



Canadian Centre for the Study of Co-operatives Style Guide for Authors and Collaborators

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CANANDIAN CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF CO-OPERATIVES Saskatoon, Saskatchewan



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CCSC Style Guide: Introduction

The Canadian Centre for the Study of Co-operatives (CCSC) is an interdisciplinary research and teaching centre located on the University of Saskatchewan campus. Established in 1984, the CCSC is supported financially by major co-operatives and credit unions from across Canada and by the University of Saskatchewan. Our goal is to provide practitioners and policymakers with information and conceptual tools to understand co-operatives and to develop them as solutions to the complex challenges facing communities worldwide.

The purpose of the CCSC Style Guide is to achieve consistency in prose style and usage in our publications, so that readers can become absorbed in the content and avoid being distracted by oddities in form. Authors and editors will also have an easier task when they compose and revise by a shared set of rules.

Our Audiences

The CCSC produces a variety of publications for different audiences:

- 1) Scholarly papers intended for academics and researchers of co-operatives and the social economy.
- 2) Research reports and papers intended for professionals in the co-operative and non-profit sectors as well as policymakers and public servants.
- 3) Promotional material about CCSC events, academic programs, and job openings, intended for students and the general public.
- 4) Grant applications, reports, and letters, which are directed primarily to officials and committees in university, government, co-operative, and other formal organizations.

Writing Goals and Principles

With every piece of content we publish, we aim to:

- **Empower.** Help people understand the CCSC, its research, and activities by using language that is accessible and consistent.
- **Respect.** Treat readers with the respect they deserve. Give them the information they need in the simplest and clearest form possible. That means we avoid jargon and unnecessary academic terms. Remember that our readers have other things to do. Be considerate and inclusive.
- **Educate.** Give readers the exact information they need and, where possible, the resources and opportunities to learn more.
- **Guide.** As a research centre aimed at making an impact in the “real world,” our job is to guide. Whether you’re an academic trying to explain a challenging new concept or a CCSC employee inviting students to a talk, communicate in a friendly and helpful way.
- **Speak truth.** At all times, we must be credible. Avoid superlatives, overstatements, and embellishment.

Voice and Tone

In scholarly papers, research reports, grant reports, and correspondence, voice and tone will necessarily be different from writer to writer. Given the wide range of fellows associated with the CCSC, along with research staff, differences in voice and tone in written material for academics and professionals are not only expected but welcome. At the same time, proofreaders for all these publications should edit with the following in mind:

1. **Plainer is better.** Hyperbolic overstatements, convoluted sentence structures, and academic jargon impede legibility and impact. While we appreciate a poetic turn of phrase, we value clarity above all.
2. **Translation may be necessary.** Scholarly concepts and research projects can be complicated, but we don't impress anyone by making these things opaque. As experts, our job is to demystify language and descriptions in order to help people learn.

In CCSC promotional material, both of the above hold true, and the voice is always professional and clear. Tone should remain positive and relatively neutral or straight-faced (i.e., humour should be avoided).

Style Tips

In all publications, apply the following key elements of CCSC style:

- **Use active voice. Avoid passive voice.** An active sentence makes it clear who is doing what (it attributes agency):
 - Passive: The motion was unanimously accepted.
 - Active: The board voted unanimously to accept the motion.
- **Avoid slang, academic jargon, and the excessive use of acronyms.** Write in plain English.
- **Keep sentences simple.** In most cases, complex sentences should be avoided, and compound sentences should be kept to a minimum.
- **Use positive phrasing rather than negative phrasing.** Positive phrasing is easier to understand:
 - Negative: Until you submit your revisions, you will not receive your degree.
 - Positive: Once you submit your revisions, you will receive your degree.
- **Keep paragraph length manageable.** Avoid paragraphs that run half a page or longer. In general, try to keep paragraphs to 3–5 sentences maximum.

