# UCL house style

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Abbreviations
The following abbreviations never carry full stops:

- abbreviations that end with the same letter as the full word such as Dr, Mr, Mrs, St, Jr, Sr
- standard works of reference, e.g. OED, BMJ, THE
- countries, institutions, societies and organisations, e.g. UK, BBC, UNESCO
- degree titles: BA, BSc, MA, MSc, MPhil, PhD, DEng, DPhil
- am (for ante meridian), pm (for post meridian) and CV (for curriculum vitae)
- page number references, e.g. p6, p38.

However, use full stops for e.g., i.e. and etc. and initials of names, e.g. John D. Rockefeller; T. S. Eliot.

Acronyms
With organisations whose names are acronyms, refer to them in the format that they use on their own website, e.g. Ofsted, NASA, Ofgem

Alumni
Use alumnus (male, singular); alumna (female, singular); alumni (male plural, or mixed plural); and alumnae (female, plural).

When mentioning past students, provide their details in brackets after their name, followed by their year of graduation without a separating comma, e.g. Marie Curie (UCL Chemistry 1990).

Ampersand
Only use an ampersand (&) to replace “and” in UCL faculty and department names (e.g. UCL Spanish & Latin American Studies) and job titles – it should not be used in normal prose.

Bullet points
Introduce numbered or bulleted lists with a colon and ensure that the introductory phrase or sentence makes grammatical sense with the subsequent bullets.

1. Lists of items
Use lower case for each new item (unless it is a proper noun) and put a full stop after the last item in the list if the sentence ends there.

For example:

The university offers:
• thought-provoking lectures
• sporting facilities
• halls of residence.

2. Lists of full sentences:
Start each new sentence in the list with a capital letter and end each sentence with a full stop, as follows:

The couple had three main reasons for buying the house:
• It has a spectacular view of the sea.
• Ofsted rates the local school as ‘outstanding’.
• There are excellent transport links.

**Capitalisation**
Use capitals to denote proper nouns referring to people, organisations and places.

Use lower-case for department, school, institute, centre etc when not referring to the full title, e.g. “The UCL Institute of Archaeology is world-leading in its field; last year the institute was ranked first in the Guardian Good University Guide…”

**Compass points**
Write these in lower case and using hyphens, e.g. south-east; north-western.

Capitalise compass directions only when they form part of a recognised name for a geographical or political region, e.g. the West Midlands, South-East Asia.

**Currencies**
Write all numbers associated with currencies as figures.
Abbreviate dollars like this:
$1 (US)
A$1 (Australia)
HK$1 (Hong Kong).

Use the € symbol when writing amounts in euro.
To do this on a PC, hold down the CTRL and ALT keys and press the ‘4’ key above the QWERTY row. On a Mac, hold down ALT and press the ‘2’ key above the QWERTY row.

For amounts of money, the style is £X million/billion, but abbreviated to £Xm/bn in headlines and pull quotes, with no space between the currency symbol and the abbreviation.

Cite amounts of money in the original currency, followed by the pounds sterling equivalent in brackets.

**Dates**
Write dates in the following format: 23 April 1964, or Sunday, 23 April 1964.

When referring to decades, use an ‘s’ without an apostrophe at the end, e.g. 1970s, 1420s).

For pre-Christian dates, use BCE (Before the Common Era) and leave a blank space between the year and the acronym, e.g. 400 BCE.

Instead of AD, use CE (Common Era) and, again, leave a blank space between the year and the acronym, e.g. 120 CE.

When giving approximate dates, abbreviate circa as c. followed by a space, e.g. (c. 145 BCE)

For each century after the ninth, use figures, e.g. 19th century.
When expressing a timespan, use words or en-dashes but not a mixture of both: e.g. 1826–50 or from 1826 to 1850.

To create an en-dash on a PC, hold down the ALT key and type 0150. On a Mac, hold down ALT and press the hyphen key.

**Degree programmes and modules**
Use “degree” or “degree programme” and “modules” when referring to individual parts of a degree programme.

Use “single-subject degrees” for those in one subject and “combined-studies degrees” for those in more than one subject.

When referring to specific degree programmes, write the subject name first, then the qualification, e.g. “English BA, Chemistry MSci, Astrophysics MSc”.

**Events**
Write the titles of events in roman type and capitalise the first word and any proper nouns (e.g. Heroes from the dark side: ancient heroes versus the Minotaur).

When referring to an event in body copy, put the title in inverted commas.

**Government**
Use lower case for government and the coalition (the 2010–15 administration).

When terms such as Conservative, Democratic, Independent, Liberal and Republican refer to specific political parties or movements, put these in capitals.

**Hyphens**
Use a hyphen for the following:

- adjectives involving more than one word, when these come before a noun, e.g. He had an up-to-date haircut, but his shoes were not up to date
- numbers, e.g. five-year-old; 12-month period
- words with the prefix ‘re-’ that begin with an ‘e’, e.g. re-entry; re-examine
- words with the prefix ‘cross’, e.g. cross-disciplinary
- those following ‘non-’, ‘anti-’ or ‘pro-’, e.g. non-invasive; anti-inflammatory; pro-life
- those following ‘semi-’, ‘quasi-’ and ‘ex-’, e.g. semi-quaver
- prefixes before a capitalised name, numeral or date, e.g. pre-1950; mid-August.

**-ise**
Use ‘ise’ and ‘-isation’ (e.g. capitalise, nationalisation).

**Italics**
Italicise foreign (including Latin and Ancient Greek) words that are not commonly used in English (e.g. trompe l’oeil, C. difficile).

