.

We're concise. Use short, simple sentences and omit unnecessary words. Don't be afraid to speak plainly. For example:

⊘ Register for Open Day using our online form.

⊗ If you would like to attend one of our Open Days, please find our online form at the bottom of our Open Day page.

Being honest in our writing means that we speak clearly and truthfully. Don't dance around the point – get straight to it. For example:

⊘ We've been clear that staff engagement could, and should, have been stronger. There are important lessons to learn for the future, but failing to put our long-term finances on a firm footing is simply not an option.

⊗ We take feedback from staff seriously and we have received many comments – both positive and negative – in recent weeks, but the common theme suggests that our management could possibly have done a better job of engaging with staff, and they will be briefed so that they can learn from this experience and do better in the future.

We're confident

This means our language is **factual**, **bold** and even, at times, **inspirational**.

As a university, we're analytical, logical and use evidence to reach sound conclusions. This should also apply to how we communicate with people. For example:

⊘ We're ranked 29th in the UK, according to the *Guardian* University Guide, 2018.

⊗ We're one of the best universities in the UK.

Because of our evidence-based approach, we can speak boldly with authority. For example:

⊘ A degree doesn't guarantee you a job. You have to fight hard to succeed and we can help give you the edge. 94% of our students are in work or further study within six months of graduating.

⊗ The job market is competitive, but our students have a great chance of getting a job after graduating.

And this style of fact-based authority means we can inspire people. For example:

⊘ Whether examining the impact of a warmer world or exploring the likelihood of a worsening of the UK's wintertime flooding, our academics are shaping policy and strengthening society's climate resilience.

⊗ Looking at the various aspects of climate change, our academics are helping to contribute to how society deals with the issues surrounding our changing climate.

Tone

Tone is what modifies our voice. It adapts to create the effect we want to achieve, and reflect who we're communicating with and how.

The adoption of various tones enables us to be more human: warm, friendly and conversational when it's appropriate, formal and more corporate when it's required – and always professional.

When thinking about tone, consider three things: audience, channel and effect.

Audience

Who are you writing for? For example, are you writing for students, staff, or stakeholders? Remember there is more than one way to communicate with the same audience, depending on what you need to say.

Channel

How are you communicating the message? For example, are you writing a formal report, a post on Twitter, or content for our website?

Effect

What is the effect you want to achieve? For example, do you want to persuade, reassure, or rebut?

Example

Say, for example, your audience is students as well as the community at large. You're writing an introduction to the community section on our website, and you want to create a sense of warmth and inclusivity that encourages people to get involved in a variety of University events.

Your voice will always remain direct and confident, but here's the difference tone can make:

✓ The University has a wide range of events and activities for you to take part in even if you aren't a student. Find out what we have to offer and join our community.

✗ There are many events for students and non-students to participate in at the University. Here's what we have to offer.

Tone is responsive: it adapts as required for the circumstances. As long as it's sincere and professional, though, you can't go far wrong.

STYLE

Style comprises the rules and recommendations for spelling, punctuation, word choice and so on. It ensures our written communications are consistent and reflect our organisation's identity.

Contents

1. Abbreviations

Abbreviations

We use commonly understood abbreviations such as Mr, Mrs and Dr. For lesser known or University-specific terms, we write the word out in full in the first instance.

We do not use full stops in any abbreviations, even if the abbreviation ends in a different letter to the full word.

Examples

✓ CV

✓ Mr and Mrs Smith.

✓ BEng is a Bachelor of Engineering.

✗ C. V.

✗ Mr. and Mrs. Smith.

✗ B.Eng is a Bachelor of Engineering.

See also: acronyms

Acronyms

We always spell out an acronym in the first instance followed by the acronym in round brackets (unless it is well known, such as BBC, UCAS or NASA).

We typically capitalise every letter in an acronym and do not use full stops. However, there are some exceptions; for example, "Erasmus". If in doubt, look up the specific acronym in our A-Z guide, or if it's an acronym external to the University, then use the

acronym owner's preferred style (for example, DfE for the Department for Education).

If an acronym has entered the language as an everyday word – such as laser or sim card – then write it in lower case.

If the acronym first appears in a heading due to space constraints, then spell it out in the first instance in the body text.

Examples

✓ We are accredited by the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA).

✗ We have links with the British Broadcasting Corporation (B.B.C.).

✗ Students on this course can join the ACCA upon graduation.

See also: abbreviations

Contractions

Contractions – creating a single word from two separate ones using an apostrophe (for example, "don't" instead of "do not") – may be used in less formal writing. For formal communications, you should write words out in full.

If writing on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor, do not use any contractions.

Examples

✓ Haven't seen a club or society you'd like to join?

✓ We are delighted to offer you an unconditional place.

2. Bolds, italics and underlining

Bold

We use emboldened text to emphasise words and highlight important facts. However, this should be done sparingly. This is preferred over all-upper case, italicised or underlined words.

Use emboldened text to help break up chunks of text.

✓ **Other requirements:** See pages 182–185 for more details.

✓ 98% of University of Reading research is **internationally recognised** and 78% of our research is classified as **internationally excellent**.

✗ Our research is INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNISED.

✗ Our **desire** to create **knowledge** that will **benefit** society drives our **active** and **diverse** research **agenda**. Our research is **useful**, **real-world** research on issues affecting society both in the **present** and in the **future**.

Exceptions

Communications and campaigns designed by our Creative and Print Studio may use all-upper case letters for standard and emphasised text.

See also: hyperlinks

Emojis

We do not use emojis in our communications. The only exception is on social media, and you should only use them sparingly.

Italics

We use italics for titles of works including newspapers, journals, books, plays, television programmes, songs, video games and radio series.

We use bold, not italics, for emphasis.

> ⊘ *Macbeth* by William Shakespeare.
>
> ⊘ 98% of University of Reading research is **internationally recognised** and 78% of our research is classified as **internationally excellent**.

> ⊗ 98% of University of Reading research is *internationally recognised* and 78% of our research is classified as *internationally excellent*.

Underlining

Hyperlinks can be underlined online or in digital documents such as PDFs, but should be avoided in printed communications.

We do not underline text for emphasis.

> ⊘ You can register using our online form.

> ⊗ If you wish to attend you must register in advance.

See also: hyperlinks

3. Capitalisation

Capitalisation

We capitalise the first word and all important words in the following:

- school and department names, modules, professional teams and offices, and the University Library
- titles of works including academic publications, newspapers, journals, books, plays, television programmes, songs, video games and radio series (note that titles of works are also italicised)
- the titles of our academic programmes of study, however, subjects should be lower case
- names of University events, for example, "Open Day"
- full building names, for example, "Agriculture Building".

See also: University name, Library, modules, job titles, building

Examples

> ⊘ The Department of Mathematics and Statistics.
>
> ⊘ Disability Support Office.
>
> ⊘ Content Team.
>
> ⊘ *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.
>
> ⊘ BSc Artificial Intelligence.
>
> ⊘ Your degree in artificial intelligence.

Capitalisation of headings

Use sentence case for headings.

Examples

> ⊘ Undergraduate degrees at Reading

> ⊗ Working With Our Students and Graduates

Exception

Some headings across our web and print templates use upper case Effra typeface as part of the styling.

4. Names and titles

Building names

Capitalise the names of buildings (including the word "building") when writing the full name of a building.

We don't use initial caps on "hall", "halls" or "halls of residence". Only use initial caps when referring to the halls by their full name.

For specific building names, see our [A-Z guide](#).

Examples

- ✓ The Meteorology Building on Whiteknights campus.
- ✓ You will make lots of friends in your halls of residence.
- ✓ Wantage Hall is catered whereas St George's Hall is self-catered.

- ✗ The agriculture building is located on the Whiteknights campus.
- ✗ Many undergraduates choose to live in Halls during their first year.

