

The University of Sheffield Editorial Style Guide

Last updated October 2011

This style guide is a reference tool for University staff and freelance copyeditors. It outlines the English standard for all University publications, web and print, including brochures, prospectuses, reports, and the media.

You may disagree with some of the rules. Where this is the case, please use our version to maintain consistency. If you have any questions about the guide, or suggestions for additions and amendments please email us:

marketing@sheffield.ac.uk

Other useful writing guides

Writing for the web:

www.sheffield.ac.uk/marcoms/guidelines/web/writing4web

The Plain English Campaign has a free guide to writing in plain English:

www.plainenglish.co.uk/plainenglishguide.html

A

A Level

Not hyphenated. Use an upper case L.

Abbreviations

Abbreviations should not be used. Abbreviated terms commonly used within the University may not be understood outside it, especially by prospective international students.

February *not* Feb.

Tuesday *not* Tues.

postgraduate certificate *not* PgCert (apart from in course titles)

Professor *not* Prof

Exceptions:

Mr Mrs Dr (note that there is no full stop)

See also *Acronyms* and *Contractions*

Accents

Use accents on foreign words, unless the word has been anglicised, for example *café*, *fiancee*.

Exceptions:

Précis

Exposé (to distinguish from expose)

Access

When giving directions, always include information about disabled access.
See *Equal opportunities*

Acronyms and initials

Phrases or titles abbreviated to acronyms or initials must be written out in full the first time they are used, followed by the short version in brackets. Thereafter, the abbreviation can be used.

The School of East Asian Studies (SEAS) offers four-year language-based courses in Japanese, Korean and Chinese. SEAS undergraduates can choose...

Exceptions to the rule are acronyms better known than what they stand for, such as BBC or NATO.

If you are writing for the web, acronyms should be written in full with the short version in brackets the first time they are used on **each** web page.

See also *Abbreviations and Contractions*

Addresses

In documents, publications and on University stationery, addresses should always be arranged vertically. Never make an address part of a sentence or paragraph of text.

Building numbers that cover a range (196–198) should be separated by an en-dash with no spaces. See *en-dash*.

Where the address is in a city or major town, do not include the county.

If you are writing for an international audience, the country should follow the town or city and postcode on a new line. In the case of University addresses, always use United Kingdom, rather than England.

The University of Sheffield
Western Bank
Sheffield S10 2TN
United Kingdom

In the case of department addresses, put the department name before the University:

The Institute for Lifelong Learning
The University of Sheffield
196–198 West Street
Sheffield S1 4ET

Some important details:

- no full stops at the end of addresses
- no comma between the number and the street name
- do not abbreviate Road, Street or Avenue
- postcode should appear after the town or city on the same line
- no comma between town/county and postcode

Mailing out

When creating address labels or typing letters for use with window envelopes, all the following guidelines apply **except** that the postcode should be on the last line, separate from the town or city.

Ampersand (&)

In running text, use the word *and* instead, especially when writing for the web.

Ampersands are sometimes used in the vertical arrangement of titles and department names for design purposes. See *Our Visual Identity Guide* for details.

And/or

Try to avoid. Check that you can't use simply one or the other. Alternatively, rewrite the sentence. The same applies to **his/her**.

Apostrophes

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

Possession

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, then the apostrophe goes after the s:

The graduates' certificates will be kept in departmental offices

The same applies to singular nouns ending in s:

The class's teacher was absent.

Generally, the rule also applies to proper nouns ending in s:

Rolf Harris's portrait of the Queen

Exceptions are proper nouns such as Jesus, Moses or Greek names ending in *es*:

Achilles' heel was killing him
Euripides' bus pass had expired

Certain other names ending in s can look and sound awkward when an extra s is applied. In such cases it is acceptable to omit the additional s provided your approach is consistent throughout the publication or document.

