

Grammar, Spelling and Punctuation

Official Name

The University's official title is:

National University of Ireland, Galway
or Ollscoil na hÉireann, Gaillimh

The only official abbreviation is:

NUI Galway

This in-house Grammar and Punctuation Style Guide is intended primarily for the use of the Marketing and Communications Office staff, and those working with the office on promotional material, news releases, websites and other written documents.

We do not intend for this to be an exhaustive compendium of grammar and punctuation, more of a quick guide to common examples.

In everything we write we try to use language that is as clear, simple, and accessible as possible.

The *Times New Roman* typeface family is the preferred typeface for use on all communications produced in-house.

Times New Roman is not used in any of our marketing material, such as brochures and advertising, nor branded material, such as signage or merchandise.

Specific style guides are also available on:

Copywriting for Promotional Material

Writing a Press Release

Personal Names, Titles and Qualifications

Professor not Prof (or even Prof.)

Dr not Dr. or Doctor

Avoid Ms and Mr where possible except in running text, where we spell out the name first time round and contract thereafter

John Smith (first mention), Mr Smith (thereafter)

For official use we refer to the
President as
Dr James J. Browne

To simplify our style, we use

PhD not Ph.D.

MA not M.A.

BA not B.A.

Spelling

Follow standard British usage, key words to watch out for include...

Programme
not program

Organisation, analyse
not organization or analyze

Toward, while
not towards or whilst

Ones to watch include...

practice (noun) / practise (verb)
licence (noun) / license (verb)

Use first year and second year except when adjectival:

This is the first year that first-year students will have no exams.

Stops

Stops (. ? ! : ;) are always followed by only a single (not a double) space before the next sentence or part of sentence.

And

and is used, rather than &

Quotation marks

Quotation marks are preferably smart (‘...’), rather than straight ('...').

Use double quotation marks to signal direct speech and verbatim quotes, closing quotation marks after the full stop.

Obama said “This is a great day for Ireland.”

If the quotation itself contains a concluding mark, such as an exclamation mark, “no full stop is required after!”

Use single quotation marks to identify words and phrases that are not themselves quotes but to which you wish to draw attention as ‘lexical items’.

Colons and semi-colons

Colons (:) are most often used to indicate a list of items in running text. The part before the colon must be a full sentence in its own right but the second need not be.

Use a semicolon (;) rather than a comma to combine two sentences into one without a linking conjunction.

The committee dealing with the question of commas agreed on a final text; however, the issue of semicolons was not considered.

Hyphens

Compounds may be written as two or more separate words, with hyphen (s), or as a single word.

Postgraduate and undergraduate do not use hyphens.

Use hyphens sparingly but to good purpose...

user-friendly software
two-day meeting
well-known problem
above-mentioned report
policy for the long term, but long-term effects
measures for flood control, but flood-control measures

Abbreviations

The prime consideration when using abbreviations should be to help the reader. First, then, they should be easily understood.

So when an abbreviation that may not be familiar to readers first occurs, it is best to write out the full term followed by the abbreviation in brackets.

The Global Science Project (GSP) should enable the Committee of Scientific Representatives (CSR) to broaden its membership. In recent discussions, a programme of initiatives was agreed between GSP and CSR.

Times, Dates and Years

Write out the month, preceded by a simple figure for the day, separated by a hard space comma and then all four digits referring to the year.

26 January, 2009 not 26th Jan ‘09

When referring to decades write the 1990s (no apostrophe).

The letters AD come before the year number (AD2000), whereas BC follows it (347 BC).

Numbers, weights and measurements

As a general rule write low numbers (zero to nine inclusive) in words and larger numbers (10 and above) in figures.

Note that you should always use figures for statistics and votes:

*3 new officials were appointed in 2002, 6 in 2003 and ...
12 delegations were in favour, 7 against, and 6 abstained*

Always spell out units of measurement, avoiding symbols where possible.