Job titles

When referring to a role generally, use lower case letters. For example, "She is a director," and "Our lecturers are engaged in a variety of research." When using a role as part of a person's title, or to refer to a specific person in that role, use initial capitals. For example, "John Smith, Director of Admissions," and "The Vice-Chancellor gave a lecture." However, for former titles (for example, "former director"), we do not use initial capitals.

Hyphenate titles where appropriate, but abbreviate without hyphens.

We do not use gender-specific job titles. For example, people who act are actors.

Examples

- ✓ The retired professor gave us his views.
- ✓ The Emeritus Professor gave us her views.

- ✗ The Chef prepared food for the students.
- ✗ The authoress spoke to students.

Exceptions

Titles of awards, such as "Best Actress".

Organisation names

If in doubt about how to spell an organisation's name, check their website.

Organisation names do not need to mirror the company logo, for example, O2 (no superscript) and Eat (not eat).

Postnominals

Include postnominals (for example, "KCB") on formal letters/communications, but not in wider communications.

Remember that you don't need to list all postnominals, just the ones that are relevant to your message.

Our preferred order for postnominals is:

- civil honours
- military honours
- QC (Queen's Council)
- degrees, in the order bachelor's, master's, doctorates, and postdoctoral
- diplomas
- certificates
- membership of academic or professional bodies.

Pronouns

We prefer gender-neutral pronouns, which means we try to use "they" instead of "he/she".

If you're writing a message for other people, particularly online, try to address the audience directly and inclusively, using words such as "you", "we" and "our".

See also: writing for inclusion

Examples

⊘ You can meet our academics during the University's Open Day.

⊘ A Reading student can expect to receive plenty of support on their course.

⊗ Attendees can meet University academics at Reading's Open Day.

⊗ A Reading student can expect to receive plenty of support on his or her course.

Titles

Use the full title on first mention (for example, "Sir Ian McKellen and Dame Judi Dench"), and thereafter use the shortened version ("Sir Ian and Dame Judi").

Include postnominals (for example, "KCB") on formal letters/communications, but not in wider communications.

For further guidance on title protocol and forms of address, please refer to the Debrett's website.

Use an abbreviated salutation only if it is common outside a university context. Write Dr Smith (because Dr is common outside a university context, and because we wouldn't write it out in full) but Professor Singh (rather than Prof Singh).

Exceptions

A shortened version of "Professor" could be included on Twitter due to limited character count.

⊘ Prof Smith (on Twitter only)

⊘ Dr Jones

See also: postnominals

Qualifications

Follow our standard style for abbreviations when abbreviating qualifications.

For specific qualifications, please see our A-Z guide.

University name

We refer to the University as "the University of Reading", not "The University of Reading" or "Reading University". After the first

instance this may be shortened to "University". Note the upper case "U".

When referring to universities in general, the word should be lower case.

We also avoid "UoR", except on social media.

To avoid ambiguity in "Reading" being misread as "reading", (for example, "reading a book", particularly in an international context), the University uses "at Reading". For example, "Study history at Reading". This should be used in preference to starting a sentence with "Reading". Rather than "Reading gave me the opportunity to…" use, "At Reading, I was given the opportunity to…"

Examples

- ⊘ At the University of Reading we pride ourselves on the quality of our research.
- ⊘ The University is situated close to the town centre.
- ⊘ Ranked in the top 200 universities in the world.

- ⊗ The University of Reading (unless at the start of a sentence), Reading University, Reading Uni, or UoR (unless on social media).

See also: social media

5. Numbers

General rule

We spell out numbers from one to nine, and use numerals for 10 and above. For example, "You can choose from three courses," and "The course is ranked in the top 10 in the UK." The exceptions to this rule are measurements, statistics and building signage.

Use commas for numbers in excess of 1,000; for example, "The University employs more than 4,000 staff."

Spell out "million", "billion" and "trillion" except when referring to sums of money, units, or inanimate objects – in these instances, use abbreviations ("m", "bn" and "tn", with no space between the figure and the abbreviation). For example, we would say, "There are seven billion people on the planet", but "This year's research funding is in excess of £54m."

Our preference is to write "first" not "1st"; for example, "first-floor corridor," or "in the second year". However, in some cases the "1st" form may be more appropriate, such as in building signage ("4th Floor") or in statistics ("ranked 1st for research").

Use hyphenated words for compound terms with numerals: "first-year undergraduate" and "two-year-old child". Ensure your hyphens convey the correct meaning; for example, four year-old children has a different meaning to four-year-old children.

See also: money

Dates and date ranges

Our preferred date format is: 1 January 2019.

We do not use superscript or commas when writing dates.

For date ranges, use the minimum number of digits to avoid ambiguity.

Use figures for decades (for example, '60s instead of sixties; see apostrophes for further guidance) and, when it's necessary, always include a space between the year and the designation (AD, BC). AD is placed before the year, BC after it.

For academic and financial years, we typically use a forward slash after the full year followed by the last two digits of second year. For example, 2018/19.

For calendar years, we use an en-dash instead of a forward slash. For example, 2018–19.

Examples

✓ Christmas Eve is on 24 December.

✓ Elizabeth I reigned throughout 1558–1603.

✓ The Second World War took place during 1939–45.

✓ You will join us for academic year 2018/19.

✓ Our work focuses on music during the '60s.

✓ The Roman invasion of Britain began in AD 43.

⊗ Christmas Eve is on 24th December.

⊗ Elizabeth I reigned throughout 1558–03

⊗ The Second World War took place during 1939–1945

⊗ You will join us for academic year 2016–17.

⊗ Our work focuses on music during the sixties.

⊗ The Roman invasion of Britain began in 43AD.

See also: dashes and apostrophes

Units of measurement

We use the metric system for units of measurement.

Length/distance is measured in kilometres (km), metres (m), centimetres (cm) and millimetres (mm), although miles are also commonly used, and acceptable.

Volume is measured in litres and millilitres (ml).

Mass/weight is measured in kilogrammes (kg) and grams (g).

You can write out the full unit of measurement or its abbreviation, but be consistent if you're writing out a series of measurements.

Temperature

Our preferred temperature format is: 2°C, which in this example indicates a temperature of two degrees Celsius. However, writing out the temperature in full ("two degrees Celsius") is also acceptable.

Percentages

Numbers and the % symbol should be used for percentages. Always use the symbol in headlines.

If you need to spell out the word, use "per cent" instead of "percent".

Examples

✓ The Research Excellence Framework 2014 confirms that 98% of University of Reading research is internationally recognised.

⊗ The NSS survey found an 83 percent overall satisfaction.

Money

Use the British pound sterling symbol only when figures are used. Use commas to break up figures in excess of 1,000.

Spell out "million", "billion" and "trillion" except when referring to sums of money, units, or inanimate objects – in these instances, use abbreviations ("m", "bn" and "tn", with no space after the figure). For example, we would say, "There are seven billion people on the planet", but "This year's research funding is in excess of £54m."

Examples

✔ The new building will be worth £15m.

✔ Undergraduate fees are £9,250 each year.

✘ We aim to raise £300million in funding.

✘ The cost of the trip will be fifty £.

✘ We need to raise £100000.

Telephone numbers

We always use international and area codes, and include spaces between the two codes and phone number. The phone number itself includes spaces after the third and sixth digits.

✔ +44 (0) 118 987 5123

✘ 0118 987 5123

✘ +44(0)1189875123

Time

Times should be written numerically and formatted with colons. We do not use "o'clock". We use the 24-hour clock as it is more widely understood by an international audience and avoids ambiguity.

For time spans (for example, an event that runs from 10:00 until 11:00) we would use an en-dash and no spaces around the punctuation.

Examples

✔ You can arrive on campus from 14:00.

✔ Rehearsals on Thursday, 13:00–15:00.

✘ You can arrive from three o'clock onwards.

✘ The event takes place at 4 pm.

