



VERSION 3.0 2025

EDITORIAL

STYLE

GUIDE

Selkirk  College

Consistency and clarity make the Selkirk College brand strong and memorable.

We are **all Selkirk College communicators.**

Writing on behalf of Selkirk College is an opportunity to communicate the personality, integrity and professionalism of the college and its community. The *Selkirk College Editorial Style Guide* is a tool to help you create clear and consistent content that reflects the mission and values of Selkirk College.

Use this document to guide your communication when academic formatting (MLA, APA, etc.) is not required.

Style at a Glance

- One space after periods, not two.
- No Oxford comma—that means no comma before **and** or **or** in a list.
- Do not use dots in **am** and **pm**.
- Only use apostrophes to show possession. Use **it's** when you mean **it is**.
- Don't add an apostrophe in years, unless you want to show possession: 1990s.
- Don't capitalize the word **college** on its own.
- Use Canadian spelling. Some common words are: catalogue, centre, counsellor, enrol, enrolled, enrolling, enrolment and traveller.
- Use headline-style capitalization for headlines. Capitalize everything except prepositions and **the, a, an, to, as, and, but, for, or** and **nor**.
- Consider your audience and tone of voice.

Sources and references

- *Simon Fraser University Editorial Style Guide*
- *The Canadian Press Stylebook: A Guide for Writers and Editors (18th edition)*
- *The Chicago Manual of Style (15th edition)*
- *The Editorial Style Guide for UBC Communicators*
- *The UVic Edge Brand Guide*
- *Kootenay Mountain Culture Magazine Style Guide*

Selkirk College

Refer to Selkirk College by its full name whenever possible. If you don't use the full name, keep it lowercase.

Yes: Selkirk College, the college

No: The College

Selkirk College contains many different schools, programs and places. While each one has its own identity, they are all part of the college. Include Selkirk College in names where appropriate.

Yes: Selkirk College's School of Arts & Technology, Selkirk College's Castlegar Campus

No: The school of the Arts

Alumni

Use **graduate**, **graduates**, **alum** and **alumni**, which are gender-neutral. Some commonly used words are gendered and should be avoided.

Credentials (degree, diploma and certificate)

In general, only use capitalize credentials when you are referring to a formal and complete name within a list.

Yes: He graduated with a Forestry Technology Diploma.

If you are referring to someone's degree, try to write it out rather than using the abbreviation.

Yes: The new English instructor, who holds a doctorate in literature, starts next week.

No: The new English instructor, PhD, starts next week.

Do not use periods in degree abbreviations.

Yes: PhD, BA, BSc

Enrolment Status

The words full-time and part-time are always hyphenated.

Yes: I am a full-time student at Selkirk College.

Yes: I study part-time.

Events

If you are promoting an event at Selkirk College. Remember to include the date, time and location. See the entry “Dates, Times and Years” for how to format this information.

Faculties, Departments and Schools

Capitalize the proper name of a faculty, department and school. In our schools, use **&** in place of **and**.

School of Arts & Technology

School of Hospitality & Tourism

School of Business

Selkirk International

School of Environment & Geomatics

School of University Arts & Sciences

School of Health & Human Services

School of Industry & Trades Training

If you're not using the full name, don't capitalize it.

Yes: School of Arts & Technology, the school; Selkirk College, the college

No: The School, the College

Capitalize the proper names of campuses and buildings.

Tenth Street Campus

Grand Forks Campus

Victoria Street Campus

Kaslo Learning Centre

Silver King Campus

Nakusp Learning Centre

Silver King Student Commons Building

Mir Centre for Peace

Castlegar Campus

Selkirk Technology Access Centre (STAC)

Trail Campus

Skattebo Education Forest

Programs and Courses

Capitalize the formal titles of academic programs and courses.

Yes: I'm looking forward to taking Introduction to Video and Audio next term.

Don't capitalize an academic subject unless it is a proper noun.

Yes: My English class is after lunch.

Terms and Breaks

Capitalize the seasons and the word **term** in all our terms: Fall Term, Winter Term and Spring/Summer Term.

