

## Abbreviations

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## General guidelines and observations

Always write the term in full at first mention, with the abbreviation following in parentheses. On the Web, that means on every page. Ensure that the same abbreviation is used elsewhere in your text.

Well known abbreviations (for example: CV, DNA, etc., HIV and i.e.) do not have to be spelled out. In general, you should assume that the reader does not know what the abbreviation stands for and use the long form first.

### Periods

Do **not** use periods with the following:

- chemical symbols and mathematical abbreviations: CO<sub>2</sub>, NaCl, log, tan
- SI symbols and units: cm, kg, L, mmHg
- degree abbreviations: BA, MA, MD, MSc, PhD
- short forms of words: exam, lab, flu, typo
- abbreviations or acronyms consisting exclusively of upper-case letters or ending in an upper-case letter: CBL, CCFP, UGME

Use periods:

- with geographical abbreviations, e.g. B.C., P.E.I., but not for the two-character symbols recommended by Canada Post
- with most lower-case abbreviations, including a.m., p.m., e.g., i.e.
- at the end of abbreviations for single words: Dr., Mr., misc.
- after initials in a person's name: J. L. Henderson (a space is required between each period and the following initial or name)

### Plural

Add an "s", but **not** an apostrophe, to form the plural of most abbreviations:

- BMIs, PFTs, RNs, URLs

In cases where the resulting form would be ambiguous, add an apostrophe before the "s":

- Q's and A's, SIN's

## Degrees

uOttawa recommends writing all degree abbreviations without periods and without spaces.

- BA, MA, MD, MSc, PhD, RN

## Doctor (Dr.)

In the medical field, the title Dr. is generally used for physicians, dentists and psychologists. It can also be used in academic settings to refer to people with a PhD outside the health care field. When referring to an individual who holds a PhD or an honorary doctorate, we suggest you replace the title Dr. with:

- Mary Swanson, PhD, will be....
- Hiroshi Morioka, who holds an honorary doctorate from the University of Montreal, will be...

Do **not** use Dr. and MD together.

- Dr. Rosa Jones **or** Rosa Jones, MD
- **Incorrect:** Dr. David Morales, MD

The plural of Dr. is Drs.

- We consulted Drs. Carpentier, O'Byrne, and Yakimov.

## e.g. versus i.e.

Beware of confusing and misusing the following abbreviations:

- e.g. – for example
- i.e. – that is, specifically

The i.e. generally is used to introduce matter that is explanatory as opposed to preceding a list of examples. If you can say for example as a substitute for the abbreviation, you want to use e.g., not i.e.

## Months and days

Months and days should only be abbreviated in informal documents or in tables and lists where space is limited. Do **not** abbreviate the month in the date in a business letter.

For months, the three-letter abbreviations are more uniform: Jan., Feb., Mar., Apr., May, Jun., Jul., Aug., Sep., Oct., Nov. and Dec. Note that the month of May is not abbreviated and is therefore not followed by a period.

## Titles before personal names

For titles preceding personal names, use the following abbreviations:

Dr. = Doctor (plural: Drs.)

Mr. = Mister (plural: Messrs.)

Mrs. = Mistress (plural: Mmes.)

\*Ms. (plural: Mses.) *unlike Miss or Mrs., it does not depend upon or indicate marital status*

Hon. = Honorable

Prof. = Professor

\*Use *Ms.* when referring to a woman unless a preference for *Mrs.* has been indicated. Note that *Miss* is not an abbreviation and does not take a period.

Abbreviate professional and official titles only when they are used with surnames preceded by first names or initials:

- Dr. Eleanor Ecos but Doctor Ecos
- Prof. R. A. Heft but Professor Heft

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