



The Mount Royal Staff Association (MRSA) maintains first-rate, professional standards in its print and online publications. This style guide is intended to provide a definitive resource for writers, offering a consistent approach to how we present ourselves to our internal and external audiences: students, faculty, staff, retirees, volunteers, government, media, community partners and others.

The MRSA style guide is compiled and managed by the Governance Committee. It is designed for all members of the MRSA community who write about or for the Association.

The guide is based on principles and technical guides published by the Canadian Press (CP) — Canada's national news agency. Other reference materials used to develop this guide include the Oxford Canadian Dictionary, Fowler's Modern English Usage and The American Psychological Association's Publication Manual.

Questions relating to references found in the guide, or recommendations for future additions, may be submitted to the Governance Committee via [mrса@mtroyal.ca](mailto:mrса@mtroyal.ca). **If you cannot find a specific item of question in this guide, please first check the Mount Royal University comprehensive style guide, available online through MyMRU.** Additional tools and technical guides not found in this edition can be found in the CP Stylebook and Caps and Spelling, available for purchase through the Mount Royal University BookStore.

---

## Writing

Some basic rules, courtesy of George Orwell and others:

1. Never use a long word where a short one will do.
2. If it is possible to cut out a word, always cut it out.
3. Never use the passive voice where you can use the active.
4. Avoid clichés.
5. Never use a foreign phrase, a scientific word or jargon if you can think of an everyday English equivalent.

Long sentences, like long paragraphs, should be used judiciously.

---

## **Abbreviations, Numbers, Times, and Dates**

In general, avoid introducing unfamiliar acronyms if they are to be used only once or twice. When in doubt, spell it out.

**Most buildings and groups, though known by many, should still be formally introduced on first reference, followed by the acronym in parentheses directly afterwards to indicate it is a replacement for the full term:** *Ex: This is to be determined at the next General Faculties Council (GFC). The GFC met....*

Mount Royal Staff Association; subsequently, MRSA

Mount Royal Faculty Association; subsequently, MRFA

Student's Association of Mount Royal University; subsequently, SAMRU

Lincoln Park Room - LPR

Taylor Centre for the Performing Arts - Taylor Centre

The Bella Concert Hall - The Bella

Wyckham House - Wyckham

Roderick Mah Centre for Continuous Learning - RMCCCL

Riddell Library and Learning Centre - The Library

**When using the month and date, write them out in order of month, day, and then year:**

February 9, not Feb. 9 or Feb. 9th

*Ex: The event is being held on June 13, 2017, not 13th June, 2017*

For clarity, do not write in M/D/Y or D/M/Y numerical format as the order can differ based on preference and creates ambiguity.

**Use a closed hyphen to connect associated years: the 2013-14 school year, but 1998-2003**

**For street addresses,** always write out the full address, except for the quadrant.

*Ex: 4825 Mount Royal Gate SW and not 4825 Mt.Royal Gt. South West*

**Seasons are always lower case** unless part of a proper noun, as in: *The Winter 2016 semester doesn't actually start on the first day of winter.*

**The modifiers a.m. and p.m. have periods, and the minutes are always represented:**

Classes begin at 8 a.m. *not* 8:00 a.m.

Do not use the 24-hour clock

**Spell out whole numbers below 10, and use figures for 10 and above:**

Spell out first through ninth and use figures for higher enumerations.

*Ex: It only takes one second. In that time, 12 “bingos” were called.*

**Avoid starting a sentence with a number; if you must, spell it out.**

*Ex: “The event had 15 people in attendance,” or, “Fifteen people attended the event,” NOT “15 people attended the event.”*

**Consistency is king with numbers;** if you have a mixed sentence with low and high numbers, treat them all the same and either spell them all out, or write them all out numerically.

**Use figures for decisions, rulings, scores, votes and odds,** as in a 6–3 ruling, a 35–6 vote, a 7–7 tie

**Spell out numbers in fractions below one and standing alone:**

one-third

12 one-hundredths

**When writing about money, use the \$ symbol. When referring to denominations smaller than a dollar, write cents:**

\$248-million budget

lemonade costs five cents

---

## Capitalization and Spelling

The MRSA follows the Canadian Oxford Dictionary for the spelling of all words, unless specifically noted otherwise in this guide.

For capitalization, a standard rule of thumb is to use lower case unless it's a formal title or name. For more information on capitalization of people and places around Mount Royal, please see their respective sections in this guide.

