

The Hong Kong Chartered Governance Institute

Corporate Governance Paper Competition and Presentation Awards 2023

Writing Style Guide

Language: Older-fashioned British English spelling and syntax. Use the 'ise' form, rather than the 'ize' form where this is an option.

Presentation: Tables and graphics can be used for illustrating simple ideas, but the content has to be written in paragraphs.

Dictionary: Collins English Dictionary and/or OED for spelling and hyphenation

abbreviations

In general, avoid unnecessary abbreviations, or those that might be misunderstood. Use full spell-outs for ambiguous abbreviations.

acronyms

Spell out in full at first mention in each section/article, with acronym in parenthesis, thereafter use acronym only.

capitalisation

Capitalise proper nouns (names, places, months, etc). Also titles of office holders (Simon Pindar, Chief Executive, Green Door Productions Ltd), as well as names of organisations ('In June, the HKSAR Government gave money...', but, 'the government decided to...')

caption

Photo captions should not have full stops, unless more than one sentence is used.

Chartered Secretary and Chartered Governance Professional

Initial caps at every mention, including when used in plural form: Chartered Secretaries and Chartered Governance Professionals.

citations

ITALICISE: Printed books, films, names of ships, genera, species, less-used Latin words, other foreign words that are not generally accepted in English, and the name CGj. For legal case citation, only the name of the case is italicised (*Rye v Rye 119621 AC 496, HL*).

colons and semicolons

Avoid overuse of the colon; reserve it for introducing a list, or sometimes to precede an explanation in a sentence. No initial cap for the first word after a colon, except if it is a proper noun. Use semicolons where a colon is used to introduce a list; where a sentence includes several clauses in a list; or, as in this example, to separate elements within a list where the elements include commas.

commas

Do not use the serial comma (also known as the ‘Oxford comma’). If a sentence or list is long and the lack of serial comma might be confusing, break up the sentence with a comma followed by ‘as well as’ or similar.

company names and institutions

At first reference to a company name or institution in each section/article, use the full correct legal company name, with the Co, Ltd, Corporation, or PTE, etc. Thereafter an abbreviated form may be used. Use only Ltd, never Limited in full.

countries and geographical references

Use UK, US throughout (never in full).

Macau is spelled with the u at the end (except if using a proper noun, then use spelling exactly as the official usage: Macao SAR Government).

The PRC/China is defined as ‘the mainland of China (the Mainland)’. All subsequent references should be ‘the Mainland’.

Use lower case for general directional terms (southeast) and without hyphens. Use initial cap if using as a proper noun (Southeast Asia, South America).

dates

Use the British English dating system: “D MMMM YYYY” (that is, 5 November 2012). For date ranges use four-figure years with the en-dash, with no space either side: 2010–2012, January 2000–November 2012. Use full numbers for decades and do not use an apostrophe (the 1990s). There is no space between the slash and the letters on either side of it: 2011/2012.

eg, ie, etc

Avoid using such abbreviations in running text, use ‘for example’, ‘such as’, ‘in other words’, ‘that is’, ‘among others’, ‘including’, ‘comprising’ and so on.

ellipsis

Do not overuse the ellipsis structure. If the ellipsis is used in running text or any headers, use as in this example: ‘Culture, work site, protocol and compliance... We believe that safety is everyone’s responsibility.’

en-dash

The en-dash is the middle-length dash of the three (the hyphen being the shortest, the em-dash being the longest).

En-dashes (aka en-rules, or 1/N), with no space either side, are used to indicate ‘from/to’; en-dashes indicate an inclusive, continuing relationship, as in a date range ‘1997–2012’ or a time range ‘9.30am–5.20pm’. [Note the use of the dot, not the colon, to separate the hour from the minutes.]

