



Xarxa Vives  
d'universitats



INTERUNIVERSITY  
STYLE GUIDE  
FOR WRITING INSTITUTIONAL  
TEXTS IN ENGLISH

MANUAL D'ESTIL  
INTERUNIVERSITARI  
PER A LA REDACCIÓ DE TEXTOS  
INSTITUCIONALS EN ANGLÈS

QUARTA EDICIÓ

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QUARTA EDICIÓ, 2024

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## PREFACI DE LA QUARTA EDICIÓ

La primera edició del *Manual d'estil interuniversitari per a la redacció de textos institucionals en anglès* s'emmarcava en el Pla de política lingüística 2012–2014 de la Xarxa Vives d'Universitats. Ve a tomb aquí remarcar dos aspectes fonamentals: d'una banda, que cada universitat de la Xarxa ha de ser una comunitat universitària multilingüe amb individus plurilingües i, d'una altra, que la Xarxa té un compromís amb la projecció exterior del català i de les relacions institucionals i internacionals.

Com a resposta a les observacions i recomanacions fetes per la comunitat universitària i atès que la revisió periòdica d'aquest tipus de recursos és necessària, s'ha revisat aquesta nova edició. Esperem que aquest manual millorat continuï ajudant els usuaris a perfeccionar les seves tècniques comunicatives i a escriure textos en anglès amb més facilitat, i també que respongui a les necessitats creixents del personal universitari per donar forma a documents institucionals en anglès.

El foment del multilingüisme, un dels eixos fonamentals de les universitats de la regió Vives, es concreta en diferents objectius específics, entre els quals en destaquem dos: la millora de les competències lingüístiques de l'alumnat, del PTGAS i del PDI en terceres llengües i l'elaboració de criteris lingüístics en anglès. El manual que presentem és fruit d'aquest plantejament: facilitarà sens dubte la comunicació interuniversitària institucional i augmentarà la qualitat lingüística de la informació elaborada amb finalitats de projecció internacional; de retruc, farà que el personal universitari millori els seus coneixements de llengua anglesa i per tant sigui més competent lingüísticament, una altra de les necessitats manifestes i recollida arreu.

Finalment, hem de valorar especialment que vint-i-dues universitats treballin efectivament en xarxa i es dotin d'uns criteris lingüístics en anglès únics, comuns i homogenis. I aquest treball ha estat possible, en primer lloc, gràcies a l'activitat conjunta dels serveis lingüístics universitaris, que n'han estat els elaboradors i revisors; els tècnics lingüístics, amb una llarga trajectòria en les institucions d'educació superior, tenen la màxima competència per seleccionar i elaborar els criteris per produir textos adequats a les finalitats de comunicació i intercanvi internacionals, coneixen a bastament la terminologia universitària i han tingut especialment en compte les necessitats específiques dels catalanoparlants com a productors d'informació. En segon lloc, també agraïm la participació de diverses unitats i serveis universitaris, que han aportat els seus comentaris per tal de garantir-ne l'adequació a les situacions comunicatives específiques de l'àmbit universitari.

## PREFACE TO THE FOURTH EDITION

The first edition of the *Interuniversity Style Guide for Writing Institutional Texts in English* was a product of the Vives Network of Universities Language Policy Plan 2012–2014 and its publication was – and still is – an opportunity to remember two of our organisation’s guiding principles: first, that our universities should be multilingual communities whose members can demonstrate linguistic competence in a variety of languages; and second, that the Network itself is committed to making the Catalan language and our institutional and international relations more widely visible abroad.

Because resources of this nature need to be reviewed on a regular basis, and in response to the observations and suggestions made by the university community, this new edition has been revised from start to finish. We hope this new, improved Guide will not only continue to help users perfect their communication techniques and write better English-language texts but also respond to the ever-increasing needs of university staff to draft institutional documents in English.

The promotion of multilingualism is the general objective of one of the four axes in the Vives Network’s Plan and is given form in three specific objectives, two of which are important here: the improvement of the third-language communication skills of students, administrative and service staff and teaching and research staff; and the creation of English-language resources and guidelines for English language use. Amongst other initiatives, the Guide is the result of our universities’ efforts to address these specific objectives. We believe that it will play an essential role in facilitating interuniversity communication and improving the quality of the institutional English-language documents we produce for international readers. It will also help our community bolster its knowledge of the English language and acquire the linguistic competence in English that is widely considered to be necessary.

Finally, if there is value in the fact that twenty-two different universities can work together and eventually share a single set of homogeneous, English-language guidelines, then we have two groups of people to thank for that. First, there are the university language services who coordinated their efforts to write and revise the Guide. Building on extensive professional experience in higher education and a familiarity with our community’s terminology and with Catalan speakers’ specific needs as producers of information, the language specialists in those services have proved their ability to select and write guidelines to ensure that our English-language texts suit the purposes of international communication and exchange. And second, we should also thank the various university units which have given their feedback to help tailor the Guide to our specific communicative needs.



## INTRODUCCIÓ

La internacionalització creixent dels estudis universitaris requereix que les universitats de parla catalana adoptin polítiques i pràctiques noves que puguin donar resposta al context acadèmic canviant sense perdre posicions en termes de qualitat acadèmica, adequació internacional i capacitat econòmica. Per arribar a mercats nous i assegurar que els estudiants se sentin atrets pel nostre sistema educatiu, és necessari produir en anglès, la *lingua franca* internacional actual, documents de tot tipus: convenis, plans d'estudis, material promocional o pàgines web, entre d'altres.

Aquesta situació representa un desafiament constant per a les persones que han d'escriure, traduir o publicar el deversall de documentació que genera la universitat. Com podem assegurar que la gran varietat de documents ofereix una imatge unificada i coherent de les universitats implicades que, a més, evidencia la qualitat dels serveis que ofereixen?

El *Manual d'estil interuniversitari per a la redacció de textos institucionals en anglès* intenta donar resposta a la pregunta anterior. Està pensat per als docents, els investigadors, el personal d'administració i serveis, i els professionals de la llengua que han de redactar documentació institucional en anglès. Tot i que una de les seccions recull criteris generals de redacció, la paraula *estil* del títol fa referència a les convencions lingüístiques relatives a l'ortografia, la puntuació, la tipografia i altres aspectes editorials: tot és essencial per garantir textos coherents, clars i precisos en termes lingüístics i formals. La coherència en aquests aspectes dona claredat i cohesió als textos, cosa que, al seu torn, en facilita i simplifica la comprensió. Com a transmissores de coneixement, és essencial que les universitats siguin rigoroses en l'ús de la llengua per aconseguir l'objectiu científic de descriure la realitat i la seva complexitat de manera clara i assequible.

Aquest manual, que ha pres com a referència altres guies d'estil (*English Style Guide*, de la Direcció General de Traducció de la Comissió Europea, *The Chicago Manual of Style*, *The Oxford Manual of Style*, etc.), està organitzada en diferents seccions: ortografia, puntuació, majúscules i minúscules, abreviacions i símbols, nombres, ús no sexista de la llengua, criteris de traducció, redacció, eines per a la redacció de textos i models de documents. Conté tres apèndixs: abreviacions habituals, formes de plural remarcables i expressions llatines amb les equivalències en anglès. Al llarg del text s'usen dues convencions simples per presentar els exemples incorrectes: les frases s'indiquen amb un asterisc i les paraules o els segments estan ratllats.

\*The Arabic discussion group will meet from 3 p.m.– 6.30 p.m. on Thursdays.

~~the 1990's~~

D'altra banda, les frases inadequades estilísticament estan precedides de l'expressió *Therefore, not* i, al darrere, hi apareix la paraula *but* seguida d'una frase més adequada.

Do not use a colon to substitute a comma. Therefore, not

To complete your admission application: send the required documents by the end of the month.

but

To complete your admission application, send the required documents by the end of the month.

Estem segurs, doncs, que aquest manual i les recomanacions que conté serviran d'ajuda a qui hagi de treballar textos en anglès, i desitgem que es converteixi en un instrument imprescindible que faciliti la tasca diària de moltes persones.

## INTRODUCTION

The growing internationalisation of higher education requires universities from Catalan-speaking territories to adopt new policies and practices if they are to respond to the changing global academic environment and not fall behind in terms of improved academic quality, international understanding and commercial advantage. In order to reach out to new markets and to ensure that students are attracted to our educational system, documents of many kinds – including agreements, syllabuses, advertising material and websites – now need to be produced in English, the current international lingua franca.

This situation places considerable demands on those responsible for writing, translating and publishing university documents. How can we ensure that the wide variety of documents produced give a uniform corporate image of the universities in accord with the quality of the services provided?

The *Interuniversity Style Guide for Writing Institutional Texts in English* intends to respond to this demand for quality. It is designed for use by the administrative, teaching and research staff and language professionals who are responsible for writing institutional texts in English. Although one section focuses on how to write clearly, the word *style* in the title refers not to literary style but to those linguistic conventions concerning spelling, punctuation, typographical display and other editorial issues that are essential for consistent, clear and precise language and layout. Consistency in these areas leads to clarity and cohesion which, in turn, makes documents more straightforward for readers. As transmitters of knowledge, universities have to be rigorous in their use of language so that they can fulfil the scientific purpose of describing reality and making the complexity of this reality more readily understandable.

Loosely modelled on existing style manuals (the *English Style Guide* of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Translation, *The Chicago Manual of Style*, *The Oxford Manual of Style*, etc.), this guide is organised into sections dealing with spelling, punctuation, capitalisation, abbreviations and symbols, numbers, gender, singular and plural, translation, writing in English, tools for digital text production and model documents. It also contains three appendices: common abbreviations, unusual plural forms and Latin terms with English equivalents. Throughout the text we use two simple conventions to indicate examples of incorrect language: sentences are preceded by an asterisk while short phrases are crossed out.

\*The Arabic discussion group will meet from 3 p.m.–6.30 p.m. on Thursdays.

~~the 1990's~~

Stylistically inappropriate sentences, on the other hand, are introduced by the words *Therefore*, *not* and followed by the word *but* and a new, more appropriate sentence.

Do not use a colon to substitute a comma. Therefore, not

To complete your admission application: send the required documents by the end of the month.

but

To complete your admission application, send the required documents by the end of the month.

We trust that the guidance and recommendations provided within these pages will be of help to anyone who has the task of preparing English-language texts and that this guide will become part of daily working life for many.

## 1. SPELLING

Many questions related to spelling can be resolved simply by referring to a dictionary or using a good computer spellchecker. But there are also issues that require more careful consideration and that cannot be resolved automatically. This section of the Guide provides recommendations on such issues, including the general conventions applicable to spelling, such as use of British and American variants, and the consequences of these conventions (for example, ligatures and consonant doubling). By “American” here we refer to the English written in the United States of America. There are other American Englishes in Canada and the Caribbean, and other Englishes around the world, but in regard to spelling the British and American (USA) variants are the dominant alternatives. We also refer to other considerations that are not strictly in the province of spelling but that nevertheless affect the way the language is written; issues here include the use or non-use of diacritics, italics and hyphens.

### 1.1 Conventions

As a reflection of our European geographical situation, we recommend the use of British English in most contexts, particularly for institutional documents. Some universities within the Vives Network of Universities have opted to use British English combined with so-called Oxford spelling, which is based on the Oxford Dictionary. In certain ways, it is similar to spelling in American English; in others, it resembles British spelling conventions. Details are given in Section 1.1.1.

In some situations, many university texts may be addressed specifically to American readers or may be for or from an academic ambit in which American English is more usual. In such cases, use common sense and discretion in deciding which variant is more suitable.

We strongly recommend, however, that only one variant of English be used within a single text or related series of texts, for reasons of coherence.

#### 1.1.1 Differences in spelling between British and American English

For most general purposes, there is little significant difference between British and American English in written texts. In practically all circumstances, any text written in standard British English will be comprehensible to an American reader, and vice versa.

Historically, in British usage both the *ise* and *ize* spellings have been accepted in verbs like *organise/organize* and *recognise/recognize* and other parts of speech derived from them (*organisation/organization* and *recognisable/recognizable*). The *ise* spelling is used more frequently in a broad range of publications. Therefore, we recommend that the *ise*, *yse* and *isation* forms be used, except where the context specifically requires American spelling.

As we stated in Section 1.1 above, some universities within the Vives Network have opted to use British English with Oxford spelling. In the following paragraphs, we will highlight the spelling differences and similarities between British English, with and without Oxford spelling, and American English.

<b>British</b>	<b>Oxford</b>	<b>American</b>
authorise	authorize	authorize
authorisation	authorization	authorization
digitise	digitize	digitize
digitisation	digitization	digitization
finalise	finalize	finalize
finalising	finalizing	finalizing
globalise	globalize	globalize
globalisation	globalization	globalization

The Greek root *lys*, found in British English verbs like *analyse*, is also conserved in Oxford spelling. American English equivalents (*analyze*) are again the result of standardisation reforms. Some other verbs that follow this pattern are listed below.

<b>British</b>	<b>Oxford</b>	<b>American</b>
catalyse	catalyse	catalyze
electrolyse	electrolyse	electrolyze
paralyse	paralyse	paralyze

Remember, however, that British English, Oxford spelling and American English all spell certain words always with an *s* or with a *z*. In the case of *s*, this happens when *ise* is not a complete suffix but a fragment of a longer component like *cise*, *mise*, *prise* or *vise*, often from French past participles. Some of the more relevant ones are listed below.

advertise	advise	compromise	disguise
enterprise	exercise	improvise	merchandise
supervise	surprise	televise	revise

In the case of the letter *z*, this happens with a small number of words including *prize* and *size*.

The following summary lists other well-known and now commonly accepted distinctions between British and American spelling.

<b>British English</b>	<b>American English</b>
<i>ce</i> (defence)	<i>se</i> (defense)
<i>our</i> (colour)	<i>or</i> (color)
<i>re</i> (centre)	<i>er</i> (center)

Also, note that British usage has the form *programme* (as opposed to the American *program*) except when referring to computer code, in which case *program* is preferred.

### 1.1.2 Ligatures

Although the *æ/œ* spelling (known as a ligature, in which two or more letters are graphically combined) for more technical words (e.g., *oestrogen*, *caesium*, *haematology* or *orthopaedics*) is still in use in British English, this is now not universally the case for most other words that were traditionally written with a ligature; these words now have a single written vowel that substitutes the older *æ* form (*medieval* and *encyclopedia* being well-known examples). Opt for the simplified spelling for all such non-technical words.

### 1.1.3 Double consonants before suffixes

Where consonants are doubled for monosyllabic words (basically, after a short vowel and immediately before a suffix beginning with a vowel such as *ing*, *er*, *est* or *ed*), British and American English spelling is the same.

flat	flattest
stop	stoppable
shop	shopping

For words of more than one syllable, however, differences between British and American usage can differ.

#### i) The letter *l*

As an indication for when to double this final consonant in British English, we replicate the explanation given in Section 1.5 of the *English Style Guide* of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Translation (see Bibliography): "In British usage, a final *l* is doubled after a short vowel on adding *ing* or *ed* to verbs (sole exception: *parallel*, *paralleled*) and adding *er* to make nouns from verbs".

Examples would include the following:

Membership will probably level off by the end of the year.

Student interest in the new programmes has levelled off since January.

All those wishing to travel under the terms of the new grant should contact the International Office.

This regulation applies to administrative staff who travelled during the first semester.

Model your task on one of the following diagrams.

Project modellers will need a minimum of five years' experience.

In American English, except for words ending in *al* (*final/finally*; *minimal/minimally*), *l* is usually not doubled before a suffix.

travel, traveling, traveled, traveler

model, modeling, modeled, modeler

level, leveling, leveled, leveler



Finally, there are certain words ending in *l* in British English which double this consonant in American English:

<b>British English</b>	<b>American English</b>
enrol	enroll
fulfil	fulfill
appal	appall

Note that the *l* is accordingly doubled or not in derivatives ending in *ment*:

<b>British English</b>	<b>American English</b>
enrolment	enrollment
fulfilment	fulfillment

## ii) Other consonants

Usage may vary considerably between British and American English in the doubling of a consonant other than *l* at the end of a word. If in doubt, consult a reliable English dictionary. However, the following observations generally hold for both variants. The consonants *t* and *r* double before *ed* and *ing* if the last syllable of the root word is stressed.

The Department will admit students who meet the following requirements.

The Dean admitted that faculty disruptions were inevitable.

Students must submit their assignments in the agreed format.

Applicants who are submitting their papers in June should fill in the following form.

The Rector will confer an honorary doctorate on two renowned sociologists.

The University has rarely conferred such degrees in this academic field.

Faculty members will refer all complaints to the Dean.

Reliable international research should be referred to for clarification.

In contrast, for two-syllable words whose first syllable is stressed, the final consonant is not doubled.

open	opening	opened
focus	focusing	focused
target	targeting	targeted

In British English, the exception to this are two-syllable words ending in *p*, where the final consonant is doubled even when the principal stress is on the first syllable.

The new dean plans to equip laboratories with the latest technology.

The science labs are equipped with state-of-the-art instruments.

## 1.2 Diacritics

Diacritics are marks added above or below a letter (or sometimes within or between letters). In the Roman alphabet, they are basically used to indicate a modification in the pronunciation of the letter in question.

Unlike some European languages, which make use of a large number of diacritics, modern English does not have any. However, some borrowed words may be written in English with their original non-English diacritic. The most common are the so-called grave ( ` ) or acute ( ´ ) accents, the cedilla ( ¸ ), the umlaut/dieresis ( ¨ ), the tilde ( ~ ) and the circumflex ( ^ ), but they rarely affect pronunciation (for exceptional cases, see Section 1.2.1 Ambiguity). Overall, borrowed words tend to lose their diacritics over time because of processes of simplification and assimilation, and the fact that diacritics are not easily typed on an English keyboard.

### 1.2.1 Ambiguity

Use diacritics when their absence could result in ambiguity. For example, *exposé*, *résumé* and *rosé*, when unaccented, look like different words (in this case, *expose*, *resume* and *rose*, respectively). In many cases, when there is no possible ambiguity, you do not need to use the original diacritic (for example, *facade*, *deja-vu* or *doppelganger*). In other cases, however, assimilated foreign words, including some borrowed from French (for example, *attaché*, *communiqué* and *soufflé*) and, increasingly, from Spanish (*jalapeño* and *piñata*), often keep the original diacritic.

