

# King's Style Guide

## Background

The King's Style Guide, updated March 23, 2024, helps to ensure King's communications and branding are consistent and reflect our brand values. A style guide helps maintain and enhance King's external image.

The style guide is a living document, and we will continue to update it as required. Contact [Communications](#) with questions or comments regarding this style guide.

## Voice and Tone

King's voice is personable, informative and uses active voice. (See Plain language guidelines, below.) The King's hallmark is the sense of community.

## Email Signatures

Experts recommend keeping your external email signature as simple as possible. Signatures should be 4 lines of text plus the appropriate logo.

Text should be Arial, 11 point, black. You may include information such as

- Name
- Degree(s) and/or professional designation (optional)
- Faculty, department or administrative unit
- King's University College (adding "at Western University" is optional)
- Phone number: use the format 519-433-4567 ext. #####. You can include a +1 in front of the number for international audiences
- A cell phone or fax number if necessary; use the format 000-000-0000
- Website and relevant social media accounts (optional; list without the "https://" prefix)
- Email-optimized King's logo

The official university logo should appear under the email signature.

Example 1:

Joe Example  
Human Resources Manager  
King's University College  
519-433-3491 ext. 1234

Example 2:



Jill Example, Job Title  
King's University College at Western University  
266 Epworth Avenue London, Ontario, Canada N6A 2M3  
P. 519-433-3491 ext. 0000 | P. 1-800-265-4406 | F. 519-433-2738  
@KUC.international

### What to avoid in your signature:

- Your email address – if your audience receives your email, they have your email address
- Inspirational quotes – some users may be offended, and the quote selected may not support the King's brand
- Links to personal social media accounts
- Disclaimers, sustainability statements or anti-phishing statements, unless they are required
- Bold, italics, different colours or sizes of fonts; King's green is acceptable, used sparingly
- Graphics, other than the King's email optimized logo. Many people use text-only email systems and won't be able to see them. Images may not display properly in other email programs, and a distorted image harms the King's brand. Often, images are treated as attachments and can clog a user's inbox or cause email to be filtered as spam.

Email [Communications](#) for any logo requirements.

### Abbreviations

- In digital documents and websites, use the full name on first use at every potential point of entry into the content (e.g., on every web page, not just the homepage)
- Do not abbreviate the days of the week
- Do not use periods unless the abbreviation refers to a place or a person.
  - Examples: U.S., P.E.I., C.S. Lewis
- Titles such as Dr., Prof., Lieut. are abbreviated if they come before names, on first reference. They are written out in descriptive passages.
  - Examples:  
Dr. David Malloy  
**Prof. Jeremy Greenway**  
At the front of the classroom stood professor John Siambanopoulos, chalk in hand.

## Acronyms

- Unless they are instantly recognizable (such as CPR), spell out acronyms in full on first use, and indicate the acronym in parentheses
  - Example: “diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI)”
- Do not use periods in acronyms
  - Example: “Become a KAMP mentor!”
- Capitalize all the letters in an acronym
- In digital documents and websites, spell out acronyms on first use at every potential point of entry into the content (e.g., on every web page, not just the homepage). Use only the acronym on subsequent usage within the same webpage/document.
- Do not use an apostrophe to form the plural of an acronym
  - Example: URLs, not URL’s (no apostrophe required)

## Apostrophes

- Use an apostrophe for master’s and bachelor’s degree, even if used on their own:
  - “While studying for his master’s, Nikki worked at King’s.”
- Do not insert an apostrophe in plurals, e.g., PINs, PDFs, FAQs, the 1990s
- Three years’ experience (apostrophe at the end)

## Bolding, Italics, Underlining

- Use boldface (sparingly) to denote emphasis (never italics)
- Do not use underlining to denote emphasis – underlined words can be mistaken for hyperlinks
- Never use more than one method of emphasis at the same time
  - avoid **using bold and underline together**

## Capitalization

Basic rule: capitalize all proper names and names of departments/agencies/clubs/religions/languages/addresses/places. Otherwise, lowercase is preferred.

- Do not use all caps for emphasis
- Do not capitalize words that are not part of company name
  - Example: Stinson Security personnel (not Personnel)
- Use initial capital letters for all King’s official programs
  - Foot Patrol, Peer Guide Program

## Capitalization for departments and buildings

- Capitalize departments and governing bodies in their full and proper forms
  - “Department of History” but lowercase when the reference is informal: the history department, the library
- Capitalize building names even when short form is used.
  - Example: “Students will meet in front of Dante.”
- Use lowercase for the word “office” unless it is part of the proper name
  - Academic Dean’s Office.
  - Student Financial Services office (lowercase O because “office” is not part of the name of the department)
- Capitalize program names when used in full only
  - “King’s Peer Guide Program”
  - “King’s peer guides will assist international student”

