

NTSU Style Guide

Updated October 2020



www.trentstudents.org



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Purpose

This style guide is designed to ensure that all NTSU communications are written in our house style and consistent with our brand.

Whether you're writing content for a social media post, an event description on the website, or any other form of communications material, please use this document as a point of reference.

We appreciate that writing isn't everyone's strong suit, and we're not expecting you to create something that's ready to publish first time. Just follow the points in this guide and the Comms team will do the rest.





***"No sentence can be effective if it contains facts alone. It must also contain emotion, image, logic and promise."
- Eugene Schwartz***



Tone of voice

NTSU's tone of voice is:



Judgemental ———— Non-judgemental

-  - You're young, so you'll probably find university life difficult.
-  - We understand that University can be difficult.



Friendly ———— Unapproachable

-  - The Students' Union offers a free Information and Advice Service.
-  - Our Information and Advice Service is here to support you.



Fun ———— Serious

-  - This afternoon, the City SU will host Nottingham's Medical Detection Dogs.
-  - We've got some very special, four legged visitors coming to the City SU this afternoon.



Helpful ———— Unhelpful

-  - There's a wealth of information about essay support on the internet.
-  - Here's an article on essay support you might find helpful.



Knowledgeable ———— Patronising

-  - Anxiety affects a lot of people in different ways and many of those people don't know how to cope with it. Here's some advice.
-  - Anxiety affects 1 in 5 students. Here's some advice on how to manage it.

Concise ———— Wordy

-  - Academic Reps have a number of responsibilities including attending training, student forum and gathering student feedback through our Tell Trent System. You can vote for them through our online system via our website. Go to trentstudents.org, Your Say, then Academic Reps.
-  - Academic Reps represent students on their course or school, making sure their feedback is heard. Find out more and vote for them here.

Inspiring ———— Unenthusiastic

-  - Now that summer is over, it's time to start applying for jobs.
-  - This ex-Trent student just landed the job of their dreams. Here's how you could do the same.



***"Don't use big words.
They mean so little."
- Oscar Wilde***

Use of slang/ jargon

As an inclusive organisation, it is important that we limit our use of slang words and jargon so we can appeal to as many students as possible.

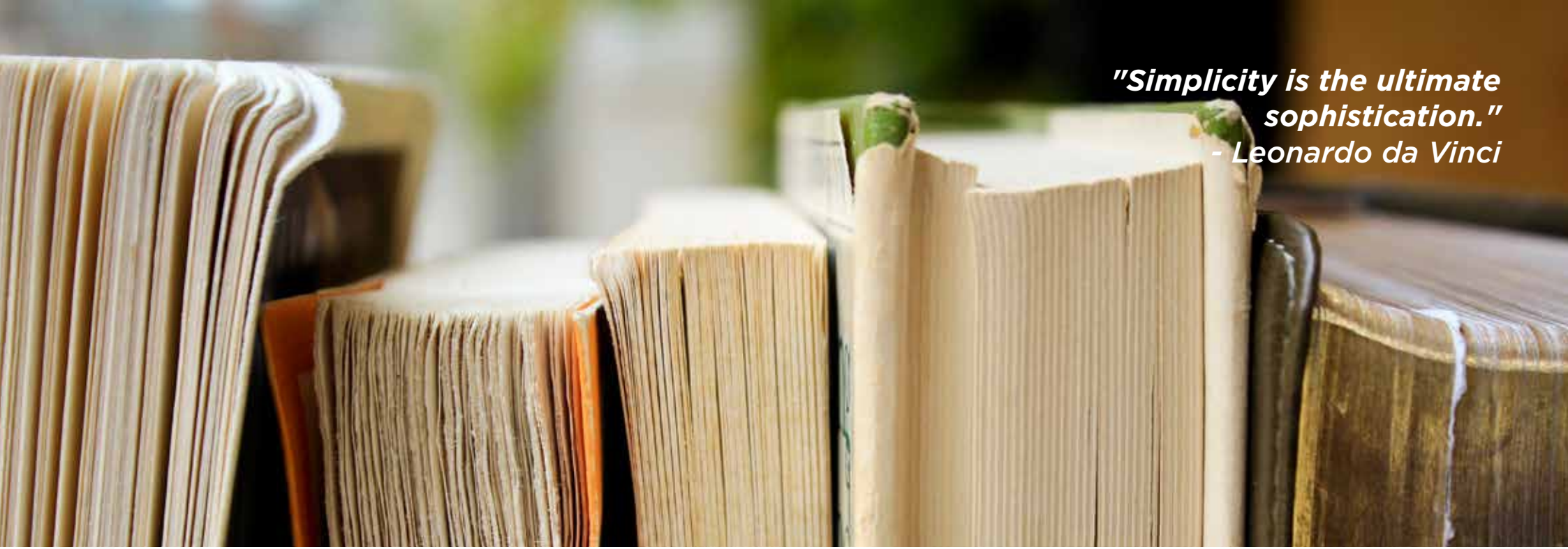
Within the organisation, we use a lot of jargon on a day-to-day basis without even realising it. For example, we use and understand terms like 'quorum' and 'hustings' but this doesn't necessarily mean that students will. Even if terms like these are understood by students, they may not necessarily appeal to them. Everyday language is almost always a preferable option to jargon or specialist terminology as it will land better with your audience.



