

Writing Style and Grammar Guide

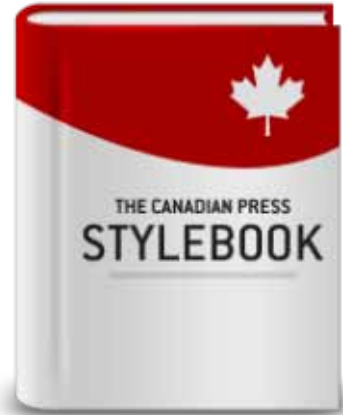
Selkirk College recommends following the guidelines set out in The Canadian Press Stylebook (CP) or the Chicago Manual of Style (CM) for the creation of all public documents and the website. For spelling, we adhere to The Canadian Oxford Dictionary. In the case of a discrepancy between CP and The Canadian Oxford Dictionary, Selkirk will use the spelling recommended in CP.

This style guide highlights common errors and lists exceptions, preferences, or Selkirk-specific conventions not covered by these reference books. Where possible, discrepancies between CP (typically used in journalism) and CM are noted. It is possible to mix the two styles as long as the resulting use of language is clear and consistent.

Selkirk College reserves the right to recommend different style guides for course work. These style guides will be provided by the instructors of said courses.

In addition, the writing and style guide for the Continuing Education Calendar (CE Calendar) is slightly different than what is depicted here. You are invited to download the [CE Calendar Style Guide](#), for further explanation.

If you have any questions about this style guide and/or suggestions, please contact the Communications Coordinator at communications@selkirk.ca.



Acronyms and Abbreviations

Where possible, use the phrase instead of the abbreviation (eg. Christian Schadendorf has a doctorate in forestry). Otherwise, use the following abbreviations.

All-capital abbreviations do not have periods. Most lowercase and mixed abbreviations take periods (M.Sc.), except mixed abbreviations that begin and end with a capital letter (PhD).

Don't use periods in academic degree abbreviations (BA, BEd, BBA, MAcc, PhD). When referring to degrees in a general sense, write bachelor of arts or bachelor's degree; master of arts or master's degree; doctorate or doctoral degree. (He's graduating with a master's degree.). According to CP style, Dr. is to be used only when the person is a medical professional. Otherwise, for faculty, use professor or Prof. Bill Smith.

On first mention, write out in full the names of buildings, institutes, schools, centres, departments (Mir Centre for Peace, Shambhala Music and Performance Hall, Selkirk College Students' Union, School of Environment and Geomatics). After first mention, acronyms are acceptable (for example MCP, SMPH, SCSU). But copy that is filled with acronyms or abbreviations is unsightly and hard to read, so writers are encouraged to use other descriptions, such as "the school," "the "institute" and so on in subsequent references.

Omit periods in all-caps abbreviations or acronyms unless the abbreviation is geographical (U.S., P.E.I., B.C., N.L.) or a single letter (E., p.)

The correct abbreviated form in text for Ontario is Ont., but on mailing addresses it is acceptable to use ON.

Metric symbols are not abbreviations and are followed by a period only when they are at the end of a sentence.

Addresses without a specific street number are written out in full (Elwyn Street, Frank Beinder Way.) When an address includes a specific number, the address is abbreviated (45 Somewhere St., 13 My-Home Ave.).

The 1990s can be shortened to the '90s, not the 90's.

Alumni

Preferred use is graduate or graduates, but to clarify:

- alumna = one female graduate
- alumnae = more than one female graduate
- alumnus = one male graduate
- alumni = plural for a group of male graduates or plural for a mixed group of male and female graduates

Ampersand (&)

Don't use in text or in titles, but do use for marketing purposes in formal names where the use has been established (School of Environment & Geomatics).

Capitalization

General Guidelines

A down style, meaning that capitals are used sparingly, is generally preferred when writing text. Capitalize proper names. Words associated with or derived from proper names, including titles, should be written in lowercase.

For example:

- Use "Nursing program." **Don't use** "program of Nursing" or "Nursing Program"
- Use "Board of Governors" or "the board." **Don't use** "board of Governors" or "the Board."
- Use "Selkirk College" or "the college." **Don't use** "the College"

Capitalize the names of months and days, of holidays, of historical and geological periods and events. Don't capitalize seasons (e.g., spring, fall) unless they stand in place of a month.

