

# Content style guide

Use the NSW Department of Education content style guide for all department websites and publications.

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## Overview

To search this page for a specific term, use **CTRL + F** on a PC or **Command F** on a Mac.

If something isn't covered here, refer to the following:

- [Australian Government Style Manual](#)
- [Macquarie Dictionary Online](#) (subscription required)
- [Macquarie Dictionary grammar guide](#)
- [Macquarie Dictionary punctuation guide](#).

If you have any feedback about this style guide, contact [content\(at\)detcorpcomms.zendesk.com](mailto:content(at)detcorpcomms.zendesk.com).

## Abbreviations and acronyms

When abbreviating the NSW Department of Education, use 'the department' wherever possible. If space is a factor, such as in a tweet or a table heading, use 'DoE'.

Online search is very powerful so don't assume your reader has seen the full explanation of an abbreviation or acronym on a previous page. Spell out and put an acronym in brackets for the first use on each webpage.

It is easier for a reader if you do not constantly refer to the acronym. Use other words like 'the board' for variety.

### When to use acronyms

Consider your audience when deciding whether to spell out an acronym. As long as your audience will understand, you can use the following acronyms on the first reference without first spelling them out.

We've included the full versions here for you to note the capital letters in the full versions, in the event that you need to spell it out for your audience. If you do, always spell out first then include the acronym in parentheses.

Note: Avoid using acronyms in page titles.

- ABN – Australian Business Number
- ACARA – Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority
- ACT – Australian Capital Territory; no need to ever spell out (but spell out Queensland, South Australia, Northern Territory, Tasmania, Victoria, Western Australia except in postal addresses)
- AQF – Australian Qualifications Framework
- ATAR – Australian Tertiary Admission Rank
- BYOD – bring your own device
- BSB – Bank-State-Branch; no need to ever spell out
- ebs4 – the official program name for enrolment business system; no need to ever spell out
- eFPT – Enterprise Financial Planning Tool
- ERN – enrolment and registration number

- GST – goods and services tax
- HSC – Higher School Certificate
- HSIE – human society and its environment
- ICT – information and communications technology
- NAPLAN – National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy
- NSW – New South Wales; no need to ever spell out (but spell out Queensland, South Australia, Northern Territory, Tasmania, Victoria, Western Australia except in postal addresses)
- OASIS – office automation and school information system
- P&C – parents and citizens association
- P&C Federation – Federation of Parents and Citizens Associations of New South Wales; include a link to the [P&C Federation](#) site if your audience won't be familiar with it
- PDF – portable document format; use all caps; no need to ever spell out
- PDHPE – personal development, health and physical education
- SAP – systems applications and products
- STEM – science, technology, engineering and mathematics
- TAFE – Technical and Further Education; no need to ever spell out
- TAS – technology and applied studies
- UAC – Universities Admissions Centre
- URL – uniform resource locator; no need to ever spell out

### When to spell out terms in full

Always spell the following acronyms out on first reference unless you know for certain your audience will know the acronym better than the full name. Note the casing and exceptions to usual rules about acronyms.

- Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG)
- Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA)
- culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD; note: Students are not CALD students.) Students are from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds or communities. Avoid using the acronym.)
- Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation (CESE)
- Council of Australian Governments (COAG)
- covered outdoor learning area (COLA)
- creative and performing arts (CAPA)
- English as an additional language or dialect (EAL/D; note: students are not 'EAL/D'. They are students learning English as an additional language or dialect. This term has replaced ESL)
- equal employment opportunity (EEO)
- full-time equivalent (FTE)
- highly accomplished teacher (HAT)
- Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART)
- individualised learning plan (ILP)
- Industry Training Advisory Bodies (ITABs)
- International Competitions and Assessments for Schools (ICAS)
- Learning Management and Business Reform (LMBR)
- language background other than English (LBOTE; note: the department considers students LBOTE if they or one of their parents or carers speaks a language other than English in their home)
- NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) (note: this replaces the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards NSW as of 1 January 2017)
- opportunity, choice, healing, responsibility, empowerment (OCHRE)
- outside of school hours care (OOSHC)
- Personalised Learning and Support Signposting Tool (PLASST)
- personalised learning plan (PLP)
- Primary Principals' Association (PPA)
- Primary Schools Sports Association (PSSA)
- Professional English Assessment for Teachers (PEAT)
- Record of School Achievement (RoSA)

- registered training organisation (RTO)
- release from face-to-face (RFF)
- Resource Allocation Model (RAM)
- schools for specific purposes (SSPs)
- Secondary Principals' Council (SPC)
- senior executive service (SES)
- student administration and learning management (SALM)
- Student Representative Council (SRC) (note: if referring to SRC in general, use lower case – for example, 'Many schools include a student representative council (SRC) to ensure their student body feels well represented.')
- vocational education and training (VET)
- World War I (WWI)

Convention	Examples
Do not use full stops or spaces in common abbreviations and personal titles.	UNICEF
	Anzac
Use a nonbreaking space between a numeral and a measurement abbreviation.	Mr
	BA
	DipEd
	9 am
	5 pm
	9 km
	4 MB
	830 KB (note: upper case)
	p 4 (for page)
	pp 7-9 (for consecutive pages)
Do not use eg, ie, NB or etc. Spell these out instead.	for example
	that is
	note
	and so on
Use a full stop for less common abbreviations.	fig. (for figure)
	cont. (for continued)
Do not use an apostrophe when pluralising an acronym.	SSPs
	RTOs

Convention	Examples
Do not use acronyms in page headings. Spell them out in full or use an alternative word or phrase.	<p>Understanding project-based learning (not 'Understanding PBL')</p> <p>Frequently asked questions (not 'FAQs')</p> <p>Special religious education (not 'SRE')</p> <p>Special education in ethics (not 'SEE')</p>

## Bold, italics and underlining

Avoid using italics online, especially for large blocks of text. Do not use bold, italics or underlining in headings. Use only the styles provided.

Convention	Examples
<p>Use bold if you must add emphasis to a particular word or phrase within a sentence.</p> <p>To make sure a screen reader will read it correctly, use <code>&lt;strong&gt;</code> tags in HTML. Never use <code>&lt;b&gt;</code> tags.</p>	<p>Select <b>New</b>.</p> <p>Make sure you have <b>your director's approval</b> before you fill in this form.</p>
<p>In general, don't use italics online in large blocks of text. Screen readers treat them inconsistently and dyslexic readers find them difficult to comprehend.</p> <p>Use inverted commas to set apart titles of short publications.</p> <p>See also <a href="#">Publication titles</a>.</p>	<p>For specific guidance about staff dress code, see the department's Code of Conduct.</p> <p>For step-by-step instructions, refer to the 'Adobe Experience Manager how-to guide'.</p> <p>Read <i>Tomorrow When the War Began</i> for homework.</p> <p>For more information, refer to the 'Setting up a customer quick reference guide'.</p> <p>Under the <i>Education Act 1990</i>, children must attend school from the age of 6.</p>



Convention	Examples
You may use italics for scientific names or foreign words used within an English sentence.	Choose low-maintenance plants like the peace lily ( <i>Spathiphyllum Wallisii</i> ) for your classroom.
To make sure a screen reader will pronounce foreign words and phrases correctly, use the appropriate <a href="#">HTML language code</a> .	The <i>kanji</i> in the Japanese texts in the specimen paper are drawn from the list of prescribed characters.
If a foreign word or phrase is commonly used in English, do not italicise it.	In German, words for 'the' include <i>der</i> , <i>die</i> and <i>das</i> .
	In ancient times, Greece ( <i>Hellas</i> ) was made up of city-states.
	We set up an ad hoc committee to deal with the subject.
	If you haven't already RSVP'd, please do so today.
Don't underline or underscore any text.	<u>Underlining makes text look like a link.</u>

Refer to the [Style Manual's guidance on italics](#).