The City Campus hustings are taking place next week



The City Campus Q&A sessions are taking place next week – they are your opportunity to question your officers.



*"Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication."
- Leonardo da Vinci*

Sentence structure

The same can be said for sentence structure. Copy should be written in a clear and simple way to avoid confusion and misunderstanding. Shorter sentences make the information more punchy and easy to understand.



Nottingham Trent Students' Union (NTSU) is here to make sure that your time at NTU is the very best it can be and, from advice and representation to events and facilities, there are a number of opportunities on offer to help you do just that.



Welcome to Nottingham Trent Students' Union. We're here to make your time at NTU the very best it can be. From advice and representation to events and facilities, there are a number of opportunities on offer to help you do just that.



Style points

In order to maintain a consistent house style in our communications there are a few stylistic points worth noting when it comes to creating copy.

The use of capital letters

- *Nottingham Trent Students' Union*, *The Students' Union* and *Nottingham Trent University* should all be capitalised if you are referring to the organisation itself. If you are talking about university or students' unions in general, use sentence case.
- Titles for events should be capitalised (Trent Talent), whereas titles for news stories should also be written in sentence case.

 Election Results Announced

 Election results announced


Style points


1. Abbreviations

- Abbreviations like 'Exec' fall into the category of jargon and can be confusing to students who haven't come across them before. Try to avoid them where possible.
- Use the long form of terms like 'it's' and 'it'll'. We naturally shorten them when we speak but the longer forms will add clarity to your copy.

2. Acronyms

- Acronyms are fine and often necessary, just make sure you've explained the term the first time it is mentioned.

 NTSU is one of the top SUs in the country. To find out more about NTSU, [click here](#).

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3. Numbers

- For numbers below 10, use the written form eg. Five.
- Numbers over ten should be written in their numerical form eg. 11.
- Larger figures should be written in their shortest form eg. 16,000,000, should be 16 million.

4. Apostrophes

- Where possession is involved, an apostrophe should be used.
- Eg, Freshers' Week - it's a week dedicated to freshers, it belongs to them, therefore an apostrophe is necessary.
- If the word is plural or ends in an 's', the apostrophe goes after the 's'. If not, it goes before, eg. 'Nottingham's must-see sights'
- Common ones to remember are **Freshers' Week** and **Students' Union**.

- Please see [here](#) for more information on using apostrophes.


5. Exclamation marks

We don't use exclamation marks, as they tend to undermine the message that is being made. Use a full stop instead. For more detail on why exclamation marks are undesirable in copywriting, [read this article](#).

6. Dates, times and venues

When we write the location details for an event, we have to include a lot of punctuation to break the information up, which can easily look messy. We have a standard format to ensure this type of information is clear and consistent. This format may vary slightly depending on the context it is being used in. In both instances, the first piece of information (usually a campus or a date) should be bold followed by a colon. All other information should be standard body text separated by commas:

 Clifton Campus - 10am - 2pm - 2nd December, The Point

 **Clifton Campus:** Monday 2nd December, 10am - 2pm, The Point

 **Monday 2nd December:** 10am - 2pm, The Point, Clifton Campus

7. Referring to campuses

- Don't assume that all students will understand what 'the SU' means. We have 3 campuses and a students' union at each so make sure you specify, City, Clifton or Brackenhurst SU. If you're referring to one of the campuses, 'Campus' should be capitalised too.

 Come to the SU

 Come to the City Campus SU on Shakespeare Street



URLs



Quick links

When setting up a page or event on the website that requires promotion, speak to the Comms team about creating a quick link. If, for example, you're hosting an interview skill workshop, ask for the URL to be trentstudents.org/interviewskills instead of trentstudents.org/events/interview-skills-workshop-02. This makes the web address far easier to remember and looks a lot cleaner on any promo material.

Shortened URLs

If you're linking to a web page from social media, you can use a URL shortener to condense it. We recommend using [this website](#). Simply copy and paste the original URL, click 'shorten URL' and it will generate a shorter version for you to use.

QR Codes

If you're creating a poster/printed material and your URL is too long, we advise using a QR code that students can scan on their phone to get to the desired website. If you're requesting artwork, we'll create one for you but if you're doing your own, we recommend using [this QR Code Generator](#).

A photograph of a modern building with large windows and a tram in the foreground. The text 'Things to include' is written vertically in a large, bold, green font over the image.

Things to include

Call to action (CTA)

Promo material for events, campaigns, or anything else you want students to get involved with should include a call to action.

