

THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH
Information Services Group

Captioning Style Guide

Consistent and accessible captions for time-based media

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WORKING DRAFT

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Please be aware that the Summer 2026 edition of the Captioning Style Guide is not finalised. We may make further changes as the guide is used in practice. For the latest version of this document, please refer to the Captioning Service webpage. Please email comments and feedback to captions@ed.ac.uk.

Accessibility Information

If you require this document in an alternative format, such as large print, with a coloured background, or in audio format, please contact the Captioning Service. You can email us at captions@ed.ac.uk.

Introduction I

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Every year, the University of Edinburgh publishes thousands of hours of media for audiences across our community. Accurate captions help ensure that everyone can access and engage with this media.

Captions are transcriptions of speech presented in sync with the original audio. They also include meaningful non-speech information, such as speaker changes and sound effects. Captions should enable viewers to understand media even when its audio cannot be heard.

Captions are an essential accessibility feature for many d/Deaf and hard of hearing people. They also benefit other audiences, including people whose first language is not English, neurodivergent people, and anyone watching in an environment where they cannot listen to audio, such as a library or office.

This guide sets out the captioning style used by the Captioning Service. There are multiple ways to produce accessible captions, but this guide is intended to promote consistency across the University by providing a clear and thought-out set of conventions for colleagues to use. Colleagues using this guide should apply its conventions consistently, but, as with any other style guide, some situations will still require editorial judgement.

This guide applies to closed captions for pre-recorded media. **Closed captions** are provided as a separate caption track which viewers can turn on and off, whereas **open captions** are permanently embedded in a video. Live media and open captions are outside the scope of this guide, but many of the principles are still relevant.

The majority of University media is published on Media Hopper Replay (lecture recordings) and Media Hopper Create (other media). Unless otherwise noted, the conventions in this style guide apply to both platforms. Limitations which affect captioning are noted throughout the guide, along with advice on what alternatives are available.

Accessibility regulations I.1

UK higher education institutions have legal obligations under the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018 to provide captions for pre-recorded media.

Generally, accurate captions must be provided for all pre-recorded media. Live captioning is exempt under these regulations[1], but if a recording of the event is later made available on demand, then captions are required.

[1] Live captioning may still be required under other legislation, such as the Equality Act 2010.

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The regulations are tied to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.2 Level AA, which require captions for all pre-recorded audio in synchronised media (Success Criterion 1.2.2).

To meet this success criterion, captions should:

- Include all spoken dialogue.
- Include meaningful non-speech audio where it contributes to understanding. For example, laughter or a door slamming.
- Preserve the original meaning, even if the wording is not the same.
- Be synchronised closely enough with the audio to be usable in real-time.

The regulations do not stipulate a minimum 'percentage accuracy' for captions. Instead, compliance depends on whether a viewer can understand the media, without audio, using the captions. Minor errors may be tolerable, but errors which materially affect meaning or omit important information may result in captions which do not meet accessibility requirements.

Do not assume that automatically generated captions are compliant. Media owners are responsible for reviewing and correcting them where necessary, or should delegate that responsibility.

This section is provided for your information only. It is not legal advice.

Captioning Service I.2

Information Services provides a free caption correction service to all staff and students publishing media on Media Hopper Replay and Media Hopper Create.

The service supports both one-off and ongoing caption correction, such as for courses with students who have captioning requirements as part of their Schedule of Adjustments.

More information can be found on the Information Services website. You can also reach out by email by contacting captions@ed.ac.uk.

About this document I.3

The Captioning Style Guide is maintained by the University's Captioning Service. It is reviewed annually during the summer, drawing on captioning experience gained throughout the academic year. Minor updates may also be published throughout the year to clarify guidance and address new issues.

The latest version can be found on the Information Services website.

We welcome questions and feedback. Please email us at captions@ed.ac.uk.

Core Principles 1

Edited verbatim 1.1

- Always preserve the speaker's original word choice and meaning.
- Do not paraphrase, summarise, or simplify dialogue. Do not censor content.
- In certain cases, editing dialogue may improve readability without affecting meaning or understanding. Acceptable examples of edited verbatim are described throughout this guide.

Consistency and judgement 1.2

- Apply the style guide conventions consistently throughout the media.
- When a word has multiple acceptable spellings, select and use only one form throughout the media.
- For edge cases not included in this guide, decide on a reasonable convention and apply it consistently throughout the media.

British English 1.3

- Use British English spelling, except when the speaker is discussing spelling in other dialects, another spelling is part of a direct quote, or another spelling is part of a proper noun (*Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*).
- Use the spelling and hyphenation provided in the Oxford English Dictionary, but continue to use *-ise* and *-lyse* endings (*organisation*, *analyse*).

✓ Correct

LINE 1 I'm sure I recognise them
LINE 2 from somewhere else.

This example is correct. The **-ise** ending with an **s** has been used for **recognise**.

× Incorrect

LINE 1 I've made a simple
LINE 2 computer programme.

This example is incorrect. **Program** without the **-me** ending is used in British English when referring to computer programs. **Programme** with the **-me** ending would be used when referring to, for example, a degree programme or programme of events.

Formatting and Layout 2

For the purposes of this style guide, a **caption line** is a single horizontal line of text. **Caption blocks** contain one or more caption lines displayed together at the same time. Timings are adjusted for whole caption blocks, not individual lines.

