

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD STYLE GUIDE

The following is an excerpt from the full University of Oxford Style Guide: www.ox.ac.uk/styleguide. Although it is made freely available online, it is intended as an in-house guide to enable staff of Oxford University to be consistent, and does not purport to compete with OUP's professional style and writing guides.

General rule

- if there is more than one correct way of writing something, choose whichever uses least space and least ink

Abbreviations

- close up spaces between letters and don't use full stops in abbreviations, contractions or acronyms; but do use spaces between people's initials:

✔ *Dr P A Smith has an MMathPhil and a DPhil in maths*

Capitalisation

- only use capital letters where absolutely required
- capitalise 'college', 'department' etc when used as part of their official name:

✔ *Brasenose College; Department of Engineering Science; Medical Sciences Division; Faculty of Law*

- use lower case for 'college', 'department' etc when used descriptively without the full name:

✔ *the college; the department; the division; the faculty*

- capitalise 'University' whenever referring to Oxford University:

✔ *the University is 800 years old; the collegiate University is a large employer*

- capitalise 'Professor' when followed by a name, but use lower-case when used as a job title:

✔ *Professor Smith is a professor in the Social Sciences Division*

Colleges

- the following colleges have names with unusual spellings or cannot be abbreviated by omitting the word 'College' from their full names:

✔ *All Souls (no apostrophe)*

✔ *Christ Church (never 'Christ Church College')*

✔ *New College (not just 'New')*

✔ *Queen's or The Queen's College (never just 'Queen's College')*

✔ *University College (not just 'University', although 'Univ' is fine in informal settings)*

Dashes/hyphens

hyphens: always closed up to words either side:

- ✔ *use to join prefixes which might cause confusion: pre-eminent; re-release*
- ✔ *use in adjectival phrases preceding a noun: a long-held belief; a first-class degree*
- ✔ *do not use in adjectival phrases following a noun: a belief which has been long held*
- ✔ *do not use in adjectival phrases which include an adverb ending in -ly: a highly paid job; a quickly flowing river*

n-dashes

- with spaces either side, use:

✔ *as a pair, in place of commas or parentheses to separate a phrase*

✔ *singly, in place of a colon to link 2 parts of a sentence which could each stand alone*

- closed up to words or numbers either side, use:

✔ *to link concepts or ranges of numbers/dates: 2014–15; German–Polish pact*

✔ *to link two names who are co-creators or after whom something is named: Lennon–McCartney; Varley–Gladwell prize*

Dates/years

- format as day month year:

✔ *12 January 2016*

✘ *January 12, 2016*

- give date ranges with a closed-up n-dash:

✔ *12–14 January (see also Times below)*

- for academic/financial years, use either an n-dash or a slash but be consistent:

✔ *2016–17 OR 2016/17*

- for decades, do not use an apostrophe:

✔ *the 1970s*

Degrees

- Oxford offers the following types of degree, in the following order of seniority:
 - BA, BFA, BTh – bachelors' degrees (singular: bachelor's degree)
 - MA, MPhil, MSc – masters' degrees (singular: master's degree)
 - DPhil – doctorate

Numbers

- spell out whole-number words for one to ten
- use figures for 11 and above and for percentages, measurements and currency
- if lots of numbers are in a piece of writing, use figures for all of them to allow for easy comparison

Postnominals

- don't feel you have to list all someone's awards, degrees, memberships etc – only list those relevant to the context of the piece
- follow this order when listing postnominals:

✔ *civil honours, military honours, QC, degrees (bachelors' > masters' > doctorates > postdoctoral), diplomas, certificates, fellowships/memberships*

Quotation marks

- place punctuation **before** the closing quotation mark if the quote would have required punctuation in its original form; place it **after** the closing quotation mark if the quote would not require punctuation:

✔ *'Bob,' I asked, 'do you like cheese?' OR 'Bob, do you like cheese?' I asked. OR 'Does Bob', I asked, 'like cheese?'*

- use single quotation marks for quotations/direct speech/titles and double quotation marks for quotations/direct speech/titles within that:

✔ *'I haven't got round to reading "Thomas the Tank Engine" yet,' I said.*

Spelling

✔ *use suffix -ise; -isation; -yse; -ysation*

✘ *NOT -ize; -ization; -yze; -yzation*

Streets

- these Oxford street names are correctly written as follows:
 - St Aldate's
 - St Clement's Street
 - St Ebbe's Street
 - St Giles'
 - St John Street

Terms

- academic terms/vacations at Oxford are spelt and capitalised as follows:
 - Michaelmas term
 - Hilary term
 - Trinity term
 - long vacation

Times

- use either n-dashes or from...to when referring to spans of time, not a mixture of both:

✔ *2–3pm OR from 2 to 3pm; 9am–5pm OR from 9am to 5pm*

✘ *NOT from 2–3pm*

- pick either the 12-hour clock or the 24-hour clock and write all times in the same format:

✔ *12-hour clock: 8am; 5.30pm; noon; midnight*

✔ *24-hour clock: 08:00; 17:30; 12:00; 0:00*

Titles

- academics with knight/damehoods use the academic title first:

✔ *Professor Sir Septimus Albuquerque*

- academics who are also members of the clergy use their clerical title first:

✔ *The Revd Dr Juliet Capulet*

University of Oxford

- use either University of Oxford or Oxford University; they are interchangeable