## Capital letters

Keep capital letters to a minimum. Never use all caps.

We've outlined some general guidelines here, with specific examples below.

Use title case (where the first letter of each main word is upper case and the rest are lower case) for proper nouns. Proper nouns include:

- people's names
- full position titles when used with a person's name
- full names of organisations and companies
- full names of conferences and events
- full names of grants and programs
- full names of official policies.

Use lower case for:

- generic and plural forms of names and titles and terms, such as directors and principals
- names of job types, such as director, nurse, manager or teacher
- names of general program types or organisations, such as work health and safety course or human resources company.

### Use lower case for 'department'

As per the [Australian Government Style Manual](#), use lower case when using the generic form of the Department of Education – the department.

The [Government terms section](#) states:

"Use initial capital letters only for the formal names of government departments and agencies. Check the names of departments and agencies in the government online directory.

Don't use capital letters for generic mentions. For example, use:

- 'the agency' instead of 'the Agency'
- 'the authority' instead of 'the Authority'
- 'the commission' instead of 'the Commission'
- 'the department' instead of 'the Department'."

In briefs use 'the Department of Education (the department)' the first time, and then use 'the department' thereafter.

## Organisations, people and places

Convention	Examples
Use title case for organisation names when using the full name.	the Department of Education or the department
Use lower case when referring to them generally.	NSW Government or the government
	the University of Sydney or the university
	the Killara High School P&C Association or the association, your school's P&C association
	NSW Health (not Ministry of Health)
Use title case for members of the department's executive in all cases.	the Secretary of the Department of Education or the Secretary
	the Deputy Secretary, School Operations and Performance or the Deputy Secretary
	Deputy Secretaries
	the Minister for Education or the Minister
Use title case for position titles when referring to a specific title and person, including their unit or directorate, if applicable.	Anne Smith, Principal, Roseville Public School
	Robert Jones, Principal, School Leadership
Use lower case when using titles generally.	Toni Cheng, Director, Educational Leadership
	Jill Smith, A/Principal, Roseville Public School
	Peter Jones, R/Principal, Roseville Public School
	John Brown, Web Adviser, Communication and Engagement
	the principal, executive director, teacher, instructional adviser, acting principal, relieving principal
	The director, educational leadership (DEL) and principal, school leadership (PSL) are responsible for...
	For individual advice, refer to your careers adviser.
Use title case for the names of agencies or areas that have a public face, profile or brand.	Aboriginal Affairs
	Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation (CESE)

Convention	Examples
Use title case for the names of corporate groups and divisions.	<p>School Performance – North</p> <p>Education and Skills Reform</p> <p>People Group</p> <p>School Infrastructure NSW</p>
Use title case for directorates and business units, but lower case for the word 'directorate' and 'business unit' unless part of the official title.	<p>Asset Management</p> <p>Audit directorate</p>
Use lower case for any teams at a lower level than business units.	<p>Communication and Engagement</p> <p>Information Technology Directorate</p> <p>Professional and Ethical Standards</p> <p>Legal Services</p> <p>Procurement Solutions Directorate</p> <p>the content team</p>
Use title case for most government terms and titles.	<p>the Prime Minister</p> <p>the Treasurer</p> <p>the Attorney-General</p> <p>the Cabinet</p> <p>the Treasury</p> <p>the Act/Ordinance</p> <p>the Executive</p> <p>Parliament House, Commonwealth Parliament, the Parliament Library or 'the debate in parliament continued for hours'</p> <p>Australian Government (note: don't use federal, national or commonwealth)</p> <p>NSW Government or the government</p>

Convention	Examples
Use title case when referring to a specific qualification, accreditation or course	Bachelor of Education (Primary)
	Certificate III in Skills for Work and Training
Use lower case when referring to qualifications generally.	Professional Accomplishment
	certificate III or diploma qualifications
	a bachelor's degree
	a master's degree
	a PhD
Use title case for descriptive place names that have taken a semi-official status.	the Central Coast
	North/South Coast
Use lower case for the descriptive part of most geographical names.	the Inner West
	southern Australia
	western Sydney
	south-west Sydney
Use lower case for seasons unless part of a proper noun.	the summer uniform
	winter holidays
	Spring Sports Carnival

Convention	Examples
Note the casing in these specific examples.	<p>Aboriginal affairs ('affairs' is lower case unless referring to the agency. 'Aboriginal' always has an upper case A)</p> <p>access request – lower case unless referring to ERN Access Request</p> <p>adult and community education (ACE)</p> <p>Anzac (not ANZAC)</p> <p>Australian Curriculum</p> <p>bushfire program</p> <p>EDConnect</p> <p>Integration Funding Support</p> <p>memorandum of understanding (not MOU)</p> <p>MyPL</p> <p>My School (for the website, not your own school)</p> <p>non-government schools</p> <p>NSW public schools (unless part of a full title such as NSW Public Schools State Drama Ensemble)</p> <p>OCHRE: opportunity, choice, healing, responsibility, empowerment</p> <p>quality teaching model (not framework)</p> <p>quality teaching rounds</p> <p>School Finder</p> <p>specialist support classes</p> <p>state</p> <p>state office</p>

## Publication and program titles

Convention	Examples
Use title case for the names of policies, procedures, programs (including awards programs), assessments, syllabus and tests when using the full name.	<p>Aboriginal Education Strategy or the strategy</p> <p>National Quality Framework or the framework</p>
Use lower case for subsequent/generic forms.	<p>Assisted School Travel Program or the program</p>
Do not italicise. If you need to set a title apart in text, use inverted commas.	<p>Australian Professional Standards for Teachers</p> <p>Best Start Kindergarten Assessment or the assessment</p> <p>Community Languages Schools Program but community languages schools</p> <p>Connected Communities</p> <p>Department of Education Annual Report 2016 or the annual report</p> <p>Education for a Changing World</p> <p>Elsa Dixon Aboriginal Employment Program</p> <p>Controversial Issues in Schools Policy or the policy</p> <p>Intensive English Centre (IEC) or the centre</p> <p>Intensive English High School (IEHS) or the high school</p> <p>Languages K-10 Framework</p> <p>New Arrivals Program (NAP) or the program</p> <p>Premier's Public Sector Awards, Strengthening the Environment and Communities category</p> <p>Rural and Remote Education – a blueprint for action</p> <p>Saturday School of Community Languages</p> <p>School Excellence Framework</p> <p>Science and Technology K-6 Syllabus or the syllabus</p> <p>All 4 macro skills can be addressed through 'Accessing and responding' under the 'Communicating' objective, if the response is in the target language.</p> <p>Culture cannot be taught discretely. Instead, 'The role of language and culture' explores the interplay between languages and culture, and how one can influence the other.</p> <p>This unit explores the cross-curriculum priority areas of 'Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait islander histories and cultures' and 'Sustainability'.</p>

Convention	Examples
Use title case for official national partnership names.	National Partnership Agreement on Skills Reform
Do not italicise.	Low Socio-Economic Status School Communities National Partnership
	Empowering Local Schools National Partnership
	National Partnership on Literacy and Numeracy
Use title case and italics when referring to titles of long publications such as books, magazines, journals and movies, as well as legislation.	<i>Australian Journal of Education</i>
	<i>Education Act 1990</i>
	<i>Macquarie Dictionary</i>
	<i>Sydney Morning Herald</i>
	<i>Gone with the Wind</i>

See also [Publication titles](#).