Yes: The Winter Term begins on January 4, 2022.

Yes: I took that course last term.

No: I took that course last Term.

Taglines, keywords and campaigns

We have a motto.

Best of all—inquire

We have a brand positioning statement that you can use for a tagline.

Building remarkable futures

We also use a variety of keywords and campaign slogans that change from time to time.

Experience unique

Who will you become?

Forward together

Some taglines are being phased out and should not be used anymore.

~~**Everything you want right here.**~~

Titles

Only capitalize someone's title when it comes before their name.

Yes: Maggie Matear, the president of Selkirk College.

We follow the *Canadian Press Stylebook*. If you can't find what you're looking for there, try the *Chicago Manual of Style*. We use Canadian spelling and the *Canadian Oxford Dictionary*. See "Appendix A: Word List" for Canadian spelling of some common words.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

Write out all province names in full, except for BC, NWT and PEI. Do not use periods.

Yes: I grew up in Alberta, but I moved to the Kootenays in BC to attend Selkirk College.

Do not use periods in abbreviations and acronyms.

Yes: I enrolled in the SROAM program.

Write out a full name on first usage and add the acronym or abbreviation in parentheses. After that first mention, only use the shortened name, do not flip back and forth.

Yes: The Selkirk Technology Access Centre (STAC) builds the competitiveness of advanced manufacturing and materials companies in the Kootenays. At the STAC, you can access a 3D printer, a 3D scanner, CNC machines and many other tools.

When pluralizing an acronym, do not add an apostrophe. Use the apostrophe only when you want to show possession.

Yes: The program is run in collaboration with local NGOs.

Yes: The NGO's vision is to increase access to education in developing nations.

Addresses

In addresses, write out the words **street** and **avenue**. Add two spaces before the postal code.

Victoria Street Campus
606 Victoria Street
Nelson, BC V1L 4K9

Ampersands

Do not use an ampersand in place of **and** in text. Use it in a formal name that includes an ampersand.

Yes: Selkirk College makes health and wellness resources available to all students.

No: Selkirk College makes health & wellness resources available to all students.

Use the ampersand when it is part of a Selkirk College school name.

Yes: The School of Health & Human Services

Use the ampersand in registered business names.

Yes: A&W, AT&T

Use the ampersand within charts, posters and lists at the designer's discretion—be consistent within the document!

Apostrophes

An apostrophe is used to signify possession.

Selkirk College's tuition fees are much more affordable than a university.

Plural nouns that end in s only need an apostrophe.

Teachers' apples

Singular nouns and names that end in **s** typically take an apostrophe and an **s**.

I left Chris's notebook at the library.

Do not use an apostrophe when you want to pluralize an acronym or a decade.

Yes: The 1960s; NGOs

Capitalization

In headlines, we use headline-style capitalization or title case. That means capitalizing all words except for prepositions and **the, a, an, to, as, and, but, for, or** and **nor**.

Province Announces \$2.4 million for Selkirk College Student Housing

People That Made the Place: A Look Back on 2020 at Selkirk College

Colons and Semicolons

A colon can be used to introduce a list or a quotation. It can amplify what came before it. If a colon is followed by a complete sentence, proper noun or question, use a capital letter.

I have three favourite cities: Nelson, Castlegar and Kaslo.

**Prospective post-secondary students have a lot to consider: Should they stay close to home?
Should they try living in a new city?**

A semicolon can go between two closely related ideas. It can also be used to separate items in a list that have internal punctuation. If you find yourself turning to semicolons, it's a sign that your sentence is getting long and likely isn't web friendly. Try breaking it up into shorter, more digestible sentences.

Yes: Selkirk College's Tenth Street Campus and Victoria Street Campus are in Nelson. There are also campuses in neighbouring Castlegar and Trail.

No: Selkirk College's campuses include the Tenth Street Campus and the Victoria Street Campus, which are in Nelson; the Castlegar Campus; and the Trail Campus.