Dickens' *Great Expectations*
Welles' *Citizen Kane*

Plurals of nouns omit the s after the apostrophe:

The classes' timetables were confused

When you use plural nouns that don't end in s – children, women, sheep – the apostrophe goes before the s:

The women's minibus runs until 11pm

The one exception to this rule is *its*:

The book was old, its cover was in tatters

See also *it's or its*

Omission

Apostrophes are also used to show that letters are missed out of a word or phrase, usually to make it easier to pronounce.

I'll – I will

they're – they are

See also *Contractions*

Where not to use apostrophes

Never use an apostrophe to form a plural with numbers and letters:

1990s *not* 1990's

Three As at A Level, *not* three A's at A Level

CDs *not* CD's

Never use an apostrophe when *its* is used in the possessive sense:

The University is easy to get to: its main buildings are near the tram stop.

Asterisks*

There's no call for asterisks outside of complex academic or report writing. Whatever you have to say should be made clear in your writing. There should be no need to refer the reader to footnotes or small print.

*Should not be used for other purposes, for instance to denote an omission or to present bullet points.

B

-based

Hyphenated when combined with another word to form an adjective:

work-based study

Brackets

Avoid where possible. In marketing copy, use en-dashes to indicate parentheses.

Bullet points

Rules governing the use of bullet points can seem complex and even contradictory. To keep things simple, the most important things to remember are

- don't overuse them
- try to keep lists and points short
- be consistent

Put another way, if you can get your points into a clear sentence or paragraph then do so. If you need to use a list of bullet points, pick a style and stick with it.

Lists are usually introduced with a brief sentence or clause. If the items in your list flow naturally from this sentence, there is no need to use a colon.

The open day programme includes

- visits to academic departments
- talks
- accommodation visits
- self-guided tours
- videos

If the items on your list can't be made to flow naturally from an introduction, use a colon. If your list is introduced by a phrase such as *for instance* or *for example*, use a colon. For example:

The urban regeneration research cluster is principally concerned with three areas:

- Housing as a medium for the physical and social regeneration of urban areas.
- The role of property in urban regeneration.
- Urban and regional policy, local governance and urban regeneration.

As the first and second examples illustrate, a list that completes or flows from an introduction doesn't need full stops after each point. However, if your points are longer you can use internal punctuation.

The third example illustrates that when points are self-contained sentences you should begin each point with an initial capital and end with a full stop.

Too many bullets

Generally speaking, bullet points are most effective at a maximum one line of text per point. In print, a list of bullet points running unbroken down a whole page is uninviting. A list of that length on the web might also have a negative effect. Try to break the monotony by presenting information in different ways.

The one medium that permits excessive use of bullet points is the Powerpoint presentation. As with print and online publications, however, each individual list and point should be kept as short as possible. A template for Powerpoint presentations can be downloaded from the Marketing website.

A final point

- ❖ Don't be tempted to use diamonds, arrows or other symbols as bullet points.
- They can cause confusion and make your page look cluttered.
- A simple black dot is all you need.

Capital letters

Proper nouns, official titles and course titles use initial capitals when written in full.

Vice-Chancellor Keith Burnett
BA(Honours) History

When referring to such titles in running text or using a word such as *history* in a generic sense, don't use an initial capital.

The University is about to appoint a new vice-chancellor
Applicants must study history at A Level

Programme is not capitalised unless it is part of a full course title.

Honours Degree Programme in Computer Science.
This programme covers units in...

Department names use initial capitals, but the word department always uses lower-case d, unless it begins a sentence.

The Department of English Literature
Our department has an excellent reputation. .

When referring to the University of Sheffield, as *the University* use an initial capital. When referring to a *university* use all lower case.

Small words (*in, at, of, the, and, on*) are never capitalised even in titles.

The Hound of the Baskervilles
My Life as a Dog

See also *Course titles and Headings and titles*.

Careers adviser

not careers advisor
but
careers advisory service

Centuries

In keeping with our guideline on numbers, everything up to 10 is written as a word, 11 onwards as numerals.

For nouns, use: fourth century, fifth century and so on, then: 11th century, 21st century. For adjectives, use a hyphen: fourth-century philosopher, 21st-century furniture.

