# GCU Library Website Style Guide

## Abbreviations

- If an abbreviation or acronym is to be used more than once on a page, put it in brackets at first mention e.g. inter-library loan (ILL). If the phrase is only to be used once on a page, just use the full phrase without the qualifying abbreviation e.g. inter-library loan.
- Exceptions – abbreviations which are commonly used without being spelled out in full e.g. FAQs.
- Abbreviations should not contain spaces or full stops between initials. The letters in an abbreviation should be capitalised only where they represent a word in the phrase being abbreviated e.g. ILL, AtoM. For organisations and products check how they abbreviate their own name and follow that e.g. EThOS, eduroam.

## Bullet points

- Bullet points should be used for lists and can be used to break up larger sections of text.
- If a bullet point contains a full sentence then it should end with a full stop.
- If a bullet point contains only a phrase or partial sentence then it should not end in any mark of punctuation.

## Capitalisation

- Initial capitals should only be used at the beginning of a sentence or heading, or for proper nouns e.g. names, places.
- Exception – 'University' should be capitalised when referring to Glasgow Caledonian University. Use lower case when referring to universities in general.
- Exception – team names should be capitalised e.g. Resource Management team (see [Team Names](#) section).

## Contact details

- Email addresses should always be for a team rather than an individual and should be 'mailto' links.
- Telephone numbers should always be in the format 0141 123 4567.
- Where possible provide contact details for a team rather than for individual members of staff.

## Dates

- Dates should not contain superscript e.g. 21$^{st}$. Instead use 21st.
- Dates should be written in the format dd Month yyyy e.g. 21st September 2014.

- Date ranges should be in the format dd to dd Month yyyy e.g. 21st to 23rd September 2014, or 21st September to 23rd October 2014, or 15th December 2014 to 8th January 2015.

## Documents

- The use of documents should be kept to a minimum – where possible content should be added within a web page.
- If a document is to be used it should always be sent to DDIL in its original format i.e. Word, PowerPoint, etc.
- Documents will always be uploaded in PDF format. This guarantees that the document can be read on a variety of devices and ensures its long term digital preservation.
- The title of the document should be placed within a header using Title format.
- The footer of the document should contain a page number in the bottom right-hand corner in the format Page # e.g. Page 1.
- The footer of the document should contain an auto-updating date stamp in the bottom left-hand corner in the format Last updated: dd Month YYYY e.g. Last updated: 15 December 2014.

## Format (web page)

- Key content should be placed near the top of the page.
- Lists should always be bulleted.
- Longer pages should be reduced by sectioning content into tabs.
- If you are using tabs ensure that any other content on the page is located above the tabs, as users are unlikely to scroll below a tabbed section.
- Keep introductory text to a minimum – users should be able to see the top of any tabbed content without scrolling.
- The title of a tab has a maximum of 32 characters (but the shorter the better).
- There should be no more than four tabs per page.
- There is no limit to the amount of content that can be placed within a tab. The length of each tab will depend on many factors – how much you have to say, how you say it, and what content is involved. In general if a tab feels too long, it probably is!

## Format (website)

- Clean look and feel.
- Navigation menus should be clear – it should be obvious what a user will get when they click on a link.
- Navigation menus should be in alphabetical order.
- Headers (see Headings section).
- Links (see Links section).

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- Top level navigation landing pages should be in the form of a tiled index page. Again this should be in alphabetical order.
- Quick links on the home page should always correspond to a web page listed within the top level navigation menu – they should never be standalone pages.
- Every page of the website (i.e. those within the gcu.ac.uk/library domain) should be fully responsive. This includes forms, tables and images.
- Every page of the website should be accessible. If in doubt speak to the Disability team.

## Headings

- Top level headings should be H2.
- 2nd level headings should be H5.
- 3rd level headings should be bold and followed by a colon.
- A page header should be the name of the corresponding top level navigation menu.
- A body header should correspond exactly to the title of the page in the navigation menu.

## Images

- Images can be used on the website if:
  - They are corporate (no clip art);
  - They serve a purpose (not just to brighten up a page);
  - They are responsive.
- Images should be supplied in their original format (not previously resized).
- Images should be supplied in the highest available quality.
- When using images they should be either:
  - 100% of the page width, or;
  - Right aligned (if wrapped with text).

## Language

- Use plain English i.e. language that is clear and easy to understand.
- Where possible avoid using jargon.
- Avoid passive sentences;
  - Don't say: You can log in using your domain username and password;
  - Do say: Log in using your domain username and password.
- Use personal pronouns such as 'you' rather than a distinct user group e.g. 'students' or 'staff'.

## Links

- Internal links (i.e. within the library website) should open within the same browser tab.
- External links (i.e. out with the library website) should open in a new browser tab.

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- Links should be built into the text of a page, not presented as 'click here'.

## Numbers

- One to nine spelled out, 10 and over in numerals.
- Exceptions – levels, rooms, loan periods, and lists, which should all be displayed as numerals.
- For numbers with four digits or more use a comma e.g. 10,000.

## Tables

- Tables can be used on the website. However they are difficult to make responsive so use should be kept to a minimum. Where possible represent tables in another format. Where this is not possible adhere to the following guidelines:
    - Keep tables as small possible;
    - Where possible design the table to have a larger number of rows than columns;
    - Keep row and column headings short.

## Team names

- Refer to library teams in the following way:
    - Archives and Special Collections team;
    - Collections and Discovery team;
    - Academic Librarian team;
    - Library Information Support team;

## Terminology

- Terminology should be consistent across the website.
- Company names and products should be spelled and capitalised as they are on their own websites.
- For help with grammar use the [Guardian and Observer Style Guide](#).
- Use the guide below to standardise specific library terminology across the website:

| Preferred Term(s) | Synonym(s) |
|---|---|
| academic librarian | librarian; subject librarian |
| article; journal article | paper |
| connect to | access; log in; use |
| domain username and password | Domain Username and Password |
| ebook (also ejournal, eresource) | e-book; eBook; electronic book |
| full text | fulltext, full-text |
| GCULearn | Blackboard; VLE |
| Glasgow Caledonian University, GCU, university | institution |
| journal | serial |

| mobile device | smartphone; tablet |
|---|---|
| RefWorks | Refworks; Ref Works |
| search; find | discover; locate |
| trimester A, B, C | trimester a, b, c; trimester 1, 2, 3; semester a, b, c |
| user | patron; student; staff; customer |
| web page | webpage |
| website | web site |
| Wi-Fi | Wifi; WiFi |

## Times

- Times should be written in a 12 hour format e.g. 7am, 3pm, 9.15am.
- Time ranges should also be written in a 12 hour format e.g. 9am to 5pm, 9.15am to 6.30pm, 9.15am to 6.00pm.

## Videos

- Videos can be embedded in the website. However only videos from certain hosts can be made responsive. Currently only videos hosted on YouTube can be embedded; the ability to embed videos hosted on EdShare@GCU and within the website's content management system will be available soon. When using video adhere to the following guidelines:
  - Ensure the video used is of the highest possible quality (HD if possible);
  - Video can only be embedded in 16:9 or 4:3 so try to use video already in these aspect ratios;
  - Video can only be embedded in the main body of a web page. It will always fill the width of the page and therefore cannot be text wrapped. Video cannot be embedded within another content element i.e. within a tab.