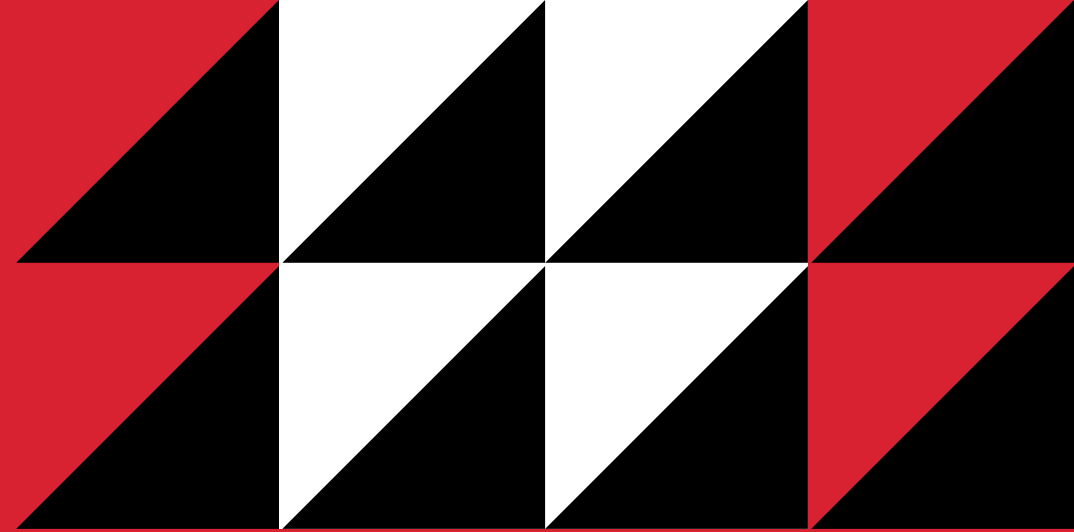




CITY
ST GEORGE'S
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON



Writing Style Guide



The University of
business, practice
and the professions.

citystgeorges.ac.uk

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Why have a writing style?

The way we communicate our ideas, whether through the written or the spoken word, sends a message about who we are.

Consistency, clarity and integrity in everything we write are essential. We should be perceived as straightforward, accessible, and open about who we are and what we do. To achieve and maintain this image, our tone of voice and use of language, both for internal and external audiences, needs to be consistent.

This guide establishes the rules and conventions that should be used when writing or editing material for publication by City St George's, including prospectuses, brochures, press releases, newsletters and other centrally produced print and digital communications. The house style needs to be adhered to for all materials published in the name of City St George's including reports, brochures, letters and marketing materials.

City St George's Brand team can provide further guidance on the Writing Style Guide, brand@citystgeorges.ac.uk.

For members of staff responsible for creating and editing web content, please refer to the Writing for the web guide also available online.

Tone of voice

City St George's writing style is **lean** and **business-like** with a **friendly** and **approachable** quality. We are passionate, expert and specialist. Superfluous words and colloquialisms commonly used in verbal communications and in speech should be avoided in written communications.

Purpose and audience

It is important to consider the purpose and audience prior to starting any piece of writing. This is because purpose and audience will often direct the tone of voice. For example, a report intended for research partners would read more formally than an Instagram post for students. Therefore, the tone of voice should be adapted to suit the target audience. Do not assume your audience has had academic or scientific training. Explain any technical terms or jargon at the first mention.

A short summary using information provided by the researcher or via the NHS website should suffice. For example, "I am studying hereditary childhood ataxia, which is a term for a group of disorders that affect coordination, balance and speech."

Formal

City St George's Writing Style Guide assumes the default use of a formal tone of voice unless there is a reason to do otherwise. This is because a formal tone of voice connotes a prestigious higher education institution more than an informal one. However, we recognise the need to be flexible to reach young and increasingly digitally native audiences. For the purposes of social media and student communications, the writing and tone of voice can move away from the guidance of the Writing Style Guide when needed. Careful consideration must be applied before doing so.

Informal

Many platforms will suit a more informal tone including social media and student communications.

In these cases you may use a tone of voice which is conversational. The university should refer to itself as 'we' and address the audience directly as 'you' – this helps to convey a personal tone.

Social media

Social media platforms are sometimes where our stakeholders first interact with us. Most of these platforms are designed to be used informally, with the exception of LinkedIn, which is generally more professional than the other platforms but on the lighter side of the professional sphere.

The table to the right should help provide guidance on the appropriate tone of voice to use across different social media platforms.

A human quality can be achieved by injecting a sense of personality into appropriate posts and by starting conversations with the audience e.g., congratulating recent graduates (examples to the right).

Use of humour

Humour helps humanise a brand and it can be instrumental in facilitating a connection with our key audiences. It is important that any use of humour aligns with City St George's values and does not detract from its position as a university. So, avoid using humour for the sake of it, or joining the conversation too late, as this can do more harm than good.

	Audience	Tone
Facebook	Primary: Current/prospective students Secondary: Parents, staff, alumni	Engaging, friendly and helpful.
X	Primary: Current students, staff, alumni, industry partners, press Secondary: prospective students	Informative, conversational, formal/informal where appropriate.
Instagram/TikTok	Primary: Current/prospective students Secondary: Alumni, staff	Friendly, casual, fun, positive and inspirational.
LinkedIn	Primary: Current students (primarily PG), staff, alumni Secondary: Prospective students, industry partners	Professional, inspiring and informative.
YouTube	Primary: Prospective students Secondary: Current community	Engaging, inspiring and informative.

About City St George's

City St George's, University of London

Not: CSG, CSGUL, City, CUL, SGUL, City University, City St George's University.

In formal contexts always use City St George's, University of London in full the first time you refer to the University. Thereafter, the name can be shortened to City St George's. If you need to mention City St George's several times and require a formal alternative, you can use 'the University', provided it is absolutely clear that you mean City St George's and not the University of London.

Do not refer to City St George's as a college of the University of London. City St George's is a member institution of the University of London.

Double possessive

Possessive apostrophes after City St George's look problematic.

Try to re-write the sentence to avoid this.