When you write for the web, superscript doesn't always translate well into HTML, so you can bend the rules and write out: twentieth-century, twenty-first century.

See *Dates and times and Numbers*.

Colon (:)

Use a colon to introduce a list in a sentence:

Research topics include: gender and politics in France, French cinema, twentieth-century literature.

Colons can also be used to separate statements in a sentence, when the second statement explains the first:

The Department of Chemistry has some of the best facilities in the country: its recently refurbished laboratories are state-of-the-art.

Never follow a colon with a dash (:-)

Comma

The building houses computers, seminar rooms and a library.

In a simple sentence like the above there is no need for a comma before *and*.

Compliment or complement

You pay someone a *compliment*. You have a full *complement* of students.

A book review may be *complimentary*. Two types of medical treatment or two colours can be *complementary*.

Comprise or compose

The parts *compose* (make up) the whole. The whole *comprises* (includes) the parts. The whole is *composed of* the parts. Never use *is comprised of*, although *consists of* is correct.

Computer-aided

Hyphenated when used as an adjective as in *computer-aided design*.

Contact details

If a telephone number is given there should also be an email address. Fax numbers and web addresses are optional but strongly recommended.

Telephone numbers should always follow the format 0114 XXX XXXX. Never put the area code in brackets.

If the publication or web page is for an international audience, then the telephone number should follow the format +44 (0)114 XXX XXXX.

Contractions

There's nothing wrong with contractions. 'You'll' for *you will* and 'we'll' for *we will* are perfectly acceptable in the right context. Contractions help establish a friendly, informal tone. They help you to replicate the patterns of everyday speech, which makes your copy easier to read.

See also *Abbreviations* and *Acronyms*

Course titles

The correct way to write a course title is *BA(Honours) History* or *BA(Hons) History*. Note there is no space between *BA* and *(Honours)*.

Award abbreviations

A Level (not hyphenated)	GCSE
BA(Honours)	PgCert
BEng(Honours)	PgDip
BSc(Honours)	MA
MPhil	PhD

See also *Capital letters*.

Dashes

See *En-dash*.

Dates and times

Use *25 July*, not *July 25* or *25th July*. Omit the day of the week and year, unless needed for clarity, in which case write out the year in full:

2011

To express an academic year, or range of years, use the following format:

2011–12, or 2013–2014, using an en-dash

not 2011-12 or 2012/13

Use *am* and *pm*, not the 24-hour clock. Use full stops not colons as separators.

9.30am not 09:30

11.30pm not 23:30

12 noon

12 midnight

Note there is no space between the number and *am* or *pm*.

Avoid vague time references (*will be online soon*) and relative time references (*last year, next year*). Time references need to be specific if they are to be of use to the reader.

See also *Numbers and Centuries*.

Degree class

First, 2:1, 2:2, 3rd. Use *First*, never *1st*. Use a capital when referring to *a First*, but lower case for *first-class* degree. Never use *first degree*, as this can be confused with an undergraduate degree.

She was awarded a First in biology

He was awarded a 2:1 in English

She was awarded a first-class degree in chemistry

Department names

Department has a capital D when it is part of the department's title:

Welcome to the Department of Automatic Control and Systems Engineering.

When referring to the department, use a lower-case d.

The academic staff in the department are friendly and approachable.

Use the same rule when referring to *schools*.

Welcome to the Management School.

The school has an excellent record.

If you use an acronym for your department or school, such as ACSE or SEAS, always make sure you also write it out in full the first time you use it in a text.

E

Eg

No full stop. Use a comma before.

We offer part-time courses in a range of subjects, eg computing, languages and the environment

Like *ie*, *ergo* and *et al*, *eg* is rarely used outside of formal academic writing. In marketing copy, *eg* can often be replaced by *including* or *for example*.

We offer part-time courses in a range of subjects, including computing, languages and the environment

Ellipsis (...)

Ellipsis marks indicate a pause in speaking or an omission of one or more words. Ellipsis marks should not be used unless they are part of a direct quotation.

