

New Brunswick Community College

Style Guide

May 2021

Fourth edition

This style guide will be updated as needed.
If you have any comments or questions about
the guide, please contact communications@nbcc.ca



Any document appearing in paper form is uncontrolled and must be compared to the electronic version.

What's a Style Guide?

A Style Guide is a non-academic reference that provides answers to general questions around writing style and language use at New Brunswick Community College (NBCC). Following Canadian Press (CP) guidelines, Government of New Brunswick guidelines and particular NBCC stylistic preferences, this guide will help achieve a consistent, standard writing style in everyday NBCC communications. However, we do recognize that there will always be exceptions such as when you are writing for industry-specific, policy, or legal purposes. In that case, please use your discretion to maintain those writing standards.

Note: Marketing and other materials may follow a less formal style as needed.

Comments and suggestions

This guide is maintained and updated by the Community and Government Relations team at NBCC. Language and its use are always evolving and you may find that this guide doesn't address specific examples you may come across. Please feel free to contribute to these guidelines by sending comments or suggestions to the Communications team at communications@nbcc.ca.

Sources

Grammar Girl, www.quickanddirtytips.com/grammar-girl

The Canadian Press Stylebook, 17th Edition, The Canadian Press, Editor: James McCarten

The Canadian Press Caps and Spellings, 20th edition, The Canadian Press

Communications and Editorial Services Guidelines, Province of New Brunswick, May 2013

NBCC terms and usage

Aboriginal

NBCC's preferred term is **Indigenous**. The exception is programs or initiatives external to NBCC which use the term Aboriginal (e.g., New Brunswick Aboriginal Peoples Council).

Academic courses

In everyday communications, lowercase course names except for language classes.

*John was late for his **mechanical engineering** class.*

Joseph is taking second language courses in French.

Capitalize formal course names.

***Writing Fundamentals** will teach you the essentials to function in a business environment.*

Academic programs

Capitalize the formal names of programs but lowercase the names of program subjects in everyday communication, except for words that are proper names (names of people, places, languages, etc.).

*Students applying to **Hospitality and Tourism** must submit their applications soon.*

*Anna is learning about **automotive repair** at NBCC.*

Acronyms

Spell out all acronyms on first reference and include the acronym in parentheses following the name. Afterwards, you can use the acronym on the same page.

Do not assume that a reader understands an acronym that was featured earlier in a document or website. Readers may be scanning, skipping or accessing the content through different entry points if they are online.

*As an **Information Technology (IT)** graduate, you can find employment anywhere within the IT market.*

Advisor

*Contact a Recruitment **Advisor** for more information..*

Alumni

Alumni is the plural form of graduates. For a male individual, use **alumnus**. For a female individual, use **alumna**. For a group of females, use **alumnae**.

John Smith and Jane Doe are NBCC alumni.

Jane is an NBCC alumna.

John is an NBCC alumnus.

Awards

Capitalize specific awards.

*He received an **NBCC Alumni Recognition Award** for the tremendous impact he has had in his community.*

She received an award for literature.

When referring to a student or staff member who received an award, use the term **recipient** as it denotes distinction or merit whereas the term **winner** denotes chance.

Jane was a recipient of the New Brunswick Teachers Award in 2013.

John was a winner of the 2014 Cash for Cars lottery.

Board of Governors

Capitalize when referring to the formal name of any board. If referring to a board in a general sense, lowercase.

*The NBCC **Board of Governors** provides a broad direction to the College as a framework for organizational decision-making.*

*The **board** was invited to attend our annual meeting.*

Campuses

NBCC has six campuses across New Brunswick. For branding purposes, refer to NBCC and the campus name together. No hyphenation.

NBCC Fredericton Campus

NBCC Miramichi Campus

NBCC Moncton Campus

NBCC Saint John Campus

NBCC St. Andrews Campus

NBCC Woodstock Campus

Capitalization

Capitalize the names of proper nouns (people, places, or things). For capitalization of job titles, see **Titles**.