The en-dash is also used in a compound where one of the parts consists of more than one word: ‘Hong Kong–based relations’ (to avoid the uglier temporary compound construction, Hong-Kong-based relations).

fonts

Arial, 12pt (for heading); 11pt (for the body text).

footnote reference numbers

Footnote references (and asterisks related to a note elsewhere on the page) are always placed after any punctuation that follows, except with the em-dash structure (or space+em-dash+space), as is used in CGJ for the em-dash structure), where the footnote reference always comes before the em-dash. (See example below, ¹ and ^{*})

Otherwise, if there is no punctuation after a word or phrase to be referenced, add the footnote reference number directly after the relevant word. (See example below, ²)

Example: 'This year, 102 new students enrolled in this programme¹ – which has proved a very popular way for us to promote the Chartered Secretary profession² to local undergraduates – while a total of 31 Institute members joined as mentors.*'

forward slash

No space before or after the forward slash (and/or).

gender sensitivity

Avoid using gender-specific terms where other options are available ('humanity' rather than 'mankind', etc). However, use Chairman even if the position is held by a woman.

line spacing

Single. Exactly 14 point, Before 0 point, After 0 point

measurements

In running text, do not abbreviate measurements – use the full word, (kilometres, inches, metres, grams).

money

Always specify currency (HK\$, US\$) followed by the amount in numerals, with no space between the symbol and the number (HK\$200,000, HK\$25 million, HK\$1.7 billion).

Use the standard symbol for major currencies (£25 million, ¥300 billion, RMB10 million). For other currencies, provide the HK or US dollar equivalent in parenthesis after the amount: 84,000 pesos (US\$2,000).

names

Use first and family name at first mention (Paul Stafford). Thereafter use title and family name (Mr Stafford). Do not use the full stop in titles (Mr, Dr, Ms). However, in general, do not use Mr, Ms, Mrs in a list of names, except for Dr and Professor.

Chinese names: use the name in the same order as the person himself or herself writes their name. So it could be Donald Chow Yun-fat, or Chow Yun Fat, Donald, or however the person uses their own name. In this example, thereafter use Mr Chow.

numbers

In running text one to nine are written out in words. Use numbers for 10 upwards. The same goes for ordinals (first, second, third, 13th, 20th). However, if there is a mixture of figures in one sentence use numbers ('In 9 out of 40 cases...'). Never use the digit 1 in running text, always spell this out.

Use a comma when there are four or more figures, e.g. 1,000 (except when referring to page numbers).

Numbers are separated by en-rules not hyphens, e.g. 28–30 September, pages 26–27 (note there are no spaces either side of the en-rule unless it is being used parenthetically).

percentages

Use numerals for percentages, followed by %. No space between the number and % (20%).

quotation marks

Use single quotation marks, reserving double quotation marks for quotations within quotations.

quoting from other sources

When quoting directly from other published sources, and the quote is set off with quotation marks, use the original spelling, capitalisation, punctuation and italicisation exactly: do not edit or amend to fit the in-house style.

reference

Chicago Manual of Style Author-Date system is suggested to follow.

For this system, please note that while in the footnote references in the body of the paper, the author names are written with [first name + family name], in the Bibliography section at the end, the order is reversed, so the family name of the author/s has/have to come first.

See https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-1.html for a general outline.

Exceptions to this reference:

- Please use the British English style for quotation marks, as specified above. Use single quote marks around the names of journal articles, not double quote marks (reserve double quote marks for quotes within quotes, if applicable). For example: Kory Stamper, 'From "F-Bomb" to "Photobomb", How the Dictionary Keeps Up with English', ...
- Please use the British English style of punctuation for placement of quote marks. In American, quote marks always go outside any following punctuation such as a full stop or a comma. In British English, this changes depending on context. Quote marks only go outside the closing full stop or comma if the quoted material is a full sentence. If it is only a clause, the closing quote mark comes before any following comma or full stop (or other punctuation).
- Please do not use dots in abbreviations: so use ed (not ed., for editor); no (not no. for number); et al (not et al. for 'and others'). Obviously, if the abbreviation is at the end of a sentence, use the full stop to end the sentence, but not as a style to follow an abbreviation.
- Incorporate other style matters from this Style Guide, for example: for websites, no https:// if the website includes www.
- Use British English date style: date + month + year (American English, as in the Chicago Manual reference, is not the same: month + date + year).

time

Time is stated in a 12-hour format: 8.00am; 9.30pm

Use the simple style without dot: 'am' and 'pm'. There is no space between the number and am or pm.

website addresses

http is ONLY used if there is NO www in the website address (www.hkcg.org.hk, or http://hkcg.org.hk).