For example:

- Clinicians and scientists, working at St George's.

Where this cannot be avoided, you may use City St George's as a double possessive without a second 's' or a second apostrophe.

For example:

- City St George's research output.

University of London

Where possible, write out in full. If you need to abbreviate, use UoL with a lower case 'o' and not 'UOL'.

Strapline

City St George's strapline is: The University of business, practice and the professions.

Schools

Our Schools:

- Bayes Business School
- School of Communication & Creativity
- School of Policy & Global Affairs
- School of Science & Technology
- School of Health & Medical Sciences
- The City Law School.

Note, when referring to any of City St George's Schools, the word School should always be capitalised. For Schools which include the word 'and', always use an ampersand (&) rather than 'and'.

Avoid using acronyms in the place of School names, particularly in communications to external audiences.

Bayes Business School

In formal writing, use Bayes Business School the first time you refer to the School. Thereafter the title can be shortened to Bayes.

Bayes is not an acronym. It should never be written as BAYES.

The possessive style is: Bayes'.

The City Law School

Use upper case for every word, including 'The'.

Spaces around City St George's

Campuses

City St George's has three campuses, they should be capitalised.

- Clerkenwell
- Tooting
- Moorgate

For example:

- Teaching will take place on the Tooting campus.

Buildings

When referring to City St George's buildings, both the name of the building and the word Building should be capitalised.

For example:

- Students should meet in the reception area of College Building.

Lecture theatres and seminar rooms

Use 'lecture theatre', 'seminar room' or 'learning space' in formal writing, but 'classroom' or 'teaching space' is fine for more informal writing.

Departments and teams

Use upper case for the name of the department or team and lower case for the word 'department' or 'team' unless the word 'department' or 'team' is part of the name.

For example:

- Finance department or Finance team.

This also applies for **centres**, **divisions** and **groups**.

Students' Union

City St George's Students' Union. The apostrophe goes after Students.

Halls of residence

Lower case 'h' and 'r' unless it is the formal name of a specific hall.

For example:

- We offer halls of residence across London.
- Romano Court is one of our most popular halls.

What we do

Higher education

Universities educate rather than teach. Where possible try to change your wording to educate or learn rather than teach. However, teach or teaching may be appropriate for more informal communication especially when concerning undergraduate students.

For example:

- City St George's educates students in areas including social sciences, law and business.
- Students learn from academic staff who are leaders in their fields.

Not:

- We will teach you how to...

Note, lower case 'h' and 'e' for higher education unless it begins a sentence in which case the 'H' should be capitalised.

University

Upper case 'U' when referring to a specific university.

For example:

- The University of business, practice and the professions when referring to City St George's.
- Durham University.

Lower case 'u' when referring to university in general.

For example:

John left home to go to university.

Lower case 'u' when referring to a group of universities.

For example:

The proposals affect universities across England and Wales.

Courses/programmes

In print:

Ensure consistency throughout a publication or body of work, using either course or programme to refer to a degree rather than a combination of the two. In prospectuses, City St George's defaults to course throughout for consistency. When referring to a cluster of courses e.g., Finances courses, only the subject area is capitalised and not 'courses'.

On web:

Authors are encouraged to use course and programme interchangeably for search engine optimisation (SEO) purposes and to improve readability. This avoids our webpages being penalised for keyword stuffing.

Modules

Upper case for the first letter.

For example:

- Oliver has chosen to study the elective module Government, law and democracy. Please note, module names use 'and' and not an ampersand (&).

Modes of study

These definitions apply to a particular mode of study chosen by a student.

- **In-person/on-campus student or course** – refers to a mode of study where a student attends classes in a physical learning space; previously referred to as face-to-face teaching. This will be supported by online learning resources that all students can access online.
- **Blended student or course** – refers to a mode of study where students will be attending both in-person/on-campus and online. The split between in-person/on-campus and online is decided by the programme and includes either synchronous or asynchronous online activities in addition to in person/on-campus learning activities.
- **Hybrid student or course** – refers to a mode of study where the student may have some flexibility in deciding their mode of attendance. The student may be able to choose to attend all or some of the lectures, seminars and support sessions online or in-person. In this mode, some students will be attending lectures and seminars online with others attending in-person. This mode of study will be delivered from a physical learning space and supported by online learning resources that all students can access online.
- **Online student** – refers to a mode of study where a student studies online; previously referred to as 'distance learning'. Students may need to attend in-person/on-campus for induction activities, practical activities or assessments and this will be outlined in the course requirements.

Enterprise

Use enterprise rather than knowledge transfer unless using an official name e.g., Knowledge Transfer Partnership.

What we do

Qualifications

GCSE

All upper case. Use lower case 's' when plural e.g., GCSEs.

A-level

Not A level, A' level or a level. Always include the hyphen and write the first 'l' in lower case.

Diploma

Lower case 'd' unless the word begins a sentence.

Foundation degree

Upper case 'F' and lower case 'd'.

Undergraduate degree

One word for undergraduate. Lower case 'u' unless it begins a sentence.

Honours degree

When writing about a course that we offer, the degree level should appear first, followed by the subject.

All bachelor's degrees offered at City St George's are honours degrees, with exception of the MBBS degrees. It is not necessary to clarify this by adding (Hons) in brackets after course titles.

Postgraduate degree

One word for postgraduate. Lower case 'p' unless it begins a sentence.

Postgraduate Certificate

Upper case 'P' and 'C'.

Postgraduate Diploma

Upper case 'P' and 'D'.

Master's degree

Use master's degree in lower case when applied generically or upper case when talking about a specific degree. If the plural form is required, use: master's degrees.

For example:

- City St George's is world renowned for its master's degree in Magazine Journalism
- Nina is studying for an MSc in Organisational Psychology
- Bayes Business School offers master's degrees in both Real Estate and Real Estate Investment.
- Joe is an MRes Biomedical Science – Infection and Immunity student.

When referring to the MPAS, write it out in full in the first instance with the abbreviated name in brackets. You can then continue to refer to the abbreviated name. E.g., City St George's Tooting campus is the ideal place to study the Master's in Physician Associate Studies (MPAS).

