

# Charles Darwin University

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## Written style guide



A guide for Charles Darwin University staff when preparing written material for publications, formal or informal documents, and online content.

For further guidance, please contact [brand@cdu.edu.au](mailto:brand@cdu.edu.au)

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## Introduction

### Purpose of a written style guide

**To clarify** frequently asked questions

**To ensure** consistency across written communications

**To inspire** effective written content

**To encourage** internal and external advocates for CDU

### The brand

Our brand is attached to every facet of our identity, including written content across publications, emails, marketing, reports and course materials. How we represent Charles Darwin University across our communications, has a direct influence on our reputation and growth opportunities in the Northern Territory, Australia and around the world.

CDU is a new world university committed to bringing people together to use knowledge for shaping our future. It's a place where everyone can follow their passion to make things better – however big or small.

Applying our shared CDU written style and tone of voice builds familiarity, authority, trust, and helps ensure CDU is always represented in a professional and appropriate way.

It is important that our new world university brand position and our shared values are evident in all communications. Our values are creativity, social justice, sustainability and collective effort.

### Creativity

We value originality, artistic endeavour and freedom of expression.

*We're original. In written language, this means expressing ourselves using our own words and style.*

### Social Justice

We believe everyone can contribute to making positive impact.

*In written language, this means making our content open and accessible to everyone, not closing it off by using confusing jargon or complicated sentence structure. Our writing should aim to demonstrate the unique ways CDU connects disciplines, projects, and people to create new paradigms that can transform our world.*

### Sustainability

We're committed to preserving and protecting our environment, to ethical business practices and to using technology to build a more sustainable future.

*In written language, this means we're forward focused and use the active voice, because we're here to shape the future. Your language should connect your message to an unwavering belief, cause or calling.*

### Collective Effort

We care about addressing the real issues in our local communities and across our region, through bringing like-minded people together to make the world a little better.

*This means our language must be compelling and inspiring. The meaning should always be clear, and the call to action should be inclusive.*

## Talking about CDU

Often, if you're writing for an external audience, you'll need to include an introduction to CDU. See **appendix 1** for approved wording that describes what we do, and how and why we do it.

## Audience

Our written expression is critical to how our audience perceives us. It doesn't matter if you're writing an email, content for marketing, or writing a business case; all CDU communications open a dialogue that represents the university. First and foremost, it's important to understand the mindset we are talking to. Audiences view CDU as one organisation; one person if you like – no matter what part of CDU they're interacting with. Therefore, consistency of tone and delivery is just as important as consistency of message and action.

Use language that your audience understands. Consider the information your reader requires and the actions they might need to take. This means not writing what you want to 'tell' people, but writing what people want to know.

Knowing the purpose of your writing helps to ensure that what you write is focused. For example, are you writing to impart information or to persuade? Are you telling, asking, requiring, or suggesting?

The words in the following section provide you with a tonal guide to help you connect with your audiences in an engaging and compelling way.

### Our tone is

OPEN / PASSIONATE / CARING /  
ENLIGHTENING / ENGAGING / FUTURE-FOCUSED

**We are open**, clear, accessible, transparent and outward facing.

**We are passionate** about what we do, and look to inspire others.

**We care** about the world around us, communities, individuals and their causes – no matter how big or small. We express empathy and understanding.

**We are enlightening** and informative. We share our knowledge clearly and effectively so it can benefit others.

**We are engaging**; inviting and captivating the interest of our readers by making it relevant to them and taking the time to tell people what we can do for them.

**We are focussed on the future**, optimistic, young and modern.

### Our tone is not

FLOWERY / ARROGANT / INSTITUTIONALISED / DULL

**We DO NOT** add words that do not add value. We avoid puns and salesy language.

**We DO NOT** think only about ourselves. We write about the reader and remain relevant.

**We DO NOT** assume that someone will know our everyday university language and acronyms. We use words that are simple and direct, and avoid corporate jargon.

**We DO NOT** write text that we would not want to read ourselves or is not relevant to our readers. If it doesn't interest you, think about how you could make it more interesting. If it's not possible, ask yourself if it's really necessary. Concise and engaging is most compelling.

All text should be written in plain English:

- using familiar, everyday words
- in an active voice where possible
- using short, simple sentences
- clearly and concisely
- for the target audience
- avoiding jargon, abbreviations, acronyms and specialist terminology
- to promote key objectives/messages.

Plain English also means using words and phrases normally used in conversation rather than those used in legal or bureaucratic documents (**see also the section Plain English words**).

### Online communications

Writing for the online environment differs from writing for printed materials, as online use is different. For example, online users:

- do not read from 'front cover to back page' like a book but skip between pages and sections
- scan pages and content to help them locate information rather than read every word
- expect information to be available immediately and easily
- read a lot slower than printed text

Material written for print often has content and references that make it unsuitable for online use, so it is not appropriate just to convert printed material to online content. **See Appendix 2 for tips on writing online content.**

### Use active tone of voice

Active tone of voice is more engaging and compelling. It means the subject does an action to an object. Identify the subject of your sentence and ensure the subject is doing the action (not being acted upon).