✘ Meet us at 1.00pm.

✘ The graduation ceremony takes place at 11.00.

Time duration

Use minutes when a time period is less than two hours. For longer spans of time, use "4 hours 30 minutes".

Examples

✔ 90 minutes

✔ 2 hours 15 minutes

6. Punctuation

Ampersands

We typically insert a space either side of the ampersand symbol.

With some exceptions, we avoid using ampersands in copy, course titles and module names, as well as department names and research themes. Check the A-Z guide if you're unsure about a specific department name.

If a company uses an ampersand in its name, write it with an ampersand.

Examples

- ✓ Our BA Film and Theatre combines critical approaches and the opportunity to create films and performances.
- ✓ Our new research themes include health, environment, and heritage & creativity.
- ✓ Students go on to roles in companies such as Marks & Spencer and Johnson & Johnson.

- ✗ I am interested in studying BSc Mathematics & Psychology.
- ✗ She started her career at Marks and Spencer.

Apostrophes

Apostrophes have two functions.

1. To indicate missing letters. For example, "did not" becomes "didn't", and "would not" becomes "wouldn't". See also: contractions.

2. To indicate possessives. Note: when a word ending in "s" is a singular possessive, the apostrophe goes at the end followed by an extra "s". For example, you'd write "James's book" but "parents' evening".

Abbreviations use apostrophes in the normal way when denoting a possessive.

- ✓ The MD's speech.
- ✓ MPs' expenses.

However, it is a common mistake to use an apostrophe on pluralised abbreviations.

- ✗ I have those CD's you asked for.
- ✗ Several MPs' were present.

When writing about decades, apostrophes are only necessary when abbreviating the decade or indicating a possessive.

- ✓ *Star Wars* was released in the 1970s.
- ✓ *Star Wars* was released in the '70s.
- ✓ 1970s' fashions are making a comeback.
- ✓ '70s' fashions are making a comeback.

- ✗ *Star Wars* was released in the 1970's.
- ✗ *Star Wars* was released in the 70s.

See also: apostrophes, contractions

Examples

- ✓ The Vice-Chancellor's presentation.
- ✓ Get your supervisor's opinion.
- ✓ James's book.
- ✓ Parents' evening.
- ✓ The 1960s' fashions were even more bizarre than the '70s' styles.
- ✓ Beginner's Spanish.

Exceptions

There are two exceptions to these rules:

1. its/it's

The Grammarist gives useful advice on [its vs it's](#):

"Its, without an apostrophe, is the possessive of the pronoun "it". "It's", with an apostrophe, is a contraction of "it is" or "it has". If you're not sure which spelling to use, try replacing it with "it is" or "it has". If neither of those phrases works in its place, then "its" is the word you're looking for."

2. Plurals

Words that are just plural (not possessive) never have an apostrophe; for example, "We bought some books," and "Recycle your bottles here."

Brackets

Parentheses (commonly called round brackets) often take the place of a pair of commas or dashes; for example: "The research institute (located on our Whiteknights campus) carries out research in a number of areas."

If you're using other punctuation with brackets, these will typically fall outside the bracket. For example, "The event is at the University of Reading (Whiteknights campus)." The punctuation falls within the brackets when it is part of the quoted text.

Bulleted and numbered lists

Bulleted lists can be used to break up information while numbered lists should be used when information needs to be presented in a particular order.

If each item in a bulleted or numbered list is a full sentence they should start with a capital letter and end with a full stop. If each item in the list is not a full sentence, they should start with a lower-case letter. The last item in a list should have a full stop at the end. We avoid the use of semi-colons in lists.

- Lists should only be preceded with a colon if each list item is not a full sentence.
- Lists should be treated as distinct items, with preceding text/headings giving context.
- Lists should primarily be used to provide users/readers with options or a choice.

Examples

⊘ You can choose from the following flavours:
- vanilla
- strawberry
- chocolate.

⊗ When I go on holiday I like to:
- go skiing.
- eat too much ice cream.

⊗ You can choose from:
- vanilla,
- strawberry,
- and chocolate.

Colons and semi-colons

Colons

Use colons between two sentences, or parts of sentences, where the first introduces a proposition that is resolved by the second; for example, "The University has five research themes: environment, food, health, heritage & creativity, and prosperity & resilience."

We don't use a capital letter after a colon except if what follows is a full sentence or a proper noun.

A colon, rather than a comma, should be used to introduce a quotation or to precede a list (see also: [quotations and quotation marks](#)).

Examples

> ✓ John said: "He was an expert on punctuation."
>
> ✓ He was an expert on the following: the colon, the comma, and the full stop.

> ✗ John said, "He was an expert on punctuation."
>
> ✗ He was an expert on the following, the colon, the comma, and the full stop.
>
> ✗ He was an expert on the following: The colon, the comma, and the full stop.

Semi-colons

Use a semi-colon to connect two separate but related sentences. For example: "*The Oatmeal* has really helpful guidance on semi-colons; you can find it online." In this example, you could replace the semi-colon with "and", or a full stop, and it would still be correct – but a semi-colon is more effective.

A semi-colon can replace a full stop, but shouldn't replace a comma.

Examples

> ✓ It's summertime; everyone is on holiday.
>
> ✓ I like tea with milk well enough, but not with sugar.

> ✗ I like tea with milk well enough; but not with sugar.

Commas

You only need to insert a comma before the final "and" in lists of three or more items – known as an Oxford comma – if it will make the list clearer for the reader. For example, if an item on your list already contains the word "and".

Examples

> ✓ Our shop sells cake, ice cream and biscuits.
>
> ✓ Sandwiches include ham and cheese, cheese and pickle, and bacon, lettuce and tomato.

> ✗ Breakfasts include porridge, full English and toast and jam.

Dashes and hyphens

There are three types of dashes and hyphens:

- an em dash: —
- an en dash: –
- a hyphen: -

Dashes

As per the *Guardian*'s style guide, we prefer to use en dashes. These can add a touch of drama – like this. But they should be used sparingly. We do not use em dashes or hyphens for this purpose.

We will also use a pair of en dashes as an alternative to commas or round brackets to draw readers' attention to something.

Beware sentences – such as this one – that dash about all over the place – commas (or even, very occasionally, round brackets) are often better; semi-colons also have their uses.

A single dash can be used to introduce explanation, amplification, or correction of what has gone before.

Dashes should not be used as hyphens.

Examples

- ⊘ Our Whiteknights campus – set in 130 hectares of beautiful parkland – has won eight consecutive Green Flag awards.
- ⊘ Congratulations – we would like to offer you a place to study at Reading.

Hyphens

We use hyphens to avoid ambiguity; for example, four year-old children or four-year-old children.

Compound terms may be open, closed or hyphenated; for example: real estate, multidisciplinary, world-leading research. There is often not a set rule for these but it is important to be consistent in use. See our [A–Z guide](#) for specific examples.

We also typically use hyphens to avoid letter clashes that make pronunciation or reading difficult, especially with identical vowels (see our [A-Z guide](#) for exceptions). For example, we would say re-engineer instead of reengineer, and pre-date instead of predate.

Hyphens are also used for compound modifiers and noun phrases when they qualify another noun; for example, "triple-accredited business school" and "term-time teaching."

Note that these terms are not hyphenated if they follow a noun. For example, "teaching in term time" and "the records are not up to date." Modifiers comprising an adverb and adjective are also not

hyphenated; for example, "highly qualified staff," and "extremely advanced technology."

Decimals

Decimals should be written as a full stop, and the number of decimal places used should be consistent within a list or context. For example, in marketing materials our convention is to round down (if between .1 and .4) or up (if between .5 to .9) to the nearest whole number when referencing key statistics, such as the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education survey results.

Ellipses

Ellipses should always be precisely three dots with no spaces in between them. There should, however, be a space on either side of an ellipsis.

