

Writing for the OIA

A to Z Style Guide

Abbreviations

To ensure your reader understands what your abbreviation means:

- write full name first (afterwards, abbreviations can be used)
- in longer pages, try to repeat the full name from time to time (because many web users do not start reading from the top)
- make sure the page can be read and **understood on its own**, without reading any other page of the website (because many web users land on the page directly from Google, via keywords).

In a table, you can use more abbreviations than in normal sentences, e.g. you can abbreviate *International* to *Int'l*.

You can abbreviate *approximately* to *approx.* (even in a sentence) if it is followed by Arabic numerals.

Address

If the address is on one line, use commas:

National Taiwan University, No 1, Sec 4, Roosevelt Rd, Taipei 10617, Taiwan

If it is on several lines, omit commas:

*National Taiwan University
No 1, Sec 4, Roosevelt Rd
Taipei 10617, Taiwan*

Alumni

Peter is an **alumnus**.

Peter and Paul are **alumni**.

Victoria is an **alumna**.

Victoria and Alexandra are **alumnae**.

Victoria, Alexandra and Peter are all **alumni**.

Ampersand (&)

Avoid & except where it is part of the official name

Apostrophe

the results gained by the student = *the student's results*

the results gained by the students = *the students' results*

Apostrophes can help to make your sentences lighter:

NTU's Office of International Affairs rather than ~~*the NTU Office of International Affairs*~~

Application documents

Prefer *application documents* over ~~application materials~~

two 2x2-inch photographs (not ~~photos~~)

one photocopy (not ~~one copy~~)

Bulleted lists

Bullets are a useful way of breaking up your writing and clearly showing a list. They are much easier to read than a list incorporated into general text. There are three main styles of bulleted lists:

- Short items
- Longer items but not complete sentences
- Complete sentences

Start each bullet point with a capital letter, unless it is a list that carries on from the introductory text. Only use full stops at the end of complete sentences.

Short items

The whole life cost of a lighting scheme includes:

- *Installation*
- *Operation*
- *Maintenance*
- *Removal*

Lists that follow on from the introductory text

Before driving in winter, you should:

- *check the anti-freeze in your radiator*
- *make sure your lights are clean and working properly*
- *ensure your windscreen is clean*
- *replace the battery if it's not reliable.*

Complete sentences

Our vision to be the world's leading road operator comprises five goals:

- *We provide a service that our customers can trust.*
- *We set the standard for delivery.*
- *We deliver sustainable solutions.*
- *Our roads are the safest in the world.*
- *Our network is a dynamic and resilient asset.*

Campus and other locations

Taiwan Taoyuan International Airport

Taipei International Airport (Songshan)

Chunghwa Post (not ~~Taiwan Post~~)

Chunghwa Telecom (not ~~Chunghua~~, not ~~Chung-Hua~~)

7-Eleven

convenience store

the Gongguan area

Gongguan MRT Station (no ~~the~~)

Gongguan MRT Station exit 3

Xinsheng South Rd

Zhoushan Rd
the main campus
Fu Bell
NTU's Main Gate (e.g. Please stand by at NTU's Main Gate until the guests arrive)
Royal Palm Avenue
the College of Bioresources and Agriculture (not ~~Bio-Resources~~)
fourth floor or 4th floor (not 4F, not 4th floor, not 4th Floor)
Room 418, 4th floor, 2nd Administration Building (Bldg only where space is restricted)

Capitals

As a general rule, use capitals for proper nouns only.