For example:

- Use "I'm excited to start school this fall." **Don't use** "I'm excited to start school this Fall"
- Use "Courses start in Fall 2012." **Don't use** "Courses start in fall 2012."

Don't capitalize URLs, services, or unit names that begin with a lowercase letter. In general, follow the capitalization used by the organization or person.

For example:

- Use "mySelkirk is the first place to go for access to Selkirk's online Services." **Don't use** "MYSelkirk is the first place to go for access to Selkirk's online services"
- Use: eBay, k.d. lang, iPod, WestJet, etc.

The proper names of courses are capitalized.

For example: Use "Chemistry 110." **Don't use** "chemistry 110." And use "100-level chemistry course." **Don't use** "100-level Chemistry course:"

Academic Degrees

Names of degrees, fellowships, and the like are lower case when referred to generically.

For example:

- Use “bachelor’s degree” or “bachelor of arts.” **Don’t use** “Bachelor’s degree”
- Use “master’s degree,” or “master of science.” **Don’t use** “Master’s degree”
- Use “doctoral degree,” “doctorate” or “doctor of philosophy.” **Don’t use** “Doctoral degree”

Note the plural form of degrees: bachelor’s degrees; master’s degrees; doctoral degrees.

Diploma and Certificate Programs

Most schools of Selkirk offer diploma and certificate programs in addition to degree programs. Please consult school-specific web pages for specific diploma and certificate program names.

Awards and Distinctions

In the case of awards and distinctions, lowercase common noun references stand alone (e.g., bursaries, awards, prizes, medals). *For example:* Use “NISOD Award” or “the award.” **Don’t use** “NISOD award” or “the Award.”

Dates and Times

Dates

Use the month/day/year format. and don’t include ordinal suffixes (i.e 1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc.) *For example:* Use “February 1, 2012.” **Don’t use** “1 February 2012” or “February 1st, 2012.”

Do not use punctuation if indicating month and year only. *For example:* Use August 2012. **Don’t use** “August, 2012.”

When referring to the academic year, use a dash to indicate the last part of one year and the first part of the next. *For example:* Use “2012-2013.” **Don’t use** “2012/2013.”

Where space restrictions require the names of the months be abbreviated, or when following CP style, abbreviate the following months: Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov., and Dec.

When used in a tabular manner and in the Continuing Education Calendar, the following forms can be used without periods: Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr, May, Jun, Jul, Aug, Sep, Oct, Nov, Dec | Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat, Sun

Times

“Noon” and “midnight” are acceptable to avoid ambiguity

Use lowercase letters with periods, or small caps, to indicate a.m. or p.m. When space is an issue, “am” and “pm” are acceptable without periods. *For example,* use “10 a.m.” or “12:15 p.m.” **Don’t use** 10:00 a.m. or 12:15.

Departments and Schools

Abbreviations

Use “Dept.” to abbreviate a college department. Don’t abbreviate “department” when referring to more than one.

Capitalization

Don’t capitalize schools, departments, or offices when referring to more than one.

Inclusive Language Guidelines

Inclusive language strives to promote all people--regardless of difference--as full and valued members of society by selecting vocabulary that avoids exclusion, the use of false stereotypes and the use of descriptors that portray groups of certain people as dependent, powerless, or less valued than others.

Anticipate audience diversity when writing. People may have different cultural, ethnic, religious, or racial backgrounds, be of different ages, genders and sexual orientations and have different disabilities, whether visible or not. When writing, speaking, or using images, use examples that reflect the diversity of identities and perspectives.

Descriptors that refer to personal attributes such as race, gender, sexual orientation, disability or age, for example, tend to over-emphasize and draw undue attention to the distinguishing attribute. Avoid the use of such descriptors unless they are relevant and valid.

For example:

- *Write “Greg is new to the department and has expressed an interest in taking that course.” Don’t write “Greg, who uses a wheelchair, is new to the department and has expressed an interest in taking that course.”*

When possible, be guided by the preferred terms or phrases of the person or group of people concerned.