## School terminology

Convention	Examples
Use upper case for English and other languages.	Arabic
Use lower case for all other subjects.	English
	French
	Japanese
	creative arts
	economics
	geography
	mathematics
	music
	science and technology
Use lower case for key learning areas (KLAs), but use upper case for their abbreviations.	human society and its environment (HSIE)
	personal development, health and physical education (PDHPE)
	mathematics

Convention	Examples
Use upper case when referring to specific NAPLAN domain titles and references when used in conjunction with a specific score.	National Minimum Standard
Use lower case when referring to literacy and numeracy in general.	Numeracy – Band 6
	The average score on the Reading assessment was 570.
	At the department, we place strong emphasis on the importance of literacy and numeracy.
Use upper case when referring to a specific school year or stage.	Year 1, Year 2, Year 3
See also <a href="#">Stages of learning</a> .	Years 1, 2 and 3
	Years 1 to 3 (Years 1–3 in a table)
	Stage 3
	Stages 4 to 5 (Stages 4–5 in a table)
	Kindergarten
	(note: 'preschool' is always lower case)
Use upper case when referring to specific terms, weeks and semesters.	Term 3 Week 2
	Term 2 2019
	Term 1 Week 4 2019
	Term 1 Day 1
	Semester 1 2020
Use lower case when referring to school development days.	school development day (SDD)

## Website specifics

Convention	Examples
Only capitalise the first letter of a webpage name and page headline unless the name contains a proper noun.	Academic opportunities
	Scholarships and awards
	Ministerial media releases
	Working with children
	Contact us
	About us
	Events calendar



Convention	Examples
When writing instructions for web applications, match the casing to what the user will see on their screen.	Select <b>File</b> then <b>Open</b> .
Use bold to emphasise the key elements in the instructions. In HTML, use <code>&lt;strong&gt;</code> tags, never <code>&lt;b&gt;</code> tags.	Select <b>SAVE</b> .
Use 'select' rather than 'click' as it is more inclusive.	Select <b>Edit</b> .
	Open <b>Asset Finder</b> .
	Hold down <b>Alt</b> and type <b>0150</b> on the numeric keypad.

## Contact details

Use a call-out box at the end of your content to provide additional links or contact details.

Hyperlink the full email address so users can copy and paste if needed. Use **mailto:** instead of **https://** in your link code.

Hyperlink phone numbers so users can dial directly from their smartphones. Use **tel:** instead of **https://** in your link code and don't use spaces.

Start all call-out boxes with a heading that follows the existing heading hierarchy on the page. See below for examples.

Note: never share a personal or direct email address on a public page of the website.

Convention	Examples
If you need to list multiple formats, use a bullet list.	For more information about [topic], you can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>visit <a href="#">the GEL website</a></li> <li>email <a href="mailto:email@det.nsw.edu.au">email@det.nsw.edu.au</a></li> <li>call 1300 55 55 55.</li> </ul> See also <a href="#">Lists</a> .
Be consistent when listing contact details.	Joan Smith Content Adviser
Include the area code – you never know where your audience is viewing your content from.	Learning and Business Systems 02 5550 0550 0405 555 555
See the <a href="#">digital.nsw content style guide</a> for more.	<a href="mailto:email@det.nsw.edu.au">email@det.nsw.edu.au</a>
	(Note: use soft returns between lines by holding down 'Shift' and pressing 'Enter' or 'Return')
	See also <a href="#">Capital letters</a> .

## More information

For further reading and resources, visit:

- [GEL website](#)
- [the digital.nsw content style guide](#)
- [Macquarie Dictionary grammar guide](#)

## Need help?

For help, email [email@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:email@det.nsw.edu.au) or call 1300 55 55 55.

## How can we help?

For more information, contact:

Joan Smith  
Content Adviser  
02 5550 0550  
0405 555 555  
[email@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:email@det.nsw.edu.au)

## Copyright and citations

If you're using any third-party material, you must cite it appropriately. Include the creator's name linked to the source as well as the creative commons (CC) licence linked to the relevant creative commons webpage.

### Referencing style

For most contexts, refer to the Style Manual's [Author–date](#) guide.

### Referencing NESA content

When attributing NESA use this style:

[Title of the document] © NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) for and on behalf of the Crown in right of the State of New South Wales, [Year of publication].

#### Example:

'By the end of Stage 4, students describe the nature of history and archaeology, as well as explain their contribution to an understanding of the past.'

History K–10 Syllabus © NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) for and on behalf of the Crown in right of the State of New South Wales, [Year of publication].

## Copyright and terms of use

All NSW Department of Education resources require a copyright statement.

For a short version with a hyperlink, use the following:

© [State of New South Wales \(Department of Education\)](#), 2023.

When you can't include a hyperlink to the official copyright page, use the following:

© State of New South Wales (Department of Education), 2023.

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## Correspondence guidelines

We use open punctuation for letters, emails and other correspondence. That means we do not use a comma after the salutation (Dear John) or closing (Yours faithfully).

Refer to the correspondence and briefing guidelines from [Ministerial and Executive Services \(staff only\)](#) for more details.

## Dates and times

Convention	Examples
Do not use ordinals or commas when writing out dates, except when used as an introductory element.	22 January 2017  Wednesday 19 July 2017  On 4 July 2017, a group of American expats got together to celebrate Independence Day.
Use DD/MM/YY style for tables.	01/08/17  31/10/16
Use the full name of the day and month where you can.  Use the approved shortened versions with no full stop where space is an issue, such as in a tweet, table heading or event listing.	Shortened forms for days: Mon Tues Wed Thu Fri Sat Sun  Shortened forms for months: Jan Feb Mar Apr May June July Aug Sept Oct Nov Dec
Use an en dash in year ranges.  When both years share the first two digits, shorten the second year to only include the second two digits.	Financial year 2016–17  Literacy and Numeracy Strategy 2017–20
Use an en dash without spaces in simple date ranges	19–21 July 2018
Use an en dash with spaces in ranges that span multiple months.	31 August – 2 September
Use words when you include a range in dates within a sentence.	Our offices are closed from 23 December 2017 to 7 January 2018.  School holidays are from 10 to 21 April.
Do not use apostrophes when referring to decades.	1960s (not 1960's or '60s)

Convention	Examples
Use numerals for times.	9 am
Use a colon between hours and minutes.	9:30 am
Use a non-breaking space between the numerals and 'am' or 'pm'.	noon or 12 pm (not midday) midnight or 12 am
Use words when you include a range in times within a sentence.	Our office is open from 9 am to 4:30 pm.
Use an en dash between times in tables or simple text. Without space if both times are am or pm, and with space if they are different.	Call the office between 9 and 11 am. 9 am – 4:30 pm 9–11 am

## Ellipses

An ellipsis is always three dots ... like that. No spaces between them.

