UGS Web Content Style Guide

In general, the Undergraduate College follows The University of Texas Writer’s Style Guide. Here are some common formatting, style, grammar, and punctuation issues to keep in mind.

View the Drupal cheat sheet

**If you will be updating webpages and have not been trained in Drupal, please contact Trent Lesikar to schedule training**

Headings

- Every header should have text underneath it
  - There must be at least one sentence under an h1 before an h2 is used
- Use h2 for section titles and h3 for subsections
  - Do not skip from using an h1 to an h3

Content & Links

- A page’s call to action (fill out this form, make an appointment, attend this workshop) should be at the top of the page with the text hyperlinked to any relevant form or contact info
- Try to incorporate links into the body of your text
  - Avoid linking words like “click here.”
  - For example, “The Undergraduate College oversees course flags and Signature Courses.”
- Each page should speak to one audience
  - For example, there should not be information for students and information for faculty on one page
- Keep paragraphs short with one main idea that is summarized in the heading
- The entirety of a page’s content should fit on one screen without having to scroll
  - If there is a lot of excess content that you really can’t cut, make a new page and link to it within the text
- Link building names on your pages to their corresponding online maps on first reference
  - For example, “Visit the Office of the Dean in MAI 202.”
  - There is no need to include a link to the same building if it is mentioned multiple times on one page
- Always link email addresses to names or prompts when available
  - For example: “Please email us or call 512-471-8800 for more information.”

Images

- All images must have an alt tag. This ensures that site visitors using screen readers and other web accessibility devices can know the content of the image.
- The alt tag should clearly describe the main content of the image. Take a moment to write something that reflects what you see.
  - For example: “Richard Reddick shakes hands with President Hartzell”
- The alt tag should never be the same as the filename.
  - CORRECT: `<img src="Richard Reddick.jpg" alt="Richard Reddick shakes hands with President Hartzell"/>
  - INCORRECT: `<img src="Richard Reddick.jpg" alt="Richard Reddick"/>

Common Style Issues

Capitalization and Punctuation

- Never use two spaces after a period
- Use ampersands in page and program titles but not within body text, unless referencing a page or program title
- Always capitalize “The” in “The University of Texas.”
- Always reference the university as “The University of Texas at Austin” on first reference
  - “UT” is acceptable on second
- Always capitalize “University” mid-sentence, never “school” or “college” unless using a proper name
  - “I work for The University of Texas at Austin. The University is made up of many different colleges and schools.”
- Never capitalize “the” in “the Undergraduate College” mid-sentence
- Never capitalize the semester name (e.g. spring, summer, fall) mid-sentence
- Never capitalize a subject or department unless using a proper name or a course title
  - CORRECT: “Students can enroll in chemistry courses from the College of Natural Sciences.”
  - CORRECT: “They majored in physics and English.”
  - CORRECT: “They are a faculty member in the Department of Sociology.”
  - CORRECT: “They are a faculty member in the sociology department.”
  - INCORRECT: “They are taking Chemistry, Art History, and Biology courses this semester.”
- Never capitalize “bachelor’s” or “master’s” degree mid-sentence
- Always use punctuation in degree abbreviations
  - For example: Ph.D., M.A., M.Ed., etc.
- Do not use the Oxford comma with a list of three or more things
  - CORRECT: “They are taking history, biology and math courses this semester.”
  - INCORRECT: “They are majoring in English, biology, and Spanish.”
- Capitalize job titles only when used before a name
CORRECT: “Richard Reddick is dean of the Undergraduate College.”
CORRECT: “Dean Richard Reddick will attend the luncheon hosted by President Hartzell.”
CORRECT: “Richard Reddick, dean of the Undergraduate College, will attend a lunch hosted by President Hartzell.”
INCORRECT: “The President spoke at our dinner on Tuesday night.”

**Dates, Times, and Numbers**

- Use the following formats for times: “4-5 p.m.” / “2:30 a.m.-6 p.m.” / “4:30-5:30 p.m.”
- Use the following formats for dates: “Sept. 1, 2024” / “September 2024” / “Thursday, Sept. 2, 2024”
- Never use suffixes with dates e.g. “Oct. 3rd” or “Nov. 4th”
- Never use parenthesis with phone numbers
  - CORRECT: 512-471-4486
  - INCORRECT: (512) 471-4486
- Always spell out numbers one through ten--use numerals from 11 on

**Program-specific Styles**

**Bridging Disciplines Programs**

- Certificate titles do not use the Oxford comma
  - For example: “Ethics & Leadership in Law, Politics & Government”
- Always capitalize “Connecting Experience”

**First-Year Experience**

- Always capitalize First-Year Interest Group (FIG), First-Year Experience (FYE), Transfer-Year Experience (TYE), First-Year Connection, Signature Course, and Helen and Jeff Herbert Family University Lecture Series

**Bulleted and numbered lists**

- Do not put periods at the end of a bullet (should ideally be phrases, not sentences)
- Do not put a colon at the end of the text preceding the list
- Try to use either bold or bullets to make text stand out, not both

**Emphasis**

- Use emphasis sparingly; it loses its impact if used too much on one page
- Never double up on styles (for example, bolding and italicizing a word)
- Never use exclamation points, unless they appear in a quote

**PDFs**

- Avoid asking people to download PDFs from the UGS website. Instead, revise the content and put it directly on the web so it can be viewed without downloading. This is especially important for students on mobile devices
  - Exceptions include forms or checklists that students are expected to print out and complete
- Internal content for use by staff can be posted, revised, and updated on a wiki rather than on the public website

**FAQ**

- Avoid using “Frequently Asked Questions” pages as a catch-all for information on your site
- If information is requested often enough to be included as an FAQ, it should be addressed in the front-facing content of your site
- Think of ways to clump the content into easier-to-navigate pages