Email

Not hyphenated. When referring to a University email address in print or online, always write *sheffield* in full, not *shef*.

Other e-words such as *e-commerce* and *e-learning* should be hyphenated.

Email links in online documents should be the email address.

Send enquiries to admissions@sheffield.ac.uk
not

Send enquiries to the [admissions office](#)

See also *Web addresses*.

En-dash (–)

Longer than a hyphen. Has a different function.

Use an en-dash without spaces when there is a distinction in meaning between two words:

Labour–Liberal alliance

and to replace *to* in numerical ranges:

people aged 55–60

pages 25–30

Use a pair of en-dashes with spaces in the same way that you'd use brackets to indicate parentheses:

Four of the halls – Earnshaw, Halifax, Sorby and Stephenson – are close to one another.

Equal opportunities

The University operates a comprehensive equal opportunities policy, and is committed to eliminating all forms of unfair discrimination. Take care when describing or addressing different groups of people in print or on the web. For example:

- deaf people or the deaf community, *not* the deaf
- people with disabilities, *not* disabled people
- wheelchair users, *not* people in wheelchairs
- people with AIDS *not* AIDS victims
- elderly people, *not* the elderly or old people
- lesbians and gay men and the gay community, *not* lesbians and gays, or gays

See also *Gender-specific suffixes*

Etc

No full stop.

Try to avoid – use *including*, *include*.

Exclamation mark (!)

Avoid! Exclamation marks can appear especially patronising when addressing a young market.

F

Fewer / less

Use fewer when the amounts can be quantified, less when they can't:

There are fewer than 10 places available

There is less milk than yesterday

Fonts

Our official Stephenson and Blake fonts are available for staff to download at:
www.sheffield.ac.uk/marcoms/visualid/downloads/fonts

Don't try to italicise bold text or set italics in bold. This will cause the font to display incorrectly. To highlight and emphasise text, use the true italic or bold versions of the fonts, increase the point size, or colour the text.

Foreign words and expressions

These should always be italicised, unless the word or expression is anglicised or widely used.

Fin de siècle
Schadenfreude
Mise en scène
Disce doce

Fractions

A fraction that stands alone is written out and hyphenated, even when one of the numbers is higher than ten.

Two-thirds of the students
One-twentieth of the population

A fraction attached to a whole number should be written in numerals.

2 ½ times per year

Fragments

Contracted sentences are usually picked up by your spell-check as *Fragments*. Such sentences are acceptable in certain contexts, such as lists of bullet points, or entries in directory-style publications. The following sentence is a good example. Avoid overuse.

Full stops

Try to split long sentences into shorter ones. Shorter sentences make text easier to read. Use one space, not two, after full stops.

G

Gender-specific suffixes

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

Aviator *not* aviatrix
Actor *not* actress
Manager *not* manageress
Comedian *not* comedienne

Nurse *not* male nurse
Chair *not* chairman

H

Headlines, headings and sub-headings

For page headings, headlines and sub-headings use sentence case – an initial capital for the first word only.

How to apply
not
How To Apply

You should only use title case if your header is also a proper noun, the official title of something, for instance:

The Department of Geography

Never use all caps for a header in print or online.

See also *Title case* and *Sentence case*.

Headlines and links

The headline of a web page should always be the same as any links leading to that page. For instance, don't call your link *How to apply for a place* if the page it links to is headed *Information for prospective students*.

Headlines for magazine and newsletter articles, in print or online, should be kept as short as possible. If your headline runs over more than one line, you should cut it down.

Higher education

Although it's often abbreviated to HE, higher education isn't really a proper noun so it doesn't need initial caps when you write it out in full.

Helpdesk

One word.

Honorary Professor

Honorary Professor, Honorary Reader, Honorary Fellow are proper nouns with initial capitals. Honorary professorship, honorary degree etc are common nouns – no initial caps.

Hyphen (-)

Hyphens can be used to join together two words to form an adjective. If the first word is an adverb you don't need a hyphen.

Note that in the fourth example there's no need for a hyphen after *full*.