A **line break** marks the boundary between two caption lines. It is the point at which the first caption line ends and the second line begins. To **break the line** at a particular point is to begin a new caption line at that point.

Replay Media Hopper Replay does not support multi-line captions or editing caption timings. Disregard this section when editing captions with the Media Hopper Replay transcript editor.

Caption block limits 2.1

- Limit caption blocks to two lines.
- Limit caption blocks to no more than 80 characters.
- Where automatically generated captions have gone beyond these limits, split the caption block in two and spread out the content.

✓ Correct

LINE 1 You don't always need two lines.

This example is correct. The caption block contains only one line and less than 80 characters.

× Incorrect

LINE 1 I know I've got a lot to say,
LINE 2 but you should split caption blocks in two
LINE 3 when there's too much content.

This example is incorrect. The caption block contains more than two lines and 80 characters. This content should be split across multiple caption blocks.

General line breaking principles 2.2

- Use one caption line whenever content is short enough to remain readable.
- Always break on punctuation or spaces between words, never within words.
- Keep words and phrases which function together as a unit on the same line where possible (see Section 2.3).
- Where automatically generated captions have introduced unnecessary line breaks, correct these by removing the line break.

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✓ Correct

LINE 1 This is short enough.

This example is correct. Only one line is used, as the content is short enough to remain readable.

× Incorrect

LINE 1 This is
LINE 2 short enough.

This example is incorrect. While the line is broken syntactically after **This is**, the caption block is too short to warrant multiple lines. The line break should be removed.

Syntactic line breaking 2.3

- Prefer line breaks at natural linguistic boundaries.
- Avoid separating closely connected grammatical units where possible, but do so where necessary to preserve readability.
- The same principles apply when splitting content across caption blocks.

Avoid splitting:

- articles and nouns (*the* + *university*);
- prepositions and their objects (*in* + *Edinburgh*);
- auxiliary and main verbs (*has* + *published*);
- adjectives and nouns (*significant* + *findings*);
- titles and names (*Professor* + *Murphy*);
- numbers and their units (*20* + *minutes*).

✓ Correct

LINE 1 Researchers at the university
LINE 2 have published significant findings.

This example is correct. The line break separates two phrases in the sentence.

× Incorrect

LINE 1 The researchers analysed
LINE 2 the data before writing their report.

This example is incorrect. The line break separates the verb **analysed** from its object **the data**.

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Sentence boundaries 2.4

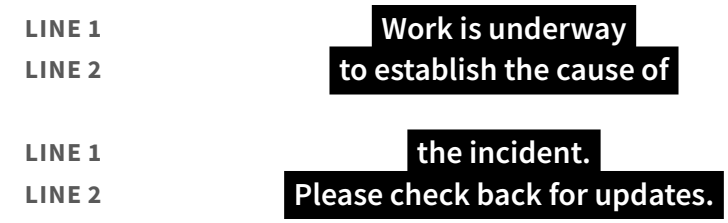
- Break the line where a sentence ends.
- Avoid ending a caption block at a point which leaves the viewer waiting unnecessarily for the completion of a phrase.
- Where automatically generated captions split off a few words into the next caption block, move them to the previous block. Edit timings if necessary.

✓ Correct



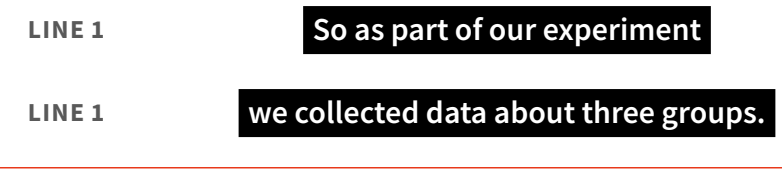
This example is correct. The speaker's pause after **Okay** warrants a full stop. As a result, the line is broken and their next sentence begins a new line.

× Incorrect



This example is incorrect. **the incident** should be moved to the end of the previous caption line.

× Incorrect

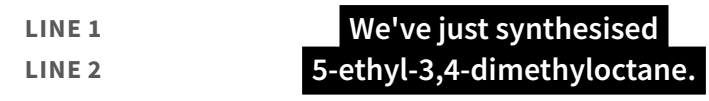


This example is incorrect. The complete sentence is separated across two one-line caption blocks. They should appear together to avoid making the viewer wait unnecessarily for the full sentence.

Hyphenated and long words 2.5

- Do not break lines in the middle of hyphenated or long words. If a word exceeds the display width, allow the media platform to handle wrapping.

✓ Correct



This example is correct. The line is broken before, not in the middle of, the name of the compound.

Long strings 2.6

A **string** is a continuous sequence of characters which functions as a single unit. Examples include URLs, email addresses, and file names, which can be lengthy.

- Do not break long strings across caption lines or caption blocks. If a string exceeds the display width, allow the media platform to handle wrapping.
- Where automatic captions have split a long string across multiple caption lines or blocks, combine these into one line. Edit timing where necessary.

✓ Correct

LINE 1 https://information-services.ed.ac.uk/students

This example is correct. Even though the full URL is longer than what might normally be kept on one caption line, it should not be broken.

