

# Style guide A-Z

## A

### Acronyms

Give in full the first time you use an acronym.

- British Journal of Clinical Pharmacology (BJCP)
- British Journal of Pharmacology (BJP)
- Pharmacology Research & Perspectives (PR&P)
- BPS Assessment (BPSA)
- World Congress of Basic and Clinical Pharmacology (WCP 2022)

Don't use acronyms unless they are commonly used and widely understood, for example EU, BBC.

### Addresses

When using the same address in multiple places make sure you keep the address consistent. When using addresses on a page, display them in a sentence.

- British Pharmacological Society, The Schild Plot, 16 Angel Gate, City Road, London EC1V 2PT, United Kingdom
- BPS Assessment, 16 Angel Gate, City Road, London EC1V 2PT

Refer to town and country, for example, London, UK

Don't abbreviate names or words in addresses. With exception to UK, USA, UAE

### Affinity Groups

Lower case a and g when referring to all groups. For example, The affinity groups play a central role in encouraging networking and discussion between members.

Use capitals when using full name.

- Cardiovascular & Respiratory Pharmacology Affinity Group
- Drug Discovery, Development & Evaluation Affinity Group
- Education & Skills Affinity Group
- Integrated Systems Pharmacology Affinity Group
- Molecular & Cellular Pharmacology Affinity Group
- Neuropharmacology Affinity Group
- Toxicology Affinity Group

## Affinity Group Co-Chairs

Use a hyphen and a capitals.

## Ambassadors

Full name of the scheme is Ambassadors Scheme. Members can be either an:

- Ambassador
- Ambassador Coordinator

## Ampersands (&)

Use 'and' rather than '&', unless PR&P, A&E, company names or job titles.

## Awards

Refer to [www.bps.ac.uk/prizes](http://www.bps.ac.uk/prizes) for the correct names of our awards, prizes and grants.

# B

## Between

Between 15 and 20; not between 15–20 (as “–” stands in for “to” here)

## Bold

Do not use on the web, it is difficult for people to read on screen. Use headings or bullets instead if you want to emphasise particular words or sections.

## Brackets

Use (round brackets), not [square brackets]. The only acceptable use of square brackets is for explanatory notes in reported speech:

“Thank you [Foreign Minister] Mr Smith.”

## British Pharmacological Society

We use British Pharmacological Society in full. If a shortened reference is needed, then 'the Society', 'we', 'our' or 'us' can be used – not 'BPS'.

## BPS Assessment

We use BPS Assessment. If a shortened reference is needed, then use 'BPSA'.

## Bullet points

You can use bullet points to make text easier to read. Make sure that:

- you always use a lead-in line, followed by a colon
- each bullet makes sense running on from the lead-in line
- you use lower case at the start of the bullet
- you don't use more than one sentence per bullet point – use commas or dashes to expand on an item
- you don't put 'or' or 'and' after the bullets
- if you add links, they should appear within the text and not as the whole bullet
- you don't put a semicolon at the end of a bullet
- there is no full stop after the last bullet point

Only one level of bullet points can be used on the website.

## C

### Capitals

Keep to a minimum. Too many capitals make text difficult to read. If in doubt use lowercase: the Government; the Coalition Government; the Scottish Government; the Welsh Assembly; a government minister; green paper; white paper

Don't use capitals to emphasise headings or words. They don't make Something look more Important.

### Colour

Do not rely on colour to communicate or for emphasis.

### Contractions

Use contractions like you're and we'll. Avoid should've, could've, would've, they've - these can be hard to read.

Avoid contractions if the content will be translated for an international audience.

## Committees

Lower case c when referring to all committees. For example, Explore our committees, sub committees and advisory groups. Use capitals when using full name.

- Animal Welfare & In Vivo Pharmacology Sub-Committee
- Clinical Committee
- Council
- Diploma Sub-Committee
- Early Career Pharmacologist Advisory Group
- Education and Training Committee
- Finance Committee
- Industry Sub-Committee
- International Advisory Group
- Management Group
- Meetings Committee
- Membership and Awards Committee
- Nominations Group
- Policy and Public Engagement Committee
- Publications Committee
- Specialty Registrars Advisory Group

## Click here

Don't use, it implies that assistive technology will not work. Describe where links are going instead or use a call to action, such as 'find out more'.

## Curriculumms

Not curricula.

## Currency

Indicate currency by using its three-letter abbreviation, such as USD or CAD. Don't use currency symbols, like \$ or €. We would say 25 USD, not \$25.

The only exception to this would be when using £.

## D

## Data

Treat as a singular noun: The data is stored on a secure server.

