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Editorial house style

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Public Engagement Team

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This document highlights some of the main points of the written house style, to be implemented in printed and online communications. It gives a summary guide to style and consistency in written communications from the Public Engagement Team at the University with particular emphasis on the content and style of event programmes and listings.

Here is an example of an event listing with many of the key elements displayed:

9am – 1pm, 13 March, 6pm – 8.10pm, 15 March, 2.30pm – 4.30pm, 18 March
PsyFi film festival
Arts Picturehouse, St Andrew's Street
A film festival of screenings and talks on compulsion organised by the Cambridgeshire branch of the British Science Association and PsyFi:
9am – 1pm, 13 March *Vertigo* (PG)
6pm – 8.10pm, 15 March *Black Swan* (15)
2.30pm – 4.30pm, 18 March *Croupier* (15)
Map: 00, Film, Ages 12+, Pre book tel: 0871 902 5720 or visit: www.picturehouses.co.uk, £3.50

General

Capital letters

Use lower case as much as possible.

In event titles
"Crisp packet fireworks with the Naked Scientists"
(not **"Crisp Packet Fireworks With The Naked Scientists"**)

In text/event descriptions
Use a capital first letter if the noun is specific, but keep it lower case if it is general:
"The Festival of Ideas activities are hosted by a number of **faculties**"
(faculties uses lower case f here as a specific faculty is not being referred to)

"The **Faculty of Archaeology and Anthropology** (specific) comprises three **departments** (general). The Faculty (specific) includes the **Department of Social Anthropology** (specific). The Head of the Department of Social Anthropology (specific) is ... while other departmental heads (general) have…

Do not use capital letters for subjects eg **science, technology, engineering and mathematics.**

The University uses capital letter U, when it means the University of Cambridge; but if you are using the word university in a general way eg **a place at university** (meaning any university) it should remain lower case.

The Cambridge Colleges: use a capital C, even when referring to the Colleges in general. This differentiates the Colleges from further education colleges, for example. **The Colleges admit students from many local schools and colleges.**

DRAFT

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Use capital letters in **job titles**, but not as general description ie **Tim Radford, Science Editor vs Tim Radford, former journalist at The Guardian.**

No capital required after a colon.

Problem words

Capitalise	**Don't Capitalise**
Earth	world
Universe	the moon
South Pole	

Dates

Friday 16 January 2012 not Friday, 16th January
1890s, 1930s not 1890's, 1930's
20th century not twentieth century

Longer em-dashes (**–**), with gaps around them, should be used with times, dates and age ranges: **Tuesday – Sunday, 11.30am – 5pm**

Times

Event times should be displayed with am/pm and feature space either side of the em-dash:

- **10am – 1pm, 2pm – 5pm**, 16 – 24 March

Avoid the 24 hour clock. Times are also displayed as 10am – 1pm, as opposed to 10.00am – 1.00pm, always use a full stop to denote hours from minutes rather than a colon, eg 10.30am rather than 10:30am. Where times feature in the body of the text they should appears as 11.30am to 5.30pm.

Addresses

Should have building name, first line of address and postcode (if applicable).

Examples

Single occurring events: 7.30pm – 9.30pm, Saturday 27 October
Events with multiple times/dates: 9am – 1pm, 13 – 17, 6pm – 8pm, 18, 24 March

Months need only appear next to the final date of that months sequence ie **24, 27 October, 3 November.**
Do not use **st, nd, rd th** ie **14** March not **14th** March.

*Decisions – **days,** and the use of **and***

Event Key

The event key should appear in the following order with capital letters to denote a new key point and commas in between:

Map reference, Type of event, Ages, Drop in, Pre book/no need to book
eg
Map: 51, Talk, Ages 14+, Drop in

DRAFT

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Types of event:

Talk
Demonstration
Hands on
Performance
Film
Workshop
Exhibition

Where events span multiple types this should appear **Talk/Film**

Age ranges

Children **aged 12 – 16**
In event descriptions use children aged from 12 to 16, spell out numbers under ten: children aged from ten to 16. Use children aged from 12 – 16 in event key.