- ⊘ "To be, or not to be … "

Exclamation marks

Use sparingly in less formal text.

Never use in formal documents or headlines.

Examples

- ⊘ Find out what makes our Open Days so great that 99% of our visitors rated them as "good" or "excellent"!

- ⊗ We have opened a brand new research centre!

Footnotes

Use footnotes to reference sources of information that qualify or back up a statement or statistic.

Use superscript font when inserting footnote numerals into body copy. The corresponding footnote below the body copy should start with a capital letter and end with a full stop.

We insert footnote numerals after the punctuation only when the footnote refers to an entire sentence.

> ⊘ Henley Business School, the University of Reading's hub of business expertise, is among the top-ranked business schools in Europe.[1]

When referencing multiple sources within the same sentence, put the each index numeral immediately after its respective piece of text, even before the punctuation.

> ⊘ We are ranked in the top 10 in the UK for Accounting and Finance[1] and our student satisfaction ratings across all areas are 85-94%[2].

Footnotes online follow the same principles, and the corresponding references should be found at the end of the relevant section's body copy. However, if referencing another webpage or other online source, then simply insert a hyperlink with a relevant description (see also: hyperlinks and using descriptive links).

Remember, this rule does not apply to academic work, and you should check with your University department for specific academic preferences. For more information, see the Library's guide on citing references.

See also: Statistics and referencing

Full stops

Every sentence should end with a full stop, unless it's replaced by a question mark or exclamation point, or is followed by an ellipsis.

We use single spaces after full stops.

Question marks

We only use question marks at the end of a direct question; for example, "Do you want to visit the London Road campus?" but not, "I asked her if she wanted to visit the London Road campus?"

Quotations and quotation marks

Only make changes to quotations to correct typos. If you need to shorten a quotation, use an ellipsis, but it should not change the meaning of the text.

Use double quotation marks for direct speech or to highlight a particular phrase or term within a sentence. Single quotation marks should only be used for a quotation within a quotation or speech.

> ⊘ "I remember the moment the lecturer said, 'You've passed!'"

For quotations that are complete sentences, punctuation falls before the quotation marks.

> ⊘ He said: "I'm part of the Content Team."

If the quotation is only part of a sentence, punctuation falls after the quotation marks.

> ⊘ According to one student, the campus is "green and beautiful".

Use a colon when introducing quotations from people, unless embedded in a sentence.

⊘ A spokesperson said: "This is a university."

If a quotation runs across more than one paragraph, insert opening quotation marks at the beginning of each paragraph and only insert a closing quotation mark at the end of the final quoted paragraph.

⊘ "I feel honoured and privileged to have served the University of Reading as Chancellor for the past 10 years.

"The highlight of my tenure was presiding over the opening of the fabulous new University campus in Malaysia."

See also: ellipses

Slashes

Slashes should only be used in prose to distinguish between two alternatives when the alternatives can be described with one word each.

Academic years use slashes while financial years should use dashes.

See also: date ranges

Examples

⊘ If you are taking a BA/BSc, you can…
⊘ Fees for the 2017/18 year are included in the 2018/19 accounts.

⊗ If you are Scottish/Northern Irish, you can…
⊗ Modules for the year 1819.

7. Spelling

British English

We typically use British spellings and not American.

Examples include "colour" (not "color"), "travelling" (not "traveling") and "centre" (not "center"). However, American proper nouns, such as Department of Defense, Labor Day and World Health Organization, should use US spellings. You should also not alter American spellings if quoting from an American text.

Use -ise verb endings in preference to -ize ones. Even though -ize isn't just an Americanism and -ize is often also correct, our audiences tend to expect -ise because we are a British university.

We prefer not use irregular British conjugations (for example, use "burned", not "burnt", "learned", not "learnt", and "dreamed", not "dreamt"), but if you prefer to use "-t" instead of "-ed" words, it's fine as long as you're consistent.

Examples

⊘ The students organised a charity collection in the town centre.
⊘ I burned my hand.
⊘ The International Office organised a Labor Day celebration for American students.

⊗ Some students choose to go traveling after graduation.
⊗ We learnt a lot about food hygiene.
⊗ The history students studied the attack on Pearl Harbour.

Latin terms

Avoid Latin terms (for example: "etc", "eg", "ie", "per se" and "per annum") abbreviated or otherwise.

If there is an unusual example when using a Latin term is unavoidable, do not use a full stop after an abbreviation.

Examples

✓ We offer a wide range of subjects, including English, agriculture and maths.

✗ We offer a wide range of subjects, e.g. English, agriculture and maths.

Exceptions

The common exception is "CV". We also make exceptions for titles like "Emeritus" and talk of "ad hominem degrees". "Alumni" can be used when referring to Alumni Office, but use "graduate" to refer to a former student who has completed their study here.

Trademarks

Use a generic alternative unless there is a very good reason not to.

Examples

✓ photocopy

✗ Xerox

8. Statistics and referencing

Statistics have an important place in our communications and copy – they complement our direct and confident tone of voice with demonstrable evidence.

Statistics should always be consistently sourced, either as part of the copy or in a footnote.

Write out the source name in full, include an abbreviation in parentheses if appropriate, and always include the year. A comma should be inserted ahead of the year, and if your source requires further clarification, add a second comma after the year and write out the clarification in full.

Examples

✓ Research Excellence Framework, 2014.
✓ Destination of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey, 2016/17, based on first degree leaver respondents.
✓ QS World University Rankings, 2019.
✓ QS World University Rankings by Subject, 2019.
✓ *Guardian* University Guide, 2019.
✓ National Student Survey, 2018.
✓ Complete University Guide, 2020.
✓ *The Times* and *The Sunday Times* Good University Guide, 2019.

✗ REF.
✗ QS 2019.
✗ *Guardian* University Guide 2019.

See also: Footnotes

9. Social media, web terms and usages

This section of the style guide is intended for people who write content for our websites and social media accounts. It includes terms that may not be familiar to you. If anything is unclear, please email content@reading.ac.uk.

Alt text for images

When uploading an image to one of the University's content management systems, you will need to fill in an alt text or description field.

Alt text is useful for search engine optimisation (SEO) purposes and improves the accessibility of our websites. For example, users with visual impairments may use screen-readers that pick up alt text and read this information aloud. Therefore, alt text should be included on all images.

Alt text should describe what you can see in the image. The description should be detailed enough so that users who don't see the image receive the same information as those who do.

If you're sharing a chart or graph, include the data in the alt text so that people have all the important information.

Avoid directional language

Do not use directional instructions or any language that refers to the layout or design of the page. This is because the layout of the page may be different depending on the user's device or browser window size, or if they are using a screen-reader.

If you want to direct a user to something else on the page, use an anchor link. If you want a user to click a link, include it in the same body of text, rather than telling the user to go somewhere specifically on the page.

✓ We regularly run many events. See the full list of upcoming events at the University of Reading.

✓ Register your interest by filling in the form [anchor link to form further down the page].

✖ We regularly run many events. Click on the link in the blue sidebar on the right to see a full list of upcoming events.

✖ Register your interest by filling in the form at the bottom-left of the page.

Email addresses

Email is written as one word, no hyphen, and lower case unless it's the start of a sentence.

University email addresses should be written in lower case with the domain name in full.

Examples

✓ j.smith@reading.ac.uk

✖ E-mail J.Smith@rdg.ac. uk

Hashtags

We usually use "UoR" when using a hashtag referring to the University ("#givingtoUoR" rather than "#giving"). We try to use hashtags as part of natural sentence construction instead of just inserting them at the end or beginning of a post.

Try not to use anything too generic such as "#GetReady" ("#GetReadyForUoR" is better). This avoids potential confusion with hashtags separate to the University.