Passive examples:

- The assignment was completed by the student.
- The research was performed by CDU in 2017.

Active examples:

- The student completed the assignment.
- CDU performed the research in 2017.

### Enough about us

Avoid writing all about what we do and how we do it. Find opportunities to demonstrate what your message means for the reader. Rather than writing about 'students' or 'researchers', write about the reader where appropriate. This is more personal and demonstrates how your message is relevant to the reader and will keep them engaged.

'About us' example:

- We offer a wide range of courses.
- We provide confidential assistance and be contacted by calling --

‘About them’ example:

- Students can study various courses.
- Students can access confidential assistance by calling --

‘About you’ example:

- You can choose from a wide range of courses.
- If you need help, call us on -- for confidential assistance.

## Conventions

CDU has agreed grammatical, spelling, wording and writing conventions, which ensure consistency across all of our written material regardless of the author or department. **See Appendix 3 for a regularly used terms ‘cheat sheet’.**

### Abbreviations and contractions

An abbreviation is a shortened form of a word (or words) that consists of the initial letter alone, or the initial letter followed by letters other than the final one.

The abbreviations etc, eg and ie do not end with full stops. Etc is preceded or followed by a comma only when the sentence structure demands it; ie and eg are both preceded by a comma but there is no comma after them or dots after the letters. Similarly, et al, viz, qv, non seq and so on.

A contraction is a shortened form of a word (or words) that ends in the same letter as the word itself:

- Mr
- Dr
- Pty Ltd

Contractions are not followed by full stops unless they end sentences.

### Acronyms

The full name is used for the first reference, followed by the acronym or initials in brackets. For example:

- Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR)
- South Australian Tertiary Admissions Centre (SATAC).

Avoid using the above structure in headings. Either use the full name or the acronym alone if it is well understood and widely used (eg CDU, VET).

### Ampersands

Do NOT use ampersands unless it forms part of a formal company name, such as Black & Decker or Tiffany & Co.

## Apostrophes

Apostrophes have two main uses:

- (i) to indicate the omission of letters, for example: she'll, he'd, can't
- (ii) to indicate possession in nouns.

When indicating possession, the placement of the apostrophe depends on whether the noun that shows possession is singular or plural. If the noun is singular, the apostrophe goes before the 's', eg the student's books. If the noun is plural, the apostrophe goes after the 's', eg the students' books. If the plural of the word does not take an 's', the apostrophe comes before the 's', eg Susan entered the women's room with an armload of children's clothing. Apostrophes are not used for simple plurals or when abbreviating expressions such as:

- full-time equivalents (FTEs)
- USBs
- CDs
- DVDs
- RTOs

or when referring to a number of years, for example:

...during the 2000s, universities became— —.

If the above is used in a possessive sense, an apostrophe is used. For example:

...the 2000s' major events were— —.

Other examples of the use of apostrophes include:

- states and territories', eg the states and territories' school entry ages.
- Parents and Citizens' Association – this is used regardless of any correspondent's letterhead

Apostrophes for multiples include:

- The girls' bikes are on the verge.
- The boys' bags need to go outside.

## Brackets

Use round brackets within a sentence. Try not to use brackets within brackets but, if unavoidable, use square brackets [ ].

The full stop is placed within the brackets if the sentence within the brackets is complete. If the text inside the brackets is incomplete, the full stop is placed outside the closing bracket.

## Call to action

As well as informing people, written material should drive audiences towards the next step that we want them to take. This is referred to as the 'call to action'.

Possible actions include:

- get in touch using a contact form or telephone number
- find out more by visiting a website/webpage/social media site
- download a document
- fill in a form
- ask for an appointment
- request a brochure or other publication
- apply for a course.

The term 'visit' is used when referring people to a website or social media site for more information. If the target audience is young people, the term 'check out' is preferred.

Examples:

- To find out more about CDU, visit [study.cdu.edu.au](http://study.cdu.edu.au).
- Check out our [Semester 1 courses](#).

Where possible, do not use www or http before the website address. Many websites can be accessed without using www in the address. Always test the website address before placing it in any publication.

## Capital letters

Capital letters are used for proper nouns and acronyms, for example:

- (i) When referring to Indigenous people the word 'Indigenous' must always have a capital letter, for example:
  - Indigenous schools
  - non-Indigenous students
  - Indigenous teachers
  - Indigenous.
- (ii) When referring to a specific state or territory of Australia, capital letters are used, for example:
  - This Territory is committed to education reform (referring to the Northern Territory).
- (iii) When referring to a specific government, capital letters are used for the title:
  - the Northern Territory Government
  - the Australian Government (**see Appendix 4**)
  - the State Government
  - the Government.
- (iv) When government is used in a non-specific sense or as an adjective, lower case is used. For example:
  - the role of any government is to...
  - government agencies
  - non-government organisations.
- (v) Lower case is used for nouns used in a non-specific sense. For example:



- education regional offices
- local education offices
- central office
- principal
- head of department
- deputy principal.

