



University of Augsburg

# Style Guide

for English-Language Documents



## 1. Introduction

This Style Guide is aimed at all employees (*Mitarbeiterinnen und Mitarbeiter*) of the University of Augsburg and seeks to provide guidelines towards a unified presentation of the university in the English language.

### 1.1. How to Use This Guide

Please refer to the table of contents for information on what is in here. Please also always refer to the guidelines laid out in the corporate design manuals of the university, as well as the German-English "Glossary of English at the University of Augsburg", also to be found in the download center.

In the following, examples of correct usage will be given in **grey with a magenta highlight**, while wrong usage will be ~~crossed out~~. In case there is an acceptable usage that we don't like particularly for some valid reason or other, it will be given in plain **magenta**. In most cases, this will be variants that can be misunderstood or that may imply something we would not want them to imply, so a decision has been made against these variants. Very important rules will be given **bold and underlined** (*fett und unterstrichen*).

This style guide is written in English, but quite often, translations of hard words will be given in italics (*kursiv*) in brackets (*Klammern*). Occasionally, we will also provide hints (*Tipps*; tip = *Trinkgeld*) on unusual or irregular forms (*unregelmäßige Formen*) in the English language. Sometimes, we will also highlight false friends (*ähnliche oder identische Wörter in den beiden Sprachen, die aber unterschiedliche Bedeutungen haben*) in this way.

Most importantly: In case you stumble over something not covered here, you can always check elsewhere. A current, scientific monolingual dictionary (*einsprachiges wissenschaftliches Wörterbuch*) from the library, the World Wide Web (English Wikipedia or Google), or a native speaker of English will always be a source to turn to for help.

### 1.2. Varieties of English

As you surely know, there are two main and several minor varieties (here: *Varietäten*; *Formen einer Sprache*) of the English language, just like the Swiss and German varieties of the German language. These two major varieties of English are called British English (BrE, BE) and American English (AmE, AE); minor varieties include Canadian, Australian, or South African English. A variety goes beyond a dialect, because it has its own grammatical rules and words that are only used in this variety. For example, Americans and Australians sit on a 'couch', the British on a 'sofa' and the Canadians on a 'chesterfield' when relaxing at home in front of the TV – each of the three refers to the same item of furniture. Both American and British English are widely used all over the world.

For the purposes of the University of Augsburg, we have decided that it is not only impractical (*nicht praktikabel*), but actually impossible to prescribe (*vorschreiben*) any one of these two varieties for use. Since any member of the University of Augsburg may be more at home with either variety, you may use whichever you prefer.

However, please be **consistent** in your use of these varieties. Which means, in any given file or document, please only ever use one variety, **either** British English **or** American English, but **do not mix them**. Thus, if you spell "honour", you must also spell "capitalise" (and say 'sofa'). If you spell "honor" you must spell "capitalize" (and say 'couch').

There is one way out, however: You can use all four spellings, if you claim to use **Canadian English**. Again, please be consistent within any one document regarding any given item (the ‘ou / o’ or the ‘ize / ise’) – and remember to sit on a ‘chesterfield’.

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## 2. Terminology and Usage Specific to the University of Augsburg

### 2.1. Terminology

#### 2.1.1. The University of Augsburg

*Universität Augsburg* should normally be translated as (The) **University of Augsburg**, but, in accordance with our logo, it can also be rendered as **Augsburg University**. Note, however, that **Augsburg University** is considered very informal (*umgangssprachlich*). Please only use it in informal speech. In written communication, especially in very formal written communication, always use **University of Augsburg**.

In a sentence, the phrase **University of Augsburg** **must always** come with a definite article (“the”). It can only stand alone outside a sentence, like in a table or an address (or if you are referring to the phrase, not the item, like in the previous sentence). By contrast, **Augsburg University** **must not ever** have any article at all!

For example:

**The University of Augsburg** was founded in 1974.

There is a cooperation agreement between the **University of Augsburg** and the **University of Pittsburgh**.

Where does John work these days? – Oh, he’s now at **Augsburg University**.