Examples

- ⊘ It's a beautiful day on the #UoR campus
- ⊘ Our Student Ambassadors are ready to welcome you to #UoROpenDay

- ⊗ It's a beautiful day on campus #UoR #beautiful #grass #sunny #day #summer #warmth
- ⊗ Our Student Ambassadors are ready to welcome you #OpenDay

Hyperlinks and using descriptive links

Use links to point users to relevant content and trusted external resources. The text of a link should always be descriptive of the link's destination to inform users and aid those using screen-readers.

Do not use "Click here", "Click for more information", "Read this", or insert the URL link text as it is. Instead, write the sentence as you normally would, and link the relevant keywords (not the whole sentence).

Use the actual URL (for example, www.reading.ac.uk) when writing University web addresses in print material or when a user is not able to click on the link. Omit the "http://" unless it is needed for the link to work. We write URLs for print in bold, not underlined.

If a link comes at the end of a sentence or before a comma, don't link the punctuation mark.

Examples

- ⊘ See the Staff Portal website for more details.
- ⊘ Find more information for international students on our website at **www.reading.ac.uk/international**.

- ⊗ Read this for details.
- ⊗ Click here for details.
- ⊗ Click on http://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/staffportal/sp-index.aspx

Social media

At times, you may not be able to follow all of our style rules due to space and design constraints within certain social media platforms. In general, try to be as clear and consistent as possible when adapting your messages for social media.

For expert social media guidance, contact the University's Social Media Manager at socialmedia@reading.ac.uk.

Structuring your web content

You should order your content on the page by importance, with the most important content appearing first.

Use HTML headings (H1, H2, H3 and so on) to break up your content into smaller, more specific sections. This enhances the readability of your page and enables scan-reading by creating clear signposts for the user.

The numbering denotes the importance of a heading (H1 is the most important, whereas H6 is the least important).

An H1 heading should always be the page title. Use H2s for sub-sections and H3 and below for headings that come under these sub-sections.

See also: pronouns, job titles

10. Writing for inclusion

Ensure that you write in a way that doesn't exclude particular individuals or groups. Exclusion can sometimes happen when there's an assumption about what's considered normal or default, or if people are referred to solely by their disability, race, gender or sexual orientation.

- ⊗ If you are able to send a primary school teacher to hold a workshop, we'll ensure her expenses are paid in full. (This presumes that all primary school teachers are women.)
- ⊗ The event is for teaching staff and for normal staff. (This makes teaching staff sound abnormal.)
- ⊗ 3% of our applicants are epileptics. (Referring to people by their disability can make them feel less of a person.)

You can write inclusively by recognising that such writing can make people feel less important, excluded, stereotyped or stigmatised. Better ways of writing the above sentences include:

- ⊘ If you are able to send a primary school teacher to hold a workshop, we'll ensure their expenses are paid in full.
- ⊘ If you are able to send a primary school teacher to hold a workshop, we'll cover all incurred expenses.
- ⊘ The event is for academic and professional staff.
- ⊘ The event is for all staff.
- ⊘ 3% of our applicants have epilepsy.
- ⊘ 3% of our applicants are people with epilepsy.

A–Z GUIDE

Use this section to find our preferred spelling or style for specific words and acronyms.

Use the *Guardian* style guide for any words you can't find in this document.

3sixty bar

Note the lack of capitals.

A level

No hyphen, note lower case "l". Use AS level and A2 level to differentiate between one- and two-year qualifications.

AACSB

Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business.

ACCA

Association of Chartered Certified Accountants.

accommodation

Often misspelled. Use when referring to all University accommodation. If referring to a specific hall, use that building's full name.

Agriculture Building

Note the capitals.

AHRC

Arts and Humanities Research Council.

alumni

Avoid, unless referring to the Alumni Office at the University of Reading. Refer to former students as graduates.

Allen Laboratory

Note the capitals.

AMBA

Association of MBAs.

AMS Tower

Note the capitals.

anniversaries

Anniversaries follow our general rule about numbers: spell out numbers from one to nine, and use numerals for 10 and above. For example, "The University celebrated its 90th anniversary in 2016."

ARC

Academic Resource Centre, associated with Henley Business School.

Archaeology Building

Note the capitals.

Archway Lodge

Note the capitals.

are/is

We use "is" with singular subjects and "are" with plural subjects. Collective nouns usually take "is" (for example, "The Content Team is working on the style guide") but if this sounds awkward you can

use "are" by highlighting the group's individuals. For example, you could say, "Content Team members are working on the style guide."

Exceptions to this rule include bands and sports teams. For example, "Reading FC are playing Saturday."

ASSET

ASSET refers to a Jisc-funded project, led by the University of Reading, which successfully piloted the use of video for providing feedback to students on their coursework. The project is now completed but further information on the project can be found at www.reading.ac.uk/videofeedback.

BA

Bachelor of Arts.

bachelor's

Note the lower-case "b" and the apostrophe. The plural of this is "bachelor's degrees". The term "undergraduate" may be preferable in some uses, for example, "we offer a variety of undergraduate courses".

When making a specific reference to one of our courses, simply use the official name of the course. Also use this if referring to a degree as part of someone's title.

In biographies or news stories where we are describing someone's educational background, use the generic term along with the subject studied.

Examples

- ⊘ I have a bachelor's degree.
- ⊘ My parents have bachelor's degrees.
- ⊘ Our BSc Construction Management is a popular course.

- ⊘ Joe Bloggs, BSc Human Geography.
- ⊘ He holds a bachelor's degree in politics from the University of Reading.

- ⊗ He was awarded bachelors' degrees in Chemistry and Statistics.
- ⊗ You can choose from a variety of bachelors degrees.
- ⊗ Our Bachelor's Degree in Fine Art is award-winning.

BBSRC

Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council.

BCA

Berkshire College of Agriculture.

BEng

Bachelor of Engineering.

Blackboard Learn

Blackboard Learn is the University's virtual learning environment. We write it with initial capitals.

Blandford's

Restaurant at Park House.

Blandford Lodge

Note the capitals.

British English

We use British spellings not American. For example, use -ise not -ize spellings: organise, recognise, specialise. Other examples: adviser not advisor; colour, not color. It may be useful to check your

computer is set to use the English (UK) dictionary in Microsoft Office applications. If you are unsure how to do this contact the University IT helpdesk.

BSc

Bachelor of Science.

BTEC

Business & Technology Education Council. The organisation no longer exists but the acronym is used in the qualification, for example, BTEC National Diploma.

BUCS

British Universities & Colleges Sport. Previously known as British Universities Sports Association (BUSA).

building

Only capitalise in the full name of a building; for example, Agriculture Building, Archaeology Building.

We don't use initial capitals on halls, hall or halls of residence. Only use initial caps when referring to the halls by name.

Examples

- ✓ The Meteorology Building is on Whiteknights campus.
- ✓ You will make lots of friends in your halls of residence.
- ✓ Wantage Hall is catered whereas St George's Hall is self-catered.

- ✗ The agriculture building is located on the Whiteknights campus.
- ✗ Many undergraduates choose to live in Halls during their first year.

CAF

Chemical Analysis Facility.

cafe

Not "café" unless part of an official name.

Café Index

Note the capitals and accent over the "e".

Café Libro

Note the capitals and accent over the "e".

campus

We don't capitalise this; for example, "We are located at the Whiteknights campus," and "All lectures are held on our campus."

Campus Central

Shop on Whiteknights campus. Note the capitals.

Careers Centre

Note the capitals.

Carrington

Note the capital.

CAS

Centre for Agricultural Strategy.

CEAS

Centre for Euro-Asian Studies.

Cedars Hotel and Conference Centre

Note the capitals.

CeLM

Centre for Literacy and Multilingualism. Note the lower case "e".

Central Kitchen

Note the capitals.

Centre for Agricultural Strategy

Note the capitals.

Centre for Agri-Environmental Research

Note the capitals.

Centre for Entrepreneurship

Note the capitals.