Formatting will always follow one of two styles: in the middle of a sentence or between two sentences.

### In the middle of a sentence

When used in the middle of a sentence, an ellipsis has a space on either side. The first letter after it will be lower case.

Harry, who led a bayonet charge, whose father described him as ‘A fine athlete ... ardent, over eager.’

### Between two sentences

When used between two sentences, include the end punctuation from the first sentence, followed by an ellipsis with spaces on either side. The first letter after the ellipsis will be upper case.

“You will have heard of our work landing under shrapnel fire, attacking with fixed bayonets up the precipitous spurs through the dense undergrowth. ... We were greatly split up.”

## Hyperlinks

In general, don't spell out URLs in the online space. Instead, hyperlink keywords to point the user in the right direction.

Never hyperlink an H2 heading. Avoid hyperlinks on other headings if possible.

Convention	Examples
When listing our main website online, use <a href="https://education.nsw.gov.au">education.nsw.gov.au</a> as the link text.	Use <a href="https://education.nsw.gov.au">education.nsw.gov.au</a> as your default homepage.
Do not include 'www.' or 'https://' in the text that users see.	For a thorough understanding of the way we work, visit <a href="https://education.nsw.gov.au/about-us">education.nsw.gov.au/about-us</a> .
Make sure any punctuation is not in hyperlink style.	
When listing URLs in print, use education.nsw.gov.au.	For more tips, visit education.nsw.gov.au/road-safety-education.
Do not include 'www.' or 'http://'.	[Example in a footer] education.nsw.gov.au
Do not include a final slash for longer URLs.	
Make sure any punctuation is not in hyperlink style.	
Match your link text to the destination. Include keywords from the page you're referring to, if not the full title of the page itself.	Go to <a href="#">Policies and procedures</a> for more details.
If you use a page or document title in your hyperlink, match the casing of the thing you're linking to. Otherwise, hyperlink text should stay in sentence case.	For more information read the <a href="#">cyber safety section</a> of the Technology guide for parents and carers.
Don't use the same text for different destinations.	Visit the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) website to download the <a href="#">continuum of skills</a> .
Never use 'click here' or other generic instructions.	
Use active voice not passive voice.	
Do not select 'open in new window' for hyperlinks to avoid confusion.	
Make sure any sentence punctuation is outside the hyperlink, including commas, full stops and spaces.	
Use 'staff only' within the link text when you link from a publicly available page to a staff-only page or document.	Find more details in the <a href="#">Pay, leave and benefits (staff only)</a> section of the human resources intranet.
	For more information, refer to the <a href="#">Budget Policy (staff only)</a> .
	Download the <a href="#">quick reference guide (staff only)</a> (PDF 160 KB).

Convention	Examples
When linking to internal downloads, include details about the file format and size. Include this information as part of the link to ensure a screen reader reads this before the user chooses to download the file.	Download all <a href="#">schools personas (PDF 1.81 MB)</a> .
Use the file size that comes up in 'document properties'.	<a href="#">Application to enrol in a NSW Government school (PDF 155 KB)</a> .
Do not link to downloads we do not own. Instead, link to the webpage that includes the download link. If the owner of that content updates the download, we would run the risk of linking to outdated information.	<a href="#">Guide to the National Quality Standard (PDF 8.6 MB)</a> .
Do not select 'open in new window' for hyperlinks to avoid confusion.	<a href="#">Template 1: approved provider notice (DOC 60 KB)</a> .
	<a href="#">Template 2: approved parent and carer notice (DOCX 89 KB)</a> .
	(note: KB is upper case)

See also [Linking guidelines](#).

## Hyphens and dashes

Convention	Examples
Several common words do not contain a hyphen.	coordinate
	coursework
	keyword
	interagency
	login (when used as a noun or adjective) but log in (verb)
	prerequisite
	schoolwork
	socioeconomic
	statewide
	textbook
	videoconference, videoconferencing
	wellbeing

Convention	Examples
Use hyphens for compound adjectives when used before the noun they modify.	<p>evidence-based evaluation (but note no hyphen in: the evaluation is evidence based)</p> <p>full-time staff (but note no hyphen in: the staff member is full time)</p> <p>long-term arrangement (but note no hyphen in: the arrangement was long term)</p> <p>up-to-date content (but note no hyphen in: the content is up to date)</p> <p>school-based staff (but note no hyphen in: the staff is school based)</p> <p>post-school activities (but note no hyphen in: the activities are post school)</p> <p>work-life balance</p> <p>Commonwealth-state agreement</p> <p>South-East Asia</p> <p>decision-making (a decision-making process, and the art of decision-making)</p>
Several common terms appear as two separate words.	a lot
Do not hyphenate compound modifiers that include an -ly word.	<p>cross curriculum</p> <p>full stop</p> <p>log in (when used as a verb)</p> <p>play space</p> <p>a finely honed argument</p>
Use en dashes in number spans and ranges, not hyphens.	Examples from a table:
Spell out the appropriate word ('to' or 'and') within a sentence or heading.	<p>pages 31–35</p> <p>2016–18</p> <p>9 am – 5 pm</p> <p>Stage 4–5</p> <p>Examples within a sentence or heading:</p> <p>Read pages 31 to 35 and report back on Monday.</p> <p>Our working hours are between 9 am and 5 pm.</p> <p>This program is available for students in Years 7 to 10.</p>

Convention	Examples
Use en dashes with spaces in headings and titles, not colons or ellipses.	Great Teaching, Inspired Learning – a guide
The word that comes after the en dash should always be lower case, unless it's a proper noun.	Resources – extension courses English – standard
Use en dashes with spaces to signify an abrupt change in a sentence or to set apart a parenthetical element.	Enrolment is available on a quota basis – but not in this case.  Schools must provide required resources – textbooks, phones and computers – as well as supervision.

For more on en dashes and ranges, refer to the [Style Manual's Dashes guide](#).

### How do I insert an en dash?

In most programs, you can find an en dash under 'Insert' then 'Special characters'.

In Microsoft programs, the 'Special characters' menu is under 'Symbols' then 'More symbols'. These programs will also auto-correct a hyphen with a space - like this - as you type. Just make sure you hit the space bar to make it appear.

### Keyboard shortcuts

On a PC, hold down the Alt key and type 0150 on your numeric keypad.

On a Mac, hold down the option key and type a hyphen.

## Inclusive language

Use language that is culturally appropriate and respectful of the diversity of NSW's peoples.

In general, focus on the person not their attributes.

For more detail, refer to the [Style Manual's Inclusive language guide](#) – noting that the consultation for this guide spanned all of Australia.

