

A

Abbreviations

In most instances, periods must be placed at the end of abbreviated words, but note the following exceptions:

- Academic degrees: BA, BS, MA, MPhil, MBA, MSc, PhD
- Abbreviations consisting of two or more capital letters: VP, UK, US, UGC, HKUST, ASEAN

Use the article *an* before abbreviations that begin with the following letters if the letter is pronounced as a vowel sound: A, E, F, H, I, L, M, N, O, R, S or X:

- An RGC-funded project
- An HKUST faculty member
- An MBA graduate

Use the article *a* before abbreviations that are generally expressed as words and begin with a consonant sound:

- A MOOC website
- A NASA astronaut
- A STEM program

Spell out the title *Professor* or abbreviate as *Prof.* if necessary. Never use *Prof.* without the period.

Academic degrees

Avoid abbreviations in text; use *bachelor's degree*, *master's degree*, *doctorate*, etc. Use abbreviations such as BA, MA and PhD in lists or where the need to identify many individuals by degree would make the preferred form cumbersome.

Academic departments and programs

Capitalize the formal name: *Department of Mathematics*, *Program in Big Data Technology*. The *of* may be dropped and the title flopped, with capitalization retained: *Mathematics Department*, *Big Data Technology Program*. Lowercase *department* in plural uses but capitalize the proper name element: *the departments of Mathematics and Physics*.

Academic titles; other campus titles

Capitalize and spell out formal titles such as *professor*, *chancellor*, *chairman*, etc., when they precede a name. Lowercase elsewhere:

- Professor TAM Wing-Yim
- The provost issued a statement.

Lowercase modifiers such as *physics* in *physics Professor TAM Wing-Yim* or *department* in *department Chair Michael Altman*.

Capitalize endowed titles: *Charles NG, the CLP Holdings Professor of Sustainability.*

- Endowed titles are often quite lengthy. However, the endowed title is a distinction and should be recognized. Because these titles are cumbersome, it is acceptable not to use them on first reference to a faculty member.

Capitalize a title before a person's name that was formerly held, is about to be assumed or is held temporarily, but do not capitalize the qualifying word: *former, founding, acting, -designate, -elect, etc.* (e.g., *former President Paul CHU*).

Acronyms

Use acronyms sparingly. With the exception of a few widely recognized acronyms (e.g., NASA, UNICEF, or AIDS), use the full name on first reference followed by the acronym in parentheses.

Ages

Use figures: *18-year-old student*, but *the student is 18 years old*. *The competition is for 12-year-olds*. *The man is in his 40s* (no apostrophe).

alumnus, etc.

Alumnus (singular) refers to a man who has attended a school; plural *alumni*.

Alumna (singular) refers to a woman who has attended a school; plural *alumnae*.

Use *alumni* when referring to a group of men and women.

In direct quotation or where informality is acceptable: *alum* (singular); *alums* (plural).

Ampersand (&)

Use an ampersand when space is limited or when it is part of an entity's formal name: TT & WF Chao Foundation.

C

Capitalization

Capitalize campus place names and proper nouns:

- Academic Concourse
- Piazza
- Cheng Yu Tung Building

Capitalize names of academic departments of school, programs, and the abbreviated forms of such names:

- Chemistry Department
- Accounting
- School of Science
- Global Business Program
- SENG

Capitalize University when referring to HKUST in running text.

Lowercase *university* when it is not part of a proper name.

Do *not* capitalize academic disciplines unless they are part of a department name or an official course name:

- She teaches mathematics.
- Professor Chan teaches in the Department of Physics.
- John is majoring in computer science.
- He is a founding member of the Master of Science in Big Data Technology.

co-

Use a hyphen when forming nouns, adjectives or verbs that indicate occupation or status: *co-director*, *co-founder*, *co-signer*.

Course titles

Capitalize course titles and set in italic. Discipline and course number are in roman type, with discipline name capitalized:

- Accounting 1610, *Introduction to Business Law*
- Language 1117, *Advanced Chinese Communication*

D

Dates and times

Full dates should be spelled out in the month-day-year date style in formal writing:

- The HKUST Jockey Club Hall was officially opened on February 17, 2017.

If numeric dates have to be used, please adopt the international format defined by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) that eliminates ambiguity and is universally understandable. In a date such as 05/08/13, for example, it can be interpreted as May 8, 2013, or August 5, 2013. ISO 8601 tackles this uncertainty by providing a cross-national method of representing dates: YYYY-MM-DD.

- Thus, September 2, 2010 would be: 2010-09-02

Use an ordinal number and spell out when a day is mentioned without the month or year:

- On October 10, only 20 people enrolled for the course. By the twenty-second, it was already full.

Do *not* abbreviate *June* or *July* in text. Abbreviate only *Jan.*, *Feb.*, *Mar.*, *Apr.*, *Aug.*, *Sept.*, *Oct.*, *Nov.*, and *Dec.* when they are followed by a specific date:

- Jan. 31, 2020, is the target date.

Do *not* abbreviate days of the week, except for reasons of space in a tabular format: Sun., Mon., Tue., Wed., Thu., Fri., Sat. (three letters, with periods).

