



Northern Ontario  
School of Medicine  
École de médecine  
du Nord de l'Ontario  
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# Editorial Style Guide

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**NOSM COMMUNICATIONS UNIT**  
June 15, 2017



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## Editorial Style Guide

At the Northern Ontario School of Medicine, we've got lots of information and news to share, and many people who help get the message out about the School. In order to help you communicate with the School's many partners and collaborators, we've put together some resources to help you feel comfortable putting pen to paper (or in modern times, putting fingers to the keyboard).

### General Guidelines

NOSM's style is derived primarily from the Canadian Press (*CP*) Stylebook—which is used by journalists and members of the media across the country—mixed with our own organizational style. However, language is constantly changing and evolving, which means that there will always be exceptions to the rules.

The Communications Staff at NOSM have copies of the *Canadian Press Stylebook* that you are welcome to borrow or reference. Those who commonly write for their role may find benefit in purchasing their own [Canadian Press Stylebook](#) or [Canadian Press Caps and Spelling book](#) as references.

### We're here to help

Although this guide is designed to support you, sometimes there is no substitute for human interaction. The Communications staff at NOSM are happy to help you and answer any questions you may have. Please don't be shy to get in touch! You can contact any member of the Communications Team, or email [communications@nosm.ca](mailto:communications@nosm.ca).

## Accessibility

The following guidelines are derived from [AccessAbility: A Practical Handbook on Accessible Graphic Design](#), a document produced by the Association of Registered Graphic Designers (RGD).

### Alignment

**Align body text to the left, rather than aligned to the right or centre, or justified.**

Text alignment can affect readability, especially in lengthy copy. Flush left text is easier to read for long periods, as the axis provides an easily located starting point for each line.

### Capitals, Bold, Italics, Underlining

**Avoid using all capital letters.**

Not only is using all caps at times perceived as shouting, it also reduces the readability. When text is set in lowercase, readers often recognize the words based on their shape, rather than reading each letter individually (AccessAbility: A Practical Handbook on Accessible Graphic Design, 8).

**Italics and underlining for emphasis should be avoided.**

Italics and underlining create a visual distraction, and can cause difficulty reading. One notable exception to this rule is that italics is often used to identify titles of books and publications.

**Use bold text if it is necessary to draw the reader's attention to a few words in a paragraph.**

### Colour

**Do not use colour to differentiate meaning.**

For example, if compiling an instructional document, avoid red circles to indicate negative elements, and green circles to indicate positive elements. Readers with difficulty perceiving colour may not be able to differentiate between these two instructions.

**Avoid the use of colour to make a word stand out.**

### Font

**Use fonts Futura or Myriad Pro, if you have access to them on your computer. When in doubt, use Arial.**

There are many factors that affect the readability of a document, making it easier or more difficult for people with visual impairments. The font type is one of those factors. NOSM's fonts are chosen for readability and accessibility.

### Size

**Use font no smaller than 11 point.**

Although there are many factors that affect the accessibility of a document, it is important to remember that many people have visual impairments, and it is our responsibility to respect the needs of all of our readers.

## Tables

**Use tables only when you need to analyze where information intersects on an x and y axis. If this is not required, use a list.**

Lists are easier to read on screen readers.

## Hyperlinks

**Avoid using the term “click.” Rather than saying “click here,” build the hyperlink in to your sentence or text.**

The term “click” is seen as exclusionary. Screen readers and other accessible technology that can be used hands-free sometimes use breath flow or blinking in place of clicking. In addition, having “click here” makes it difficult for people using screen readers to understand where the link leads.

✓ **Correct:** Read more about NOSM’s Northern Ontario Dietetic Internship Program.

✗ **Incorrect:** Click here to read about NOSM’s Northern Ontario Dietetic Internship Program.

**Eliminate http://www. when writing a web address.**

Including these markers is unnecessary, and makes it more tedious for users to engage with the material on a screen reader or other accessible technology.

✓ **Correct:** nosm.ca

✗ **Incorrect:** http://www.nosm.ca

✗ **Incorrect:** www.nosm.ca

## Headings

**Document headings should be less than 20 words, especially in long documents with table of contents.**

Having editorially clear, descriptive headings will make it easier for audiences to engage with content on accessible devices.

## Acronyms

Reading an article with many abbreviations and acronyms can be difficult. If possible, avoid unnecessary acronyms or abbreviations. Otherwise, follow the below guidelines.