If the communication will be viewed by external audiences, lowercase occupational titles and job descriptions.

marketing and communications manager, Jane Smith

hospitality and tourism instructor Jane Smith

executive assistant John Doe

Chair

Capitalize **Chair**, particularly when used by itself, when referring to the presiding officer.

Please address your remarks to the Chair.

Mr. Smith, as Chair, will present the report.

College

When referring to NBCC, **NBCC** is the preferred term. As a second choice, capitalize **College**, when referring to NBCC specifically.

We will enhance student mobility and access to, from and within the College by increasing transfer of credits and the recognition of relevant work experience.

The College-wide committee met on a monthly basis.

Committee

Capitalize the formal names of groups, teams and committees. Use lowercase, if the words “committee”, “council” or “team” stand alone.

The Senior Executive Team, Administrative Council and Alumni Steering Committee met to discuss how to change the world.

The committee meets regularly.

Crown corporation

Capitalize **Crown** and use a lowercase “c” in corporation.

Formatting

Please refer to the guidelines in the **NBCC Visual Identity Standards** document available on NBCC@work. You’ll find guidelines regarding logo usage, brand colours, typography, email signatures and more.

Full-time, Part-time

Hyphenate **full-time** or **part-time** when modifying a noun (person, place or thing).

We are hiring a full-time instructor for our computer engineering program.

Do not hyphenate when modifying a verb (action).

He attends class part time.

She works full time at the office.

Gender neutral language

Avoid use of gender specific nouns (i.e. fisherman, ombudsman); instead use fisher, ombud.

Collective pronouns (they/them) can be used with singular nouns, but **sparingly**.

Instead, wherever possible, restructure the sentence to:

- Use a plural antecedent – Change “each student needs to provide their address” to “students must provide their addresses”
- Eliminate the pronoun – Change “each student has their own study habits” to “each student has particular study habits”
- Switch to first person, second person, or imperative – “You as students should develop your own study habits” or “Develop your own study habits”

Hands-on

Hyphen required.

*Students will receive **hands-on** training through a practicum.*

Indigenous

Capitalize **Indigenous**, a term used to encompass a variety of First Nations and Aboriginal groups.

NBCC students and staff learn from Indigenous knowledge, culture and history.

Indigenous should always be used as an adjective, not a noun.

Incorrect: *NBCC supports the Indigenous.*

Correct: *NBCC supports Indigenous learners.*

Jargon

Jargon is language and terminology that is specific to an industry or a culture. When you are writing for audiences who may not be familiar with your industry or NBCC, avoid using jargon.

Jargon: *Jane Smith played an integral role in the research phases of SLE initiatives at NBCC.*

No jargon: *Jane Smith played an important role in developing a learning experience that integrates community service into the curriculum.*

Learners

This term is preferred to “students.”

NBCC Advantage

The new strategic plan, *Together We Rise*, includes reference to the NBCC Advantage. “Advantage” is capitalized but “the” is not. Refer to *Together We Rise* for the specific elements referred to by the NBCC Advantage.

New Brunswick Community College, NBCC

Spell out New Brunswick Community College on first reference and refer to the acronym in parenthesis beside it. NBCC may be used in later references. No spaces or punctuation. Refrain from breaking the abbreviation on two lines. **The** is not used before NBCC whether spelled in full or abbreviated.

Welcome to New Brunswick Community College (NBCC).

Avoid using “the” before New Brunswick Community College or NBCC.

Incorrect: *The New Brunswick Community College offers quality programs.*

Correct: *New Brunswick Community College offers quality programs.*

NBCC program sectors

All regular full-time NBCC programs fall within one of 15 program sectors as follows. Please note the website will reflect the most updated information regarding NBCC program sectors. You can also check with Academic Development to get the most current information.