Capital letters are always used for names that identify nationalities, races, tribes and inhabitants of particular areas of countries, adherents of particular religions, languages and language groups. For example:

- American
- Buddhist.

(vi) Capital letters are used in reference to:

- a particular school term, eg Term 3
- the University
- the names of courses, eg Bachelor of Nursing
- the title of a position when it is used in conjunction with the person's name, eg Mr Jones, Principal Ms Brown, Vice Chancellor and President.

## Commonly confused/misused words

Accept and except	Accept is a verb that means 'agree with', 'take in' or 'receive'. Except is a preposition that means 'apart from'; it is also used as a verb meaning to leave out. For example: We accept all major credit cards, except American Express.
Advice and advise	Advice is always a noun except in the United States. Advised is therefore a spelling error in non-US English. The correct spelling is advised. Advised is a verb.
Affect and effect	Affect is a verb meaning 'to influence something'. As a noun, affect has a technical meaning in psychology 'an emotion or subjectively experienced feeling'. For example: This poem affected me so much that I cried. Effect is a noun meaning 'the result of'; effect can also be used as a formal verb meaning 'to cause [something] to be'. For example: Temperature has an effect on reaction spontaneity.
Comprise	To comprise means 'to consist of' or 'to include'. Redundant uses can sometimes be found with 'to comprise of' and 'to be comprised of'. These may be confused with the correct forms 'to consist of' and 'to be composed of'.
Device and devise	Device is always a noun except in the United States. Deviced is therefore a spelling error in non-US English. The correct spelling is devised.
Diffuse and defuse	Diffuse refers to the dispersal of fluid or solid waste into a medium. Defuse means to disengage an electromagnetic field.
Discreet and discrete	Discreet means 'circumspect'. Discrete means 'having separate parts'.

Enrol or enroll	Enrol is the correct spelling. Enroll is the US spelling so is not correct in non-US English. The spelling difference extends to enrolment (not enrollment). However, enrolled and enrolling are spelled with two l's.
Everyday and every day	Everyday is an adjective that means commonplace, ordinary or normal (eg These shoes are great for everyday wear). Every day means each day (eg I have to work every day this week).
Exacerbate and exasperate	Exacerbate means 'to make worse'. Exasperate means 'to exhaust' (usually someone's patience).
Hoard and horde	A hoard is a store or accumulation of things. For example: He has a hoard of discontinued rare cards. A horde is a large group of people. For example: A horde of shoppers lined up to be the first to buy the new gadget.
It's and its	It's is a contraction that replaces it is or it has. For example: It's time to eat. Its is the possessive pronoun corresponding to it (like his corresponds to he). For example: My mobile phone has poor reception because its antenna is broken.
Lay (lay, laid, laying) and lie (lie, lay, lain, lying)	Lay and lie are often used synonymously. The distinction between these related verbs is further blurred by the fact that the past tense of lie is lay. A quick test is to see if the word in question could be replaced with recline; if it can, Standard English requires lie. Lay means to place something. Lie means to recline. For example: You should not lie down right after eating a large meal. Yesterday I lay on my bed for half an hour after dinner. My wife saw me lying there and made me get up; she told me that if I had waited for a couple of hours I could have lain down in perfect comfort.
Levee and levy	A levee is a structure built along a river to raise the height of its banks (like a dike). For example: The Netherlands is well known for its elaborate system of levees. To levy is to impose a tax or a military draft; levy, as a noun, is an assessment or army thus gathered. For example: This statute allows the State to levy a 3% tax.
Licence and license	Licence is always a noun except in the United States. Licencing and licenced are therefore spelling errors in non-US English. The correct spellings are licensing and licensed. The following words work in the same way (the noun is spelled with a 'c' and the verb is spelled with a 's'): practice and practise, advice and advise, device and devise.
Loathe, loth and loath	Loathe is used only as a verb in Standard English; it is often used for loth or loath in phrases such as 'she was loathe to accept'.
Myself	Myself should only be used when both the subject and object of the verb are the speaker, or as an emphatic pronoun (intensifier). For example (intensifier): I myself have seen instances of that type. For example (reflexive): I hurt myself. I did it to myself.