Centre for Integrative Neuroscience and Neurodynamics

Note the capitals. Often abbreviated to "CINN".

century

We write centuries in words (lower case) rather than in numbers. For example, "in the twenty-first century" and "in the nineteenth century". When used adjectively, the century should be hyphenated as an adjectival phrase; for example, "twenty-first-century book" and "nineteenth-century poetry".

Exceptions

Abbreviate when the character count is restricted, such as in headlines and on social media.

CETL

Centre of Excellence in Teaching and Learning.

CETL-AURS

Centre for Excellence in Applied Undergraduate Research Skills.

CFA

Chartered Financial Analyst.

Chancellor

Always capitalise when referring to the Chancellor of the University.

Chancellor's Building

Note the apostrophe and capitals.

Chaplaincy Centre

Note the capitals.

Charlie Waller Institute

Note the capitals.

Chemical Analysis Facility

Note the capitals.

Chemistry and Pharmacy Building

Note the capitals.

CIM

Chartered Institute of Marketing.

CINN

Centre for Integrative Neuroscience and Neurodynamics.

CIP

Centre for Institutional Performance.

CIPD

Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development.

CISI

Chartered Institute for Securities & Investment.

Cole Museum of Zoology

Note the capitals.

Convenor

Not "convener".

Council

Always capitalise when referring to the executive governing body of the University of Reading. When referring to any other council, such as a local authority, capitalise only when using the full name of the authority.

Examples

- ⊘ There are four external members of the Council.
- ⊘ Planning applications are handled by Reading Borough Council. You can apply via the council's website at www.reading.gov.uk.

Counselling and Wellbeing Team

Note the capitals.

course

We refer to our degrees as courses when communicating with external audiences, such as prospective students and applicants, as they are more familiar with this term.

When addressing an internal audience, such as current students, use the term "programme".

See also: degree

CPD

Continuing Professional Development.

CPE

Certificate of Proficiency in English. Usually referred to as the Cambridge English: Proficiency (CPE).

CREPR

Centre for Real Estate and Planning Research.

cross-

Usually hyphenated as a prefix; for example, cross-curricular, cross-disciplinary.

CQSD

Centre for Quality Support and Development.

DBA

Doctor of Business Administration.

degree

Lower case; for example, "We offer three undergraduate degrees," and "She achieved a first in her degree." Exceptions to this would be

a specific reference to a type of degree; for example, "We offer a Foundation Degree in Art."

We use "degree" to refer to the qualification a student receives upon successfully completing one of our degree courses or programmes.

See also: course

degree classifications

Avoid numerals when referring to degree classifications. We prefer:

- first-class honours
- upper second-class honours
- lower second-class honours
- third-class honours
- ordinary degree.

Examples

✓ I have a first-class honours degree.

✗ She got a 3rd in English.

Exceptions

Where space is limited, it is acceptable to use abbreviated terms such as "2:1".

department

We use lower case for departments, except when referring to specific units.

When discussing a particular department, in the first instance refer to the department name in full, and thereafter as "the Department".

Examples

✓ Courses are run by a number of departments.
✓ The Department of Meteorology is a world leader.

✗ Interdisciplinary research takes place across a number of Schools and Departments.

Department of Art

Note the capitals.

Department of Chemistry

Note the capitals.

Department of Classics

Note the capitals.

Department of Clinical Language Sciences

Note the capitals.

Department of Computer Science

Note the capitals.

Department of Economics

Note the capitals.

Department of English Language and Applied Linguistics

Note the capitals.

Department of English Literature

Note the capitals.

Department of Film, Theatre & Television

Note the capitals, comma and ampersand.

Department of Food Economics and Marketing

Note the capitals.

Department of Food and Nutritional Science

Note the capitals.

Department of Modern Languages and European Studies

Note the capitals.

Department of History

Note the capitals.

Department of Mathematics and Statistics

Note the capitals.

Department of Meteorology

Note the capitals.

Department of Philosophy

Note the capitals.

Department of Typography & Graphic Communication

Note the capitals and ampersand.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor

Note capitals and hyphen.

Disability Advisory Service

Note the capitals.

Dol.cHe Vita

Note the full stop and capitals. Use "Dolche Vita" in body text.

Donor Day

Only use initial capitals when referring to a specific day; if referring to donor days in general use lower case.

EAP

English for Academic Purposes.

Eat

Brand name of the University's catering outlets. This should be written with an initial capital in body text; it is lower case only in the logo.

EB

European Baccalaureate.

Edith Morley

Formerly HumSS.

EFL

English as a Foreign Language.

e.g.

We do not use Latin abbreviations. Use something like "for example" or "such as" instead.

email

One word, no hyphen. University email addresses should be written with the domain name in full, using all lower-case letters: j.smith@reading.ac.uk.

EMLab

Electron Microscopy Laboratory.

Emeritus Professor

A professor who has retired but retains an honorary title.

Engage

Engage is an interactive research resource for bioscience students. It is a project created by Centre for Excellence in Applied Undergraduate Research Skills (CETL-AURS).

Engineering Building

Note the capitals.

Environmental Systems Science Centre

Note the capitals. Often abbreviated to "ESSC".

EPSRC

Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council.

EQUIS

European Quality Improvement System.

Erasmus

European Region Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students. Rarely spelled out. Note the acronym is not written with all capital letters. It should always have an initial capital; for example, "I have a place on the Erasmus programme."

ESRC

Economic and Social Research Council.

Estate and Facilities Building

Note the capitals.

etc.

We do not use Latin abbreviations. Use something like "and so on" instead.

extra-curricular

Note the hyphen.

Food Biosciences Building

Renamed "Harry Nursten".

Foxhill House

Note the capitals.

Freshers' Week

Avoid. We use the term Welcome Week.

full-time/full time

We hyphenate when this is used as a compound adjective; for example, "I'm studying a full-time course," but "The football team were 1-0 at full time."

fundraising

One word.

government

Lower case even when referring to the particular people in office.

graduand/graduate

Lower case. Graduand: a person who has passed but has not yet received their degree. Graduate: a person who has received a degree.

Graduate Institute of International Development, Agriculture and Economics

Often abbreviated to "GIIDAE".

Graduate Institute of Political and International Studies

Often abbreviated to "GIPIS".

Graduate School

Note the capitals.

graduation

Lower case unless referring to a specific event; for example, "There are several graduation ceremonies throughout the year," and "The Graduation Ceremony will be held on 19 July 2019."

groundbreaking

One word.

halls

We don't use initial caps on halls, hall or halls of residence; for example, "Students should apply early for a place in halls" and "Our halls of residence are available to all students." Only use initial cap when referring to the halls by name; for example, "Wantage Hall is catered whereas St George's Hall is self-catered."

Halls Hotline

Note the capitals.

Harborne

Note the capitals.

Harry Pitt

Note the capitals.

Harry Nursten

Formerly the Food Biosciences Building.

HBS

Harvard Business School. Note that this should not be used for Henley Business School at the University of Reading.

HCCM

Henley Centre for Customer Management.

HCI

Heritage & Creativity Institute. Note the ampersand.

Health and Dental Centre

Note the capitals.

HEFCE

Higher Education Funding Council for England.

HEI

Higher Education Institution.

helpdesk

One word. For example, "the IT helpdesk" and "the student helpdesk".

Henley Business School

Refer to it as Henley Business School. After the first instance, "Henley" or "the Business School" can be used.

Avoid HBS as it is the accepted acronym for Harvard Business School.

If you need to make a distinction between campuses, use Henley Business School, Greenlands campus or Henley Business School, Whiteknights campus.

Examples

✔ Henley Business School is ranked in the top 30 business schools in the world.

✔ The Henley Executive MBA programme is taught at the Greenlands campus.

✘ HBS offers a wide range of business courses.

Hons

With honours. Usually written: (Hons). For example, "BA (Hons)" but we never use "Hons" in our course titles.

Examples

✔ BA English Literature.