Academic Services

Applied and Media Arts

Business Administration

Civil Engineering Technology

Electronics and Electrical Engineering Technology

Environment and Marine Systems

Health

Hospitality and Tourism

Industrial and Mechanical

Information Technology

Office Administration

Social Sciences

Trades: Building and Construction

Trades: Metals Processing

Trades: Mobile Equipment Repair

NBCC@work

Use a lowercase “w”.

NBCC’s intranet site, NBCC@work, is a go-to resource for leave forms, College-wide announcements, etc.

Robertson Institute for Community Leadership

Use Robertson Institute for Community Leadership on first reference and refer to Community Leadership Institute in later references.

*The award-winning **Robertson Institute for Community Leadership** was launched in 2014. While NBCC students are the first focus of the **Community Leadership Institute**, NBCC is also committed to encouraging and supporting community leadership in its faculty and staff.*

The acronym RICL may be used internally in written communications but is not preferred for external communications.

Titles

Capitalize formal titles when preceding names.

***President and CEO** Marilyn Luscombe attended the meeting.*

*The **Director of Applied Research & Innovation**, Diane Burt, will be making a presentation.*

Lowercase formal titles when standing alone or set off from the name with commas.

*Marilyn Luscombe, **president and CEO** of NBCC, attended the meeting.*

*The **president** of NBCC attended the meeting.*

*John Smith, the **minister of energy**, attended the meeting.*

Together We Rise

Each word in the title of NBCC’s new strategic plan is capitalized. There is no punctuation.

General style and grammatical preferences

Quick Reference - Canadian Spellings		
acknowledgement	enroll / enrolled / enrolment	modelled / modelling
analyze	favour	neighbour / neighbourhood
behaviour	gauge	program / programming
cancelled / cancelling	honour	realization
centre / centred	institutionalize	recognize
counselling	labour	re-educate
customize	medallist	re-examine
economize	mobilize	specialization

a, an

Use **a** before **consonant** sounds.
a historic building, a one-way ticket

Use **an** before **vowel** sounds.
an apple, an honor

active/passive voice

Writing in an active voice means the subject is doing the action. Writing in a passive voice means that the subject is being acted upon. Often, the word **by** is a sign that you are writing in the passive voice. Avoid passive voice as it is awkward, wordy and indirect.

Passive: *The new policy was approved by the Board of Governors.*

Active: *The Board of Governors approved the new policy.*

a.m. or p.m.

Do not include zeros when writing out time.
7 a.m.
7:25 p.m.

colon

A colon may be used to introduce a formal question, quotation, amplification, example, or list. A colon replaces **that is, for example, such as**, and so on.
Develop the essential skills to succeed in this field: communication, listening and critical thinking.

co- (prefix)

Co-chair, co-host, co-owner, co-worker

but

coexist, cooperate and coordinate.

commas

NBCC's stylistic preference is the Oxford comma, i.e. put commas between the elements of a series:

Students will learn through roleplaying, video scenarios, debates, and group projects.

councillor, counsellor

Use councillor when referring to municipal government and counsellor when referring to academic.

I will call my city councillor tomorrow.

Talk to a student counsellor to discuss your grades.

dates

In writing dates, use a **cardinal number** (a number that represents an amount like *one, two* or *three*) instead of an **ordinal number** (a number that represents a place in a series like *first, second* and *third*). Use the ordinal form only when the day is alone (no month) or if the day is separated from the month by other words.

On January 1, classes start.

On the 1st of each month, the students will take an exam.

When referring to a specific date, place a comma between the date and the year otherwise no comma.

Classes start on January 1, 2016.

Another semester starts January 2016.

dos and don'ts

Note there are no hyphens. No apostrophe in "dos."

Students will learn the dos and don'ts of the building construction trade.

enroll, enrolment, enrolls, enrolling, enrolled

When used as a verb *Please enroll by Thursday* or *He enrolled last week* use double consonant; when used as a noun

Enrolment has increased use single consonant.

FAQs

An abbreviation for Frequently Asked Questions. No apostrophe.

final part of official names

The words **Limited, Incorporated, Corporation, Ltd., Inc., Corp.**, and so on may be dropped in everyday communications.

