

STYLE GUIDE VIU'S UNIVERSITY RELATIONS DEPARTMENT

In general, we follow the [VIU Communications internal style guide](#), *The Canadian Press Style Book* and *The Canadian Press Caps & Spelling* unless otherwise noted below.

[ABBREVIATIONS](#)

[ABORIGINAL](#)

[ACRONYMS](#)

[CAPITALIZATION](#)

[COMMAS](#)

[COURSES](#)

[DASHES](#)

[DATES](#)

[DEGREES](#)

[EMAIL](#)

[ITALICS](#)

[JUSTIFICATION](#)

[MEASUREMENTS](#)

[MONEY](#)

[NUMBERS](#)

[PAGINATION](#)

[PHONE NUMBERS](#)

[PHOTOS](#)

[PLURALIZATION](#)

[PUNCTUATION](#)

[QUOTATIONS](#)

[SPELLING](#)

[TITLES](#)

[TIME](#)

[URL](#)

ABBREVIATIONS

1. According to standard grammar usage guidelines, place abbreviations are displayed using periods (e.g. B.C.). For stylistic reasons we often display our provincial abbreviation as BC—both usages can be considered correct for our purposes.
 - a. In written communications (media releases, Journey, articles etc) use BC (i.e. no periods)
2. Spell out common abbreviations for clarity. (i.e. barbecue not BBQ or television not TV.)

ABORIGINAL

1. Always capitalize the word Aboriginal
2. Always capitalize the names of First Nations (i.e. Snuneymuxw) and their territories and languages.

ACRONYMS

1. Unless they are instantly recognizable, spell out acronyms in full on first use, and indicate the acronym in parentheses. Use acronyms sparingly unless they are better known than the full term.
 - a. CUPE, VIUFA etc
 - b. Do not use periods in acronyms.

CAPITALIZATION

1. Capitalization in headlines depends on the medium.
 - a. Media releases – all caps for headline; sentence case for subhead
 - b. Journey: Title Case for Headlines or ALL CAPS depending on the document.
2. Capitalize the word ‘university’ when it refers to VIU. If referring to universities in general the word should be lowercase.
3. Capitalize geographic regions when they refer to a region: The West Coast of Canada has beautiful scenery.
 - a. BUT, when you are referring to a coastline it is lowercase.
 - i. The west coast of Vancouver Island is wild.

COMMAS

1. Don’t use a serial comma unless necessary for clarification.
 - a. She ate apples, pears and bananas NOT She ate apples, pears, and bananas.

COURSES (UNIVERSITY DEGREES/PROGRAMS/CERTIFICATES)

1. Please refer to [VIU Communications Style Guidelines](#) under capitalization.

DASHES

1. Put spaces between the ‘em’ dash and the words on either side.
 - a. An alumnus – someone who is a graduate of VIU – is very important to the University.
2. Put spaces between ‘en’ dashes and the words on either side, unless space is an issue.
 - a. Preferred: 3pm - 4pm
 - b. If space/design dictates: 3pm-4pm or 3 pm – 4 pm.

DATES

1. No comma when the date is only the month and the year.
 - a. In March 2005 Kirsten went to Indonesia
 - i. If it is unclear then put the comma in: In March 2005, 25 students went to Indonesia.
 - b. If there is a specific day indicated then a comma is used: On March 17, 2005, Kirsten Schuld went to Indonesia.
2. Do not use ordinals in dates
 - a. i.e. March 3, not March 3rd.
3. Decades should be written without an apostrophe: 1960s not 1960's.
4. Do not abbreviate the names of the months unless necessary for space reasons.
5. Degree dates: see under 'degrees'.

DEGREES

1. In general avoid using periods.
 - a. BSc not B.Sc.
 - b. PhD not Ph.D
2. Mixed abbreviations take periods.
 - a. B.Comm.
3. In Journey dates are always written as follows:
 - a. David Forrester (BSc '10)
 - b. When writing the degree date make sure the apostrophe is curling to the left.
 - i. '01 not '01

EMAIL

1. Hyperlinks in documents should not be underlined.
 - a. david.forrester@viu.ca or www.viu.ca

ITALICS

1. Titles of plays/newspapers/books/journals/CDs/records/magazines/movies should all be *italicized*. Titles of articles, chapters and poems are not.
 - a. Articles should be in quotations "From Here to Kenya".
2. Use italics for non-English words, unless they have become part of the English language.

JUSTIFICATION

1. Always right or left align never fully justified.
2. Avoid widows and orphans.
 - a. Widow: A line or word left on its own at the top of a page/column
 - b. Orphan: A line or word left on its own at the bottom of a page.

MEASUREMENTS

1. Metric abbreviations should appear in lowercase with no periods, except for the abbreviation for "litres," which should be capitalized to avoid confusion with the number 1. Put a space between the number and the abbreviation for the unit of measure, unless space is an issue.

