University of
Southern
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UniSQ Style Guide for Open Texts

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About this guide

Following the style guide will ensure that authors and copy editors consistently use the same spelling, grammar, and other style rules.

This style guide was adapted from the [BCcampus Open Education Self-Publishing Guide Appendix 2: Style Guide](#) licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](#) ![CC BY]

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Based on style guides:

- *[USQ writing style sheet (May 2021)](#)*
- [Style manual (2020 online edition)](#)
- *[Macquarie dictionary](#)* (available via the [UniSQ Library](#)).

Textual elements

Referencing and attribution

APA referencing is preferred unless the author has a strong preference for another citation style. The chosen referencing style must be applied consistently throughout the book.

Where appropriate, you must give credit to, or attribute, the creator of the work or works you have borrowed from. For further guidance consult the style manual's section on [referencing and attribution](#).

General style

- Language and examples should be inclusive, in accordance with UniSQ's *[Words Matter](#)* and the *[Style manual](#)* inclusive language guidelines.
- Gender neutral language (e.g. 'chairperson') and non-binary pronouns (e.g. 'they', 'them', 'their') should be used for general discussion and examples.

For further guidance consult the style manual's section on [accessible and inclusive content.](#)

Headings

- Headings should be short and informative (fewer than 70 characters).
- Headings should follow a clear hierarchy.
- Heading styles and placement should be consistent throughout.
- Title case is preferred.
- Use minimal punctuation. No full stop.

For further guidance consult the style manual's section on [headings.](#)

Lists

- Bullet lists can be ordered or unordered but numbered lists should always be ordered (e.g. steps in a process).

- Use a colon at the end of lead-in sentences.
- Complete sentences should begin with capital letter and end with a full stop.
- Sentence fragments should not be capitalised and should not end with in a full stop except the last point in the list.
- Don't use 'and' or 'or' to connect items, except before the last item if it is critical to the meaning.

For further guidance consult the style manual's section on lists.

Tables

- Pressbooks has built-in table functionality.
- Tables should be numbered sequentially throughout the book.

For further guidance consult the style manual's section on tables.

Punctuation and capitalisation

Punctuation

- Punctuation should follow Australian conventions and be kept to a minimum. Over-punctuation can be avoided with shorter sentences.
- Screen readers work better with minimal punctuation.
- Use punctuation marks to:
  - end sentences (full stops, exclamation marks and question marks)
  - break up sentences and show the relationship between words and phrases (commas, colons, semicolons, dashes, forward slashes and ellipses)
  - show possession and contractions (apostrophes)
- Use only a single space at end of a sentence.

Full stops

- Only use full stops for the last item on a bullet list unless each item is a full sentence.
- Full stops should be placed *inside* end quotation mark where the quote is a complete sentence, and *outside* end quotation marks where the quote is part of a larger sentence.
- No full stop at the end of:
  - titles
  - headings
  - captions
  - web addresses
  - email addresses
- No full stops between letters in an acronym or initialism.

For further guidance consult the style manual's section on punctuation and conventions.

Colons and semicolons

- Limit colon use. Shorter sentences are preferred.
- Semi-colons are not recommended (especially in bullet lists). Use a comma to create a pause or a full stop to break up the sentence instead.
- Use colons to:
    - start lists
    - start subtitles
    - start block quotes
    - provide more detail
    - introduce a question
    - give an example
    - summarise or contrast
    - write mathematical ratios
- Use lower case after colons unless the next word is a proper noun or the remaining text forms a full sentence or question.

For further guidance consult the style manual's section on colons.

Brackets and parentheses

- Use round brackets (parentheses) if you can remove the enclosed text and the meaning does not change.
- Parentheses enclose cross-references to other parts of the content, definitions, shortened forms, citations, extra detail, clarification and asides.
- Use square brackets in quoted material to show that you have:
    - paraphrased the original content
    - inserted text that was not in the original content
- Follow normal punctuation rules inside brackets.

For further guidance consult the style manual's section on brackets and parentheses.

Dashes

- Use an en dashes as en dashes (Unicode: 2013 ALT+X) and minus signs as minus signs – otherwise this can confuse screen readers.
- Use words instead of en dashes for date and number ranges where possible (for example, 'from', 'to', 'between') – except financial years, terms of office and lifespans.
- Use spaced en dashes for non-essential explanatory information.
- Em dashes are no longer recommended – if you use them, do not space them.

For further guidance consult the style manual's section on dashes.

Quotes

- Use single quotation marks for quoted text and direct speech.

- Double quotation marks are not Australian style – use them only for quotes within quotes.
- Use block quotes without quotation marks for quotes over than 30 words. Select blockquote in the Pressbooks editing menu.
- Use ellipses for omitted words in quotes. Avoid omissions that change or confuse the meaning.
- Use square brackets to add contextual information.
- Use '[*sic*]' – to show errors (for example, spelling mistakes) in quotes.
- Use the original spelling, punctuation and capitalisation in quotes (for example when quoting US material).
- Don't use quotation marks for transcripts – use the speaker's name, followed by a colon instead
- Place punctuation (for example, full stops) outside quotation marks except where the quote forms a complete sentence.

For further guidance consult the style manual's section on quotation marks.

Capitalisation

- Capitalise first word of sentence only, except proper nouns
- Use Title Case for headings
- Use sentence case with italics for titles of works mentioned in the content - except when following APA style.

Numbers and measurements

- Numbers from one to nine should be spelt out as words, unless accompanied by dollar or percentage signs.
- Numbers from 10 onwards should be written as numerals.
- Space in numbers over 9999 (10 000).
- No apostrophe in decades (1940s).
- Centuries can be written as words (nineteenth century) or numbers (19th century), however, this must be consistent.
- En dash with no space should be used for number ranges.
- Numbers should be used for day and year, month should be spelt out in full (25 December 2017).
- Full stop between hours and minutes (9.30 am)
- Two zeroes for even hours (6.00 pm)
- Space between last number and am, pm or noon (12.00 noon)
- Space between numbers and measurements (5 kg)
- Three letter currency code should precede amount, with no space in between (AUD$100)

For further guidance consult the style manual's section on numbers and measurements.

Shortened words and phrases

- Avoid using abbreviations where possible.
- Place or organisation names should be written out in full the first time, followed by the acronym in parentheses, to be used in subsequent mentions.
- Abbreviated place or organisation names can also be used in tables or where space is limited.

- Abbreviations of scientific or technical terms can be used if the term is written out in full in parentheses after the first instance.

For further guidance consult the style manual's section on [shortened words and phrases](#).

Italics

- Limit use of italics
- Italicise:
  - foreign words
  - titles of works
  - legal cases and Acts
  - published works

For further guidance consult the style manual's section on [italics.](#)

Links

- Use the in-built function in Pressbooks for links.
- External links should open in a new window.
- Internal links should open in the same window.
- When linking directly to files, file type and size should be included in square brackets after the link.
- Don't end URLs with full stops.
- Ensure link text doesn't contain a full stop.
- Use descriptive links when hyperlinking

Visual elements

Identifiers

Corporate colours and logos

- [UniSQ Brand Toolkit](#)
- A UniSQ logo must be used in entirety.
- University of Southern Queensland is preferred for external use.

Images

- Images must be copyright compliant. CC image licences must be [compatible](#) with the book's CC licence.
- Upload images to the Pressbooks Media Library.
- Figures should be sequentially numbered.
- Captions should include attribution statement

- - Title, Author, Source & Licence (TASL)
  - No full stop at the end of the caption.
- Include alt text for informative images, not for decorative images.
  - Keep alt text short and descriptive

For further guidance consult the style manual's section on alt-text for images.