Know that there is often a difference between respectful and appropriate language by those belonging to a group (in-group) and those who don’t belong (out-group). As language is constantly evolving, be sure to seek advice or more information when you’re unsure.

Abilities

Use language that focuses on the person, not the disability. Always put the person before the disability.

For example:

- *Use “person with a disability,” “students/employees with disabilities,” “a person with cerebral palsy.”*

“Disabled” is an adjective, not a noun. **Don’t use** “*the disabled.*”

Use language that conveys a positive message and emphasizes abilities rather than limitations. Avoid negative or value-laden terms that overextend the severity of a disability.

For example:

- Write “*As an individual living with a physical disability, Lin appreciates the assistance of her guide dog.*” **Don’t write** “*Olivia, who is physically disabled, could not get by without the assistance of a regular care aide.*”
- Write “*Barbara uses the wheelchair for mobility.*” **Don’t write** “*Robert is confined to a wheelchair.*”
- Write “*Marc is living with epilepsy.*” **Don’t write** “*Marc, who is afflicted with epilepsy . . .*”

Do not label people by their disability.

For example:

- Use “*People with schizophrenia.*” **Don’t use** “*schizophrenics.*”

Most times, there is no need to refer to a person’s disability, but when the need arises, choose acceptable terminology for the specific disability or use the term preferred by the individual. One person with a visual disability may prefer “blind” while another person with a similar disability may prefer “person with low or limited loss of vision.”

Avoid outdated and derogatory terms such as “the disabled,” “handicapped,” “crazy,” “crippled,” or “physically challenged.”

Remember that many chronic conditions and disabilities are invisible. Do not assume that because you do not know that someone is living with a disability that they are not.

Race or Ethnicity

Avoid generalizations based in race or ethnicity. Do not assume that a person’s appearance defines their nationality or cultural background.

Capitalize the proper names of nationalities, peoples, and race: Aboriginal Peoples, Arab, Caucasian, French-Canadian, Inuit, Jew, Latin, Asian, Cree.

Remember that “person of colour” and “immigrant” are not synonymous.

Avoid references that draw undue attention to ethnic or racial backgrounds. When references are valid, learn the most appropriate specific terminology or use the term preferred by the person or group concerned. Also, remember to mention the race or colour of Caucasian or white people as well.

“Black” is acceptable when referring to people of African descent. It should not be used to refer to people of colour who are not of African descent. African Canadian is also sometimes used. Black and white do not name races. If used to describe colour, they are lowercase.

Avoid vocabulary that extends negative racial, cultural or ethnic connotations and avoid usage that carries hierarchical valuation or portrays groups of people as “inferior,” “bad,” “criminal”, or less valued than others. The term “black” has negative attributes associated with it (e.g., black sheep, black

market, blackmail) whereas “white” signals moral purity and innocence.

Using “minority” may imply inferior social position and is often relative to geographic location. When needed, the use of “minority ethnic group” is preferred over “minority group.” “Racial” or “Visible Minority” are also commonly used and typically describe people who are not white. “Ethnic Minority” refers to people whose ancestry is not English or Anglo-Saxon and “Linguistic Minority” refers to people whose first language is not English (or not French in Quebec).

Ancestry

Where possible, avoid defaulting to umbrella broad terms such as “Aboriginal Peoples,” “native peoples,” or “the First Nations”. “Aboriginal Peoples” refers to all the aboriginal people in Canada collectively—Indians, Métis, and Inuit—without regard to their separate origins and identities. “Aboriginal Peoples” can also be used to refer to more than one aboriginal person. The use of “Aboriginal Peoples” is preferred as it emphasizes the diversity of people within the group known as aboriginal people.

The word “native” is a word similar in meaning to “aboriginal.” The term “native peoples” is a collective term to describe the descendants of the original peoples of North America. The term is increasingly seen as outdated (particularly when used as a noun) and is losing currency. The term “First Nations” is widely used and has for the most part replaced the term “Indian.” “First Nations” refers to all Indian peoples in Canada – both Status and Non-Status Indians. It excludes Métis and Inuit people. “First Nations” has also been adopted to replace the word “band” in some communities.