✘ BA (Hons) English Literature.

Hopkins

Note the capitals.

HumSS

Renamed "Edith Morley".

IB

International Baccalaureate.

ICAEW

Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales.

ICMA

International Capital Market Association.

ICMA Centre

International Capital Market Association Centre. Use ICMA Centre, not ICMAC.

ICMR

Institute for Cardiovascular and Metabolic Research.

ICRC

Innovative Construction Research Centre. Not to be confused with the International Committee of the Red Cross.

ICS

Institute of Chartered Shipbrokers.

i.e.

We do not use Latin abbreviations. Use something like "in other words" or "that is to say" instead.

IELTS

International English Language Testing System.

IFP

International Foundation Programme.

IMBA

International Master of Business Administration.

INCEIF

International Centre for Education in Islamic Finance.

Informatics Research Centre

Note the capitals.

Innovation Works

Note the capitals.

Institute for Cardiovascular and Metabolic Research

Note the capitals. Often abbreviated to "ICMR".

Institute of Education

Often abbreviated to "IoE".

Institution-Wide Language Programme

Often abbreviated to "IWLP".

inter-

Not hyphenated as a prefix; for example, interdisciplinary, intercultural.

International Foundation Programme

Often abbreviated to "IFP".

International Study and Language Institute

Often abbreviated to "ISLI".

internationally excellent

Research Excellence Framework classification.

IRC

Informatics Research Centre.

is/are

We use "is" with singular subjects and "are" with plural subjects. Collective nouns usually take "is" (for example, "The Content Team is working on the style guide") but if this sounds awkward you can use "are" by highlighting the group's individuals. For example, you could say, "Content Team members are working on the style guide."

Exceptions to this rule include bands and sports teams. For example, "Reading FC are playing Saturday."

-ise

We use -ise instead of -ize; for example, organised, not organized.

ISLI

International Study and Language Institute.

IT

Can refer to:

Information technology, a subject area.

IT, a team within the University; responsible for IT equipment and services on campus and provide support for these services and their users.

IT Service Desk

Note the capitals.

IWLP

Institution-Wide Language Programme.

-ize

We use -ise instead of -ize, for example, organised, not organized.

JJ Thompson

Note the capitals.

JMCR

The John Madejski Centre for Reputation.

job titles

When referring to a role generally, use lower case; for example, "She is a director," and "Our lecturers are engaged in a variety of research." When using a role as part of a person's title or to refer to a specific person in that role, use initial capitals; for example, "John Smith, Director of Admissions" and "The Vice-Chancellor gave a lecture."

Knight

Note the capital.

Knowledge Transfer Centre

Note the capitals.

Knowledge Transfer Partnership

Note the capitals.

KPI

key performance indicator.

KTC

Knowledge Transfer Centre.

KTP

Knowledge Transfer Partnership.

Library

Full name "University of Reading Library". After the first instance this can be shortened to "University Library" or "Library".

Lower case if referring to general libraries, such as a library of resources.

Little Learners Day Nursery

Note the capitals.

Little Owl Pre-School

Note the capitals and hyphen.

The Rt Hon. the Lord Waldegrave of North Hill

Chancellor of the University of Reading. We refer to him by his full title ("the Rt Hon. the Lord Waldegrave of North Hill") or as "Lord Waldegrave" (not "Lord William").

Lord Zuckerman Research Centre

Note the capitals.

MA

Master of Arts.

MA(Res)

Master of Arts by Research.

master's

Generally speaking, you write in lower case: "master's degree". Note the apostrophe. The plural of this is "master's degrees".

When making a specific reference to one of our courses, simply use the official name of the course. Also use this if referring to a degree as part of someone's title. In biographies or news stories where we are describing someone's educational background, use the degree title along with the subject studied.

Examples

- ⊘ Roberto has a master's degree.
- ⊘ We offer a wide range of master's degrees.
- ⊘ Our MA International Relations is taught by experts.
- ⊘ Joe Bloggs, MSc Food Science.
- ⊘ She holds a master's degree in plant diversity from the University of Reading.

- ⊗ The students went on to study masters' degrees in Art and History.
- ⊗ You can choose from a variety of masters degrees.
- ⊗ Our Master's Degree in Medieval Studies is award-winning.

Exceptions

Master of Business Administration.

- ⊘ He has an MBA.
- ⊘ She holds a Master of Business Administration.

- ⊗ He has a master's degree in Business Administration.

Mathematics and IT Services Building

Note the capitals.

MBA

Master of Business Administration.

MChem

Master of Chemistry.

MDes

Master of Design.

Meadow Suite

Note the capitals.

Medical Practice Team

Note the capitals.

MEng

Master of Engineering.

MEnvSci

Master of Environmental Science.

MERL

Museum of English Rural Life.

Meteorology Building

Note the capitals.

Miller

Note the capital.

Minghella Studios

Note the capitals.

MMath

Master of Mathematics.

MMet

Master of Meteorology.

MOD

Ministry of Defence. Note upper case "O".

modules

We use initial capitals for all important words in module names. You do not need to capitalise articles ("the", "an" and "a") except when they start a sentence.

Examples

⊘ Students on our Communications at Work module also undertake a short placement.

⊘ Optional modules include:
- Icons of Spain and Latin America
- The Making of Modern France
- Introduction to French Culture.

⊗ Optional modules include:
- Icons Of Spain And Latin America
- The making of modern france
- Introduction to French culture.

mortarboard

The square academic cap worn at graduation ceremonies.

MPhil

Master of Philosophy.

MRC

Medical Research Council.

MRes

Master of Research.

MSc

Master of Science.

MSc by Research

Master of Science by Research.

MSci

Master in Science; an integrated master's degree, usually lasting four years, where the first three years are similar to a BSc course and the final year is at master's level.

multi

Not hyphenated as a prefix; for example: multicultural, multidiscipline, multidisciplinary, multicurricular.

Muslim Prayer Centre

Note the capitals.

My Jobs Online

Note the spaces and capitals.

National Centre for Biotechnology Education

Note the capitals.

National Centre for Earth Observation

Note the capitals.

NERC

Natural Environment Research Council.

NSS

National Student Survey.

Old Whiteknights House

Note the capitals.

Open Day

Only use initial capitals when referring to a specific day; if referring to open days in general use lower case.

Examples

- ✓ Come to our Open Day on 1 June.
- ✓ You are welcome to attend an open day.

- ✗ Have you registered to attend our open day?
- ✗ Come to our open day on 1 June.

Palmer

Note the capital.

Park House

Note the capitals.

Park House Lodge

Note the capitals.

Part

We often use "Part" when referring to sections of a programme. Should be written with an initial upper case letter; for example, "In Part 1, students will take three core modules." As this is not a commonly known term for prospective students, use "Year" in external-facing documents instead.

part-time/part time

We hyphenate when this is used as a compound adjective; for example, "I'm studying a part-time course," but "You can study this course part time."

PGCE

Postgraduate Certificate of Education. Note: This should not be confused with PGCert.

PGCert

Postgraduate Certificate. Note: This should not be confused with PGCE.

PGDip

Postgraduate Diploma.

PharmD

Doctor of Pharmacy.

PhD

Doctor of Philosophy. Use "DPhil" to refer to an Oxford PhD. For plural use, use "PhDs".

Philip Lyle

Note the capitals.

Polly Vacher

Formerly the Systems Engineering Building.

postdoctoral

One word.

postgraduate

One word, lower case. We do not use the "PG" abbreviation.

PRMIA

Professional Risk Managers' International Association.

program

We use program only as a computing term; for example, "This is a new computer program."

programme

We use programme internally to refer to a programme of study at the University; for example, "You may choose a variety of modules within your programme" and "The School offers several programmes in this subject area."

We refer to our degrees as courses when communicating with external audiences, such as prospective students and applicants, as they are more familiar with this term.