PhD

Not PHD or phD.

Also note that doctorate or doctoral, used in prose, should be lower case.

For example:

- Abi's doctoral research explores the use of technology in therapy for people with aphasia.

City St George's brand names

Some locations or activities within City St George's remove the space between two words, in order to create a brand name (e.g., **CitySport**, **StaffWire**). These should never be italicised but take care to capitalise the first letter of the second word as indicated here. If in doubt, check with the brand owners.

People

Academic staff

Do not refer to academic staff as ‘teachers’. Also avoid ‘lecturer’ unless this is part of the formal title (as opposed to, for example, Reader).

Dean

Use upper case ‘D’ when referring to a specific Dean or Deans at City St George’s e.g., Dean of The City Law School or the Deans of City St George’s six Schools.

Use the academic title rather than ‘Dean’ as title. For example, Professor Anna Whitelock, Dean of the School of Communication & Creativity.

Doctor

Shorten to ‘Dr’ without a full stop after the ‘r’.

Professor

Upper case ‘P’ and always in full; never ‘Prof’.

Visiting Professor

The correct way to refer to a Visiting Professor is e.g., Visiting Professor Dr Frederick Bloggs.

Professional Services staff

Not Central Services, support staff, non-academic staff, clerical staff or admin staff.

Use upper case ‘P’ and ‘S’.
Use upper case for specific titles.

Council

City St George’s Council has an upper case ‘C’.

Students

Graduand

This word describes a student who has passed his or her examinations but has yet to graduate. Lower case unless the word begins a sentence.

International student

Lower case unless ‘international’ is at the beginning of a sentence.

Alumni

When writing about alumni of City St George’s, the format should be: full name (course, year of graduation). Ensure to use the brackets as shown here.

For example:

- For City St George’s alumnus Dermot Murnaghan (Journalism, 1984), the Department of Journalism plays a key role in preparing its students for print and broadcast journalism.

If it would aid the reader’s understanding, you can include the award (e.g., MSc, BA), but this is not a requirement.

Note the following:

Alumnus

- One male graduate.

Alumna

- One female graduate.

Alumni

- Several graduates (male and mixed groups).

Alumnae

- Several female graduates.

Titles

In prose, use the title and first name of a person at the first mention. Thereafter, use the title and surname only and ensure that you are consistent throughout the document.

For example:

- Professor Leanne Aitken attended the ceremony. There was a lunch for guests after the ceremony, but Professor Aitken had a prior commitment and was unable to attend.

When using initials, there should be no spacing or full stop.

For example:

GL Brown, not G L Brown or G.L. Brown

Contracted titles such as Dr, Mr and Mrs should not be followed by a full stop.

Use upper case for ranks and titles when referring to a particular person.

For example:

- the Deputy Dean
- Joe Biden, 46th President of the United States
- the Prime Minister.

Peerages and national honours

If an academic also has a peerage (e.g., Lord, Baroness), write this before their academic title.

For example:

- Lord Professor Robert Winston.

But if an academic has a national honour (e.g., Sir, Dame), write this after their academic title.

For example:

- Professor Dame Wendy Hall.

However, if it is clear that you are referring to a moment in their life before they were awarded the peerage or national honour and if it would be jarring to include it, the peerage or national honour may be omitted.

For example:

- Professor Wendy Hall was awarded a CBE in 2000, before being made a Dame in 2009.

The same rule applies for non-academics with peerages or national honours. For instance, it would be odd to say ‘John Lennon met Sir Paul McCartney in 1957 when they were teenagers’. You would omit McCartney’s knighthood in this instance. But if you are in doubt whether to include the peerage or national honour, it is better to include it.



Formatting

Capitalisation

As a general rule, a word should only be capitalised when it begins a sentence or when it is a proper noun. There are exceptions to this rule for example, in the case of event and title names, which use title case (see below for more information). Governments, councils, companies, universities, schools, departments, centres and colleges are capitalised only when referring to a specific case.

For example:

- Sabrina visited several engineering schools before deciding to study at the School of Science & Technology.
- In February, the Council of City St George's, University of London approved an ambitious Vision & Strategy. The University is now beginning a new phase of investment.
- Bayes Business School is located close to the City of London. The School welcomes students from around the world.

Avoid capitalising every letter in a word.

Names and titles

Brand names and publication titles typically use title case, where each word is capitalised.

For example:

- British Airways
- Writing Style Guide.

Not:

- British airways
- Writing style guide.

This includes the names of websites and online companies. Note the capitalisation convention in the names of the following websites:

- YouTube
- LinkedIn
- TikTok.

Headings and subheadings

City St George's uses sentence case for headings, which is to capitalise only the first word unless the subsequent words are proper nouns. Avoid title case (where each word is capitalised).

For example:

- Campus facilities
- Find out more.

Not:

- Campus Facilities
- Find Out More.

This also applies for course modules.

For example:

- Fluid mechanics and thermodynamics.

Not:

- Fluid Mechanics and Thermodynamics.

Events

Similarly to brands and titles, events names should use title case. Event names should also be capitalised even if the name does not start a sentence.

For example:

- Open Day
- Away Day
- You are invited to attend your Graduation on...

Not:

- Open day
- Away day
- You are invited to attend your graduation on...

Italics

Publications

Italics should be used for all publication titles: books, brochures, newspapers and periodical titles; film and play titles; TV and radio series and titles of paintings and other works of art.

For example:

- An article in *The Guardian* noted that
- Dr Smith is co-editor of *Foreign Affairs*
- Sam is performing in *The Merchant of Venice*.

Write national newspapers how they write their name on their front pages (i.e., not all have 'The' at the start): *The Times*, *The Guardian*, *The Telegraph*, *The Sun*, *The Mirror*, *The Observer*, *Daily Express*, *Daily Mail*, *Financial Times*, *Metro*.

Italicise only publications that have a print version. If they are online only (BuzzFeed, Business Insider) then do not italicise.

If you are referring to an individual piece of research, song, article, short story, etc. within a larger publication, use single quotation marks rather than italics.