**The first time an acronym is used, spell it out in full and add the acronym in brackets afterwards.**

✓ **Correct:** The Comprehensive Community Clerkship (CCC) is an eight-month longitudinal clerkship.

✗ **Incorrect:** The CCC (Comprehensive Community Clerkship) is an eight-month longitudinal clerkship.

**Not all acronyms use all capitals.**

✓ **Correct:** Centre for Rural and Northern Health Research (CRaNHR)

✗ **Incorrect:** Centre for Rural and Northern Health Research (CRANHR)

**Do not spell out words that are hard to pronounce when their abbreviation is more commonly known.**

✓ **Correct:** DNA

✗ **Incorrect:** deoxyribonucleic acid

✓ **Correct:** LED

✗ **Incorrect:** light-emitting diode

**Plural forms of an acronym can be added to the acronym's bracketed introduction. The plural indicator should not be capitalized and should not have an apostrophe.**

✓ **Correct:** Physician Assistants (PAs)

✗ **Incorrect:** Physician Assistants (PA's)

✗ **Incorrect:** Physician Assistant (PAS)

**A possessive in an acronym should not be included in brackets the first time an acronym is used.**

✓ **Correct:** The Northern Ontario School of Medicine's (NOSM) research portfolio is diverse.

✗ **Incorrect:** The Northern Ontario School of Medicine's (NOSM's) research portfolio is diverse.

To learn about acronyms specific to NOSM, consult the list NOSM Acronyms List which outlines those in common use at the School. The NOSM Acronyms List is available on the NOSM intranet, using the pathway: MyNOSM Home > Organization > Dean's Office > Communications > General Documents.

## Capitalization

Unless it is necessary, try to avoid capitalization. The Canadian Press StyleBook follows the below rule for capitalization:

“Capitalize all proper names, trade names, government departments and agencies of the government, names of associations, companies, clubs, religions, languages, nations, races, places, addresses. Otherwise, lowercase is favoured where a reasonable option exists.” (Ed. 14, p. 204)

### Avoid using all capital letters.

Not only is using all caps at times perceived as shouting, it also reduces the readability. When text is set in lowercase, readers recognize the words based on their shape, rather than reading each letter individually ([AccessAbility: A Practical Handbook on Accessible Graphic Design](#), 8).

### Do not capitalize learner roles.

- ✓ **Correct:** medical student
- ✗ **Incorrect:** Medical Student

### NOSM's style includes capitalizing professional titles.

- ✓ **Correct:** Associate Professor
- ✗ **Incorrect:** associate professor

### Capitalize Indigenous Peoples and Francophone.

In the past, NOSM used the term Aboriginal. This changed in 2016, when the Indigenous Reference Group recommended that the School adopt the term Indigenous. This change was motivated by the Canadian Government's recognition of the United Nations Declaration of Rights of Indigenous People, included within the “Calls to Action” made by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC).

- ✓ **Correct:** Indigenous Peoples
- ✗ **Incorrect:** indigenous peoples
- ✗ **Incorrect:** Indigenous peoples
- ✗ **Incorrect:** Indigenous people

## Capitalizing Common Nouns

Capitalize common nouns when they represent the full version of a formal name, and use lowercase when a partial version of the name is used.

- ✓ City of Greater Sudbury; the city
- ✓ Government of Ontario; the Ontario government; the government
- ✓ The Ministry of Health; the ministry

### Exceptions:

- ✓ The Northern Ontario School of Medicine; the School
- ✓ Northern Ontario; the North
- ✓ The Board of Directors; the Board



## **Academic Degrees**

Capitalize full degree names; use lowercase for general references.

- ✓ Bachelor of Education; bachelor's degree
- ✓ Master of Science; master's degree
- ✓ Doctor of Philosophy; doctorate
- ✓ Certificate of Completion; the certificate

## **Awards and Distinctions**

Capitalize names of awards when they are listed in full; use lowercase for shorter references.

- ✓ The Global Best Awards were presented in Toronto.
- ✓ The awards were presented in Toronto.