## Capitalization for titles, designations and names

- Use Dr. before name; title is used for non-medical doctors
- Use Prof. before name, the same way that Dr. is used; however, spell out “professor” when the word does not precede a name
  - “Prof. Jeremy Greenway” but “He is an English professor.”
- Capitalize formal titles directly preceding a name
  - “Dean of Students Joe Henry spoke...”
- Use lowercase titles when standing alone or set off from the name with commas
  - “The vice-principal met with first-year students.”
- Capitalize common nouns when they are part of a formal name: Catholic Church, Olympic Games
- Capitalize principal words in awards, honours, funding awards, and scholarships
- Designations of sex and marital status (Mr., Mrs., Miss, Ms.) should be omitted

## Colons

- Use a colon before a URL or email address
- Use a colon before a list only if the introduction is a full sentence (See Lists)
- Capitalize the first word after a colon in a sentence
  - Note: Cleaning, maintenance, and residence staff enter rooms on a regular basis

## Commas

- King's does not use a comma between the last two items of a list, unless there is potential for confusion

## Faculty

- Use an initial capital when referring to the academic divisions
  - Example: Faculty of Science
- Use lowercase when referring to the group of people collectively known as faculty.
  - Example: Subject-specific counselling is also offered by the department chairs and faculty during their office hours

## Hyperlinks and URLs

Always make hyperlinks meaningful text that can be read out of context and be understood. Do not use “click here,” “learn more” or “website” as hyperlinked words.

- Correct: [Find more information about residence.](#)
- Incorrect: For more information about residence, [click here.](#)

Do not hyperlink the period at the end of the sentence

Do not include the end slash in URLs, for example, [www.kings.uwo.ca/academics/business-mos](http://www.kings.uwo.ca/academics/business-mos)

Do not include http:// if the website has www – only use one or the other

## Hyphens and dashes

- Hyphenate compound modifiers before a noun
  - the third-period goal
- Use a hyphen to avoid doubling a vowel, tripling a consonant or duplicating a prefix, for example, co-operate, re-emerge, re-redesign, but readjust, reaffirm, reopen
- Use a hyphen with fractions: two-thirds, three-quarters
- Do not use a hyphen in ranges (time, dates, etc.) – use an en-dash

## Lists

- Alphabetize lists wherever possible
- Use parallel structure in lists: ensure that the list items are alike in format and structure (e.g., all list items are just words, or all list items begin with an active verb)
- Lists should be introduced by a colon only if the introduction is a full sentence.
  - Correct: You can take any of the following courses:
  - Incorrect: To be guaranteed a spot in residence you must:  
In this case you can either remove the colon or reword. To be guaranteed a spot in residence you must complete these steps:

- You can capitalize the first letters in lists or not, or punctuate the list or not – just be consistent in your document

## Locations and room numbers

There are two acceptable methods to communicate location.

1. Name of building followed by room number. **Dante room 112**
  - Use lowercase for the word “room”
  - A comma is not needed between the building name and room number
2. Building short form and room number. **W047**
  - Do not put space between letter and numbers (not W 047)
  - Capitalize building designations as follows:
    - W for Monsignor Wemple Building
    - KC for Darryl J. King Student Life Centre
    - LH for Elizabeth A. “Bessie” Labatt Hall
    - DL for Dante Lenardon Hall
    - BH for Broughdale Hall
    - CCL for Cardinal Carter Library

## Mailing address format

- In general, follow the Canada Post guidelines for Canadian addresses
- Do not use periods in provinces, for example, use ON for Ontario, not Ont.
- Put the city, province and postal code on the same line
- Insert 2 spaces between province and postal code and no comma after the city name
  - King’s University College  
266 Epworth Avenue  
London ON N6A 2M3  
Canada

## Money

- Do not use decimal points.
  - Tickets are \$10 at the door
- When using the dollar sign, do not repeat the word dollars and vice versa
  - \$450 million (omit the word dollars)
- Use CAN when referring to the Canadian dollar when the document could be viewed by an international audience (e.g., \$100 CAN)

## Numbers, Dates and Times

- Write out numbers zero to nine; use numerals for 10 and up
- Use an en-dash, not a hyphen, between ranges. There is no space around the dash.
  - 10 a.m.–5:15 p.m., 12–15 hours a week, chapters 97–99.