### 1.2.2 Names

With names in other languages, use all the diacritics correctly and consistently. Therefore,

Please contact Dr González Martí, assistant rector for Communication, for further information.

The plenary talk was given by Professor Johan Lübeck, a specialist in medieval German manuscripts.

### 1.2.3 Other words

When an English text uses foreign words or phrases that are not names but that have diacritics in the original language, you should either keep all such marks or else use none at all. Be consistent. If you decide to use them, remember that they should also be used on capital letters.

The Concept of *Égalité* in the Recognition of Non-EU Degrees in France: A Critical Analysis

## 1.3 Italics

Italics are often used to emphasise words or phrases.

Remember that you will only have *five minutes* to present your conclusion.

All assignments must be handed in by *Friday 11 May*.

However, we generally recommend restricting their use to the following cases.

### 1.3.1 Titles of books, journals and other publications

Unless following specific editorial guidelines, write the titles of books, journals and other published materials such as dictionaries and reference works in italics, to distinguish the titles from the rest of the sentence.

Recent research into the applications of microbial cyanobacteria on oil pollution has been published in the latest edition of the prestigious journal *Science Today*.

Be aware, however, that conventions for indicating the title of a book or journal may vary depending on the publication or academic field. You will therefore have to bear these factors in mind, depending on the purpose of your text and where it will be published. For additional comment, see Section 3.2.2 Publications and the Bibliography.

### 1.3.2 Words and expressions in other languages

Italicise words or expressions from other languages that are not common in English (that is, words not included in a reliable English dictionary) and that may therefore not be readily understood.

The ceiling of the Faculty's *Aula Magna* offers visitors a beautiful example of Catalan *Modernisme*.

Other expressions of this kind are the Latin terms for academic distinction *cum laude*, *magna cum laude* and *summa cum laude* (meaning “with honour”, “with great honour” and “with highest honour”, respectively), which should be italicised.

But note that foreign words that have now become common in English do not require italics.

addendum	ad hoc	alma mater	attaché
avant-garde	communiqué	force majeure	in vivo
status quo	vice versa	zeitgeist	

Note also that, in the event of using a non-English form for the official name of an organisation (universities, companies, governmental bodies, etc.), these names are not written in italics.

The University is currently involved in discussions with the Red Española de Supercomputación (Spanish Supercomputing Network).

## 1.4 Hyphens

The use or non-use of hyphens is a complex issue. The same words may sometimes be considered correct with or without hyphens, such as is the case with *email* and *e-mail*. The general tendency, however, is to use them less, especially due to the influence of electronic and social media, where hyphens are often considered superfluous or untidy. There are thousands of examples of recently disappearing hyphens, such as the following recommendations taken from the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*.

Formerly hyphenated words split in two:

fire drill      ice cream      test tube

Formerly hyphenated words written as one:

pigeonhole      upmarket      waterborne

To avoid unnecessary difficulties, we will give only certain basic guidelines.

### 1.4.1 Prefixes

Many words beginning with a prefix are written with a hyphen (*co-payment*); many are not (*overproduction*). Confusingly, there are also cases where both forms are considered acceptable (British: *pre-school* / American: *preschool*). As can be seen from this last example, the tendency in American English is to hyphenate less than in British English. In any event, if in doubt about whether a prefix should be followed by a hyphen, consult a reliable dictionary. However, the following observations generally hold.

Words beginning with a common prefix (such as *un*, *dis* or *re*) are often written without a hyphen.

Current levels of absenteeism in many subjects are unacceptably high.

Student representatives have disregarded criticism from the Rector, calling it uninformed and unfair.

This initiative reaffirms the strong ties between the two universities.

Nevertheless, make sure to hyphenate when the prefix *re* precedes a word beginning with *e*, such as *re-evaluate*, or when the hyphen can help avoid confusion, such as *re-sent* vs *resent* or *re-sign* vs *resign*.

Hyphenate all words formed by a prefix and a word beginning with a capital letter.

This movement is a pan-European response to failures in education.

The research confirms a growing anti-British sentiment in commercial relations.

The trans-Siberian railway attracts many students seeking adventure.

But note that words like *transatlantic*, *transpacific* or *subarctic* are normally written as single words with no capitalisation.

### 1.4.2 Compound adjectives

Hyphenate compound adjectives before a noun to indicate that the adjectives should be read as a unit, thereby avoiding ambiguity.

small-city mayors [as opposed to city mayors who are small]

a popular-music producer [as opposed to a music producer who is popular]

Although hyphens are only sometimes needed to avoid misunderstanding, hyphenate compound adjectives even when confusion is unlikely.

a little-discussed problem

a low-prevalence phenomenon

a well-meaning intervention

However, do not hyphenate compound adjectives in which the first element is an adverb ending in either *ly* or *y*.

a compellingly argued paper

a highly detailed research proposal

a very engaging argument

Similarly, do not hyphenate compound adjectives in which the first element is a comparative or superlative.

the most cited research paper

a less complicated suggestion

### 1.4.3 Phrasal verbs

#### i) Nouns formed from phrasal verbs

Nouns formed from phrasal verbs are often written as a single word and may or may not be hyphenated. If in doubt, consult a dictionary.

The dropouts from this course are unusually high.

Funding problems have meant that these projects have been put on standby.

A major follow-up to this study has already been planned.

Last year's buy-in allowed our faculty to open three new laboratories.

#### ii) Adjectives formed from phrasal verbs

When a phrasal verb is used as an adjective, it is usually hyphenated.

Students participating in this initiative were given additional information during the signing-on phase.

During the warm-up period, there will be no assessment.

### 1.4.4 Word breaks

Hyphens can be used to break words up into their component parts to facilitate reading by avoiding doubled letters.

Part-time teaching staff play an increasingly important role in the MA programme.

The Office of Health and Safety's harm-minimisation strategy was instrumental in reducing the spread of Covid among the staff.

But note that certain high-frequency terms are no longer hyphenated.

Cooperation among participating universities is gradually increasing.

Macroeconomic factors have led to considerable modifications in research funding.

Words that are part of a name may be exceptions to this rule.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

### 1.4.5 Compounds with the same root and different prefixes

When a noun is preceded by more than one hyphenated prefix, write the prefixes as follows.

In a pioneering study, the Department of Psychology is currently researching the pre- and post-natal effects of carbon monoxide.



## 2. PUNCTUATION

Punctuation is an important aspect of any written text. Good punctuation organises or divides the text to make meaning clearer; poor punctuation will make it difficult to understand.

### 2.1 General guidelines

Use common sense. Punctuation should help make written language clear to readers. If it does not, it should not be there. In line with most modern recommendations on this subject, we recommend light use of punctuation: as much as is necessary but no more.

#### 2.1.1 Precedence

Be careful of using two or more punctuation marks in succession. Generally speaking, use the stronger or more necessary one. For example, question and exclamation marks are stronger than commas and full stops. However, quotation marks, brackets and ellipsis points are often used next to other punctuation marks. In the first of the two examples below, the question mark is used instead of the habitual comma and precedes the closing quotation marks; and in the second, a full stop is not needed because the exclamation mark already ends the sentence.

“Have all the results been reported?” asked the researcher.

Fees must be paid by 20 December!

#### 2.1.2 Punctuation and spacing

Punctuation marks in English – apart from dashes, ellipsis points, slashes and opening brackets – are always next to the preceding word, without a space.

Slashes are closed up to the preceding word and to the next word when they separate two single words.

and/or

male/female

When a slash separates two groups of words or a group of words from a single word, insert a space before and after the slash.

This proposal has been approved / requires further consideration.

Such documents shall be signed by the rector / rector's delegate, as applicable.

Full stops, question marks, exclamation marks, commas, colons and semicolons are always followed by a single space.

## 2.2 Full stops

Full stops, or points, present few problems. Use them for three main purposes: ending sentences that are not questions or exclamations, punctuating the numbers or letters used to list the elements of a summary, and separating the letters in some, but not all, abbreviations.

### 2.2.1 Indirect questions

Use a full stop, not a question mark, after an indirect question.

He asked what the requirements were.

### 2.2.2 Items in lists

Use full stops after the numbers or letters that list the elements of a summary.

1. Prepare the report.
  2. Send copies to all members.
- 
- A. Punctuate properly.
  - B. Write simply.

The individual items in vertical lists should only be followed by full stops when they form complete sentences (as above), not when they are simply nouns or noun phrases (as below).

Bachelor's degrees

1. Law
2. Chemistry
3. History of Art

Punctuate information contained in a list written in sentence form with a comma after each item in the list and the conjunction *and* or *or* before the last item, which is punctuated with a full stop.

To qualify for the master's programme

1. your undergraduate degree must be officially recognised,
2. you must have a CEFR B2-level command of English, and
3. you must submit official transcripts of your undergraduate studies.

If the list consists of sentences punctuated with a full stop, the phrase introducing the list must end in a colon (as in the example) or a full stop.

Requirements for admission to the master's programme:

1. Your undergraduate degree must be officially recognised.
2. You must have a CEFR B2-level command of English.
3. You must submit official transcripts of your undergraduate studies.

### 2.2.3 Headings

Do not use full stops at the end of headings.

Doctoral degree requirements

Doctoral students are required to submit at least three progress reports during the first two months of the research period. The templates for these reports can be accessed online.

However, use full stops (not colons) in run-in heads, which should be italicised or written in boldface to make them stand out.

*Doctoral degree requirements.* Doctoral students are required to submit at least three progress reports during the first two months of the research period. The templates for these reports can be accessed online.

### 2.2.4 Sentences ending in abbreviations

If an abbreviation that takes a final point ends a sentence, this final point functions as the full stop.

The new faculty service provides updates on roundtables, forums, seminars, courses, etc.

This research is the initiative of a number of companies, including Apple Inc.

The tour of the *Aula Magna* will end at 2.30 p.m.

In the case of questions and exclamations, however, finish the sentence with the final point of the abbreviation followed by a question mark or exclamation mark.

Can this department really base its future decisions on the findings of Brown et al.?

This was hardly the position adopted by Washington D.C.!

### 2.2.5 Footnotes and endnotes

End all footnotes and endnotes with a full stop.

<sup>1</sup> Smith, R.G. In “How to Write a Good Essay”, pp. 45–48.

<sup>4</sup> Mack, 111–112.

## 2.3 Colons

Use colons to introduce examples, explanations and specifications. In running text, a colon is preceded by a complete sentence; what follows it may or may not be a complete sentence, and may be a list or even a single word.

University orientation provides a range of activities for new students: tours, workshops and social events.

Research centres are facing a troubling situation: budgets are shrinking.

They proposed the creation of a new post: unit coordinator.

### 2.3.1 Common mistakes

Be careful with colons in the following situations.

#### i) Instead of a comma

Do not use a colon to substitute a comma.

\*To complete your admission application: send the required documents by the end of the month.

To complete your admission application, send the required documents by the end of the month.

## ii) After a preposition

Do not use colons between a preposition and its complement.

\*The Council announced cutbacks in: research funding, international cooperation and staff development.

## iii) Two or more colons in a sentence

Never use more than one colon in a sentence.

\*The Council's priorities are controversial: they have been praised and criticised by all groups: PDI, PTGAS and students.

Note, however, that you can use a semicolon and a colon in the same sentence.

The Government cutbacks have been devastating; protests are planned by many people working in the most affected areas: education, healthcare and social services.

## 2.3.2 Other uses

### i) Titles and subtitles

When you cite the name of a book which has both a title and a subtitle, separate the two with a colon. Do this even though no colon may appear on the cover or the title page of the book itself.

*Human Towers: A Catalan Tradition*

### ii) Ratios

Ratios can be written with words (*two to one*) or with numbers and a colon (*2:1*).

Women outnumbered men by two to one.

The ratio of women to men was 2:1.

## 2.4 Semicolons

### 2.4.1 Main functions

The semicolon is mainly used to join two complete sentences in a single sentence when (a) the two sentences are thought to be too closely related to be separated by a full stop and (b) there is no connecting word which would require a comma, such as *and* or *but*.

The Governing Council agreed to the measure; the Student Council rejected it.

### 2.4.2 Alternatives to the semicolon

#### i) Full stop

A semicolon can generally be replaced by a full stop.

The Governing Council agreed to the measure. The Student Council rejected it.

However, the semicolon suggests that the two shorter sentences are more closely related than two consecutive sentences.

#### ii) A connecting word

A semicolon can also be replaced by a suitable connecting word (*and*, *or*, *but*, *while*, *yet*) with a joining comma.

The Governing Council agreed to the measure, yet the Student Council rejected it.

However, certain connecting words must be preceded by a semicolon or full stop. The most common are *consequently*, *hence*, *however*, *meanwhile*, *nevertheless*, *therefore* and *thus*.

The two sides have refused to negotiate; consequently, the measure has been suspended.

### 2.4.3 Lists

Use semicolons to separate items in long or complex lists, or to make these items more conspicuous than they would be with commas.

The membership of the committee was as follows: PDI, 4; PTGAS, 5; students, 3.

## 2.5 Commas

As a general rule, commas can be used to list items in a series, to join sentences and to set off parenthetical or introductory phrases (for commas in lists in sentence form, see Section 2.2.2 Items in lists).

### 2.5.1 Listing items in a series

In a list containing a series of items, separate the items with commas. However, a comma should not precede the conjunction before the final item (in other words, write *a, b and c* and not *a, b, and c*). But if a comma would make the meaning clearer, use it – especially when one of the items in the list is already joined by *and*.

Specialist subjects include teaching, research and development, and business applications.

### 2.5.2 Joining sentences

When you join two complete sentences into a single sentence, you can use commas but follow them with a suitable connecting word: *and, or, but, while* or *yet*.

The group members had to hand in their reports last week, but some were only submitted this week.

The comma is not required if the subject of the second part of the sentence is omitted or if the conjunction used is *and* or *or*.

The student had to hand in the work by Friday but didn't make the deadline.

The student had to hand in the work by Friday or the work would receive a failing mark.

### 2.5.3 Other uses of the comma

Separate a city from a state, province, region or country with a comma.

Chicago, Illinois

Lisbon, Portugal

Do not use a comma between the month and the year.

~~October, 2001~~

October 2001

In most numbers of one thousand or more, use commas between groups of three digits.

62,242

1,723

1,000,000

Exceptions are degree temperatures, years, addresses, page numbers and other uses of numbers for a non-quantifying purpose (see Section 5.2.2 Commas).

### 2.5.4 Misuse of the comma

Do not put a comma between the subject and the verb even if the subject is very long. Therefore, in the sentence below there is no comma between the words *own* (the end of the long subject) and *are* (the first word of the verb phrase).

Students who are attracted by the idea of spending a few months studying at a university in a country other than their own are often put off when they realise they will have to attend lectures in a foreign language.

## 2.6 Dashes

A dash is similar in appearance to a hyphen but is longer and used differently. Use it with spaces to make a parenthetical reference.

This morning's lecture – rescheduled from last week – was given by Professor Mulligan.

Use it without spaces to express a connection or to indicate a date, time or number range.

Girona–Barcelona bus

staff–student relationship

2007–2010

3.00–7.30 p.m.

40–50 students

Ranges can be expressed by a dash or by the words *from* and *to* (or *between* and *and*) but never by a combination of *from* (or *between*) and a dash.

\*The Arabic discussion group will meet from 3 p.m.–6.30 p.m. on Thursdays.

The Arabic discussion group will meet from 3 p.m. to 6.30 p.m. on Thursdays.

## 2.7 Brackets

### 2.7.1 Round brackets

Round brackets are primarily used in four situations.



### i) Secondary or marginal information

Use round brackets to indicate information that is secondary or marginal to the main idea of the sentence.

The documentary was produced by Spotlight Films (a production company connected to the University's film school).

### ii) Explanations or abbreviations of preceding information

Use round brackets to expand on or explain preceding information.

EU-OSH (the European workplace safety and health agency) works to ensure that these regulations are respected.

The project was funded by the World Health Organization (WHO).

When a passage within round brackets is at the end of a sentence, of which it is only a part, place the full stop after the closing bracket. However, when the bracketed passage is a complete sentence, place the full stop before the opening bracket and then add a second full stop before the closing bracket.

The number of students entering arts degrees is declining (according to recent reports).

The number of students entering arts degrees is declining. (According to recent reports, it has dropped by over 25% in the last nine years.)

### iii) Options

Use round brackets to represent options.

Please write your surname(s) in block capitals.

The opinions of the author(s) are not shared by the publisher(s).

### iv) Enumerations in a body of text

Use round brackets to enclose numerals or letters in an enumeration in the body of a text. Use roman type rather than italics for the numerals and letters.

A project proposal should include (1) a description of the project, (2) an identification of the target audience, (3) an explanation of why the project deserves funding and (4) a comparison with similar projects implemented in recent years.

The preview of your class paper should include (a) an abstract, (b) a sample of each chapter, (c) a selected bibliography and (d) details on funding.

### 2.7.2 Square brackets

Square brackets are less common than round brackets. They are primarily used in three situations.

#### i) Clarifications within quoted text

Use square brackets to set off a clarification within quoted text.

The Rector said of the coming budget debate, “Never in all my years as rector have I had to make such a difficult decision about such a useful programme [grants for young researchers] affecting so many”.

#### ii) Optional or tentative text

Use square brackets to indicate text that is optional or still open to discussion. In the following example, the School of Education is responsible for implementing the project. What is optional or uncertain is whether the Office of External Relations will share that responsibility.

The implementation of the project will be the [joint] responsibility of the School of Education [and the Office of External Relations].

#### iii) Brackets within brackets

Use square brackets to indicate parenthetical elements that are already in round brackets.

A large multilateral organisation (e.g., the World Bank [WB]) has the following characteristics...

## 2.8 Question marks

### 2.8.1 Direct questions

Place a question mark at the end of any sentence that is a direct question.

Who wrote that report?