~~Jill got her Master’s from the Augsburg University.~~ no article may be used!

~~I hereby solemnly pledge my eternal loyalty to Augsburg University.~~ informal name in formal sentence

~~There is a good materials science department at University of Augsburg.~~ article must be used!

Short forms may be used occasionally. If you do, please use either **U of A** or **UA**, but do not use **AU**. As per standard university guidelines, **do not ever** use these in written communication with outside parties!

#### 2.1.2. Administration of the University of Augsburg

The **president** (*Präsidentin oder Präsident*) and the **vice-presidents** (*Vizepräsidentinnen und Vizepräsidenten*) of the university are easy ones. Did you know, however, that the chancellor of an Anglo-American (i.e. English, American, Australian, Canadian or other English-speaking) university is just a formal figurehead (*Gallionsfigur*) with no role in the day-to-day running of the institution? Therefore, the *Kanzler/in* of the University of Augsburg (in fact, of any German university) should be referred to as **Vice-President Finance and Infrastructure** in English. Note that there is usually no “of” in job names like this!

In the **university administration** (*Zentralverwaltung*), there are **departments** (*Abteilungen*) and **units** (*Referate*).

#### 2.1.3. Faculties and Other Academic Divisions

The main academic subdivision within the University of Augsburg is called a **faculty** (*Fakultät*). They are not called **school**, since this would imply a focus on training a certain skill only (~~Law School~~ to train lawyers, but not to do law research; ~~Medical School~~ to train doctors, but not to do medical research). This usage would not reflect the unity of research and teaching (*Einheit von Forschung und Lehre*) practised at the University

of Augsburg. In case you are wondering: Yes, even English-language institutions agree on this. The London School of Economics and the various Harvard schools may be exceptions, but these only confirm the rule.

Within faculties, there can be **institutes** (*Institute*), **departments** (*Fächer*), **chairs** (*Lehrstühle*), **centres** (BrE) or **centers** (AmE, *Zentren*) and other subdivisions. For certain there will be a **dean's office** (*Dekanat*, *Fachbereichsverwaltung*, *Fakultätsverwaltung*) run by a **faculty administrator** (*Fachbereichsbeamter*, *Fakultätsgeschäftsführer*).

**Note** that it is always: **Institute of ...**, **Department of...** or **... Department** (informal), **Chair of ...**, and never **Institute for ...** or **Chair for...**. You find these last on German websites quite often, but they're still wrong.

## 2.2. Usage

### 2.2.1. Academic Degrees

The abbreviated forms of academic degrees **in Germany** are usually written with points between the letters. Since most degrees we refer to at the University of Augsburg will be German ones, we have decided to keep these points. The only exception to this rule is the **MBA**. Thus:

Bachelor of Science = **B.Sc.** (not BSe)

Master of Education = **M.Ed.** (not MEd)

Doctor of Philosophy = **Ph.D.** (not PhD)

The "classic" degrees of *Diplom* (**not Diploma**; diploma = *Zeugnis*) or *Magister*, or the *Habilitation* should never be translated and should be set in italics whenever possible. The *Habilitation*, in particular, should always be explained at least once in every text or document (as ***Habilitation (second doctorate)*** or ***Habilitation (post-doc degree)***), since the concept of *Habilitation* does not exist in the English-speaking world.

The programmes leading to a **Bachelor's** or **Master's degree** are usually capitalized and put in the possessive form. However, a decision has been made at the University of Augsburg to also use **Bachelor** or **Master program** (AmE) / **programme** (BrE), if it makes life easier. However, a **doctorate** or **doctoral program(me)** is always un-capitalized. A **doctor's degree** is actually a medical degree, which the University of Augsburg cannot (yet) bestow (*verleihen*).

### 2.2.2. Academic Titles

Unlike in German, 'professor' is not a title in English, but a job. Likewise, a doctorate is only a degree in English, not a title. If this sounds strange, just think of the old *Magister*, which is only a degree in Germany, but also a title in Austria. Still, academics are usually addressed as "Doctor Jones" and "Professor Smith", respectively, if they are known to possess a Ph.D. or hold a senior teaching position at a university. They will very soon tell you to call them John (or Joanna), anyway.