× Incorrect

LINE 1 first.double-barrellast
LINE 2 @exseed.ed.ac.uk

This example is incorrect. Email addresses are examples of long strings so should not be broken across multiple caption lines.

This document continues on the next page.

Speaker Identification 3

Indicating speaker turns 3.1

- Indicate speaker turns with a speaker label.
- Format speaker labels in title case surrounded by square brackets.
- Break the line before a second speaker label in the same caption block.

✓ Correct

LINE 1 [Morgan] Can you go first?
LINE 2 [Jordan] Okay.

This example is correct. Speaker labels are formatted with square brackets and written in title case. The line is also broken before the second speaker label.

× Incorrect

LINE 1 MORGAN: Can you go first?

This example is incorrect. The speaker label is written in upper case and followed by a colon, when it should be formatted with square brackets and written in title case.

× Incorrect

LINE 1 – Can you go first?
LINE 2 – Okay.

This example is incorrect. Speaker turns are indicated with en dashes (–), when they should be indicated with speaker labels.

Replay The Media Hopper Replay transcript editor has a built-in method for identifying speakers. Use the speaker select drop down to the left of the caption block instead of typing the speaker label into the block.

Known speakers 3.2

- Format known speakers' names such that it isn't ambiguous who is speaking.
- Use the same name for each known speaker throughout the media.
- For speakers who are not identified until later in the media, retroactively update their speaker labels to identify them.
- Do not use speaker labels in media where there is only one speaker.

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✓ Correct

LINE 1 [Jane Doe] Let's move on.

LINE 1 [Jane Smith] Our final report
LINE 2 contains ten recommendations.

This example is correct. Both speakers share the same first name, so their last name has been included to disambiguate their speaker labels. Ordinarily, last names may not need to be included.

? Depends

LINE 1 [Lecturer] Right, let's begin.
LINE 2 [Chidi] My name is Chidi.

This example depends on whether the lecturer and Chidi are the same person. If they are, this is incorrect; speakers should be retroactively identified. If they are not the same person, this is an acceptable use of speaker labels.

Unknown speakers 3.3

- When speakers' names are unknown, identify them by their relationship to other speakers or to the context where possible (*[Nurse]*, *[Patient]*).
- The same relational speaker label may be re-used for different speakers.[2]
- If this is not possible, identify them numerically (*[Speaker 1]*, *[Speaker 2]*).
- Avoid using both numerical and relational speaker labels in the same media.

✓ Correct

LINE 1 [Finley] Was that a hand in the back?
LINE 2 [Student] Just a quick question.

This example is correct. The lecturer's name is known, but the student's name is not, so a relational speaker label is used. It would also be appropriate to use **[Lecturer]** in place of **[Finley]**, provided this was consistent throughout the video and unambiguous.

× Incorrect

LINE 1 [Speaker 1] Could you elaborate on that?
LINE 2 [Lecturer] Sure.

This example is incorrect. Where possible, numerical and relational speaker labels should not both be used in the same media for unknown speakers.

[2] Do so only when appropriate. A viewer would likely expect that multiple **[Audience]** tags in a question and answer session refer to different people asking the different questions. But for a three-person panel, don't use **[Panelist]** for each speaker. In this case it would be more appropriate to use numerical speaker labels if you could not identify the panelists.

Speech, Tone, and Delivery 4

Filler words 4.1

- Generally, do not omit filler words (*um*, *uh*, *like*, *you know*, etc).
- The quantity of filler words can be reduced when they are used repeatedly and do not contribute to meaning. For example, it may be appropriate to reduce *um, um, uh, um* to *um, uh*.
- Do not use additional characters (*ummmm*) to indicate the length of filler. Use punctuation, line breaks, and new caption blocks as appropriate.

✓ Correct

LINE 1 Um, right, shall we begin?

This example is correct. The filler does not contribute much in this example, but is retained.

× Incorrect

LINE 1 Ummmm.
LINE 2 What was it again?

This example is incorrect. **Ummmm** contains four **m**'s, when it should be transcribed with one. The full stop and line break, together with the short **um**, sufficiently indicate the length of the pause.

Stammer 4.2

- Indicate stammer using hyphens (-) separating the stammered letter or sound (*ch-ch-choose*, *r-read*).
- For longer stammers, the quantity of 'stammer characters' can be reduced to two. For example, *w-w-w-w-what* can be shortened to *w-w-what*.

✓ Correct

LINE 1 M-M-Mary?
LINE 2 W-was that you?

This example is correct. The stammer characters in **M-M-Mary** are capitalised because **Mary** is a proper noun. The first stammer character in **W-was** is capitalised as it begins the sentence.

× Incorrect

LINE 1 W-W-W-W-Why is that?

This example is incorrect. While the stammer begins the sentence, only the first character should be capitalised as **Why** is not a proper noun.

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False starts and changes of direction 4.3

- Do not omit the first half of sentences before the speaker changes direction.
- Indicate false starts and changes of direction with an em dash (—)[3].
- Do not add spaces either side of the em dash, except for a line break immediately after the em dash when necessary to improve readability.

✓ Correct

LINE 1 If only you'd—forget it.

This example is correct. An em dash is used to indicate the change of direction. There are no spaces either side of the em dash and the content fits comfortably on one line.