For example:

- Dr Whitby's report, 'Fructose and diabetes risk', was published in *The Lancet*.

When referring to annual publications, check if the publication itself includes the year in its official title, e.g., *The Guardian University Guide 2022*. Include the year if the brand owner does.

Latin words

Italics should be used for more obscure Latin words.

For example:

- *alma mater*
- *prima facie*.

In certain cases, when a Latin word has become common English parlance (e.g., circus, stimulus, alumni, pro bono, axis), italicisation is unnecessary.

Scientific Latin names for animals, plants etc.

For all creatures higher than viruses, write the full name in italics giving an initial capital to the first word, which indicates the genus, for example, *Tyto alba* (barn owl). On second mention, the genus may be abbreviated, for example, *T. alba*. In some species, such as dinosaurs, the genus alone is used in lieu of a common name, such as *Diplodocus* and *Tyrannosaurus*. However, the bacterium *Escherichia coli* is known universally as *E. coli*, even on its first mention.

For example:

- *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis* (Bd) is a deadly fungus that has ravaged frog populations around the world.
- Food poisoning from *E. coli* is commonly associated with eating contaminated beef or chicken products.

Abbreviations, acronyms, ampersands

Abbreviations and acronyms

Organisations

Use the full title for organisations followed by the abbreviation or acronym in brackets at the first mention. Use the abbreviation in upper case for each subsequent use.

For example:

- World Health Organisation (WHO)
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).

For abbreviations familiar to an international audience, there is no need for the full title to be used. For abbreviations familiar predominantly to a UK audience the full title should be used.

For example:

- No need to use the full title for the BBC; DNA; USA
- Possible need for full title (depending on audience) for NHS (National Health Service).

Common abbreviations and acronyms:

- Covid-19 to refer to the most recent pandemic
- BA to refer to bachelor in arts degrees
- BSc to refer to bachelor in science degrees
- BEng to refer to bachelor in engineering degrees
- MA to refer to master in arts degrees
- MSc to refer to master in science degrees
- MSci to refer to undergraduate master in science degrees
- MEng to refer to master in engineering degrees
- MRes to refer to master in research degrees
- MPAS to refer to the Master's in Physician Associate Studies
- PGCert to refer to postgraduate certificates.
- PGDip to refer to postgraduate diplomas.
- SU to refer to the Students' Union
- UG to refer to undergraduate
- PG to refer to postgraduate
- UCAS to refer to the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service
- HESA to refer to the Higher Education Statistics Agency
- REF to refer to the Research Excellence Framework
- TEF to refer to the Teaching Excellence Framework
- KEF to refer to the knowledge Exchange Framework
- EDI to refer to equality, diversity and inclusion.

Note that the abbreviated version of 'for example' is 'e.g.,'.

Megabytes and Gigabytes should be abbreviated as MB and GB.

Corporate brands

As a general rule, write brand names and corporate acronyms how the owner writes them, e.g., NASA and FIFA are capitalised but Fiat and Defra are written with just an initial capital. Avoid starting sentences with brand names that use lower case letters at the start of their names, e.g., adidas, iPad. But note that not all companies who use lower case in their logo do so when writing their name in prose (e.g., Facebook, Flickr, Xerox).

Ampersands

Ampersands should only be used when they form part of the name of a School or brand at City St George's, or if certain brand owners prefer an ampersand in their name (e.g., Marks & Spencer). In all other writing, they should be avoided, including in a job title, a department name, or in a course title.

For example:

- School of Policy & Global Affairs
- Jumoke graduated from City St George's, University of London with a BSc Accounting and Finance.

Lists

Lists

Generally, a full stop should be used at the end of the last point in a bullet-point list unless the individual points consist of a full sentence.

It is only necessary to capitalise points if they are longer phrases that would make grammatical sense in isolation, e.g., "This is something about point 1", rather than simply "point 1".

For example:

Through the Careers Service you can:

- Talk to qualified professional careers consultants
- Take part in workshops and seminars
- Access information on courses.

The Student Centre offers a range of support services:

- academic learning support service
- dyslexia service
- student health service.

If your bullets are particularly lengthy, consider using a semicolon at the end of each bullet.

When writing a list within a full sentence, consider using a colon before the list begins if it helps readability.

When writing a complicated list with several items (and especially where those items also contain commas), semicolons should be used to separate the items and make the list more understandable.

For example:

- Students on this course learn to design, develop and conduct research; critically appraise current research; develop a collaborative approach and apply research findings to improve health services.

Figures

Numbers

Spell out the numbers one to nine and use numerals for 10 upwards. However, please note the exceptions to this rule below.

If a number starts the sentence, it should be spelled out.

For example:

- Seventy people participated in the study.

Not:

70 people participated in the study.

You should not mix two styles within a paragraph or sentence when they refer to the same category.

For example:

- Results indicated that 5 of the 30 members of the control group experienced side effects
- Five of the thirty members of the control group experienced side effects
- In all four studies, between 15 and 20 people were affected. (Here, we are talking about two different categories, so two styles are acceptable).

Not:

In the third study, two participants experienced side effects and 12 experienced no side effects. (Here, we are using different styles to talk about the same category [the participants], which is not acceptable).

Use figures for measurements attached to units.

For example:

- 5kg
- 150ml.

A comma should be used when writing numbers over 1,000.

For example:

- 2,500
- 33,600
- In 2024, over 594,000 prospective students applied to universities in the United Kingdom.

Numerals

There is no need to add 0 before numerals under 10.

For example:

- Page 5
- Monday 7 July.

Not:

- Page 01
- Monday 07 July.

Money and currency

For longer prose, million and billion should be spelled out. In shorter pieces, captions and tables, 'M' and 'bn' can be used.

For example:

- The Centre has secured £2 million in funding to research corporate tax havens.
- UK defence spending has decreased over the past three years (2015: £47bn; 2016: £45bn; 2017: £44bn).

Percentages

Use per cent in longer prose, % in tables, figures and shorter pieces of text.

For example:

- 50%
- 45 per cent.

Dates

In prose, dates are written as: day, date, month, year. Note that we do not use commas or superscripts for dates.

