

Writing style guide

for communicating with students

Overview

At Federation University Australia (FedUni) we aim to be accessible, inclusive and supportive in everything we do. This includes our communications with students, staff and other stakeholders.

We all have our preferred method and style of writing. The way we write – our preferences and habits – may come from what we learned in school, the standard practices in other workplaces or organisations, or our own ideas of how to best get our message across.

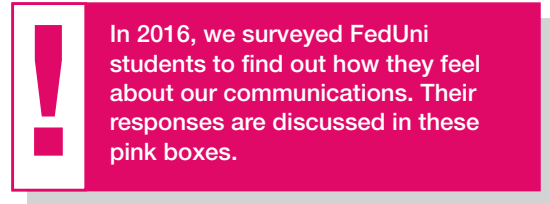
Every day, FedUni sends hundreds of messages to students by email, SMS, letter, social media channels, newsletters or on our website. Just as our brand guidelines makes sure that all our visual communications are consistent, this writing style guide is designed to help us craft the content of those messages consistently.

This guide offers suggestions, explanations, practical tips and ‘before and after’ examples of writing, which are designed to help you engage your readers and communicate information to them effectively.

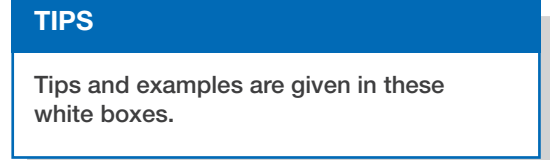
In some cases, the recommendations in this guide may be different to your preferred style. We encourage you to read and discuss them with your colleagues to help everyone put these suggestions into practice. If we can communicate all our messages with a consistent and unified voice, everyone will benefit.

If you need guidance with the tone, the language or the feel of your message, or simply would like someone to cast an eye over what you have prepared, we have support available to you. Contact our Communications Officer via studentcomms.hq@federation.edu.au who can provide you with feedback and advice.

This writing style guide should be used with our brand guidelines and document templates.



In 2016, we surveyed FedUni students to find out how they feel about our communications. Their responses are discussed in these pink boxes.



TIPS

Tips and examples are given in these white boxes.



POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

Official FedUni policies and guidelines are discussed in these blue boxes.

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SECTION 1

Methods of communication

There are many ways to communicate information. Choose the method that best suits your purpose and audience.

Email

Email is ideal for communicating with specific groups of students or staff, when no urgent answer or action is required.

Make sure you are only emailing the people who need this particular information. If people get too many irrelevant emails they switch off and pay less attention. If they usually receive focused and specific messages that are directed to them, they will be more likely to open and read the emails they receive from FedUni.

You should also check that you are authorised to communicate this information, particularly if it relates to academic progress or expresses an opinion on behalf of FedUni.

Subject line

- Short and direct (aim for 50 characters or fewer).
- Clearly introduce the topic of the email.
- Be engaging and interesting, without being obscure.
- Give the reader a reason to open the email and read more.

✓	Surprised by your ATAR? Come to FedUni Info Day.
✗	FedUni Info Day Wed 14 Dec

Content

- Discuss one idea or event.
- Target a specific group.
- Put the call to action at the top.
- Include all relevant information.

✓	Email Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care students about placement opportunities
✗	Email all students at all locations about changes to the Wimmera Campus library opening hours


Links, attachments and signatures

- Include hyperlinks for additional or background information.
- Hyperlink words or phrases that explain what the reader will find when they click the link.

✓	Find out more about our counselling service.
✓	Read our latest newsletter.
✗	Click here.

- If a link will automatically download a document, make that clear and state the file size.


✓	Download a Cover Sheet (pdf, 23kb)
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83 per cent of students prefer to receive communications from FedUni by email.

ONE MESSAGE AT A TIME

If you have several important pieces of information, send a separate email for each one.



Many students will not read an email from FedUni if the subject line does not interest them.

- Attachments should be as small as possible, and only be included if they are directly relevant.
- Use your official FedUni email signature with our logo and your full contact details, in line with the brand guidelines.
- Avoid generic signatures that only list a job title, department or area.

Tone

- Professional, while still being relaxed and friendly.
- Not overly casual or grammatically incorrect.
- No nicknames, slang or emoticons.

✓	Thanks for getting in touch about our Bachelor of Information Technology. You'll receive our information package in the mail soon.
✗	It is with much appreciation that we received your application for the ...
✗	Awesome! You're going to love the BIT. Info in the mail.

Letters

Automated or official letters are usually used for more serious or important messages than email. However, this doesn't mean they have to be written in an overly formal tone. In fact, it's even more important that serious messages are conveyed in a positive and supportive way.

