

STAFFORDSHIRE UNIVERSITY

# STYLE GUIDE

2015

The University produces many different documents, publications, emails and websites at any one time, so it is important that they have an official spelling and grammar style in order to present the University authoritatively and consistently in its messages.

## HOW TO USE THIS STYLE GUIDE

This style guide is organised into alphabetical order of written and grammatical uses and frequently used words. It contains the issues which have caused the most problems for staff who write documents.

## HELP AND ADVICE

If you would like any advice on writing copy or have any comments and suggestions for this guide, the first point of contact should be [marketing@staffs.ac.uk](mailto:marketing@staffs.ac.uk)

Another useful and comprehensive style guide, which contains hundreds of clarifications on general usage and style, is available from The Guardian at [www.guardian.co.uk/styleguide](http://www.guardian.co.uk/styleguide). This does not overrule the Staffordshire University Guide.

A useful resource is [www.dictionary.com](http://www.dictionary.com) which is an online dictionary, thesaurus and grammar guide.

## SPELLCHECKER

Most documents will be written using Microsoft Word. This programme contains a spellchecker tool to clear up typing and grammar errors. A spell check should always be run when a piece of writing is finished, but it is important not to rely on it too much. Some of the grammar suggestions don't make sense when read back and it will let some words pass when they are completely out of context. For example: 'A house inn the country.' Always check your work yourself and, for external publications, get someone else to proof read it.

## OTHER ISSUES

Another potential issue with Word documents is the language they are written in. The standard dictionary used is US English which contains many differences to UK English (e.g. 'standardize' rather than 'standardise'). Please set the dictionary to UK English.

## WRITING TIPS

Checklist:

Who? – Who are your audience and what tone is right for them?

What? – What are the main points of your piece? What message are you trying to give? What do you want the audience to do with it?

Where? – Where does the piece fit in with other communication plans and how will it reach the audience?

When? – When do you need them to act? Does your piece fit in with a timely activity?

Why? – Why should the audience read this – what are the benefits, opportunities or dangers for them? Is this really the kind of publication your audience wants?

Clarity: it is easier to read documents when the words aren't packed close together. Set the line spacing to '1.15 lines' on Microsoft Word.

Set your documents to 'align left' not 'justify' as this causes general issues with clarity.

## ACRONYMS

For first use write out in full with acronym in brackets after – eg Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). Thereafter you may use the acronym.

## BULLETS

If bullets follow a colon and the bullets are a list of points rather than explanatory sentences, bullets should start lower case and only the last bullet should have a full point, eg:

Things to do:

- proof text
- wash pots
- feed dog.

If the bullets are not preceded by a colon, they should begin in upper case and end with a full point. This applies to any bullets that take the form of sentences rather than short notes, eg:

Opportunities for local students

- Special relationships with local schools and colleges – which often offer special progression routes to the University and a range of other opportunities.
- Action days and residentials – students from local schools and colleges take part in activities designed to give them a taste of university life.

## CASING

### Upper case - u/c

A level  
Civil Service  
Continuing Professional Development  
Cultural Quarter  
Faculty  
Further Education  
Higher Education  
Level 1 (1 not one)  
Masters  
Open Day  
Students' Union  
UniQ  
University Quarter

Faculty/School – if referring to Staffordshire University's Faculty or School eg the Faculty of Health Sciences, Business School.

When referring to Staffordshire University (eg the University), use upper case. When referring to universities in general, use lower case.

When using a specific named individual and their title use upper case, eg Pauline Gowland, Admissions Tutor.

When referring to an admissions tutor generally in text, use lower case, eg: for further information please contact the admissions tutor.

## CASING

### Lower case - l/c

building, eg Brindley building  
campus  
certificate  
degree  
diploma  
e-book  
e-commerce  
faculty/school if referring to: there are computer facilities in all faculties  
fast-track  
first year  
foundation degree – if generic – Upper case if title of course  
foundation year – if generic – Upper case if title of course  
honours  
internet  
merit, distinction, pass, upper class degrees, grade C  
postgraduate  
semester (upper case when referring to Semester 1, lower case when referring to semesters in general)  
top-up  
two-year  
undergraduate  
website (one word) web

When referring to universities in general, use lower case. When referring to Staffordshire University (eg the University), use upper case.

When using their name and title use upper case, eg Pauline Gowland, Admissions Tutor.

When referring to an admissions tutor in text, use lower case, eg: for further information please contact the admissions tutor.