First Nations peoples come from different nations with different and separate languages, cultures, and customs and when possible should not be referred to as a homogenous group. Use someone’s specific nation, community or band. For band names, use the spelling the band prefers, which is also the spelling used by the federal government.

The term “indigenous” is internationally inclusive of “First Nations” or “Aboriginal Peoples”. Do not capitalize “aboriginal” as you would other designations like “Arabic” or “Nordic.” Other variations, such as “Aboriginal Peoples”, are capitalized. The term “Indian” is outdated and should be replaced by the term “First Nation(s)” except in the following cases:

- in direct quotations
- when citing titles of books, works of art, etc.
- in discussions of history where necessary for clarity and accuracy
- in discussions of some legal/constitutional matters requiring precision in terminology
- in discussions of rights and benefits provided on the basis of “Indian” status
- in statistical information collected using these categories (e.g., the census).

The term “Eskimo” is outdated and has been replaced by “Inuit.” “Inuk” is the singular of “Inuit.”

Avoid vocabulary and usage that carries hierarchical valuation, describes Aboriginal Peoples as “belonging” to Canada and other usages that may denote inferiority. Use neutral terms instead.

For example:

- *Write “Aboriginal Peoples in Canada have traditions and cultures that go back thousands of years.”*

Don’t write *“Canada’s Aboriginal People have traditions and cultures that go back thousands of years.”*

Gender

Use gender neutral terms and phrasing.

For example:

- Write “Whoever is promoted will get a raise.” **Don’t write** “Whoever gets the promotion will have his or her pay increased.”
- Write “Employees should read their packets carefully.” **Don’t write** “Each employee should read his packet carefully.”
- Write “Invite your spouse or partner.” **Don’t write** “Invite your boyfriend or husband.”

Generally, it is not necessary to specify the gender of a person in a particular role as most occupations are not gender defined. Avoid terms that show gender biases in the profession.

For example:

- Use: “cleaner,” “police officer,” “chair.” **Don’t use:** “cleaning lady,” “policeman,” “chairman.”
- Use: “nurse,” “doctor,” “lawyer.” **Don’t use:** “male nurse,” “female doctor,” “woman lawyer.”

Use parallel terms or terms of equal status and avoid terms that denote gender inferiority.

For example:

- Use: “husband and wife,” “staff in the office.” **Don’t use:** “man and wife,” “girls in the office.”

Gender is not binary, but a continuum. Trans, transgendered, trans-sexual refers to gender identity, not to sexual orientation. Always use the pronoun of a person’s choosing.

Sexual Orientation

Do not assume heterosexual orientation. Where appropriate, use examples of same-sex partners and families, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, transgender, transsexual, two-spirit, intersex and questioning communities (LGBTQTTI) lives and experiences.

Avoid defaulting to umbrella terms like “gay” or “homosexual.” Use LGBTQTTI to refer to a broad community or be specific when relevant: lesbian, gay man, bisexual woman, etc.

“Sexual orientation” is a preferred term over “sexual preference,” or “lifestyle choice” which suggests a degree of voluntary choice that is not necessarily the case.

There is a difference between a person’s gender and sexual orientation; the use of “gender” is preferred over “sex.”

Be mindful of appropriate and respectful in-group versus out-group naming. “Queer” is an acceptable in-group term but it is often better to refer to “queer communities” rather than calling an individual “queer” unless they have already told you this is how they identify.

Avoid terms like homosexual, transvestite and hermaphrodite. They are outdated, clinical and imply deviance.

Mailing Addresses

Format addresses as follows:

*Selkirk College
Admissions
301 Frank Beinder Way
Castlegar, BC Canada V1N 4L3*

Spell out street types (e.g., Avenue, Boulevard, Street) unless space is tight. If street types must be abbreviated in addresses, use the conventions below. For abbreviations of less common street types, consult www.canadapost.ca.

Type	Abbreviation
Avenue	Ave.
Boulevard	Blvd.
Circle	Cir.
Court	Crt.
Crescent	Cresc.
Crossing	Cross.
Drive	Dr.
Mall	Mall
Point	Pt.
Street	St,

Money

Where it is necessary to specify that an amount is in Canadian dollars, or in contexts where the “\$” symbol may refer to non-Canadian currencies, the currencies should be identified.