## Dates, Times, and Locations

### Dates

Generally, dates should be formatted: Friday, November 3, 2017

**Dates should be formatted in this order: day of the week (followed by a comma), month, numerical date (followed by a comma), year. Include two commas in the date: one after the day of the week, the other after the date.**

- ✓ **Correct:** Tuesday, July 5, 2016
- ✗ **Incorrect:** Tuesday 5 July 2016; 5 July 16
- ✗ **Incorrect:** Tuesday July 5th, 2016
- ✗ **Incorrect:** Tuesday July 5, 2016

**All months should be spelled out.**

- ✓ **Correct:** November
- ✗ **Incorrect:** Nov.
- ✗ **Incorrect:** Nov

**Days of the week should be spelled out.**

- ✓ **Correct:** Friday
- ✗ **Incorrect:** Fri.

**Avoid the ordinal form for dates, even those that do not include a year.**

- ✓ **Correct:** September 15
- ✗ **Incorrect:** September 15th

### Times

Generally, times should be formatted: 3:00 p.m. EST

**Use periods to separate abbreviations of a.m. and p.m.**

**Indicate the time zone.**

NOSM's wider campus spans two time zones. For clarity, indicate the time zone on posters, announcements, and meeting requests.

- ✓ **Correct:** 3:00 p.m. EST
- ✗ **Incorrect:** 3:00 p.m. est
- ✗ **Incorrect:** 3:00 p.m.

**Times should include a colon and two numbers following the colon.**

- ✓ **Correct:** 5:00 p.m.
- ✗ **Incorrect:** 5 p.m.

The time should have a space between the numeric and the abbreviation that indicates time of day.

✓ **Correct:** 8:30 a.m.

✗ **Incorrect:** 8:30a.m.

✗ **Incorrect:** 8:30am

For periods of time in years, write the numbers out in full, separated by an en dash.

✓ **Correct:** 2004–2007

✗ **Incorrect:** 2010-15

For academic years only, the form 2013–14 is acceptable. Use an en dash to separate the years.

For a range of times, use “from” and “to” when writing copy. An en dash is appropriate in short notes that indicate a time range (for example, as listed on a poster or announcement).

✓ **Correct:** The conference ran from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

✓ **Correct:** Reception: 8:00 p.m.–10:00 p.m.

✗ **Incorrect:** The conference ran from 9-6pm.

## Locations

NOSM’s Campus

All of Northern Ontario is considered NOSM’s campus. Use the phrase “NOSM’s wider campus of Northern Ontario” to reflect the area in which NOSM operates.

✗ **Incorrect:** NOSM’s Campus

✗ **Incorrect:** NOSM’s East Campus

✗ **Incorrect:** NOSM’s West Campus

NOSM uses the stylistic choice to capitalize Northern Ontario and the North.

## NOSM and its Partners

NOSM favours the terms “NOSM at Laurentian University” and “NOSM at Lakehead University” to discuss events or activities taking place at the host universities.

The terms East Campus and West Campus are no longer in use.

## Buildings and Locations

Building abbreviations at NOSM at Laurentian University and NOSM at Lakehead University are as follows:

**ATAC:** Advanced Technology and Academic Centre

**BSC:** Balmoral Street Centre

**HSERC:** Health Sciences Education Resource Centre

**MSE:** Medical School Building East

**MSW:** Medical School Building West

When formatting room numbers, use the building abbreviation, followed by “Room,” then the room number. For internal documents, the building abbreviation then the number is acceptable.

✓ **Correct:** MSE Room 107

✓ **Correct (for internal documents):** MSE 107

✗ **Incorrect:** 107 MSE

## Degrees and Professional Designations

### Academic Degrees

**Capitalize full degree names; use lowercase for general references.**

Bachelor of Education; bachelor's degree

Master of Science; master's degree

Doctor of Philosophy; doctorate

Certificate of Completion; the certificate

### Professional Designations

MD – Medical Doctor

RN – Registered Nurse

RD – Registered Dietitian

CCPA – Canadian Certified Physician Assistant

MScPT – Physiotherapist

MScOT – Occupational Therapist

MScSLP – Speech-Language Pathologist

**If a designation follows an individual's name and is all capital, do not use periods. A comma should follow the individual's name.**

✓ **Correct:** Jane Dear, RD

✗ **Incorrect:** Jane Dear MD

**Abbreviations that have upper and lowercase letters and end with a capital do not use periods.**

✓ **Correct:** PhD

✗ **Incorrect:** Ph.D.

**Abbreviations that have upper and lowercase letters and end in a lowercase letter use periods.**

✓ **Correct:** M.Sc., B.Ed., B.Sc.

✗ **Incorrect:** MSc., BEd, B.Sc

There are two ways to indicate that someone is a medical doctor.