The department has agreed with the NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG) that we will:

- reference NSW as Aboriginal land
- acknowledge that the department works to serve Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students, staff and communities.

## Traditional place names

When referring to Aboriginal people and places, defer to the most specific group possible.

Use the preferred spelling as agreed with the local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG) or Aboriginal Land Council. For example, the department uses the spelling 'Darug' instead of 'Dharug' after consulting with the local community when we opened the state office at Parramatta.

For more information, refer to the [List of traditional place names](#).



## Outdated language and terminology

Outdated (don't use)	Use this instead
sexual preference	'sexual orientation' or 'diverse sexuality'
lifestyle choice	'sexual orientation' or 'diverse sexuality'
gender transition	'gender affirmation' or 'affirmation'
transition (in relation to gender)	'gender affirmation' or 'affirmation'

## Lists

In general, opt for bulleted (unordered) lists rather than numbered (ordered) lists.

Numbered lists make more sense if you're talking about a step-by-step process.

Convention	Examples
<p>Use a colon to introduce a list within a sentence.</p> <p>Use lower case for the first word of the dot points (except where this is a proper noun) and place a full stop at end of last word in the list.</p>	<p>Greenville High School offers music lessons with the following instruments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• violin</li> <li>• cello</li> <li>• clarinet.</li> </ul>
<p>Use a colon to introduce a list that consists of self-contained sentences.</p> <p>Use a capital at the beginning of each line, and full stop at the end of each sentence.</p>	<p>The inquiry came to two conclusions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students can only participate if they have written consent from their parents or carers.</li> <li>• Parents and carers need specific information before they sign the form.</li> </ul>
<p>Use a colon to introduce a multi-level list that serves as part of a sentence.</p> <p>Use the bullet hierarchy as shown.</p> <p>Do not use a colon within sub-levels.</p> <p>Do not use more than two sub-levels within a list.</p>	<p>We can summarise these features as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• physical characteristics             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ considerable climatic variability                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• unstable heat</li> <li>• irregular rainfall</li> </ul> </li> <li>◦ extensive coral reefs and offshore islands</li> </ul> </li> <li>• ecosystem characteristics             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ many unique species of plants and animals</li> <li>◦ limited and highly variable water resources.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Convention	Examples
Do not use a colon at the end of a subheading that introduces a list.	<b>Awareness week agenda</b>
Do not use a colon to introduce a standalone list, such as in a PowerPoint presentation. Do not use a full stop at the end of a standalone list	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The director will host a community morning tea.</li> <li>• We will launch the awareness week booklet.</li> </ul>
	<b>Furniture and equipment for meeting room</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chairs (25)</li> <li>• Desks (2)</li> <li>• Lectern</li> <li>• Microphone</li> <li>• Overhead projector</li> <li>• Electronic whiteboard</li> </ul>

## Multimedia content (images and videos)

You can't publish information that identifies a person – a student, a parent or carer, or any other individual – without their permission. [Find out more about permission to publish \(staff only\)](#).

### Photos and images

Images should add value and/or provide context to your content. Don't use images in a purely decorative sense. Don't use third-party images without copyright approval and proper attribution (See copyright and citations).

Include a caption and alt text for all images. For screen shots, use the alt text 'Screen shot of step 3' for example. [Learn more about image guidelines](#).

When using an image on your website, use the [image with caption component](#).


Use the in-page editor to upload screen shots used in instructional content.

These rules also apply to charts, diagrams and graphs.

### Image dimensions

Image type	Width (pixels)	Height (pixels)
Full Bleed banner	1280	660
Campaign band	1280	386
50/50 banner (image only)	730	411
Page thumbnail	730	411
Image with caption	730	411
Feature news item/media release/announcement	Uses page thumbnail	n/a
Catalogue (if image not displayed in page content)	uses page thumbnail	n/a
Content teaser (if image not displayed in page content)	uses page thumbnail	n/a

### Example of image with caption on a standard webpage

 High school students on beach with surfboards.

High school students on a beach with surfboards.

## Videos

Videos must be hosted on the department's enterprise video hosting service, Brightcove. Videos also must have captions, an HTML transcript and, if required, an audio description of what is seen.

Include the title of the video and its length before embedding the video.

Don't rely on auto captioning services as they often include errors. You can use these captions as a starting point, but make sure you manually edit them.

Video transcripts should:

- be presented as web content
- clearly indicate who the speaker is
- include relevant non-verbal information in square brackets
- finish with 'End of transcript'.

Depending on where the video is embedded, you have a few options for where to put the transcript:

- If there's a lot of content on the page, add transcript in a Show/Hide component directly beneath the video embed.
- If video is part of a playlist, add transcript as a hidden page (select 'hide from navigation' in properties). The video will need the URL of transcript added to video metadata in Brightcove.
- If the video is embedded as the only content on the page, add the transcript directly beneath the video.
- If the video stands alone without a web page, add the transcript as a hidden page (select 'hide from navigation' in properties). Provide a link to the transcript page directly beneath the video.

When embedding a video in a webpage, follow this format:

### [Heading 2]Video – video title in sentence case (duration min:sec)

[embed video with Brightcove code]

[Heading 2]Video transcript

[Heading 3]First speaker's name

[Paragraph text]First speaker's text

[Heading 3]Second speaker's name

[Paragraph text]Second speaker's text

Include any on-screen text that's critical for understanding in [square brackets like this]. At the end, include [end of transcript]

### See also:

- [Copyright and citations](#)
- [Video guidelines](#)
- [Creating accessible videos.html](#)

### Transcript example

- See this page for an acceptable transcript format – [Transcript formatting example page](#)

## Numbers

Convention	Examples
Use words for zero and one. Use numerals for 2 and above. Refer to the Style Manual's <a href="#">Choosing numerals or words</a> for more examples, but note some Education-specific exceptions here.	Section 1 covers the rules.
To avoid starting a sentence with a numeral, rephrase the sentence.	Year 1 Term 1 Week 1  The evaluation requires one-on-one interviews with all parties.  Hundreds of people showed up to the banquet.  More than 500 people showed up to the banquet.
Use numerals for measurements.	7 kilometres
Spell out the measurement when it's in a sentence. Use a space between the numeral and measurement when it's spelled out.	45.9 seconds 7 km (in a table)
Abbreviate the measurement in tables. Use a non-breaking space between numerals and the symbol.	45.9 s (in a table)
Use commas, not spaces, for 1,000 and above.	There were 1,500 respondents to the survey.  More than 10,000 people attended.
Spell out 'million', 'billion' and other large numbers when referring to round numbers.	You can earn from 500 to 5 million dollars.
You can abbreviate in less formal communication such as social media.	The house cost \$5.3 million.  10K = 10,000  1M = 1 million
Spell out simple fractions and use hyphens.	One-half of the pies are vegetarian.
Express a mixed fraction in figures unless it is the first word of a sentence.	We require a two-thirds majority...  We expect a 5.5% wage increase.  Five and one-half per cent was the maximum...
Use the % symbol when referring to percentages.	Nearly 50% of our staff responded.