German titles / names like **Dr. Anna Meier**, **Prof. Dr. Lena Müller** or (even worse) **PD Dr. Fion Schmidtke** are hard to explain and should simply be used as they are. **Anna Meier, Ph.D.** or **Professor Lena Müller, Ph.D.** are theoretically possible, but awkward. There is no translation for *Privatdozent*. Therefore, as a rule, please **do not translate** academic titles!

### 2.2.3. Academic Disciplines and Programmes

Disciplines (*Fächer*) are not usually capitalized in English, and **never** given in quotation marks. Degree programmes are **not capitalized**, either, if they correspond with a discipline, but they can be **capitalized** if they are unique. Thus, please use the following:

Joanna studied history and medieval literature at Oxford.

John Maynard Keynes was a professor of economics.

Lena studies applied intercultural linguistics at the University of Augsburg.

Paul did something called Applied Intercultural Linguistics while at Augsburg University, while I took a Master's in Finance and Information Management.

~~Seraphina has a teaching degree in "English" and "German as a Foreign Language".~~

### 3. General Style Guide

The rules and usages in this section apply to the English language as a whole, not just to the situation at the University of Augsburg. This is by no means a complete guide, of course. For detailed information, look it up in a usage guide or a grammar of English.

#### 3.1. General Usage

##### 3.1.1. Names

Names of people, companies, countries, months, days of the week, holidays, etc. etc., are always **capitalized**, such as:

Mercedes-Benz, Siemens, General Electric, England, Canada, Germany, Friday, September, Christmas, New Year, Nine-Eleven, World War One, and of course University of Augsburg.

##### 3.1.2. Headings and Titles

The main words (nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, pronouns) in headings (*Überschriften*) and titles (of courses, events, institutions) are always **capitalized**. Also, the first and the last words of a heading are always capitalized, regardless what kind of word it is. Also, the first word after a colon (*Doppelpunkt*) is capitalized. Only the "small" words (less than four letters) in the middle of the heading are left uncapitalized.

For example:

Lord of the Rings; Lady Chatterley's Lover; The Scarlet Letter; A Beautiful Mind; Apocalypse Now

*Lord of the Rings* Revisited: A Series of Lectures on Markedly Different Topics

Of Mice and Men: Connections Between Humans and Rodents, and Researching Them

*The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*: Anne Brontë's Proto-feminist Novel and Who It Was Written For

Bachelor Programme Applied Intercultural Linguistics

Master Programme Materials Science

Elite Master Programme Finance and Information Management

Faculty of Mathematics, Natural Sciences, and Materials Engineering

Institute of Physics

Recipe for Madness: Love-Letters from the Inter-war Years in Hawaii

The State Ministry for Education and Culture, Science and Art will not usually give money to universities unless they are forced to do so by public opinion. (in a sentence)

Augsburg has more public holidays than any other place in Germany because it celebrates something called the High Peace Celebration. (in a sentence)

The rules imposed by the Treaty of Versailles indirectly led to the Second World War. (in a sentence)

The Dean of the Faculty of Law (beneath the signature of that dignitary)

### 3.1.3. Quotation Marks

Please make sure to use either **English** or **American** quotation marks, but never **German** or **French** ones. We prefer **American** ones, since they are more logical to German eyes. Thus, in American English the primary quotation marks are **"..."**, the secondary ones are **'...'**. As usual, the British do it exactly the other way around, the primary quotation marks being **'...'** and the secondary ones being **"..."**.

You can obtain these on your computer by a) switching the language of your Word document to English (any variety) or b) by using the following shortcuts. ("Alt +" means: hold down the Alt key while punching the number. After you release the Alt key, the marks will appear.)

" Alt + 0147      " Alt + 0148      ' Alt + 0145      ' Alt + 0146

Some applications, such as Editor, Thunderbird, or the university web CMS, will use the plain quotation marks **"..."** and **'...'**. These are acceptable, too, of course. Just make sure your usage is absolutely consistent, especially when editing websites.