Ones and one's	The genitive of the pronoun one always uses an apostrophe. For example: One should always wash one's feet. The only situation in which ones can be used is as the plural of the number 1.
Practice and practise	Practice is always a noun except in the United States. Practicing and practiced are therefore spelling errors in non-US English. The correct spellings are practising and practised. For example: John needed more practice playing the flute so he went to music lessons to practise. The following words work in the same way (the noun is spelled with a 'c' and the verb is spelled with a 's'): licence and license, advice and advise, device and devise.
Principle and principal	Principle is only a noun and refers to a rule or standard. Principal is both a noun and an adjective. As a noun it refers to a person who holds a high position or plays an important role, such as a school principal. As an adjective it has the sense of being foremost in importance. For example: The school principal's principal concern is to ensure students' study principles are maintained.
Sight, site and cite	Sight is something seen. For example: You're a sight for sore eyes. A site is a place. For example: I was looking at a tourist site for Rome. To cite is to quote or list as a source. For example: Please cite the sources you used in your essay.
Than and then	Than is a grammatical particle and preposition associated with comparatives. For example: I like pizza more than lasagne. Then is an adverb. For example: We ate dinner and then went to the movies.
There, their and they're	There refers to the location of something. Their means 'belonging to them'. They're is a contraction of 'they are'. For example: Since they're all coming to the restaurant for their dinner, we'll meet them there.
You're and your	You're is a contraction of 'you are'. For example: If you're going out, please be home for dinner. Your is a possessive pronoun meaning 'belonging to you'. For example: When driving, always wear your seatbelt.
Won't and wont	Won't is a contraction of 'will not'. For example: He won't let me drive his car. Wont is an adjective meaning 'accustomed or inclined to'. For example: He spent the morning reading, as he was wont to do.

### Conferences, awards, and event titles

Use initial capitals in title headings and lower case when referring to 'the events', 'the awards' or 'the conference' later in the text. For example:

- 'NT Education Awards' in the first instance and 'the awards' thereafter
- 'Premier's ANZAC Student Tour', in the first instance and 'the tour' thereafter
- 'Developing North Australia Conference' in the first instance and 'the conference' thereafter.

## Contact details

Use the following format for contact details:

First name Last name  
Job title  
Charles Darwin University  
E: [firstname.lastname@cdu.edu.au](mailto:firstname.lastname@cdu.edu.au)  
T: 8946 XXXX  
W: [cdu.edu.au](http://cdu.edu.au)

When directing people to a contact person or number, use the general term 'contact' when a number of contact options are given, for example:

To find out more about studying Nursing at CDU, contact us on telephone 8946 XXXX, email [firstname.lastname@cdu.edu.au](mailto:firstname.lastname@cdu.edu.au) or visit [study.cdu.edu.au](http://study.cdu.edu.au).

Do not use the term 'contact' when a specific contact option is given, for example:

To find out more about study pathways, telephone first name last name on 8946 XXXX.

## Dashes

There are two main types of dashes:

- en dash (–)
- em dash (—).

The en dash is used in preference to the em dash. When using the en dash in text, include a space either side of the en dash, for example:

To assist you with class preparation, time during school hours is scheduled into your week – this is known as DOTT time (Duties Other Than Teaching).

In the instance of numbers there are no spaces either side of the dash, for example:

- 14–17 January 2004
- pages 31–35
- 15–18 kilometres.

The hyphen (-) is sometimes referred to as a dash. It is treated separately on pages 13 and 14.

Do not use the en dash:

- as a substitute for 'and' with the word 'between', eg the period between 2004 and 2014, NOT the period between 2004–2014
- with the word 'from', eg from 2004 to 2014, NOT from 2004–2014.

## Dates

The following formats are used for dates:

Where just the date and year are used: 19 August 2017

Where it is appropriate to include the day and date: Wednesday 19 August 2017, DO NOT write Wednesday the 15th of August.

Where reference is to a period of days, the following format is preferred: 15 to 19 August 2017.

In materials where there are lots of dates, the following may be appropriate: 15–19 August 2017 (en dash with no space either side).

Where reference is made to a period of years, including a financial year, the following format is used: 2016–17, NOT 2016–2017.

Where it is necessary to use a numeric date, eg in a table, the following format should be used: 21/3/14, NOT 21.03.14.

## Dot points

If all dot points in a sentence are full sentences in themselves, each starts with a capital letter and ends with a full stop (see the first example below). If each dot point consists of a sentence fragment, no initial capital is used and there is no semi-colon or full stop at the end of each. The last dot point ends with a full stop.

Examples:

### Full sentences

The committee came to two important conclusions:

- Officers from the Department should investigate options for new guidelines.
- Research should be funded in three priority areas.

### Sentence fragments

The three types of assistance available are:

- monetary assistance
- equipment or environmental modifications
- advisory services.

## Headings

Headings in publications (printed and online) are in sentence case for ease of reading. For example:

- Public schools lead the way
- What do I need to know?