✓ Correct

LINE 1 The core idea is—
LINE 2 actually, we'll look at an example first.

This example is correct. An em dash is used to indicate the false start. There is no space before the em dash, but it is immediately followed by a line break to improve readability of the second phrase.

Incomplete thoughts 4.4

- When a speaker trails off or leaves a sentence unfinished, indicate this with an ellipsis (...). Use three full stops, instead of the dedicated ellipsis character.

✓ Correct

LINE 1 I thought about it, but...

This example is correct. **but** is followed by an ellipsis as the sentence is not finished.

× Incorrect

LINE 1 Uh... I'm not sure.

This example is incorrect. An ellipsis is used after **Uh**, but this is filler, not an incomplete thought.

Exclamations 4.5

- Indicate all exclamations, regardless of volume, in sentence case using an exclamation mark (!).
- Use tags to indicate particularly relevant differences in volume if required.

[3] An em dash is a horizontal line the length of an m. It looks like —. You can type it using some keyboards or copy and paste it from the internet. Never use hyphens (either one or multiple put together) in place of an em dash.

✓ Correct

LINE 1 [Cashier] Hey! Get back here!
LINE 2 [Thief] Never!

This example is correct. All exclamations are written in sentence case using an exclamation mark.

✓ Correct

LINE 1 [Lecturer] You might need to shout!
LINE 2 You might need to shout [louder] really loud!

This example is correct. All exclamations are written in sentence case using an exclamation mark, and a meaningful further change in volume is indicated with the **[louder]** tag.

× Incorrect

LINE 1 [Lecturer] You might need to shout!
LINE 2 You might need to shout REALLY LOUD!

This example is incorrect. **REALLY LOUD** is written in all capitals, when sentence case should be used instead. Optionally, a tag can be used to indicate a further change in speaker volume.

Stress 4.6

- Use upper case to indicate meaningful, non-obvious emphasis that affects the interpretation of a sentence.

✓ Correct

LINE 1 I didn't SAY she stole the money.

LINE 1 I didn't say SHE stole the money.

LINE 1 I didn't say she STOLE the money.

These examples are correct. Emphasis on different words affects the interpretation of the sentence, so it has been marked with upper case.

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Sarcasm 4.7

- Use the *[sarcastic]* tag to indicate meaningful sarcasm when it is not obvious from context.

✓ Correct

LINE 1 [Customer] Well if it won't scan, that means it's free!
LINE 2 [Cashier] If only.

This example is correct. The cashier's sarcasm can be inferred from the context without needing an explicit **[sarcastic]** tag.

✓ Correct

LINE 1 [Student] No homework this week, right?
LINE 2 [Lecturer] [sarcastic] Right.

This example is correct. If the **[sarcastic]** tag is not included, the captions would be misleading, as there is in fact homework this week.

Other tone and delivery 4.8

Consult Appendix A for a list of common tags which can be used to indicate other kinds of tone and delivery where appropriate.

Interruptions and overlapping speech 4.9

- When a speaker is interrupted mid-sentence by another speaker, use an em dash (—) with no leading space before immediately breaking the line.
- When two speakers talk at the same time and both can be heard clearly at the same time, use two lines without an em dash.

✓ Correct

LINE 1 [Speaker 1] As I was say—
LINE 2 [Speaker 2] Wait, not yet.

This example is correct. The interruption is indicated with an em dash and the line is broken. The second speaker is identified with a speaker label before their dialogue is transcribed.

✓ Correct

LINE 1 [Speaker 1] Hey!
LINE 2 [Speaker 2] How's it going?

This example is correct. This conveys that both speakers can be heard clearly, and, if the speakers are pictured in the media, viewers may be able to see that they are talking at the same time.

× Incorrect

LINE 1 [Speaker 1] As I was say—[Speaker 2] Wait.

This example is incorrect. The interruption has been indicated with an em dash, but the line was not broken before the second speaker began talking.

Incomprehensible and inaudible speech 4.10

- When speech is incomprehensible, use the *[unintelligible]* tag. This means that the speech sounds can be heard but don't make any sense, and no individual words can be picked out from the dialogue.
- When speech is inaudible, use the *[inaudible]* tag.
- When speech is drowned out by another sound, end the dialogue with an em dash (—) and use the sound effect label instead of *[inaudible]*.

✓ Correct

LINE 1 Thank you and—
LINE 2 [applause]

This example is correct. The line end with an em dash to indicate that the speaker was interrupted and the sound which has drowned out speech is identified using a label. The line is broken immediately afterwards for readability, much like when the speaker changes.

Indicating accent 4.11

- Indicate a speaker's accent using a tag only when it is particularly relevant (*[RP accent]*, *[SSE accent]*, *[Cockney accent]*, etc).
- Avoid excessively indicating speakers' accents.
- Do not transcribe the features of accents, such as dropped h's.

✓ Correct

LINE 1 So you'll find Received Pronunciation
LINE 2 [RP accent] sounds a little bit like this.

This example is correct. Accent is indicated in this case, because it makes clear that the speaker is demonstrating what the accent might sound like.