Content

- Include a clear subject at the start of the letter, perhaps in bold type to make it stand out.
- Put the call to action or specific instructions at the top.
- Give detailed but concise information or instructions.
- Explain how they can find more information or support.
- Try to keep it to a single page.

Tone

- More formal than email, but still friendly.

! Students would like more information included within the communication. It is not always clear to them where to go or who to contact for more information.

OUR POLICY

Letters should always use the official letter template, which has the FedUni logo and contact details, and an official signature.

Social media

Social media is a very powerful – and public – form of communication. Think before you post.

Content

- A balance of entertaining and informative posts is good.
- Always be relevant.
- Separate your personal opinions from your professional role.
- Only comment on issues within your area of expertise.
- Don't rely solely on social media to communicate urgent or important messages.

Tone

- Use an informal, friendly and conversational voice.
- Be polite.

OUR POLICY

At FedUni we encourage the use of social media. To ensure best-practice and legal compliance, staff are required to read the Social Media Policy, the Social Media Procedure and the Social Media Manual. Go to www.federation.edu.au/socialmedia.

Queries should be forwarded to the Social Media team.

SMS

SMS, or text messages, are very good for sending essential or urgent messages, for example, a room change or a cancelled class.

Content

- Be as direct and concise as possible.
- Don't give any additional or background information.
- Be clear that this is an official message from FedUni.
- Follow up with an email or other form of communication, so that people who don't have a mobile phone, or have difficulties using them, are not disadvantaged.

OUR POLICY

Use the FedUni SMS template, which includes the student's first name and OptOut wording.

Hi Eleanor, do you need assistance completing your FedUni application? Reply 'YES' to request a callback from our Customer Service Team. To OptOut of application assistance SMS reply 'STOP'.

The OptOut text always includes the subject of the SMS, so that students understand they aren't opting out of all FedUni text messages.

Out of office message

If you will be out of contact for more than two days, it is expected that you add an 'out of office' message to both your voicemail and email.

This must include your expected date of return, and where possible an alternate contact.

SAMPLE OUT OF OFFICE

I am currently on leave until 3 May 2017.

- If you are enquiring about special consideration, please contact [Student HQ](#).
- If you wish to apply for a program, please lodge an application via our [online applications system](#).

I will respond to all other enquiries upon my return.

Newsletters

Newsletters, whether printed or digital, are a great way to build a community and connect with people on a very personal level. They are often more informal than other forms of communication, and might be created from content and images supplied by a range of different people. This can be wonderful, as it can lead to lively and interesting content, but it is important to make sure that mistakes don't slip through to the finished product.

Content

- Nominate someone to be responsible for the content and ensure that it is appropriate and relevant to the target audience.
- Be entertaining and informal, but also professional.
- Aim for a balance of fun and facts to make it more likely that your newsletter will be read from start to finish.
- You can use jargon and/or abbreviations, but be careful not to confuse or alienate new members of your audience.
- Carefully check and proofread all content before sending it out.
- Ask for feedback and contributions, and acknowledge that content if you use it.
- Have a regular schedule (e.g. the first week of the month, quarterly).

Layout and images

- If appropriate, use the FedUni newsletter template, which has designated fonts and colours.
- Don't cram too much text on each page. If your audience is overwhelmed by the amount of information on the page they might not read any of it, which means all your hard work has been wasted.
- Use clear headings and subheadings. This will help readers navigate through the newsletter and find the information they need.
- Allow plenty of white space and don't go too crazy with different fonts and colours.
- One good image is more eye-catching and effective than several small ones. Make sure you are using good quality images at the appropriate resolution.
- Always caption pictures, especially when they have people in them (making sure to spell their names correctly).

Website

Our website is a rich source of information for current staff and students. Content on the site should help people find the information they need and complete tasks as easily as possible.

The site is also an important marketing tool, so it should always be positive, optimistic and friendly.

INDEPENDENT PROOFREAD

Ask someone else to do a final proofread of your newsletter. Because you'll have already seen your newsletter text so often, it will be harder for you to see mistakes.

RESOLUTION OF IMAGES

Images with too low a resolution look blurry or pixelated. Aim for 72 dots per inch (dpi) for digital newsletters and 300 dpi for print. Don't forget that enlarging an image reduces its resolution.

OUR POLICY

The content on our website is managed, created and maintained by site owners and content coordinators in each school, portfolio and administrative unit. The corporate web team provides them with training and support, and our [Web Publishing Guidelines](#) outline their responsibilities, and our policies and processes.

Guidelines and policies can be found at federation.edu.au (search for 'website guidelines').



SECTION 2

Writing an effective message

When you have a message to communicate – especially if it's an important one – it's tempting to leap straight into the writing. Slowing down a little and thinking before you write will make the actual writing easier.