Overall Editorial Style

Scholarly texts must employ formal, scholarly style as defined by the *Chicago Manual of Style* (<https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html>), supplemented by this style guide. In particular, observe the following:

- 1) The finished essay, report, or manuscript must exhibit consistency of format, style, and usage throughout.
- 2) Passages of text making direct and attributed use of more than 50 words derived from another published work must be identified, and the author must obtain copyright permissions or waivers as required.
- 3) Use footnotes rather than endnotes, using the Word, Google doc, or OfficeLibre footnote function. Do not manually insert text at the bottom of the page. Footnotes attributing quoted material or paraphrased material in the manuscript to specific sources must follow rules given in this guide and *Chicago*. Short titles will be used in place of “op. cit.” or “loc. cit.”
- 4) Avoid contractions unless the tone of the publication is unusually informal or are direct quotations.

Capitalization

Some guidelines for capitalizing terms:

- “Co-operatives” should contain a hyphen, unless “cooperatives” is found in a direct quote.
- Scientific or technical terms (like all terms) containing a proper name should be capitalized.
- All formal working groups, committees, and task forces having quasi-policy or quasi-administrative authority should be capitalized.
- In capitalizing titles, follow *Chicago*, with these exceptions: 1) capitalize prepositions of five or more letters (e.g., “Within,” “Before”) and 2) capitalize “to” when it is part of the infinitive form of a verb (e.g., “To Run”), because in that case it is not acting as a preposition.
- Follow *Chicago’s* “down” style for words that describe but do not directly name various entities, such as “federal government,” “province,” “city,” and so on.
- Racial/ethnic/nationality terms: Lowercase “white” but uppercase “Indigenous” and “Black.” Capitalize terms derived from proper nouns, e.g., Asian, Hispanic, African American, First Nations, etc.
- For government and academic units, capitalize the full names of existing or proposed organized bodies and their shortened names. Examples: Ministry of Social Services, Department of Agriculture, Faculty of Education, etc.

Gender-Specific and Gender-Neutral Language

In general, all references to occupational and leadership positions should be non-gender-specific (e.g., humans and chairperson, as opposed to mankind and chairman). The gender-neutral pronoun “they” should be used when the subject of the sentence has not been identified as specifically male or female.

Numbers, Numerals, and Related Items

In general, spell out numbers under 10. For 10 and up, use numerals.

Dates

All full dates should be in a day-month-year format (7 July 1983). The year of an event may be omitted in instances where it is clear to the reader from previous discussion. In addition, observe the following examples of usage:

the 1970s (no apostrophe)

on the 9th (no superscript)

effective 7 July

July 1978 (no comma)

When a span of years is indicated, truncate as follows (note the use of the en dash):

1942–45

1963–70

but 1995–2002

When a span of years is embedded in a sentence and preceded by the word “from,” the en dash should be replaced by the word “to”: e.g., from 1963 to 1970.

Enumerations in Running Text

Use a single closing parenthesis for enumeration in running text: “We have published books on 1) Federated Co-operatives Ltd., 2) Canadian credit unions, and 3) diversity in governance.” If you are using letters (less common), they would be written in a similar fashion: a), b), c).

Figure and Table References

Use the word “figure” (lowercase and spelled out) in references (e.g., “See figure 1.2”). This holds true for tables as well.

Commas in Numerals

In numbers of four or more digits, use commas between groups of three digits (or, in the case of the leftmost group only, one or two digits), counting from the right:

32,987

1,512

2,734,456

Do not use commas in these cases:

Actual years, e.g., 1995, 2004

Page numbers, e.g., pp. 972–1003 (note that in a range, the en dash is used instead of the hyphen)

Whole Numbers from One Through Nine

Write these out, including ordinals like “fourth” and “seventh.” Also write out such quantities as “three dozen” and “four score.”

Numbers Starting at 10

Use numerals except in the case large round numbers, when it may be appropriate to write them out, as in “one in ten thousand.”

Consistency Within a Sentence

If you have several numbers relating to the same thing in the same sentence and at least one of them is big enough to be written in numerals, then all of them will be in numerals.

There are 8 students in the certificate program, 23 in the social economy course, and 27 in the co-operatives course.

At the Beginning of a Sentence or Title

Write out any number that begins a sentence or title.

One hundred twenty-eight students visited CCSC desk at the student orientation.