If the question is a direct quotation repeating the speaker's exact words, a question mark is still used.

"Who wrote that report?" she asked.

## 2.8.2 Other types of question

### i) Indirect questions

Do not use a question mark in an indirect question, in which the speaker's exact words are not repeated. Use only a full stop, since the whole sentence is now a statement.

She asked who had written that report.

### ii) Courtesy questions

If a request or instruction is put as a question for reasons of courtesy, do not use a question mark.

Would you please fill in and sign the attached application and submit it before the end of the month.

## 2.9 Quotation marks

Use quotation marks, also called inverted commas, to indicate direct quotations and definitions.

Before bestowing the award, the Rector said, "Dr Robinson's efforts to oppose discrimination place him among the few who actually deserve such an honour."

According to this dictionary, a methodology is "a body of methods, rules and postulates employed by a discipline".

As in the examples above, punctuation should be placed according to the meaning: if it belongs to the quotation, it is quoted; otherwise, it is not.

According to the Dean, "The need for structural change is paramount."

The Dean declared that the need for structural change was "paramount".

Although there is a diversity of guidance in this respect, we recommend using double marks for a quotation and single marks for a quotation within a quotation.

“His office door is very unusual; it has ‘Welcome’ written all over it in more than thirty different languages.”

Quotations of over four lines in length should be set off from the text as a block quotation, not enclosed in quotation marks, and single-spaced. Quoted matter within the block quotation is set off with double quotation marks; quotations within these quotations, with single quotation marks.

Single quotation marks can also help show the reader that a word or term is used in an unusual, colloquial or ironic way.

Nature somehow ‘knows’ the best environmental course to take.

The students felt ‘ripped off’ by the lecturer’s decision to hold the exam a week earlier than scheduled.

That lecturer is famous for sharing her ‘wisdom’ with her students.

Also, use quotation marks for titles of chapters in books, articles in periodicals, and TV and radio programmes.

## 2.10 Exclamation marks

An exclamation mark is used at the end of a short phrase or a sentence that expresses very strong feeling. It is one way of adding emphasis and in our institutional context it may be used in public announcements of certain kinds, university relations and advertising.

Sign up now!                      More funding for research and development!

However, exclamation marks are very rare in formal English, so use them sparingly. Finally, never use more than one exclamation mark in a row.

\* Join us at the presentation!!!

## 2.11 Apostrophes

In general, we use apostrophes to indicate possession or contracted forms.

### 2.11.1 Possessive forms of nouns

The possessive form of a singular noun is marked by an apostrophe followed by *s*.

the manager's report    the lecturer's hypothesis

This rule applies in most cases even with a name ending in *s*.

the PTGAS's response    Erasmus's success

If a plural noun already ends in *s*, the apostrophe is used alone.

the students' work (several students)

the teachers' room (all the teachers)

Note that the apostrophe is also used in expressions of time.

eight weeks' time    yesterday's meeting

Degree types should be written with an apostrophe followed by *s*.

bachelor's degree    master's degree

But note the exception *doctoral degree* (not *doctor's degree*).

Do not use apostrophes to indicate a decade, a plural acronym or the plurals of figures.

~~the 1990's~~    the 1990s

~~URL's~~    URLs

~~747's~~    747s

### 2.11.2 Contractions

Use apostrophes for contractions (*you're* for *you are*, *don't* for *do not*, *it's* for *it is* or *it has*), but note that contractions are far less common in formal texts than they are in informal writing.

## 2.12 Ellipsis points

Use ellipsis points with a space on either side to denote pauses. Use them at the end of a sentence without a space to indicate that the sentence has been left unfinished.

“This morning’s lecture was ... very interesting.”

The lecturer warned her students, “The reports are due next Friday. If I don’t get them...”

Use ellipsis points with square brackets to denote words missing from a direct quotation.

The Rector said, “Preston [...] transmitted values through his books [...] and enabled us to understand the present and look to the future.”

Do not use ellipsis points to indicate an incomplete list.

\*This unit deals with promotion, advertising, outreach...

This unit deals with promotion, advertising, outreach, etc.

### 3. CAPITALISATION

Capital letters essentially have three functions: to mark the beginning of a sentence, to indicate titles and to distinguish proper nouns from other words. It is impossible to establish absolute rules for all aspects of capitalisation because it often depends on the role of a word in a sentence, the writer's personal taste or the house style being followed. It is largely the second and third functions mentioned above – titles, and the distinction between proper nouns and other words – that lead to discrepancies in practice: authors can apply traditional or more modern approaches to title capitalisation (that is to say, maximal and minimal capitalisation, respectively), and sometimes there are differences of opinion over exactly what constitutes a proper noun and how words derived from proper nouns should be dealt with. Whatever decisions are taken, however, writers should strive to maintain consistency.

#### 3.1 Sentence capitals

##### 3.1.1 Beginning of a sentence

The first letter of a word that begins a sentence, or a set of words that function as a sentence, should be capitalised.

On behalf of the URV, I would like to welcome you. All of you. Each and every one of you.

Also capitalise the first letter of a syntactically complete quoted sentence.

According to university regulations, "All thefts of library books must be reported to the general manager."

##### 3.1.2 After a colon

After a colon it is standard practice not to capitalise the first letter of the following text.

The academic year is divided into two quite distinct periods: the first and the second semesters.

However, if the statement introducing a vertical list is a complete sentence, close it with a colon and then capitalise the first letter of each item of the list. If the items are complete sentences, close each with a full stop; if they are not, leave them without punctuation.

Students can pass the course only in the following circumstances:

- a) They attend 80% of all the classes.
- b) They hand in all the course work on time.
- c) They get at least 50% in the final exam in June.

Students must present the following documents:

- a) The official application form
- b) A motivation letter
- c) A photocopy of their passport

If the statement introducing a vertical list is a sentence fragment, not a complete sentence, do not close it with a colon and lowercase the first letter of each item. Finish each item with a comma or a semicolon, except for the second-to-last item, which should finish with a comma or semicolon followed by the word *and* with no final punctuation, and the last item, which should finish with a full stop.

Students will have more chance of successfully completing the course if

- a) they are given clear instructions,
- b) they are regularly reminded of their obligations, and
- c) they are closely supervised.

For the use of a capital letter after a colon in some administrative documents, see Section 11.

### 3.1.3 With round brackets

When the parenthetical material is a complete sentence, capitalise the first word.

All aspects of the projects submitted will be analysed in detail by the department.  
(Please bear in mind, however, that the final decision will be in the hands of the research committee.)

If the parenthetical material is enclosed within another sentence, it should not begin with a capital or end with a full stop, whether it is a full sentence or not.

The debate continued (we all knew that this was inevitable) in the bar after the lecture had finished.

Students should take their application forms to the Language Service (opposite the lift on the third floor).



## 3.2 Titles

### 3.2.1 Documents

Traditionally, the titles of documents in English are given maximal capitalisation. That is to say, capitalise the first word and all nouns, pronouns, adjectives, verbs and adverbs. Do not capitalise articles, conjunctions or prepositions.

The Strategic Plan for Teaching and Learning

However, the first word of a subtitle after a colon is generally capitalised, whatever part of speech it may be (see also Section 2.3.2 Other uses [of colons]).

Strategic Planning: An Approach to the Future

Remember, too, that when writing individual titles, you can often exercise a certain amount of personal judgement. A short title, for example, may look better if words that are often lowercased are capitalised.

All About Erasmus

In the headings of document sections, however, use sentence-style capitalisation (first word and proper nouns) instead of title-style capitalisation (first word and all nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs), although the exact style will also depend on the number of levels of hierarchy. Capitalise the first word, but lowercase the rest, including the first word after a colon (except for those words that would normally be capitalised in running text).

Teaching vision

Strategic goals: a necessary evil

Core teaching values and the Dublin Declaration

The first element of a compound word is always capitalised in a title; the second element is also capitalised unless it is an article, a preposition or a coordinating conjunction.

The Role of Computer-Assisted Translation in the Internationalisation of European Universities

Greater European Integration Gets the Thumbs-up from Catalan-Speaking University Students

Second elements that are hyphenated to prefixes are capitalised only if they are proper nouns.

Competences: A Comparison between Pre- and Post-Erasmus Students

Post-examination Opening Times for University Libraries

### 3.2.2 Publications

Capitalise and set in italics the titles of all sorts of published works (books, theses, audiovisual material, journals, paintings, etc.).

the book *Landscapes: A Guide to University Architecture*

the thesis *Fabrication of Bulk and Interdigitated Organic Solar Cells*

the film *American Beauty*

the Pink Floyd album *The Dark Side of the Moon*

the journal *Analytical Chemistry*

Salvador Dalí's painting *The Persistence of Memory*

Harold Pinter's play *The Birthday Party*

However, only capitalise the first word of the titles of articles, chapters and other sections of a publication, and enclose them in inverted commas.

The research group wrote the article entitled "The dynamics of charge carriers".

Before the next class, please read the chapter "Revising prose structure and style".

For other issues of use of italics, see Section 1.3.1 "Titles of books, journals and other publications".

## 3.3 Proper nouns

### 3.3.1 Titles and ranks

Words for the titles and ranks of people are lowercased when they are used in a general sense or refer to the position held rather than the person.

The principal academic and administrative officer of a university in this country is the rector.

They are capitalised when they are used directly before a name, as a form of address or as a substitute for the name of the holder of the title.

In 2022, Rector Alabart was re-elected for a second four-year term of office.

Only last week, Rector, you stated that there would be no further cuts in the departmental budget.

Last week the Rector gave a speech to the Barcelona Chamber of Commerce.

When titles are used in apposition to a name, they do not form part of the name and are, therefore, lowercased.

Dr Alabart, rector of the University, was first elected in 2018.

The general guideline, then, is that if the title or rank is a reference to a specific person and the person's name could be used instead without affecting factual or grammatical accuracy, then a capital letter should be used.

In titles that are hyphenated compounds, it used to be standard practice to capitalise only the first part of the compound. Nowadays, however, the tendency is to capitalise both parts if the compound refers to a specific person.

The Vice-Rector for Academic Policy described the new reforms to the Governing Council.

But note that when the reference is to the position of *vice-rector*, not to a particular person, the title should be lowercased.

The vice-rector for Academic Policy is responsible for making large-scale changes to degree programmes.

### 3.3.2 Personal names

Capitalise the names and initials of all real or fictitious people.

William Shakespeare   Joanot Martorell   Silence Dogood

Many names contain articles, prepositions, conjunctions or other particles (for example, *de, d', de la, the, lo, el, la, i, y, von, van*, etc.). English, Catalan and Spanish names tend to lowercase these elements. Therefore:

Xavier de Bofarull	Walter de la Mare	Alexander the Great
Tirant lo Blanc	Antoni Rovira i Virgili	Santiago Ramón y Cajal

However, capitalise the particle when a person is referred to by the surname and the particle is in initial position.

The writer D'Ors often used the pseudonym Xènius.

### 3.3.3 Places

Capitalise the names of all countries, towns and other geographical terms commonly accepted to be the proper names of geographical, cultural, historic, economic or tourist entities.

Catalonia	Barcelona	the Iberian Peninsula
the Golden Coast	the Third World	the Wild West

The names of geographical features are also capitalised. The generic term (*lake, sea, river, channel, etc.*) is also capitalised when it is used as part of the name.

the Mediterranean Sea	the River Francolí	Lake Banyoles
-----------------------	--------------------	---------------

Otherwise, no capital letter is used (see Section 3.3.4 Reference).

the Mediterranean and the Baltic seas

Capitalise the initial article in place names, even though it is lowercased in Catalan.

El Morell	La Floresta	L'Anoia
-----------	-------------	---------

When you are referring to parts of cities, capitalise terms such as *avinguda, carrer, carretera, passeig* and *plaça*, even though these are lowercased in Catalan (see also Section 8.1.4 Place names).

All Erasmus Week participants should be at the station in Plaça de Catalunya at 9 a.m.

Compass directions should only be capitalised when they are part of the name of a recognised geographical or political region.

The URV has established an agreement with Queen's University, the leading university in Northern Ireland.

The URV is the university of southern Catalonia.

### 3.3.4 Reference

When a reference is made to a previous mention of a capitalised proper name, the usual practice is to revert to lower case.

The Erasmus students were taken to Lake Sils. When they arrived, the lake was calm and serene.

The Spanish Civil War was fought between 17 July 1936 and 1 April 1939. The war began after a group of right-wing generals rose up against the Government of the Second Spanish Republic.

However, when the reference is simply a short form of the specific person, organisation, institution or event previously mentioned, capitals are used.

The Universitat Rovira i Virgili is placing great emphasis on internationalisation. The University is fully aware of the importance of this policy.

The Spanish Civil War was fought between 17 July 1936 and 1 April 1939. The Civil War became notable for the passion and political division it inspired.

Plural forms that apply one generic term to multiple names should be lowercased because the generic term is merely a descriptor and not part of the proper name.

The universities of Girona and Lleida

In order not to repeat the name of a place, writers sometimes use synonyms (or coreferents), which should always be capitalised.

the New World [America]    the Big Apple [New York]    the Pond [the Atlantic Ocean]

### 3.3.5 Dates, periods and events

Capitalise all days, months, festivals, holidays, historical periods and historical events (*Wednesday, August, Easter, Saint John's Eve, the Middle Ages, the Tragic Week*), but lowercase the seasons (*the autumn semester, spring enrolment, winter, summer*).

### 3.3.6 Movements and ideologies

Capitalise the names of all cultural, artistic, social, political and religious movements and ideologies.

Romanticism                      Surrealism                      the Slow Movement  
the Tea Party                      Catholicism

### 3.3.7 Languages and nationalities

The names of languages and nationalities are always written with a capital letter.

The working languages of the research group are Catalan, Spanish and English.

The Basque universities have signed numerous agreements with their Catalan counterparts.

### 3.3.8 Official documents

The titles of laws and official documents should be capitalised.

the Single European Act

the Statute of Autonomy of Catalonia

Royal Decree 1359/2003, of 21 October, on the Governance of TATT Activities

Framework Agreement of Cooperation between the University of Lleida and Queen's University

Descriptive titles and titles used in the plural should be lowercased.

The regulation governing the administration of examinations was debated by the Senate yesterday.

The statutes of the autonomous communities were first established in the early 1980s.

### 3.3.9 Education

#### i) Subjects, courses, degrees and disciplines

When referring to subjects, courses and degrees in general terms, use lower case.

Three students failed their mathematics exam.

My mother has just enrolled on a course in computer programming for senior citizens.

Bernard is studying a bachelor's degree in biochemistry.

When referring to the official names of subjects, courses and degrees, use title-style capitalisation (see Section 3.2.1).

Three students failed Advanced Mathematics I.

The enrolment for the course Computer Programming for Beginners ends on 27 March.

The Master's Degree in Biochemistry teaches students how to use chromatographic techniques.

The names of disciplines should be lowercased.

Although anthropology is easy to define, it is difficult to describe.

The course provides students with training in research into oenology and biotechnology.

#### ii) Chairs and knowledge areas

The official names of all chairs and knowledge areas are capitalised. The generic term is only capitalised when it is part of the official name.

The UOC's Chair in Education and Technology is pleased to announce that its 10th international seminar will be held next November.

The knowledge area of Scope Management ensures that the projects include only the work required to complete them successfully.

### iii) Grades

Grades are capitalised.

Fail	Pass	Excellent
Distinction	A	B

### iv) Academic periods

Academic periods are lowercased.

the academic year	compulsory secondary education (ESO)
the first semester	the second term

## 3.3.10 Public institutions and organisations

Capitalise all the words, including the generic terms, that are part of the official name of public institutions, organisations, societies, associations and movements.

- the Faculty of Chemistry
- the Department of Business Management
- the Language Service
- the Board of Trustees
- the General Directorate of Universities

When the names of organisations are in the plural or have a more general meaning, the generic terms should be lowercased.

The departments of History and Psychology are piloting a new teaching methodology.

One of the aims of a university language service is to prepare students to compete in a globalised society.



When the full name of the organisation is abbreviated by deleting a word or words, the capitals should be maintained (see Section 3.3.4 Reference).

The Department [of History] is piloting a new teaching methodology.

The University [of Barcelona] is engaged in a far-reaching process of internationalisation.

### 3.3.11 Congresses, events and competitions

Capitalise the names of congresses, conferences, symposiums, meetings, seminars, forums, festivals, competitions, etc.

the Third Symposium of Sports Medicine

Science Week

the Seventh Competition in Creative Writing

If the generic term is not part of the name of the activity, use lower case.

the conference Euroanaesthesia 2015

Any specific title that is placed after the general title should also be capitalised.

The Second MAUMIS Research Symposium: "Conflict, Discrimination and Religious Plurality"

### 3.3.12 Brand names

Write all words that are part of brand names, models and commercial products with an initial capital.

The Samsung Galaxy Tab is a line of upper mid-range Android-based tablet computers.

An Excel worksheet can be embedded in a Word document.

The laboratory purchased various PerkinElmer analytical instruments and a Hewlett Packard printer.

### 3.3.13 CamelCase

CamelCase is the term used to refer to the convention of joining several words together to form a single name. Medial capitals (capital letters in the middle of a word) are used so that each word can be easily distinguished and the name easily read. There are two types of CamelCase: in UpperCamelCase the first letter of the name is capitalised; in lowerCamelCase it is lowercased. It has been used for centuries in the spelling of certain names.

Don MacLean                  Paul McCartney                  Meindert DeJong

In the 19th century, it was used for the purpose of chemical notation.

CaBr<sub>2</sub>      Ac<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>      AgBr      Li<sub>2</sub>O

Subsequently, in the 20th century, it was used by computer programmers who needed to create terms without leaving spaces between words.

EndOfFile                  ErrorLevel

At the end of the 20th century, it spread from the world of computer programming and it is now in general use, particularly for corporate trade names.

MasterCard                  Microsoft PowerPoint                  HarperCollins  
iPad                  iPhone                  PlayStation

In the world of academia, CamelCase is often used in the abbreviations of academic qualifications.

BSc                  MSc                  PhD                  MPhil

For the use of capitalisation in abbreviations and symbols, see Section 4.