Plan

Who is your audience?

Who are you writing for? Make sure you know who your target audience is before you start writing. This will help you choose the right method to use and will focus your energies on communicating to them in a very direct and specific way.

What's in it for them?

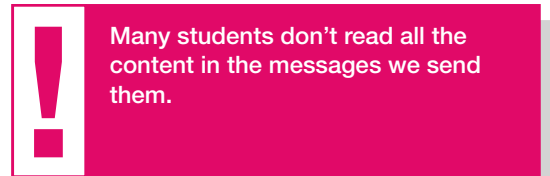
When you are very involved or close to a topic, it's tempting to tell your audience what you think they should know, rather than what they actually want to know. A good way to avoid this is to focus on the benefits to your audience, instead of the features that you are proud of, have worked hard on, or think they should appreciate.

Ask 'So what? Why would they care?' When you can confidently answer that question, you have found an effective approach that will engage and interest the reader.

What do you want them to do or understand?

Once you have the audience's attention it's time to be very clear about what you want or need them to do. This is your purpose or your 'call to action'.

Sometimes this information is buried at the bottom of the message but it's much better to put it right up the top. Your readers will appreciate the clarity of that information and they are also much less likely to miss it.



FOCUS ON THE BENEFITS

The headline on the Apple's advertising campaign for the very first iPod – an extraordinary piece of new technology – was '1,000 songs in your pocket'. Rather than explain the iPod's features, they simply told the audience how it would benefit them.

That's why the course finder on our website says 'Let's find your dream career'. Instead of talking about the wide range of courses FedUni offers, the focus is on helping visitors to our website achieve their goals.

Draft

Start by writing a rough draft of your message. Concentrate on the message you need to communicate and think about the best way to make it relevant and interesting to your target audience.

Don't worry too much about getting the words exactly right to start with. If you find it hard to get going, jot down the main ideas as bullet points first and then turn them into sentences later.

Put the important information up the top, then fill in the details below. Background information or links to more information can be inserted at the end.

A useful tactic for writing long messages is to write the subheadings first, making sure they are structured logically, and then fill in the sentences and paragraphs underneath each one.

Less is more

Limit your message to one single idea or piece of information. Use the tips in [Section 3: Writing toolkit](#) to shorten your message by cutting out unnecessary words or phrases and choosing simple words over complex ones.

Writing in short, simple words doesn't mean you are 'dumbing down' the message. It means you are communicating as clearly and effectively as possible.

Edit

Read through your work with a critical eye, checking each of these elements:

- Will the audience care about this message?
- Is the call to action up front?
- Are the main points ordered logically?
- Is the subject line clear and interesting?
- Can you cut out unnecessary words or phrases?
- Can you replace a complex word with a simpler one?
- Are there any mistakes in the grammar, punctuation or spelling?
- Have you repeated any information unnecessarily?

BEATING WRITER'S BLOCK

If you find yourself staring at a blank page or screen and can't get started, adopt writer Anne Lamott's approach of giving yourself permission to write a terrible first draft. Don't edit or overthink your writing. Just get the words down and fix them later.



One in seven students think our communications are too long. Less than five per cent think they are too short.

EDITING YOUR OWN WORK

The Writing Toolkit includes information and examples to help you edit your own work. If you are a senior manager working with long or very important documents, consider using a professional editor.

Review

Test

Testing your message with someone from the target audience is a great way to check how effective it is. Even running it past a colleague, after giving them a clear brief about the audience and the purpose of the message, will help you determine if you need to make changes.

Rework

Consider the feedback and rewrite or restructure your message if necessary. If you are making substantial changes, you may need to go back and edit your new content.

Always save your drafts, just in case you need to go back to an earlier version.

Proofread

Before you send anything out, make sure it has been thoroughly proofread. Always use Word's spellcheck tool, but don't rely on that alone. A spellcheck won't pick up a correctly spelt word used in the wrong context, or a confusing sentence.

Ask someone who hasn't read your earlier drafts to proofread the final message. A fresh eye will often pick up mistakes that you might miss.

Design and layout

To make sure all of our material looks consistent, your document should follow the brand guidelines.

For material produced inhouse, you can use the Microsoft Office templates provided.

GUIDELINES AND TEMPLATES

To download the [brand guidelines](#) or [Microsoft Office templates](#), go to [federation.edu.au](https://www.federation.edu.au) (search for 'brand guidelines').



SECTION 3

Writing toolkit

Your aim should be to connect with your audience and communicate your message to them as simply and clearly as you can. If someone can read your message once and understand it, it saves time and reduces confusion and mistakes.

Use clear and simple language

Words are your tools, so it's important to choose them carefully. Your ideas can be complex and sophisticated, but your writing should express them simply.