We also use programme to mean television programme.

Note that Henley post-experience courses are referred to as "programmes".

programme members

At Henley, programme participants are referred to as programme members rather than students. Participants can also be used. For example, "Executive MBA programme members will undertake a research project in the final months."

programme titles

We use initial capitals on all important words. For example, BSc Psychology, Mental and Physical Health.

Always check the order of words and whether the department uses "&" or "and" in titles.

Pro-Vice-Chancellor

Note the use of two hyphens and capitals at the start of each word.

The University has three Pro-Vice-Chancellor positions:

- Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation)
- Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning)
- Pro-Vice-Chancellor (International and External Engagement)

Examples

✓ The Pro-Vice-Chancellor announced a series of changes.

✗ She is the new P-V-C.

Exceptions

We can abbreviate to PVC when space is limited; for example, in headlines or tweets.

Psychology Building

Note the capitals.

Public Lecture Series

Note the capitals.

RAE

Research Assessment Exercise. This has now been replaced by the Research Excellence Framework (REF).

Reading Enterprise Centre

Note the capitals.

Reading Film Theatre

Note the capitals.

Reading Real Estate Foundation

Note the capitals.

Reading Scientific Services Ltd.

Note the capitals and full-stop. Often abbreviated to "RSSL".

RED Award

Reading Experience and Development Award.

REF

Research Excellence Framework (previously known as RAE).

REP

School of Real Estate & Planning.

RICS

Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors.

RREF

Reading Real Estate Foundation.

RTPI

Royal Town Planning Institute.

RUBC

Reading University Boat Club (belonging to Reading University Students' Union). After the first instance this can be referred to as RUBC or the Boat Club.

Russell

Note the capital.

RUSU and Students' Union clubs

Reading University Students' Union; note the position of the apostrophe. Only use "Reading University" when referring to Students' Union clubs or associations, for example, the Reading University Badminton Club.

school names

Use an initial capital when referring to a specific school or department but lower case if referring to school or departments in general.

Examples

- ✓ Each school is home to a number of research groups.
- ✓ The School of Law has a high rate of student satisfaction.
- ✓ Interdisciplinary research takes place across a number of schools and departments.
- ✓ The Department of English Literature offers a friendly and welcoming environment.

- ✗ The University is home to a number of Schools.
- ✗ The University is divided into Schools and Departments.

School of Agriculture, Policy and Development

Note the capitals and comma.

School of Archaeology, Geography and Environmental Science

Note the capitals and comma. Often abbreviated to "SAGES".

School of Architecture

Note the capitals.

School of Arts and Communication Design

Note the capitals.

School of Biological Sciences

Note the capitals.

School of the Built Environment

Note the capitals.

School of Chemistry, Food & Pharmacy

Note the capitals, comma and ampersand.

School of Construction Management and Engineering

Note the capitals.

School of Humanities

Note the capitals.

School of Literature and Languages

Note the capitals.

School of Law

Note the capitals.

School of Mathematical, Physical and Computational Sciences

Note the capitals and comma. Often abbreviated to "SMPCS".

School of Pharmacy

Note the capitals.

School of Politics, Economics and International Relations

Previously School of Politics and International Relations. Note the capitals. Often abbreviated to "SPEIR".

School of Psychology and Clinical Language Sciences

Note the capitals. Often abbreviated to "PCLS".

Science and Technology Centre

Note the capitals.

SEEDA

South East England Development Agency.

SOAR

Skills Opportunities at Reading.

Southern Universities Management Services

Note the capitals. Often abbreviated to "SUMS".

Southern Universities Purchasing Consortium

Note the capitals. Often abbreviated to "SUPC".

Special Collections

Service providing access to University rare books and archives.

Speech and Language Therapy Clinic

Note the capitals.

SportsPark

The University SportsPark is the sports facility located on our Whiteknights campus. One word, note the capitals.

Statistical Services Centre

Note the capitals.

students

We don't use an initial cap. For example, "We welcome international students." The term "programme members" is used when referring to those attending Henley Business School.

Students' Union

Use initial caps and note the position of the apostrophe.

Student Wellbeing Service

Note the capitals.

Summer Ball

Note the capitals.

Systems Engineering Building

Renamed "Polly Vacher".

Technologies for Sustainable Built Environments Centre

Note the capitals. Often abbreviated to "TSBE".

TEEP

Test of English for Educational Purposes.

TEF

Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework.

temperature

Our preferred temperature format is: 2°C, which in this example indicates a temperature of two degrees Celsius. However, writing out the temperature in full ("two degrees Celsius") is also acceptable.

term

Relating to the academic term. Not capitalised; for example, "the spring term". When using "term time" as a noun phrase, it is not hyphenated; for example, "during term time", "in term time", except when using it as an adjectival phrase; for example, "term-time teaching", "term-time placements".

TOEFL

Test of English as a Foreign Language.

TSBE

Technologies for Sustainable Built Environments.

UCAS

Universities and Colleges Admissions Service; however, UCAS can be used as most people know it by the acronym.

UCQF

University Credit and Qualifications Framework.

undergraduate

One word, lower case. We do not use the "UG" abbreviation.

University name

We refer to the University as "the University of Reading", not "The University of Reading" or "Reading University". After the first instance this may be shortened to "University". Note the upper case "U".

When referring to universities in general, the word should be lower case.

We also avoid "UoR", except on social media.

To avoid ambiguity in "Reading" being misread as "reading", (for example, "reading a book", particularly in an international context), the University uses "at Reading". For example, "Study history at Reading". This should be used in preference to starting a sentence with "Reading". Rather than "Reading gave me the opportunity to…" use, "At Reading, I was given the opportunity to…"

Examples

- ☑ At the University of Reading we pride ourselves on the quality of our research.
- ☑ The University is situated close to the town centre.
- ☑ Ranked in the top 200 universities in the world.

Exceptions

Reading University Students' Union (and associated clubs and societies), social media account names and posts (where character count is limited), and hashtags, and quotations.

Ure Museum of Greek Archaeology

Note the capitals.

URS

Urban and Regional Sciences.

US

United States; no spaces or punctuation. Use only as an adjective; for example, "She is a US citizen," and not "She is from the US."

USA

United States of America; no spaces or punctuation. Use only as a noun; for example, "She is from the USA," and not "She is a USA citizen."

Venue Reading

Note the capitals.

Veterinary Epidemiology and Economic Research Centre

Note the capitals. Often abbreviated to "VEERU".

Vice-Chancellor

Note the use of a hyphen and capitals at the start of each word.

Examples

⊘   The Vice-Chancellor attended on behalf of the University.

⊗   The VC attended the event on behalf of the University.

Vice-Chancellor's Office

Note the use of a hyphen and capitals at the start of each word.

VLE

Virtual learning environment. Note that this is not capped when spelled out.

Walker Institute for Climate Systems Research

Note the capitals. Use "Walker Institute" after first reference.

Wager

Note the capital.

Week 6

Formerly known as Enhancement Week or Reading Week.

Welcome Week

Week-long event with activities introducing new students to the university. Formerly known as Freshers' Week.

wellbeing

One word.

Whiteknights House

Note the capitals.

Wi-Fi

Note the capitals and hyphen.

world-leading/world leading

We hyphenate when this is used as a compound adjective; for example, "Our world-leading research," but "Our research is world leading."

Should only be used in reference to the Research Excellence Framework classification.

Year

Use caps when referring to a specific year of a programme but not years in general; for example, "In Year 3, students will complete a dissertation" and "The programme runs over three years." Only use "Part" as an internal term. For external-facing documents, such as undergraduate materials, "Year" should be used as it is a more understandable term for prospective students.

years

For academic years, we use a slash: 2018/19.

For calendar years a dash is used: 2018–19.

Use figures for decades, and an apostrophe before the numbers in abbreviations; for example, "The 1960s", "In the '60s".

See also: century