Language, Grammar, and Punctuation 5

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Regular punctuation 5.1

- Use commas (,) and full stops (.) to reflect the speaker's delivery and pauses.
- Use commas to indicate brief pauses, even if this results in a comma splice (that is, when two complete sentences are joined by a comma).
- Use full stops to indicate longer pauses or a definitive end to a thought, even if this results in grammatical fragments.
- If a speaker talks continuously without pausing, use less punctuation to reflect this. Avoid adding artifical commas unless necessary to improve readability.

✓ Correct

LINE 1 **Lectures are every Friday at 10,**
LINE 2 **they'll be in the Gordon Aikman.**

This example is correct. A comma is used after **Friday at 10** to reflect a speaker's brief pause, even though this creates a comma splice in standard grammar.

✓ Correct

LINE 1 **We couldn't finish the report.**
LINE 2 **Because we didn't have the data.**

This example is correct. A full stop is used after **finish the report** to reflect a speaker's longer pause, even though the second sentence is a grammatical fragment.

Guidance on more specific punctuation is included elsewhere in this guide.

Plurals and possessives 5.2

- Only use an apostrophe (') for plural letters (*dot your i's*, *cross your t's*); do not otherwise use an apostrophe for plurals (*CDs, 2020s*).
- For all singular possessives, use the *'s* suffix, even when the word or name already ends with an *s* (*Winters's*).
- For all plural possessives, use the *'* suffix (*the Winters'*).

Colloquialisms, slang, and regional terminology 5.3

- Do not alter or remove any colloquialisms, slang, or regional terminology.
- Do not transcribe specific pronunciations of accents, such as dropped h's.
- Where automatically generated captions incorrectly identify slang or replaces it (*gonna* replaced by *going to*), correct this.

✓ Correct

LINE 1 I cannae do it.

This example is correct. **cannae** is an example of regional slang. It forms part of the speaker's word choice and has therefore been retained in the captions.

✓ Correct

LINE 1 I said I was gonna do it,
LINE 2 so I'm going to do it.

This example is correct. Both **gonna** and **going to** appear in the same sentence, and the speaker's word choice has been preserved in both cases.

Quoted material 5.4

- Surround quoted material (including excerpts from books, titles, signs, slides, and speech which is presented as a quotation) with single quotes (').
- Do not use single quotes for indirect speech or when speakers only describe the content of speech or writing.
- Include punctuation which forms part of the material within single quotes. However, if the same sentence-ending punctuation would also appear immediately after the single quotes, omit it from the quote to avoid duplication.

✓ Correct

LINE 1 It began something along the lines of
LINE 2 'On a cold winter's evening'

This example is correct. **On a cold winter's evening** is surrounded by single quotes as it is intended as quoted material, even if the speaker is not entirely certain that this was the exact wording.

✓ Correct

LINE 1 His question was, 'Who are you?'.

This example is correct. The punctuation at the end of the quote is retained as it is not duplicated immediately after the quote.

× Incorrect

LINE 1 'Don't do it.'.
LINE 2 That's what they told me.

This example is incorrect. A full stop has been included both at the end of the quoted material and immediately after the closing single quote. The full stop within the quote should be removed to avoid duplicating punctuation.

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Mispronunciations 5.5

- Generally, do not transcribe mispronunciations in captions.
- Where it is meaningful, transcribe the mispronunciation phonetically and surround it with single quotes ('). Do not include the intended word, if any.

? Depends

LINE 1 Welcome to 'Edin-burg'.

This example depends on whether it is meaningful or relevant that 'Edinburgh' was mispronounced. If it is, this example is correct. Otherwise, the line should read **Welcome to Edinburgh**.

Profanity and sensitive content 5.6

- Transcribe profanity and sensitive content as it is spoken.
- Do not censor words unless the audio itself is censored. Never soften words or substitute them for other words.
- If only part of a word has been censored in the audio, retain the sounds which are still audible.
- Use the [bleep] tag surrounded by hyphens when there is an audible 'bleep' (*f-[bleep]-ing*, if the 'ff' and 'ing' sounds are still audible)
- Use an em dash when the audio is cut out without a bleep or other censor sound (*oh sh—*, if the 'sh' sound is still audible).

This document continues on the next page.

Names and Terminology 6

Names and capitalisation 6.1

The University of Edinburgh 6.1.1

- Capitalise *University* when referring to the University of Edinburgh.
- Do not capitalise *the* in *the University of Edinburgh*.
- Do not capitalise *university* when using the term generically.

Proper nouns 6.1.2

- Capitalise all proper nouns. For example, names of specific people, places, events, organisations, initiatives, works, and other entities.
- Do not capitalise common nouns when they are used descriptively and not as part of a name.

✓ **Correct**

LINE 1 **The Sustainable Development Goals**
LINE 2 **were adopted in 2015.**

This example is correct. **Sustainable Development Goals** is capitalised because it is the name of an official framework. The common noun **Goals** is capitalised as it forms part of that name.

Academic calendar 6.1.3

- Do not capitalise *week*, *semester*, *teaching block*, *reading week*, or *freshers*.
- Capitalise *Flexible Learning Week* and *Welcome Week*.

Degree programmes and courses 6.1.4

- Capitalise University of Edinburgh degree programme and course names as they appear in the Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study (DRPS).
- Capitalise excerpts of programme and course names.
- Do not capitalise general subject areas.

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✓ Correct

LINE 1 I'm a second-year Philosophy student.