For example:

Use:

- *Three hundred Canadian dollars = C\$300*
- *\$749 in New Zealand dollars = NZ\$749*
- *Two U.S. dollars = US\$2*

Zeros are included after the decimal point only when they appear in the same content with fractional amounts.

For example:

- *Write “The fees include \$10.00 for registration and a \$2.75 service charge.” Don’t write “The fees include \$10 for registration and 1 \$2.75 service charge.”*

For very large monetary amounts, sums of money may be expressed by a mixture of numerals and words. Use “\$3 million,” not “\$3,000,000.”

Numbers

Use “first year” and “second year” rather than “1st year” or “2nd year.”

Use a comma (and no space) in numbers greater than three digits. *For example: Use “2,000.” Don’t use “2000.”*

Spell out numbers if they begin a sentence.

For example:

- *Write: “Fourteen staff members will volunteer at the Selkirk Health Symposium.” Don’t write “14 staff members will volunteer at the Selkirk Health Symposium.”*

Format telephone numbers with periods. *For example: “Use “604.822.5555.” Don’t use “(604) 822-5555.”*

Numbers 10 and over should be written in numeric form.

For example:

- *Write: “More than 300 students representing six provinces attended the conference.” Don’t write “More than three hundred students representing 6 provinces attended the conference.”*

Whole numbers under 10 should be spelled out (e.g., one, two, three).

Exceptions include:

- *scores*
- *course credits*
- *GPA’s*
- *footnotes*
- *building floors*
- *room numbers*
- *book chapters*
- *school grades*

Note: For consistency, numbers under 10 may also be written numerically if they satisfy all of the following criteria:

- *are accompanied by numbers of 10 and larger*
- *are within the same sentence or paragraph*
- *describe the same category/unit/object*

For example:

- *Write: “Selkirk Food Services offers four dining plan options.” Don’t write “Selkirk Food Services offers 4 dining plan options*
- *Write: “In total there are 48 units and 192 residents living on floors 5 through 12.” Don’t write “In total there are forty-eight units and one hundred and ninety-two residents living on floors five through twelve.”*
- *Write: “The committee will be composed of 9 to 12 members.” Don’t write “The committee will be composed of nine to 12 members.”*

Capitalize common singular nouns and abbreviations followed by a number or letter.

For example:

- *Use: “Chapter 15,” “Grade 4,” “Room 710.” Don’t use: “chapter 15, “grade 4,” “room 710.”*

Punctuation

Ampersands

Ampersands should be used when using college unit names in the headers of documents. However, when they are used throughout a document, the ampersand should be omitted.

Use for headers: “The School of Environment & Geomatics”

Use in body of document: “The School of Environment and Geomatics”

Apostrophes

Avoid using an apostrophe to indicate a plural acronym or decade.

For example:

- *Use: “URLs,” “1920s.” Don’t use: “URL’s,” “1920’s”*

Colons

The colon normally introduces a list, formal quotation, summation, or idea that completes an introductory statement.

For example:

- *Write “Selkirk Orientation provides a range of fun activities for new and current students: games, tours, workshops and root beer floats.”*
- **Don’t write** *“To complete your admission application: send the required documents by the end of the month.”*

Ellipses

Use an ellipsis to indicate an omission from a sentence, a trailing off of thought, or that more information follows. Mark the ellipsis using three points with a space on either side of the ellipsis.

Write “The assistant said, ‘We hope you enjoy today’s orientation activities ... and we look forward to hearing your feedback.’ Don’t write “The assistant said, ‘We hope you enjoy today’s orientation activities, and, well, um, we look forward to hearing your feedback.’”

Hyphens and Dashes

Hyphens are used to combine words. Dashes are used in place of other punctuation to emphasize information in a sentence.

Hyphens

Hyphenate compound adjectives to avoid ambiguity.

For example:

Use: “first-year student,” “post-diploma program,” “toll-free number,” per-credit basis,” “full-time work,” “18-month program.” **Don’t use:** *“first year student,” post diploma program,” “toll free number,” “per credit basis,” “full time work,” “18 month program.”*

Do not hyphenate adverbs ending in –ly

For example:

- *Use “highly paid employee.”* **Don’t use** *“highly-paid employee.”*

When the second part of a hyphenated expression is omitted, the hyphen is retained and followed by a space.