<p><b>A</b></p> <p>aboriginal</p> <p>Aboriginal Education Program</p> <p>advisor</p> <p>alumni: a gender neutral reference to a group of grads</p> <p>alum: an acceptable short form of alumni</p> <p><b>B</b></p> <p>Bissett School of Business</p> <p>Bow Valley College</p> <p>book store — however, the proper name of the retail outlet at MRU is the “Mount Royal University BookStore”</p> <p>bachelor's degree (when used casually)</p> <p><i>but</i></p> <p>Bachelor of &lt;Program&gt; (when in reference to a specific degree)</p> <p><b>C</b></p> <p>campus</p>	<p><b>L</b></p> <p>Leacock Theatre</p> <p>Lincoln Park Room</p> <p>Lincoln Park Campus</p> <p><b>M</b></p> <p>MacEwan University (not Grant MacEwan)</p> <p>master's degree</p> <p>Mount Royal University (MRU)</p> <p>Mount Royal Recreation (MRR)</p> <p>Main Street</p> <p><b>N</b></p> <p>Nickle Theatre</p> <p><b>O</b></p> <p>online</p> <p><b>P</b></p> <p>Pepsi, Pepsi-Cola</p> <p>per cent (avoid the symbol %), percentage</p> <p>program, not programme</p>
---	--

<p>centre</p> <p>Cougars (not Cougar's)</p> <p><b>D</b></p> <p>director-at-large</p> <p>doctorate</p> <p><b>E</b></p> <p>email</p> <p>enrol</p> <p>enrolled</p> <p>enrolment</p> <p><b>F</b></p> <p>favour</p> <p>Foundation (as in Mount Royal University Foundation)</p> <p>fundraising, fundraiser, fundraise</p> <p><b>G</b></p> <p>governors, not governors</p> <p><b>H</b></p> <p>home page</p> <p>honorary degree</p> <p>honorarium</p> <p>honour</p> <p><b>I</b></p> <p>Iniskim Centre</p> <p>Internet (public)</p> <p>Intranet (internal, like MyMRU)</p>	<p><b>R</b></p> <p>Roderick Mah Centre for Continuous Learning</p> <p>Ross Glen Hall</p> <p>Riddell Library and Learning Centre (the Library)</p> <p><b>S</b></p> <p>sizable, not sizeable</p> <p>Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT)</p> <p><b>T</b></p> <p>Taylor Centre for the Performing Arts</p> <p>theatre</p> <p>town hall (two words)</p> <p>The Table</p> <p>Transitional Vocational Program (TVP)</p> <p><b>U</b></p> <p>undergraduate</p> <p>University of Calgary</p> <p>University of Alberta</p> <p><b>V</b></p> <p>vice-president</p> <p><b>W</b></p> <p>web — lower case</p> <p>web page, website, webcast, webmaster, web server</p>
--	--

## Commonly Misused Words

Alternate – every other one in a series

Alternative – one of two possibilities

*Note: “Alternate” may stand for “a substitute” when used to refer to the other one of a series of two, but “alternative” implies a matter of choice that is never present with “alternate.”*

Among – two or more persons or things are involved

Between – two or more persons or things are involved, but each is considered individually.

*E.g. “An agreement between six heirs.”*

Cannot - Not “can not”

Compare to – point out similarities between objects of a different order

Compare with – point out differences between objects of the same order

Comprise – the whole comprises the parts: “the house comprises six rooms.”

Grateful (not “greatful,” which is not a word)

In regard to (not in regards to)

It’s – A contraction for it is or it has

Its – Indicates possessive

*Ex: It’s time to vote; the Board has reached its decision.*

Less – Is for things you can’t count

Fewer – Is for things you can count (e.g. attendees or votes)

*Ex: I’ll make less potato salad next time. There were fewer people at the party than I thought would come.*

That – restrictive pronoun: specifies which object among many

Which – non-restrictive pronoun: does not specify which one; adds more information

*Ex: Chairs that don’t have cushions are uncomfortable to sit on.*

*I sat on an uncomfortable chair, which was in my office.*

Their – Plural possessive *Ex: It's their choice.*

They're – Contraction for they are

There – Refers to a place

---

### **Inclusive Language**

It's important to recognize that language around age, race, gender, disabilities and religion must be handled thoughtfully. Use fairness, sensitivity and good taste when identifying age, colour, creed, nationality, personal appearance, religion, gender and any other heading under which a person or group may feel slighted.

The MRSA follows Canadian Press Stylebook guidelines for inclusive language. If you have the guide, refer to pages 19–24 of the 14th edition. If you have any questions about inclusive language that this guide cannot answer, please contact the Office of Campus Equity and Meaningful Inclusion of Mount Royal University.

Here is a common example:

#### **Sexism**

Some readers find the use of he (him, his) as a word of common or indeterminate gender to be sexist. His or her should be avoided as much as possible. Reword the sentence instead:

Whoever is promoted will have \$50 added to his or her pay.

Whoever is promoted will get a \$50 raise.

They (them, their) is an increasingly acceptable alternative to he (him, his).

