These excerpts from the TRU Style Guide are provided as a quick reference and reflect common errors in communications. Please consult the full guide, part of TRU's Brand Guide, for more comprehensive answers to your style questions.

For queries or comments, or to suggest additions to this reference, contact marcom@tru.ca.

Do you mean...

- affect, or effect?
- complement, or compliment?
- e.g., or i.e.?
- its, or it's?
- log in, or login?
- principal, or principle?
- stationary, or stationery?

Word List

See the Word List in the TRU Style Guide Appendix for an expanded list of frequently misspelled or misused words, and consult the *Canadian Oxford Dictionary* for complete definitions and examples.

- 1980s, the '80s, 86ers (see also Plurals vs Possessives)
- advisor
- alumna (female graduate), alumni (group of graduates), alumnus (male graduate)
- co-operative education, co-op
- co-requisite, but prerequisite
- defence and defenceless, but defensive, defensible
- email
- enrol (not enroll), enrolment, but enrolled, enrolling (double "l" before a vowel)
- grade point average, GPA
- homepage (TRU's homepage is tru.ca)
- honour, honourable, but honorary, honorific
- Indigenous (capitalized)
- its (possessive)
- master's degree, but Master of Arts
- Métis
- percent
- prerequisite, but co-requisite
- resumé
- *Secwepemc, Secwepemctsin, Secwepemculew,* (no é) but Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc
- tenure track (noun), but tenure-track (compound adjective, e.g. a tenure-track position)
- vice-chancellor, vice-president (hyphenated)
- web page, but website
- well-being
- WolfPack (not Wolfpack)

Capitalization

General rules: capitalize common nouns when they represent a complete formal name, but use lower case in subsequent partial or informal forms, per the following examples. When referring to TRU as "the university", for example, always use lower case. Common nouns should otherwise **not** be capitalized, even when they are used in terminology specific to the university context.

> Thompson Rivers University, the university; the Thompson Rivers University Senate, the TRU senate, the senate

> TRU President and Vice-Chancellor Alan Shaver, Alan Shaver, president; the president

> the Faculty of Arts, the arts faculty, the faculty; Faculty of Arts Dean Jim Gaisford; the dean of arts

> Doctor of Philosophy; doctorate; Master of Education; master's degree; baccalaureate

Academic programs, credentials and subjects: Formal academic programs and credentials as listed in the TRU Calendar follow the general rule for capitalization. Distinctions within degree programs, such as major, minor, honours, etc. should **not** be capitalized in running text.

> Bachelor of Science; major in cellular, molecular and microbial biology; honours biology; directed studies

> the Co-operative Education program, co-operative education, co-op

Capitalization of job and position titles: In running text, use academic ranks (assistant, associate, full professor) only when the context makes it necessary, otherwise use "faculty member". Only use "professor" when the faculty member has attained the rank of full professor.

Plurals vs. possessives

Plurals vs. apostrophe "s": When we mix possessives—indicating belonging, usually formed by adding an apostrophe plus "s"—with plural nouns or proper nouns that end in "s", we often struggle with the apostrophe. In the example below, the fruit is sold in multiples (plural), while the manager gets an apostrophe plus "s" to indicate belonging (possessive).

> Manager's special: plums and peaches half price

Plurals for letters, abbreviations and numbers: Capital letters used as words, numerals used as nouns, and abbreviations in lower case, capitals or mixed case all usually form the plural by adding "s".

> the three Rs
> ABCs, CDs, FTEs, URLs
> MAs, PhDs
> the 1990s, the '60s
> vols., eds.

Lists

Bulleted or numbered lists may be introduced by a complete sentence followed by a colon. These types of lists do not require internal or terminal punctuation. Do not capitalize the first word of items in a bulleted or numbered list unless it is a proper noun.

Students must obtain the following documents:

- official transcripts
- a letter of permission
- record of degree program

Numbers

In running text, spell out numbers one through nine. For 10 and above use numerals.

Always use numerals for:

measurements that use abbreviations or symbols, e.g. 5 km, 2 L, 9˚C, 6 m^3

percentages, e.g. 50%

quantities consisting of whole numbers and fractions, e.g. 1 ½

course units, e.g. (3)

grade-point averages, e.g. 4.33

currency, e.g. $5, $1.5 million

One important exception: always spell out numbers that begin sentences.

The above practices apply to ordinal numbers as well. Spell out ordinal numbers when referring to year of study.

Surita is in her fourth year of study.

Domestic telephone numbers should be separated with hyphens. No parentheses should be used around area codes.

250-828-5000

Punctuation

Ampersand: Avoid using the ampersand (&) in running text (body copy). The ampersand is acceptable in lists and as an element in registered company names.

As headers: School of Trades & Technology; Office of Environment & Sustainability

In a sentence: Campus development is overseen by the Office of the Vice-President, Administration and Finance.

Dashes and hyphens: An em dash (—), not an en dash (–) or hyphen (-), is used to set off a phrase in a sentence in much the same way as commas—as in this example—and parentheses. There should be **no spaces** before or after an em dash. Used like parentheses, em dashes can contain a statement with no grammatical connection to the rest of the sentence. An em dash is stronger than a comma to enclose.

> More than 500 awards—over $1 million handed out each year—are available.

Note: the key codes for an em dash (—) are Ctrl+Alt+- (on the number pad) for Windows and Shift+Option+- for Macintosh. The key codes for an en dash (–) are Ctrl+- for Windows and Option+- for Macintosh.

Use hyphens in compound adjectives followed immediately by the noun they modify.

> upper-level course
>
> tenure-track position
>
> first- and second-year students

Quotation Marks: Periods and commas go inside quotation marks; colons and semicolons go outside quotation marks. The question mark and exclamation mark go inside the quotation marks when they apply to the quoted matter only, but outside when they apply to the entire sentence, as in this example from the *Chicago Manual of Style*:

> Which of Shakespeare's characters said, "All the world's a stage"?

Use double (not single) quotation marks around unfamiliar terms on first reference or to refer to words as words or letters as letters (as evidenced throughout the TRU Style Guide).

> A "W" indicates a withdrawal from a course and is not calculated in your GPA.

Using quotation marks to set off a significant word or phrase traditionally implies irony. So-called scare quotes are overused and could be confusing, if irony could be misconstrued. "Free" in the second example below could imply "stolen".

> That "free webinar" turned out to be an advertising ploy with no useful information.
>
> *Incorrect:* "Free" textbooks—help yourself.

Think something should be added?

Suggest additions to this quick reference guide by contacting marcom@tru.ca.