

UNB | 2015+ Website Refresh

Website Writing Checklist

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Version 1.0

WEB WRITING CHECKLIST

Consult the following checklist to ensure you're on track with your web writing. Questions? Email digital@unb.ca

GENERAL

- ✓ Is the page short, concise, and **easy to scan**?
- ✓ Does the content make sense when found **out of context**? (e.g., through search, links, or bookmarks).

TONE

- ✓ Use the **active voice** with strong verbs.
- ✓ Use **conversational writing**
- ✓ Use **pronouns**: The reader is "you," the university or faculty/unit is "we."

WRITING

- ✓ **"Chunk" your content** by breaking it into manageable sections.
- ✓ Be brief: Use **short sentences** and **short paragraphs** (1-4 sentences).
- ✓ Use the journalism model of the **"inverted pyramid"** — start with the most important information, and then provide additional details.
- ✓ Use **bullets and numbered lists**. Don't limit yourself to using this for long lists — one sentence and two bullets is easier to read than three sentences.

HEADINGS

- ✓ Start every page with a **descriptive heading** that summarizes the page's content.
- ✓ Use clear headings to **help the reader scan** through your text.
- ✓ Use a heading at least every three paragraphs.

- ✓ **Front-load headings** with keywords to help visitors quickly find the information they're searching for.
- ✓ Capitalize only the first word of a heading.

HYPERLINKS

- ✓ Write **descriptive links that can stand alone** — describe what your reader will get if they click that link. Never use “click here” or “read more.”
- ✓ Format links like this:
 - “Review the admission requirements (link to UNB admission requirements) to ensure you're ready for the program.”
 - “Our department follows MLA style (https://www.mla.org/MLA-Style), which is a system for documenting sources in scholarly writing.”

CAPITALIZATION

- ✓ Capitalize titles — such as dean, professor or president — only when they directly precede a name. (e.g., “UNB President Eddy Campbell,” but, “Dr. Eddy Campbell, the university's president”).
- ✓ Capitalize **faculties, departments and degree programs** (e.g., “Faculty of Science,” the “Department of English,” a “Bachelor of Arts”).
- ✓ Don't capitalize the words “major” or “minor.”

STYLE

- ✓ Do not double or triple space between sentences.
- ✓ Avoid the serial comma (Oxford comma).

More questions? Consult the UNB Brand Book: unb.ca/brand-toolkit

Sources

<https://www.usability.gov/how-to-and-tools/methods/writing-for-the-web.html>
<http://www.plainlanguage.gov/howto/quickreference/weblist.cfm>
<https://www.nngroup.com/articles/be-succinct-writing-for-the-web/>