---

## People

### The campus community

The large internal groups at Mount Royal University that the MRSA works primarily with are students, faculty, staff and management. Whenever possible and as appropriate to the message, internal and external communications should include these groups. When grouped together, they should be ordered as presented:

- Students — of primary importance
- Staff — those who provide collaborative services; they should *not* be referred to as support staff or non-academics
- Faculty — means faculty members or academics

*Ex: Students, staff, faculty, and management are invited to X.*

### How to refer to the president:

President John Smith (upper case for the title when it precedes the name)

John Smith, president, Mount Royal Staff Association (lower case for the title when it follows the name)  
second reference is Smith

### Titles of administrative officers are hyphenated, with areas of responsibility following after a comma:

vice-president, enrolment services)

associate vice-president, university relations

### Titles that precede a proper name are capitalized:

Vice-President Jane Smith

### Titles following a name and set off by commas are not capitalized (this is the preferred usage):

Jane Smith, vice-president

*BUT*

### Do not capitalize unofficial titles preceding a name:

arbitrator John Smith, or the university's president David Docherty (as opposed to university President David Docherty)

**Set off long titles with commas; avoid front-loading:**

Jane Smith, director-at-large, MRSA

not

Director of Risk Management, Safety and Security Jane Smith

**Do not capitalize titles standing alone:**

Contact the president of the Faculty Association for more information.

**The honorific “Dr.” is used only for medical doctors.**

---

**Places and Groups on Campus**

Capitalize only full proper names and titles but avoid where possible. Casual reference, in lower case, is more conversational and, thus, preferred:

Examples

Mount Royal

or

the University, when referring to Mount Royal specifically

the Mount Royal Staff/Faculty Association

or

the Association

the Board of Governors/Executive Board

or

the Board

the Governance (or any) Committee

or

the Committee

the Cougars, or possessive (Cougars')  
*not* Cougar or Cougar's

the Faculty of Arts  
or  
the arts faculty

**Do not capitalize faculties, schools, departments and offices when referring to more than one:**  
the faculties of nursing and physics.

**The names of buildings and defined areas on campus are capitalized:**

Bella Concert Hall  
Bissett School of Business  
East Gate  
Faculty/Staff Lounge  
Iniskim Centre  
Lincoln Park Campus  
Lincoln Park Room  
Main Street  
Nickle Theatre  
Recreation Concourse  
Riddell Library and Learning Centre  
Roderick Mah Centre for Continuous Learning  
Ross Glen Hall  
Staff Lounge  
Stanley Gymnasium  
The Table (cafeteria)  
Taylor Centre for the Performing Arts  
Triple Gymnasium  
West Gate  
Wright and Leacock Theatres  
Wyckham House

**“Main Street” refers to the major corridor on the first floor of the main Lincoln Park Campus building connecting West and East Gates**

---

## **Punctuation**

**Hyphens** are useful for avoiding ambiguity. Use a hyphen to join two or more words serving as a single adjective modifying a noun. Do not use a hyphen with words ending in -ly. The -ly suffix is adequate notice that the next word is being modified.

Use hyphens with ex-, self-, all-, post- and -elect. Some words which begin with co- also take a hyphen, such as co-worker, or when a hyphen avoids doubling a vowel, such as co-operate or co-ordinate.

**Almost all punctuation marks go inside quotation marks.** If more than one paragraph of quotation from a single speaker runs in succession, use quotation marks at the beginning of each paragraph but at the end of the last paragraph only.

Never use single quotation marks in text or for anything except quotations within quotations.

Use an **em-dash** with a space before and after to indicate a break in a sentence: The biology field school — the first of its kind in Canada — offers 20 students a chance to study in Ghana each summer.

**Italicize the titles of books, magazines, songs, etc.** The titles of theses, scholarly papers, etc., should appear inside quotation marks, in upper/lower case, but not italicized. For example: The study, “Treatment of acute gastroenteritis in children: An overview of systematic reviews of interventions commonly used in developed countries,” was published in *Evidence-Based Child Health: A Cochrane Review Journal*.

**Money.** The style is \$2, not \$2.00 for even amounts, but it’s \$3.24, \$1,897.99. Use numerals until you get to millions, then \$1 million, \$1.5 million. Remember that the \$ sign takes care of the word dollar, so it must not be repeated. Omit periods (and spaces) in the abbreviations for currency — CAD\$500, C\$800.

---

## Logo Standards

- The order of logo formality goes from high to low as displayed here.
- One of the MRSA logos should be placed on **every written piece created**. Preferably, the written out logo is to be used. Refer to the top of the guide as an example.
- **Never stretch or condense the logo.** Always re-size it so that the length and width retain the same ratios to one another.
  - *In other words, only re-size by pulling on the corner, or manually re-sizing while keeping ratios intact. Never pull or push from the sides or top.*
- When placing the MRSA logo, always leave **at least ¼” margin of white space surrounding it**.
- When sending letters, use the letterhead template - do not alter this.
- Committees shall be provided with templates for all documentation, and the placement of the logo in the header and/or footer should not be tampered with.

Written out logo

MOUNT ROYAL **STAFF ASSOCIATION** 

Acronym logo 1

M**RSA** 

Acronym logo 2