Commas

We do not use the Oxford comma. Generally, that means you do not have to use a comma before the final **and** or **or** in a list. Sometimes, you will need to add a comma to avoid confusion.

Yes: My favourite cities are Nelson, Castlegar and Trail.

Yes: I consulted my parents, my instructor, and my counsellor.

Use a comma after an introductory clause.

Yes: In 2022, classes start on January 4.

Use a comma to set off geographic places.

Yes: Selkirk College's Tenth Street Campus is in Nelson, BC, Canada.

Contractions

Contractions bring an informal tone to your writing. Consider your audience when deciding whether to use them.

Remember that **it's** is a contraction of it is. **Only** use **it's** when you mean **it is**.

Dates, Times and Years

For **dates** write out the full month and do not use ordinals, like 9th or 3d.

Yes: November 3, 2021

No: November 3rd, 2021, Nov. 3, 2021

When you are writing the month, day and year, add a comma before and after the year. If you are just writing the month and the year, don't use the comma.

Yes: November 2021.

Yes: The event is at 7 pm on Wednesday, November 3, 2021, at Selkirk College's Silver King Campus.

To write a date numerically, use the format YYYY-MM-DD.

Academic years are written as 2022/23. Write out the full first year, add a backslash and then add the last two digits of the next year. **Year ranges** are written with an en dash 1998–2023.

Yes: From 1967–2016, the Academic Calendar was printed, but for the 2017/18 academic year, it was digitized.

Times are written as numerals. We do not use periods in **am** and **pm**. We do not use ciphers (:00). When a series of times are all in the am or pm, only list it after the last number.

Yes: 7 am, 8:30 pm

Yes: My first class is from 11:30 am to 1 pm. My second class is from 3 to 4:40 pm.

No: 7:00 a.m., 8:30 PM, seven p.m.

Avoid being redundant! You don't need to say 12 noon or 8 am in the morning.

Yes: Students should arrive at noon.

When writing a time range, use the en dash. Do not add spaces to either side of the dash.

Yes: Thursday from 8–9 pm

No: Thursday from 8 - 9 pm

Do not use an apostrophe in **years**, unless you want to show possession.

Yes: Selkirk College has been a community force since the 1960s.

Yes: Archival photographs are full of 1960's hairstyles.

Ellipses (...)

Ellipses can be used to show that words have been omitted from a quote. Make sure that when you leave words out of a quote, you are not changing the sentiment.

Add a space on either side of an ellipsis. If a full sentence precedes an ellipsis, you'll need to add a period too. Do not put a space between the period and the ellipses.

Yes: "I will be applying to Selkirk College in the fall... I hope to get accepted!"

No: "I will be applying to Selkirk College in the fall ... I hope to get accepted!"

Exclamation Points

Use exclamation points sparingly and never double up. Remember that exclamation points function as a period. You do not need to add a period.

No: It's the last day of classes!.

Hyphens and Dashes

Hyphens and dashes should all be closed—do not add spaces on either side.

Hyphens (-)

Hyphens join words before a noun, but do not use them with “ly” words.

Yes: It was a first-rate class; the class was first rate.

Yes: The class has a highly educated instructor.

En dashes (–) (code: press, hold and release alt-0-150)

En dashes are used in date and number ranges to represent the words **to** or **through**.

Yes: January–February

No: January – February

Yes: 10–12 pm

No: 10–12p.m.

Em dashes (—) (code: press, hold and release alt-0-151)

Em dashes can be used to add non-essential information into your sentence or to add emphasis.

Selkirk College—which serves 2,800 full-time learners a year in certificate, diploma, bachelor’s degree, co-operative education and continuing education programs—is in the Kootenay region of BC.

It was a great class—super interesting.

Links, Websites and Email Addresses

Do not set URLs in bold. Do not italicize or underline them. Use normal punctuation after a URL.

Yes: You can find the information on selkirk.ca.

No: You can find the information on *selkirk.ca*

If possible, hyperlink text instead of including the full URL.

Yes: Please visit Selkirk College's [website](#).

No: Please visit Selkirk College's website: selkirk.ca.