Spell out times of day in text. With *o'clock*, the number is always spelled out.

- The seminar continued until half past four.
- The class will begin at eleven o'clock in the morning.

Arabic figures are used for exact times except for noon and midnight. Use periods for *a.m.* and *p.m.* Avoid the redundant *10 a.m. this morning*.

- The coach will depart at 6:20 p.m.
- The course meets from 9:30 a.m. to noon.
- You are cordially invited to attend a press conference on Thursday, April 19 at 10:30 a.m. at the Conference Lodge.

Decades: Use Arabic figures for decades of history; use a left-pointing apostrophe to indicate numerals that are left out: the 1990s, the '90s.

Centuries: Lowercase and spell out numbers less than 10: *the first century, the 20th century*. Hyphenate when used as modifier: *21st-century China*.

Dean title

Formal and university-level communications: *Professor TAM Kar-Yan, Dean of the School of Business and Management [and Chair Professor of the Department of Information Systems, Business Statistics, and Operations Management]*

Internal and marketing and promotional collaterals: *Professor TAM Kar-Yan, Dean of HKUST Business School*

After the first reference: "*Professor Tam*" or "*Dean Tam*"

Departments and Schools

Full name on first reference subsequently use Department and School when it is clear the same department and school is being referred to.

F

Faculty

Faculty can be singular or plural, depending on whether it refers to a group of individuals or to group members who act individually:

- *The faculty is generally content.*
- *Many faculty agree to comply with the new educational requirements.*

Some editors prefer to use *faculty members* in plural constructions. Defer to their preference.

Fractions

Use figures for precise amounts and convert to decimals whenever practical: *2.5 centimeters*. In nonscientific usage, spell out fractions and use hyphens between the words:

- *More than two-thirds of students took part in the campaign.*



Italics

Italicize the titles of longer or discrete works: books, newspapers, periodicals, proper titles of musical compositions and works of art, individual names of ships/aircraft/spacecraft, and exhibitions.



Lists

In lists of names, use alphabetical order unless there is a reason to do otherwise.

When listing a series of clauses, keep structure parallel.

Bulleted lists:

- Introduce the list with a colon.
- Start each item with an uppercase letter.
- If items are complete sentences, end each item with a period.

When a list is introduced by a complete grammatical sentence, followed by a colon, items carry no closing punctuation unless they consist of complete sentences:

An effective lesson plan has the following components:

- Materials
- Clear Objective
- Direct Instruction
- Guided Practice
- Closure

If the list completes a sentence begun in an introductory element—that is, if the items are syntactically part of the preceding sentence—use appropriate end punctuation (i.e., separate items in the list by commas or semicolons, and end with a period):

To complete the course, students must:

- Take the designated core courses,
- Pass an oral examination, and
- Complete a written examination.

M

Mainland

Hong Kong is a Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China. The words '*China and Hong Kong*' must NEVER appear together in any text, maps, images, graphs, or other communications materials. The correct term for use in such cases is '*the Mainland and Hong Kong*'. The name Hong Kong must also never appear as a country in a list of other countries.

Upper case must always be used for the noun 'Mainland' (e.g. *the program in the Mainland*) while lower case should be used for the adjective 'mainland' (e.g. *a mainland student*).

N

Names and titles

After referring to individuals by using their full (first and last) names, refer to them by their last name only in press releases and newsletters. For other types of publications, other conventions may apply.

For Chinese names, the last name precedes the first name. The entire last name should be capitalized upon first appearance; on subsequent appearances of the last name, capitalize only the initial letter. If the first name is hyphenated, the initial letter of both parts should be capitalized. If the individual also has a western name, it is placed at the beginning of the whole name:

- LEE Shau-Kee
- YANG Qiang
- Albert CHUNG Chi-Sing
- Dennis CHAN

When writing about a married woman, endeavor to use just one surname: *Mary CHAN Mei-Ling*.

A *the* preceding a formal organization name is lowercased in running text unless it begins a sentence:

- The Hong Kong Jockey Club donated HK\$33 million dollars to *the* Hong Kong University of Science and Technology to build a new residential building in Tseung Kwan O.

Titles of faculty members are generally included at first occurrence and thereafter:

- Dr. Jason CHAN greeted his audience.

For non-academic staff and students, the courtesy titles *Mr.* and *Mrs.* should be avoided except in official content or when used as part of a direct quotation.

Mr., *Mrs.*, *Ms.*, and *Dr.* are dropped if another title is used:

- Melody LEUNG, PhD

Newspaper and magazine names

Set names in italics. An initial *The* is set in roman type and, unless it begins a sentence, is lowercased:

- The *Wall Street Journal* and the *New York Times* are her favorite papers.

Lowercase *magazine* unless it is part of the publication's formal title:

- *Quanta Magazine*
- *Time* magazine

Web news and magazines: Whether repurposed print or broadcast news, or material freshly written for online publication, this is copyrighted, original content/intellectual property. Therefore, names of online newspapers, webzines and the like are set in italic: *Huffington Post*.