## Hyphens

Hyphens are used in the cases listed below:

Situation	Examples
all-	all-inclusive
cross-	cross-sectoral
ex-	ex-employee, ex-student
full-time	full-time equivalent staff, full-time program
ill-	ill-prepared, ill-informed, ill-defined
in-	in-school program, in-class activity

multi-	multi-age, multi-faceted, multi-dimensional
non-	non-Aboriginal, non-government, non-payment
part-time	part-time staff, part-time students
post-	post-compulsory
pre-	pre-primary
self-	self-evident
socio-economic	low socio-economic school communities
time-out	time-out area
whole-	whole-school programs
-based	school-based programs, class-based activities, evidence-based results
-term	fixed-term, short-term, longer-term
-wide	school-wide data, sector-wide collaboration

Two or more adjectives before a noun that act as one idea (one-thought adjectives) are traditionally connected with a hyphen.

Examples:

- This is a low-budget job. (The sense is not: this is a low job and a budget job. The words low and budget are linked into the single concept of 'low-budget'.)
- First-class decisions require clear-headed thinking.
- He has a devil-may-care attitude.

Do not hyphenate words prefixed by un, in, dis, anti, hyper, pre, re, post, out, bi, counter, de, mis, mega, micro, inter, over and under (among others).

Examples:

uninfected, inpatient, disorder, disbar, antismoking, hyperactive, preoperative, prejudge, reoccur, readjust, resubmit, postoperative, outpatient, outmoded, bimonthly, biannual, counterculture, decompress, misinformed, misprint, megabyte, microcircuit, interconnected, interoffice, overemphasise, underestimated.

When the last letter of a single syllable prefix is the same as the first letter in the word that follows, a hyphen should be inserted to prevent misreading. For example:

- de-emphasise not deemphasise
- pre-eminent not preeminent
- re-enter not reenter
- post-traumatic not posttraumatic
- hyper-realism not hyperrealism
- counter-revolutionary not counterrevolutionary
- under-represent not underrepresent.

In some words that are well known, this practice is less crucial and there are some exceptions to the rule above. For example, in the following cases hyphens are no longer used:

- cooperate
- coordinate
- airconditioning
- Statewide
- online.

## Indigenous people

The word Indigenous is used and is taken to mean Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.

## '-ise' or '-ize'

We use the spelling provided in The Macquarie Dictionary, for example:

- realise not realize
- organise not organize
- recognise not recognize.

If an 'ize' spelling is part of the name of an organisation/body, retain that spelling. For example, World Health Organization.

## Numbers

Numbers nine and under are written in words in texts and numbers above nine are written as numbers. Examples:

- There are five new schools being built and 35 schools being upgraded.
- There will be 53 people at the official opening.
- The school is 84 years old.

Numbers that start a sentence are in words even when other numbers in the same sentence are in figures. Figures are preferred in works of a mathematical, scientific, technical or statistical nature.

Numbers are written as figures when they accompany symbols and units of measurement in tables such as:

sums of money	\$5.08 23c \$4 million, not \$4m or \$4M
time	10.30am 12.00noon 50 minutes 1800 ACST
mass	250 t 120 kg
measures	57 L 26 km 16 mm
degrees	An angle of 45 degrees or 45o
percent	9 percent or 9%, not per cent or p.c.
ages	Their average age was 16 years. He was to be 15 years old when he enrolled.

Roman numerals when referring to certificate level qualifications. For example:

- Certificate I in — —
- Certificate II in — —
- Certificate III in — —
- Certificate IV in — —.

Where it is necessary to use figures for numbers rather than words, do not use a comma or space between each set of three digits for numbers between 1000 and 9999. Use space (not a comma) for numbers 10 000 and greater.

When using numbers as bullet points use the number only; there is not a full stop afterwards, eg

- 1 (text here)
- 2 (text here)
- 3 (text here)

## Online links

For online communications, links are essential to take users to more information.

The most logical and useful place to put body copy links is at natural action points. For example when referring to a school, put the name of the school as the link to the school website or social media site. Where possible, avoid placing the link at the beginning of a sentence as this can stop a user from reading any further. For example:

Public health, nursing, psychology, and pharmacy are just some of the courses available in the [School of Health](#).

Never use 'click here' (or similar phrases) as the link wording. Many users scan pages either visually or using assistive technology and 'click here' out of context is meaningless. Use action words in the link text to help users anticipate the destination of the link. For example:

To see full details of our structure download the organisation chart (PDF 27Kb).

It is useful to make the action word part of the link so it clear what action a user can expect.

Examples:

- Visit the list of courses page.
- Download the brochure (PDF 2Mb).
- Search for a training course.
- Explore one of 80 professional learning opportunities.
- See pictures from the launch in our photo gallery.

If linking to another page within the same website make sure the text used for the link matches the page title you are directing the user to. This is good practice, avoids confusion and makes navigation easier.