Do not write long blocks of capital letters: ~~IN AN ELECTRONIC ENVIRONMENT THIS IS INTERPRETED AS SHOUTING~~

Use capitals for official or specific names:

- job titles, e.g. *the President, the Dean for International Affairs, Student Ambassador*
- our main official categories: International Scholar, International Degree Student, Exchange Student, Visiting Student
- degrees and academic subjects, e.g. *MA in Oriental Philosophy*
- colleges, departments and institutes, e.g. *College of Public Health, Department of International Business*
- publications, e.g. *Read the **Study Abroad Programs** brochure*
- the University (only when referring to NTU), e.g. *the University has 11 colleges and 2 professional schools*
- *Visitor Visa, Resident Visa, National Health Insurance*

Also use capitals for:

- days of the week, e.g. *Wednesday*
- months, e.g. *April*

Do not capitalize general terms:

- *NTU has produced more than 40 university presidents*
- *Presidents from eight Asian universities participated in the meeting*
- *We offer five programs in... We offer 30 courses in...*
- *a college, a department, an institute, a school*
- *new students, returning students*
- *higher education*
- *a transcript, a photocopy of your passport, a passport-sized photograph in electronic format*
- *an email*
- *a visa, visa-exempted entry*

Do not capitalize:

- *fall, winter, spring, summer*

Generally, use lower case wherever possible, including in headings (but upper case for names of colleges, proper names for buildings, etc).

Dashes

You can use a dash when you are expressing a range in a table:
2015–2020 (Ctrl + Minus)

It is preferable to avoid dashes if you have enough space:

This scheme will run from 2015 to 2020 (not ~~*This scheme will run from 2015–2020*~~)

For academic years, financial years: *2015/2016* (note: no space next to /)

Dates

→ see **Numbers**

Deadlines

As long as your message remains clear, adopting a positive viewpoint is encouraged.

In most cases, ~~*your application should be submitted no later than by the deadline of July 20*~~ can be rewritten as **apply by July 20**.

Instead of ~~*applications will close on July 20*~~, you can write **applications are open until July 20**.

~~*Application deadlines*~~ can be written as *Application dates* or *When to apply*

Email

email (not ~~*e-mail*~~)

Erasmus

Erasmus Mundus can be shortened to *Erasmus*, e.g. *Incoming Erasmus Students* (rather than ~~*Incoming Erasmus Mundus Students*~~)

Fax

Fax (not ~~*FAX*~~)

+886 (0)2 2362 0096

Formatting text

→ see **Italics**

→ see **Text alignment**

→ see **Underline**

Geographical names

In a **sentence**, some countries take 'the', such as:

- *the USA* (e.g. *Exchange Students from **the USA***)
- *the UK* (e.g. *Partner institutions in **the UK***)
- *the Netherlands*
- *the Czech Republic*
- *the Philippines*
- *the Gambia*
- *the Republic of China (Taiwan), the ROC (Taiwan)*

In an alphabetical list, place the Netherlands under N, the UK under U, etc.

In a **table**, you may omit 'the'.

Please note:

the USA (not *U.S.A.*, not *America*)

the UK (not *U.K.*)

the Netherlands (not *Netherland*, not *Holland*)

Korea (not *South Korea*)

Mainland China

Macau (note: *the University of Macau* but *Macao Polytechnic Institute*)

the Philippines; a citizen of the Philippines is *Filipino* (male) or *Filipina* (female)

Sao Tome and Principe

the Americas = *South America* + *North America*

Headings and subheadings

Keep headings simple

Avoid unnecessary capitals: *How to find us* not ~~*How to Find Us*~~.

Avoid end punctuation

Avoid unnecessary words such as *information*:

Contact or *Contact us* not ~~*Contact information*~~

Visa not ~~*Visa information*~~

Useful information

Keep headings consistent

All verbs with same subject, or all nouns, all adjectives, etc; if possible, try to prevent a mix:

Who can apply, When to apply, How to apply

Eligibility, Application deadline, Application guide

Hyphens

Do not use a hyphen in:

email (not ~~*e-mail*~~)

online (not ~~*on-line*~~)

worldwide (not ~~*world-wide*~~)

Italics

While italics may be used to highlight *words* or *short phrases*, try to avoid using them to highlight whole sentences, as they make text more difficult to read (especially if your text will be **read on a computer screen**).

NTU

NTU, not ~~*the NTU*~~

Numbers

Writing out numbers

Spell out *one* to *ten* included.

11, 12, 13...

