



Digital Style Guide

Office of Public Affairs
Fall 2023

Web Content

Write for your audience	3
Web vs. print content	4
Avoid duplication of content	5
Paragraphs and subheads	6
Right column on webpage	7

Formatting and Style

Use of bold, underling and all caps	8
AP Style	9
Hyperlinks	10
Buttons	11
Use of color	11
Images	12
Logos	12
Videos	13
Accessibility	14

Templates

Academic Departments	15
Success Programs	16
Calendar Entries	18
Public Affairs Contacts	19

Web Content

WRITE FOR YOUR AUDIENCE

It is imperative that our web content is easily understood by a wide audience varying in age, education level, and native language.

Who is your audience?

- Current students
- Potential students
- Foreign students
- Returning or older adult students
- Disabled students
- Faculty
- Staff
- General community

Plain Language

Plain Language was developed to make sure written material is easy to understand for everyone. Many students and potential students are from other countries or may have limited formal education.

Some examples of plain language:

- Use short words instead of long ones. If you find yourself using a 4 syllable word, look for an alternative.

Ex. The XYZ Department prepares students who have various levels of proficiency to reach an optimum level of performance.

Simplify this to:

The XYZ Department helps students of all levels master the material.

Reference for Plain Language

Learn more about plain language at <https://www.plainlanguage.gov/>

WEB VS. PRINT CONTENT

When people look for information online, they want to be able to find what they are looking for quickly, without a lot of filler material. Studies show people tend to skim and scan websites for information, rather than read every word.

Create Pages that are Easy to Skim and Scan

People skim and scan web material, often on a cell phone. Try to get to the point in as few words as possible. Keep sentences and paragraphs short.

Break Up Text

Instead of large blocks of text, try to pare it down and then break up into separate paragraphs and where appropriate, bulleted lists.

Use Headings and Subtitles

People skimming a webpage will be able to see at a glance what topics are covered on a page. Subtitles are also helpful for search engine optimization, i.e. people doing Google searches for the topic you are discussing.

Avoid Acronyms

BMCC faculty and staff become familiar with our many acronyms. The new or potential student will not know what they mean. Plus, anyone searching for information on a topic will not find our site if crucial words are hidden in acronyms. Write out terms instead of using acronyms.

Ex. The School Health Education major is sometimes referred to by the acronym SHE.

Instead of, “The SHE major will lead to many career options.”

Use: “The School Health Education major will lead to many career options.”

Acronyms hinder Google Searches

People searching for a course in education, for instance, will not find a page that uses, “SHE” instead of “School Health Education.”

Using the keywords “school health education” will help potential students who are Googling for programs find ours. It will also make our content more readable and user friendly.

AVOID DUPLICATION OF CONTENT

Duplication of Content

We try to avoid having the same content in several places on the website. It is better to link to the content already in existence on another part of the website than copy it onto your webpage.

Ex. Student Resources: if you wish to include information about BMCC resources for students on your webpages, link to the Student Hub rather than re-listing individual services on your webpages.

Ex. PDFs: If you have a PDF booklet attached to your site, do not excerpt and repeat information from the PDF on the webpages.

However, it is preferable to have information on the webpages *instead* of having viewers take the extra step of opening a PDF. The information is easier to find and creates a better viewer experience.

Ex. Information from other websites: Hyperlink to the other website *instead* of copying their material to ours. That way, when the other website updates their material, people will have the more current and correct information.

PARAGRAPHS

Paragraphs should be relatively short and easy to read. There is rarely a need for a subtitle over the first paragraph on a page—skip the subtitle and go right into the topic. Paragraphs further down on the page can have subtitles.

Use Keywords

The first paragraph on a page should contain some keywords about the page topic, especially the first sentence. This will help with search engine optimization (SEO), i.e. your page coming up in relevant searches.

HEADINGS AND SUBHEADS

Headings should be:

- To the point
- Preferably one line
- No acronyms

Use Subheads

- When a page has several paragraphs, subheads help the reader see at a glance what is on the page
- Subheads are also useful for search engine optimization

RIGHT COLUMN ON A WEBPAGE

The right column on the page is generally reserved for contact information and links to news and events. Not every page needs this information, but it is important to have consistency so viewers know what to expect. Information other than contact, news and events, can be placed in the center column.

For example, videos and images should be sized appropriately to go in the center column rather than the narrow right column. Many students will be viewing the site on a cell phone and may not even get to any videos or photos in the right column.

For example, here is the right column for the Women’s Resource Center (WRC) landing page. Some departments include a contact name, for instance, the program director, in the contact box.

CONTACT

199 Chambers Street, Room S-340
(currently operating remotely)
(212) 220-8166
wrc@bmcc.cuny.edu

Virtual Front Desk Office Hours

Monday and Wednesday from 1-3
p.m.
Tuesday and Thursday from 11 a.m.-1
p.m.
[Join us via Zoom](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

[Sister2Sister Orientation
\(Mentor/Mentees\)](#)
September 15 | 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM
Zoom

[Fit Mind Workshop: Improve Your
Relationships](#)
September 21 | 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM
Zoom

FORMATTING AND STYLE

Consistent formatting and style give the website a cohesive look and help the viewer navigate through the material.

Use of Bold Type

Use occasional bold type to emphasize **one** or **two words**, not a whole sentence or paragraph.