**Use "Dr." before their name.**

✓ **Correct:** Dr. John Smith

✗ **Incorrect:** Doctor John Smith; Dr John Smith

**Use MD following the person's full name, with a comma.**

This is more common when listing more than one professional designation or affiliation.

✓ **Correct:** Dr. John Smith, MD, MBA

✗ **Incorrect:** Dr. John Smith, MBA

## Inclusive Language

### Indigenous

NOSM uses the term Indigenous, which is consistent with the recommendations of the [United Nations Declaration of Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) and included within [Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's \(TRC\) Calls to Action](#). The term Indigenous, used by the United Nations, is not meant to refer to people living in any particular region, but rather, recognizes the first peoples and their rights around the world.

Some Indigenous Peoples identify more closely with their tribal or linguistic group designation, and prefer to use the name of their community to identify themselves.

### Francophone

Francophone peoples are those for whom French is their mother tongue, those who identify with French culture, or those who use French at home. Francophone is used as the term to represent this group of individuals, and is more commonly used at NOSM than Franco-Ontarian.

### Sex and Gender

Use inclusive, gender-neutral language rather than choosing arbitrary distinctions regarding sex.

- ✓ **Correct:** Each student should open the orientation package sent through the mail.
- ✗ **Incorrect:** Each student should open his orientation package upon receiving it in the mail.

- Use humankind rather than mankind.
- Use ancestors rather than forefathers.
- Use working hours rather than man hours.
- Use artificial, synthetic, or constructed rather than man-made.
- Use spokesperson, not spokesman.
- Use chair, not chairman.
- Use police officer, not policeman or police woman.

While it is beneficial to avoid making gender distinctions as generalities, it is also useful to avoid making assumptions about the gender identity of any individual.

## **Mental and Physical Disability**

Although language about disability is ever-evolving, it's important to remember to put the person first, not the disability. This way, the disability isn't seen to be at the core of that individual's identity—it's something with which they are living.

**As a general rule, use “with” clauses to identify a disability.**

✓ **Correct:** a person with schizophrenia

✗ **Incorrect:** a schizophrenic

**Avoid the word victim.**

✓ **Correct:** someone who has had a stroke

✗ **Incorrect:** stroke victim

**Use the term visual impairment rather than blind.**

## Lists

### Items in a Series

When writing a sentence that includes a list, NOSM uses the serial comma (known also as the terminal or Harvard comma). This is a comma that is placed before the second last item in the list, directly before the “and.”

- ✓ **Correct:** All staff, faculty, and learners were invited to the event.
- ✗ **Incorrect:** All staff, faculty and learners were invited to the event.

**Longer lists that appear in running text and do not include commas within each item can be separated by a comma. Longer lists should be introduced by a colon.**

✓ **Correct:** In the hospital waiting room, there was: a man with a concussion, an adolescent with a sprained ankle, and a child having difficulty breathing.

**Lists that appear in running text but include long clauses that include commas or parentheses should be preceded by a colon and separated by semicolons. Longer lists should be introduced by a colon.**

- ✓ **Correct:** In the above photo, pictured from left to right are: Dr. Roger Strasser, NOSM Dean; Dr. David Marsh, NOSM Deputy Dean; and, Kim Daynard, NOSM Director of Communications.
- ✗ **Incorrect:** In the above photo, pictured from left to right are: Dr. Roger Strasser, NOSM Dean, Dr. David Marsh, NOSM Deputy Dean, and Kim Daynard, NOSM Director of Communications.

### Bulleted Lists

Vertical lists should be introduced with a full sentence and a colon. Punctuation in a vertical list depends on the type of list. Lists where each bullet is a full sentence requires punctuation (periods, not semicolons, at the end of each sentence). If each bullet is short and is not a full sentence, no punctuation is required.

✓ **Example of a bulleted list with periods:**

Five strategic goals are at the heart of NOSM's renewed Strategic Plan:

- Enrich our educational programs to foster exemplary quality health care in rural and remote communities.
- Strengthen our capacity to perform outstanding research that aligns with the health needs of Northern Ontario.
- Create an inclusive whole school culture and learning environment that supports the growth and development of our faculty, staff, and learners.
- Empower our faculty members through ongoing engagement and active involvement in all aspects of the School.
- Engage our communities, health service partners, and other collaborators strategically to strengthen relationships and expand resources.