Booking information

Where an event is pre book, information should be displayed in the following sequence:
Pre book tel: 01223 334433, email: name.surname@cam.ac.uk or visit: www.cam.ac.uk/event

Where there is a cost or some additional information it should follow from the contact information after a comma with no capital letters in the following way:
Pre book tel: 01223 334433, email: name.surname@cam.ac.uk or visit: www.cam.ac.uk/event, **£5, children £4, concessions £3**

Or
Pre book tel: 01223 334433, email: name.surname@cam.ac.uk or visit: www.cam.ac.uk/event, **recommended donation £2**

Where the events booking is centrally managed use **Pre book*** the asterisk signals to the booking information displayed at the base of each page.

Where booking is not essential, but recommended, please use **Booking recommended**

Email and web addresses

Email addresses should appear in lower case, not underlined, eg name.surname@cam.ac.uk
Web addresses should not include **http://** at the beginning and should end with a full stop if they appear at the end of a sentence.

When present in an event key they should always be displayed as
email: name.surname@cam.ac.uk
visit: www.cam.ac.uk/event

Telephone numbers

tel: 01223 339397

Event reference numbers?

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General: body copy

Tone

When introducing events use plural personal pronouns such as **'us'** and **'we'**. Ensure that event contributors follow the same style to maintain consistency.

Full points

Do not use full points in **eg, am, pm, op, no, cf, ie, ed, etc**

Hyphenation

When an adverb is used to qualify an adjective, if the adverb is not readily identifiable as an adverb, then it should be hyphenated. For instance, in the phrase 'deep blue sea', 'deep' could be an adverb to indicate that the colour of the sea was both blue and of considerable depth. To demonstrate that 'deep' is being used to qualify the adjective 'blue', the phrase is hyphenated **'deep-blue sea'**.

Adverbs that end in 'ly' are almost always identifiable as adverbs and therefore rarely need hyphenating, eg slowly moving train, highly educated scholar.

A hyphen is used to separate two vowels used together in a word when they are the same vowel eg co-ordination, micro-organism, co-operate, but reappointed not re-appointed.

The following words should not be hyphenated:

Hands on	Email
Fundraising	Online
Website	

The following words should be hyphenated:

Co-ordinator	Pro-Vice-Chancellor
Vice-Chancellor	

Numbers

In text numbers are spelt out: **one, two …** up to **nine**
10, 11 and over appears in figures

In statistics numbers appear as figures 1, 2, etc

When numbers appear as part of a phrase or are combined with words, the numbers should be spelt out:

- two million, not 2 million (but £2m)
- **six-a-side**, not 6-a-side

When numbers begin a sentence they are spelt out, even if there are statistics within a passage of connected prose, eg **Sixty-four students graduated**, 31 of whom were overseas students.

Numbers over a thousand should use a comma, eg **1,234** not 1234.

Fractions do not use a hyphen, eg **two thirds**, not two-thirds.

DRAFT

Percentages – within text per cent is always spelt out, eg one **per cent**, 50 per cent; in tables or in graphs the % symbol can be used.

Page references should be displayed in full. For example, **pages 34 – 35 or 46 – 54** or **107 – 117** or **136 – 138**

Names and initials

When referring to the Vice-Chancellor using her full title, you should say **Vice-Chancellor Professor Alison Richard** not University Vice-Chancellor Professor Alison Richard.

Full points should not be used after abbreviations such as **Mr, Mrs, Prof, Dr, BSc, MLitt, PhD**

Full points are NOT used after initials eg **Dr M P S Handley** (with space between each initial)

There should not be a comma between a name and honorarium eg **Dame Jane Goodall DBE**

When **alphabetical lists** of names are being given, follow a strict alphabetical order:

Mac appears before Mc
de Sa, du Plessis appear under D
Spanish names appear under the first surname, eg M Rangel Archila de Novais comes under Rangel

Paragraphs

Use one line return between paragraphs and do not indent the first line.

Keep paragraphs short. Bear in mind that large blocks of text put readers off.

Whilst, amongst and amidst are considered archaistic, use **while**, **among** and **amid.**

Also be aware of American spelling. Remember that the correct way of spelling English words is with **s** instead of **z**, for example **organise** not **organize**.

Punctuation

Double quotation marks are always used for direct quotes, unless there is a quote within a quote, in which case use single within double.

A **full stop is used outside** the quotation mark if the quote is only part of a sentence. It comes inside the quotation mark if the quote is a whole sentence:
…part of “a sentence”.
“A whole sentence.”

Single quotation marks

Single quotation marks should be used for event names where an event is referenced (excluding its event listing).

Do not use quotation marks for organisation names.

