

## ENGLISH USAGE STYLE GUIDE

This guide provides guidance in the use of the English language at the University to:

- ensure a clear and consistent use of language that can be understood by English-speakers from a wide range of backgrounds and countries
- answer common queries and address common mistakes
- provide references to recommended resources

### 1. COMMON MISTAKES

#### The University of Göttingen

- General texts: University of Göttingen or the University of Göttingen also acceptable: Göttingen University
- Scientific journals: University of Goettingen
- When referring to the legal entity: Georg-August-Universität Göttingen  
Note that the hyphens are required.
- Capitalise “University” and “Campus” when referring to the University of Göttingen or the Göttingen Campus. NOT when referring to a university or campus in a general sense.
- Please refer to [Corporate Design](#) to download the logo and for further advice.

#### British vs American English

British spellings are recommended; however, clear communication and official names (eg German Primate Center) take precedence over all else. Be consistent within the text. For publications, follow the guidelines of that publication.

- Use: colour, favour, enrol, enrolment, programme, fulfil
- NOT: color, favor, enroll, enrollment, program, fulfill

**Note:** enrolled, enrolling, fulfilling are correct.

#### Equal Opportunities

(when in doubt, contact Equal Opportunities department directly)

- people with disabilities, not disabled people
- wheelchair users, not people in wheelchairs
- elderly people, not the elderly or old people

## 2. COMMONLY MISTRANSLATED TERMS

German	English	Clarification
Controlling	auditing monitoring review	For instance, “GleichstellungsControlling” could be translated to “equal opportunities monitoring”.
Deutschland-stipendium	<none>	This term may be used as is, with clarification.
Drittmittel/ Drittmittelgefö- rderte Projekte	grant-funded research projects	“Third-party funding” is often used by EU funders (and preferred by the DFG); however, it is not a commonly understood term by English-speakers.
Mensa	cafeteria dining hall canteen	When referring to a specific University location, the name should not be translated, eg Alte Mensa or Mensa am Turm.
Nachwuchs (eg wissenschaftlicher Nachwuchs)	early career (eg early career researcher)	We advise using “young” only when describing schoolchildren or if there are clear age restrictions.
sogenannt		In English, “so-called” can mean the exact opposite! “Sogenannt” may often be omitted or “known as” added to the text.
Wissenschaft Wissenschaftlich Wissenschaft- ler_innen	science or academia or research; scientific or academic; scientists researchers scholars	“Science” typically refers to the natural sciences. Depending upon the context, “academia” or “research” may be better choices. The same is true when used as an adjective.  “Scientists” generally refers to those in the natural sciences. “Researchers” and “academics” include those in humanities and the arts. The term “scholars” is inclusive and also includes students.  “Scientists and scholars” is a good choice.

**Note:** In cases where there is no exact translation, it is often a good idea to use the original German with a short description so that the reader has a term to use for further research. Sometimes, however, the correct answer is no word at all!

### 3. OTHER RULES

#### General Rule

If there is more than one correct way of writing something, choose whichever uses least space and least ink.

#### Abbreviations and Acronyms

The trend is to avoid using full stops in common abbreviations: eg, ie, etc. However, many publications still use them: e.g., i.e., etc. Before using any of these, consider whether the meaning is clearer to write “such as”, “for example” or simply nothing at all.

- For example, NB (nota bene) would not be understood by many English-speakers.
- Always spell out the acronym the first time it is used in a text. *The project was completed with the support of the University Medical Center (UMG).*
- Do not combine *Professor* and *Dr.* Instead choose the most applicable title. Not: *Professor Dr. Dr. Mary Smith*
- Choose either *Dr Mary Smith* or *Mary Smith PhD*. Do not use both before and after.
- To write a name with full honours, put the string of letters after the name, not before. *Professor Emeritus Mary Smith MD PhD*

#### Capitalisation

- Do capitalise names of departments, qualifications, job titles: Department of History, Professor of Economics. Do not capitalise when it is not a title: *Professor Mary Smith is a professor in the Institute of Computer Science.*
- Do capitalise months, days of the week, holidays: *July, New Year’s Eve, Advent*
- Do capitalise languages and nationalities: *German, English language, Chinese food*
- Do not capitalise seasons of the year: *summer, winter semester, spring break*
- Do not capitalise disciplines: economics, law, medicine, dentistry, physics

#### Date/Times

Use either dashes or from/to when referring to spans of time, but not a mixture of both. When using the 24-hr clock, do not use am/pm.

- Use the 24-hr clock: 08:00 – 00:00. *Office hours are from 11:00 to 14:00.*
- The recommended date format is: *20 March 2019 OR Wednesday 20 March 2019*

#### Degrees and Programmes at the University of Göttingen

- Bachelor of Arts (BA), Bachelor of Science (BSc)
- Master of Arts (MA), Master of Science (MSc), Master of Education (MEd)
- master’s programme or master’s degree, doctoral degree programme, doctorate (PhD)

#### Hyphens

Hyphens are used in words beginning with prefixes such as co, de, pre or re, when two of the same vowels appear together (re-emerge, de-escalate) but not when the vowels are different (proactive, reorder). When in doubt, consult a dictionary.

- Do not hyphenate these common words: *email, vice president*
- Hyphens are used to join adjectives that describe other descriptors but not adverbs: *large-scale projects, entry-level positions, internationally renowned team*
- Hyphenate numbers used as adjectives: *18- to 21-year-old students*
- Use dashes to separate a non-essential phrase – such as this one – but use sparingly.

#### Numbers

- One billion is 1,000,000,000. One million is 1,000,000. They may be abbreviated as 1B and 1M, respectively.
- Spell out whole-number words for one to ten and if a number starts a sentence.
- Use numerals for 11 and above and for percentages, measurements and currency.

#### Additional Resources

There are many style guides available online. Below please find a few recommended guides that have served as resources for this one. Note that translation software is rarely 100% correct and it still needs to be checked.

- [Oxford University style guide](#)
- [Cambridge University style guide](#)
- [The Guardian and Observer style guide](#)
- [The Economist pdf 9th edition](#)
- [BBC style guide](#)
- [Reuters Handbook](#)

Recommended dictionaries and translation tools

- [Oxford English Dictionary](#)
- [Deepl.com, Google translate](#)
- [Leo.org](#) (use with caution)
- [Dict.cc](#) (also use with caution)

This document and other resources are available at:

[www.uni-goettingen.de/de/77766.html](http://www.uni-goettingen.de/de/77766.html)

Please contact [Yuko Maeda](#) and [Melissa Sollich](#) for queries and suggestions.