For example:

- Monday 26 March 2012
- Tuesday 1 May 2012.

When specifying a date range, either use 'from xx to xx' or 'between xx and xx'.

For example:

- The period from 1914 to 1918
- Between 1914 and 1918.

When writing about an academic or financial year, use the format 2024/25.

For example:

- City St George's 2024/25 undergraduate intake.

Summer, winter, spring, autumn

Not Summer, Winter, Spring and Autumn unless the words begin a sentence.

Times

Use either the 12 or 24 hour clock, but not both in the same text: consistency throughout a text is vital. Also note that midday and midnight are conjunctions so, not mid day/mid-day or mid night/mid-night.

For the 12 hour clock, use a full stop between the hour and the minute and use am and pm where necessary for clarity. There is no space between the time and either am or pm. There is also no space before or after the en dash (e.g., 2pm–3pm and not 2pm – 3pm). For the 24 hour clock, use a colon and not am or pm.

For example:

- The meeting starts at 11.30am and ends at 1pm. It will be followed by lunch at 1.30pm.
- The meeting starts at 11:30 and ends at 13:00. It will be followed by lunch at 13:30.

For decades, please use four figures and an s, no apostrophe.

For example:

- Planning began for the Northampton Institute in the 1890s.

Punctuation

Hyphens

Where you are unsure or where hyphenation and non-hyphenation are both acceptable, ensure that you are consistent throughout a single document. Please also see the section on Spelling (page 12) for a list of words that we hyphenate.

Compounds that are made up of an adjective and a verb participle should always be hyphenated.

For example:

- better-rated
- performance-related.

But adverbs ending in ‘-ly’ should not be hyphenated.

For example:

- newly discovered papers
- easily understood research.

Hyphenate words to avoid confusion or mispronunciation.

For example:

- pre-eminent.

Use hyphens for pre-, mid- and post-; for full- and part- (time) and for non-.

For example:

- post-2010 changes to higher education funding
- he is a full-time academic
- non-compliance.

Use hyphens for fractions.

For example:

- two-thirds of students.

But do not use hyphens for compass points.

For example:

- in the north west of England.

Be careful to not use a hyphen in the place of a dash.

For example:

At the doorsteps of the historic City of London and TechCity – Europe’s largest cluster of digital startups.

Not:

At the doorsteps of the historic City of London and TechCity-Europe’s largest cluster of digital startups.

For the sake of consistency, ensure all dashes are en (-) dashes and not em (—) dashes.

Apostrophes

Use an apostrophe to indicate possession.

For example:

- the student’s essay (one student)
- Stephanie’s diary
- the academics’ meeting (several academics)
- the Students’ Union (the Union represents many students).

For plural nouns that don’t end in s, use ’s.

For example:

- people’s rights
- children’s books.

For plural nouns that end in s, use the apostrophe alone.

For example:

- the neighbours’ houses (several neighbours).

Do not use the apostrophe in year dates.

For example:

- the 1960s.

In general, City St George’s prefers to avoid the Oxford comma (the serial comma at the end of a list). There might be very occasional instances where it is necessary (e.g., This book is dedicated to my parents, Ayn Rand, and God), when omitting the comma or rewording the sentence would be to the obvious detriment of reading ease. Where possible, rewrite sentences to avoid use of the Oxford comma.

For example:

City St George’s has graduates working at *Daily Mail*, *Daily Express* and *The Times*.

Not:

City St George’s has graduates working at *Daily Mail*, *Daily Express*, and *The Times*.

Be careful with defining and non-defining clauses: incorrect use of the comma can change the meaning of a sentence.

For example:

- Dr Smith researches food additives which pose a risk to human health (he researches only those additives that pose a risk. Here, ‘which pose a risk’ is a defining clause that is crucial to our understanding of Dr Smith’s work. For defining clauses, ‘which’ or ‘that’ can be used interchangeably).
- Dr Smith researches food additives, which pose a risk to human health (implies that all additives pose a risk. Here, ‘which pose a risk’ is a non-defining clause, as it adds to our understanding).

Exclamation marks

Avoid exclamation marks in formal contexts unless they are within a direct quotation.

Ellipses

Ellipses (i.e., the use of three dots) should only be used to indicate an omission from a quote.

For example:

- Lindsey said, “the student then proceeded to list her favourite bands: Nirvana, Blur, The Strokes ... this went on for some time”.

Quotations

Use double quotation marks for quotes and single quotation marks for a quote within a quote.

For example:

- As the report states, “the students are satisfied with the course. One student remarked, ‘the lectures are interesting and relevant’ and another praised the facilities.”

Where a quotation forms a complete sentence, the full stop should be inside the quotation marks. Where the sentence continues after the quotation, punctuation should be outside the quotation marks.

For example:

- Samia shouted, “Please stop doing that at once.”
- Tim told me the lecture was “very interesting”, though I’m not sure if I believe him.

Contractions

The use of contractions (e.g., can’t, don’t, isn’t) should be guided by the intended audience. For example, contractions should be avoided in formal communication to staff and academic partners but perhaps the use of contractions in student communications is sensible.

Spelling

Spelling preferences

acknowledgment
amid
Not amidst (archaic)
among
Not amongst (archaic)
analyse
Not analyze (American)
centre
Not center (American)
cooperative
Not co-operative
cooperation
coordinate
coursework
Not course work or course-work
curriculum vitae
Not *curriculum vitae* (i.e., no italics)
CV
not cv or cv
decision-making
Not decision making
e.g.,
e-commerce
email
Not Email or e-mail
encyclopaedia
etc.
extracurricular

focuses
Not focusses
fundraising
healthcare
homepage
i.e.,
in-house
interdisciplinary
Not inter disciplinary or inter-disciplinary
internet
judgment
laboratory
Not lab
learned
Not learnt
long-term
Not long term
no one
online
on-site
organisation
Not organization (American)
paralyse
Not paralyze (American)
per cent
Not percent
policymaking, policymaker
Not policy making, policy-making/
policy maker, policy-maker

postcode
postdoctoral
prerequisite
Professor
Not Prof. But note that Dr is acceptable.
recognise
Not recognize (American)
short-term
Not short term
telecommunications
Not telecoms
queuing
state-of-the-art
visualize
Not visualise
website
Not web site
webpage
Not web page
wellbeing
Not well-being
while
Not whilst (archaic)
world-class
Not world class
worldwide

S and Z spellings

In virtually all cases, when writing words that can legitimately be spelt with either an ‘s’ or ‘z’, City St George’s defaults to the ‘s’ variant e.g., hypnotise, analyse, realise.