## Plain English words

<b>Avoid</b>	<b>Use</b>
Accommodation	Where you live, home
Accompanying	With
Acquire	Buy, get
Advise	Tell, say
Align	Line up, in line
Allocate	Give
Along the lines of	Like
Amendment	Change
Anticipate	Expect
Apparent	Clear, obvious
Applicant	You
Application	Use
As a consequence of	Because
As of the date of	From
As regards	About
Assist	Help
At the moment	Now
Commence	Start
Complete	Finish
Completion	End
Consequently	So
Constitute	Make up
Correspond	Write
Currently	Now
Delete	Cross out
Disclose	Show, tell
Discontinue	Stop, end
Enable	Allow
Endeavour	Try
Ensure	Make sure
Establish	Show, set up
Evaluate	Test, check out
Facilitate	Help
Following	After
In case of	if
In conjunction with	And, with
In order that	So that
In order to	To
In relation to	About
In the near future	Soon
In the provision of	Provide
Initiate	Start
Irrespective of	Despite, even if
Intend to	Will
Locate	Find, put
(It is) mandatory	(you) must
Nevertheless	But
Numerous	Many
Over (when referring to numbers)	More than

Per annum	Year
Personnel	People, staff
Persons	People, anyone
Possess	Have, own
Provision of	Provide
Purchase	Buy
Represent	Show, stand for
Report	Tell
Request	Ask
Reside	Live
Restriction	Limit
Requirements	Needs, rules
Submit	Send, give
Sufficient	Enough
Terminate	End, stop
Thus	So
Utilise	Use
Whereas	But
Whilst	While

## Points of the compass

When referring to points of the compass refer to the point in full, eg south-eastern or north-western.

## Qualifications

When referring to specific certificate level qualifications use 'in'. For example:

- Certificate II in Multimedia.
- Certificate IV in Hospitality.

When referring to diploma, bachelor and master level qualifications use 'of'. For example:

- Diploma of Community Services Management
- Diploma of Laboratory Technology
- Bachelor of Arts
- Master of Business Administration.

Use capitals only when referring to a specific qualification. Use lower case when referring generally to the qualification. For example: The master's degree at the university is very competitive.

## Quote marks

Use double quote marks (“ and ”) for direct conversation being quoted.

Use single quote marks (‘ and ’) when a word or phrase is unusual. For example:

The research indicated that those respondents with ‘space-age’ computers were more likely to spell correctly. Ensure the curly quote option is always checked in word processing applications.

## Quotes – direct

For a direct quote to open the quote using quotation marks, write the quote, insert a comma, close the quote using quotation marks and attribute who made the statement.

For subsequent direct quotes open the quote using quotation marks, write the quote and insert a full stop. The correct format for the final direct quote is to open the quote using quotation marks, write the quote, insert a full stop and close the quote using quotation marks. For example:

*“There was some incredible competition during the heats and an impressive array of genres including soul, jazz, funk, metal, punk and classic rock,” Ms Harrison said.*

*“There were bands that had formed only months before and others which were seasoned professionals and had been together for years.*

*“Yet each band which took to the stage displayed true professionalism and the standard of performance really impressed the judges.”*

This is also the format when taking a direct quote from a publication or document:

*“There are opportunities for parents to become involved and active encouragement for them to become partners in their children’s education.”*

Director General’s Classroom First Strategy

If a direct quote is needed within a direct quote, use single quote marks for the second quote, for example:

“I am sure that Macbeth said ‘Out damn spot’ in Shakespeare’s play,” said Susan.

## Quotes – indirect

When using an indirect quote for the first time, state the name of the organisation followed by the person’s title and their name. Do not use the person’s salutation, eg Mr, Ms, Miss, Doctor, etc.

When using an indirect quote again, use the person’s salutation, followed by their last name. When the person being profiled is a school student use their first name. For example:

The Department of Education’s Deputy Director General Schools, David Axworthy, said the students showed great aptitude in the debating competition.

Mr Axworthy said the students won the grand final and that Year 12 student Susan Smith was named best speaker.

## References to Charles Darwin University

The first reference is to ‘Charles Darwin University’. Thereafter, the reference is to ‘the University’. When referring to the University a capital ‘U’ is be used. If the publication is lengthy, it may be appropriate to use Charles Darwin University at the beginning of each section and thereafter refer to the University.

You can also use the acronym ‘CDU’, however ‘Charles Darwin University (CDU)’ should be used before doing so at the start of your text.

## Titles of publications and documents

There are well-established conventions for the titles of some publications including use of italics, quote marks and capitalisation. For titles of other publications, the extent of capitalisation is a matter of house style or preference. The most important thing is to ensure that style is consistent within each publication or series of publications.

Title case (sometimes called maximal capitalisation) involves capitalising all words in a title other than articles, prepositions and conjunctions. Sentence case (sometimes called minimal capitalisation) is where only the first word of a title and any proper nouns and names are capitalised.

This guide recommends sentence case for ease of reading and ease of use.