Use commas to group thousands: *8,000,000*

Telephone numbers

+886 (0)2 3366 2007 ext 260

If your text will not be read from overseas: 02 3366 2007 ext 260

Dates

Month, day, year: *April 05, 2012*

If helpful: *Thursday, April 05, 2012*

In a table or where space is restricted, you can use the first three letters of every month:

Apr 05, 2012

Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr, May, Jun, Jul, Aug, Sep, Oct, Nov, Dec (without a dot)

Avoid *5/4, 4/5, 05/04* and *04/05* as these forms can be ambiguous.

~~*April 5th, 2012*~~

~~*April 5th, 2012*~~

~~*April 05 2012*~~

~~*April, 05, 2012*~~

~~*2012/04/05*~~

Days can be abbreviated to *Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat, Sun* (without a dot) in a table or where space is restricted, but it is better to write days in full if you can.

the 2012/2013 academic year

Times

9am

5pm

5.30pm

noon

midnight

9am–6pm

between 9am and 5.50pm

from noon to 1pm

noon–1pm (dash: Ctrl + Minus)

~~*5 pm*~~

~~*5 PM*~~

~~*PM 5*~~

~~*05pm*~~

~~*5:30pm*~~

~~*17:30*~~

~~*12pm*~~

~~*0am*~~

~~*12am*~~

~~*9am–5.30pm*~~

Do not use ~ when you write in English

Money

Write currency first, then a space, then figure: *TWD 1,500*

~~*TWD1,500*~~

~~*TW\$ 1,500*~~

~~*1,500 TWD*~~

TWD (not ~~*NT\$*~~, not ~~*NTD*~~)

USD (not ~~*US\$*~~)

Note:

Our brochures contain many occurrences of the letters 'NT', since we often write 'NTU'. Preferring *TWD* over ~~*NTD*~~ will help us to save a few 'NT'.

For an overseas audience, *TWD* is better known than *NTD*. *TWD* is the norm in banking, for example when prospective students convert currency.

Percentage

20 % (in a table)
20 percent (in a sentence)

Ages

Use Arabic numerals
Ages as adjectives are hyphenated: *18-year-old students*

Floors

3rd floor, e.g. in addresses: *Location: 3rd floor, Main Library*
the third floor, e.g. *Student dorms occupy the third and fourth floors.*

Fractions

a two-thirds increase (hyphen)
an increase of two thirds (no hyphen)
Avoid combining figures and words: *two-thirds completed*, not ~~*2/3-completed*~~

Distance

2km (no spacing)

Parentheses (括號)

No space right after an opening parenthesis

foreign faculty (Professor, Visiting Professor, Lecturer)
~~*foreign faculty (Professor, Visiting Professor, Lecturer)*~~
~~*foreign faculty(Professor, Visiting Professor, Lecturer)*~~

When you end a sentence with a parenthesis, remember the period

The fare is TWD 150 (approx. USD 5).
~~*The fare is TWD 150. (approx. USD 5)*~~

Plurals

alumnus, alumna → *alumni, alumnae*
bureau → *bureaux*
criterion → *criteria*
curriculum → *curricula*
syllabus → *syllabi*
symposium → *symposia*

Telephone

As part of contact details: *Tel* (not *Tel.*, not *TEL*)
Elsewhere: *telephone* (not *phoene*)

Text alignment

As a general rule, align left but not right, unless there is a picture on the right.

Underline

Do not underline unless it is a link.

University or university?

the University (only when referring to NTU), e.g. *the **University** has 11 colleges and 2 professional schools*

*NTU has produced more than 40 **university** presidents.*

*Presidents from eight Asian **universities** participated in the meeting.*

URLs

Keep URLs short.

If the address starts with *www*, omit *http://*

Do not write the last slash: www.ntu.edu.tw not www.ntu.edu.tw/

Printed communication: if your URL is exceedingly long, consider using <http://tinyurl.com>

Visa

a visa (singular)

visas (plural)

Visitor Visas, a Visitor Visa

Resident Visas, a Resident Visa

~~*a Visa*~~

~~*VISA*~~