✓ **Example of a list with short points:**

The committee recommended that the School:

- Invest in research
- Engage communities
- Support faculty development

## Numbers and Abbreviations

### Numbers

**Spell out numbers up to ten. After ten, use numerals.**

Exceptions:

- Measurements that use symbols
- Percentages
- Currency
- Fractions
- Combined whole numbers and fractions

**Spell out any number that begins a sentence.**

✓ **Correct:** Eighteen people attended the workshop.

✗ **Incorrect:** 18 people attended the workshop.

**Use Arabic numerals, unless roman numerals are absolutely required.**

✓ **Correct:** There were 11 people registered for the webinar.

✗ **Incorrect:** There were XI people registered for the webinar.

**For ordinal numbers, spell out the words “first,” “second,” “third,” etc. up to and including “tenth.”**

**Use numerals for ordinals 11th and above.**

✓ **Correct:** This was the first annual conference

✗ **Incorrect:** This was the 1st annual conference.

✓ **Correct:** He was ranked 18th in his class.

✗ **Incorrect:** He was ranked eighteenth in his class.

**Numbers with more than four digits should include a comma to separate three-digit groups.**

**Exceptions: house numbers, phone numbers, and years.**

✓ **Correct:** Dr. Watson’s research was published in 1985.

✓ **Correct:** 1,000

✗ **Incorrect:** 1000

**Use figures for numbers up to 999,999. Switch to a combination of numbers and words, unless precision is required.**

- ✓ **Correct:** \$2.3-million initiative
  - ✓ **Correct:** Each probiotic capsule contains 30 billion active cells.
  - ✗ **Incorrect:** Each probiotic capsule contains thirty billion cells.
  - ✗ **Incorrect:** Each probiotic capsule contains 30,000,000,000 cells.
- 
- ✓ **Correct:** The Heart and Stroke Foundation donated \$99,000 to NOSM.
  - ✗ **Incorrect:** The Heart and Stroke Foundation donated \$99 thousand to NOSM.

**Spell out and hyphenate common fractions below one.**

- ✓ **Correct:** two-thirds, three-fifths, one-quarter inch.
- ✗ **Incorrect:** ¼ inch
- ✗ **Incorrect:** three fifths

**Use numerals in decimals, numbers larger than one with fractions, and uncommon fractions.**

- ✓ **Correct:** The rate of completion of the survey was 1/23.
- ✗ **Incorrect:** The rate of completion of the survey was one-twentythird.

## Percentages

**Use numerals for percentages, followed by “per cent” (with a space and no hyphens).**

- ✓ **Correct:** 100 per cent
- ✗ **Incorrect:** 100 percent
- ✗ **Incorrect:** 100 per-cent

**For text that has numerous references to percentages, the % symbol is appropriate, with no space between the number and symbol.**

- ✓ **Correct:** 10%
- ✗ **Incorrect:** 10 %

## Abbreviations

### Time Zones

Use abbreviations for time zones.

- ✓ **Correct:** 1:00 p.m. EST
- ✗ **Incorrect:** 1:00 p.m. Eastern

### Measurements

Metric abbreviations are written in lowercase without periods, with a space separating the numeral from the abbreviation. Exception: litres, which is marked as a capital L (in order to avoid confusion with the numeral 1).

- ✓ **Correct:** 300 km, 210 ml, 40 L
- ✗ **Incorrect:** 300km, 210 ML, forty L

Imperial abbreviations are written in lowercase, with a period at the end of each unit.

- ✓ **Correct:** in., ft.
- ✓ **Correct:** Length of incision: 2 in.
- ✗ **Incorrect:** Length of incision: 2 in

Use a capital C to indicate Celsius. Do not use a period, but include a space between the number and abbreviation. A degree symbol is not necessary. Use a hyphen to indicate negative temperatures.

- ✓ **Correct:** -43 C or 18 C
- ✗ **Incorrect:** -43C or 18°C

Square measurements should be written out fully, or with the superscript.

- ✓ **Correct:** 70,000 square kilometres, or 70,000 km<sup>2</sup>
- ✗ **Incorrect:** 70,000 square km

## Punctuation

### Ampersands

Avoid using ampersands unless it is part of an official name of an organization or location.

- ✓ **Correct:** occupational health and safety
- ✓ **Correct:** Heart & Stroke Foundation
- ✗ **Incorrect:** occupational health & safety

Ampersands are commonly used in academic references. Follow the guidelines set by the appropriate style guide when doing academic referencing (eg. APA, MLA, Harvard).