Convention	Examples
<p>Percentages can represent two different things:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>absolute change in value – for example, 10% changing to 13% is a 3 percentage point change</li> <li>relative change in value – for example, 10% changing to 13% is a 30% increase.</li> </ul> <p>To clarify when expressing the change between two percentage values, express the value before and after the change, as well as the difference you intend to highlight.</p>	<p>The absence rate decreased from 10% to 5% – a drop of 5 percentage points.</p>
<p>Use numerals to express precise mathematical relationships.</p>	<p>21 + 32 = 53</p>
<p>Leave spaces between numerals and symbols, except with ratio and percentages or when a plus or minus sign indicates a positive or negative value.</p>	<p>15 / 3 = 5</p> <p>4:1</p> <p>25%</p> <p>-2</p> <p>+2</p>
<p>Use roman numerals if part of the established name</p>	<p>World War II</p> <p>Cleopatra VII, Darius III, Henry VIII,</p>

See also [Dates and times](#).

## Page titles

### Page title – Front loading

Place the most descriptive/important keyword in your title as close to the front of your page title as possible. Example: "Algebra – why it is so important".

### Page title – Length

Keep your webpage titles under 65 characters (including spaces). While some input fields may allow longer titles we encourage all staff to aim for between 50-60 characters. 50-60 characters is ideal for Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) (i.e. Google will truncate a long title in search result listings at around 50-60 characters). If you need more context for your title, please add it to your metadescription.

### Page title – Uniqueness

Each page title on the DoE website should be unique. Please refrain from naming your page with a title that might already be used. For example, naming your page "News" will not be very helpful, as we have many pages already named "News". A better title might be "News – (name of your web area)" or "News | (name of your web area)".

## Publication titles

Convention	Examples
<p>Use title case and italics when referring to titles of long publications such as books, magazines, journals and movies, as well as legislation.</p> <p>This means the first letter of each major word is capitalised.</p>	<p><i>Australian Journal of Education</i></p> <p><i>Education Act 1990</i></p> <p><i>Macquarie Dictionary</i></p> <p><i>Style Manual: for authors, editors and printers</i></p> <p><i>Sydney Morning Herald</i></p> <p><i>Starry Night</i></p> <p><i>Gone with the Wind</i></p>
<p>Use title case but no italics for official department policies and reports.</p> <p>This means the first letter of each major word is capitalised.</p>	<p>Code of Conduct</p> <p>Performance Management and Development Policy</p> <p>Annual Report 2020</p>
<p>Use sentence case for titles of short publications such as articles, videos, fact sheets, quick reference guides, procedure documents and form names.</p> <p>This means only the first letter is capitalised. Proper nouns always retain their initial capitals.</p>	<p>Distance education enrolment procedures</p> <p>Getting ready for school</p> <p>Social media policy implementation procedures</p> <p>NSW budget for education 2016-2017</p> <p>Request for formal exemption</p>
<p>Use single quotation marks or inverted commas when using a short publication title within a sentence, where required for clarity.</p>	<p>For more information, refer to the 'Setting up a customer quick reference guide'.</p> <p>The school assembly will sing 'I Still Call Australia Home'.</p>

See also [Capital letters](#).

## Quotation marks

Convention	Examples
Use single quotation marks to set apart titles of short publications, phrases or words within a sentence.	For more information, refer to the 'Setting up a customer quick reference guide'.
Set your final full stop or other punctuation mark outside the quotation mark.	'People with disability' is the preferred term.
Do not use quotation marks for emphasis.	Use 'vision impaired' not 'blind'.
Use single quotation marks to set apart quotes from written publications.	The report recommends turning teacher education 'upside down' by implementing 'programs that are fully grounded in clinical practice and interwoven with academic content and professional courses'.
Set your final full stop or other punctuation mark outside the quotation mark for partial quotes, but inside the quotation mark for full sentences.	The report notes, 'Better evidence of the effectiveness of initial teacher education in the Australian context is needed to inform innovative program design and delivery.'
Use double quotation marks for quotes within quotes.	'Document 10 describes the "disorganised retreat" of a first wave of lightly armed soldiers.'
Use double quotation marks for direct speech.	I was having a kick with them and I said to mum, "These kids have got some talent. They need to be out playing soccer in the community."

Use a block quote for quotes longer than 30 words.

A report by the Australian Council for Education Research (2014) states:

There is now an urgent challenge to promote high quality teaching in every Australian classroom, to ensure that every teacher is doing what the best teachers already do, and to raise the status of teaching as an advanced, knowledge-based profession. Initial teacher education has a central and crucial role to play in addressing this challenge.

## Schools

In general usage, say 'public school' as the first preference or 'government school' to vary your vocabulary. Do not use 'state school'.

If you do have to mention private schools, say 'private school' or 'non-government school'.

Note: the private school sector is divided into Catholic and independent schools (lower case). To avoid confusion, stick to 'private school' or 'non-government school' as there are some Catholic independent schools.

Check the spelling of the school on the [School Finder](#).

Convention	Examples
Use upper case for names of primary schools and refer to them as 'Public School'.	Bundeena Public School (note: use this style even though the school may be listed as Bundeena Primary School)
Use upper case for names of secondary schools and refer to them as 'High School'.	South Sydney High School
Use upper case for the full title of a school for specific purposes (SSPs; NEVER 'special').	Alexandria Park Community School
Use lower case when referring to SSPs in general. The same rule applies for environmental education centres, distance education centres and other specialty schools.	Coffs Harbour Learning Centre
	Coffs Harbour Senior College
	Dubbo School of Distance Education
	Hunter School of Performing Arts
	John Hunter Hospital School
	Southern Cross Distance Education Centre
	The Beach School
	Westfields Sports High School
	boarding school
Differentiate campuses of the same college with a comma, using lower case for the campus delineation unless it includes a proper noun.	Callaghan College, Jesmond campus (note: lower case campus)
	Callaghan College, Waratah technology campus
	Sydney Secondary College, Blackwattle Bay campus
Note: some schools have an additional descriptive word that differentiates them from another school.	Matraville Soldiers Settlement Public School is different from Matraville Public School

## Spelling and word choice

The [Macquarie Dictionary](#) is our definitive guide. When the dictionary presents two options, use the first. We've called out some specific examples here because they tend to cause confusion.

For spelling and casing of computer or technical terms that aren't specified here, refer to the [Computer Hope dictionary](#). Note that some of the terms listed there use American spelling, so correct these to Australian where possible.

### A

**Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples:** Use this term, never 'Indigenous', 'First Nations', 'Aborigine' or 'ATSI'.

**additional learning needs:** not 'special needs'

**adviser:** not 'advisor'



**affect:** means to influence or cause a change (Her cold affected her singing.)

**a lot:** two words

**alternate:** means to take turns (Day and night alternate.)

**alternative:** means a different choice (We'll find you an alternative date for the workshop.)

**among:** not amongst

**ampersand:** don't use unless it is part of a name (Killara High School P&C Association)

**apostrophes:** don't use in official place names (Coffs Harbour, Kings Cross) or for boys' and girls' schools (Canterbury Girls High) or in any NSW public school name (Taverners Hill Public School). But when used in a sentence, examples like 'boys' sports' and 'girls' education' take a possessive apostrophe.

Possessive apostrophes: if you pronounce the 's then add an s after the apostrophe. If you don't, just use the apostrophe (the Smiths' car, the Joneses' new house, Jesus's disciples).

