

Plain English and inclusive language

Publications style guide

Plain English

The best way to communicate with your audience is to write in plain English.

Writing in plain English means using simpler, more direct language. Everyone should be able to understand what you're saying.

It's also important to use non-discriminatory inclusive language.

Tips for writing in plain English include to:

- avoid jargon
- use active voice (not passive)
- use shorter, more easily understood words and phrases
- minimise punctuation (use short sentences instead of a long sentence broken up with punctuation).

Plain English words and phrases

Don't write this	Write this
a number of	some, many, few
address this issue	look for solutions, solve this problem, fix this
approximately	about
adequate number of	enough
aggregated	total
amongst	among
as a consequence of	because
ascertain	find out
assist	help
at a later date	later
at the time of writing, at this point in time	now
cognisant of	aware of, know
collaborate with	work with
commence	start, begin
concerning	about
consequently	so
create a dialogue	speak to
deliver, drive	say what you are doing, for example 'increasing', 'achieving'
despite the fact that	although
discontinue	stop
dispatch	send
documentation	documents
due to the fact that	because, since, as
during the month of May	in May
establish	create, set-up, form
examine	look at, check, discuss
facilitate	help
give consideration to	think about, consider
going forward	future

Don't write this	Write this
has a responsibility for	is responsible for. Or say what it is, for example 'is responsible for managing' say 'manages'
have the capacity to	can
identify	set, create, decide on, know, recognise
if this is not the case	if not
if this is the case	if so
impact upon	affect
in accordance with	in line with
implement	apply, install, do
in order to	to
in receipt of	get, have, receive, receiving
in relation to	about
in the event of, in the event that	if, when
in the light of, in view of	because of
it is requested that you declare	you should declare
it should be noted that	note that, remember that
key, important, primary	main
leverage	use, build on
make an application	apply
make a complaint	complain
methodology	method
notwithstanding	even though, though
obtain	get, have
prior to	before
primary	main
provide	give
provide a response to	respond to
provide assistance with	help
pursuant to	under
reach a decision	decide
require	need or must
subsequently	after
that is the reason why	that is why
the way in which	how
thereafter	then, afterwards
until such time as	until
upon	on
utilise	use
whether or not	whether
with reference to, with regard to, with respect to	about, regarding

Inclusive language

Write content that is inclusive. Recognise the diversity of your audience.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' is the preferred term as it recognises the distinct identities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Don't use the acronyms 'ATSI' or 'TSI'.

Don't use 'Aborigine'. Use 'Aboriginal peoples' (remembering that the preferred term is 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples').

Acknowledgement of Country

Information is available in the [Guiding Principles for Welcome to and Acknowledgement of Country](#) (PDF).

Age

Use 'elderly people' or 'older people' (not 'the elderly').

Cultural diversity

Don't refer to a person's ethnicity unless there is a reason to do so.

Don't assume that all ethnic groups belong to the same religion.

Use initial capitals when referring to nationalities and religions, eg Korean, Spanish, German, Buddhist, Muslim, Catholic.

Use the following if relevant/necessary to distinguish between people born in Australia and elsewhere.

Vietnamese-born Australians

Australians of Irish background

Disability

Don't define a person by their disability.

Don't use outdated and inaccurate words such as 'handicapped', 'crippled' and 'invalid'.

Use positive language.

a person with a disability (not a disabled person)

a wheelchair user (not wheelchair bound)

a person with epilepsy (not an epileptic)

a person with AIDS/a person who is HIV positive (not a person 'suffering' from AIDS)

Elders

Capitalise when referring to Australian Indigenous Elders.

Titles such as 'Aunty' and 'Uncle' are used as marks of respect for Elders in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. Don't use unless you are familiar with the person, have used the term with them previously or have been invited by the person or advised by a member of the Indigenous community to do so.

Elder in Residence

Capitalise the 'e' and the 'r'.

Use the title 'Aunty' or 'Uncle' and the Elder's first name for UTS's Elder in Residence.

Aunty Joan Tranter was appointed UTS's inaugural Elder in Residence.

Gender

Avoid sexism in language.

Don't use 'man', 'he', 'him' and 'his' as generic terms.

spokesperson (not spokesman)

chair (not chairman)

humankind, humanity (not mankind)

artificial, manufactured (not manmade)

Rewrite the sentence to avoid using gender-specific pronouns.

Each student must be aware of their responsibilities.

becomes

Students must be aware of their responsibilities.

or

You must be aware of your responsibilities.

If a student fails they will receive extra assistance.

becomes

Students who fail will receive extra assistance.

or

You will receive extra assistance if you fail.

Indigenous

Always capitalise when referring to Australia's Indigenous peoples.

UTS is committed to providing educational and employment opportunities for Indigenous Australian people.

Lower case when generically referring to the original inhabitants of a country.

The Koori people are indigenous to New South Wales.

Titles

Don't use 'Mr', 'Mrs', 'Ms': simply use the name.

Mary Smith

D Field

Use 'Mr' and 'Ms' if first initial/name is unknown (don't use 'Miss' or 'Mrs' unless specifically requested to do so).

Traditional Owners

See also [Guiding Principles for Welcome to and Acknowledgement of Country](#) (PDF).

Use initial capitals.

The Traditional Owners of the land that UTS is built on are the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation.

Welcome to Country

Information is available in the [Guiding Principles for Welcome to and Acknowledgement of Country](#) (PDF).