

## Capitalization (upper-case and lower-case)

[Awards](#)

[Chemical, medical and pharmacological terms](#)

[Faculties, departments, services, programs and committees](#)

[Faculty vs. faculty](#)

[Headings](#)

[Job titles](#)

[Bulleted lists](#)

[Races, languages and peoples](#)

[International System of Units](#)

[Subject areas, disciplines and degrees](#)

[University vs. university](#)

### Awards

Capitalize the official names of awards:

- Award in Education
- Distinguished Mentor Award
- a Nobel Prize winner

Do **not** capitalize common-noun short forms:

- Ten students were nominated for an award.

### Chemical, medical and pharmacological terms

Do **not** capitalize the names of conditions, syndromes and the like, but capitalize a personal name that forms part of such a term:

- chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
- diabetes insipidus
- Alzheimer disease
- Down syndrome

Capitalize the names of infectious organisms but **not** the names of conditions based upon such names:

- People attacked by *Salmonella* are likely to suffer from salmonellosis.

Capitalize trade names of drugs and any other manufactured products:

- Aspirin
- Tylenol
- Valium

Do **not** capitalize the generic names of drugs:

- acetaminophen
- acetylsalicylic acid

## Faculties, departments, services, programs and committees

Capitalize the names of faculties, departments, services, programs and committees when you write them in full:

- Faculty of Medicine
- Department of Epidemiology and Community Medicine
- Information Management Services
- MD Program
- Curriculum Content Review Committee

Retain the capital letter when going from the full name to the generic (Department, Faculty, Service, etc.) for concision:

- The Aboriginal Program was established in 2005. The Program's goal is to increase awareness of...

Do **not** capitalize short forms when used in a non-specific sense, when preceded by a possessive, demonstrative or other type of adjective, and when used adjectivally or in an adjectival form:

- A committee has been assembled to address this issue.
- This program has 125 students.
- The decision was based on departmental policies.
- Our services cover all strategic, operational and financial activities.

Do **not** capitalize the plural forms, even when the full titles of the bodies concerned are given:

- She sits on several committees and boards of directors.
- Researchers from the departments of Anesthesia, Clinical and Basic Sciences, Infectious Diseases and Surgery were consulted.

## Faculty vs. faculty

Do **not** capitalize when referring to the teaching staff, but capitalize when referring to the academic unit.

- The Faculty's students are required to complete evaluations on faculty.

## Headings

In **centered** headings, capitalize every word except for articles (unless they begin the heading) and any conjunctions or prepositions of fewer than four letters.

Chronic Heart Failure in Adult Patients

The term "cardiovascular disease" (CVD) refers to...

In headings that begin **at the margin**, capitalize only the first word (and any other words that require capitals in their own right).

Primary and secondary care  
Evidence shows that interventions by a...

## Job titles

Do **not** capitalize the title when it stands alone or is pluralized:

- The dean chaired the meeting, which was attended by content experts, unit leaders and professors.
- The academic advisor works closely with the vice-dean and the counselors to guide students through challenging situations.

Capitalize the title when it directly precedes a name and replaces courtesy titles such as Mr. or Ms.:

- The Dean, Dr. Bradjwen, will preside over the ceremony.
- The University honoured Professor Kate Watson.

Capitalize the title in a letter or an email signature:

- Linda Chenard  
Operations Manager  
Faculty of Medicine
- Melissa Forgie, Vice-Dean

## Bulleted lists

In point-form lists, grammar and syntax determine the capitalization of the initial letters.

If your list contains single words and phrases, do **not** capitalize the first word:

*The following are complications of acute myocardial infarction:*

- *electrical complications*
- *mechanical complications*
- *left ventricular thrombus*
- *pericarditis*

If your list is composed of complete sentences, capitalize the first word (and use a period at the end of all the items):

*A pandemic occurs if the new infection causes severe illness or death in the population and the following three conditions are met:*

- *The new viruses are introduced into populations in which there is no or little existing immunity.*
- *The new viruses can be effectively transmitted from person to person.*
- *Rapid spread of infection can result.*

## Races, languages and peoples

Capitalize nouns and adjectives referring to race, tribe, nationality and language:

- As a bilingual investigator, she works in both Anglophone and Francophone research communities.
- He learned to speak Cree because it was the only language his grandmother spoke.
- Coronary heart disease is more common among Caucasian populations.
- Discuss social factors affecting the health of Inuit children.

## International System of Units

Capitalize only the word *Celsius* when writing the names of SI/metric units in full. When using symbols, capitalize only those based on personal names and the letter *L* for *litre*:

- -1°C (degree Celsius)
- 175 lb. (pounds)
- 30 m (metres)
- 12 V (volts)
- 30 L (litres)

## Subject areas and disciplines

Do **not** capitalize the names of subject areas and disciplines.

- She is interested in pediatrics.
  - Students should read articles on epidemiology in their spare time.

Capitalize the first letter in disciplines and subject areas **only in an official academic unit title:**

- School of Psychology
- Department of Social Sciences

## University vs. university

Capitalize when it refers to a specific institution:

- The University of Ottawa is home to the only bilingual medical school in the world. The University also boasts a state-of-the-art simulation centre.

Do **not** capitalize when it is simply a common noun:

- Richard has balanced university life with volunteering for a number of organizations.

and when you pluralize it, even before a series of specific institution names:

- The conference attracted students from the universities of Montreal, Ottawa and Toronto.

### References:

Translation Bureau. (2013). *The Canadian Style*. Retrieved from:  
<http://www.btb.termiplus.gc.ca/tpv2guides/guides/tcdnstyl/index-eng.html?lang=eng>.

University of Ottawa, Language Services. (2013) *Writing Guide: Capitalization*. Retrieved from:  
<http://www.uottawa.ca/services/lsl/eng/writing-capitalization.html>.