Clearly written messages also show respect and consideration for your audience, which helps build better relationships. The following writing tools will help you do that.

Be clear

Using plain and clear language helps your audience read, understand and use the information you are giving them.

The principles of plain language include:

- structuring your message logically
- using headings, subheadings, lists and tables to help readers navigate through your material
- writing short, uncomplicated sentences and leaving out anything that isn't necessary for your message

- choosing common, everyday words rather than jargon or technical terms
- only using acronyms when absolutely necessary and always defining them the first time they appear
- using white space, typography that is easy to read and visual tools.

Be reader-friendly

Connect with your audience directly by using words like 'you', 'we' and 'I', if that's an appropriate tone for your message. Think of your written words as the start of a conversation.

Match your level of technical language to your audience. Academic staff will understand the meaning of some phrases and terms about curriculum or assessments, but students may not. If you have to use bureaucratic, technical or legal terms, include a definition or explanation.

Complex	Simple
a large number of	many
advantageous	helpful
ameliorate	improve
commence	begin, start
commensurate	equal
consolidate	combine, join, merge
constitutes	is, forms, makes up
construct	build
deleterious	harmful
disseminate	issue, send
due to the fact that	because
endeavour	try
erroneous	wrong
expeditious	fast
facilitate	ease, help
implement	carry out
in lieu of	instead

Complex	Simple
in order that	for, so
in regard to	about
in the event that	if
inception	start
leverage	use
optimise	perfect
pertaining to	about, of, on
prescribed	required
proficiencies	skills
proximity	near
regarding	about
subsequently	after or later
successfully complete	complete, pass
sufficient	enough
utilise	use
was of the opinion that	thought
with the exception of	except for

TIP

Where possible, choose a simple word or phrase over a complex one.

Writing in short, simple words doesn't mean you are 'dumbing down' the message. It means you are communicating your important and complex ideas as clearly and effectively as possible.

Be inclusive

Using inclusive language shows courtesy and respect for diversity. Before identifying particular characteristics about people when you write, ask whether it is necessary and relevant to the discussion. If it is, then use words that emphasise people's humanity, rather than focusing on their gender, race, cultural background, religion, age, sexual orientation, physical or intellectual ability or appearance.

✓	people with disabilities
✗	disabled people
✓	first name or given name
✗	Christian name
✓	English as an additional language (EAL) or languages other than English (LOTE)
✗	non-English speaking background (NESB)
✓	domestic partner
✗	husband or wife
✓	police officer
✗	policeman
✓	Write your answers in the booklet supplied.
✗	The student should write his/her answers in the booklet supplied.

Use the active voice

Using the active voice means being clear about who (the 'actor') is doing what (the 'action'). For example, 'The ball was kicked' is passive, as we don't know who kicked the ball. 'The teacher kicked the ball' is active.

Writing in the active voice gives the reader more information, and it also adds accountability to your message.

Active: We made mistakes.

Passive: Mistakes were made.

Active: Fed Uni residential students raised \$500 towards a very worthy cause.

Passive: \$500 was raised towards a very worthy cause.

When the action is more important than the actor, the passive voice is appropriate. For example, 'The new library will be opened in January', is passive, but the important message is that the library will be opened, not who is opening it.

AVOID GENDERED PRONOUNS

Avoid writing his/her. It is now acceptable to use 'their' even if the subject of your sentence is singular.

Be concise

Get straight to the point. Often your first draft will wander around the main idea, especially at the start. It can be very helpful to ask yourself where the first key point is, and then take out everything before that.

Cover one theme per paragraph and one key idea per sentence. Cut out unnecessary words or sentences. Aim for two to four sentences in each paragraph and sentences with an average of 15 words or fewer. The less words you use, the more likely it is that your message will be read and understood.

Often your first draft will be the longest, because you are concentrating on getting all your ideas down. Once you have done the first draft, look for ways to make it shorter and simpler.

Get the tone right

Choose an appropriate tone for the message. A newsletter might use contractions (you're, let's, we've), slang and funny pictures to make it friendly and chatty. That's perfectly fine, as it tailors the way you write to the way you want the reader to feel: included, energised, excited and happy.

A letter about fees would (and should) be more formal, but that doesn't mean discarding the principles of plain language. It just means carefully matching the tone to the situation. You can still address the reader directly as 'you', rather than 'the student' or 'the applicant'.

It's important to maintain a constructive and non-judgemental tone. Rather than tell someone what not to do, reframe the message to tell them what they should or can do.

Even if you are writing about a negative situation, like a student who has failed a course, it's important to include information about positive steps that they can take or the support services that are available for them.