Films, videos, DVDs, radio programs and television programs	Sentence case and italics Eg: <i>The sound of one hand clapping</i> is set in Tasmania.
Episodes of radio programs and television programs	Sentence case and single quotation marks Eg: 'The hero's story' screened last night on <i>Four corners</i> .
Works of art (paintings, sculptures and other physical artwork)	Sentence case and italics Eg: We have been studying <i>The thinker</i> , one of Rodin's greatest works.
Scientific names of plants and animals	Sentence case and italics. Eg: Grassed areas are characterised by <i>Cassia nemophila</i> .
Books	Sentence case and italics Eg: Have you read <i>Catcher in the rye</i> for English?
Periodicals, journals, magazines and newspapers	Title case and italics Eg: <i>Origins</i> is published twice a year.
Chapters	Sentence case and single quotation marks Eg: In the chapter entitled 'Professional learning opportunities', there are numerous examples of...
Articles	Sentence case and single quotation marks Eg: The article in The NT News entitled 'University wins coveted award' shows the exemplary teaching practices ...
Documents and published work	Sentence case and italics Eg: <i>Connect Discover Grow: Strategic plan 2015 – 2025</i> describes our key strategies over ten years whereas <i>Focus 2017</i> describes key areas for consideration during the year.
Policies	Title case Eg: It is important to adhere to the Duty of Care for Students policy.
Legislation	Title case and italics Eg: <i>School Education Act 1999</i>
Elements within a publication (chapters, figures, tables, pages)	Capitalised Eg: This is discussed in Chapter 4. Student enrolments since 2017 are shown in Figure 3.1. But this is shown on pages 23 to 41.
Musical compositions, ballets and operas	Sentence case and italics Eg: Our school is performing <i>Rites of passage</i> next term.
Song titles	Sentence case and single quotation marks Eg: We ended the concert with 'Brass in pocket' by The Pretenders.

## Spelling

The following are used:

- cannot, not can not;
- thank you, not thankyou
- advisor not adviser, as in careers advisor
- focused not focussed
- benefited not benefitted.

Consult The Macquarie Dictionary if there is any doubt about the correct spelling of a word.

## Telephone numbers

The following styles are used for telephone and fax numbers:

- 8946 2222
- 1800 222 222
- 1300 222 222
- 13 22 22

When the publication is for use in the Northern Territory, do not include the area code, eg: T: 8946 2222.

When the publication is for use across Australia, the area code is within brackets, eg: T: (08) 8946 2222.

When the publication is for use outside Australia, the international code is used, eg: T: +618 8946 2222.

## The Northern Territory

When referring to Territorians, use Territorians, NOT Northern Territorians.

Use Statewide NOT state-wide or State-wide.

## Writing checklist

- ✓ Is the purpose clear and accurate?
- ✓ Have you written the document for the target audience?
- ✓ Does the document meet the requirements of this style guide?
- ✓ Do the words flow easily?
- ✓ Is the structure clear and allows readers to find things easily?
- ✓ Have you used using the correct font?
- ✓ Have you used headings, boxes, tables, diagrams, captions, breakout quotes and illustrations to make the pages easier to read?
- <sup>6</sup> ✓ Have you made sure the type and other visual elements are clear and sharp?
- ✓ Has the document been proofread for spelling and grammar?
- ✓ Have you obtained the necessary approvals?

## Appendix 1: Approved wording to describe CDU

Often, if you're writing for an external audience, you'll need to include an introduction to CDU. Here is some approved wording that describes what we do, and how and why we do it.

It can be edited down as required.

### About CDU

Charles Darwin University is a new world university; committed to bringing people together to use knowledge to shape the future. It's a place where everyone can follow their passion to make things better – however big or small.

The University's main campus is located in Australia's most northern capital city of Darwin; a young, multicultural and cosmopolitan tropical city that sits on the rim of South-East Asia. As the only university in the Northern Territory, CDU is uniquely placed to provide education, training and research expertise to match the growing focus on Australia's north.

The University was conceived to support the economic, environmental, cultural and social development of the Northern Territory. Working in partnership with the Territory and Commonwealth governments, CDU has established a Higher Education, Vocational Education and Training, and Research portfolio strongly focused on Northern Australia and the surrounding South-East Asian region.

CDU has grown from local community origins during the past 50 years to become an internationally renowned dual sector university that caters for students across the Northern Territory, Australia and the world.

CDU has developed innovative methods of flexible delivery to broaden outreach to students with online learning. Enriched by the social, cultural and natural endowments of the Northern Territory, and a commitment to the advancement and prosperity of the region, Charles Darwin University enables staff and prepares students to be creative thinkers and effective contributors in a complex and changing world.

Driven by the need for students to be educated as specialists and trained to be job ready in fields that benefit the local and national economies, and ranked as one of Australia's top 3 universities under 50 (Times Higher Education rankings 2015-2016), CDU has cemented its position as a sustainable, innovative, multi-sector tertiary education provider.