This example is correct. The speaker is referring to a specific degree programme, so **Philosophy** is capitalised as an excerpt of 'MA (Hons) Philosophy'.

✓ Correct

LINE 1 I'm a philosophy undergrad
LINE 2 interested in applied ethics.

This example is correct. **philosophy** refers to the subject area more generally in this example, so it is not capitalised.

Titles of works and other materials 6.1.5

- Format titles of works and other materials in title case.
- Surround titles of works and other materials with single quotes (').

Job titles 6.1.6

- Do not capitalise job titles when used as descriptions of roles.
- Capitalise names of organisations.

✓ Correct

LINE 1 I'm a senior clinical fellow
LINE 2 in intensive care.

This example is correct. The role **senior clinical fellow** is not capitalised.

✓ Correct

LINE 1 I was a Captioning Service supervisor.

This example is correct. The role **supervisor** is not capitalised, but the name of the service is.

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Abbreviations and acronyms 6.2

- Do not use full stops between letters in abbreviations, including in acronyms and initialisms.
- Do not use full stops in titles, including in honorific titles (*Mr*, *Ms*, *Mx*, *Rt Hon*, etc) and abbreviated degree titles (*MA (Hons)*, *PhD*, etc).
- Use an apostrophe to indicate where the first part of a word has been omitted in an abbreviation. For example, *'90s* as an abbreviation of *1990s*.
- For abbreviated organisation names, preserve that organisation's preferred capitalisation (*IUPAC*, *Acas*, *UoE*).

✓ Correct

LINE 1
LINE 2

EUSA are organising activities
for this year's Welcome Week.

This example is correct. There are no full stops between the letters in **EUSA**.

× Incorrect

LINE 1

She was awarded her Ph.D. last year.

This example is incorrect. **Ph.D.** is an abbreviation, so no full stops should be used.

Specialist terminology 6.3

- Follow existing conventions for spelling and formatting established technical terms, scientific nomenclature, and notation.
- Do not alter or simplify terminology unless the speaker does so.

For example, preserve conventions:

- in notation such as *pH*, *NaCl*, and *COVID-19*;
- in technical terms and eponyms, such as *Boolean algebra*;
- in species nomenclature, such as *Homo sapiens* and *Loxodonta cyclotis*;
- in generic and proprietary medicine names, such as *ibuprofen* and *Nurofen*.

? Depends

LINE 1

Let's talk about T. rex.

This example depends on what the speaker said. If the speaker shortened 'Tyrannosaurus rex' to **T. rex**, then this caption is correct. If the speaker said 'Tyrannosaurus rex', then the full form should have been used. Do not alter or simplify terminology unless the speaker does so.

Computing terminology 6.4

Keyboard combinations 6.4.1

- Format names of keys in title case, joined with a plus sign (+), without spaces.
- Use common abbreviations for non-character keys.
- Spell out key names when not used in a combination.
- Spell out key names for more verbose phrasings. For example, *press both the control and C keys at the same time*.

Common non-character keys:

`Ctrl`	`Opt`	`Cmd`
`Alt`	`AltGr`	`Fn`
`PgUp`	`PgDn`	`Home`
`End`	`Escape`	`Shift`
`Tab`	`Insert`	`Delete`

✓ Correct

LINE 1 **To copy, press Ctrl+C.**

This example is correct. The combination has been formatted in title case, with keys joined with a plus sign without spaces. **Ctrl** is a common abbreviation of ‘Control’.

On-screen interface elements 6.4.2

- Surround the name of the element with single quotes (').
- Preserve the capitalisation used in the interface.
- Do not include the generic element type within the single quotes, unless this is what appears on screen (*button*, *tab*, *window*, *drop down*, etc).

? Depends

LINE 1 **Click the 'Go to dashboard' button.**

This example depends on what was on the screen. If the button has the label ‘Go to dashboard’ with that exact capitalisation, then this example is correct. **button** is not included within the single quotes, as this describes the generic element type.

Numbers 7

Spelling numbers 7.1

- Generally, spell out all numbers one through ten; use numerals above ten.
- Use commas in numbers with more than four digits (*2,500*).
- Use numerals for dates, percentages, measurements, currencies, times, and other technical and subject-specific expressions.
- Spell out numbers which begin sentences, except where doing so would reduce readability (for example, percentages).
- Spell out numbers where they form part of an established word or idiomatic expression (*one-to-one meeting*, *one-off*, *three-dimensional*).
- Spell out emphatic numbers.

✓ Correct

LINE 1 **Twelve years ago today, it was.**

This example is correct. **Twelve** is spelt out because it begins the sentence.

✓ Correct

LINE 1 **You will have an assignment due**
LINE 2 **at the start of semester 2.**

This example is correct. A numeral is used in **semester 2** because **semester 2** is a term used with a specific meaning in the context of teaching at the University (and higher education more broadly).

× Incorrect

LINE 1 **There are 1,000s of people**
LINE 2 **waiting at the gates.**

This example is incorrect. The numeral **1,000s** should have been spelt out as **thousands** because the number is used emphatically in this context. Emphatic numbers are those which convey a sense of scale or impact, rather than communicate a precise quantity.

Ordinals 7.2

- Spell out ordinals first through tenth; use numerals above tenth.