Eg. 'Book now' in a social media post or a 'find out more about NTSU at trentstudents.org' on a poster.

Essential details

- Dates (including day as stated above)
- Time - start and end
- Location - include campus, building and room
- Summary - a few key details of what the event/project will entail.
- Images/ video (social media)

Social posts need to include an image, graphic or video - it makes them much more eye catching and generates more audience engagement than a post with no image. If you have images already, please share them with Comms when you send your social media request, otherwise submit an artwork request form for a new one to be created.

Templates



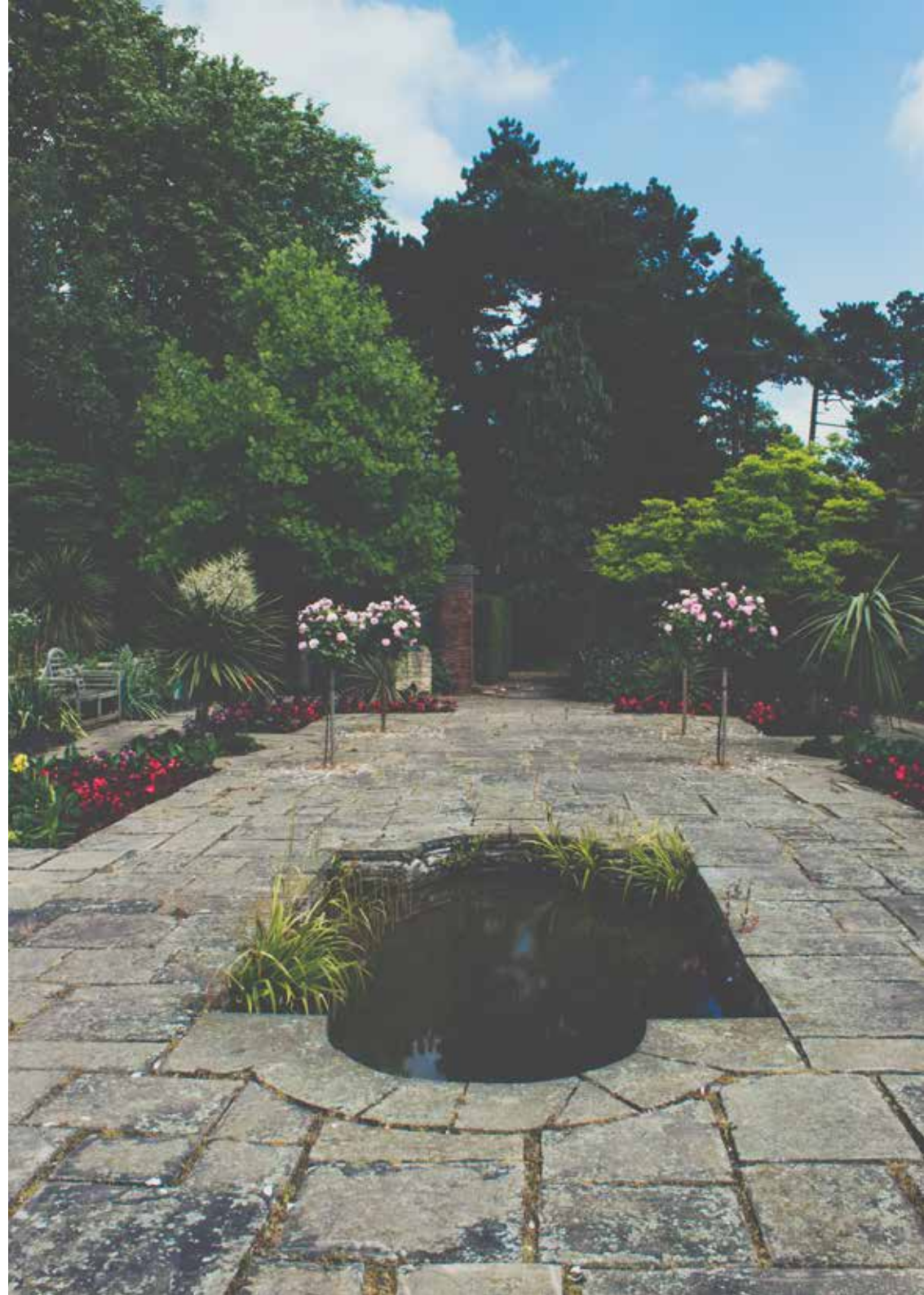
Not only will writing your own copy give the Comms team a better understanding of what you're trying to achieve, it will also save time! If you know exactly what you want, putting it on paper will mean fewer back and forths to get it right.

These templates have been designed to assist you:

[News article template](#)

[Newsletter article template](#)

Remember we're not expecting your content to be perfect. Just give us the basic info using the guidelines in this document and we'll knock it into shape for you.



NTSU

NOTTINGHAM TRENT STUDENTS' UNION



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