## Dates

22 July 2010. Don't use th or a comma in dates. For example, Monday 3 April 2018 not Monday 3rd April, 2018.

In tables 22.7.10 is acceptable. The thirties or 1930s, not the '30s; 2011–12, or from 2011 to 2012.

Use a dash for a span of years. For example, 2011–13, not 2011-2013 or 2011/13.

## Documents

Pull content out of documents as much as possible: visitors engage more with web page content. It's also better for search engines to have content on a web page rather than 'hidden' in a document.

Use PDFs on the website rather than Word, Excel and PowerPoint.

### Documents upload

When uploading documents add them to the Media Library assets folder under Pages. This allows for easy sharing and tracking of documents.

Remove any reference to version numbers or web version when uploading a document to the website.

When uploading a newer version of a document, update the item in the Media Library rather than creating a new item. Make sure the item you are uploading has exactly the same title, this will preserve any existing links.

Delete any documents that are no longer needed.

## E

### Early bird

No hyphens.

### Editor-in-Chief

Note hyphens.

### Eg, etc and ie

eg can sometimes be read aloud as 'egg' by screen reading software. Instead use 'for example' or 'such as' or 'like' or 'including' – whichever works best in the specific context.

etc can usually be avoided. Try using 'for example' or 'such as' or 'like' or 'including'. Never use etc at the end of a list starting with these words.

ie – used to clarify a sentence – isn't always well understood. Try (re)writing sentences to avoid the need to use it. If that isn't possible, use an alternative such as 'meaning' or 'that is'.

## En dash (–)

The en dash (–) is slightly wider than the hyphen (-). They mean and do different things. (See Hyphenation below for more on hyphens.)

The en dash is used to represent a span or range of dates or time. There should be no space between the en dash and the adjacent material.

For example: 11–13 DEC 2017 | London, UK

'Parenthetical dashes' – like these – can be used for emphasis in a sentence.

## elearning

Not e-learning, E-learning or eLearning.

## email

Not e-mail, Email or email address.

Avoid using someone's name and then repeating it in the email address: Email Joe Bloggs at joe.bloggs@bps.ac.uk; instead say Email [joe.bloggs@bps.ac.uk](mailto:joe.bloggs@bps.ac.uk).

## e-newsletter

Note the hyphen. Think about using newsletter instead.

## Et al

Do not use. Try "and others": simpler, plain English.

## Exclamation marks

Do not use!

## F

### FAQs

Do not use. If you write content by starting with user needs, you won't need to use FAQs.

### Focused

One s.

### Footnotes

Don't use. Footnotes are designed for print.

## G

### Geography and regions

Use lowercase for north, south, east and west, except when they're part of a name or recognised region.

So, the south-west (compass direction), but the South West (administrative region).

### Government

Lower case unless it's a full title. For example: 'UK government', but 'Her Majesty's Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland'. Also 'Welsh Government', as it's the full title.

### Great Britain

Refers only to England, Scotland and Wales excluding Northern Ireland. If you're telling users about multiple areas, use (for example) 'England, Scotland and Wales'.

### Britain

Use UK and United Kingdom in preference to Britain and British (UK business, UK foreign policy, ambassador and high commissioner). But British embassy, not UK embassy.

# H

## Headings

Use heading 3 to break up page content and heading 4 for sub headings.

Don't use questions in headings, you should be answering questions not asking them. For example, 'Apply now' not 'How do I apply'.

## Hyphenation

Hyphenate:

- re- words starting with e, like re-evaluate
- co-ordinate
- co-operate

Don't hyphenate:

- reuse
- reinvent
- reorder
- reopen
- email

Don't use a hyphen unless it's confusing without it, for example, a little used car is different from a little-used car. If in doubt, check the Oxford English Dictionary for Writers and Editors.

Never use a hyphen in place of an en dash (–). See En dash for more details.

# I

## ie

ie – used to clarify a sentence – isn't always well understood. Try (re)writing sentences to avoid the need to use it. If that isn't possible, use an alternative such as 'meaning' or 'that is'.

## Images

Alternative text should only be added when the content is important. Images used as decoration only do not need alternative text.

Give your image a useful name when uploading it to the website, and include information about the image and the dimensions. This will make it much easier to find images for reuse. For example, "students celebrating 1900x350".



When uploading a newer version of an image, update the item in the Media Library rather than creating a new item. Make sure the item you are uploading has exactly the same title.

Crop images to the correct dimensions before uploading to the website. This ensures that the page load time is not slowed by large images.

Delete any images that are no longer needed.

Don't use images to display text content. This is not user friendly or accessible.