**art form:** 2 words

**artmaking:** one word

**Australian:** use to refer to all cultural, linguistic and religious backgrounds. Mention heritage, cultural or other national identity only if it's necessary. Consult the Style Manual on how to refer to [nationalities, peoples and places outside of Australia](#).

## B

**bring your own device (BYOD):** lower case unless using the acronym

**bushfire:** one word

## C

**co-curricular:** use instead of 'extra-curricular' (Our school offers a range of co-curricular activities.)

**commas:** do not use the Oxford comma, or final serial comma, unless you need to clarify a complex list. (The shop sells apples, bananas and potatoes. Our directorates include Communication and Engagement, Audit, and Health and Safety.)

**complementary:** means completing (The complementary strategies will satisfy all stakeholders.)

**complimentary:** means either flattering or free (The Attorney-General made some complimentary remarks. We'll be issuing 50 complimentary tickets.)

**COVID-19:** ensure all references use the full name in uppercase as it's an acronym and there are other coronaviruses in the world. For print uses, link to [education.nsw.gov.au/covid-19](https://education.nsw.gov.au/covid-19).

## D

**Darug:** the land on which the Parramatta state office stands (not Dharug)

**data:** use data as a singular noun (This data indicates that NSW Government schools are highly effective.)

**day care:** two words

**degrees:** a bachelor's degree, a master's degree, a PhD

**discreet:** means circumspect or restrained (Be discreet in your treatment of a contentious issue.)

**discrete:** means distinct or separate (The work is in two discrete parts.)

**dos and don'ts:** note the apostrophe

## E

**ebook:** no hyphen

**either/neither:** either takes or, neither takes nor

**effect:** a verb – to bring about. (He effected a return to profit.) Also used as noun, meaning a result, a consequence (The effect of heat).

**e-learning:** note the hyphen

**Elder:** Aboriginal Elder

**email:** no hyphen

**English as an additional language or dialect (EAL/D);** do not use ESL

**enquiry:** use inquiry

**e-safety:** note the hyphen

**exclamation marks:** don't use them. Exclamation marks aren't part of government voice. Exclamation marks are only acceptable when used in informal content such as social media. For more details, refer to the [Style Manual](#).

**extra-curricular:** use 'co-curricular' instead (Our school offers a range of co-curricular activities.)

**ezine:** no hyphen

## F

**fewer than:** use with nouns that can be counted (fewer than 50 students scored...; see also 'less than')

## G

**GIF:** upper case

**Gigabytes:** GB

**go live:** verb (When you're ready for your site to go live, follow the process.)

**go-live:** noun or adjective (Before go-live, make sure you've reviewed the content guidelines. As part of the go-live process, the team will conduct a verification scan.)

Great Teaching, Inspired Learning

## H

**headings and subheadings:** use an initial capital and then lower case except for proper nouns

**homepage:** one word

## I

**inclusive language:** take a 'people first' approach to ensure your language is inclusive.

**Indigenous:** use Aboriginal as an adjective and noun instead of Indigenous when referring to NSW residents. Indigenous is a common term that you may use to refer to a business entity or business function.

**inquiry:** means an investigation (The department is conducting an inquiry into the incident.) or question (Thank you for your inquiry.)

**internet:** lower case

**interschool:** one word

**iPad:** follow Apple's style for similar devices

## J

**JPG:** upper case (no need to spell out)

## L

**learning from home:** use this term in all instances (this is different from '[distance education](#)' and '[remote learning](#)'; avoid 'online learning' as not all students use the internet)

**less than:** use with mass nouns that are continuous and can't be counted (teachers spend less than half their week...; see also 'fewer than')

**licence:** noun (His driver's licence was suspended.)

**license:** verb (The service is licensed for up to 29 children.)

**live stream:** two words

**login** (noun or adjective); **log in** (verb)

## M

**more than:** use instead of 'over' unless you're referring to something happening over time (more than 50 per cent of students; over the past 10 years more than 60 schools...)

## O

**OK:** not 'okay' and definitely not 'ok'.

**online:** one word

**over:** use 'more than' unless you're referring to something happening over time (see also 'more than')

## P

**parents and carers:** the preferred term for inclusion (not caregivers)

**PDF:** upper case (no need to spell out)

**pedagogy:** avoid in external communication – means the function, work or art of a teacher – teaching practice covers this term.

**per cent:** use the % symbol with a numeral (The survey had a 30% take-up rate. We saw an increase of 5 percentage points.)

**percentage:** one word

**portal:** lower case (staff portal, student portal, parent portal)

**practice:** noun (It will take staff some time to reach best practice. He opened a medical practice.)

**practise:** verb (I want to practise my tennis serve.)

**program:** don't use 'programme' unless it's part of an official name.

**pronouns:** use the pronouns a person specifies to refer to them. If the person hasn't specified a pronoun, use [gender-neutral terms](#), such as 'you' or 'they'.

**punctuation:** use minimal punctuation in letters and emails (no comma after greetings such as 'Dear colleagues' or 'Kind regards').

## S

**screen shot:** 2 words; don't use 'screen grab'

**sound bite:** not sound byte

**spacing:** only one space after a full stop, not two

**special needs:** use 'additional learning needs' instead

**stakeholders:** try to use descriptive words when you're talking about one or two different groups of people

**standalone:** one word

**state school:** don't use; say public or government school

**students from refugee backgrounds:** use instead of 'refugee students'

**students from (cultural/ethnic) background:** e.g. students from Syrian background; use instead of 'Syrian students'

**subheading:** one word

## T

**titles:** Mr, Mrs, Ms, Miss, Dr (note: many teachers/educators/bureaucrats have PhDs, so refer to them as Dr) For children under 18, use their first name.

**towards:** use this instead of 'toward' as the latter is American spelling

## U

**under way:** 2 words (The project is under way.)

**URL:** upper case (no need to spell out)

## V

**videoconference:** one word

## W

**warm up:** verb (Make sure you warm up first.)

**warm-up:** noun or adjective (Let's do vocal warm-ups. This is a warm-up game.)

web

webpage

website

web 2.0

world wide web

**whilst:** don't use – while is more approachable and, therefore, most appropriate

wi-fi

X

Xmas: don't use – use Christmas

Z

-ze endings: use -se, for example emphasise, realise; but capsize

Stages of learning

Try to avoid using stages of learning. If you know the students are in Year 2, say Year 2 not Stage 1. Year 5 and 6 is also more descriptive than Stage 3.

If you need to refer to the stage because an education program is specific to the (generally) 2 years of learning denoted by the stage, then stage is upper case. Do not abbreviate. For example: A study of history and geography is mandatory in Stages 4 and 5.