### Apostrophes

An apostrophe is not used to indicate a plural of an acronym or decade.

- ✓ **Correct:** 1930s, URLs
- ✗ **Incorrect:** 1930's, URL's

When indicating a possessive, singular names or words that end in an s (and the sound is also an 's') take an 's.

- ✓ **Correct:** Chris's textbook
- ✗ **Incorrect:** Chris' textbook

When indicating a possessive, singular names or words that end in an s (but sound like a 'z') take an apostrophe alone.

- ✓ **Correct:** Socrates' play
- ✗ **Incorrect:** Socrates's play

When indicating a possessive, plural nouns ending in s take an apostrophe alone.

- ✓ **Correct:** Physicians' rights

### Commas

NOSM uses the serial comma, known also as the Harvard comma, or the terminal comma. This means that when giving a list, a comma is added on the second last item of the list, before "and."

- ✓ **Correct:** blue, green, and yellow
- ✗ **Incorrect:** blue, green and yellow

### En Dash (–)

PC: Alt 0150 Mac: Option -

The en dash is slightly longer than a hyphen, and connects items in a range.

- ✓ **Correct:** Extra copies were requested of the May–September issue of the publication.
- ✓ **Correct:** Between 2002–2005, the curriculum was under development.
- ✗ **Incorrect:** Extra copies were requested of the May - September issue of the publication.

En dashes are used in indexes to indicate a range of cited pages.

- ✓ **Correct:** (438–53).

## Em Dash (—)

PC: Alt 0151 Mac: Option shift -

The em dash is slightly longer than the en dash. Em dashes are most commonly used to replace other pieces of punctuation or to introduce a deviation or new idea within a sentence. They are not preceded or followed by spaces.

**Em dashes can be used to replace commas.**

✓ **Correct:** The doctor, a member of the community for more than 30 years, was well respected.

✓ **Correct:** The doctor—a member of the community for more than 30 years—was well respected.

✗ **Incorrect:** The doctor — a member of the community for more than 30 years — was well respected.

**Em dashes can be used to replace parentheses.**

Upon reading the lengthy document (all 365 pages of it), the policy was approved.

Upon reading the lengthy document—all 365 pages of it—the policy was approved.

**Em dashes can be used to add an additional idea to a sentence.**

Northern Ontarians have made NOSM what it is—a locally grown solution to regional health inequities.

## Hyphen

Hyphenate two or more words that precede and modify a noun (i.e. two or more words that act as an adjective). This is done for clarity. That said, if the modifiers do not come before the noun or stand alone as nouns, they do not require hyphenation.

✓ **Correct:** She wanted to be a health-care professional.

✗ **Incorrect:** She wanted to be a health care professional.

✗ **Incorrect:** She wanted to be a healthcare professional.

✓ **Correct:** She was always interested in health care.

✗ **Incorrect:** She was always interested in healthcare.

✗ **Incorrect:** She was always interested in health-care.

✓ **Correct:** He was interested in evidence-based medicine.

✗ **Incorrect:** He was interested in evidence based medicine.

✓ **Correct:** The guidelines are evidence based.

✗ **Incorrect:** The guidelines are evidence-based.

✓ **Correct:** He was mistaken, and accidentally gave out-of-date statistics.

✗ **Incorrect:** He was mistaken, and accidentally gave out of date statistics.

✓ **Correct:** He did not realize he had given statistics that were out of date.

✗ **Incorrect:** He did not realize he had given statistics that were out-of-date.

Do not use a hyphen when there is a compound modifier where the first word ends in an -ly adverb, even when these fall before the noun. The -ly adverb's function as a part of speech is to modify other adverbs, adjectives and nouns.

✓ **Correct:** She gave us clearly defined terms.

✗ **Incorrect:** She gave us clearly-defined terms.

- ✓ **Correct:** They will establish a broadly based research centre.
- ✗ **Incorrect:** They will establish a broadly-based research centre.
- ✗ **Incorrect:** They will establish a broadly based-research centre.

**When the main part of a compound adjective appears only once in a pair or a series of parallel compound adjectives, hyphens indicate which words the reader should mentally join with the main part.**

- ✓ **Correct:** NOSM is seeking healthy eight- to 11-year-old standardized patients.
- ✗ **Incorrect:** NOSM is seeking healthy eight to 11 year old standardized patients.