Work-based learning
Full-time study
The course is broadly based
The course is completed through full and part-time study

The following words are never hyphenated:

postgraduate
worldwide
nationwide

milkround
multidisciplinary
multinational
interpersonal
ongoing
cooperative
teamwork

Hyphenating compounds

Permanent compounds

You don't need a hyphen if the compound is well-established or if it has become one word, for instance:

prime minister
notebook

Exceptions include 'coordinate', which some style guides still prefer to hyphenate. Our preference, and the Guardian's, is for one word.

Temporary compounds

You can add the hyphen temporarily, as in 'much-needed', to avoid ambiguity. For instance:

Yoda gave Luke Skywalker much-needed training.

means the training Yoda gave was acutely necessary.

If you take the hyphen out:

Yoda gave Luke Skywalker much needed training.

you're saying that Yoda gave Luke a lot of necessary training.

You don't need to hyphenate a phrase like 'richly deserved' because the adverb clearly modifies the verb. There is no room for confusion.

I

ie

An abbreviation of the Latin *id est* meaning *that is*. As with *eg*, no full stop is necessary. Use a comma before. Try to avoid.

Institution

Try not to use *institution* as a substitute for *university*, as it can cause confusion. The generic term is *higher education institution*, but this can appear over-formal and monolithic.

Interesting

...falls into the category of words that have lost their potency through overuse. In other words, anything that is described as interesting will certainly not arouse the interest of your readers.

internet

Lower case initial.

Don't use *world wide web* to describe the internet.

-ise or -ize

Use *-ise* rather than *-ize* in words such as *organise*, *specialise* and *finalise*. The only exception we can think of is *capsize*.

Italics

Italics are hard to read on screen. Try to avoid, unless referring to book titles or certain foreign words/terms. Try not to use italics for emphasis.

See also *Fonts*

It's or its

It's means *it is*.

The possessive *its* doesn't need an apostrophe:

The university has redesigned its logo.

See also *Apostrophes*

J

Jargon

If you're writing for prospective undergraduates, or for the University's staff magazine avoid jargon, business-speak, corporate buzzwords – any terms that will only be understood by a select group. Avoid hyperbole.

Sometimes terms specific to the higher education sector, such as RAE or TQA, cannot be avoided. Write these terms out in full the first time they are used, followed by the acronym in brackets. Subsequently, you can refer to the acronym only.

Job titles

In the first instance use:

Vice-Chancellor Professor Keith Burnett said

or

Professor Keith Burnett, Vice-Chancellor, said

Subsequently, use:

Professor Burnett, or the vice-chancellor.

K

Key (adjective)

Sometimes used as a loose equivalent to *important*. Avoid. Use a more precise term.

L

Latin plurals

Some are so common that we don't realise they are plurals: *alumni, data, criteria*.
Some can sound pedantic and put the reader off.

fora – use forums

formulae – use formulas

syllabi – use syllabuses

See also *Foreign words and expressions*

Liaise and liaison

Note the correct spelling. Some spell-checking functions get this wrong.

M

Material

Avoid. Be more specific.

We provide course notes, reading lists and textbooks at the start of the semester.

not

Course material is provided at the start of the semester.

MB (megabytes)

Not M.B or mb.

Media

Media is the plural of medium

The news media are, not is

Multimedia

Only use multimedia when there are more than two media.

N

Numbers

Zero to nine are written as words and 10 onwards in figures, unless a sentence begins with a number over 10:

Sixty-five million years ago, Sheffield was home to dinosaurs.

Other exceptions are numbers that have technical significance or need to stand out for quick comprehension, such as: tables, statistics, money, times, ratios and academic grades.

Where a number from one to nine is part of a phrase or title that you didn't create, stick with the convention.

Key Stage 2

Write out the names of foreign currencies except in tables: *yen, francs, dollars*. No capital letters. If dollars are other than US, this needs to be stated: *New Zealand dollars* or *NZ dollars*.

For larger numbers, use the following formats:

2,000	£1 million
10,000	1 billion
100,000	
1 million	

See also *Dates and times and Ranges (numerical)*.