Numbers

In most instances, spell out *one* through *nine* and use Arabic numerals for *10* or above. Same for ordinal numbers, but the letters should not appear as superscripts:

- There were seven people at the meeting.
- There were 36 students in the class.
- The conference room on the fifth floor can accommodate up to 20 people.
- Hong Kong ranked 12th out of 50 cities.

Note: Be sure the ordinal letters do not automatically convert to superscripts.

Use the % symbol only when it is preceded by a numeral; otherwise, spell out the word percent.

- Fewer than 20% of students have enrolled in the workshops.
- He charges a five percent commission.

Where many numbers occur within a sentence or paragraph, keep the format consistent across that sentence or paragraph:

- Although most of the respondents were between 11 and 19, two were 9 and one was 7.
- The talk lasted 2 hour and 15 minutes.

Spell out the number if it is the first word of a sentence, unless it is a year:

- Thirty-four students registered for the class.
- 1992 was a very good year.

Use a comma in four-digit numbers: 1,000.

Do not drop the word *million* or *billion* in the first figure of a range: *The company is worth from \$2 billion to \$4 billion* (not from \$2 to \$4 billion, unless you really mean two dollars).

In proper names, use words or numerals according to an organization's practice: *20th Century Fox*, *Twentieth Century Fund*.

P

Photo captions

Suggest using the present tense irrespective of when the event took place: *HKUST's MBA program is ranked No. 1 in Asia.*

Punctuation

Serial commas

In a series of three or more items, add a comma before the conjunction if it joins the last two elements:

- The graduates posted pictures of their parents, the president, and the vice presidents of HKUST.
- The workshop requires students to complete a science project using milk, honey, and bread and butter.

Colons

Capitalize the first word after a colon if it is a proper noun or the start of a complete sentence. Never capitalize after a colon when introducing a list.

- Typhoon signal No. 8 has been in force for two days straight: All classes are cancelled until further notice.
- He needed a few more items to complete his job application: a resume, cover letter, and references.

Commas with dates

Use commas to set off the year in the month-day-year style of dates:

- Professor Stephen HAWKING delivered an IAS Inaugural Lecture on June 15, 2006, at HKUST.
- The 25th congregation was scheduled for Thursday, November 16, 2017.

When the day of the week is given, it is separated from the month and day by a comma.

- Tuesday, May 1, was a public holiday; Wednesday the second was not.
- The new restaurant will open in April 2019.

Ellipses

Treat an ellipsis as a word—that is, it is preceded and followed by a space.

If the words that precede an ellipsis constitute a grammatically complete sentence, place a period or another punctuation mark at the end of the last word before the ellipsis, then follow it with a space and the ellipsis:

- *We haven't found any evidence of computer hacking. ... We are keeping an eye on things, though.*

It is not necessary to use ellipsis points at the beginning or end of a quoted phrase, sentence, or longer passage. Readers understand that the material generally is preceded or followed by additional material at the source.

Hyphens and Dashes

Hyphens (-) joins words, word elements, or numbers:

- HKUST-MIT project
- Light-emitting diode
- All-round learning

An en-dash (–) simply means “through”:

- Nine thousand participants attended 200 events over 2016–2017.
- For source citations and indexing, see chapters 10–12.

Note: On a PC, press ctrl + minus on the numeric keypad to insert an en-dash.

An em-dash (—) is used to denote a sudden break in thought:

- This was a tremendous effort—over the past decade—to tackle a global threat.
- The smartphone—one of the most important inventions of the 21st century—makes communication easier, but not necessarily better.

Note: On a PC, press alt + ctrl + minus on the numeric keypad to insert an em-dash.

Semicolons

Most often used in publications to break up lengthy list of names and titles:

- *Attending the award ceremony were the President, Professor Paul CHU; the Vice President for Academic Affairs, Professor Ronald CHIN ; and several dignitaries.*

Quotation marks

Place closing quotation marks outside most punctuation. Question marks and exclamation marks are placed before the closing quotation marks only when they apply to the quoted matter.

- Prof. Woo said, “It was the drive in all of us that made it possible for the University to open in three years.”
- She asked, “How long is it going to take?”

Place quotation marks around the titles of articles in magazines, journals, and newspapers:

- “Real-time monitoring of hydrophobic aggregation reveals a critical role of cooperativity in hydrophobic effect” was published on May 31, 2017 in the journal *Nature*.

An unfamiliar or ironic term may be placed in quotation marks on first reference.

S

Spelling

American spellings should be adopted across all printed and online communications at HKUST. When in doubt, please consult the dictionaries published by *Merriam-Webster*. However, there is no need to change spelling in quoted material written in non-American languages.

T

Telephone and fax

Country codes should be included as a bracketed suffix with all phone and fax numbers. Spaces are used to separate the telephone number into four-digit groups—e.g., (852) 5555 5555

Do not use dashes.

W

Web

The World Wide Web; for short, the web. Lowercase in compound uses: *website*, *webpage*.

wide

Generally, no hyphen: *citywide*, *nationwide*. Two important exceptions: *campus-wide*, *university-wide*.