Abbreviations

In Narrative Text

Except for a carefully controlled selection of the most common acronyms and abbreviations (such as US, UK), avoid them. As much as possible, spell out proper names instead of using acronyms, which are a plague of bureaucratic and otherwise insular writing and speech. Example: credit unions, not CUs. FCL may be so written in a publication about Federated Co-operatives Limited, but in that publication, the names of other co-operative organizations should be written out. In a publication devoted only to credit unions, intended for a credit union audience, the abbreviation CU may be used for “credit union” if the author believes this will improve rather than detract from the publication’s legitimacy and legibility. For all acronyms that you do use, define each one in parentheses at the first use.

Employees of United Farmers of Alberta (UFA)....

Use periods in “U.S.” and “U.K.” only when they serve as adjectives (e.g., U.S. organizations or organizations in the US).

CCSC: Treat it as though saying each letter. Hence, “the CCSC,” “a CCSC publication.”

Proper Names

Take care with the names of companies and organizations. Some use the ampersand as part of the name; some do not. Do not substitute an ampersand for “and” in a proper name.

Do not abbreviate state or province names in the narrative text of a manuscript, with the exception of the “DC” in “Washington, DC,” because “Washington, DC” is widely used and “Washington, District of Columbia” is cumbersome.

Vancouver, British Columbia

Washington, DC (in both narrative text and notes)

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

In Notes

Make maximum use of abbreviations. Notes will be read by specialists who can tolerate tight writing for the sake of maximum information in a minimal amount of space. (Exception: months are still written out, e.g., 3 August 1994.) In notes only, use the two-letter postal abbreviation for provinces and states when the province or state follows the name of a city, county, headquarters, etc.

Punctuation

Commas

Serial commas: Use a comma after each item in a series, except the last.

red, white, and blue

Parenthetical expressions require a pair of commas.

Frank Anderson, Jr., wrote....

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, is....

Liberals, Conservatives, New Democrats, etc., voted....

Federated Co-operatives Limited, whose headquarters are in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, is....

Note that restrictive clauses do not use such commas:

The bicycle shop that is on the corner of Avenue B and 22nd Street....

Quotation Marks

With quotation marks, semicolons and colons go outside; commas and periods go inside.

Colons

Insert a colon to separate a publication's title from its subtitle. In long and complex titles, you may need to add more punctuation. Titles of events generally should not have subtitles, although exceptions may be made in the case of paper presentations.

Semi-colons

Most people who use semi-colons do so incorrectly, and for this reason most people should avoid them.

A semicolon has three general uses: to clarify a series, to indicate two closely related independent clauses, and to punctuate a list.

Series: If one or more elements in a series contain a comma, use semicolons to separate them.

Two closely related independent clauses which are not joined by a co-ordinating conjunction:

The CCSC does not offer management workshops. It offers governance workshops. →

The CCSC does not offer management workshops; it offers governance workshops.

List: Use a semicolon after each item (and a period at the end of the list) if one or more items contain internal punctuation, or after each item of a list ending in *and* or *or*, even if the items contain no internal punctuation:

The CCSC has set the following priorities for the coming year:

1. Research on social outcomes purchasing;
2. Developing an education strategy;
3. Cultivating good relations with funders; and
4. Finalizing the Aviso case study.

Dashes

The shorter en dash (–) is used to mark ranges. The longer em dash (—) is used to separate extra information or mark a break in a sentence.

When using a dash, whether en (–) or em (—), do not put spaces around it. If you are unable to use the em dash character, you may use two hyphens in its place.

At the last meeting--or what we thought would be the last--the chairperson....

or

At the last meeting—or what we thought would be the last—the chairperson....

In a range or span, use an en dash.

Fiscal years 1963–72

pages 13–17

Apostrophes

Do not use an apostrophe in most plurals, such as these:

the 1960s

several CUs

However, to form the plural of abbreviations with periods and single letters standing alone, add 's:

M.A.'s

x's and y's

The possessive of a name ending in s is 's: James's, Iris's. Exception: Use only an apostrophe for names ending in a plural: e.g., United States'.

Solidus/Slash

Avoid excessive use of the solidus (the slash).

Figures and Tables

Number tables and figures by chapter in book-length publications (e.g., table 1.1 or 1-1 or figure 1.1 or 1-1 for the first table or figure in chapter 1) and include a heading/title for each one.

The Canadian Centre for the Study of Co-operatives is located in ᑭᓴᓐᑭᓐᑭᓐ (misâskwatôminihk) on Treaty 6 territory and the homeland of the Métis.

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