For example:

- *Use: “100- or 200-level courses,” five- to 10-minute intervals.”* **Don’t use:** *“100 or 200-level courses,” five to ten-minute intervals.”*

When the last letter of a prefix is the same as the first letter in the second word, use a hyphen. One exception is the word “coordinator” which does not require a hyphen.

For example:

- *Use: “anti-intellectual,” “pre-existing.”* **Don’t use:** *“antiintellectual,” “preexisting.”*

Use a hyphen to indicate joint titles.

- *Use: “instructor-researcher,” “writer-editor.”* **Don’t use:** *“instructor/researcher,” “writer/editor.”*

Dashes

A dash is similar in appearance to a hyphen, but longer and used differently. The most common versions of the dash are the en dash (–) and the em dash (—).

En dashes are typically used to indicate a date, time, or number range. No space is necessary on either side of an en dash.

For example:

- *Write “The Selkirk Bookstore is open from 9:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m. on Monday.”* **Don’t write** *“The Selkirk Bookstore is open from 9:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. on Monday.”*

Em dashes are used to show a sudden break in thought, to set off a parenthetical statement or to link clauses and replace a colon or semi-colon. Set off an em dash without space before or after the dash.

For example:

- Write “The biology field school—the first of its kind in Canada—offers 20 students a chance to study in Ghana each summer.” **Don’t write** “The biology field school — the first of its kind in Canada — offers 20 students a chance to study in Ghana each summer.”

Parentheses

Use parentheses to enclose sections, subsections and faculty pedigrees.

For example:

- Use “13(2)(a)(ix).” **Don’t use** “Section 13 2a, ix.”

Periods and Commas

Place periods and commas inside quotation marks, unless the quoted term is technical.

For example:

- Write “Tenth Street Residence has an area called a “performer patio.” **Don’t use** “Tenth Street Residence has an area called a “performer patio”.
- Write “The ASCII code for an exclamation point is “!”. **Don’t use** “The ASCII code for an exclamation point is “!.”

Do not use periods in abbreviations or acronyms. However, use periods when writing a person’s initials.

For example:

- Use: “ABE,” “CWL,” “CBT,” “Hunter S. Thompson.” **Don’t use** “A.B.E.,” “C.W.L.,” “C.B.T.,” “Hunter S Thompson.”

Do not place quotes (single or double) around letter grades and admissions/regulations terminology

For example:

- Use: A grade, Failed standing, Withdrawal standing,
- **Don’t use:** ‘A’ grade, “Failed” standing, “Withdrawal” standing

Serial Comma

The serial comma is the comma before a conjunction that joins the last two elements in a series. Some style guides, such as the Chicago Manual of Style recommend using the serial comma because it prevents ambiguity. But the Canadian Press Style states that the serial comma should be left out unless doing so would be confusing.

Selkirk College will adhere to the Canadian Press Style when it comes to the serial comma and only include it when leaving it out would cause confusion for the reader.

For example:

- Write: “The School of Environment and geomatics has programs in forestry, renewable energy and GIS.”

Quotation Marks

Use single quotation marks to place a quotation within a quotation.

For example:

- Write *The director said, “In the meeting, I announced ‘Our aim with the Count Me In campaign is to get the public interested in Studio 80.’”* **Don’t write** *The director said, ‘In the meeting, I announced “Our aim with the Count Me In campaign is to get the public interested in Studio 80.”’*

Use quotation marks or bold text when referring to the title of a webpage, menu items, buttons, etc.

For example:

- Write *“Click **Scholarships and Bursaries**” to find out more.* **Don’t write** *“Click **Scholarships and Bursaries** to find out more.”*

Spacing

Leave one space, not two, after each sentence.

e.g. and i.e.

A comma must follow “e.g.” and “i.e.”

For example:

- Write *“Join one of Selkirk’s intramural programs (e.g., volleyball, soccer, baseball).”*

“i.e.” stands for “that is,” which is used in place of “in other words.” It specifies or makes more clear.