To repeat, do not use **German** (**„...“** and **„...“**) or **French** (**«...»** and **»...«**) quotation marks.

For example:

**"'Hark the Herald Angels Sing': On the Hagiology of Christmas Carols"** (AmE)

**"'Hark the Herald Angels Sing': On the Hagiology of Christmas Carols'** (BrE)

### 3.1.4. Titles of Publications

In English, the titles of publications in book form (*selbständige Publikationen*), such as monographs (*Monographien*), collections (*Sammelbände*) and journals (*Zeitschriften*) are always given in **italics**. Articles in collections and journals are always given in **plain type and quotation marks**. Newspapers and

websites are borderline cases. They are given in italics when citing (*eine Quellenangabe machen*) articles from them, but in plain type when referring to them as a whole.

For example:

*Lord of the Rings* was recently reviewed in the Daily Telegraph.

"Review of *Lord of the Rings*", *The Daily Telegraph*, 11 September 2001, p. 60.

For the finer details of making citations in English, you can refer to the "Style Sheet for Term Papers" of the Chair of English Literature, or the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*.

### 3.1.5. Foreign Words

Foreign words (*Fremdwörter*) that are not used in everyday speech are given in **italics** in English. Obviously, words that have found their way into the English language itself (and can be found in any dictionary (*Lehnwörter*) are not marked in this way.

For example:

In the German language, *Bildung* simultaneously refers to education and (character) formation.

German academics need to take two steps to become a professor, their doctorate and their *Habilitation*, both of which usually involve writing a dissertation.

Joanna's daughter already goes to kindergarten. However, she also sends her baby son to a *Kinderkrippe*, which is the current zeitgeist, I suppose. I think that's just being uber-ambitious. (find the **3** German loan words in this example!)

### 3.1.6. Gender-Neutral Speech

Gender-neutral speech (*geschlechtsneutrale Sprache*) is a headache in German ("*Saalmikrofoninnen und Saalmikrofone*" – this is a real-life quote!!!), but it is quite easy in English. English nouns (*Nomen, Substantive*) have no gender markers (i.e., they are not gendered), so this makes life fairly easy. Personal pronouns (*Personalpronomina*), however, are gendered, so we have to be a bit creative. Often, you can avoid "he or she" or "his or her" by using "they" or "their". Or you can use "s/he". The suffix "-man" at the end of words like "postman" or "chairman" can either be left out completely, or replaced by "-person".

For example:

Every student is required to hand in their term paper at the end of August.

The Lecturer will have to teach a certain number of contact hours each week. He or she will also have to hold office hours each week.

The chair of the examination committee will decide on the matter.

In the first meeting of the budget commission, Prof. Dr. Lena Müller was elected chairperson.

Occasionally, there are gender-neutral terms to replace gendered ones, like **delivery person** (rather than **postman**), **police officer** (**policeman**), **humankind** (**mankind**) or **synthetic** (**man-made**).

### 3.1.7. The “Oxford Comma”

If you enumerate (*aufzählen*) more than two items in a sentence with “and” or “or”, you may or may not use a comma before the and / or. If you do use it, this is British English and it’s called the Oxford Comma. Americans don’t usually use it. As in: **The box contains apples, pears, and bananas.** (BrE) vs. **The box contains apples, pears and bananas.** (AmE).

## 3.2. Usage in Special Cases

### 3.2.1. Addresses

Addresses are not normally translated. After all, it is the German postman who must be able to find these addresses, not an English-speaking one! Of course, you may add the country in English or French. Thus, please use:

PD. Dr. Moritz Müller Lehrstuhl für Theoretische Wissenschaft Wissenschaftliche Fakultät Universität Augsburg Universitätsstr. 10 86159 Augsburg Germany	Dr. Max Müller Präsidium, Ref. I/7 Universität Augsburg 86135 Augsburg Allemagne
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You may, of course, replace the *Umlaute* and the *Scharfes S* with ae, ue, oe, and ss.