Email addresses should always include the "@" symbol in running text.

Yes: welcome@selkirk.ca

No: welcome[at]selkirk.ca.

Unless it begins a sentence, an email address should be set in lowercase.

Yes: You can send us an email at welcome@selkirk.ca.

To help prevent automated phishing and to allow staff emails to remain anonymous, hyperlink the name of an individual to their staff directory page when possible.

Yes: Contact [Maggie](#)!

No: You can contact Maggie Matear at mmatear@selkirk.ca.

Use descriptive text for links rather than generic text.

Yes: Read our [strategic plan](#).

No: [Click here](#).

Lists

A vertical list can be a great way to organize information and make it easier to digest. A short bullet list is introduced by a colon. Bullet points use capital letters. If a bullet is not a full sentence, it doesn't need punctuation.

Selkirk College has campuses in several towns in the Kootenay region of BC, including:

- Castlegar
- Nelson
- Trail

If the points in your list are full sentences, use a capital letter and add a period.

The new Silver King Childcare Centre is a joint initiative that increases access to quality licensed childcare:

- It provides 24 new spaces for both Selkirk College students and the general community.
- It was made possible by \$1.2 million in funding from the provincial government's Childcare BC New Spaces Fund and \$300,000 from Columbia Basin Trust.
- It is being operated by Kootenay Kids Society.

Measurements

Generally, we use the metric system and use abbreviations for units of measurement. Use numerals with units of measurement.

Yes: The speed limit is 60 km/h.

No: The speed limit is sixty kilometres per hour.

Money

Don't use zeros after a decimal point.

Yes: Snacks at the cafeteria range from \$0.50 to \$15.

No: Snacks at the cafeteria range from \$0.50 to \$15.00.

When referring to foreign currencies in specific numerical amounts, use the three-letter currency code (uppercase) before the currency symbol.

Yes: This is the equivalent of USD\$300.

No: This is the equivalent of \$300 USD.

Numbers

Write phone numbers with the area code in parentheses and a hyphen after the first three digits.

Yes: (250) 355-3555

No: 250.355.3555

Spell out whole numbers from one to nine. Use numerals for numbers 10 and up. Sometimes that means you will end up with a mix of written numbers and numerals.

Yes: There will be between eight and 12 students in the class.

No: There will be between 8 and 12 students in the class.

If a number begins a sentence, spell it out.

Yes: Twenty-four students attended the class.

No: 24 students attended the class.

Always use numerals for registered names, scores, course credits, GPAs, building floors, room numbers, grades, book chapters, money, ages and numbers combined with a unit of measurement.

Yes: I completed my Level 3 Ski Instructor course.

Yes: I finished reading Chapter 9 last night.

Use numerals for numbers in the thousands. Always add a comma.

Yes: Selkirk College serves more than 2,800 full-time learners.

When you get up to millions and billions, go back to the rule of spelling out whole numbers from one to nine.

Yes: Three million, 2.5 billion, 11 million

Parentheses

Punctuation should always appear on the outside of a closing bracket. If you are enclosing a full sentence in parentheses, it needs its own punctuation.

Yes: You can find that information online (visit my.selkirk.ca).

Yes: Selkirk College has eight campuses. (Every campus is in the West Kootenay or Kootenay Boundary.)

Periods

Only one space after periods, not two.

Quotation Marks

Only use single quotation marks for a quote within a quote. Double quotation marks are used in all other cases.

“My instructor always says, ‘Be here on time.’”

Periods and commas go inside quotation marks. Semicolons and colons go outside quotation marks. The placement of question marks and exclamation points depends on whether they’re part of the quote or the larger sentence.

“I’ve enrolled at Selkirk College,” she says. “My classes start next week.”

“What time does class start?”

Slash

Do not put spaces on either side of a slash.

Spelling

We use Canadian spelling. Refer to the *Canadian Oxford Dictionary* or the *Canadian Press Stylebook* for more guidance. See “Appendix A: Word List” for Canadian spelling of some common words.