Today CDU has more than 24,000 students spread across 11 campuses and centres in the Northern Territory, as well as in Melbourne, Sydney and online. CDU also delivers training in more than 170 locations across the Northern Territory, South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales.

Recognised leaders in environmental studies (tropical and desert knowledges), Indigenous education and studies, remote nursing and education, South-East Asian studies and online learning; the diversity of the University's study programs and delivery methods is rare among Australia's universities.

## Approved proof points

- Charles Darwin University is ranked in the top 2% of universities in the world
- Charles Darwin University is ranked 34th in the top young universities in the world
- Charles Darwin University is one of the leading universities Australia-wide for graduate employment outcomes
- Charles Darwin University is one of 20 universities worldwide and one of only 3 universities in Australia identified by Times Higher Education as a 'rising star'



## Appendix 2: Tips for writing online content

As more and more published material is online, the following tips are provided to assist staff. In many cases these tips are also applicable to traditionally published material.

Use links to enable users to quickly and easily select the next piece of information they wish to view. Make the destination of all links clear, and never underline text that is not a link.

As people scan websites for points of interest rather than read word for word, highlight key words and use bullet points.

Edit your text to get rid of superfluous words and padding. There is no need to welcome people to a website and thank them for visiting. This just clutters pages rather than giving useful information.

There is no need to repeat 'This is the Department of X' as the page title already makes that clear.

Material written for websites should be at least 50 percent shorter than printed text broken up into smaller chunks of text or lists that are easily scanned.

There are often word or character limits for social media sites so concise writing is essential. Important information belongs at the top of the page. Make sure it is immediately clear what your site or page is about.

Consider the page titles and opening sentences carefully. They should enable users to quickly identify whether they are in the right place to find what they need.

Start by putting your main point first, and then any supporting information and further explanation can follow. Users don't expect to read through paragraphs of introductory text to get to the main information they need.

As users tend to scan pages for information, you can make their experience easier by using headings and subheadings to break up the page content. This can also be a useful way of helping you structure your material when you write.

Long dense chunks of text are very off-putting online. Don't be afraid to break text up into more and shorter paragraphs and sentences than you would in print.

This will make the page look more attractive to the eye and easier for the user to read.

## Appendix 3: CDU conventions cheat sheet

Word	CDU convention
Degrees	Title case if it's the title of a degree (e.g. Bachelor of Arts)
Full-time, full time	Hyphenate when a compound adjective (e.g. full-time degree), but two separate words when not when there isn't a noun following the adjective (e.g. study full time this Summer Semester)
New world	An exception to the rule! We don't hyphenate this, even when it's a compound adjective used to describe a university.
On-campus, on campus	Hyphenate when a compound adjective (e.g. on-campus course) but two separate words when not when there isn't a noun following the adjective (e.g. study on campus this Summer Semester)
Online	Always one word, no hyphen
Part-time, part time	Hyphenate when a compound adjective (e.g. part-time degree), but two separate words when not when there isn't a noun following the adjective (e.g. study part time this Summer Semester)
Postgraduate	Sentence case, all one word (e.g. choose from a range of postgraduate and undergraduate degrees)
Semester 1, Semester 2	Title case, use numerals 1 and 2. When adding the year afterwards, do not insert a comma; Semester 1 2017
Study areas such as nursing, education, law, business	Sentence case as they are not proper nouns. BUT the exception to the rule is advertising focussing on one study area – then we use title case for the study area to make it stand out more (e.g. a new world in Education is calling)
Summer Semester	Title case
Postgraduate	Sentence case, all one word (e.g. choose from a range of postgraduate and undergraduate degrees)
Undergraduate	Sentence case, all one word (e.g. choose from a range of postgraduate and undergraduate degrees)
Numbers	Spell numbers one to nine out in full. From 10 onwards, use the numeral.
Exclamation marks!	Avoid exclamation marks, except in a few rare instances, such as saying congratulations.
Emails	Start with 'Hi Firstname', Finish with 'Warm regards, Your CDU Team (or your name)
Midyear, mid-year	Hyphenate when a compound adjective (e.g. mid-year admission) but two separate words when a noun (e.g. apply now to study mid year)

## Appendix 4: Australian, Commonwealth or Federal Government

### Reference to 'Australian Government'

All references to 'Commonwealth' or 'Federal' Government should be to 'Australian Government' in all cases, on all products and in all websites.

### Department names

Reference is to 'the Australian Government Department of XYZ'.

### Use of the term 'Commonwealth'

The 'Commonwealth of Australia' is the legal entity established by the Constitution. It is sometimes referred to simply as 'the Commonwealth'. Where the term 'Commonwealth Government' is used, it will normally be appropriate to replace that term with 'Australian Government'. However, care will need to be taken not to replace references to the 'Commonwealth of Australia' or 'the Commonwealth', where that term is used to describe the entity established by the Constitution or in a geographic sense, with references to the Australian Government.