Sheffield Hallam University copy style guide

This is a guide to the University house style. It covers areas where there's no universally accepted right or wrong in modern English. In these cases, the most important thing is to be consistent, which is what this style guide is here to help with.

This guide includes reasons behind our decisions. Although nothing in the style guide is wrong, it's natural that people will have different opinions about the judgements we've made on which conventions to adopt.

But it's important to know that our decisions are always based on market research with our audiences and plain English principles – making our communications as clear and digestible as possible.

Please use University style consistently.

Our references

For standard English usage and practice we use the *Guardian* style guide, which can be found online at www.guardian.co.uk/styleguide

A

Ampersand (&)
Don't use ampersands. Use *and*, unless referring to a company where it's a recognised part of the name, such as Marks & Spencer.

B

Bullets
University style is to make text as easy to scan as possible. Using bullets helps readers navigate the text and avoids long and unwieldy sentences.

Bulleted lists
Use a bulleted list if the items are fairly long.

Where the bulleted items follow on from the start of a sentence, or the items are not sentences in their own right, **don't**
• automatically capitalise the first word of the bulleted item
• use colons, semicolons, or any punctuation before the first bulleted item
• use colons or semicolons or full stops at the end of each bulleted item. The exception is if the bulleted item contains any additional sentences. In this circumstance a full stop is required.
• use *and* between the last two items
• put a full stop after the final bulleted item

Where the bulleted items comprise a list of self-contained sentences, use normal sentence punctuation, including a capital at the start and a full stop at the end. This is because in this instance the bullets are acting as a design feature rather than a grammatical device.

Example
▪ Talk to your friends, family, or teachers at school or college.
▪ Make a list of your strengths and what you enjoy.
▪ Do some background reading on the subjects you are interested in, or see if you can arrange some work experience.

Inline bullets

Use inline bullets for more than three items if each point is short. University style is not to use *and* between the last two items.

Examples
You can find careers in areas such as • financial services • teaching • civil service • local government • police service • criminal justice service.

Choose three modules from • mathematics • chemistry • physics • geography • history or English language. (Note in this example that there is no bullet before English language, as this is one of two choices for the final item.)

If the whole piece of text is just a list, not a sentence, you don't need to capitalise the start or use a full stop at the end.

Example
Year one modules
• business analysis • financial and management information • understanding and managing customers • managing resources • business environment • understanding innovation and creativity

C

Campus names
Always give the full name for campuses, which are
- City Campus
- Collegiate Campus

Use initial capitals. But don't use an initial capital when just using *campus* alone.

> **Example**
> Our City Campus is based in the city centre, next to rail and bus stations. Our Collegiate Crescent Campus is just outside the centre, set in parkland just off a main road. This campus hosts our main sports facilities, though there are also gyms and fitness suites at the City Campus.

Capitalisation
University style is to keep capitalisation to a minimum. Don't use it unless you have a specific reason. Too many initial capitals can make text difficult to read or scan.

Capitalise
• full course titles such as *BA (Honours) Biology* – but don't capitalise *your biology degree* or *this biology course*
• full names of buildings
• titles of named departments such as *International Office, Faculty of Health and Wellbeing, Centre for Food Innovation* – but you should still write *the office, the faculty, the centre* when not using the full name
• *University* when specifically referring to Sheffield Hallam University, but not when referring to other universities or the experience of university in general

Job titles
Don't capitalise job titles. You wouldn't capitalise *butcher* or *baker*, and neither should you capitalise *senior lecturer* or *course administrator*. The only exceptions are *Chancellor*, *Vice-Chancellor* and *Pro Vice-Chancellor*, which it is University style to capitalise.

Module titles
Don't capitalise module titles. They often appear in long lists, and capitalising them makes it hard to read. Research shows this is especially true online.

> **Example**
> Year two options
> • gender and crime • sex, violence and crime • student lives in criminology • legal and policy frameworks/criminal justice and penal policy • understanding deviance in the workplace (work-based learning) • young people and deviancy • sociology of risk • mentally disordered offenders in the criminal justice system • knowledge and practices in justice related organisations • race, ethnicity, crime and criminal justice • witnesses and victims • psychology in practice • applying cognition • reading and language disorders • animals in psychology • sensation and perception • counselling and psychotherapy in practice
>
> is clearer and easier to read than
>
> Year two options
> • Gender and Crime • Sex, Violence and Crime • Student Lives in Criminology • Legal and Policy Frameworks/Criminal Justice and Penal Policy • Understanding Deviance in the Workplace (Work-Based Learning) • Young People and Deviancy • Sociology of Risk •

If referring to a module in a sentence, use inline bullets where possible.

Example
In your final year you can choose one of • exploring drug use • hate crime and extremist ideology.

Centuries
Names of centuries are acceptable using figures or numbers, but be consistent within a publication.

Don't capitalise. Only use a hyphen if there is any risk of ambiguity. Normally there isn't.

Examples
You will study 20th century literature *or* you will study twentieth century literature
Equipped for the 21st century *or* equipped for the twenty first century

Colon (:)
Avoid colons. Often they contribute to sentences being long and complex. Splitting into two simpler sentences may be all you need to do. If not, try to rewrite the copy to avoid using them.

If you use colons, there is no space before the colon: this sentence is the way to do it. Never follow them with a dash (:-).

Course titles
The correct way to write a course title is *BA (Honours) History*. There is a space between *BA* and *(Honours)*. In prospectus entries we always write *honours* in full. In other contexts *BSc (Hons)* or similar is acceptable, but be consistent.