## 4. ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

Abbreviations and symbols provide a short reference for a longer word or a series of words. In general terms, abbreviations fall into two groups: those which are frequently used to refer to specific words or terms (*Thurs.*, *e.g.*, *Dr*) and those which accompany their longer form at least once to show us there is a shorter alternative (*EHEA* for *European Higher Education Area*, or *LERU* for *League of European Research Universities*). In this second group there are short forms for proper nouns, like *EHEA* or *LERU* above, but there are also abbreviations for common nouns (such as *CPD* for *continuing professional development* or *IT* for *information technology*) which we use when we want those common nouns to describe a generalised group, practice or field. Abbreviations are particularly important in our university context, where a large number of texts record the names of institutions and systems of different kinds; and the correct use of certain symbols in institutional texts such as informative web pages and annual reports makes those texts easier to read.

### 4.1 Forming abbreviations

#### 4.1.1 Forming acronyms and initialisms

Most acronyms are formed from the first letter or first few letters of a series of words and are usually pronounced as words. If an acronym contains six or more letters, capitalise the initial letter and lowercase the others.

Erasmus (European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students)

Europol (European Police Office)

NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization)

Initialisms are usually formed from just the first letters of a series of words. Generally speaking, write them following the upper- or lower-case pattern of the full term. When the full term is in lower case, they are usually separated by points.

MBA (Master of Business Administration)

e.g. (*exempli gratia*)

i.e. (*id est*)

Note, however, that the abbreviation *plc* (public limited company) is always written in lower case but without points.

In higher education, some initialisms representing degree studies combine upper and lower case and do not take points.

BSc (Bachelor of Science)      PhD (*philosophiae doctor*)

Note, too, that an initialism may take capital letters even when the full term does not.

PC (personal computer)      NGO (non-governmental organisation)

### 4.1.2 Forming contractions and truncations

Contractions are formed by omitting the middle of a word. In line with British English, this guide recommends not putting a point after the last letter of the contraction.

Attn (Attention)      Dr (Doctor)      Mr (Mister)

Truncations are formed by omitting the end of a word and sometimes other letters as well. They are always followed by a point.

Feb. (February)      Tues. (Tuesday)      col. (column)

## 4.2 Using abbreviations

### 4.2.1 Using acronyms and initialisms

Terms in the title of a text should not be accompanied by their abbreviation.

If a term occurs frequently in a text, accompany it by its abbreviation on first mention and just use the abbreviation in all further references.

Our faculty's internal quality assurance system (IQAS) is modelled on the document European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESGs) and each academic year all IQAS results are subject to an external review which considers those ESGs on an individual basis.

If the term is not frequently used in the text, there is usually no need to give the abbreviation at all.

Note that some very well-known acronyms do not need to be explained (e.g., UK, EU, NATO), and those abbreviations that appear as nouns in an authoritative English dictionary do not need to be spelled out on first use.

We recommend standard UK English.

IQ is now being questioned as a measure of intelligence.

However, there are texts in which you should add an abbreviation after a term even though the term only occurs once. One case is legal or administrative texts, where for the sake of precision and clarity the abbreviation is as important to include as the full term.

I hereby award this diploma to the student Joan Puig Peralta for having successfully completed the examinations organised by the University School of Nursing (EUI-UB) in the programme in Palliative Care.

The University of Barcelona Virtual Museum (MVUB) declines any liability resulting from the incorrect use of this website.

Another case is a text in which the full term is not as useful to the reader as the abbreviation. In some institutions, for example, writers often translate the full names of organisations to help non-native readers, but those translations are not used by other institutions. In such cases, the original-language abbreviation becomes particularly important for the reader as an identifier, as in the example of the *Centre de Recerca d'Alta Muntanya (CRAM)* below.

The Centre for Mountain Research (CRAM) is a leading institute that promotes practical and theoretical research into the natural environment of the Pyrenees.

A further case is a text in which the full term is not as reliable as the abbreviation. On the web, for example, a research organisation called the *Centre de Recursos de Biodiversitat Animal* is variously rendered as the *Animal Biodiversity Resource Centre*, the *Resource Centre for Animal Biodiversity* and the *Centre for Resources in Animal Biodiversity*. In such cases, add the full term's official abbreviation (in this case, *CRBA*) even after an isolated reference.

Finally, do not use abbreviations simply because they make a text look more official and without considering whether the reader really benefits by them.

\*I would like to express my gratitude to you and your colleagues for having invited our institution to the Third International Exhibition and Conference on Higher Education (IECHE 2012).

## 4.2.2 Using contractions and truncations

### i) Truncated forms as codes or symbols

Truncated forms used as codes or symbols do not take points.

EN (English)                      kg (kilogram)

### ii) Contractions and truncations in Latin

Latin forms that are full words do not take a point; Latin forms that are not full words do take a point.

sic (meaning *as was written* in the original)

et al. (short for *et alii* meaning *and others*)

no. (short for *numero* meaning *number*, with a point in this case to avoid confusion with the word *no*)

### iii) Abbreviating people's names

Abbreviate people's first names with a single letter only, followed by a point and a space.

Philippe Junot	P. Junot
Theodore Roosevelt	T. Roosevelt

Write multiple initials with points and spaces.

Elwyn Brooks White	E. B. White
--------------------	-------------

Represent compound first names by both initials.

Joan Manuel Serrat	J. M. Serrat
Jean-Paul Sartre	J.-P. Sartre

Note, however, that in formal institutional texts like contracts or certificates you should avoid abbreviating people's first names. For example, *M.* or *M.<sup>a</sup>* should be written out as *Maria* or *María*, and *J. Ramon* should be written out as *Joan Ramon* or *Josep Ramon* (for further details, see Section 8.1.1 People).

#### iv) Lower-case abbreviations

Some common abbreviations are never written in upper case, even at the beginning of a footnote.

c. (*circa*)                      e.g. (*for example*)                      i.e. (*that is*)

l., ll. (*line, lines*)                      p., pp. (*page, pages*)

<sup>21</sup> pp. 125–132. [and not \*<sup>21</sup> Pp. 125–132]

However, if possible, avoid beginning a note with an abbreviation.

<sup>21</sup> See pp. 125–132.

#### v) Use of *Article*

The word *Article* may be abbreviated to *Art.* in footnotes or tables but should not be abbreviated in running text.

#### vi) Use of *etc.*

Only use *etc.* at the end of a series of examples and never at the end of a series introduced by the words *like, for example* or *such as*.

## 4.3 Abbreviations and grammar

### 4.3.1 Abbreviations and articles

Acronyms that abbreviate the names (proper nouns) of organisations and systems do not take the definite article *the* even if their full forms do.

OPEC (the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries)

UNTERM (the United Nations Multilingual Terminology Database)

But when they abbreviate common nouns, they take *the* or *a(n)* as necessary.

the MD (managing director)

a CMS (content management system)

Initialisms generally take the definite article if the full form does.

the ERA (the European Research Area)

the OECD (the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development)

This rule can be applied to the abbreviations of the names of Catalan-speaking universities because the full forms always begin with the definite article *la* (*la Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya, la Universitat Rovira i Virgili, la Universitat de València*).

the UPC

the URV

the UV

Universities may establish other norms, however. For example, the *University of Vic – Central University of Catalonia* is known as *UVic-UCC* (without *the*) in its English abbreviated form. In English, many universities prefer this usage.

USC is the University of Southern California.

Finally, remember that the article is not necessary when the full term is hardly ever used (*HIV*, for *human immunodeficiency virus*), when it describes a general notion (*VET*, for *vocational education and training*) or when we consider the abbreviation to be a name in its own right (*IBM*, for *International Business Machines Corporation*).

To choose between *a* or *an*, apply the rule “*a* before a consonant sound, *an* before a vowel sound” (as if the abbreviation following the article were being spoken).

a LERU decision

a PTGAS representative

a UJI student

an Erasmus grant

an EHEA guideline

an NBA player

### 4.3.2 Abbreviations and plurals

Plurals of abbreviations are formed in the same way as the regular plurals of common nouns: simply by adding the letter *s*. Note that there is no apostrophe before *s*, which is written in lower case.

FAQs (frequently asked questions)

SMEs (small and medium-sized enterprises)

VLEs (virtual learning environments)



When the singular form of the abbreviation ends in *s*, that form can also be used to refer to a plural group. This avoids the uncomfortable effect of seeing an *s* repeated.

SDS (safety data sheet)

SDS (safety data sheets)

### 4.3.3 Abbreviations as adjectives

As indicated in the examples in Section 4.3.1 Abbreviations and articles, abbreviations can also be used as adjectives, in either a simple or compound form.

PDI salaries

R&D contracts

UAB-specific degree courses

EHEA-recognised qualifications

## 4.4 Abbreviations in a multilingual context

Criteria for translating into English is the subject of Section 8 Translation, but there are two important points to be made about using abbreviations in our multilingual institutional context.

First, if you need to provide English versions of the full names of university offices or government institutions, do not translate their abbreviations. For example, the English name of a university office called the *Oficina de Programes Internacionals (OPI)* would be the *Office for International Programmes (OPI)*. And the English names of the *Diari Oficial de la Generalitat de Catalunya*, the *Diari Oficial de la Generalitat Valenciana* and the *Boletín Oficial del Estado* would be the *Official Journal of the Government of Catalonia (DOGC)*, the *Official Journal of the Government of Valencia (DOGV)* and the *Official Gazette of the Government of Spain (BOE)*, respectively.

Second, a number of very frequent abbreviations in Catalan-speaking universities come from common noun phrases that have no official English equivalent (*PTGAS* from *personal tècnic, de gestió i d'administració i serveis*, *PDI* from *personal docent i investigador*, *SED* from *secretaria d'estudiants i docència* and *PAT* from *pla d'acció tutorial*).

This guide recommends explaining or paraphrasing the full term the first time it occurs in a text and then using only the Catalan abbreviation for the rest of the text. This way, English-language readers can be more effectively helped to understand their non-English institutional environment.

Last year, our university's technical, management, administrative and service staff (*personal tècnic, de gestió i d'administració i serveis*, or PTGAS) took advantage of the Erasmus programme to travel to over 20 different European destinations. A number of PTGAS members also completed courses in the US and in Canada.

## 4.5 Signs and symbols

This section provides guidelines for the signs and symbols that commonly appear in institutional writing. It also considers the use of abbreviations for units of measurement. For details on symbols expressing sequences, ranges and yearly periods, see Section 5 Numbers.

### 4.5.1 Ampersands

In our university context, the ampersand is mainly found in the formal names of institutions (e.g., *Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation*, *Overton & Meyer Award*), where it should not be replaced with the word *and*. The ampersand, and not the plus sign, should be used to abbreviate the phrase *research and development*.

Is today's R&D model failing to meet the needs of developing countries?

This guide recommends not using the ampersand as a substitute for the word *and*, as this use is generally a feature of informal writing.

### 4.5.2 Asterisks

The asterisk (\*) is used quite frequently in English, primarily to refer to additional information such as special terms or conditions.

Students will be refunded their payment in full in the case of loss during transit\*. [...]

\*Losses should be reported via the University's web page.

However, if you are writing a longer text that requires numerous footnotes or end notes (such as a contract), use numbers or letters instead of asterisks.

### 4.5.3 Multiplication signs

The multiplication sign ( $\times$ ) is similar to the lower case letter *x* but should not be confused with it.

### 4.5.4 Percent signs

Use *per cent* where the number is also spelled out; when it is not, always close up the per cent sign to the value.

Forty-nine per cent

49%

Finally, note the difference between *per cent* and *percentage point*: an increase from 5% to 7% would be an increase of two percentage points (or an increase of 40%), not an increase of two per cent.

### 4.5.5 Capitalisation and lowercasing

Use capital letters for the first letter of symbols that come from people's names.

Bq (becquerel)      Hz (hertz)      K (kelvin)      N (newton)

Symbols that come from common nouns are generally written in lower case and are the same for singular and plural.

cd (candela)      g (gram)      kb (kilobit)

kg (kilogram)      lm (lumen)      lx (lux)

## 4.6 Abbreviating units of measurement

Units of measurement are often abbreviated. The abridged forms are normally written without points and do not have plurals.

4 ha (hectares)      9 m (metres)      60 km (kilometres)

200 g (grams)      5 kg (kilograms)

Note that proper nouns that form part of units of measurement retain their initial capital.

10 degrees Celsius

## 4.7 Spacing

With most abbreviated units of measurement, insert a non-breaking space between the number and the unit.

5 cm	20 kg	960 Hz
40 km	5.5 g	

However, with percentages and temperatures, we recommend not putting a space between the number and the symbol.

55%	33°C
4.6%	91.4°F

## 4.8 Currencies

The symbol for the euro and other currencies comes immediately before the number.

€250	£900
------	------

Place the abbreviation for a currency before the amount and insert a non-breaking space.

EUR 3,600	GBP 571
-----------	---------

The cent or pence symbol comes directly after the number (e.g., 50¢ or 50p). However, there is no official cent symbol for the euro, so write €0.50.

## 4.9 Million and billion

If you need to abbreviate large amounts such as million (*m*) or billion (*bn*), place the symbol or abbreviation for the currency before the amount and insert a non-breaking space before *m* or *bn*.

€389 m	EUR 389 m
£425 bn	GBP 425 bn

## 5. NUMBERS

This section covers numbers, particularly the question of when they should be written out and what to do if they appear in combination with units of measurement, other numbers and punctuation marks. Although approaches to these issues differ depending on the type of document, these guidelines are intended for institutional rather than technical texts. They also give precedence to British usage, although explanations on American usage are given when necessary. For details on using numbers with currencies, see Section 4.8 Currencies.

### 5.1 Writing out numbers

#### 5.1.1 Cardinal numbers

Spell out cardinal numbers from zero to nine and use numerals from 10 upwards, but maintain consistency in the immediate context.

Every three sessions, the students will be organised in new groups of five.

The Board will be reviewing a total of 10 new master's degrees and 12 new doctoral degrees.

The presentations should last between five and ten minutes.

Note that apart from its use in calculations, dates, lists, etc., the concept of *zero* is usually expressed with the word *no*, instead of the numeral *0*.

There were no students in the classroom.

#### 5.1.2 Ordinal numbers

Spell out ordinal numbers from zero to nine and use numerals from 10 upwards, but maintain consistency in the immediate context. Avoid superscript type.

The Second International Conference on Fluid Dynamics was held in Vic.

The oldest European university was founded in the 12th century.

In this year's ranking table, the research groups Pattern Analysis and Sonar Imaging occupied third and eleventh position, respectively.

### 5.1.3 Roman numerals

Use Roman numerals for course names.

Mathematics II

### 5.1.4 Fractions

Spell out fractions and hyphenate them when used as adjectives.

A two-thirds majority vote is required to approve the proposal.

However, avoid hyphens when the fraction is used as a noun.

Two thirds of the students were in agreement.

The lecturer has covered three quarters of the course so far.

### 5.1.5 Numbers at the beginning of a sentence

Spell out numbers (including years) at the beginning of a sentence, although it is better to rewrite the sentence so that it does not start with a numeral.

Nineteen forty-five was the year the UN was founded.

The UN was founded in 1945.

### 5.1.6 Plural numbers

Add an s to form the plural of a numeral. Do not add an apostrophe.

Among the scores were four 94s and two 99s.

## 5.2 Numbers and punctuation

### 5.2.1 Decimal points

Use a point, not a comma, before a decimal.

0.25

5.5

### 5.2.2 Commas

In numbers of one thousand or more, use commas between groups of three digits.

2,436

32,548

83,200,000

Do not use commas in serial numbers such as page numbers, street numbers and years.

This idea receives further comment on page 1056 of the report.

All further enquiries should be made at our office at 1558 Brunswick Avenue, New York City.

The University of Bologna is the world's oldest university; it was founded in 1088.

### 5.2.3 Hyphens

Hyphenate compound numbers from twenty-one to ninety-nine.

Three hundred and forty-six students are enrolled in the School of Fine Art.

Spell out numbers that are joined to a word by a hyphen, except in the case of set phrases such as *24-hour clock*.

A five-year period

A one-week holiday

When two numbers appear side by side, spell one of them out. If one of them occurs alongside a unit of measurement, make that one a numeral.

four 6-week periods

thirty-six 20-cent coins

### 5.3 Numbers and units of measurement

Spell out the number if the unit of measurement is written out and use a numeral when the unit of measurement is abbreviated.

The surface area of the School's premises is five hundred square metres.

The conference hall is 2 km from here.

Do not use points or plurals with abbreviated units of measurement. Insert a non-breaking space between the numeral and the unit.

2 m

6 km

10 min

### 5.4 Numbers and ranges

Use numerals for ranges.

#### 5.4.1 Full numbers

In ranges, always write numbers in full to avoid ambiguity.

\*pages 123–5

pages 123–125

\*between 18 and 20,000 people

between 18,000 and 20,000 people

#### 5.4.2 Dashes

Use a closed-up dash to indicate a range.

groups of 5–10 students

#### 5.4.3 Symbols

In ranges, repeat those symbols and units that are joined to a numeral.

100°C–150°C

between 100°C and 150°C

20–30 cm

from 20 to 30 cm

For advice on spacing, see Section 4.7 Spacing.



## 5.5 Time of day

Use numerals for times of day, but spell out the number with the expression *o'clock*, which is used to designate exact hours only.

If you use the 12-hour clock, write *a.m.* and *p.m.* with points and a space between the time and the abbreviation. Use a point to separate hours from minutes.

The lecture starts at 9.45 a.m.

The Rector's speech will begin at four o'clock.

Use *noon* (or *12 noon*) and *midnight*, rather than *12 p.m.* and *12 a.m.*

The tutorial, which was due to begin at noon, began at 1.15 p.m.

The campus copy shop closes at 12 noon.

The faculty bar will serve coffee until midnight.

When using *a.m.* or *p.m.*, avoid a leading zero.

\*08.30 a.m.      8.30 a.m.

If you use the 24-hour clock, use a point to separate hours from minutes. Do not use the symbol *h*.

The meeting is at 18.00.