Don't use images in a text field unless you have edited the HTML code to make it responsive.

## Italics

Don't use italics, it is difficult for people to read on screen. Use 'single quotation marks' if referring to a document, scheme or initiative.

## J

### Job titles

Lowercase, except when referring to the (Society's) President, or when used in conjunction with the post holder's name. eg "the chief executive" but "Jonathan Bruun, the Chief Executive".

## Jargon

Avoid. If you have to use a technical term, ensure that you explain or define a word or phrase the first time you use it. Using plain English makes our content accessible and inclusive, and therefore more useful.

## K

# L

## Late-breaking

Note hyphens.

## Legal content

Legal content can still be written in plain English. It's important that users understand content and that we present complicated information simply.

If you have to publish legal jargon, it will be a publication so write a plain English summary.

Where evidence shows there's a clear user need for including a legal term (like *bona vacantia*), always explain it in plain English.

## Links

Front-load your link text with the relevant terms and make them active and specific.

### Internal links

In the link options, select the content tab and select the page you wish to link to. Don't paste in a URL.

### External links

In the link options, select the web tab and paste in the URL. Set to open in a new window and add a tooltip.

## Lists

Lists should be bulleted to make them easier to read.

Very long lists can be written as a paragraph with a lead-in sentence if it looks better: 'The following countries are in the EU: Spain, France, Italy...'

## Log in

'Login' (one word) is a noun or an adjective. For example, the information you use to access your email is your login (noun), and the page where you sign in is the login page (adjective).

'Log in' (two words) is a verb. For example, you log in with your login information.

# M

## Measurements

10mg; 10ml; no spaces, no plurals.

## Metadata

Metadata appears in search results, it is 140–160 characters maximum, short sentence describing the content of the page. Please make sure to add/update metadata when adding or updating web pages.

## Millions

Always use million and billion, not m and bn, unless in a table where space is limited.

## Money

Use the £ symbol: £75

Don't use decimals unless pence are included: £75.50 but not £75.00

Don't use '£0.xx million' for amounts less than £1 million.

Write out pence in full: calls will cost 4 pence per minute from a landline.

Currencies are lower case.

# N

## N/A

Separate with a slash. Only use in tables.

## Names and titles

'doctor' or 'doctors' when used as a noun

'Dr' when used as a title (never 'Doctor' or 'Doc' or 'Dr.')

E.g. 'We worked with doctors including Dr John Smith.'

'professor' or 'professors' when used as a noun

'Professor' when used as a title (never Prof or Prof. – although Prof can be used when shortening for social media only)

E.g. 'We worked with professors including Professor John Smith.'

Dr or Professor, never both – Professor supersedes Dr

On completing a PhD, a person receives a doctorate and can use the title Dr – some people tend not to use it (especially those in industry) however please use Dr when referring to them in publishing.

When a person holds both an academic title and honorific titles, use both, always academic title first followed by honorific – e.g Professor Sir Mark Caulfield or Dr Dame Annabel Jones.

For non-doctors, don't use Mr, Mrs, Miss or Ms in publishing, just use the person's name, e.g. John Smith.

More guidance on titles can found here:

- o <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/titles-included-in-passports>
- o <https://www.discoverphds.com/advice/doing/uk-academic-titles>

## Numbers

Spell out numbers up to and including nine, then use numerals – but use numerals next to a symbol (5kg, £2 million).

Use a comma in numbers containing four figures or more (3,260).

If you need to a sentence with a number, spell it out: "Forty-four people applied for the job."

Write "from 22 to 44" rather than "22–44".

## O

### Online

One word.

## Organisations

All organisations are singular: "The government has decided", not "The government have decided".

'They' should be used as a pronoun: 'HMPO is the sole issuer of UK passports. They will send your new passport within 3 weeks.'

The first time you mention a school, college, or university in a piece of writing, refer to it by its full official name. On all other mentions, use its more common abbreviation.

Honour companies' own names for themselves and their products. Go by what's used on their official website.

## P

### Per cent

Use per cent not percent. Percentage is one word. Always use % with a number.

### PhD

No periods.

## Phone numbers

Note spacing: + 44 (0)20 7647 3000; 0161 888 9898; 01213 901234; 07854 123456

Use international dialling code + 44 (0)20 7647 3000

Use T. to indicate a phone number and M. to indicate a mobile number

T. +44 (0)20 7239 0180

M. +44 (0)7786 552 498

## President-Elect

Note the hyphen.

## PSA

There is more than one PSA.

- Prescribing Safety Assessment – in conjunction with the Medical Schools Council, sometimes referred to as PSA1 internally
- Prescribing Skills Assessment – BPS Assessment product, sometimes referred to internally as PSA2

## Publications

Explain in the first instance then use acronym.

