



THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE

Brand Guidelines

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Please note that all examples included are for illustrative purposes only and are not reflective of final print material.

4.0

A CONSISTENT TONE
WHEN COMMUNICATING
WITH OUR AUDIENCE

Tone of voice

Contemporary. Compelling.
Considered.

The University of Melbourne brand is more than just our visual identity. Our verbal identity – how we talk – is equally important.

The University of Melbourne is steeped in history and academia. But our tone of voice and grammatical style is modern and accessible. Today, when creating University of Melbourne communications, we're contemporary, compelling and considered.

- **We're contemporary.** That's why we write in short, succinct sentences. And we say 'program' not 'programme'.
- **We're compelling.** That's why we always write with a positive, active voice. And we say 'the science students watched the comet' not 'the comet was watched by the science students'.
- **We're considered.** That's why we always create messages that are sharp and to the point, smart yet accessible, with the audience in mind. And we say 'you'll learn' not 'we'll teach you'.

Staying true to our tone of voice and grammatical style will help protect and nurture a strong University of Melbourne brand.

Contemporary

The University of Melbourne's history dates back to 1853, but our language is not stuck in the past. Our communications are modern and fresh, reflecting our progressive and worldly personality.

1. Use modern Australian English

We write using the conventions and principles of modern Australian English. Our style is simple and accessible, and often conversational in tone. We avoid archaic language, euphemisms and slang. Australian English is continuously evolving, so always refer to the latest edition of the Macquarie Dictionary (Macquarie Dictionary Publishers) and Style Manual: For Authors, Editors and Printers (John Wiley & Sons) for Australia's most up-to-date spelling and grammar conventions.

2. Embrace inclusive language

We always use inclusive language, avoiding stereotypical and offensive terms that unnecessarily categorise people by attributes such as race, gender or disability. For example, say 'student' rather than 'Asian student', 'chairperson' in place of 'chairman' and 'person with a disability' instead of 'disabled person'.

3. Respect our First Australians

We seek to use respectful and accurate terminology when writing about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. Indigenous is always capitalised and we never use Aborigine. The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous peoples describes the right for Indigenous Peoples to determine their own distinctive identity. The term Australia's First Nations people is increasingly being used and preferred by many.

4.0

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Tone of voice

Style references

- *Macquarie Dictionary* (Macquarie Dictionary Publishers)
- *Style Manual: For Authors, Editors and Printers* (John Wiley & Sons)
- [The University of Melbourne editorial style guide on Staff Hub](#)

Compelling

We use storytelling language to convey information and insights about the University of Melbourne. Our communications are engaging and interesting, reflecting our confident and cultured personality.

1. Use active voice

We write in active voice. In active voice the sentence's subject is clearly the actor. For example, 'Alice won first place' is active while 'first place was won by Alice' is passive. Using personal pronouns such as 'you' and 'we' will help you write in active voice. For instance, 'undergraduates are taught by lecturers with exceptional qualifications' is passive while 'you'll learn from exceptionally qualified lecturers' is active.

2. Inject descriptive language

Using descriptive adjectives and verbs is a simple technique for injecting richer meaning and greater energy into your writing. For example, 'the University of Melbourne has seven campuses' can be changed to 'the University of Melbourne spans seven integrated campuses'.

3. Be positive

Always write about what things are rather than what they are not. To help, try avoiding statements that start with 'don't' or 'not' and the words 'just' and 'only'. For instance, writing 'apply by' rather than 'applications close' is shorter and more positive.

Considered

We're thoughtful and precise with our language. Our communications are interesting and tailored, reflecting our intelligent and informed personality.

1. Write for each audience

The meaning of our communications should always be accessible by our audience. As your audience changes, so should your writing. For example, for a graduate student it's fine to write 'research into the composition of rare clinopyroxene-bearing diamonds is fine-tuning our dating baselines'. While for potential undergraduates, you might write 'research into the mineral makeup of diamonds shows us exactly how old they are'. Also, write to your audience not at them. For example, rather than saying 'we'll teach you', write 'you'll learn'.

2. Be consistent

Being consistent helps build a strong brand, and helps build strong trust too. It's hard to say we're one of the world's most leading universities if the quality of language is inconsistent. With so many people creating University of Melbourne communications, following this brand guide, our editorial guidelines on Staff Hub and the conventions set by Macquarie Dictionary (Macquarie Dictionary Publishers) and the Style Manual: For Authors, Editors and Printers (John Wiley & Sons) will help create consistency.

3. Avoid jargon

University jargon, acronyms and language are a part of our everyday work life, but are not understood by many of our audiences. Be mindful of jargon and use plain English alternatives, or provide a simple explanation to help with your audience's understanding. For example, '12 complementary disciplines in one degree' explains more than simply writing 'an interdisciplinary degree'.