Statistics

Convention	Examples
Statistical significance is a specific concept that indicates that a difference between two numbers, or a relationship between two characteristics, has been tested using a statistical technique.	Brown eyes have a significant effect on student achievement (p=.001).
Where possible, justify all claims of statistical significance by reporting the relevant p-value in parentheses.	A substantial number of rural and remote schools report having trouble finding teaching staff.
Avoid using the word 'significant' unless you are specifically referring to statistical significance.	
Where possible, report on the size of effects as well as their statistical significance. Report the effect size (d), odds-ratio, or regression coefficient, and/or an intuitive explanation of the results.	The effect size of brown eyes is 0.550. This means that students with brown eyes are predicted to score 20 NAPLAN points above students with blue eyes
When discussing general relationships between variables, justify all claims by reporting either the correlation or the R2 value. Where possible, interpret this for the reader.	The correlation was .5, meaning that 25% of the variation in performance is explained by variation in eye colour.
For primary analysis, include a table of descriptive statistics (including sample size, mean/standard deviation, and sample proportions for the key variables), either where you are discussing the data and method, or in the appendix.	A quasi-experimental study of 2,000 Australian students (Bezzina 2010) found that brown eyes were significantly related to student performance.
In decimals, if the value you are reporting has the potential to exceed 1.0, then use a leading zero. If the value does not have the potential to exceed 1.0 (for example correlations or p-values), then do not report the leading zero.	The effect size of brown eyes is 0.55. The p-value is .01.

Convention	Examples
<p>Ensure all estimates are reported to the same number of decimal places and are aligned. Generally this means three decimal places, but you may need to report a greater or lesser amount of detail depending on your variables.</p> <p>Only report as much detail as is necessary — make the tables as simple as possible.</p>	Find examples of tables in the next section.
<p>If you are reporting on estimates with standard errors, include confidence intervals in all graphs, and report either the confidence interval or the standard error in all tables (either in a separate column or in parentheses).</p> <p>Avoid discussing confidence intervals or standard errors in the main body. Instead, discuss magnitude and statistical significance of coefficients.</p>	Find examples of tables in the next section.

For literature reviews, mention the characteristics of the study's sample if it may affect the reader's interpretation of the results. These characteristics might include:

- country
- time period
- sample size (particularly if very large or less than 100)
- scholastic year or school type examined
- type of method (for example randomised controlled trial, quasi-experimental design, pre-post comparison).

## Statistics in tables

Use the following examples to help you present results and descriptive statistics.

Example of a table showing results

Variable	Coefficient	SE	p
Brown eyes	0.550	0.068	.001
SES	0.414	0.011	<.001
Brown hair	0.012	0.049	.510
R <sup>2</sup>	.249		
n	14,645		

Example of a table (alternative) showing results

Variable	Coefficient (SE)
Brown eyes	0.550 (0.068) ***
SES	0.414 (0.011) ***
Brown hair	0.012 (0.049)
R <sup>2</sup>	.249

Variable	Coefficient (SE)
n	14,645

Note: \*p<.10; \*\*p<.05; \*\*\*p<.01

Example of a table showing descriptive statistics

Variable	Categories	n	%
Sector	Government	217	61.47
Sector	Catholic	73	20.68
Sector	Independent	63	17.85
Location	Metropolitan	241	68.27
Location	Not metropolitan	112	31.73

Example of a table showing descriptive statistics

Variable	Categories	Mean	SD
Size	Continuous	923	425
SES	Continuous (standardised)	0	1
Academic achievement	Continuous (standardised)	0	1

### Unique cases for news articles in print and online

When writing a press release or blog post, follow this style.

Convention	Examples
Use present tense and active voice for headlines.	Secretary announces Education Week theme
Keep headlines to no more than 65 characters. Include keywords.	New roles support student learning
Use a full sentence for summary text or lead paragraph.	A new team of 50 Literacy and Numeracy Strategy Advisers will start work in NSW public schools in Term 2.
Keep summary text to 150 characters including spaces, so you can use it as the teaser text and metadescription as well.	
Do not repeat the summary text in the main body of the article.	

Convention	Examples
Use double quotation marks to set apart quotes from direct speech.	"We want to ensure growing neighbourhoods have the schools that families will need into the future," Ms Mitchell said.
Use past tense for quotes.	
Set your final full stop or other punctuation mark outside the quotation mark for partial quotes, but inside the quotation mark for full sentences.	Mr Magriplis noted that the department would "consult with the community about other aspects that will lay foundations for the identity and culture of the school".
Use the speaker's full name and title on first reference.	First reference: Cherrybrook Technology High School maths teacher Eddie Woo
Use surname and salutation on subsequent references for adults. If unsure whether someone prefers 'Ms', 'Mrs' or other, ask them.	Second reference: Mr Woo
Use first name for children under 18 years old.	First reference: Ada Fang from Sydney Girls High School Second reference: Ada
Use this specific wording for members of the Secretary and Ministers.	Formal: Secretary of the NSW Department of Education, Georgina Harrison, said...
Use the full, formal title for uses outside the department's own channels.	Less formal: Secretary Georgina Harrison Shorthand: the Secretary
Use the slightly less formal title for the department's own website.	Formal: Minister for Education and Early Learning, Jo Bloggs Less formal: Education and Early Learning Minister Jo Bloggs Shorthand: the Minister
Use the shorthand for subsequent references when it's clear who you're referring to.	

See also [News guidelines](#).

## Unique cases for print only

Refer to the [Australian Government Style Manual](#). Where the department's style differs or requires further clarification, we've noted it here. For all other cases, print follows the same conventions set out above.

### Italics

Only use italics for the full name of an Act (the *Education Act 1990*). Do not italicise shortened versions, acronyms or regulations.

Use italics to set apart long publication titles, and inverted commas to set apart short publication titles.

### Hyperlinks

Where URLs appear in text, style them as normal text. Shorten as much as possible, excluding the http:// or www. unless the link won't work without them. Use a bit.ly link or similar shortener if you need to shorten a particularly long link.

If a hyperlink appears as part of a full sentence, include the ending punctuation after it, but make sure the punctuation isn't in hyperlink style.

For a thorough understanding of the way we work, visit [education.nsw.gov.au/about-us](https://education.nsw.gov.au/about-us).



## Numbers

Use words for zero and one. Use numerals for 2 and above. Do not start a sentence with a numeral.

Use numerals for a related series of numbers, regardless of the size of those numbers.

The collection includes 47 paintings by 16 artists, 7 of whom were born in Australia, 1 in Kenya and 8 in China.

Use the % symbol for all percentages including in charts and tables. However, spell out 'percentage point' if that's what you're referring to.

Avoid ending a sentence with a numeral if your publication uses footnotes.

Refer to the Style Manual's [Choosing numerals or words](#) for more examples.

## Vanity URLs

Vanity URLs is the name for a shortened URL or friendly URL.

Where there is a strong argument for doing so, long URLs can be shortened.

The vanity URL simply redirects to the actual (persistent) URL. The original URL is still the place where the page actually lives.

Where a URL is going to appear in printed materials (i.e. factsheets, brochures, literature, etc.) a vanity URL might look better in print and may be easier to remember.

Example:

Original (persistent) URL – <https://education.nsw.gov.au/inside-the-department/great-place-to-work>

Shortened (vanity) URL – [education.nsw.gov.au/great-place-to-work](https://education.nsw.gov.au/great-place-to-work)

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This information is current as at "17/7/2023 8:44:39 pm", Australian Eastern Time. For the most up-to-date information, go to <https://education.nsw.gov.au/about-us/how-we-communicate/content-style-guide>

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