### 3.2.2. Addressing People in Writing

When referring to somebody in writing, or addressing somebody, use **Mr.** or **Ms.** for the German *Herr* and *Frau*, respectively. **Do not use** the old-fashioned ~~Mrs.~~ (for a married woman) or ~~Miss~~ (for an unmarried woman) – this is considered very impolite!

As mentioned, please do not translate German academic titles, such as **Prof. Dr.**, **PD Dr.**, or **Dr.:** **The lecture will be given by Prof. Dr. Lena Müller.**

When addressing somebody you do not know personally in a letter or an email, use the following forms:

**Dear Sir or Madam,** (when addressing one single person, but you don’t know whom or which)

**Dear Mr. Jones,** or **Dear Ms. Jones,** (when addressing a person and you know the name and sex)

**Dear Dr. Jones,** (when addressing somebody who holds a doctorate)

**Dear Professor Jones,** (when addressing a professor of some sort)

**To Whom It May Concern:** (when writing to some unknown entity, like an institution; *wen es betrifft*)

**Note:** After the greeting, the first word of the text of the letter (or email) itself is written with a capital letter: **Dear John, Allow me to remind you to...**

When ending a letter or an email, the polite forms are either **Yours sincerely,** or (even better) simply **Sincerely.** **Do not use** the older forms you may have learnt at school, like ~~Yours faithfully,~~ or ~~Sincerely~~

~~yours~~. The person reading your message might be offended, since they might think you are making fun of them. In a second letter or a reply to a reply (and any following message), you can also use **Regards**, or even **Best regards**.

When you know somebody, it is usual to be on first names in English, even if you are talking to somebody you have never met in person, who is your superior in rank, or whom you wouldn't consider your friend. This must not be confused with the German *Du* and is by no means impolite – on the contrary. Then, the form for opening a letter is **Dear John**. The closing forms can be anything from **Regards**, **Best regards**, **Kind regards**, to **Best wishes**, or **All the best**.

If you write to “Dear Professor Smith,” and get a reply signed “Best regards, Joanna”, then the correct and polite way to answer is “Dear Joanna, ... Best regards, Hans-Jürgen”. However, this does not mean Professor Joanna Smith is now your best friend and you can talk to her as if she was. Rather, keep your correspondence neutral and polite, like you would do it with any professional contact you have. You would still say *Sie* to her in German!

### 3.2.3. Dates and Times

To avoid confusion between American (09/11/2001) and British (11/09/2001) usage, please **always** spell out the month, either as **11 September 2001** or as **September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001**. There is **no** point (.) in the former and there should be superscript (*Hochstellung*) in the latter, although it can be spelled **September 11th**, as well. If you do need a numerical form, please use ISO format (**2001-09-11**) or fall back to the German format (**11.09.2001**), which most people from abroad will recognize for what it is.

To mark the time, please use the English-language 12-hour-clock as far as possible, like **9:15 am** or **12:30 pm**. If you do use “German” time format, please always add a zero to single-digit times: **09:15h**. Please avoid the German academic times, like *9-11*, since this concept is unknown in the English-speaking world.

### 3.2.4. Days of the Week

The days of the week are abbreviated thus: **Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat, Sun**.

### 3.2.5. Telephone Numbers

Phone numbers should be given in international format always: **+49 (0) 821 / 598-1234**.

For communication, we use phones (**tel.**), fax machines (**fax**), or mobile phones (BrE) / cell phones (AmE; **cell**). While the latter item is quite handy (*handlich, nützlich*), it is not a **Handy**.

### 3.2.6. Currencies (Money)

Please try to use ISO format as much as possible, like **EUR**, **GBP** or **CAD**. You can use the Euro sign (€) and the Pound sign (£), but please be careful with the Dollar sign (\$), since Canadians, Australians and New Zealanders each have their own kind of dollar that is different from the U.S. Dollar!

Also, please remember that in the English language, there is a **decimal point** (.) and the thousands separator is the comma (,). As you know, in German it's exactly the other way around.

**He paid USD 12,345.67 for the car he drives.**

~~She paid \$76.543,21 for a locket of Mozart's hair.~~