✓ Correct

LINE 1 **They finished 25th.**

This example is correct. 25 is greater than ten, so its ordinal is written with numerals.

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Fractions and ratios 7.3

- Spell out common fractions when spoken (*half*, *a third*, *three quarters*, *one and a half*, etc).
- Use numerals for fractions and ratios when they express precise values, scales, proportions, measurements, or other technical expressions (*3/4*, *15:1*, *1:50,000*).
- Preserve the speaker's choice of expression where possible.

✓ Correct

LINE 1 Nearly there.
LINE 2 Only a third to go now.

This example is correct. **A third** is a common fraction, so it has been spelt out.

? Depends

LINE 1 It'll take 2.5 hours.

This example depends on what the speaker said. If they said 'two point five hours', numerals should be used and this example is correct. If they said 'two and a half hours', then this should be spelt out.

Percentages 7.4

- Write percentages as numerals followed by the percent sign (%).

✓ Correct

LINE 1 You need 40% to pass.

This example is correct. Numerals and the percent sign were used.

× Incorrect

LINE 1 Eighty percent of students passed.

This example is incorrect. The percentage was spelt out, when numerals and the percent sign should have been used, even when the percentage begins the sentence.

Money 7.5

- Write monetary amounts using numerals.
- Use currency symbols or abbreviations where standard (*£5*, *99p*) and do not add a space between the symbol or abbreviation and the numeral.
- Spell out the unit when only minor units of currency are spoken, or when the speaker references the currency itself instead of expressing an amount.

✓ Correct

LINE 1 They're on sale.
LINE 2 50 pence each.

This example is correct. Numerals are used for the amount and the units are spelt out, as only minor currency units are used. **50p each** would also be acceptable, should this be what the speaker says.

× Incorrect

LINE 1 They use the € over there.

This example is incorrect. The speaker is referencing the currency itself instead of expressing a monetary amount, so **euro** should have been spelt out in place of the currency symbol.

Measurements and units 7.6

- Write measured quantities using a numeral.
- Separate numerals from units with a space, unless the unit is written as a symbol which conventionally attaches to the number (%, £, °C, etc).
- Use standard abbreviated units for measured quantities where an accepted abbreviation exists, regardless of whether the speaker uses the unit in full.
- Spell out the unit when no standard abbreviation exists, or when the speaker references the unit itself instead of expressing a measured quantity.

✓ Correct

LINE 1 It was 37°C today.

This example is correct. A measured quantity is being expressed, so numerals are used, and the symbol for Celsius conventionally attaches to the number, so they are not separated by a space.

✓ Correct

LINE 1 The unit we use for this
LINE 2 is millimetres of mercury.

This example is correct. The unit itself is being referred to and a measured quantity is not being expressed, so the unit is spelt out in full.

× Incorrect

LINE 1 There are 2 semesters
LINE 2 in the academic year.

This example is incorrect. The numeral **2** was used, but semesters are counted, not measured. Counts do not fall under these conventions, so numbers one through ten should be spelt out.

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Time 7.7

- Write clock times using numerals.
- Use *am*, *pm*, or *o'clock* only if spoken, separated from the numeral with a space. Don't use full stops in *am* or *pm*; don't add a space in *o'clock*.
- Use the 24-hour clock only if spoken.
- Preserve spoken descriptions of time.

✓ Correct

LINE 1 I'll see you at 4 o'clock.

This example is correct. The numeral is used and **o'clock** is separated by a space.

✓ Correct

LINE 1 [music: 'Quarter Past Midnight' by Bastille]
LINE 2 It's a quarter past midnight,

This example is correct. **quarter past midnight** was spelt out as it is a spoken description of time.

× Incorrect

LINE 1 What time was it?
LINE 2 1pm?

This example is incorrect. There should be a space between the numeral and **pm**.

Dates 7.8

- Write the day of the month as a numeral with an ordinal suffix, even when the month or year is omitted.
- Maintain the speaker's choice of date order (day–month or month–day).

✓ Correct

LINE 1 The graduation ceremony
LINE 2 is on the 13th of July.

This example is correct. The day of the month is written as a numeral with an ordinal suffix.

✓ Correct

LINE 1 I'll see you on the 5th.

This example is correct. Although the month is omitted, the ordinal refers to a calendar date and is therefore written as a numeral with an ordinal suffix.

Music and Sound Effects 8

Background music 8.1

- Label background music where it contributes to meaning.
- Indicate genre or mood of instrumental music where this is relevant.
- Indicate title and artist where this is relevant. Surround the title with single quotes (') and preserve the capitalisation used by the artist.
- Do not break the line within a label.
- If there are no lyrics, indicate the speaker immediately after the music label.

✓ Correct

LINE 1 [tense music]
LINE 2 [Priya] Someone's following us.

This example is correct. Background music can be labelled where it contributes to meaning.

A list of common tags and labels can be found in Appendix A.

Lyrics 8.2

- Indicate lyrics with a hash symbol (#) at the start of each line.
- Transcribe lyrics when another speaker is not talking over them.
- Transcribe lyrics only after indicating that music is playing with a music label.
- If dialogue interrupts lyrics, but the same song resumes, the music label for that song does not need to be repeated.
- Preserve the wording of lyrics and capitalise the first letter of each line.
- When dialogue resumes, indicate this with a speaker label.