Writing difficult messages

It can be very hard to write messages that you know will be difficult or upsetting for people to receive, like telling a student that they have failed a course or have overdue fees.

In these situations, you might find yourself writing in a more official and impersonal tone than usual. This creates a distance between you and the message you have to craft, which makes it easier to write.

A more effective approach is to think about how you want the reader to feel. If your message is dull, condescending or uncaring, they are less likely to read it carefully and take in the important information.

If you write with the aim of making the reader feel encouraged and supported, you are more likely to get a positive outcome. It's harder, but it's worth it.

USING WORD'S TOOLS

Check the average sentence length and readability of your Microsoft Word or Outlook document using the spelling and grammar check tool. But remember that this tool is just a guide – you are the best person to judge if you need to rework your writing.

CHECK YOUR VOICE

Read it out loud. If you find yourself thinking, 'I wouldn't say it like that', then don't write it like that.



SECTION 4

Our preferred style

English is a complex language. There are often several equally correct ways to spell, write, punctuate or format text. In some cases, these may be different from your personal preferences, but it's important that all of our written material is consistent.

Abbreviations, contractions and acronyms

Abbreviations

An abbreviation is a shortened version of a word. Abbreviations normally end in a full stop, but this can be left out for commonly used abbreviations.

✓ cont.	✓ i.e.
✓ e.g.	✓ no.
✓ et al.	✓ p. / pp.
✓ etc.	✓ para.

Contractions

Contractions are shortened version of words in which the last letter of the original word is present. They don't need a full stop.

✓ Mr	✓ Rd
✓ Qld	✓ St

Acronyms

Acronyms are initial letters, sometimes pronounced as a word. They are usually all capitals, and they don't need a full stop at the end. When an acronym has entered common usage, it is sometimes written with just an initial capital.

✓ ABC	✓ CSIRO
✓ Anzac	✓ TAFE

Unless it is commonly understood, define the acronym the first time you use it.

- You may be eligible for the Higher Education Loan Program (HELP).

When you use an acronym in a sentence, say it out loud to see if you should use 'a' or 'an'. If the sound of the acronym starts with a vowel, use 'an'.

- an ABC documentary
- a UNESCO program

CAN'T FIND WHAT YOU NEED?

If you can't find the answer you are looking for here, refer to the *Macquarie Dictionary* or the *Australian Government's Style manual for authors, editors and printers*.

Capitalisation

Our style is to use minimal capitalisation. Headings are written in sentence case, not initial caps or upper case (except for proper nouns).

✓	Contact us
✓	Welcome from the Vice-Chancellor
✗	Course Fees and Charges
✗	RESOURCES AND DOCUMENTS

Initial capitals are used for specific titles, not general descriptions.

✓	Associate Dean Gavin Robertson will chair the meeting.
✓	Meetings will be chaired by one of the associate deans.
✓	In Semester 2, our main topics will be ...
✓	Next semester, our main topics will be ...

Avoid using lots of uppercase letters. Bold or italic formatting is a more effective way to emphasise words.

Lists

If the items in your list are complete sentences, start each one with a capital letter and finish each with a full stop.

- ✓ There are two distinct cultural protocols:
- A Welcome to Country can only be made by an Aboriginal Traditional Owner of the country or land upon which the welcome is made.
 - An Acknowledgement of Country can be made by someone (Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal) who is not a Traditional Owner of the country or land upon which the statement is made.

If the items in your list are not complete sentences, start each item with a lower-case letter. Don't use commas or semicolons at the end of each item. Don't use 'and' on the second-last item. Do use a full stop after the final item.

- ✓ The Welcome to Country always occurs at the start of an event. Such events include but are not limited to:
- conferences
 - seminars
 - ceremonies
 - festivals
 - launches
 - meetings
 - graduation ceremonies.

All items in a list must follow the same grammatical structure. You can check this by reading the introductory phrase and then each item to see if it makes sense.

✓	Successful students: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are motivated • are organised • study hard.
✗	Successful students are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • motivated • organised • study hard.

Numbers

Write the numbers one to nine as words. Write 10+ as numerals, except at the start of a sentence (or, even better, rearrange the sentence).

✓	Twenty-three students responded to the survey.
✓	The survey had 23 responses from students.
✓	The class runs for seven weeks.
✗	23 students responded to the survey.

Use commas to separate thousands.

✓	FedUni has more than 5,000 students.
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Use the words 'per cent' not the % symbol (% can be used in tables and diagrams to save space).

✓	More than 83 per cent of students prefer us to contact them by email.
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Dates and times

Our date format is 8 May 2014. Months may be abbreviated for space.