## 5.6 Dates

Do not use the endings *st*, *nd*, *rd* or *th* with a figure in a date. Note that, in British English, dates are written in the order day–month–year, without internal punctuation.

12 July 2020

In British English, the numeric form of the date above is, therefore:

12/07/20

Note that, in American English, dates are written in the order month–day–year, with a comma between the day and the year.

July 12, 2020

In American English, the numeric form of the date above is, therefore:

07/12/20

### 5.6.1 Days of the week

Do not use a comma after the day of the week when it precedes a date.

Tuesday 6 July 2020

### 5.6.2 Years

In running text, use all four digits when referring to a year.

'71

1971

### 5.6.3 Academic years

Write academic years in one of the following two ways, but be consistent. Use a hyphen and not a dash.

the 2023-2024 academic year

the academic year 2023-2024

### 5.6.4 Decades

Use numbers to refer to decades rather than writing them out. Do not add an apostrophe before the plural s.

They were all born in the mid-1920s.

To refer to the decade from 2000 to 2010, use a circumlocution such as *the first decade of the 21st century*.

### 5.6.5 Centuries

Do not use Roman numerals for centuries. Instead, either spell out the century or use the ordinal number.

the XX century

the twentieth century

the XIX century

the 19th century

### 5.6.6 Festivals and historical events

If a date refers to a festival or historical event, spell out the number.

the Fourth of July celebrations    the Hundred Years' War  
the First of May demonstration

### 5.6.7 Laws

In citing pieces of legislation, arrange the dates as shown in the examples below.

Spanish Personal Data Protection Law 15/1999, of 13 December

Organic Law 4/2007, of 12 April, amended by Organic Law 6/2001, of 21 December,  
on Universities

## 5.7 Use of *billion*

The term *billion* is now used to indicate *1,000,000,000* or  $10^9$  in most, if not all, English-speaking contexts, following standard American usage. So, a billion is “a thousand million” rather than “a million million”.

## 5.8 Telephone numbers

Telephone numbers are typically composed of an international call prefix, a country calling code and the local telephone number. To aid legibility, they are split into groups, using spaces and not dashes or points. In the Catalan-speaking territories, the numbers after the country calling code tend to be grouped in threes.

00 34 934 016 186

Note that the international call prefix (00) used to dial out of a country is generally replaced with a plus sign. This is joined to the country calling code, which is used to dial into a country.

+34 934 016 186

Telephone extensions are written at the end of the number, after a space, in brackets.

+34 934 016 186 (182)

## 6. GENDER

English does not have grammatical gender in the way some other languages do, because most nouns (e.g., *lecture*, *timetable*, *desk*, *blackboard*) have no gender and are referred to with the pronoun *it*. However, humans and animals (*queen*, *king*, *lioness*, *lion*) are usually referred to with gender-specific pronouns and, in this section, we encourage writers to use language that is respectful of human gender, whether it is binary or non-binary. In other words, we recommend that writers consciously adopt gender-inclusive language and use vocabulary that is unmarked for gender when gender is unknown or not relevant. In this regard, we have followed the guidelines of the European Institute for Gender Equality (<https://eige.europa.eu/publications/gender-sensitive-communication>) and the American Psychological Association (<https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/bias-free-language/gender>).

### 6.1 Third-person pronouns

English pronouns are only gender-specific in the third person singular. When a person's gender is binary, use *she*, *her* and *her(s)* for female gender and *he*, *him* and *his* for male gender.

When someone's gender is non-binary, use that person's self-identified pronouns, meaning the pronouns with which the person wants to be referred. In English, some people self-identify with the pronouns *they*, *them* and *their(s)*, while others use sets of pronouns that have been introduced into the language to make it more gender inclusive, like *ze*, *hir* and *hir(s)*, or like *hen*, *henom* and *hen(s)*. In the examples below, the writer respects two people's use of self-identified pronouns.

My colleague James Rollins will be waiting for you in the main terminal when you clear customs; James is tall with a beard and *they* will be carrying a sign with your name on it, so it should be easy to recognise *them*.

Dr Sara Shields explained why *ze* believes *hir* formula would help *hir* and other scientists to simplify the procedure in an article published last week in a leading journal.

When the person's gender is not relevant, as is usually the case for institutional texts at our universities, use *they*, *them* and *their(s)*.

Only one student submitted *their* assignment on time.

Before 15 October, each tutor must speak to the students that *they* have been assigned.

Alternatively, rephrase the sentence so that the pronoun is unnecessary or pluralise the subject.

Only one student submitted *the* assignment on time.

Before 15 October, *all tutors* must speak to the students that they have been assigned.

## 6.2 Jobs and roles

Most job titles do not distinguish between binary or non-binary options. For example, *engineer*, *teacher*, *lecturer*, *doctor* and *architect* can be used to refer to anybody. However, in many cases, *man* has traditionally been used as a suffix (for example, *postman*, *policeman* or *chairman*). More recently, the suffix *woman* has also been used (*postwoman*, *policewoman* or *chairwoman*), but it is now generally accepted that there is often no need for gender-specific terms and that more gender-neutral terms such as the ones below are preferable.

barman/barmaid	bartender
businessman	business executive
cameraman	camera operator
chairman	chair
congressman	congressional representative
delivery man	courier, messenger
draftsman	drafter
fireman	firefighter
foreman	supervisor
freshman	fresher, first-year student
ombudsman	ombuds officer
policeman	police officer
salesman	salesperson, sales representative

sportsman	athlete
steward/stewardess	flight attendant
weatherman	weather forecaster
workman	worker

When referring to a particular person, then, try to avoid binary options if there is no need to be gender-specific. Therefore, not

Chairwoman Vázquez apologised for her absence.

but

Chair Vázquez apologised for her absence.

When referring to the position rather than the person occupying it, always use the gender-neutral version(s).

A new chair must be elected before the Senate's inaugural session.

### 6.3 *Man* as a reference to people in general

The word *man* has traditionally been used to refer not only to an adult male but also to the whole human race. Likewise, it has been used as a suffix (see 6.2) and a prefix (e.g., *manpower*) in a generic sense. Nevertheless, it is now generally accepted that these uses are sexist, exclude women and reinforce gender stereotypes so we recommend that they be substituted with gender-neutral terms such as the ones below.

Common gender-neutral alternatives to generic *man*

man	people, humanity, humankind
man's achievements	human achievements
the man in the street	the average person
the working man	the average worker
primitive man	primitive humans

Alternatives to words with *man* as a prefix

man hole	maintenance hole
man hours	work hours
man-made	synthetic, manufactured
mankind	humanity, humankind
manpower	work force, human resources

Other words containing *man* do not need to be changed because they are not compounds incorporating the modern gender-specific word *man* but derivations of the Latin word *manus* (hand).

manage	manufacture	manipulate
--------	-------------	------------

Likewise, there is no need to find an alternative for the word *human* because it does not finish with the suffix *man* but derives from the Latin word *humanus*.

## 6.4 Honorifics

Men have traditionally been addressed as *Mr* and women as *Mrs* and *Miss*. The honorifics for women refer to their marital status: *Mrs* for married women and *Miss* for single women. If you have no reason to talk about a woman's marital status, use the honorific *Ms*.

Generally speaking, however, most other honorifics (*Professor*, *Doctor*, *Rector*, etc.) are gender-neutral.

## 7. SINGULAR AND PLURAL

Because English is a language with very heterogeneous origins, many English words derived from French, Greek or Latin have irregular plurals or even two different plurals. Some words which may appear plural are in fact singular, as in the various names of areas of knowledge. Furthermore, the use of words denoting groups and partitive expressions often affects whether the related verb is singular or plural. Finally, some nouns, called attributive nouns, are used in singular or plural form in front of other nouns to describe or modify these.

### 7.1 Words with unusual plural forms

Some frequent examples in our institutional context are *campus*, *curriculum*, *practicum* and *thesis*, which take the plural forms *campuses*, *curricula*, *practicums* and *theses*, respectively. Because the standard English plural *s* is becoming increasingly widespread, in those cases where you can choose between two alternative plural forms this guide generally recommends the *s* form (for example, *syllabuses* rather than *syllabi*). For a list of unusual plural forms, see Appendix II: Unusual plural forms.

### 7.2 The word *data*

The word *data* can be singular or plural. Be consistent across contexts.

The data is useless because the file has been corrupted.

The data were collected in December. They show a 15% increase in student intake.

In science, *data* tends to be plural.

### 7.3 Subject-verb agreement

#### 7.3.1 Areas of knowledge

Some names of academic and scientific disciplines end with an *s* and appear to be plural but take a singular verb when they are treated as an area of knowledge or subject of study.

Economics is commonly regarded as a soft science.

The mathematics of computational chemistry is of significance to chemists.



When they are not, use the plural.

The economics of university services are complex.

The mathematics of our everyday calculations are of no significance to us.

When the discipline *economics* is used as an adjective, it maintains its form with a final *s*. The adjective *economic*, without the *s*, has a different meaning.

The Department is beginning a series of CPD courses for its economics lecturers.

Attaining sufficient economic support is a vital aspect of university governance.

### 7.3.2 Words denoting groups

With groups of people, you can use either singular or plural verbs. If you wish to imply unanimity or unity, use a singular verb; if you want to talk about varied opinions or only one part of the group, use the plural.

The University's Governing Council is considering the matter.

The Committee were divided over tuition fees.

### 7.3.3 Geographical areas and organisations

Countries, regions and organisations take a singular verb even when they have a plural name.

The Balearic Islands is a self-governing region of Spain.

The United Nations is charged with the maintenance of international peace.

However, if there is some reason to stress the individual parts, use a plural verb.

The Balearic Islands are made up of four main islands.

### 7.3.4 Percentages

In a similar way to words denoting groups, treat percentages as plural or singular depending on whether the emphasis is on a collection of parts acting individually or a quantity.

This year 27% of students have left home.

Twenty-seven per cent of students is not many.

### 7.3.5 Attributive nouns

Attributive nouns describe or modify other nouns. Like adjectives, they come before the noun they describe. They are generally singular, but in some cases they may be plural.

Twenty students received this year's government grant.

The ramp can also be used for baby carriages.

The Language Service offers visiting students a complaints form.

The Campus will soon be opening its new athletics field.

### 7.4 Partitive expressions

The expressions *half of* and *none of* may take either a singular or a plural verb when the noun they modify is countable.

Half of the class has signed up for Qualitative Analysis II.

Half of the class have signed up for Qualitative Analysis II.

None of our graduates has had problems getting a grant.

None of our graduates have had problems getting a grant.

When the noun is uncountable, use the singular verb.

Half of their funding was spent on software.

None of this energy is renewable.

The expression the *majority of* takes a plural verb if the following noun is a collection of individuals.

The majority of our graduates have had no problem getting a grant.

The expression *a number of* means several, so it takes a plural verb.

A number of applications are still to come.

However, *the number of*, because it refers to a specific number, always takes a singular verb.

At a total of just six, the number of applications this year is small compared to last year's twenty-five.

## 7.5 Verbs with compound subjects

### 7.5.1 Two or more nouns joined by *and*

Generally speaking, two or more nouns joined by *and* form a plural compound subject and take a plural verb.

The Faculty of Physics and the Faculty of Mathematics are planning to share the laboratory.

Dr Puig and Dr Sánchez have made another proposal.

However, when the nouns describe a single person, thing or concept, use a singular verb.

His first teacher and lifelong mentor is reading the opening address.

The canteen reported that fish and chips was more popular than paella.

Today's research and development is facing many new challenges.

### 7.5.2 Two or more nouns joined by *or* or *nor*

When the compound subject contains *or* or *nor*, make the verb agree with the part of the subject closest to it.

In filter media testing, either one PFE or three VFE are generally recommended.

In filter media testing, either three VFE or one PFE is generally recommended.

### 7.5.3 The expressions *together with* and *as well as*

When expressions like *together with* and *as well as* (and the nouns they are attached to) are written between commas, they do not make singular subjects plural.

The Mathematics Library, together with the other faculty libraries, is hoping to extend its opening hours.

The Ausiàs March building, as well as the private chapel and park, has now opened its doors to the public.

## 8. TRANSLATION

On many occasions, translators face difficult decisions as to what requires translation or further explanation. Many cultural aspects are specific to a given setting and the guidelines below aim to provide support with the issues this can lead to. The intention is not to lay down the law but to provide a point of reference to help you make decisions when you are faced with these complex questions. If your particular issue is not answered in this section, we recommend you use either the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the *Encyclopædia Britannica* or one of our university community's online resources to guide your decision. These resources include the Vives Network of Universities' *Nomenclatura de gestió universitària* and other documents published by TERMCAT, and the language guidelines and glossaries published by the different universities in the Network.

### 8.1 Names

#### 8.1.1 People

Maintain the accents in people's names (for example, *Sílvia*). Write out the abbreviations *M.* and *M.<sup>a</sup>* in full as *Maria* or *María*. Respect the way people write their names by preserving their use of capital and small letters and their treatment of articles, prepositions and conjunctions.

Maria De La Rosa	Gemma Puig Davies	Jana Puig i Salas
Oscar López-Díaz	Sander van Veen	Aodhán Ó Ríordáin

#### 8.1.2 Public figures

Generally speaking, do not translate the names of public figures. For example, royalty should be referred to in the original language.

King Philip VI	King Felipe VI
King Harold V	King Harald V

However, there are some exceptions. Popes should be referred to by the English equivalent of their papal names. Likewise, transliteration of names in non-Latin scripts can lead to multiple spellings of a single name (notable examples being *Gaddafi* and *Zelenskyy*). In this case, choose one variant and maintain it throughout the text.

### 8.1.3 Historical figures

Only translate the names of famous figures from history when there is a well-established English translation.

Alexander the Great    Catherine of Aragon    Wilfred the Hairy

### 8.1.4 Place names

When there is a well-established English version of a place name, use it.

Antwerp                      the Balearic Islands    Catalonia  
Genoa                        Moscow                      Munich

When there is no well-established English translation, use the name in the local language.

Arezzo                        Castelló de la Plana    Girona

When a Catalan place name may not be as familiar to the reader as the Spanish, French or Italian equivalent, you may decide to add this version in brackets after the Catalan name.

Alacant (Alicante)    L'Alguer (Alghero)    Eivissa (Ibiza)  
Elx (Elche)            Perpinyà (Perpignan)

Avoid the use of demonyms (words used to describe inhabitants) for towns and cities. Use *the inhabitants of Barcelona* or *the people of Barcelona*, rather than *Barcelonans*. Note that the demonym for Catalonia is *Catalan*, not *Catalonian*.

Do not translate addresses, but if they can be made more understandable or easier to read for an English-speaking audience, then do this. For example, transcribe the first letter of lower-case Catalan terms such as *avinguda*, *carrer*, *carretera*, *passeig* and *plaça* in upper case for English-speaking audiences (so *Carrer de Sant Pau*, *Avinguda Diagonal*, etc.).

Write out the full address rather than using abbreviations (so for *pl. de Catalunya*, write *Plaça de Catalunya*).

Floor and door numbers should be expressed in cardinal rather than ordinal numbers (for example, *Carrer de Provença, 66, 1, 2*).

### i) Rivers and lakes

Do not translate the names of rivers and lakes (*River Sec* and *Lake Sant Maurici*, not the *Dry River* or the *Saint Maurice Lake*, respectively) unless there is a well-established English version (*Danube River*, *Shatsky Lakes*).

### ii) Seas

Translate the names of seas when there is a well-established English translation. For example, use the *Bay of Biscay* rather than the *Cantabrian Sea* (unless you are referring strictly to the southern part of the bay).

### iii) Islands

Translate the names of islands when there is a well-established English translation.

Corsica

Sardinia

Sicily

### iv) Mountain ranges

Translate the names of mountain ranges when there is a well-established English translation.

the Alps

the Pyrenees

Do not translate them when there is not.

the Picos de Europa

the Serra de Tramuntana

### v) Landmarks and buildings

Generally speaking, do not translate the names of landmarks, buildings, rooms and halls. However, there are some exceptions such as the *Catalan Parliament building*, the *Eiffel Tower* or the *Great Wall of China*. Likewise, descriptive translations may be used to make references clearer: for example, the *Les Àligues building* at the University of Girona or the *Camp Nou stadium*. In the case of generic names, such as *Sala de juntes* (in Catalan), we recommend writing *Sala de Juntas (boardroom)* in English.

### 8.1.5 Public institutions

Generally speaking, translate the names of public institutions. If the original is required, use it on first mention with a descriptive translation in brackets. Use the translation on subsequent mention. Examples include *Generalitat Valenciana* (*Valencian government*) and *Mossos d'Esquadra* (*Catalan police force*). Organisations which have an official abbreviated form should be translated but the abbreviated form should be maintained and used on subsequent mention. So, for example, the *Real Academia Española* (*RAE*) and the *Deutsche Nationalbibliothek* (*DNB*) should be translated as the *Spanish Royal Academy* (*RAE*) and the *German National Library* (*DNB*), respectively. As can be seen above, use lower case for descriptive translations into English, but maintain capitals when you are translating proper names word for word or using established English versions.

### 8.1.6 Universities

Translate the names of universities, unless otherwise stipulated by the university in question itself. Below is a list of the names of Vives Network universities to be used when writing in English.

Universitat Abat Oliba CEU: Abat Oliba CEU University

Universitat d'Alacant: University of Alacant

Universitat d'Andorra: University of Andorra

Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona: Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

Universitat de Barcelona: University of Barcelona

Universitat CEU Cardenal Herrera: Cardenal Herrera CEU University

Universitat de Girona: University of Girona

Universitat de les Illes Balears: University of the Balearic Islands

Universitat Internacional de Catalunya: Universitat Internacional de Catalunya

Universitat Jaume I: Universitat Jaume I

Universitat de Lleida: University of Lleida

Universitat Miguel Hernández d'Elx: Miguel Hernández University of Elche

Universitat Oberta de Catalunya: Universitat Oberta de Catalunya

Universitat de Perpinyà Via Domitia: University of Perpignan Via Domitia

Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya: Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya

Universitat Politècnica de València: Universitat Politècnica de València

Universitat Pompeu Fabra: Pompeu Fabra University

Universitat Ramon Llull: Ramon Llull University

Universitat Rovira i Virgili: Universitat Rovira i Virgili

Universitat de Sàsser: University of Sassari

Universitat de València: Universitat de València

Universitat de Vic - Universitat Central de Catalunya:  
University of Vic - Central University of Catalonia

Universities named after a person should include the definite article in running text whether they are translated or not.