- British Journal of Clinical Pharmacology (BJCP)
- British Journal of Pharmacology (BJP)
- Pharmacology Research & Perspectives (PR&P)

## Postcode

not post code

## Q

### Quotes and speech marks

In long passages of speech, open quotes for every new paragraph, but close quotes only at the end of the final paragraph.

When quoting someone in a blog post or other publication, use the present tense.

#### Single quotes

Use single quotes:

- in headlines
- for unusual terms
- when referring to words or publications, for example: 'Pharmacology Matters'

### Double quotes

Use double quotes in body text for direct quotations.

## R

## S

### Semicolons

Don't use semicolons as they are often mis-read. Long sentences using semicolons should be broken up into separate sentences instead.

### Sentence length

Don't use long sentences. Check sentences with more than 25 words to see if you can split them to make them clearer.

### Sign in

Do not use, use login instead.

### Slash /

Do not use within copy unless it is a web address. Remove it by rewording sentences. Use "or" or "and" instead.

### Spaces

One space after a full stop, not two.

## Spelling

We use British English spelling and conventions, not US English.

## Strategy

Lower case. Don't capitalise a named strategy: national health and welfare strategy.

## T

### Tables

An increasing number of users visit websites on a mobile or tablet device. Keep this in mind when creating content for the website. Avoid creating tables; use bulleted lists instead if you can.

### TBC

Write a full sentence if included in copy.

### Times

Use a 12-hour clock. 2.30pm, 6am, 5–6pm

Use 'to' in body copy time ranges, not hyphens: The event runs from 10am to 11am (not 10–11am).

am and pm are lower case.

For virtual or hybrid events, include the time zone to help international attendees: 11am (BST) – [check if the UK will be in BST or GMT](#)

For events held outside of the UK, include the time zone of the region where the event is being hosted. – [check the time zone of a region](#)

## Titles/headings

Titles should:

- be 50 characters or less
- be styled in sentence case, not a capital letter at the start of each word
- be unique, clear and descriptive
- be front-loaded and optimised for search
- use a colon to break up longer titles
- not contain dashes or slashes
- not have a full stop at the end
- not use acronyms unless they are well-known, like EU



## Titles (for people)

See 'Names and titles'

## Tooltips

Tooltip fields should be populated eg opens in new window, downloads PDF.

## Trade marks

Avoid using trademarked names where possible – so tablet not iPad. Trade mark is two words but trademarked is one word.

## U

### Underlining

Do not use on the web as it can be confused with a hyperlink.

### Underlining

One word.

### Underscoring ( \_ )

Do not use on the web as it can be lost in hyperlinks.

## URLs

50 characters maximum including spaces. This is the maximum the system allows.

## V

### Vice President

No hyphen.

## W

### WCP2023

No spacing.

- Title: World Congress of Basic & Clinical Pharmacology
- Official title: 19th World Congress of Basic & Clinical Pharmacology

## Webchat

One word. Not 'web chat'.

## Webpage

One word

## Websites

No need to include http:// when giving web addresses.

Don't write out the full website address in web copy. Don't use "click here" when linking online.

## Words to avoid

Please avoid using these words:

- agenda (unless it's for a meeting)
- advancing
- collaborate (use working with)
- combating
- commit/pledge (we need to be more specific – we're either doing something or we're not)
- countering
- deploy (unless it's military or software)
- dialogue (we speak to people)
- disincentivise (and incentivise)
- empower
- facilitate (instead, say something specific about how you're helping)
- focusing
- foster (unless it's children)
- going forward (if you mean "in future", just say that or end the sentence without as the meaning should be clear without this add-on)
- impact (don't use this as a synonym for have an effect on, or influence)
- initiate
- key (unless it unlocks something. A subject/thing isn't key – it's probably important)
- land (as a verb only use if you're talking about aircraft)
- leverage (unless in the financial sense)
- liaise
- overarching
- prescribe (unless it's about prescribing)
- progress (as a verb – what are you actually doing?)
- robust

- streamline
- utilise

Avoid using metaphors – they don't say what you actually mean and lead to slower comprehension of your content.

With all of these words you can generally replace them by breaking the term down into what you're actually doing. Be open and specific.

X

Y

Year

Use a dash for a span of years for example 2011–13, not 2011-2013 or 2011/13.

Young Pharmacologists

Use early career researcher.

Z

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## References

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/content-design> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/style-guide>

<https://sthttp://www.thepunctuationguide.covleguide.mailchimp.com/m>