✓ Correct

LINE 1 [music: 'Dazed & Confused' by Matilda Mann]
LINE 2 # I'd like to be your answer

LINE 1 # Speak when you don't know what to say

LINE 1 # I'd like to be your solution

LINE 1 [Speaker 1] It's been, I think,
LINE 2 four and a half years now?

This example is correct. Audible lyrics are transcribed following the music label. When the dialogue resumes, this is indicated by the speaker label.

Sound effects 8.3

- Label sound effects when it contributes to meaning.

✓ Correct

LINE 1 [door creaks]
LINE 2 [Gabriel] What was that?

This example is correct. The sound effect contributes to the meaning of the following dialogue.

× Incorrect

LINE 1 There's a [static] couple ways
LINE 2 you can approach this.

LINE 1 First, let's consider
LINE 2 the consequentialist take.

This example is incorrect. **static** is intended to represent an issue with the microphone, but the dialogue remains audible and the speaker continues without pausing or referencing the static. This sound is not meaningful and therefore does not need to be labelled.

A list of common tags and labels can be found in Appendix A.

This document continues on the next page.

Foreign Languages 9

Predominantly non-English speech 9.1

- Do not attempt to transcribe dialogue which is predominantly in a language other than English.
- Indicate this with a label with the English name of the language if known. For example, *[speaking Dutch]*. Otherwise, use *[speaking foreign language]*.

Quoted foreign language 9.2

- Transcribe isolated words and phrases in another language where they are discussed as part of English-language media.
- Never translate the content to English.

✓ Correct

LINE 1 The French word for 'apple' is pomme.

This example is correct. **pomme** is transcribed as the media is predominantly in English.

Code-switching 9.3

- When a speaker briefly switches into another language, make a best effort to transcribe the foreign-language words.
- Never translate the content to English.

✓ Correct

LINE 1 The traffic was un cauchemar.

This example is correct. **un cauchemar** is transcribed as the media is predominantly in English and the speaker only briefly switches into French.

× Incorrect

LINE 1 The traffic was [speaking French].

This example is incorrect. Viewers are deprived of the spoken content. Language tags should only be used where predominantly non-English speech is not transcribed.

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Loanwords and loan phrases 9.4

- Transcribe established borrowed expressions as spoken (*a priori*, *et cetera*, *déjà vu*, *al dente*).
- Never translate borrowed expressions to English.
- Never tag borrowed expressions as being in a foreign language.

✓ Correct

LINE 1 **7 George Square, 40 George Square,**
LINE 2 **Dugald Stewart Building, et cetera.**

This example is correct. **et cetera** is a Latin phrase which has been assimilated into English.

This document continues on the next page.

Mathematics 10

Non-Latin symbols 10.1

- Prefer symbols to spelling them out in maths-heavy media.
- Avoid using symbols when the audience may not be familiar with the notation. For example, mathematical equations in an introductory lecture for a general audience.
- Be consistent in your approach. For example, don't use both *alpha* and α.

Operators 10.2

- Spell out the names of operators as spoken (*times*, *minus*, *to the power of*, *three to the fifth*).

Negative numbers 10.3

- Prefer using a hyphen to indicate negative numbers in maths-heavy media.
- When spelling out, maintain the speaker's choice of words. For example, don't use *minus* if the speaker said *negative*.

Brackets 10.4

- Do not add brackets unless the speaker explicitly uses them in speech. For example, by explicitly saying *open bracket* or *close bracket*.
- Commas can be used in the usual manner for indicating pauses.

✓ Correct

LINE 1 **5 minus, -3 times, 8 to the power of α.**

This example is correct. While the speaker has not explicitly used brackets in their speech, their pauses have been indicated using commas.

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Common Tags and Labels A

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This appendix contains a list of common tags and labels for conveying extra information in captions, such as a speaker's tone.

Include these as required by the style guide, and elsewhere at your discretion. Prefer tags and labels from this list and do not create new ones unless none of the following are sufficient. That tags and labels are included in this list does not mean that you should always use them.

Format tags and labels in lower case, except for proper nouns, and surround them with square brackets.

Vocalisations and tone A.1

`[clears throat]`
`[coughs]`
`[groans]`
`[laughs]`
`[sarcastic]`
`[shocked]`
`[louder]`
`[quieter]`
`[sighs]`
`[sneezes]`
`[softly]`
`[whispering]`

Dialogue A.2

`[overlapping speech]`
`[voiceover]`

Language, dialects, and accent A.3

`[Cockney accent]`
Substitute 'Cockney' for name of accent

`[imitating accent]`
When name of accent is unknown

`[speaking French]`
Substitute 'French' for name of language

`[speaking foreign language]`
When name of language is unknown

Audience A.4

`[applause]`
`[cheering]`
`[booing]`
`[laughter]`

Music A.5

`[music]`

`[music: 'Song Name' by Artist]`
Match artist's capitalisation of song/artist name

`[dramatic music]`

`[ominous music]`

`[romantic music]`

`[somber music]`

`[suspenseful music]`

`[tense music]`

`[upbeat music]`

Audio and artifacts A.6

`[bleep]`

`[no audio]`

`[static]`

`[unintelligible]`

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Bibliography

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A bibliography will be included in the final version of this document.

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