The Pompeu Fabra University was founded in 1990.

Admissions at the Universitat Rovira i Virgili have increased for the third year in a row.

The definite article should also be used when the name of a university is expressed as an initialism (see 4.3.1).

The URV is the public university of southern Catalonia.

Come to the Open Day and get to know the UAB!

However, when the name of a university is expressed as an acronym – that is to say, it is pronounced as a word, not as individual letters – the definite article is not required.

UVIC-UCC joined the European Journalism Training Association in October 2023.

### 8.1.7 Courses and subjects

Translate the names of courses and subjects.

English Studies

Roman Law II



### 8.1.8 Public lectures

The titles of public lectures should be left in the original language. However, they may be accompanied by a descriptive translation in brackets where deemed appropriate. Do not italicise this descriptive title.

“Educació, aprenentatge i tecnologia a la societat del coneixement” (Education, learning and technology in the knowledge society)

### 8.1.9 Books, music and art

Translate the names of books and of musical and art works when there is a well-established English version. When there is not, leave the name in the original language. If you provide a translation, make sure you avoid any possible confusion about which version of the work is being referred to.

Casals's *Song of the Birds*

Gericault's *The Raft of the Medusa*

Holst's *The Planets*

Mallo's *Muller con cabra*

Miró's *Pla de l'os*

Verdaguer's *A Barcelona (To Barcelona)*

### 8.1.10 Awards

Translate the names of awards. Examples include the *Max Theatre Awards* or the Catalan government's *Saint George's Cross*. In our institutional context, awards like the *Menció de doctorat internacional*, the *Menció cap a l'Excel·lència* and the *Premi Extraordinari* can be translated, respectively, as *International doctoral certification*, *Pathway to Excellence Award* and *Special Prize or Extraordinary Prize*.

### 8.1.11 Museums

Generally speaking, translate the names of museums, but refer to them on subsequent mention by their abbreviation if they have one: for example, the *National Art Museum of Catalonia (MNAC)*.

### 8.1.12 Political parties and unions

Translate the names of political parties and unions in brackets on first mention. If the original name has an abbreviation, use this on subsequent mention; if it does not, use the original name.

the *Candidatura d'Unitat Popular* (Popular Unity Candidacy, CUP)

*Junts per Catalunya* (Together for Catalonia, Junts)”.

the *Partido Popular* (People's Party, PP)

the *Partit dels Socialistes de Catalunya* (Socialist Party of Catalonia, PSC)

the *Unión General de Trabajadores* (General Workers' Union, UGT)

### 8.1.13 Official journals and gazettes

Translate the names of governmental journals and gazettes, accompanied by their original abbreviation.

*Official Journal of the Government of Catalonia* (DOGC)

*Official Gazette of the Government of Spain* (BOE)

*Official Journal of the Government of Valencia* (DOGV)

### 8.1.14 Companies

Do not translate company names, although a descriptive translation in brackets may be deemed useful.

Som Energia (a renewable energies cooperative)

Construcciones y Auxiliar de Ferrocarriles (a railway vehicle manufacturing company)

### 8.1.15 Trade fairs and conferences

Translate the names of trade fairs and conferences. That said, if the trade fair or conference is referred to by its original abbreviation, this should be maintained in the translation. For example, *CONSTRUMAT* (*International Construction Exhibition*) and simply *CONSTRUMAT* on subsequent mention.

## 8.2 Forms of address

Translate common forms of address such as *senyor*, *professora* or *doctora*. Omit any other forms of address used with high-ranking officials such as politicians or the heads of universities. Thus, for example, do not include or translate *Excel·lentíssima i Magnífica* in *Excel·lentíssima i Magnífica Rectora* unless specifically requested to do so.

## 8.3 Currencies and measures

Do not translate figures in euros into sterling or US dollars. Likewise, do not translate measures given in metric units into imperial units.

## 8.4 The word *web* versus the word *internet*

The words *web* and *internet* are not synonymous. The internet is the infrastructure of connections, whereas the web is the information stored on and transmitted over this network. The web cannot exist without the internet. With this in mind, we recommend translating *xarxa* as *web*, unless you are sure that it refers to the internet infrastructure.

## 8.5 Latin

Avoid the use of Latin terms where there is a perfectly acceptable English equivalent. Examples include *a posteriori* (acceptable equivalents would be *subsequently* or *in hindsight*), *a priori* (*beforehand* or *in theory*), *in situ* (*in the original place, on site*) and *viva voce* (*oral examination*). For a more complete list, see Appendix III: Latin terms with English equivalents.

## 8.6 Varieties of English

Be consistent and use a single variety of English. Other things being equal, we recommend standard British English (e.g., *centre*, *colour*, *defence*, etc.). On occasion, however, texts written in British English will include references to programmes, organisations or other concepts that use a different system of spelling (American English, Oxford spelling, etc.). We recommend conserving these different spellings. Thus, the words *program* in *White House Internship Program* and *organization* in *International Maritime Organization* should not be changed to *programme* or *organisation*, respectively.

## 8.7 Terms that have no established translation

Terms that have no established translation, such as *vegueria* (proposed territorial division for Catalonia), should be left in the original Catalan with a descriptive translation in brackets on first mention. Other examples include *comarca* (territorial division between a municipality and province), *diputació* (provincial government) and *protecció civil* (civil defence).

## 9. WRITING IN ENGLISH

Writing well in English – or any other language for that matter – involves somewhat more than avoiding errors in grammar, punctuation and spelling. Good writing is not just correct; it responds to the interests or needs of the intended readers. It must be planned, structured and designed with a particular audience and a particular purpose in mind. For maximum effectiveness, writers need to take decisions at a variety of levels, ranging from the overall structure of the document, through the organisation of sentences within paragraphs, to the placing of certain words at certain points in sentences. They should be aware that the writing process is full of challenges. Unlike speech, writing cannot rely on intonation or gesture, or exploit immediate feedback to put communication back on track. Likewise, unlike speakers, writers have to make certain assumptions about their intended – and often anonymous – audience, and they have to understand that communication is primarily their responsibility: they know full well what they want to say but their audience may not; and it is up to them to bridge the gap.

This section aims to make you aware of the issues to be considered if you are to rise to these challenges, convey your message efficiently and produce readily understandable texts.

### 9.1 Structure

The main point of writing institutional texts is to convey information to readers. If texts are not well structured, readers will struggle to follow what you are trying to say. The first step towards an effective, coherent document, then, is proper structuring. Ensure that your texts have clearly defined sections preceded by short headings which typographically stand out from the surrounding text. Use a numbering system to highlight the hierarchy of sections (1) and subsections (1.1). Organise your texts in paragraphs that are not too long (readers welcome white space).

## 9.2 Sentences

### 9.2.1 Types of sentence

There are four main types of sentence in English: simple, compound, complex and compound-complex.

#### *Simple*

Registration begins on 14 September.

#### *Compound*

Registration begins on 14 September, but courses do not start until 1 October.

#### *Complex*

Although registration starts on 14 September, courses do not start until 1 October.

#### *Compound-complex*

Although registration starts on 14 September, courses do not start until 1 October and payment is not due until the middle of November.

### 9.2.2 Sentence variety

For texts to be interesting, readable and easily understandable, they must do the following:

- Combine sentences of the four types mentioned above: simple, compound, complex and compound-complex.
- Have sentences of different lengths.

Although short sentences are more understandable than long ones, avoid a telegraphic style by writing short, medium and (sometimes) long sentences. Aim for an average sentence length of between 15 and 20 words and beware of excessively long sentences with more than one subordination and too many parenthetical elements.

- Contain sentences that begin in different ways. For example:

*Subject + verb*

**Professor Clarke will speak** in the main lecture theatre.

*Prepositional phrase*

**During the meeting this morning**, we discussed the new procedure.

*Infinitive phrase*

**To register correctly**, you must first log into the official website.

*Participle phrase*

**On arriving at their host university**, mobility students should get an appointment with their tutor.

### 9.2.3 End weight

The principle of end-weight states that shorter structures tend to come before longer structures in sentences. That is to say, a typical English sentence has a short subject immediately followed by the verb and then a long complement/object. If sentences are structured in this way, they can be understood more easily. Therefore, not

The fact that many mobility students arrived in September and had to return home almost immediately because their papers were not in order is unfortunate.

but

It is unfortunate that many mobility students arrived in September and had to return home almost immediately because their papers were not in order.

In the first of the two sentences above, the subject is long and complex and the verb is the penultimate word of the sentence. This requires readers to keep a lot of information in their short-term memory before they find the verb, which makes the sentence more difficult to read. The second sentence changes the structure so that the subject is short, and the verb is towards the beginning of the sentence followed by the longer, more complex sequence.

### 9.2.4 End focus

The principle of end focus refers to the position of new information in a sentence. You should place information you are giving readers for the first time and want them to focus on at the end of clauses and sentences. Therefore, not

The ability to communicate ideas to others is the single most important skill that undergraduate students must acquire.

but

The single most important skill that undergraduate students must acquire is the ability to communicate ideas to others.

### 9.3 Subjects and characters

In an affirmative or negative sentence

- the grammatical subject is the noun (or nouns) before the verb, and
- the characters are the nouns that express the concepts, people or things you are writing about.

Readers will understand a text more easily if its grammatical subjects are also frequently characters. For example, consider the following title and first sentence of an institutional text.

First-year students and the registration process

Complaints about the clarity of information on the website are frequently made by first-year students.

The title identifies two main characters (the things the text is going to discuss), but the subject of the first sentence is *Complaints*, which is neither of them. It would be more appropriate to position one of the characters in subject position. The following is an improvement.

First-year students and the registration process

First-year students frequently complain about the clarity of information on the website.

Readers will find your texts easier to follow if the subjects of your verbs refer to the main characters.



## 9.4 Verbs and actions

Readers understand sentences more easily if the verb expresses the action. Compare the verbs in bold in the two sentences below.

- a) Full payment of all outstanding fees must be **carried out** before issuance of degree certificates to students.
- b) All outstanding fees must be **paid** before degree certificates can be **issued**.

In sentence a), the actions of *paying* and *issuing* are expressed in the form of two nouns (*payment* and *issuance*), not in the verb (*carried out*). The technical term for expressing actions in the form of nouns is *nominalisation*. When you nominalise your texts, they will often sound abstract and dense because you use more abstractions and you require more words to express an idea. Note that the nominalised sentence above (a) is 17 words long while the verb-style sentence (b) is 13.

We recommend that you use verbs to express actions. Do not conceal them in nominalisations.

## 9.5 Placement of verbs

In general terms, English traditionally places the verb towards the beginning of the sentence immediately after the subject. The sentence below begins with a long introductory phrase, contains non-essential information, has a long subject and places information between the subject and the verb. The result is that the verb appears in an unnatural position towards the end of the sentence.

According to recent research carried out by members of the Communication and News research group from Oxford University, led by the well-known expert in the subject, Dr James White, many administrative workers from all sorts of public and private institutions, because they have never studied communication in any of its forms, have great difficulty in writing clear texts.

The sentence below shortens the introductory phrase and the subject, removes unnecessary information and keeps the subject and the verb together, thus moving the verb towards the beginning.

According to recent research from Oxford University, many administrative workers have great difficulty in writing clear texts because they have never studied communication in any of its forms.

## 9.6 Cohesion

Readers should be able to perceive that paragraphs are not just sets of individual sentences but units in which ideas progress logically and flow from sentence to sentence. Writing in such a way is said to be cohesive. You can make your texts cohesive in two main ways:

- a) Use subjects that refer back to information introduced in previous sentences.
- b) Use characters regularly in subject position.

The two-sentence text below uses option a) to create cohesion. The information presented at the end of the first sentence is immediately repeated and used as the subject of the second.

Dr James Watson will give a seminar on the Human Genome Project. The project began in 1990 and is considered to be of such importance that funding has just been approved for the next 15 years.

The paragraph below uses option b), a consistent string of characters in subject position.

The module of the Jean Monnet programme on European integration will be taught in February. Registration is now open to university members and professionals working in the field. The module will be taught in seminar room 3 and is organised by lecturers from the Department of Public Law. It analyses recent legislation and the transformation of European law over the last 15 years.

Three of the four sentences in this paragraph have the same subject: in the first sentence the subject is used in its full form (*the module of the Jean Monnet programme on European integration*), in the third it is used in a reduced form (*the module*) and in the fourth it is used in its pronominal form (*it*).

Finally, the paragraph below uses a combination of the two options.

**Readers** understand what a passage is generally about when **they** see consistent ideas toward the beginnings of sentences, especially in their subjects. **They** feel a passage is coherent when **they** read a sequence of topics **that** focuses on a narrow set of related ideas. But when **topics** seem to shift randomly, **readers** lose their context of each sentence. When **that** happens, **they** feel **they** are reading paragraphs **that** are unfocused and even disorganized.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Williams, J.M., & Bizup, J. (2017). *Style: Lessons in clarity and grace* (12th ed.). Pearson.

In this text, there are eleven subjects (in bold), of which seven are the same (*readers* or its pronoun form *they*). So the general principle governing the organisation of this paragraph is the regular use of characters in subject position. However, the third and fourth sentences begin with a subordinate clause with different subjects (*topics* and *that*) that refer back to the information introduced at the end of the previous sentences.

## 9.7 Parallelism

Parallelism refers to giving each element in a list the same grammatical category (noun phrases, verb clauses, infinitives, etc.). The similarity of the grammatical form makes it easier for readers to perceive a similarity in content and function. The sentence below is not parallel.

The students' objections were the injustice of the measures and that they were unconstitutional.

The first element of the list (*the injustice of the measures*) is a noun phrase while the second (*they were unconstitutional*) is a verb clause. The sentence would be clearer if it were rewritten. The sentence below contains a verb instead of the nominalisation *objections* and then has a verb clause that contains a list of two elements, both of which are adjectives.

The students objected that the measures were unjust and unconstitutional.

In any series of items, then, make sure that each element of the series is in exactly the same form as all of the others. In the first example sentence below, the list has three elements: the first two are noun phrases while the last one is a verb clause. Therefore, not

The master's students will acquire the personality, the contacts and have the knowledge to succeed in almost any business venture.

but

The master's students will acquire the personality, the contacts and the knowledge to succeed in almost any business venture.

This general guideline can affect even the smallest, and seemingly trivial, of words. Therefore, not

The Erasmus students will talk of their experiences in Paris, in Athens and Moscow.

but

The Erasmus students will talk of their experiences in Paris, Athens and Moscow.

The principle of parallelism should also be respected in vertical lists. Therefore, not

Students must

- a) present the official application form,
- b) their personal academic certificate, and
- c) proof of payment.

but

Students must present

- a) the official application form,
- b) their personal academic certificate, and
- c) proof of payment.

Take particular care when you use such structures as *not only ... but also*. Therefore, not

Master's degrees not only prepare professionals but also researchers.

but

Master's degrees prepare not only professionals but also researchers.

## 9.8 Concision

Texts are said to be concise if they communicate a message clearly using few words. Concise texts are generally effective because they make information easier to understand, but they are by no means easy to write. In fact, they often take considerably longer to write because they require lots of revision. Although it is impossible to identify all the ways in which authors inflate their texts, below you will find some strategies for reducing the length of your texts without removing necessary information.

### 9.8.1 Reduce clauses

Reduce clauses to simpler, shorter constructions. Therefore, not

The URV, which was founded in 1994, is the university of southern Catalonia.

but

Founded in 1994, the URV is the university of southern Catalonia.

### 9.8.2 Delete superfluous words and phrases

Delete all phrases and words that add nothing to the meaning or provide excessive detail. Therefore, not

The effect of the application of the new economic measures can be seen in last month's figures, and it goes without saying that the University is aware of the new policy on tax deduction and has every intention of complying with the regulations.

but

The effect of the new economic measures can be seen in last month's figures, and the University intends to comply with the new regulations on tax deduction.

### 9.8.3 Avoid nominalisations

Use verbs, not nominalisations, to express actions. Therefore, not

This report is dedicated to the discussion of the new economic measures.

but

This report discusses the new economic measures.

### 9.8.4 Avoid overuse of *it is* and *there is*

Expressions that combine *it* or *there* with the verb *be* can be effectively used for emphasis at times, but overuse can create unnecessarily lengthy prose. Use them sparingly. Therefore, not

It is the Rector who will have the last word on this issue.

but

The Rector will have the last word on this issue.

### 9.8.5 Do not make vague attributions

Authors often try to justify their statements by suggesting they have acquired information from an authoritative source. If you wish to refer to a source, however, do not do so vaguely as in the following example. A straightforward statement is preferable to a vague attribution. Therefore, not

Student registrations have been observed to be increasing in some subjects that were previously determined to be unfashionable.

It has been shown that visiting lecturers have been using this new resource.

but

Student registrations have been increasing in some previously unfashionable subjects.

Visiting lecturers have been using this new resource.

### 9.8.6 Make direct statements

Do not feel obliged to provide a brief introduction to every statement you make. Often, no introduction is necessary. Therefore, not

With regard to good students, their most important characteristic is the ability to work hard.

but

The most important characteristic of good students is the ability to work hard.

### 9.8.7 Do not hedge excessively

When you write, you are often not certain of the facts and are obliged to hedge (that is to say, introduce elements of doubt and uncertainty into your texts). If you need to hedge, though, do so just once. Therefore, not

It could be possible that economic factors and the decline in immigration may be affecting student numbers.

but

Economic factors and the decline in immigration may be affecting student numbers.