**Measures**
Abbreviate as follows:
centimetre/s cm
kilo\(\text{gram/s kg}\)
kilo\(\text{metre/s km}\)
metre \(m\)
milli\(\text{metre/s mm}\)
\(\text{square metre/s m}^2\)

Write the measurement with no space between the figure and the unit, e.g. 5kg.

If both miles and metres are referred to in the same text, continue to spell these out, even when abbreviating other weights and measures.

**Multidisciplinary**
Spell this as one word and do the same with interdisciplinary.

**Numbers**
Spell out one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight and nine in words; write numbers from 10 upwards as digits.

Spell out first, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth and ninth; use digits for 10th upwards.

Unless it is a date, write all numbers at the beginning of sentences in words, e.g. Fifteen candidates were interviewed.
Use figures for volume, part, chapter, section and page numbers, However, when used descriptively, write out in words, e.g. “In the second chapter, he elaborates on the theory outlined in the first”.

Write numbers higher than 999 with commas separating the thousands, e.g. 2,589; 125,397; 9,999,000,000.
NB One billion equates to 1,000,000,000 (one thousand million).

**Obliques (slashes)**
Use obliques with no spaces on either side, e.g. “Tea/coffee will be served.”

**Percentages**
Write percentages using figures and the percent sign, e.g. 23%.

**Publications**
Use italics for the titles of all works individually published under their own titles, i.e. books, journals, newspapers, reports, plays, longer poems (e.g. Wordsworth’s *Prelude*), pamphlets, films, radio programmes, albums, substantial musical compositions, podcasts and works of art.

In the course of a sentence, italicise English newspaper titles but not the preceding ‘the’ (i.e. write the *Times*, the *Guardian*, the *New York Times*, the *British Journal of Psychiatry*)

Use roman type, without inverted commas for the Bible, Koran and other religious texts.

Put chapters in books, articles in books or journals and individually named episodes of television or radio series in roman type, enclosed within single quotation marks.
Use roman type and single quotation marks for poems, first lines of poems used as titles, short stories, or essays that form part of a larger volume, e.g. ‘Ode on a Grecian Urn’; ‘Of Superstition’.

**Qualifications**
A level
IB Diploma
Bachelor’s degree, Master’s degree
First class, upper second class, lower second class, third class – also write these as 2:1 and 2:2.

Hyphenate degree classifications when used immediately before a noun, e.g. “She was awarded an upper second-class degree”.

**Quotation and reported speech**
Use double inverted commas for quotations; use single inverted commas for a quotation within a quotation, e.g. “Today’s climate conference was a great success. The Prime Minister told me he felt ‘very optimistic about the chances of success’ and seemed very impressed by our work.”

**Telephone numbers**
Use international telephone style
Tel: +44 (0)20 7111 4444

**Time**
Write all times in the 12-hour format, adding am and pm immediately after the number, e.g. “The event starts at 4pm”.
Use a colon to separate hours and minutes, e.g. 11:30pm.
For time ranges, use an en-dash, e.g. 2–5 pm; 11am–1pm.

As with dates, do not mix up words and dashes (e.g. either the seminar takes place from 1 to 2 pm, or the seminar takes place 1–2pm). Close up spaces either side of the dash where it links two digits.

**Titles**
Capitalise professional titles only if they appear in a Name–Title construction: e.g. “Professor Henry James, Head of UCL English Language & Literature, was absent”; “Horace Engdahl, Permanent Secretary of the Swedish Academy, has arrived at UCL”.

**Web conventions**
Use lower case for web, website, homepage, email and internet. Write “online” as one word.

When you link to another website from your webpage, use descriptive text, e.g. “For more information, visit the UCL Events blog”. This helps to make your site accessible to all users and aids search engine optimisation.

If you do need to write out a URL in continuous text do not include http://www in the address nor any punctuation after it (including a full stop), e.g. ucl.ac.uk
APPENDIX: UCL specifics

**Departments**
Use the following format for academic departments:

UCL English Language & Literature
UCL Mathematics

Use an ampersand (&) to replace “and” in UCL faculty and department names.

First reference:
In the first reference to a UCL department, centre, institute, use the full official name, prefixed by UCL, e.g. “Student numbers have soared in UCL Biochemistry & Molecular Biology”.

Subsequent references:
Abbreviations are fine – these should be introduced in brackets after the first reference, e.g. “…the UCL Centre for Intercultural Studies (UCL CICS)”. Retain “UCL” for abbreviations.

Alternatively, use a descriptive, non-capitalised equivalent (e.g. ‘the department’, ‘the institute’, ‘the centre’).

Certain centres and institutes have “at UCL” in their name instead, often for funding reasons, e.g. “ESRC Deafness Cognition and Language Research Centre at UCL”.

Always write the definite article in lower case, e.g. “the Wolfson Institute for Biomedical Research at UCL”.

**Faculties/schools/institutes**
In the first reference to a UCL faculty, institute or school, use the full official name prefixed by “UCL”.

Only capitalise the word “faculty” when used in the name of a faculty. Similarly, only capitalise the word “school” when used in the name of a school.

**Provost**
Refer to Professor Michael Arthur in the following ways: “UCL President & Provost, Professor Michael Arthur” or “Professor Michael Arthur, UCL’s President & Provost”. The reason for this is that it is a single, not combined title.

**Terms**
Capitalise First Term, Second Term and Third Term.

**UCL**
UCL is the university’s official name. Only spell it out in the postal address:
University College London, Gower Street, London WC1E 6BT

UCL can also be referred to as “the university” (always lower case) or as “the institution”.

**Vice-Provost/Vice-Dean**
Capitalised, hyphenated.