JDI has over 15,000 employees.

Xplornet Communications is one of Atlantic Canada's top employers.

French, English, other languages/cultures

Capitalize nouns, adjectives, and verbs referring to languages, nationalities, peoples, races and so on.

lists

When the order of the listed items doesn't matter, group the items in a way that makes sense whether it's alphabetical or by type (most important to least important, biggest to smallest, etc.).

When listing items, you can use bullets, numbers (if order is important), or letters (if you wish to refer back to the items later).

If the listed items are complete sentences, capitalize the first letter of each bulleted item. Use punctuation for each bulleted item that is consistent with a sentence (such as a period or question mark).

Learning grammar is important because:

- *You will be able to communicate with people more effectively.*
- *You will make more friends because people love good grammar.*
- *You will find that employers value when employees can communicate effectively.*

If the bulleted items are not complete sentences, you can either lowercase or capitalize the first letter. Punctuation at the end of each bulleted item isn't necessary.

In second year, students will learn:

- *advanced machine design*
- *computer-aided drawings and specifications*
- *building systems*

For a clean and modern look, do not put commas or semicolons after each bulleted item. Don't put **and** or **also** before the last item in your list.

For all lists, consistency is the key. Use either complete sentences or words, not a combination of both in the same list. Consistency with form is important too. If your first bulleted list item is a verb, the following items should be verbs too.

me, myself and I

The easiest way to tell if you should be using **me**, **myself** or **I** is to remove all references to other people. Ask yourself: what would make the most sense if it was just me in the sentence?

Incorrect: *Gord and myself were invited.*

Correct: *Gord and I were invited.*

Incorrect: *Jane gave the keys to myself and Gord.*

Correct: *Jane gave the keys to me and Gord.*

An example of using **myself** correctly:

I gave myself twenty minutes to complete the exercise.

on-the-job

Note hyphens.

Students will receive on-the-job training during a work co-op placement.

page

Spell out **page** in full or abbreviate as **p.**

page 1

Look on p. 12 for more information.

people

Capitalize nouns and adjectives referring to nationality or people and the inhabitants of countries and regions.

Canadians, Greeks, Acadians, Maritimers, New Brunswickers, Quebecers, Monctonians, First Nations, the Wolastoqiyik, Indigenous learners.

province

Capitalize the word **Province** if you are referring specifically to the provincial government. For greater clarification, use the term **Government of New Brunswick**.

seasons

Lowercase “fall,” “autumn,” “winter,” “spring,” “and “summer” when seasons are used generically. Capitalize the name of the season if it is part of a proper name, or part of a headline or title.

*It is a beautiful spring day to train for the **Summer Olympics**.*

*Students are welcomed back to classes, each **fall**.*

*The Robertson Institute for Community Leadership officially launched during the **2014 Fall Term**.*

simple language

When writing for any audience, use language that is simple, clear and concise.

Instead of: *In the near future, John hopes to improve upon the processes that enable students to inquire about their electronic transcripts regardless of whether or not they are currently enrolled at NBCC.*

Try: *Looking ahead, John plans to improve student access to electronic grades regardless of enrolment status.*

Instead of: *In most cases, the lessons will be provided to the students by the instructors in advance of the first class and the expectation is that students will demonstrate their commitment to their studies by doing their due diligence and coming to class prepared.*

Try: *Most instructors will provide the students with their lessons before the first class and expect them to come to class prepared.*

space marks

Use one space, not two, after punctuation marks including periods.

the

In everyday communications, lowercase **the** in the names of organizations, associations, companies, institutions, awards, documents, laws and newspapers.

the University of Alberta

the House of Commons

the Constitution

the Daily Gleaner

web-references

web, web browser, webcam, web-enabled, webmaster, web page, web server, website

-wide (suffix)

citywide, provinciewide, countrywide, worldwide

except *College-wide*

workforce, workload, workplace

No hyphen.