Symbols

Use °C for temperature. If you are describing a range, only use it once.

Yes: It was a hot day. The forecast called for temperatures from 30–35°C.

Titles of Works

Use italics for titles of longer works, like movies, newspapers, books, reports and strategic plans.

Yes: Selkirk College's Castlegar Campus is hosting a drive-in screening of *Black Widow* on Saturday, October 16, at 6:30 pm.

Use quotation marks for chapters, essays and articles.

Yes: Did you read "New Selkirk College Student Housing to be Built in Castlegar, Nelson" in the *Nelson Star*?

Selkirk College is committed to supporting truth, reconciliation, Indigenization and decolonization, and this should be reflected in our writing. **Do not combine the territorial acknowledgement with a photo representing people who are not part of the listed nations.**

Capitalization

Capitalization differs from the general rules in the *Selkirk College Editorial Style Guide* and the *Canadian Press Stylebook*. Terms that relate to Indigenous identity, institutions or rights are generally capitalized.

This overrules directives in other guides.

Capitalize the following terms when used in relation to Indigenous Peoples:

- Aboriginal
 - Chief
 - Creator
 - Elder
 - Elders Council
 - First Nations
 - First Peoples
 - Hereditary Chief
 - Indigenous Peoples, non-Indigenous Peoples
 - Indigenous Right
 - Indigenous Title
 - Indigenous Voice
 - Knowledge Keepers
 - Medicine Wheel
 - Nation
 - Numbered Treaties
 - Oral History
 - Oral Tradition
 - Potlatch
 - Protocols of Traditional Knowledge
 - Status Indian, non-Status Indian
 - Traditional Knowledge
 - Treaty Right
 - Urban Indigenous Peoples
-

Language

Do not use language that perpetuates harmful colonial ideals. Avoid possessive statements.

Yes: Indigenous Peoples in Canada or Indigenous Peoples in what is now Canada.

No: Canada's Indigenous Peoples.

Avoid stereotypes, assumptions and generally homogenous statements. Be specific, and consider each situation and group of people or individual that you are speaking about.

Refer to the three major groups of Indigenous Peoples in this order: First Nations, Métis, Inuit (use Inuk when referring to a singular Inuit person).

Spelling and Grammar

Use Indigenous names, spelling and conventions for Indigenous People and places. Consult the websites of the communities and places you are referring to and make sure your spelling is correct. This is dynamic — check often for updated names and spelling.

Always use the names and terminology that people use to describe themselves. Do not make assumptions about how to represent people. Ask questions.

The plural possessives of First Nations and Indigenous Peoples do not require an apostrophe.

Yes: First Nations land.

No: First Nations' land.

Traditional Acknowledgement

Long version

Selkirk College acknowledges the traditional territories of the First Nations of the West Kootenay and Boundary regions: the Sinixt (Lakes), the Syilx (Okanagan), the Ktunaxa and the Secwépemc (Shuswap) Peoples. The mountains, rivers, lakes and lands of these territories have sustained life and human communities since time immemorial. Learning and education have been part of this land for millennia.

Selkirk College is grateful to the keepers of these territories where we live and learn, and the wisdom and beauty that surrounds us. Selkirk College is honoured to work with an engaged and proud Métis community who make the West Kootenay and Boundary region their home. We honour and celebrate the values, cultures and ways of knowing that all Indigenous learners bring to Selkirk College.

Short version

Selkirk College acknowledges our respect for and deep gratitude to the First Nations of the West Kootenay and Boundary regions: the Sinixt (Lakes), the Syilx (Okanagan), the Ktunaxa and the Secwepemc (Shuswap) Peoples on whose traditional territories we are honoured to operate.