## Dates

- Do not write “st,” “nd,” “rd” or “th” on dates
  - September 16, 2017, not September 16th or 16<sup>th</sup>
  - Acceptable uses:
    - 21st century
    - 17th edition
    - 20th anniversary
- Write out full name of day and month except if space does not permit.
  - Abbreviate only Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov., Dec. and only when used with a specific date
  - Days of week are abbreviated only in charts and without periods
- Spell out decades (“the ’90s”) or write the numerals in full (1990s) with no apostrophe.
- To indicate a date range, use one of the following formats:
  - **From** this date **to** this date (from 2001 to 2017)
  - Use an en-dash, not a hyphen (1990–1997)
  - **Between** this date **and** that date (between 2005 and 2016)

## Time

- Only includes minutes when necessary
  - 4 p.m. but 4:15 p.m. (not 4:00 p.m.)
- Always place one space after the number
- Use a.m. and p.m. (lowercase and with periods)
- If there is a range of time use an en-dash (not a hyphen) in this format: 7 p.m.–10:30 p.m. (no space around en-dash)
  - using the word “to” is also acceptable: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- Use noon and midnight, not 12 p.m. or 12 a.m. and never 12 noon a.m./p.m. When minutes are involved use a.m. and p.m. (12:30 p.m.)
- Include a.m. or p.m. with both numbers in a range

## Periods

- Do not place periods in acronyms
  - KAMP

At the end of a sentence, use one space after a period, rather than two – word processing software inserts the proper amount of space after a period

## **Phone numbers and extensions**

- For extensions, do not use a comma after “ext.” or use “X” to denote the extension
  - Phone: 519-433-3491 ext. 4363
- Use a hyphen in toll-free numbers: 1-800-222-2222
- P. preceding the phone number is acceptable on print materials
- Phone: or Toll free: should be used on the web

## **Plain language guidelines**

The King’s preference is for text to be written in plain language: written in a clear, direct way that allows the reader to understand the document on the first reading.

### **Use common words**

It’s best to use words that users will likely use in a search engine. Even though you are writing for a Canadian university site, you want everyone – including ESL students, and people outside of Canada – to understand. Remember, the King’s voice is active, personable and succinct.

### **Be concise**

Cut out unnecessary words.

### **Organize the text**

Follow the inverse pyramid method: present the main message first and the details after. Not all reader read word for word online; instead, they scan for relevant keywords to get to the content they want.

### **Use short, active sentences**

Limit each sentence to one idea.

### **Use active voice**

Focus on the doer of the action, for example, “You can book your appointment...” rather than “Appointments can be booked...”

### **Use lists**

Lists are easy to scan and help to present information clearly. Lists draw readers’ eyes, which makes them more likely to remain on the page instead of moving on.

### **Review your content**

A comprehensive, accessible website strengthens King’s brand. The Communications Content Creator can review your text and make recommendations on best web and print practices, and ensure that your document follows the King’s style guide.



## **Video style guide**

The objective is to build strong brand recognition across all of our platforms and distribution channels.

Our brand identity supports King's strategic intent "A Place to Be, A Place to Become." All King's Communication material has the following goals:

- To attract future students
- To show the student experience at King's
- To provide information to current students about events
- To tell the King's story

## **Content**

- All videos must adhere to the King's strategic plan
- Each video must have a clear purpose and target audience
- Videos should be fast paced
- A call to action, or least a URL, should be included at the end of the video

## **Format**

- Videos must be submitted to Communications to be placed on the official King's YouTube channel
- Include a descriptive title and description of the video, such as event name, location and department)
- Follow the King's style guide for font, logo and colour guidelines
- The first frame, referred to as the front card, of every King's video must identify that the video is owned and promoted by King's. Use the King's logo and colours.
- The last image, or "end card," in every King's video identifies the video as a King's promoted asset. The end card can also include key messaging relevant to that specific video such as URLs and social media handles.

## **Music use**

All music used in King's videos must be cleared for use; music used without permission is an infringement of copyright.

## **Media releases**

Ensure that people who appear in the video have signed a media release.

## Word List

As a Canadian institution, King's uses Canadian spelling, which generally follows British conventions; King's also uses [CP Style](https://www.thecanadianpress.com/) (https://www.thecanadianpress.com/).

- 2SLBTQIA+, rather than other acronyms
- Alumna = female singular, alumnae = female plural, alumni = plural, alumnus = male singular; N.B. While “grad” and “graduate” are gender neutral, these terms are currently only used on the day of convocation
- Aramark (not ARAMARK)
- bachelor's (when referring to a degree) – lowercase, with an apostrophe
- Black (capitalized)
- café (with accent)
- centre, for example, “Student Life Centre” but “Student Center” uses the American spelling
- co-curricular but extracurricular; however, Co-Curricular Record
- email (not e-mail)
- enrolment – one “l”
- extracurricular (no hyphen)
- first aid (first-aid kit)
- full-time
- honours – this was changed from “honors” in 2019
- Indigenous (capitalized)
- master's
- official academic record (not capitalized)
- Orientation Week (O-Week)
- panelist – one “l”
- part-time
- post-doctoral (use the hyphen)
- staff (lowercase s)
- username (one word)
- voicemail (not voice mail)
- The Write Place (not THE WRITE PLACE)

## Additional resources

Government of Canada guidelines and resources for inclusive writing:

<https://www.noslangues-ourlangages.gc.ca/en/writing-tips-plus/inclusive-writing-guidelines-resources>