For example:

- Write *“Men should dress in formal attire (i.e., tuxedo with proper footwear)”*

“e.g.,” means “for example.”

For example:

- Write *“Selkirk hosts a number of free monthly workshops (e.g., Clearing Office Clutter).”*

Vertical Lists

Short, simple lists are best written in sentence form, especially if the introduction and the items form a complete grammatical sentence. Other lists should be set vertically.

A vertical list is best introduced by a complete grammatical sentence, followed by a colon. Consistency is essential. All items in a list should be constructed similarly (e.g., all noun forms or phrases).

For example:

Use - *I enjoy many outdoor activities on campus:*

- *running*
- *biking*
- *kayaking*
- *hiking*
- *swimming*

Don't use - *I enjoy many outdoor activities on campus:*

- *walking*
- *to run*
- *swimming in the ocean*
- *to hike*

Unless numerals or letters serve a purpose (e.g., to indicate task order or chronology), they should be omitted.

To avoid long, skinny lists, short items may be arranged in two or more columns.

Bulleted vertical lists

If the bulleted items are complete sentences, punctuate the sentence as normal.

For example:

Use - Here are a few facts about Selkirk:

- *There were more than 2,000 students enrolled at Selkirk in 2008-09.*
- *Enrolment is expected to increase by 2 per cent over the next two years.*
- *The Registrar addresses enrolment issues at Selkirk College campuses across the region.*

If the list items are not complete sentences, do not use capitals or closing punctuation.

For example:

Use - Your application must include the following documents:

- *a full resume*
- *three letters of recommendation*
- *all your diplomas, from high school to graduate school*
- *a brief essay indicating why you want the position and why you consider yourself qualified for it*

In a bulleted vertical list that completes a sentence begun in an introductory element and consists of phrases or sentences with internal punctuation, semicolons may be used between the items, and a period should follow the final item. Each item begins with a lowercase letter.

For example:

Use - The dean announced that:

- *media relations training, to be conducted in a group setting by the Communications Coordinator, would be offered to all faculty members over the next six months;*
- *faculty will be able to choose from several training days and times, but only one day and time may be chosen*
- *a media relations manual will be available to faculty and staff, and will be distributed at the training sessions.*

In a bulleted vertical list where the items complete a sentence begun in an introductory element and the list consists of phrases or sentences without internal punctuation, no punctuation should be used after each list item. Each item begins with a lowercase letter.

For example:

Use: The committee, composed of students concerned with public transportation access to campus, agreed to:

- *review existing transportation options and develop several possible solutions*
- *meet with transit officials to discuss their concerns*
- *create a website to keep the general student population updated on developments*

Numbered vertical lists

For numbered items, a period follows the numeral and item begins with a capital letter.

For example:

Use - Apply for housing by July 15 to:

1. *Avoid delays in processing your application*
2. *Secure a housing assignment before the start of the academic year*
3. *Reduce the stress of starting your academic term*

In a numbered vertical list that completes a sentence begun in an introductory element and consists of phrases or sentences without internal punctuation, no closing punctuation is used for each item.

For example:

Use - To get to the Selkirk Bookstore from the intersection of Wesbrook Mall and Thunderbird Boulevard:

1. *walk north along Wesbrook Mall to college Boulevard*
2. *turn west*
3. *walk west along college Boulevard to East Mall*

In a numbered vertical list that completes a sentence begun in an introductory element and consists of phrases or sentences with internal punctuation, semicolons may be used between the items, and a period should follow the final item. Each item begins with a lowercase letter.

For example:

Use - The director of the department announced that:

1. *a review of the department would take place in the next eight months;*
2. *an external review committee, chosen by the board of directors, would be selected to conduct an analysis of the internal review;*
3. *there would be several opportunities to department staff to meet with the external review committee.*

Titles

Abbreviations

Title	Example
Chief Executive Officer	CEO Angus Graeme
Administrative Assistant	Admin. Assistant
Executive Assistant	Exec. Assistant
Vice President, Finance	VP Finance

Do not abbreviate “instructor”.

Capitalization

Capitalize titles only when they directly precede a person’s name.