- ✓ **Correct:** Check the patient's heart rate at one- and five-minute intervals.
- ✗ **Incorrect:** Check the patient's heart rate at one and five-minute intervals

**Use a hyphen to avoid doubling a vowel, tripling a consonant or duplicating a prefix.**

- co-operate
- re-emerge
- doll-like
- sub-subcommittee

This is not required when the end of the prefix and the beginning of the next word are not the same: readjust, reinstate, reopen.

**Use a hyphen to avoid awkward word combinations.**

- cave-in not cavein
- co-star not costar
- de-ice not deice
- set-to not setto

**Hyphenate vice- with any of the compounds, such as Vice-Chancellor, Vice-President, Vice-Chair, etc.**

**Hyphens join the numerator and denominator of fractions.**

three-fourths, one-half, etc.

**Use a hyphen for minus sign in temperatures.**

-10 C

## Parentheses ( )

Parentheses always appear in pairs, and usually provide additional information.

If the parentheses appear at the end of a sentence, terminal punctuation should go outside of the closing parentheses.

✓ **Correct:** She wasn't able to meet today (due to a scheduling conflict).

✗ **Incorrect:** She wasn't able to meet today (due to a scheduling conflict.)

Punctuation that applies only to the parentheses goes inside the parentheses.

✓ **Correct:** I can call him tomorrow to confirm (if that will help?).

✗ **Incorrect:** I can call him tomorrow to confirm (if that will help?)

## Quotation Marks

When ending a sentence with quotation marks, the period goes inside of the end quotes.

✓ **Correct:** According to the learner, the placement was "difficult but rewarding."

✗ **Incorrect:** According to the learner, the placement was "difficult but rewarding".

## Spacing

Use one space, not two, between the end punctuation of one sentence and the beginning of the next.

✓ **Correct:** She decided she was going to improve her health. She started eating well and exercising.

✗ **Incorrect:** She decided she was going to improve her health. She started eating well and exercising.

## Spelling

**Note:** This spelling list was inspired by the Queen's University, University Relations' Style Guide. NOSM follows Canadian spelling conventions.

### Many words take the Canadian “-our” at the end of a word:

- armour
- behaviour
- colour
- demeanour
- endeavour
- favour, favourite, favourable
- flavour
- harbour
- honour, honourable, honoured but honorary
- humour but humorous
- labour but laborious
- neighbour
- odour but odorous
- rigour but rigorous
- rumour
- saviour
- valour but valorous
- vapour but vaporous
- vigour but vigorous

### exceptions:

- tremor
- squalor

### Canadian spelling also uses the double ‘l’:

- compel, compelled, compelling
- counsel, counsellor, counselling
- enrol, enrolled, enrolment
- fuel, fuelled
- fulfill, fulfilled, fulfilment, fulfilling
- install, installment, installation, installing
- marvel, marvelled, marvelous
- signal, signalled, signalling
- total, totalled
- travel, travelled, traveller, travelling



**Other commonly misspelled words:**

- analyze (not analyse)
- centre, centred, centring
- cheque (as a method of payment)
- defence
- email
- grey (colour)
- knowledgeable
- organize (not organise)
- practice (noun or adjective), practise (verb)
- program (not programme)
- theatre
- X-ray (not x-ray or X-Ray)

**Common confusions**

**accept/except**

To accept means to receive or approve; except means “excluding” or “but” (I’d apply for the job, except I’m too lazy. But if they offered it to me, I’d accept.)

**admittance/admission**

Use admittance when referring to the physical: “No admittance.” Admission refers to entry based upon the presentation of documentation or money (Jennifer was granted admission to NOSM’s MD program.)

**adverse/averse**

Adverse means “harmful” or “against one’s interest”; averse means “strongly disinclined.”

**advise/advice**

Advise is the verb; advice is the noun. License/licence and practise/practice follow the same rule.

**affect/effect**

Affect is a verb and effect is a noun. To affect means to change or influence; effect is a result.

**all right/alright**

All right should be used to mean “all correct” or “okay.” Alright is not universally accepted and should be avoided.

**a lot**

A lot is always written as two words (e.g. NOSM partners with a lot of communities across the North.).

**complement/compliment**

Complement refers to something that goes well with something else; compliment means praise or flattery.

**dos and don'ts**

This expression forms its plural normally. As does “no ifs, ands, or buts.”

**e.g., i.e.**

e.g. stands for *exempli gratia*, meaning “for example.” i.e. stands for *id est*, meaning “that is.” Note that there are periods between these two letters, and no space in between.

