

University of Iowa Health Care

How to improve your writing

Tips to keep your University of Iowa Health Care writing strong, consistent, and on-brand

Our enterprise

- 1. University of Iowa Hospitals & Clinics:** The legal name of our hospital uses the “&” (ampersand) instead of the word “and.” So we need to write, “University of Iowa Hospitals & Clinics,” not “University of Iowa Hospitals **and** Clinics” (and tip: no “the” in front).
 - When to use “&”: Always in “University of Iowa Hospitals & Clinics”
- 2. “UI Health Care” not “UI Healthcare”:** Treat “health care” as two words, especially in the name of our enterprise.
 - When to use “health care” as two words: Always in “UI Health Care”
- 3. You may shorten “University of Iowa” to “UI”** anytime for staff-only communications, or on the second reference for patients or the public. For example: “University of Iowa Health Care is comprised of UI Hospitals & Clinics, including UI Stead Family Children’s Hospital; UI Roy J. and Lucille A. Carver College of Medicine; and UI Physicians.”
 - When to use “UI”: Sometimes. Use your best judgement. For internal use, colleagues will understand “UI.” For the public, we want to make sure University of Iowa is known (and not confused with another “I” state such as Indiana or Illinois).
- 4. Avoid the abbreviations “UIHC” and “CCOM” for external audiences.** If “UIHC” must be used (for staff only), use it to stand for UI Hospitals & Clinics, never for UI Health Care. Likewise, avoid using “CCOM” for Carver College of Medicine for any external audiences; use if for internal purposes only.
 - When to use “UIHC” or “CCOM”: Sparingly, and only for internal references
- 5. Always include “Stead Family”** within the name of UI Stead Family Children’s Hospital, not just “UI Children’s Hospital.”
 - When to use “University of Iowa Stead Family Children’s Hospital”: Always!



Titles and credentials

6. Use **credentials** after a person's name instead of "Dr." prior to it: e.g., "Jane Doe, MD, PhD," instead of "Dr. Jane Doe." In subsequent references, refer to them by their last name only.
7. **All job titles** should be lowercased, except when immediately preceding a person's name. For example: "Brooks Jackson, MD, MBA, vice president for medical affairs" is correct. So is: "Vice President for Medical Affairs Brooks Jackson, MD, MBA," because the title becomes before the name.

Other usage

8. **Long live the Oxford comma!** Also known as a serial comma, this is the comma that's included before the final conjunction in a list or series. For example: "Faculty, staff, and volunteers are invited," not "faculty, staff and volunteers."
9. **Stick with boldface** for emphasizing words, but use sparingly. Avoid italics (*it's harder to read*), all caps (STOP YELLING AT ME), or underlining (on screen it can be confused with a link).
10. **Hyperlinks** should use descriptive text or names indicating to the user where that link is going, or a short URL. Don't use "click here" or "here" for your links. It's not compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and it makes it more difficult for those with vision loss using screen readers to tell where that link is going.

Want to learn more? These tips are based on:

- [UI Health Care Editorial Style Guide](#) (found on The Point, Marketing and Communications)
- [University of Iowa's Editorial Style Guide](http://brand.uiowa.edu/editorial-style) (brand.uiowa.edu/editorial-style)

Questions? Email the-loop@uiowa.edu.