O

Oceans

The proper names are always capitalised, even when shortened to *Mediterranean* or *Atlantic*, or used as adjectives. For instance:

Barnsley is a Yorkshire town with a *Mediterranean* climate.

Mediterranean Sea: never use *Med*.

Atlantic Ocean: mid-Atlantic is hyphenated. Transatlantic is one word, no capitals.

Open Days

When we refer to the University's four annual open days, we write *Open Days* with initial caps because it's the official title (proper noun) of a series of events.

Departmental open days are not part of a series. It's not a proper noun so you don't need initial caps.

While we're on the subject, avoid the word 'departmental'. It sounds formal and administrative. Try to use the name of the department if you can: *Management School open days*, *Geography open days*.

If you can't be specific, use 'department open days' instead.

Outer space

Earth	Use a capital E when referring to the planet where we live. Use a lower-case e if you mean soil.
sun/moon	These don't need a capital letter.
solar system	No capitals.
galaxy	Where the solar system is.
Milky Way	This is a proper name, so it gets initial caps.
outer space	Not Outer Space, outerspace or outer-space.
Jupiter, Saturn, Mars etc.	These are proper names so they always get a cap. In case you were wondering.

There are many galaxies, suns, moons and solar systems in the universe. They're not proper names so they don't need caps. It's fine to refer to 'the sun'. The reader will know you mean our sun.

The sun, the moon, Earth, Mars and all the planets in our solar system.

Who says? *National Geographic, The Guardian.*

P

Paragraphs

Use one line return in between paragraphs. Don't indent at the beginning of paragraphs.

Keep paragraphs short, especially when writing for the web. If you are writing for a student audience, bear in mind that large blocks of text are offputting and will probably not be read.

Part-time

Hyphenated.

Passive voice

Passive voice is the enemy of Plain English. This is from a government website offering advice for staff on how to write:

"If you want to be detached, distant or not responsible for the actions you're taking, you may want to consider using the passive voice. However, in the majority of cases, the active voice is best. It is concise, direct and helps to make your writing more lively and informative."

The professor **will present** her research at the conference.

not

Research **will be presented** by the professor at the conference.

Per cent

Write out in full as two words, not one symbol (%). Symbols (&, %) can look untidy in large blocks of text. Tables with numbers can use %. Percentage is one word.

Per day

Also *per year, per month* and so on. Try to avoid the colloquial *a year, a month, a day*.

Plain English

Aim to be as clear and concise as possible. Using plain English does not mean 'dumbing down'. It just means delivering your message in the clearest way possible.

BEFORE

The forum exists in order that students can communicate issues or concerns about the quality of their learning experience that they feel are important and/or make suggestions for ways in which course programmes or modules might be better delivered and structured. In other words it is designed to give the student body a voice in the way teaching is managed and delivered. (62 words)

AFTER

The forum gives students a say in the way their courses are run. (13 words).

Platitudes

Avoid using platitudes, for example:

The University welcomes international students.

Cut the sentence altogether or replace it with evidence that the University provides a welcoming environment.

Postgraduate

One word, not hyphenated.

Pro-Vice-Chancellor

Some universities use two hyphens. Others use one. We use two.

Punctuation

See *Ampersand, Brackets, Comma, Colon, En-dash, Full stop, Hyphen, Question mark, Semicolon*. For advice on punctuating quotes see *Quotation marks...*

Q

Question mark (?)

Sometimes you don't need to signal to your reader that you're asking a question:

Could you please send me an application form.

is perfectly acceptable email etiquette.

Quotation marks

When quoting direct speech use full quotation marks (“”). For quotes within quotes use single quotation marks (inverted commas), placing a comma before the reported speech.

“Our Students' Union provides a range of services.”

“He said, ‘I don't think so’ and he left.”

In running text, don't be tempted to apply inverted commas to colloquial terms, clichéd phrases or technical jargon:

Our Students' Union runs a number of ‘cool’ club nights.