✓	7 February 2015
✓	7 Feb 2015
✗	February 7th 2015
✗	7th Feb '15

Our time format is 4.30 pm. Use full stops, not colons, and put a space before 'am' or 'pm'.

✓	3.00 pm
✓	3 pm
✗	3:00pm
✗	3PM

Separate spans of numbers, including years and times, with an en-dash.

✓	2013–14
✓	4–6 pm
✗	2013/14

Punctuation

Our style is to use minimal punctuation. That means removing unnecessary punctuation, as long as it doesn't change your meaning.

Apostrophes

Apostrophes indicate contractions or possessives.

- ✓ **She's not in class today.**
- ✓ **The library's opening hours have changed.**

Apostrophes are not used to indicate plurals ...

- ✗ **The library now has hundred's of new video's and DVD's available for loan.**

... except when abbreviations or letters are used as nouns.

- ✓ **I gave them four A's and six B's.**

Colons and semicolons

Colons are used after a statement that introduces a list, a quotation or an example.

- ✓ **FedUni has campuses in three regional areas: Ballarat, Gippsland and the Wimmera.**

Semicolons link two related but independent clauses. Both halves of the sentence must make sense on their own. If they don't, don't use a semicolon.

- ✓ **Summer is bushfire season; be very careful when using naked flames.**
- ✗ **Summer is bushfire season; hot and dry.**

Semicolons are also used to separate items in a list if commas would make it confusing, for example, when one or more items in the list need their own commas for clarity.

- ✓ **The prize winners were Selma Lee, Ballarat; Peter Campbell, Churchill; and Dac Nguyen, Stawell.**
- ✗ **The prize winners were Selma Lee, Ballarat, Peter Campbell, Churchill, and Dac Nguyen, Stawell.**

Note that there is a semicolon before the last item in the list.

Commas

Commas are used to separate clauses in a sentence, or items within a list. Our style is to not use a comma before the final item of a list, unless it is needed for clarity.

✓	She took a photograph of her parents, the king, and the queen. [The photograph was of four people.]
✗	She took a photograph of her parents, the king and the queen. [The photograph was of two people: her parents who are also the king and queen.]

Hyphens and dashes

Hyphens, en dashes and em dashes all have different uses.

Hyphens are used to join two words that work together to make an adjective, or where a prefix makes a word confusing.

✓	We are all ready for a well-earned break.
✓	Please tell us if you have any pre-existing injuries.

En dashes (–) with a space on either side isolate an explanation or phrase within a sentence. Our style is to use spaced en dashes.

✓	The library – like all shared spaces – should be a comfortable and pleasant place for everyone to work in.
---	---

Em dashes (—) are used to signal an abrupt interruption. They are rarely used outside fiction writing.

Quotations

Our style is to use single quotation marks (' '), not double (" "). Use quotation marks for:

- direct quotes
- the titles of lectures, speeches, conferences and songs
- the titles of chapters or articles in books or other publications (but not the publication title)
- the first mention of an unfamiliar term, before you define it
- words used in an unusual way, or colloquial terms.

For quotes within quotes, use double quotations marks.

Referring to the University

Our official name is Federation University Australia. Always use this official name for the first mention. After that, you can use FedUni.

✓	Federation University Australia
✓	FedUni
✗	FU
✗	FUA

When discussing Federation University Australia specifically, University has an initial cap. When the word 'university' is used in a general context, it is lowercase.

✓	Further historical information on the University is available online.
✓	The University seeks to provide a learning environment that promotes and values diversity and offers equality of access and opportunity.
✓	We are Australia's first regional, multi-sector university.
✓	Many of you may be the first in your family to attend university.

When discussing our campuses, the word campus is always in uppercase.

✓	Federation University Australia's SMB Campus
✓	FedUni's Mt Helen Campus
✗	Gippsland campus

Spelling

We use Australian spelling, which is often different to American or British. Some common examples are listed here, but if you are unsure check the Macquarie Dictionary.

✓	~ise: e.g. recognise, finalise, organise
✗	~ize: e.g. recognize, finalize, organize

✓	~yse: analyse
✗	~yze: analyze

✓	~our: e.g. colour, labour
✗	~or: color, labor

✓	~re: centre
✗	~er: center

✓	~ement: judgement, acknowledgement
✗	~ment: judgment, acknowledgment

If you are referring to a specific organisation or publication, or using a direct quote, always use the original spelling.

✓	World Health Organization
✗	World Health Organisation

CHECK YOUR SPELLCHECK

You may need to set the language in Microsoft Word to English (Australian) to stop it automatically changing your words to US spelling.

NOTABLE EXCEPTION

The Australian Labor Party does not have a 'u' in its name.

Websites

URLs can be long and confusing when written out in full. Always consider whether you really need to provide the full URL. If your message is delivered digitally, use hyperlinks and descriptive text to make it clear where the link goes.