## 9.9 Summary

One of the main problems of writing clearly and effectively is that there will always be a gap between what you want to say and what your readers may understand. The principles outlined above will help you overcome this. Remember that they are only guidelines, not inflexible rules, but they will give you a general idea about how most university texts should be written. In a nutshell, the principles of clear writing are the following:

- a) Give your documents a clearly defined structure. The sections and subsections and their corresponding headings should guide readers towards meaning.
- b) Write sentences of different types and lengths. This will give your texts variety. But beware of excessively long sentences!
- c) Express actions not as abstract nouns (nominalisations) but as verbs.
- d) Make sure that the main verb is towards the beginning of the sentence by avoiding long introductory phrases, keeping your subjects short and not separating the subject from the verb.
- e) Begin sentences with information that you believe is familiar to readers and end sentences with what you believe is new or unfamiliar. Make sure that your most important characters occupy the subject position as often as possible.
- f) Ensure that all the elements of a list are expressed in the same grammatical form.
- g) Once you have completed your text, revise it for concision (among other things).

## 10. WORD PROCESSING TOOLS

In today's world, most administrative texts are produced on a word processor. Within this context, those who work with text need to be able to exploit the full potential of digital text processing, a field that goes far beyond the textual and linguistic issues that are dealt with in other sections of this guide. Much of what could be said is applicable to all languages, but in this section, as far as possible, we will restrict the discussion to aspects that affect texts in English.

Popular word processors, such as the broadly equivalent Microsoft Word (commercial software that is a registered trademark of Microsoft) and LibreOffice (open-source software), are sophisticated configurable programs with many tools to improve productivity, that is, to work faster and achieve higher quality. These programs are installed with a series of default settings and while some affect the creation of texts in all languages, certain settings can specifically affect English. An example is the language setting for the text, which establishes the spellcheck dictionary to be used, among other things. If you are typing in English but the spellchecker is checking for words in Catalan, productivity goes down rather than up. Default settings for new documents can be established by creating a template document and saving your preferred settings into it. Precisely how to do that will depend on the program and the version you are using.

There are various kinds of language tools. Not all of these are installed with the word processor itself, but usually the relevant files for English will be. In general, different varieties of English are available, so you need to check that the variety chosen is the one you want to use. Language tools not distributed with the original versions can usually be downloaded from the web.

### 10.1 Spellcheckers, grammar checkers and thesauruses

Spellcheckers are perhaps the most useful of the language tools on offer. Incorrect spellings are automatically detected. You can set up the checker so that it detects spelling mistakes as you type or you can turn it off and activate it later.

It is easy enough to use the wrong word, however, typing for example *sight* instead of *site*. In such cases your spellchecker will not detect any error, so you still need to check your work carefully after typing it.



Another potential problem is that you may disagree with the established criteria of the spellchecker. For example, does your institution prefer *cooperate* or *co-operate*? This is largely a matter of taste. In such cases, you can add what you consider to be exceptions to a local dictionary so these spellings will be accepted in the future but only for documents edited on the same computer.

Word processors offer users grammar checkers and thesauruses, but non-native speakers should bear in mind that these are not always as useful as other similar tools available online. For example, while grammar checkers can detect a lack of verb concord or suggest the punctuation of long sentences to improve readability, they can also mark a sentence as unacceptable when there is really nothing wrong with it. And while thesauruses can suggest synonyms of selected words, they are not always very complete and do not include guidance on differences between suggestions. For this reason, if you are writing in English but it is not your first language, you will need to find other tools and resources to support your word processor's grammar checker and thesaurus.

## 10.2 Automatic correction tools

The most popular word processors, such as Microsoft Word, LibreOffice and Google Docs, all include correction tools (often called *Autocorrect*), which automatically replace certain typed sequences of characters with other characters. These tools are language specific so, if you use them, make sure they are correctly configured. Otherwise, you may find yourself unable to enter a correct sequence at all, because they will unhelpfully change what you type.

Automatic substitution of characters may be a useful option, if set up in accordance with the way you want to work. It can include the following:

- a) Correction of common typing errors (such as *teh* to *the* or *abotu* to *about*)
- b) Automatic suggested completion of long words
- c) Expansion of abbreviated forms
- d) Substitution of character sequences to access special characters, such as two consecutive hyphens replaced by a dash or  $1/4$  replaced by  $\frac{1}{4}$
- e) Replacement of unlikely sequences, such as double capital letters at the beginning of a sentence replaced by a single capital letter
- f) Automatic formatting of lists

### 10.3 Configuring text format and language tools in your word processor

Configuring language tools is important because, if you are using a local version of Microsoft Word, the default settings for your document may not be for English, even though your document is in that language. In this section we outline how to configure the tools in your word processor and establish suitable default settings for an administrative document in British English. The following guidelines focus on the use of the Catalan version of the desktop program Microsoft Word 2021.

To create a template with suitable default settings, create a new Microsoft Word document and then follow the steps below.

- Maximise the *Estils* panel on the *Inici* ribbon to visualise it. Position the pointer over the *Normal* style and an arrow for a drop-down menu will appear. Right-click on the style to open this menu. Choose *Modifica* and a dialogue box will open.
- Click on the *Format* button and then on the first item, *Tipus de lletra*, in the drop-down menu. Here you can choose the default font and its size and colour, among other things. Confirm any changes you make with the *D'acord* button.
- Select *Paràgraf* from the same drop-down menu. Click the first tab, *Sagnia i espaiat*, to establish the line spacing, the paragraph spacing, the indentation, the justification and the tabulation positions. Click on the second tab, *Salts de línia i pàgina*, to avoid single final lines at the top or bottom of a page, and to insert a page break before each paragraph with this style. Confirm all the changes.
- Select *Llengua*, choose *anglès (Regne Unit)* from the list and make sure the box *No revisis l'ortografia ni la gramàtica* is unchecked. Confirm those changes. (The spellchecker will only work if it has been installed. If in doubt about this, contact the computer service responsible for your hardware and software maintenance.)
- Click on *Anomena i desa* in the *Fitxer* tab. A dialogue box will appear, in which you can give your document a name, such as *admin-en-template1*. Then open the drop-down menu for *Tipus de fitxer* and choose *Plantilla de Word (\*.dotx)* and click on *Desa*.

Your document format preferences are now saved in your template. To create a new empty document based on these settings, double-click on the template file in a Windows Explorer window, or create a new document based on your template by clicking on *Crea*. (Templates for many kinds of documents are also available online. Such templates tend to focus on complicated formats, such as tri-fold brochures. For simpler documents with a single flow of text, it is preferable to create your own template, as we describe here.)

To view the spellchecker and grammar checker settings, click on the *Fitxer* tab at the top on the left and choose *Opcions* to open the corresponding dialogue box. Then choose *Correcció* from the menu on the left-hand side. On the right-hand side of the box you can establish settings for document proofing. To turn off as-you-write spell checking, uncheck *Revisa l'ortografia a mesura que escric*. To turn off grammar checking, uncheck *Marca els errors gramaticals a mesura que escric*. To choose what kinds of error the grammar checker will identify, open the *Estil d'escriptura* dialogue box by clicking on the *Configuració* button. Uncheck boxes for items that you do not want the program to automatically correct. Do not forget the *Format automàtic a mesura que escric* tab in *Opcions de la correcció automàtica*, where you can set up the automatic treatment of quotation marks, among other things. When you finish, save your changes and exit the dialogue box. These autocorrect settings are not saved into your template but are associated with your profile as a user on that specific computer.

You can establish various other general settings in the *Visualització* and *Avançades* tabs in *Opcions del Word*.

## 10.4 Special characters

Some characters are particularly problematic for electronic media. For example, the older type-setting tradition of curly apostrophes (') and curly quotation marks (" ") corresponds to print media. They were not available on mechanical typewriters at all and are not immediately available on computer keyboards either. (They need to be looked up in character tables.) Like straight apostrophes (') and straight quotation marks (" ") they are available on word processors, but curly quotation marks are often misinterpreted by web servers and incorrectly displayed on web pages.

You may encounter problems with other special characters. Our recommendation is to save Microsoft Word documents in .docx format (which, by default, uses standard Unicode UTF-8 character encoding).

## 10.5 Word wrap and word division

The difference between print and web text editing traditions is not merely confined to character selection. Text justification may also be an issue. Texts for print media such as books, magazines and newspapers are usually fully justified (left and right). Web media, in contrast, tend to be left-justified because they are viewed at different page widths on different screens, and large horizontal gaps may appear between words if a fully justified text is viewed in a narrow window. This problem can be solved in word processing documents if the right dictionaries are installed (if not, words may be divided in the wrong place) and automatic word division is activated. The program will then split long words at the end of lines to reduce the appearance of long spaces between words when full justification is used.

Word wrap is the feature that automatically carries down any word that does not fit at the end of a line. Although it is a fundamental feature of word processors, it can lead to problems when items that should be on the same line are split over two lines. To avoid this, use non-breaking spaces, for instance between an honorific and the following name, and non-breaking hyphens, for instance as a separator between numbers.

Mr Charles Smith

2013 3476 24 4700000418 (a bank account number)

In Microsoft Word the following key combinations can be used to insert these characters: *Control+Shift+Space* for a non-breaking space; *Control+Shift+Hyphen* for a non-breaking hyphen.

## 10.6 Team projects and revision of texts

Generally speaking, texts for publication pass through various hands during the stages of creation, editing, proofreading, etc. This chain is fragile when using desktop software such as locally installed word processors because the most recent version of the project file is held by only one person at a time (and stored in only one place). Users must take turns working on the document and send the project file on to the next member of the team when they finish. This can slow work down and lead to problems of traceability, meaning that it is difficult (or impossible) to know which versions a document has gone through and who has introduced which changes.

This issue is addressed by the track changes tool in word processors, but as with all digital tools, it is vital to make best use of the instrument provided. (Hidden revisions can be inadvertently distributed in a final version, to the potential embarrassment of all concerned.)

The following guidelines focus on the use of *Control de canvis* in the Catalan version of Microsoft Word 2021.

To turn track changes on and off, go to *Revisió > Seguiment > Control de canvis* or use the key combination *Control+Shift+E*.

You can see if you are currently tracking changes by looking for *Control de canvis* on the status bar (the bottom border of the Microsoft Word window). If this control is not visible, activate it by right-clicking on the status bar itself and selecting the corresponding option on the menu that appears.

To control how tracked changes are displayed in your document, use the controls in *Revisió > Seguiment*. You can modify how changes appear by clicking on *Canvia les opcions de seguiment*.

You can accept or reject changes to make permanent changes, or just show and hide them. To accept or reject them, use the *Revisió > Canvis* controls.

If a document has passed through various reviewers with *Control de canvis* turned on, the proposed modifications will be marked with an identifier for each person. If you click on *Revisió > Seguiment > Subfinestra de revisió*, you will see this identifier beside each change. When you hold the pointer over a change, a pop-up text also shows this information. Each author's suggestions can be colour-coded in the *Canvia les opcions de seguiment* dialogue; changes proposed by just one reviewer, for example, can be shown using the *Mostra l'etiquetatge > Persones específiques* dialogue.

*Control de canvis* can be combined with the insertion of comments (in the *Revisió* tab) to create an effective process for proofreading by teams of reviewers, but circulating a document can lead to delays when team members are held up by slower work from their colleagues.

When working with a group of document reviewers, there are a number of issues to bear in mind, most of which concern actions to be avoided. The most important of these are outlined below.

- Base your document on a template that includes styles for all the paragraphs and headings you will need. Do not introduce any manual paragraph formatting into the document. Use your template styles instead.
- Do not use the *Enter* key to create extra vertical spacing. If necessary, adjust your template paragraph styles.
- Do not use the font and font-size controls to change the appearance of text manually. Incorporate font features into your style definitions instead.
- Do not apply italic and bold styling to a whole paragraph to make it look like a heading. Use a heading style instead.
- Do not use the space bar repeatedly to create horizontal space or to centre your text. Make sure your tabulation positions are defined in your template styles and use the tab key to position text. If text needs to be aligned, this should be part of the paragraph style definition.
- Do not type a manual number or bullet to create the effect of a list or heading. Incorporate automatic numbering or bulleting into the paragraph style instead.
- Do not create a page number, a table of contents, an index, a cross-reference, or other such items manually. These items should be created using automatic fields so that they are updated automatically when the document is modified.
- Use inline images (instead of floating images) to prevent unpredictable movement of text. Do this by right clicking on the images in your document and then selecting *Ajusta el text > Alineat amb el text*.

Some of these problems, and many others, can be detected and corrected by skilful use of the *Cerca i substitució* command. For instance, double spaces between words can be eliminated by searching for double spaces and replacing them with single spaces throughout the whole document. The same trick can be used to eliminate empty paragraphs by searching for “^p^p” and replacing it with nothing.

The items listed above are guidelines to avoid frequent text-formatting errors. Once you start to use the built-in features of the word processor to create the desired effects in a reproducible and configurable way, you will find it much more effective than manual formatting.

Microsoft Word offers another method of working with a document that has been circulated among various editors: *Compara*, which is available in the *Revisió* tab. This function allows you to see all the differences between versions of a document and who has proposed each change. Nonetheless, circulating a document to different members of a team is a cumbersome process. This problem may be addressed by resorting to online tools, which is the subject of the following section.

## 10.7 Online word processors and other online tools

Desktop word processors are powerful programs that can be adapted to users' preferred ways of working, but they have their limitations, particularly when document editors are working as a team. Many of the tools available in desktop word processors are now available online and in some cases these tools are more powerful.

This is the case for online dictionaries such as Word Reference ([wordreference.com](http://wordreference.com)), or grammar and spellchecking tools, such as LanguageTool ([languagetool.org](http://languagetool.org)). Automatic translation tools, such as Google Translate ([translate.google.com](http://translate.google.com)), Microsoft Translator ([bing.com/translator](http://bing.com/translator)) or DeepL Translator ([deepl.com/translator](http://deepl.com/translator)), also work best online.

Likewise, teamwork can be enhanced by synchronising desktop files to a shared online copy, as with the services offered by DropBox ([dropbox.com](http://dropbox.com)), Google Drive ([drive.google.com](http://drive.google.com)) or Microsoft OneDrive ([onedrive.live.com](http://onedrive.live.com)).

The most radical option is to do away with the desktop word processing environment altogether, at least in the initial stages of text creation. Online word processors are now a viable alternative to desktop software. Popular options include GoogleDocs ([docs.google.com](http://docs.google.com)), Zoho Writer ([zoho.com/writer](http://zoho.com/writer)) and Microsoft 365 ([microsoft.com/en/microsoft-365](http://microsoft.com/en/microsoft-365)).

The word processing environment in these online editors is more rudimentary, but they offer the following advantages over desktop word processors:

- File storage is more secure online than on a local hard drive.
- All previous versions are stored and the editing of each version can be traced.
- Since all editors work on the same version, there is no chance of conflicts between versions from different sources.
- There is enhanced integration with other online resources, such as automatic translation and dictionary look-up.

## 10.8 Conclusions

All too often, users are asked to create and edit texts without any thought to the issues raised in this section, as if the effective use of these programs were common knowledge or intuitive. To some extent, word processing programs themselves encourage this perception by making it so easy to edit and print your first texts and also by allowing users to manually format texts without regard to best practice. Given the variety and power of the tools available, it is vital that users configure these tools appropriately to exploit their full potential. In this section we hope to have indicated some of the resources and pitfalls, particularly with a view to the edition of texts in English in a Catalan-speaking context.



## 11. MODEL DOCUMENTS

This section provides practical advice on writing different types of document: applications, resolutions and notifications; certificates and internal certificates; correspondence (letters and email); and agreements.

Each subsection offers model texts that are versions of similar original documents. Their purpose is to facilitate and standardise the institutional production of such documents in English, making them readily comprehensible to international readers. Their structure may vary from corresponding Catalan and Spanish documents.

These models may not cover all eventualities, but they will provide helpful guidelines and some useful language. When combined with advice from the other sections, they are a good start to creating your own institutional documents.

### 11.1 Application

#### 11.1.1 Definition

An application is a formal request to a competent body.

#### 11.1.2 Structure

##### i) Applicant's personal details

Provide your name, family name, identity document type and number, and postal address. If relevant, provide further information such as telephone number, email address, date and place of birth, etc. If you are making the application on behalf of another person, include both your personal details and those of the person you are representing.

##### ii) Declaration

In this section, give the reasons for the application. Introduce it with the expression *I declare* in bold, capital letters and followed by a colon, and write each statement on a new line beginning with a capital letter and ending with a full stop. If there are two statements or more, number them.

### iii) Request

This section states the object of the application. Begin with the expression *Request* in bold, capital letters and followed by a colon, and write any following statements on a new line beginning with a capital letter and ending with a full stop. If there are two statements or more, number them.

### iv) Supporting documents

If any documentary evidence is required, or it is in your interests to include it, list the documents you attach.

### v) Signature

Sign the document. There is no need to print your name and surname because they have already been provided at the beginning.

### vi) Place and date

After the signature, write the name of the town or city in which the application has been made and the date.

### vii) Recipient

At the foot of the page, put the name of the unit and institution to which it is addressed.

## Model application

**Name:** Anita

**Family name(s):** Smith

### Identity document

**Type:** Passport

**Number:** Y2369480K

**Issuing country:** United Kingdom

**Postal address:** Carrer de Joan Fuster i Ortells, 8, 43007 Tarragona

**Further information:** +34 693 455 293

### I DECLARE:

1. I am a student from the University of Sheffield, United Kingdom, currently on an Erasmus programme at the Universitat Rovira i Virgili.
2. On 25 September I registered on a Catalan for Beginners course at the Language Service and on the same day paid the full course fee (€225).
3. I was subsequently informed that as a mobility student I am entitled to free basic language tuition.

### I REQUEST:

A refund of €225.

### SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

1. Photocopy of passport
2. Photocopy of Erasmus learning agreement
3. Photocopy of Language Service registration form
4. Photocopy of proof of payment from the bank



Tarragona, 15 October 2023

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Language Service

Universitat Rovira i Virgili

## 11.2 Resolution

### 11.2.1 Definition

A resolution records a decision. It generally responds to an application and may end a particular administrative procedure.

### 11.2.2 Structure

#### i) Identification of the document

Identify the document with a reference number. If the resolution is especially long or complex, it may be appropriate to add a short title by way of summary.