If the phrase is clichéd, try to replace it. If it's a technical term that won't be widely understood among your audience, you should either explain it or take it out. If the phrase really is a direct quote, make sure the source is explicit in the text and punctuate as above.

If you're going to use a colloquialism, use it. You don't need inverted commas.

When referring to other publications by their titles, use italics rather than inverted commas:

Our department is ranked among the UK top ten by *The Times Good University Guide*.

R

Ranges (numerical)

Use an en-dash with no spaces either side:

students aged 21–30

3–8 Palmerston Road

-related

Hyphenated when used as an adjective in *work-related study*, but the course is *work related*.

Redundancy

Try to avoid words which add nothing to the meaning of your sentence. You could end up with a redundant expression such as:

You can register now, or **alternatively** wait until July.
Pip is the **chief** protagonist of *Great Expectations*.

See also *Tautology*.

S

Semicolon (;)

Use to separate two related ideas in a sentence.

In 2010, the University introduced several new courses; a list of the courses can be found on the website.

Use semicolons to distinguish phrases listed after a colon if commas will not do the job clearly:

“You can choose from: Advanced Study and Research Methods; Computer Aided Architectural Design; Climate Sensitive Environmental Design.”

Sentence case

We use sentence case for all headlines, headings and sub-headings within a document, for instance:

Scientists tackle climate change
Information for students

Unless your headline or heading is also a proper noun, the official title of something. Then you can use *Title case*.

Spaces

There should never be more than one space in succession in word-processed text. Not even after a full stop.

Split infinitives

Split infinitives are not always bad grammar. Trying to avoid splitting infinitives can often result in an overly formal tone, or a messy sentence. As a rule, choose the option that sounds the least stuffy.

Students' Union

Note the apostrophe. The full, official title is The University of Sheffield Union of Students. It is also known as Sheffield Students' Union. Never abbreviate to 'Union'.

T

Tautology (grammatical)

A fault in style which can be defined as saying the same thing twice.

Significant landmark.

Added bonus.

See also *Redundancy*.

Telephone numbers

See *Contact details*.

Title case

Only use title case to write out the full official title of something in a heading or body copy, for instance:

The Department of Automatic Control and Systems Engineering.

We were given a tour of the Department of Automatic Control and Systems Engineering.

Note that the connecting words (of, and) don't have initial capitals. There are no grammatical rules for title case. But we prefer the mixture of upper and lower-case initials.

When you refer to a book, film, or journal in body copy, use title case in italics:

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time

Readers of Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations*

In a survey carried out by *The Sunday Times*

Time

See *Dates and times*.

U

Undergraduate

One word, not hyphenated, lower-case initial.

University

When referring to the University of Sheffield as *the University* use an initial capital. When referring to *a university* use a lower-case *u*.

URLs

Don't publish long URLs with lots of suffixes, especially in print.

If you structure your website carefully so that important information is easy to find, you shouldn't need longwinded URLs.

Don't use the term URL in copy. Say 'web address' instead.

V

Vice-Chancellor

Two words, hyphenated.

W

Web addresses

Sheffield addresses should start with *www*, omitting the *http://*

www.sheffield.ac.uk

Always type *sheffield* in full. Never use the shortened *www.shef.ac.uk* version.

If a web address comes at the end of a sentence it should not be followed by a full stop. This avoids any confusion about whether the full stop is part of the address.

When writing a web address in an online document, always make it into a hyperlink rather than plain text, so the link can easily be followed.

Within a text, web addresses should ideally be presented on a separate line, and highlighted for clarity. In print publications, designed in-house or by an approved agency, web addresses are underlined so addresses containing underscores should be avoided if possible.

Very rarely, a web address may be too long to fit on one line due to the set column width of a publication, and has to be continued on a second line. If no shorter alternative link is available, this is acceptable. Take care not to split any one element of the address over two lines.

Web page

Two separate words, no hyphen.

website

One word, the *w* is lower case unless it begins a sentence.

Z

ize-ise

Use *s* instead for words ending in *-ize* and *-ization*.

Organise, *not* organize