Avoid terms like 'click here'. It's better to describe what the reader can do, or what will happen, when they go to that page of the website.

✓	Read our interview with Magda.
✗	Click this link to read our interview with Magda on Tumblr: http://resmedia2015.tumblr.com/

If a link will automatically download a document, make that clear and state the file size.

✓	Download an open day program (pdf, 167Kb)
✗	Download an open day program at https://federation.edu.au/future-students/open-day/program.pdf

Most people will be able to navigate through a website to find what they need. In a printed document, it is often enough to direct them to the home page, with some guidance about which section of the website has the information you are referring to.

If the URL has a 'www' at the start or you can indicate it with formatting, such as underlining, there's no need to include 'http://'.

✓	Search federation.edu.au for 'bookshop hours'.
✗	Bookshop opening hours can be found on our website at https://federation.edu.au/current-students/life-on-campus/services-on-campus/book-shop .



SECTION 5

Before and after

BEFORE	AFTER
<p>Action Required</p> <p>You are now required to meet with your Program Coordinator/Leader or Academic Coordinator within 10 working days of the date of this email to develop a study and support plan tailored to help you succeed in your studies. Please contact your Program Coordinator/Leader or Academic Coordinator to schedule your appointment or for further information.</p>	<p>What do I need to do?</p> <p>You must meet with Mr Samuel Brown, your Program Coordinator by 17 July 2017. Together, you can develop a study and support plan that will help you succeed in your studies. Please contact Mr Brown on samuelbrown@federation.edu.au or 03 xxxx xxxx to make an appointment.</p> <p>If you need more information, contact the student support service on <provide contact details>.</p>
<p>Through the framework, we provide a range of uniquely designed support programs, activities and opportunities that enhance the learning and developmental experience for on campus students.</p>	<p>Make the most of your time on campus with our unique support programs, activities and opportunities, specifically designed for you.</p>
<p>For credit to be approved towards a program there are many factors which need to be taken into consideration and each case is assessed on an individual basis. The reason your credit application was deemed unsuccessful was due to <insert reason here>.</p>	<p>We assess every application for credit individually and consider many factors. Your credit application was not successful because <insert reason here>.</p>
<p>Please note you are not required to pay fees at the time of enrolment. An invoice for your higher education fees will be forwarded to you shortly after you complete your enrolment.</p>	<p>You don't need to pay fees when you enrol. We will send you an invoice for your higher education fees.</p>
<p>Just a quick reminder that the University offers a range of scholarships bursaries and financial support for students to apply for. For more information just go to the scholarships page on the website: http://federation.edu.au/current-students/assistance-support-and-services/scholarships</p>	<p>Remember, you can apply online for a range of scholarships, bursaries and financial support.</p>
<p>Our Customer Service Team is available 9am – 5pm, Monday to Friday on 1800 333 864, alternatively we can call you.</p> <p>Click here to request a call</p>	<p>Call our Customer Service Team on 1800 333 864 during business hours or ask us to call you.</p>

BEFORE	AFTER
<p>Hi [name],</p> <p>You are not enrolled in classes for Semester 2</p> <p>Our records indicate that you have classes in your shopping cart which have not been finalised*. As classes are quickly filling up it's important to finalise your enrolment for Semester 2.</p> <p>*Please note our records are current as of [date]. If you have finalised your enrolment in the last 24 hours please disregard this reminder.</p>	<p>Dear [name],</p> <p>Don't miss out on Semester 2 classes</p> <p>On [date] you had classes in your online shopping cart that weren't finalised. Classes are filling up quickly. If you haven't already finished your enrolment, do it soon to make sure you don't miss out.</p>
<p>Email subject: Summer course information</p> <p>Dear Students</p> <p>Please find attached the list of courses running over Summer. The attached flyers have the dates listed and we hope you will have access to enrol in the Student Centre from Monday 5th October.</p> <p>These course will only run if there are sufficient number of students enrolled.</p> <p>I have also attached a list of courses, pending approval, to run at the Partner campuses in Melbourne. These are still to be confirmed and you will need to contact the relevant campus regarding enrolment.</p> <p>Please feel welcome to contact me if you have any questions.</p>	<p>Email subject: Enrol now in a summer course</p> <p>Dear students,</p> <p>We are running lots of great courses over summer. The attached flyers list the topics, dates and venues. Some courses will only run if enough people register, so enrol early to make sure you don't miss out. You can enrol at the Student Centre from Monday 5 October 2016.</p> <p>Additional courses are being run by our partner campuses in Melbourne. Please contact those campuses directly for enrolment details.</p> <p>If you have any questions, contact me on <insert details>.</p>
<p>With a personalised approach to learning that focuses on support, FedUni's innovative Bachelor of Nursing is a degree that really makes a difference.</p> <p>With pathways for full-time, part-time, accelerated program delivered in both a face-face as well as a flexible delivery mode, FedUni provides a supportive environment for all students to begin a journey towards becoming a registered nurse. Find out more</p>	<p>Do you want to make a difference?</p> <p>Our Bachelor of Nursing program supports you to become a registered nurse.</p> <p>The flexible, personalised approach to learning lets you study full-time or part-time. You may also be able to enrol in our accelerated program. The program is delivered face-to-face and online. Discover more about our Bachelor of Nursing online.</p>

