Publications Style Guide

Please use the following general guidelines for developing and reviewing the content for all Web sites developed by CCIT.

**Style**
Is the language…
- professional but comprehensible and accessible to students?
- succinct but as comprehensive as necessary?
- written in active voice where appropriate?

**Active:** The Center for Student Advising staff answers questions about course selection, course load, registration, considering a major, and a host of other topics.”

**Passive:** Questions about course selection, course load, registration, considering a major, and a host of other topics can be answered by Center for Student Advising staff.

- cast in third person plural for the descriptive and resource materials that follow?
  Students interested in study abroad should begin exploring their options during their first year at Columbia.

- written in the present and/or conditional tenses?
  Students interested in study abroad should begin exploring their options during their first year at Columbia.

Is the preferred spelling and capitalization observed? (not meant to be comprehensive)
- adviser (not advisor); advising (not advisement)
- Advising Deans
- College (capitalized when referring to Columbia College)
- *Columbia College Bulletin, The Fu Foundation School of Engineering and Applied Science Bulletin,* and the *SEAS Bulletin* are always italicized because they are titles of proper publications.
- on-line
- e-mail, e-commerce
- first-year students, sophomores, juniors, seniors
- The Fu Foundation School of Engineering and Applied Science (always with “The” and the “T” capitalized)
- Pass/D/Fail
- premedical; predoctoral; postdoctoral
- University (capitalized when referring to Columbia)
- Web site
Does the piece use acronyms correctly?
On each new Web page, acronyms may not be employed until is has been preceded by the full name or title of the acronym followed by the acronym in parentheses.

**Correct:** The Fu Foundation School of Engineering and Applied Science (SEAS) is a great engineering school. SEAS is located in New York.

**Passive:** SEAS (Fu Foundation School of Engineering and Applied Science) is a great school. SEAS is located in New York.

Is preferred usage of designating numbers followed?
Numbers zero to ninety-nine should be spelled out except when referring to academic credit (e.g., 3 points) or centuries (17th Century)

Did you use “can” and “may” correctly?
Can is reserved for references to ability, may for references to permission:
Students who can write well have a distinct advantage when they apply for fellowships.
No more than six points of "D" may be credited toward the degree in any academic year.

Avoid the use of "get" whenever possible. Substitute such words as "obtain," "research," "develop," "find," etc.

**Rhetoric**
Does this section respond to anticipated issues/topic treated by the section?
Is this section pro-active?

Does it…
- provide a big picture for the issue?
- achieve the advising goal?
- define the constituency served?
- provide important specific details?
- offer the resources available to support that big picture?

Does this section provide correct and appropriate referrals to further information, including where appropriate
- directions to useful printed materials and adequate bibliographic information where appropriate:
  *Italicized Title* by Author First Name + Last Name. Publisher, edition if applicable, year of publication.

**Links**
Are links properly formed, with titles of the linked pages linked without explicit URLs?

**Correct:** Please see the [Columbia College Web site](http://www.college.columbia.edu).

**Incorrect:** Please [click here](http://www.college.columbia.edu) to see the Columbia College Web site.