**every day/everyday**

Every day is a phrase in which every modifies the noun day (I go for a walk every day.); everyday is an adjective used to describe activities that occur every day or are ordinary or commonplace (Walking the dog is an everyday occurrence.).

**farther/further**

Farther refers to physical distance; further refers to figurative distance.

**fewer/less**

Use fewer to refer to things you count (I used to drink fewer glasses of water than I do now); use less for things you cannot count (I use to drink less water than I do now.).

**immigrate/emigrate**

People emigrate from a country and immigrate to a country.

**its/it's**

its is possessive (the cat chased its tail); it's is a contraction of “it is.”

**more than/over**

Over means above in a physical context. (e.g. The helicopter flew over the hospital.) More than is used when referring to numbers (e.g. More than 250 participants attended the conference.)

**principal/principle**

Principal means head or leading figure, and it means first, most important (e.g. Supporting patient health is the principal role of a health-care professional.); principle means a basic truth, law or moral guideline.

**stationary/stationery**

Stationary means stopped, not moving; stationery refers to writing materials.

**that/which**

Use which (surrounded by commas) if a group of words adds information. (The books, which have black covers, are new.) Use that if it limits the set of things you're talking about. (The books that have black covers are new.)

**they're/there/their**

They're is the contraction of “they are”; there is the opposite of here; their is a possessive.

**who's/whose**

Who's is a contraction of “who is”; whose is a relative pronoun indicating possession (Whose turn is it to wash the dishes?).

## NOSM-Specific Spelling Preferences

pediatrics, pediatrician

dietitian, dietetics

## NOSM-Specific Terminology

Student vs. Learner

**At NOSM, a student is specifically a medical student, enrolled in NOSM's MD program.**

✓ **Correct:** The student completed her third year CCC in Kapuskasing.

✗ **Incorrect:** The learner completed her third year CCC in Kapuskasing.

**A learner is any person engaged in education in any of NOSM's academic programs. When referring to a mixed group of students from various programs as well as MD students (e.g. PAs, dietitians, residents, and MD students), use learner. Also use learner for anyone in a program other than the MD program.**

## Alumni

Alumni is the plural form of a word originating from Latin. There are other forms to use for non-plural references to learners who have graduated from NOSM programs.

**Do not use the term alum. Use alumnus or alumna.**

Alumna = one female graduate

Alumnus = one male graduate

Alumnae = more than one female graduate

Alumnus = one male graduate

Alumni = plural for a group of male graduates or a mixed group of male and female graduates

## NOSM's Campus

**All of Northern Ontario is considered NOSM's campus. Use the phrase "NOSM's wider campus of Northern Ontario" to reflect the area in which NOSM operates.**

✗ **Incorrect:** NOSM's Campus

**NOSM uses the stylistic choice to capitalize Northern Ontario and the North.**

## Telephone, Fax, Email and Mailing Addresses

Telephone and Fax

**Use a dash to separate numbers.**

✓ **Correct:** 705-662-9876

✗ **Incorrect:** (705) 662-7169

**The abbreviation for telephone is "Tel."**

✓ **Correct:** Tel: 807-766-1234

✗ **Incorrect:** Phone: 807-766-1234

**For international audiences, add "+1-" to the beginning of the phone number.**

The "+" is a short form for dialing the international direct dial collection in the country from which you are telephoning. In North America, the "+" translates into 011.

✓ **Correct:** + 1-807-766-1234

## Email

**Email is a single word, without a dash, as identified by Canadian Press.**

**When giving a NOSM email address, give the simplest or shortest version possible.**

Note: In the past, the standard convention at NOSM for creating emails was `firstname.lastname@nosm.ca`. Although the email may have aliases, this email naming convention was used to avoid confusion. However, the convention changed to favour the shorter alias for simplicity.

**Correct:** `jdoe@nosm.ca`

**Less common:** `jane.doe@nosm.ca`

## Mailing Addresses

The main mailing addresses for NOSM are formatted as follows:

NOSM at Lakehead University  
955 Oliver Rd  
Thunder Bay, ON, P7B 5E1

Tel.: 807-766-7300  
Fax: 807-766-7370

NOSM at Laurentian University  
935 Ramsey Lake Rd  
Sudbury, ON, P3E 2C6

Tel.: 705-675-4883  
Fax: 705-675-4858





Northern Ontario  
School of Medicine  
École de médecine  
du Nord de l'Ontario  
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