However, please note that we make one exception for variants of ‘visualize’, i.e., visualized, visualizing, visualization.

Job titles

Job titles

Use upper case for specific titles.

For example:

- Head of Corporate Marketing.

Use lower case for generic job titles.

For example:

- advisor
- counsellor.

Use a comma between a person's name and job.

For example:

- Professor Sir Anthony Finkelstein, President of City St George's, University of London.

When referring to a group of people with the same job title, use lower case.

For example:

- The heads of department met last week.
- At graduation ceremonies, events officers are on hand to answer any questions.

In formal contexts, when an academic's post title includes their academic rank, write it as follows.

For example:

- Professor Ian Loveland, Professor of Law, specialises in public law.

It is not necessary to do this in less formal contexts, though always include the academic's post at first mention.

Contact details

Name

If using a person's initials, these should be spaced without the use of full stops.

For example:

- Dr P J Reilley
- Mrs R Smith.

Telephone

Use upper case abbreviations followed by a colon with a space between dialling code and numbers.

For example:

T: +44 (0)20 7040 8631
F: +44 (0)20 7040 8562

Address

All City St George's addresses, including those within Bayes Business School, must always include City St George's, University of London after the School name.

Web

When writing the words 'internet', 'web' or 'webpage', do not capitalise unless the words begin a sentence.

URLs should be written in bold typeface. Wherever possible, omit 'http://' when writing a URL and do not use trailing slashes (slashes at the end of a URL).

For example:

- For more information, visit **www.citystgeorges.ac.uk**.

Not:

- For more information, visit: **<http://www.citystgeorges.ac.uk>**

Often a URL will not start with a 'www.'. Audiences today will still understand this as a URL, so sometimes there is no need to add 'www.' at the start.

For example:

- **photos.city.ac.uk/asset-bank**.

Where a URL comes at the end of a full sentence, it should be followed by a full stop. Where it stands alone or is preceded by a colon, it should not be followed by a full stop.

For example:

- Any members of staff interested in learning more about City St George's environmental policies should visit **www.citystgeorges.ac.uk/sustainability**.
- The following websites offer guidance for international students coming to the UK:
 - **www.britishcouncil.org**
 - **www.ukvisas.gov.uk**.

Email

When writing the word 'email', do not capitalise the word unless it begins a sentence. Please also note, the word is not hyphenated (not e-mail).

For example:

- **tim.longden.1@citystgeorges.ac.uk**.

Email signatures

Email signatures across City St George's should follow the following convention.

First name Surname

Job title, Department
City St George's, University of London
Northampton Square
London EC1V 0HB

T: +44 (0)20 7040 XXXX

M: +44 (0)7XXX XXXXXX
(optional) My pronouns are xxxx
www.citystgeorges.ac.uk

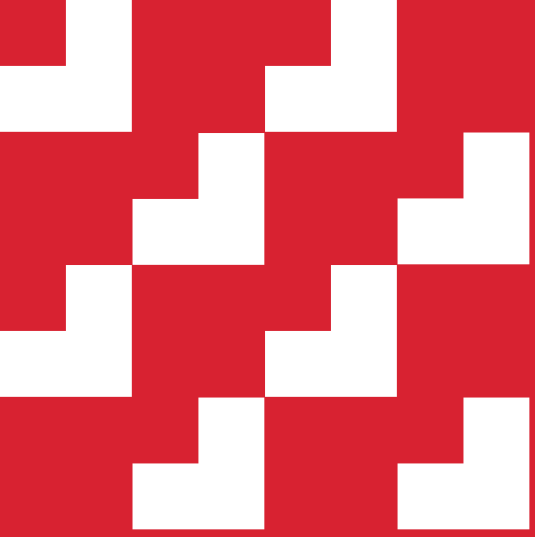
Ensure that any academic title is included with a name (e.g., Dr Juanita Hoe) as well as a job title if relevant (e.g., Senior Lecturer in Mental Health Nursing).

Use the street address relevant to you:

- Northampton Square, Cranmer Terrace, Bunhill Row etc.

A template email signature, which includes the City St George's logo in the correct position, can be downloaded from: **www.citystgeorges.ac.uk/brand** or from **<https://www.sgul.ac.uk/email-signatures>**

All City St George's addresses, including those within Bayes Business School, must always include City St George's, University of London after the School name.



Equality, diversity and inclusion

At City St George's, we value diversity and equality in its very broadest sense and the language we use has to be at the forefront of this effort.

The nine protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010 are: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation. While these are the legal definitions, City St George's recognises that they might not be the most inclusive language.

Preferred terms are constantly in flux and so we must use language that is inclusive to avoid the risk of unwittingly offending, excluding or patronising any of our colleagues, students or visitors.

It is important to refrain from making any assumptions about a person's gender, ethnicity, disability,

sexual orientation or age, and such information should be referred to only when relevant to the context. Note to only use language that refers to diversity in a positive way in all incidences.

These pages were created in partnership with City St George's staff affinity networks: CityUniWomen, LGBTQI+ Network, Network for Racial Justice, Disability Network and Religion and Belief.

The following pages will be updated in due course following consultation with staff networks from the merged City St George's institution. To learn more about our staff networks, visit either:

www.citystgeorges.ac.uk/equality-and-diversity

www.sgul.ac.uk/about/who-we-are/equality-and-diversity



Gender

Society sometimes uses terminology that excludes women and people with non-normative genders. Therefore, language at City St George's should reflect people of all gender identities and ensure their contributions are recognised.

It is important to use gender-neutral terminology where possible.