For example:

- Use “*Instructor Robin Trudel.*” **Don’t use** “*Robin Trudel, Instructor*”

Do not capitalize a title when it appears after a person’s name.

For example:

- Use “*Angus Graeme, the president of Selkirk.*” **Don’t use** “*Angus Graeme, the President of Selkirk.*”

Exceptions to the rule: In formal contexts, such as a list of professors in an annual report, titles are usually capitalized even if they do not directly precede the person’s name. Exceptions may also be called for in promotional or other contexts for reasons of courtesy.

Titles of Compositions

Use italics for titles of publications, movies, and television and radio programs.

For example:

- Use: *Grey’s Anatomy, The Matrix, The Vinyl Café.*

Use quotation marks to set off article titles, parts of books, song titles and short poems.

For example:

- Write *Delia’s most recent research article, published in Kootenay Magazine, is titled, “Winter Exercise Clothing Guidelines;”*
- Write: *Barry said his favourite song is “Hey Jude” and his favourite poem is “How do I love thee?”*

URLs, Web and Email Addresses

Do not include “http://” or “https://” in web addresses unless required for the page to function.

For example:

- Use “selkirk.ca/music.” **Don’t use** “http://www.selkirk.ca/music”.

Do not include “index.html” or “home.html” in URLs (unless they are required for the page to function).

For example:

- Use “selkirk.ca/staff.” **Don’t use** “www.selkirk.ca/staff/index.html”

Do not include a slash at the end of the URL unless absolutely necessary.

For example:

- Use “selkirk.ca.” **Don’t use** “selkirk.ca/”

For URLs that function with or without the inclusion of “www”, use “www” when possible for clarity.

If necessary, break URLs in text after a slash or period.

Bold URLs and email addresses when they appear in a printed piece.

For web documents, do not label a URL “click here.” Instead, include the full URL, or hyperlink an appropriate term.

For example:

- Write “eCampus is a collaborative network that links faculty and students to online learning at Selkirk.” **Don’t write** “eCampus is a collaborative network that links faculty and students to online learning at Selkirk. *Click here for more information.*”

Writing Style Guidelines

As a general rule, use language in a way that most clearly, quickly, and simply communicates your ideas to the reader. Don’t assume your reader has local or Selkirk-specific knowledge. Use clear, plain language, and standard terminology. For instance, when referring to another department, provide a general explanation of that department if necessary.

Avoid overly complex sentence construction.

For example:

- Write “You can pick up your U-Pass at the Castlegar Campus Bookstore.” **Don’t write** “Students, as well as staff members who are eligible for the U-Pass, can pick up their U-Pass at the Castlegar Campus Bookstore.”

Use the active voice.

For example:

- Write *“Selkirk IT performed maintenance on the mail server yesterday.”* **Don’t write** *“Maintenance was performed on the mail server yesterday.”*

When addressing one audience, use the direct second person or the imperative.

For example:

- Write *“Visit the website and apply by the end of the month.”* **Don’t write** *“Students should visit the website. They should apply by the end of the month.”*

Create readable text. Rather than using paragraphs of dense text, consider creating short, factual lists or descriptive headings.

Avoid using several different terms for one thing; this can confuse the reader.

For example:

- Write *“Check the Health and Wellness website for full program details. Visit the Contact page on the website to get in touch with a program assistant.”* **Don’t write** *“Check the Health home page for full program details. To get in touch with a program assistant, visit the Contact page on the Health and Wellness site.”*

In body text, avoid spelling words entirely in capitals for emphasis; your reader will interpret this approach as shouting. Instead, use a bold typeface to draw attention to a word or phrase.

For example:

- Write *“If you receive an email virus, do not open the file attachment.”* **Don’t write** *“If you receive an email virus, DO NOT open the file attachment.”*

Avoid archaic language.

For example:

- Write: *“Students working in laboratories may be exposed to harmful chemicals so it is important for them to take chemical safety training;”* not *“Students working in laboratories may be exposed to harmful chemicals, thus it is imperative for them to take chemical safety training.”*
- Write: *“Unfortunately, the president was not able to attend the Town Hall event;”* not *“Alas, the president was not able to attend the Town Hall event.”*