## CORPORATE IDENTITY

Staffordshire University is the name of the University - use as the first reference and always in official documents and letters (Not Staffs or Staffordshire Uni and never Stafford University).

Staffs is acceptable in conversation and quoted conversation "The lecturers at Staffs are brilliant."

Stoke-on-Trent not Stoke.

Stoke is acceptable in in conversation and quoted conversation "Stoke is well connected to the UK rail network."

## DASHES

n dash - (small dash) used in a similar way to brackets to break up a sentence, eg ...two main campuses - Stoke-on-Trent and Stafford - at the forefront of developments....

m dash – (long dash) used in a similar way to a semi-colon when pausing for emphasis, eg exciting area – offering the best of city and country.

A good rule of thumb is that if there are two dashes in a sentence, they are n dashes, if there is one dash in the sentence it is an m dash.



## DATES AND TIMES

1 February 2016 not 1st February 2016 and not February 1st 2016  
no st, nd, rd or th  
9am-5:30pm (no spacing) or 09:00-17:30  
2014/15  
Monday - Friday (spacing, n dash)  
1895-1940 (no spacing)  
1970s no apostrophe  
21st Century (numerals, upper case C)

## FULL POINTS ETC

No full point after title in name, eg Mr Murphy not Mr. Murphy  
eg ie etc am pm - not e.g. or i.e. etc.  
No full point with pull quotes

## HYPHENATION

### To hyphenate...

12-week  
co-  
computer-based  
decision-making  
fast-track  
film-making  
full-time  
half-day  
hands-on  
in-company  
in-depth  
in-house  
inter-  
locally-based  
one-day  
part-time  
pre-  
post-  
problem-solving  
programme-making  
self-  
state-of-the-art  
Stoke-on-Trent  
student-led  
tailor-made  
top-up  
two-week  
two-year  
up-to-date  
well-equipped  
well-established  
wide-ranging

## HYPHENATION

...or not to hyphenate

audio visual  
blue chip  
case study  
coursework  
cybercultures/cybermarketing etc  
eBook  
email  
fieldwork  
field course  
field studies  
first hand  
job hunting  
laptop  
long standing  
media related  
multidisciplinary  
multimedia  
multi disciplinary etc  
object orientated  
online  
on campus/on going  
postgraduate  
prototyping  
real time  
scriptwriting  
student centred  
undergraduate  
university wide  
workplace/marketplace  
work experience  
worldwide

## ITALICS

All Latin in italics, eg *vive voce*

Books, lecture titles etc in italics, not inverted commas, eg *The Guardian*, not 'The Guardian'

## MISCELLANEOUS

Students' Union – not union of students, apostrophe after s

We have two main campuses – Stoke-on-Trent and Stafford. Each campus has two sites; Beaconside and Blackheath Lane, and College Road and Leek Road.

When displaying phone numbers it is usually

call:                      email:                      fax: (if it needs to appear – fax is virtually obsolete)

visit [www.](#) or drop the [www](#)

Always include social media icons eg Facebook and Twitter where relevant.

Phone numbers do not have brackets around the code.

International dialling call: +44 1782 292718



## NUMBERS

1,000 or above, use commas, eg 20,250

Level 1, not level one

Year 1

Semester 2, not Semester two (upper case when referring to Semester 1, lower case when referring to semesters in general)

£14 million

one to nine spelled out, upwards of 10 use numerals - except at the start of a sentence, eg Fifteen students said...

Per cent – write as symbol %

## ONE WORD OR TWO

child care

darkroom

furthermore

healthcare

job hunting

keynote

laptop

long standing

masterclass

media related

multimedia

online

postgraduate

primary care

scriptwriting

teamwork

undergraduate

website

work experience

## PLACES

Beaconside site

Blackheath Lane site

College Road site

Leek Road site

Lichfield Campus

Stafford Campus

Stoke-on-Trent

## SPACING

BSc (Hons) not BSc(Hons), BA (Hons) not BA(Hons)

No spacing when using forward slashes, eg film/video, not film / video

BSc not B.Sc



## SPELLING

advisor  
artefact  
cannot, not can not  
focused  
focusing  
judgement  
learned (not learnt)  
transferable  
transferred  
transferring  
travelled

no American spellings – e.g. specialise - not specialize, realise - not realize, colour - not color etc.

## STRAPLINE

CREATE THE DIFFERENCE is no longer in use as a strapline and should not be used.