Websites for local Indigenous communities

- Colville Confederated Tribes: colvilletribes.com
- Ktunaxa people; Ktunaxa Nation: ktunaxa.org
- Métis Nation: mnb.ca
- Secwepemc people; Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc: tkemlups.ca
- Shuswap Nation Tribal Council: shuswapnation.org
- Syilx Okanagan People; Syilx Okanagan Nation Alliance: syilx.org

Resources

- [*A Guide to the Pronunciation of Indigenous Communities and Organizations in BC*](#) by the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation
 - *Elements of Indigenous Style* by Gregory Younging
 - [First Voices Keyboard App](#)
 - Indigenous Peoples terminology guidelines for usage
 - [Secwépemc Communities Pronunciation](#) by Thompson Rivers University
-

References and Sources

- *Elements of Indigenous Style: A Guide for Writing By and About Indigenous Peoples* by Dr. Gregory Younging.
- Indigenous Corporate Training, Inc. (www.ictinc.ca)
- Style Sheet for Indigenization Guides (from Dianne Biin).

Tone of Voice

Write in an active voice.

Yes: Students enjoy using the gymnasium.

No: The gymnasium is often enjoyed by students.

Be concise, clear and credible. Say what you mean and be specific. Include facts instead of opinions.

Yes: Digital Fabrication & Design students will learn how to use programs such as Adobe Photoshop, Blender and AutoDesk.

No: Digital Fabrication & Design students learn industry-standard applications from cutting-edge professionals.

Write to Your Audience

Your tone will adjust depending on your audience. For example, if you're writing a report for government, you will likely use a more formal tone.

Regardless of the audience, all communications should reflect the Selkirk College's one-of-a-kind voice.

Selkirk College is:

- **Friendly and warm.** We are empathetic, curious and welcoming.
- **Accessible.** Our campuses and programs are for everyone.
- **Inclusive.** Our language is free of stereotypes, and we don't make assumptions about people's beliefs or backgrounds.
- **Unpretentious.** We are an academic institution, but we don't use jargon and we're not overly verbose.
- **Informed.** We are interested in and up to date on the world around us.
- **Optimistic.** We aim to have a positive impact.

Writing for the Web

On a website, there are typically three types of readers: **skimmers**, **swimmers** and **divers**. When you're creating content, try to cater to these three readers. Provide easy access points with the opportunity to go deeper.

- **Skimmers** will look at headlines, bullets and key graphics.
- **Swimmers** will dig a little deeper. They might read paragraphs and watch a video.
- **Divers** will read the content, engage with multimedia and click through to other pages.

Inverted pyramid: Start with the key information so that skimmers can find what they're looking for. Add more details and nuance as your story develops.

Tone: Use a conversational tone and avoid using jargon. Look for unnecessary words you can delete.

Writing: Keep your sentences and paragraphs short. Aim for one thought per sentence. One idea per paragraph. One to four (short!) sentences per paragraph.

Help your reader stay engaged with signposts like headings, lists and calls to action.

Appendix A: Word List

A

acknowledgement
alum

B

bachelor's degree
backward (not backwards)
Black

C

catalogue
centre, centred
childcare
colour
coordinate, coordinator
cooperative, cooperative
education, BUT co-op programs,
co-op students
councillor (a member of a council,
e.g., city councillor)
counsellor (a person trained to
give guidance)
COVID-19

E

e.g.,
East Kootenay
Elder
email
endeavour
enrol, enrolled, enrolling,
enrolment

F

Fall Term
favourite
First Nations
forward (not forwards)

G

GPA
grey

H

health care
honoured

I

i.e.,
Indigenize
Indigenization
Indigenous
Indigenous Peoples
internet
Inuk/Inuit

K

kilometre
Kootenay Boundary

L

labour

M

major
master's degree
Métis
metre
microaggression
midterm
minor
MOU

N

neighbour
neighbourhood
NSERC

O

ongoing
online
onward (not onwards)
Oral History

Oral Traditions
organize

P

per cent
PowerPoint
postgraduate
post-secondary
prerequisite
program (not programme)

R

rack cards
realize
recognize

S

Spring/Summer Term
subcommittee

T

theatre
toward (not towards)
Traditional Knowledge
travelled, traveller

U

URL

W

waitlist
waitlisted
well-being
West Kootenay
white
WiFi
Winter Break
Winter Term
workforce
work-integrated learning