BEFORE

Dear Belinda,

Just a quick reminder with exams fast approaching

From 5pm Friday 31st October until the end of the year, Res is strictly an Alcohol Free Zone

Residence is first and foremost a place of study and during the important period of SWOTVAC and EXAMS all residences are alcohol free zones.

During this time any behaviour that may jeopardise any resident's quiet living environment is not permitted. This means no alcohol is to be consumed anywhere on Res, no public music, drunkenness, noise or gatherings are permitted.

This is a very important time on Residence so please respect and assist all resident during this period. Don't finish your year on Residence by risking serious penalties, fines and suspensions.

Noise restrictions are relaxed from 5pm – 7pm each night but if someone asks you to turn it down, it's too loud!

Good luck with the exams and have a fantastic summer break!

Email subject: FW: Free Lunch - Subway - Students & Staff - Federation Business School - Mt Helen - Thursday 8th October - 12.30pm

Dear Business Students and Staff

You are invited to join us for a free subway lunch on Thursday 8th October from 12.30pm.

Venue is the Business School reception area.

Please rsvp to me for catering purposes. If you have already replied to me, you do not need to do so again.

We hope you can attend.

AFTER

Dear Belinda,

Residences are about to be quiet and alcohol-free

This is a very important time of year for all students. To help everyone prepare for exams, all FedUni residences will be quiet, alcohol-free zones from 5 pm Friday 31 October until the end of the year.

No alcohol consumption, public music, loud noise or parties are allowed. Noise restrictions are relaxed from 5–7 pm each night, but please turn your music down if you are asked to. There are serious penalties, including fines and suspensions, for anyone who doesn't follow these rules.

Good luck with your exams and have a fantastic summer break!

Email subject: Free lunch at the Business School

Dear students and staff,

We would love you join us for a free Subway lunch to [celebrate the end of semester/farewell a colleague/insert purpose or occasion].

Date: Thursday 8 October

Time: 12.30 pm

Venue: Mt Helen Campus, Federation Business School reception area

RSVP: Monday 5 October to [insert email]

We're looking forward to seeing you there.



SECTION 6

Resources

Useful links

TOPIC	URL
FedUni branding	Access the FedUni Brand Book (login required) or search federation.edu.au for 'brand guidelines'
FedUni website guidelines	Read our website standards and guidelines or search federation.edu.au for 'web guidelines'
FedUni social media guidelines	Watch the video or search federation.edu.au for 'social media guidelines'
FedUni Microsoft Office templates	Download the FedUni-branded Word and PowerPoint templates or search federation.edu.au for 'templates'
Plain language tips	opc.gov.au/plain
	victorialawfoundation.org.au/plain-language-resources
	plainlanguagenetwork.org
	plainenglish.co.uk
Microsoft Word reading statistics	Go to support.office.com and search for 'readability'
Australian spelling	macquariedictionary.com.au
Grammar check	grammarly.com

Need help?

If you need some help to write an effective message, or you'd just like someone to look over your communication before you send it out, contact our Communications Officer via studentcomms.hq@federation.edu.au.

Refer to our Communication guidelines webpage for further assistance and request forms:
<https://federation.edu.au/staff/business-and-communication/communication-guidelines>

Writing checklist

PLANNING

- Do I know who my target audience is?
- Have I chosen the best method to communicate with them?
- Is there a clear, single purpose to my message?
- Have I thought about the benefits to my audience?
- Will the audience know what I want them to do or understand?

DRAFT

- Is my subject line engaging and descriptive?
- Is my message logically structured with the important information at the top?
- Have I told the reader everything they need to know?
- Have I told them how to find more information?
- Have I used clear and simple language?
- Is my message positive and encouraging?

EDIT

- Have I reviewed my writing using the Writing Toolkit?

REVIEW

- Have I tested my message or asked for feedback?
- Have I rewritten my message if necessary?

PROOFREAD

- Has my message been thoroughly proofread?

DESIGN AND LAYOUT

- Does my document follow the FedUni brand guidelines?