Use terms such as:

- police officer, not policeman
- chair or chairperson, not chairman
- spokesperson, not spokesman
- workers, not workmen.

Avoid terms such as:

- the man in the street
- layman's terms
- guys.

Avoid adding terms such as lady, woman or male in front of job titles, for example: woman judge or male nurse. This is because such language creates a false impression that the rightful owners of the title are of one gender.

Avoid referring to an adult as a girl or boy. Generally no offence is intended, but we should avoid referring to adults as if they are children.

As you will often not know a woman's marital status, it is safest to use the title Ms. However, it is best to check a person's preferred title, which may be stated on their web profile or email signature. Remember to use Dr or Professor as a title (when appropriate) as this is often forgotten more for women than for men.

Trans

Stonewall identifies gender identity as "a person's innate sense of their own gender, whether male, female or something else which may or may not correspond to the sex assigned at birth, such as non-binary". Gender identity might be used instead of gender to better recognise the diverse identities away from binary gender assumptions. Everyone (not just trans people) has a gender identity.

Gender reassignment is a term used in the Equality Act and Gender Recognition Act, usually meaning trans people or someone's transition. You should talk about someone's transition rather than their gender reassignment or sex change.

Trans is an inclusive term and can generally be used without offence to cover people who identify with a different gender from that which they were assigned at birth. The term trans should only be used as an adjective and the word 'transgender' should never be suffixed with '-ed' or '-ism'.

Intersex

The term intersex describes a person whose physical sex characteristics differ from what is typically characterised as male or female. This can include variations in anatomy, hormones and chromosomes.

Being intersex and being trans are not synonymous and intersex people can identify as any gender, regardless of their intersex characteristics.

Giving someone the opportunity to describe their biological sex as intersex, rather than male or female, supports intersex people to feel seen and respected.

Gender non-conforming

Gender non-conforming people typically do not abide by the expectations of gender norms. There are many ways to be gender non-conforming and different terms will be used by different people to describe their gender identity.

Each person will experience gender differently. It is important to understand what the terms people use mean to them and not assume that everyone's experience will be the same.

Non-binary

Non-binary is a term used for people whose gender identities do not fit into the gender binary of male and female. A non-binary person might consider themselves to be neither male nor female, or to be in some sense both male and female. They may also reject society's gendering practices altogether and refuse to be categorised.

No one can assume what pronouns a person will use. It is best to take each person's lead regarding the names, pronouns and titles that they use for themselves.

Avoid using he/she when someone's pronouns are not known, as this excludes non-binary individuals. Instead use non-gendered pronouns, e.g., they. Avoid phrases that exclude non-binary people (e.g., both men and women, either gender, the opposite sex) and include non-binary experiences where relevant. In materials directly relating to gender, ensure that these materials do not assume that gender is binary.

As well as the most common titles Mr, Ms, Mrs, Miss, Dr, Professor, there is also Mx, which is a gender neutral title used by some people.

Sexual orientation

If you need to refer to an individual's sexual orientation but are unsure, the best guide is to ask politely what word they prefer and make sure that they are comfortable with this before proceeding further.

Remember, not everyone is heterosexual/straight or experiencing different gender attraction only and so we must use language that is inclusive and that will not cause offence in our writing. When referring to an individual's sexual orientation and/or gender identity, you should ask how the individual identifies and what term they want to use (if any). For example, queer may be a positive term that one person identifies with but that is not the same for everyone.

LGBTQI+

The language around sexual orientation and gender identity continues to evolve and grow in acceptance. You might see different acronyms being used. At City St George's, we use LGBTQI+ (lesbian, gay, bi, trans, queer, intersex, plus) e.g., LGBTQI+ people or City St George's LGBTQI+ community. This matches the language and acronym used by City St George's LGBTQI+ staff network.

If referring only to sexual orientation, LGBQ+ should be used.

If referring to only trans identities and gender identity, TIGNC (trans, intersex and gender non-conforming) should be used.

Lesbian, gay, bi

Stick to using lesbian, gay and bi as these are more inclusive and widely accepted terms than bisexual or homosexual.

Further information on LGBTQI+ language can be found on the Stonewall website.

Race, nationality and ethnicity

Someone's race, nationality or ethnicity should not be assumed and should only be referred to if necessary for the context. When it is necessary to refer to race, the terms **Black**, **Brown**, **White** and **Mixed** should be capitalised because they are referring to people and not colours.

BAME

While this is a legal definition and typically required for the purposes of data collection, it fails to take into consideration the differences between the communities that fall under BAME. Therefore, City St George's discourages the use of BAME where possible (e.g., outside of legal and data collecting settings) and encourages specificity e.g., Bayes Business School launched a scholarship programme for Black UK-domiciled undergraduate students. Note, the term BAME also includes White minorities (White people who are not ethnically British).

People of colour

This is generally a widely accepted term but similarly to BAME, many are uncomfortable with the term for it groups all races other than White under one blanket definition. As this is the default terminology adopted by the Network for Racial Justice who guide City St George's on race, nationality and ethnicity, it is fine to use along with the use of 'staff of colour' and 'students of colour'. However, when referring to a particular group that fall under the definition of 'people of colour' e.g., Arab women, then it is best to be specific in order to avoid unnecessarily grouping people under an umbrella term.

African

Africa is a vast continent and one should refrain from referring to someone as African in place of their ethnicity or nationality. African is also not a language (e.g., no-one speaks African).

African-American

This hyphenated term, preferred by most Americans of African heritage, is generally considered politically correct and acceptable to use.

Asian

It is generally appropriate to use the term Asian or more specifically South Asian, East Asian and South East Asian. However, Asia is a vast continent and many people may prefer to be referred to by their specific ethnicity or nationality.

Black

In most cases there is no objection to Black being used as a description of a person, provided it is used as an adjective (e.g., a Black person). Note, the term Black is capitalised.

Brown

This term is often used to group Asian people but some Asian people do not identify as Brown so it is best avoided in a grouping context. Note, the term Brown is capitalised.