Dashes Always use longer em-dashes (**–**)

DRAFT

Italics, should be used to denote the **title of a product**, either print publications, television programmes or plays. do not use quotation marks.

Where **event titles** are solely the name of a product, **italics should not be used**, unless the event is referencing a particular product, for example: Translating Camus: *The Outsider*
Italics should only be used where they reference a product (either written, oral or visual), this includes titles of television programmes, books, plays and exhibitions. They should **not be used** where they reference **a service ie Radio 4**, the BBC etc

(for more information on Italics please see: www.economist.com/style-guide/italics

University

University of Cambridge is the official University title and should be used in all communications and publications. **Cambridge University** should be avoided.

When referring to the University alongside the University of Oxford the names should be written in full ie "the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge". The term Oxbridge should be avoided.

Equal opportunities

Deaf people, not the deaf
People with disabilities, not disabled people
Wheelchair users, not people in wheelchairs
People with AIDS, not AIDS victims
Elderly people, not the elderly or old people
Ethnic minority group/community or **minority ethnic group/community,** not ethnic group/community

Useful resources online:

The Economist has a very useful style guide it can be found:
http://www.economist.com/styleguide/introduction

Particularly the following sections:

Short words: http://www.economist.com/styleguide/s#node-21535257

Punctuation: http://www.economist.com/styleguide/p#node-21535249

Words to avoid: http://www.economist.com/style-guide/horrible-words

The Guardian's style guide is also a useful source for additional information. It can be found at www.guardian.co.uk/styleguide

More useful guidelines relevant to the UoC:

DRAFT

Degree titles use capital first letters for clarity eg **BA Honours in History**. Single Honours, Joint Honours etc also use capital first letters for clarity.

Capital letters are also used for term names, eg **Michaelmas Term.**

Qualification subject titles should have capital letters eg GCSEs in Mathematics, Chemistry and History.

Titles of papers should have capital letters eg “This includes the general paper **Historical Argument and Practice”.**

Plurals

Heads of school (no s), **deans of faculty** (no s) as each head or dean is head of one school or dean of one faculty.

For the plural of Master the apostrophe follows the s: **Masters' regulations** or **Masters' degrees**. For the singular of Master the apostrophe precedes the s: **a master's degree** in Computing Science.

Problem spellings/words

Beware of the following problem words:

- **A Level**
- Cambridge has **graduate students** or graduates, but not postgraduates; **Post-docs** not postdocs
- College titles: **Queens’, King’s, St Catharine’s**
- **dependent** – adjective, needing the support of something or someone in order to continue existing or operating; **dependant** – noun, someone who depends on you
- **effect** – the result of a particular influence; **Affect** – to have an influence on someone or something
- **medieval** (not mediaeval)
- **Millennium**
- **MPhil**
- **USA** not US
- **website, email** and **online** are written as one word, not hyphenated
- **advice** – noun; **advise** – verb
- **adviser** not advisor
- **complement** – to make something else seem better or more attractive when combining with it. **compliment** – a remark that expresses approval, admiration or respect**;**
- **en suite** is two words (not hyphenated)
- **fieldwork** is one word, ie not field work (**course work** is two words)
- **focused** – not focussed
- **liaise**
- **licence** – noun; **license** – verb eg licensing (to license)
- **licensee/licensor**, not licencee/licencor
- **practice** – noun, action rather than thought or ideas; **practise** – verb, to do or play something regularly or repeatedly in order to become skilled at it, or to work in a skilled job for which a lot of training is necessary
- **stationery** – paper, pens, pencils and envelopes, etc; **stationary** – not moving

DRAFT

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- the word **role** has no circumflex above the o

Headlines and links

News headlines in magazines and web stories should use **active verbs**:
'Cambridge Professor **discovers** new technique' not 'New technique for cell extraction discovered'.

The headline of a web page should always be the same as any links leading to it. Don't call your page 'Information for prospective students' if the link to it is 'How to apply'.

Keep headlines as short as possible.

Description	Title	Body text
Full performance	A Midsummer Night's Dream	We present *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and then all go home.
An event referencing a product in the title	Animal relationships in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*	We present and discuss a range of relationships in the Shakespeare's play *A Midsummer Night's Dream*
A discussion on a theme of work	A midsummer night's dream	A character assassination of characters in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*
Referencing a previous event referencing a product	Discussing 'Animal relationships in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*'	An analysis of the event that presented and discussed a range of relationships in the Shakespeare's play *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

A Midsummer Night's Dream

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