Don't capitalise subject areas outside of full course titles.

Example
Our BA (Honours) History includes the study of history and analytical theory. This history degree is the UK's first to include both subjects.

See also *award abbreviations*.

D

Dashes
When using a dash in sentences – such as this – always use an en dash. You can make an en dash by simultaneously pressing the Ctrl key and the hyphen (or subtract) key on the top-right hand side of the keyboard, next to the numberpad (see below).

Use an en dash without spaces to show a range or connection between words, such as *20–50 metres*, *7.30–9.30pm* or *5–12 January*.

Dates and seasons
Use 25 July, not July 25 or 25th July.

Don't put the day of the week and year, unless needed for clarity. If you use years, the format is 2000–01 not 2000/1. Use an en dash when showing a range of numbers.

Write names of centuries without initial capitals or hyphens. Just write, for instance, *nineteenth century.*

In online writing, avoid vague time references like *will soon be online,* and relative time references such as *last year* or *next year.* Online time references need to be specific. Dates and times online are likely to need updating to avoid the information appearing untrustworthy.

Don't capitalise the names of seasons, but do capitalise religious or cultural periods such as Easter, Christmas and Ramadan.

E

Email addresses
Do not hyphenate *email.* There are no capital letters in email addresses.

If an email address comes at the end of a sentence, don't follow it with a full stop. This avoids confusion about whether the full stop is part of the address. The same goes for web addresses.

We don't use 'www.' at the start of a URL (this is a new development so you may see this on older deliverables or on some websites etc).

Exclamation mark (!)
Avoid. Don't use for emphasis. An exclamation mark makes text come across as shouting! Many readers find this inappropriate. Don't use to show humour or surprise.

F

Faculty
Use an initial capital only when you are giving the full faculty title.

Example
The Faculty of Organisation and Management works extensively this area.
but
The faculty launches a new course in this area next semester

Full-time
Two words, hyphenated

H

Headings and subheadings
Use an initial capital on the first word only. Make headings and subheadings meaningful so that readers can use them to scan by understanding what is likely to be written below.

Examples
Benefit from industry expertise
Opportunities to study abroad

Hyphenation

Much hyphenation is by personal convention rather than grammatical rule. Consistency is the single biggest issue. University style is to keep hyphenation to a minimum.

Here are some examples of when hyphens are needed.

Compound adjectives
Hyphenate phrases ending in *-ed*, such as *computer-aided*, where the first word is a noun and the second word ends in *-ed*. The exception to this is when the first word ends in *-ly*, such as *beautifully constructed*. Most words ending in *-ly* are adverbs. They don't need additional construction to describe a verb.

Always hyphenate full-time and part-time.

Phrases of three words or more
Hyphenate phrases of three words or more when used directly before a noun, but not when they stand alone.

> **Example**
> Our up-to-date facilities are based in the city centre.
> but
> We make sure our city centre facilities are kept up to date.

When there is a genuine danger of confusion
Hyphenate phrases where you genuinely need to avoid ambiguity or confusion, such *as we run four five-day courses.* But note that it's quite rare to create ambiguity by not hyphenating a phrase. Do it only if there is real risk of confusion.

J

Job titles
Avoid using University job titles in general writing, unless they genuinely add meaning that helps you put your point across. Don't capitalise job titles, including when they are referring to an individual person.

> **Examples**
> Previous graduates have found careers as bank managers, financial consultants and accountants.
> Jane Doe is now marketing manager for Benson Foods, Oxford.

Exceptions are Vice-Chancellor and Pro Vice-Chancellor. Pro is a separate word and not hyphenated, though it does have an initial capital.

Make a serious effort to avoid lists of University job titles and multiple references to them in marketing com

P

Part-time
Two words, hyphenated

Postgraduate
One word, not hyphenated. Always write in full apart from abbreviated versions of course titles such as PgCert and PgDip.

Q

Quotation marks (')

University style is to use single quotation marks. Use double quotation marks only when there is a quote within a quote.

Do not use for the titles of books, plays, films, TV or other works – just initial caps will do.

Example
Professor Hopgood's textbook Intelligent Systems for Engineers and Scientists is ranked as a bestseller.

R

Ranges

For numerical, time or date ranges use *from* and *to*, or use an en dash without spaces.

Example

Children aged 12–16, or children aged from 12 to 16, *but not* children aged from 12–16
The course runs from August to December *or* the course runs August–December

S

Semicolon (;)

University style is to avoid where possible. Research suggests that many of our readers are uncertain about why and where to use them. It is almost always possible to avoid semicolon use through rephrasing or replacing with an en-dash, or bullets for a list.

SHU

Avoid the acronym SHU in place of Sheffield Hallam University. We often say 'Sheffield Hallam', the University, or as often as possible *we*. We do, however, use SHU when it's part of established name of something such as shuspace or SHU Go.

Spaces

Use one space in between sentences, not two.

Subject areas

Don't capitalise subject areas except when they are used as part of a full course title, such as *BA (Honours) History*. Write about how students study *history, biology and electronics,* not that they study *History, Biology and Electronics*.

T

Time

Use am and pm with no space or punctuation after. Normally use the 12 hour clock and use the shortest form of the time.
Examples
4pm, not 4.00pm

For time ranges use an en dash with no spaces

Examples
4–5pm
4.30–9pm

U

Undergraduate
One word, not hyphenated

University
When referring to Sheffield Hallam University use an initial capital. When referring to universities generically use all lower case.

Example
The University has recently opened a new Students' Union building. We believe it compares to that of any other university.