Latino/a/x vs Hispanic

It is important to distinguish the difference between Latino/a/x and Hispanic. Latino (men), Latina (women) and Latinx (non-binary people) are generally accepted terms to refer to people who are from South America (either born or with an ancestral history). Hispanic on the other hand refers to people from a Spanish speaking country. Therefore, a Brazilian person might refer to themselves as Latino/a/x but not Hispanic and a person from Spain might refer to themselves as Hispanic but not Latino/a/x. A Mexican person might refer to themselves as both.

Middle Eastern

Middle Eastern should be avoided as it is often considered a political term and it can be offensive to refer to people in this way. It is also too broad as the Middle East has several ethnicities. Therefore and where possible, be specific e.g., Arab, Syrian, Iraqi.

Mixed Ethnicity, Mixed Race

When describing people of mixed ethnic origin, the appropriate terms to use are Mixed Ethnicity or Mixed Race. Note, the terms Mixed Ethnicity and Mixed Race are capitalised.

West Indian, Afro-Caribbean, African-Caribbean

Generally it is better to avoid these terms as they are considered somewhat outdated, with 'Black' considered more appropriate. An exception can be made for the region of the North Atlantic Ocean in the north of the Caribbean: the West Indies.

Immigrant

This word can be used to describe a person who migrates to another country, usually for permanent residence. Be aware that immigrant, migrant, economic migrant and migrant worker are all different terms with different meanings. Avoid using the term expat for it exclusively refers to those from the West (often White people) and therefore carries a sense of superiority.

Unacceptable terms

The terms below should not be used in place or in conjunction with ethnicity, nationality or race for they are othering and offensive:

- Coloured
- Ethnic
- Exotic
- Ghetto
- Half caste
- Oriental
- Urban.

Disability

The definition of disability is contained in the Equality Act 2010; a person is 'disabled' if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

'Long-term' means that the condition must last, or be likely to last, for more than 12 months, or is likely to last for the rest of the life of the person affected.

Individuals with cancer, multiple sclerosis or HIV/AIDS are covered from the date of diagnosis regardless of the impact that the illness is having on their life at the time of diagnosis. The definition of disability is therefore very broad. This means that many other conditions could also potentially be covered, including, for example, chronic fatigue syndrome, schizophrenia, arthritis, diabetes and epilepsy.

Non-visible disability

There is a wide range of disabilities that are not necessarily 'visible' to other people.

Non-visible disabilities may include:

- Mental health conditions – for example, anxiety, depression, obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD), schizophrenia
- Autism and Asperger syndrome
- Sensory processing difficulties
- Cognitive impairment, such as dementia, traumatic brain injury, learning disabilities
- 'Non-visible' physical health conditions, such as chronic pain, respiratory conditions, diabetes, incontinence
- Hearing loss
- Low or restricted vision.

It is important to emphasise that there is no strict delineation between visible and non-visible disabilities and to remember that sometimes people experience a combination of both.

Several terms have been used to describe disabilities that are not visually obvious. These include:

- Non-visible disabilities
- Invisible disabilities
- Less-visible disabilities
- Hidden disabilities.

It is recommended that the term 'non-visible disability' is used due to the following concerns

- 'Hidden disability' could imply that people are purposefully hiding their disability
- 'Invisible disability' could imply that the disability is in that person's head, and doesn't really exist
- 'Less visible disability' implies that the disability is partially visible, whereas in most cases it is not visible at all.

Collective terms and labels

The word 'disabled' is a description not a group of people. Use 'disabled people' not 'the disabled' as the collective term.

However, many deaf people whose first language is BSL consider themselves part of 'the deaf community' – they may describe themselves as 'Deaf', with a capital D, to emphasise their deaf identity.

Avoid medical labels. They say little about people as individuals and tend to reinforce stereotypes of disabled people as 'patients' or unwell.

Don't automatically refer to 'disabled people' in all communications – many people who need disability benefits and services do not identify with this term. Consider using 'people with health conditions or impairments' if it seems more appropriate.

Positive not negative

Avoid phrases like 'suffers from' which suggest discomfort, constant pain and a sense of hopelessness.

Wheelchair users may not view themselves as 'confined to' a wheelchair – try thinking of it as a mobility aid instead.

Words to use and avoid

Avoid	Use
(the) handicapped, (the) disabled	Disabled (people)
Suffers from, afflicted by	Has (name of condition or impairment)
Confined to a wheelchair, wheelchair bound	Wheelchair user
Mentally handicapped, mentally defective	With a learning disability (singular) with learning difficulties (plural)
Able bodied	Non-disabled
Deaf and dumb; deaf mute	Deaf, user of British Sign Language, person with a hearing impairment
The blind, sight challenged, suffering from blindness	Blind, partially sighted, visually impaired, sight loss

Age

Being old in British society too often carries connotations of being worn out and of little further use. It can even be a term of abuse. We should use language that does not make assumptions about the value of people based on their age. Where necessary to refer to age, it is better to use neutral terms such as older people or elderly person.

Avoid old, pensioners, senior citizens, OAPs, geriatric. Also avoid referring to young adults as kids or children.

Religion and belief

Accurate use of language concerning religion is a way of demonstrating respect for the beliefs of others.

Try to use belief-neutral language, e.g., first name or forename, not Christian name. But also keep in mind that neutrality is not the only way to avoid offence, e.g., in some cases it may be more appropriate to say Christmas rather than festive season.

Use of the Gregorian calendar is widespread, but the terms **AD** and **BC** are based upon Christianity. Instead we should follow the lead of historians, who today prefer to use the secular alternatives **BCE** (before the Common Era) and **CE** (the Common Era).

Staff networks

City St George's recognises the value of self-organised groups in creating an environment that respects the diversity of all staff and students. City St George's staff networks fulfil several roles including:

- Peer support
- Forum for social interaction
- Assisting in raising awareness of equality
- Acting as a consultative body for City St George's in the shaping of policies and its activities.

City St George's networks

- CityUniWomen
- Disability Network
- Family and Carers Exchange Network
- LGBTQI + Network
- Network for Racial Justice
- Religion and Belief.

To learn more about each of the above networks, visit: www.citystgeorges.ac.uk/staffaffinitynetworks.