#### ii) Background

List the facts and the various steps that have been taken since the beginning of the process and any regulations that might affect the decision. Introduce them with the expression *considering* in bold, capital letters followed by a colon, and write each statement on a new line. If there are two statements or more, number them.

#### iii) Resolution

Introduce this section with the formula *I resolve* in bold, capital letters and followed by a colon, and briefly state the decision taken, in full sentences.

#### iv) Signature

This section includes the signature, full name and position of the signatory, in this order.

#### v) Place and date

End the resolution with the name of the town or city where the document will be signed and the date.

## Model resolution

**Document number:** 2023/287

**Body:** Language Service

### **CONSIDERING:**

1. On 15 October Anita Smith sent an application to the Language Service asking to be refunded the sum of €225 that she paid for a Catalan for Beginners course.
4. From the documents provided it is clear that Ms Smith is currently on an Erasmus programme at our university and made the payment as stated.
5. Mobility students, including Erasmus students, are entitled to free tuition in Catalan, in accordance with the official list of fees for language courses.

### **I RESOLVE:**

Ms Smith is to be refunded the sum of €225.



Maria Sales Llopis

Coordinator of the Language Service

Tarragona, 29 October 2023

## 11.3 Notification

### 11.3.1 Definition

A notification informs the interested party of a resolution that has been adopted by a competent authority.

### 11.3.2 Structure

#### i) Recipient's details

Identify the person to whom the notification is to be sent in the top left-hand corner under the heading. Include their name and family name, address, post code and town or city.

#### ii) Introductory formula

State the date on which the resolution was adopted and by whom.

#### iii) Text of the resolution

Reproduce the full text of the resolution below the introductory formula. If it is particularly long, attach it to the notification as a separate document.

#### iv) Appeals

State whether an appeal can be made, to whom and within what time frame.

#### v) Signature

In this section, include the signature, the full name and the position of the person issuing the notification, followed by the date and place.

## Model notification

**For the attention of:** Anita Smith

**Postal address:** Carrer de Joan Fuster i Ortells, 8, 43007 Tarragona

On 29 October 2023 the coordinator of the Language Service of this university issued the following resolution.

### **CONSIDERING:**

On 15 October Anita Smith sent an application to the Language Service asking to be refunded the sum of €225 that she paid for a Catalan for Beginners course.

From the documents provided it is clear that Ms Smith is currently on an Erasmus programme at our university and made the payment as stated.

Mobility students, including Erasmus students, are entitled to free tuition in Catalan, in accordance with the official list of fees for language courses.

### **I RESOLVE:**

Ms Smith is to be refunded the sum of €225.

### **APPEALS**

This resolution does not exhaust the right of appeal through administrative channels. If you wish to appeal, present an application for further review by the rector within one month from the day after receiving this notification.



Jaume Serra i Alemany

Head of the Secretary's Office, Language Service

Tarragona, 1 November 2023

## 11.4 Certificate

### 11.4.1 Definition

A certificate attests to a broad range of facts such as course attendance, the attainment of an academic level or qualification, or the exercising of a specific function. It is issued by a person or organisation with the recognised authority to validate the facts attested to.

### 11.4.2 Structure

#### i) Date

Write the date in the top right-hand corner of the page rather than at the bottom. Omit the place name that typically appears on certificates in Catalan.

#### ii) Generic salutation

Begin with *I hereby certify that* in bold, capital letters followed by a colon.

#### iii) Body

State the information that is being attested to. This section is fully justified.

#### iv) Signature

Include the signature of the person issuing the document and left-justify it.

#### v) Certifier's name and position

Give this information on two lines, left-justified and without full stops.

#### vi) Organisation

The specific level of organisation (service, school, faculty, area, university, etc.) indicated in the text may depend on the type of certificate. Indicate the highest level of organisation as the final item. Where two or more levels are identified, place them on separate lines with no full stop. This information is left-justified.



## Model certificate

13 February 2023

### I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT:

Marc Esteve i Monfort, the holder of identity document number 23676263M, attended the staff-training course “Conflict Resolution in the Workplace”. The three-hour course took place on 29 January 2023 in the *Sala d'Actes* (conference hall) of the Science Faculty at this university.



Maria Josep Puig i Torres  
Area for Staff Training  
Universitat Rovira i Virgil

## 11.5 Internal certificate

### 11.5.1 Definition

An internal certificate attests to an ongoing or completed administrative procedure. It is equivalent to the Catalan *diligència*, informally known as a *faig constar*.

### 11.5.2 Structure

#### i) Date

Write the date in the top right-hand corner of the page rather than at the bottom. Omit the place name that typically appears in certificates in Catalan.

#### ii) Generic salutation

The final recipient of an internal certificate is not generally known, so the text begins with the generic salutation *To whom it may concern*, which should be left-justified and followed by a comma.

#### iii) Body

In the body, state the information that is being attested to. This section is justified.

#### iv) Signature

Include the signature of the person issuing the document and left-justify it.

#### v) Signatory's position

Put the person's name below the signature, followed by their position on the next line. Left-justify the text and do not use full stops.

## Model internal certificate

12 June 2023

To whom it may concern,

Georgina Subirats Colom submitted her doctoral thesis to this department on 5 June 2023. The thesis will be assessed by a board of examiners, who will issue a report. It will then be deposited in the TDX institutional repository.



Cecília Garriga

Department Director

## 11.6 Letter

### 11.6.1 Definition

A letter is a hand-written, typed or printed communication which may require a response.

### 11.6.2 Structure

#### i) Sender's address

Write the sender's address in the top right-hand corner of the page.

#### ii) Recipient's name, position and address

If you include the recipient's address, write this on the left-hand side of the page. The first line should be level with the last line of the sender's address. Use any professional title the recipient has used in previous correspondence. Otherwise, write the recipient's full name without *Mr* or *Ms*.

#### iii) Date

Write the date on the right-hand side of the page below the sender's address. Do not write the name of the town or city from which the letter is sent.

#### iv) Salutation

Salutations most frequently begin with *Dear* and end with a comma. When the letter is informal, follow *Dear* by a first name.

Dear Mark,                      Dear Lucy,

When the letter is formal, follow *Dear* by *Mr* or *Ms* and the recipient's family name.

Dear Mr Jones,                  Dear Ms Benway,

When you do not know the recipient's name, use the phrase *Dear Sir or Madam* followed by a comma.

When the letter is addressed to a group of people, follow *Dear* by a common noun.

Dear student,                      Dear colleague,

You can follow *Dear* by a capitalised noun to denote the recipient's position.

Dear Coordinator,              Dear Head of Studies,

#### v) Body

The body of the letter should convey the information in a direct style and be paragraphed appropriately.

The following phrases may be useful.

In reply to...

With reference to...

I am writing to enquire about...

I am writing to inform you of...

I was happy to learn that...

I was sorry to hear that...

I would be grateful if...

I would appreciate it if...

I am pleased to announce that...

You will be happy to learn that...

I regret to inform you that...

I am sorry to say that...

You are advised to...

You are requested to...

Please do not hesitate to...

Please feel free to...

I look forward to...

I am looking forward to...

#### vi) Close

The close is a formulaic way of ending a letter. Capitalise the first word and follow the last word with a comma. Leave some extra space above and below the close. An acceptable formal close is *Sincerely* and an acceptable informal close is *Kind regards*.

#### vii) Signature line

The signature line consists of the signature followed by the sender's printed name. If appropriate, write the sender's position below the printed name.

## Model letter 1: giving information

Campus de la Ribera  
15007 Sant Salvador

19 November 2023

Dear staff member,

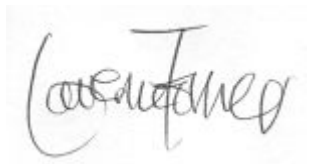
As the coordinator of this year's Erasmus Staff Week, I'm writing to give you some practical details about what we've planned for the event, which will take place during the week of 14–18 December.

First of all, to get into town you'll find there are regular bus and train shuttles right to the city centre. Once you get to the centre, you'll be able to go straight to your hotel, the Hotel Majestic, which is just a ten-minute walk from Plaça de la Pau.

Turning to the Staff Week itself, on Monday 14 March we'll be having our welcome meeting at 7.30 p.m. in the *Sala de Juntes* (the boardroom) in the University's main building at 433, Carrer de les Botes. Our registration desk will be open there from 3.30 p.m. to 7.15 p.m., so don't forget to visit us.

Finally, if you've already booked a room in a hotel other than the Hotel Majestic or if you won't be able to come before 7.15 p.m. to register at the Staff Week desk on Monday, then please let us know as soon as possible by emailing us at [SWorganisers@ub.edu](mailto:SWorganisers@ub.edu). And when you're here, remember that if you need to contact the organisation at any time, you can phone us at 934 027 352.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Laverne Forner', written in a cursive style.

Laverne Forner  
Staff Week Coordinator

## Model letter 2: asking for information

Janice Farrell  
The Organising Committee  
Centre for Educational Research  
The Fairborn Exchange  
Manchester  
M13 4XL

Observatori del Tercer Sector  
Campus de la Ribera  
15007 Sant Salvador

17 December 2023

Dear Ms Farrell,

I have recently seen your announcement in the journal of the Centre for Educational Research calling for papers for the Fourth International Conference on Effective Governance and Learning Leadership, which you are convening between 16 and 19 June 2024.

I am currently engaged in research on the service delivery relationship between the voluntary and public sectors and I would be interested in presenting a paper at the Conference if you feel that my work is appropriate to the scope of this year's event. I would also be grateful if you could send me detailed information about the conference programme.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jaume Balmes Gómez', with a large, stylized initial 'J'.

Jaume Balmes Gómez

## 11.7 Email

### 11.7.1 Definition

An email is a form of written communication sent by electronic means which may require a response.

### 11.7.2 Structure

#### i) Subject line

Keep the subject line short and provide specific information about the content of the message. Use sentence-style capitalisation (first word and proper nouns).

#### ii) Salutation

Tailor the salutation to the person you are writing to. The salutation generally starts with *Dear* followed by a name or position and ends with a comma.

Dear Marina,	Dear Mr Davies,
Dear Head of Department,	Dear Coordinator,

Less formal emails can also start with *Hi* or *Hello*, followed by a comma.

#### iii) Opening sentence

The opening sentence is commonly used to explain why you are writing. An acceptable formal beginning to this sentence is

I am writing to inform you that...

and an acceptable informal beginning is

I am writing to let you know that...

#### iv) Body

Formal emails are very similar to formal letters. Therefore, the same guidelines can usually be applied. For useful language, see Section 11.6 v) Body.



#### v) Closing sentence

The closing sentence is commonly used to offer thanks or to state what kind of response you expect. An acceptable formal closing sentence is

I look forward to your response.

and an acceptable informal closing sentence is

I look forward to hearing from you.

#### vi) Close

To close, use the formal *Sincerely* or the informal *Kind regards*, followed by a comma.

#### vii) Signature line

Write your first name or your full name, depending on the level of formality.

## Model email 1: giving information

World Poetry Day

---

Dear all,

I'm writing to remind you that World Poetry Day is coming up in our university and you're all invited!

Date: 14 May 2024

Place: The main foyer of the Barcelona campus

Time: 11.30 a.m.–4.30 p.m.

Please come along and join in the activities. There will be various competitions you can participate in. You will find a copy of the full programme attached to this email.

Kind regards,

Mireia Rojals

## Model email 2: asking for information

EDUCATCH list of contacts

---

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing to ask if you would be willing to share your list of contacts for the EDUCATCH project so that we can start looking for partners for a similar project we plan to work on.

We hope that this will not be inconvenient for you and we would appreciate your help in this matter.

Sincerely,

Manel Puig

## 11.8 Agreement

### 11.8.1 Definition

An agreement is a written document in which two or more parties establish mutual obligations for the conduct of a shared project.

### 11.8.2 Structure

#### i) Title

The title identifies the type of agreement and can also name the parties and state the main objective of the agreement.

#### ii) Participants

This section identifies the parties signing the agreement by their full name, position and institution. It also makes reference to their power to represent their institution or act individually. Introduce it with the expression *by and between*, centred in bold, capital letters. Each party should be given a separate paragraph.

Close this section with a sentence confirming that all the parties signing the agreement acknowledge the others' capacity to enter the agreement.

#### iii) Recitals

This section sets out, in separate and numbered paragraphs, the precedents, the willingness of the signatories, the legal framework and everything that needs to be taken into consideration. Introduce it with the word *state*, centred in bold, capital letters, and start each of the following paragraphs with the word *That*.

#### iv) Clauses

This section includes the specific clauses agreed to by the parties. Use the word *clauses*, centred in bold, capital letters as the title of the section and a numbered heading for each clause.

v) Close

Close the document with a sentence acknowledging where and when the agreement was signed.

vi) Signatures

This section should include the signature, name, position and institution for each of the parties signing the agreement.

## Model agreement

### FRAMEWORK COOPERATION AGREEMENT

#### BY AND BETWEEN

The first party, Joan Garcia Romaní, rector of the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (hereinafter, “the UOC”), acting for said university; and

The second party, Sònia Capdevila Tena, rector of the University of Girona (hereinafter, “the UdG”), acting for said university.

The parties, acting in their aforementioned capacities, declare that they have sufficient legal capacity to enter into this Agreement and

#### STATE

1. That the UOC and the UdG signed an Agreement for the joint creation and organisation of an interuniversity master’s degree in Translation on 13 April 2023.
2. That Spanish Royal Decree 1393, of 29 October 2007, amended by Spanish Royal Decree 861, of 2 July 2010, governing official university studies, defines the legal framework for offering master’s degrees and expressly provides for interuniversity programmes.
3. That, on 1 April 2023, the governing body of the UOC passed the resolution to join the programme of an interuniversity master’s degree in Translation.
4. That the signatory universities, in considering that they have partially shared and complementary objectives, wish to sign this Agreement in the interest of fulfilling their respective missions.

Now, therefore, the parties agree to the following

## CLAUSES

### 1. Object

The object of this Agreement is to define the collaboration conditions between the signatory universities for organising the Interuniversity Master's Degree in Translation.

### 2. Liability

The signatory universities hereby state that this Agreement does not constitute any kind of relationship of representation, dependence or subordination between them, and, therefore, neither institution may act on behalf of the other in performing their legal or contractual duties or in assuming commitments or taking on responsibilities for them.

### 3. Data protection

Both parties state that they comply with all the provisions of Spanish Personal Data Protection Law 15, of 13 December 1999, and Spanish Royal Decree 1720, of 21 December 2007, which implements Law 15, and acknowledge that they have been informed on what their personal data is to be used for and how they can exercise their rights to access, modify and challenge this data.

### 4. Confidentiality

The signatory universities shall treat all data, documents and information provided by the other party during the term of this Agreement as confidential.

### 5. Intellectual property

The signatory universities shall jointly own the intellectual property rights of the content of the syllabus of the Interuniversity Master's Degree in Translation.

### 6. Term and termination

This Agreement enters into force from when it is signed and has a term of two (2) years.

The following are the causes for terminating this Agreement:

- The signatory parties agree, in writing, to terminate it.
- Either party breaches its obligations, and the other party gives thirty (30) days' written notice that it wishes to terminate this Agreement, in which case the Agreement is terminated unilaterally.
- The general reasons for terminating agreements provided for in the current legislation.

## 7. Jurisdiction and governing law

The parties submit to the contentious administrative courts of Barcelona to resolve any dispute arising from the interpretation, application or enforcement of the provisions established herein.

In witness whereof, the parties hereto sign two (2) identical and equally valid counterparts of this document in Barcelona on 30 April 2023.



Joan Garcia Romani  
Rector  
Universitat Oberta de Catalunya



Sònia Capdevila Tena  
Rector  
University of Girona



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## APPENDIX I: COMMON ABBREVIATIONS

### Months

Jan.	January
Feb.	February
Mar.	March
Apr.	April
Aug.	August
Sep.	September
Oct.	October
Nov.	November
Dec.	December

### Days

Sun.	Sunday
Mon.	Monday
Tues.	Tuesday
Wed.	Wednesday
Thurs.	Thursday
Fri.	Friday
Sat.	Saturday

## Other abbreviations

c.	circa (around)
cf.	confer (compare)
email	electronic mail
et al.	et alii (and others)
e.g.	exempli gratia (for example)
etc.	et cetera (and so forth)
govt	government
ibid.	ibidem (in the same place)
i.e.	id est (that is)
natl	national
sic	sic erat scriptum (thus was it written)
sig.	signature
soc.	society
trans.	translator, translation, translated by
univ.	university
vs	versus (against)
Wi-Fi	local area wireless technology

**APPENDIX II: UNUSUAL PLURAL FORMS**

addendum	addenda
agenda	agendas
appendix	appendices
basis	bases
bureau	bureaus
campus	campuses
consortium	consortia
corps	corps
corpus	corpora
criterion	criteria
curriculum	curricula
formula	formulas
index	indexes, indices
maximum	maximums
medium	media, mediums
memorandum	memoranda
millennium	millennia
phenomenon	phenomena
plus	pluses
practicum	practicums
premium	premiums
quantum	quanta
referendum	referendums
stimulus	stimuli
syllabus	syllabuses
thesis	theses

**APPENDIX III: LATIN TERMS WITH ENGLISH EQUIVALENTS**

a posteriori	subsequently, with hindsight
a priori	beforehand, in theory
bona fide	in good faith
ditto	as before, aforesaid
et alii	and others
idem	the same
in absentia	not present
in camera	in secret
infra	below
in memoriam	in memory
in situ	in the original place
inter alia	among other things
intra muros	internal
nota bene (NB)	note well
per annum	per year
per diem	per day
sine qua non	essential
sui generis	unique
supra	above
terra firma	dry land
viva voce	oral examination

# Xarxa Vives

d'universitats



Universitat Abat Oliba CEU  
Universitat d'Alacant  
Universitat d'Andorra  
Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona  
Universitat de Barcelona  
Universitat CEU Cardenal Herrera  
Universitat de Girona  
Universitat de les Illes Balears  
Universitat Internacional de Catalunya  
Universitat Jaume I  
Universitat de Lleida  
Universitat Miguel Hernández d'Elx  
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