- a. Preferred: 5 km, 20 ml, 9 L
 - b. If space dictates: 5km, 20ml, 9L
2. Imperial abbreviations should appear in lowercase, with a period at the end of each unit, unless using superscript:
 - a. in., ft., BUT in²

MONEY

1. Do not use extra zeros.
 - a. \$1,000 not \$1,000.00 BUT \$0.95
2. Use the phrase 'more than' not 'over' to describe money.

NUMBERS

1. Spell out whole numbers below 10; use figures for 10 and above.
 - a. Although write: 10 million, not 10,000,000
2. Put commas in the appropriate place for a number bigger than 999. i.e. 1,000; 1,345,345.
3. Use the phrase 'more than' not 'over' to describe numbers.
 - a. There were more than 4,000 graduates this year.
4. Don't start a sentence with the numeric form.
 - a. Thirteen students signed up for the program NOT 13 students signed up for the program.
 - b. If possible change the sentence: This year, 13 students signed up for the program.
5. In general avoid having two unrelated numbers beside each other.
 - a. Instead of, "There were 25 15-year-olds in the race..." rewrite the sentence to say, "All 25 competitors in the race were 15 years old."
6. Per cent:
 - a. Use the word 'per cent' for numbers below ten.
 - i. One per cent; two per cent; three per cent
 - b. Use the '%' symbol with numbers above 10 in numeric form.
 - i. 10 %; 100 % etc
7. Ordinals
 - a. Do not use the ordinal version of a number (ninth, 52nd etc) when writing the complete date: On January 15 he went to the doctor.
 - b. Write out the ordinal if it's a single word: tenth, sixtieth, thirtieth.
 - c. If it's more than one word use numerals: 49th, 52nd

PAGINATION

1. Numbers should be in the bottom right hand corner of documents.
2. Only use the number – no symbols.
 - a. i.e. 1 not 1. OR #1

PHONE NUMBERS

1. Write them with periods not dashes (unless unavoidable)
 - a. 250.740.6215 not 250-740-6215

PHOTOS

1. This mostly applies to Journey magazine – for example if a freelance photographer was hired to do a cover shoot. In general VIU doesn't give photo credit as per the *B.C. Government Internet Standards and Guidelines*.
2. If a photo credit is required it should be written as follows in ALL CAPS.
 - a. Photo: Name of Person/Department/Company
 - i. PHOTO: SABRINA WAIT or PHOTO: SABRINA WAIT/PATRICE PHOTOGRAPHY

PLURALIZATION

1. If a plural name or word ends in 's' and needs to be pluralized don't add an extra 's'.
 - a. For example write Hopkins' not Hopkins's.
2. If a singular name or word ends in 's' and needs to be pluralized add an extra 's'.
 - a. Chris's dog ran away.

PUNCTUATION

1. Periods and commas always go inside double quotation marks; colons and semi-colons outside.
2. The question mark and exclamation mark go inside quotation marks when they apply to the quoted matter only, outside when they apply to the entire sentence.
3. There is no space between initials. H.I. Mencken, C.S. Lewis.
4. Use one space between sentences.
5. Use double quotation marks. Reserve single quotation marks for quotations within quotations.

SPELLING

To maintain consistency the *Canadian Press Stylebook* and its companion publication, *CP Caps and Spelling*, are our standard reference books. If a word isn't in these books, follow the *Canadian Oxford Dictionary* unless otherwise indicated below.

1. If referring to an electronic form of communication do not use a dash.
 - a. email, newsletter etc not e-mail
2. Use Canadian spelling.
 - a. Kilometres not kilometers
 - b. Counsellor not counselor
 - c. Colour not color
3. Alumni (plural, encompasses all genders or a group of males)
 - a. Alumnus (masculine, one person)
 - b. Alumna (feminine, one person)
 - c. alumnae (female, pl.)
4. Per cent:
 - a. Use the word 'per cent' for numbers below ten
 - i. One percent, two per cent, three per cent
 - b. Use the '%' symbol with numbers ten and above in numeric form
 - i. 10 %; 100 % etc

5. website not web site

TITLES

1. Capitalize formal titles when they directly precede the name.
 - a. President Ralph Nilson
2. A title set off by commas is lowercase.
 - a. The president, Ralph Nilson, was at the opening of the building.
3. Lowercase occupational titles.
 - a. VIU president, Ralph Nilson, was at the opening of the building.
 - b. The alumni manager is David Forrester.
4. At the end of a letter, name and degrees etc are in bold; the title underneath in regular font.
 - a. **Ralph Nilson, PhD**
President and Vice-Chancellor
5. If someone changes his/her name and it is necessary to include the former name for clarity (in a *Journey* story for example) put it in brackets before the new name.
 - a. i.e. Jennifer (Koganow) Potosky

TIME

Time is written in figures.

1. 4pm or 4am (please note: there's no space after the figure and no periods at all)
2. 4:30pm or 4:30am
3. Noon and midnight (not 12 noon or 12 midnight).

URL

6. If *www* is a part of the URL, omit *http://* in a reference.
 - a. www.viu.ca
7. If *www* is not part of the URL, include *http://* in a reference.
 - a. <http://today.viu.ca.edu>
8. Don't underline hyperlinks in documents