Use of ALL CAPS

This is not a style we use on the BMCC website. It is more difficult to read than mixed case.

Use of Underlining

Underlining is not used on our website, because it can easily be mistaken for a hyperlink.

Use of Colored Type

Black type on a white background is the most easily read and that is the style we use. We use color in other ways, such as our banners and other graphics.

AP STYLE

BMCC makes use of Associate Press (AP) style for print and website. Using a particular style provides consistency and clarity for a website, as well as print materials.

Using the correct style (here a.m.) throughout the website makes the information that is important and different (i.e. the actual time: **4 p.m.**, **9 a.m.**) stand out.

Some examples of AP style are:

Time

AP style uses periods for a.m. and p.m. and lower-case letters.

Ex. 3:30 p.m. or 8 a.m. is correct

Dates, Months, Years, Days of the Week

For dates and years, use figures. Do not use st, nd, rd, or th with dates

Ex. May 12 is correct . . . not May 12th

Technological Terms

Here are the correct spellings for some common technological terms:

- e-book
- e-book reader
- e-reader
- email
- cellphone
- Facebook

Numbers

Spell out numbers used at the beginning of a sentence. Exception:
Never spell out years.

Ex. Two hundred students volunteered for the program
2018 was the year the college president stepped down.

A good overview the AP style can be found at the following:

- The [Purdue Online Writing Lab](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/subject_specific_writing/journalism_and_journalistic_writing/ap_style.html)
(https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/subject_specific_writing/journalism_and_journalistic_writing/ap_style.html)

HYPERLINKS

Use hyperlinks sparingly

Hyperlinks stand out on a page and too many hyperlinks will distract the viewer. You want to call attention to the few hyperlinks that are most important.

Hyperlink words instead of using naked links

- BMCC is having an Open House on November 4:
<http://www.bmcc.cuny.edu/calendar/events.jsp?id=29697>

Should be written as:

- BMCC is having an [Open House](#) on November 4.

This format is not only easier for the viewer to read, it helps in search engine optimization.

Avoid “click here”

- BMMC is having an open house on October 13. [Click here](#) to learn more about the open house. [Click here](#) to learn more about the Borough of Manhattan Community College. To register for the event [click here](#).

Should be written as:

- BMMC is having an [open house](#) on October 13. Learn more about [BMCC](#). You can [register](#) online for the event.

This format as well is easier for the viewer to read and helps in search engine optimization.

Linking to a pdf

- If a link goes to a pdf indicate that, i.e. [link \(pdf\)](#)

BUTTONS

Buttons should be used occasionally—generally for a call to action such as an “Apply Now” or “Contact Us” hyperlink. We have a specific style of button that we can set up for you.



USE OF COLOR

The BMCC website has been set up with font types, sizes and colors that are part of our style. For web and calendar entries, we use black type on a white background, which is easy to read.

Headlines are preset in different sizes of black type.

If you do create documents that will be attached to a webpage or calendar entry, here are some things to consider:

Consider Contrast

Color choice in type or graphics is an accessibility issue, as high contrast (for instance black type on white background) is the most easily visible.

Limit color

Less is more in web color choices. Use of color should be consistent with the web style, in this case, black type on white background and occasional use of blue and orange (the school’s colors).

Avoid blue type because blue is frequently used to denote hyperlink text. Viewers are tempted to click on blue type when they see it.

IMAGES

We prefer to use images of real BMCC students enjoying their college experience. That is part of our branding and makes us unique among many websites that use stock images. Do not use clip art, flyers or graphics copied from other websites for calendar entries or webpages.

The Office of Public Affairs provides images for calendar entries and web pages, taken by our on-staff professional photographer. Consult with the Office of Public Affairs about appropriate images for web and calendar pages.

If you do create documents that will be attached to a webpage or calendar entry, here are some things to consider:

- You must have legal right to use an image—cannot just copy from other websites.
- Public domain images can be used.

Image Sizes

Photo sizes used on the website and web calendar are standardized as follows. We will crop and resize photos as necessary:

- web page banner: 1140 x 400 pixels
- calendar entry banner: 830 x 350 pixels
- headshots: 4x5 ratio, generally 120 x 150 pixels

Note: We provide images taken by our staff photographer in the WordPress Media Library, already sized for like calendar events, etc. Each department or office has it's own folder where we can add photos.

LOGOS

We use the BMCC logo throughout the site. We do not post logos of individual programs or external organizations.

VIDEOS

The Office of Public Affairs produces videos, made by our on-staff professional videographer. Our videos have a consistent look and feel, format and use of type—they are part of our branding.

We do not post videos created by individual programs. If programs and offices do create their own videos, they can be placed on their own social media channels.

Consult with the Office of Public Affairs about video requests related to the website. We will provide advice about whether a video is needed or if another form of communication would be more effective. We consider the website as a whole and strive to create a balance of different types of communication.

ACCESSIBILITY

The City University of New York (CUNY) is committed to providing students, faculty, staff, and the general public with the technology and information they need, and to making these resources accessible to all, in accordance with [CUNY's Policy on Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination](#) and applicable law. See CUNY's [IT Accessibility Statement](#) for more information.

Anyone developing content (text, images, video, etc.) for online publications or systems should ensure that all the necessary elements are provided to make the content accessible to people with disabilities, including blind, low vision, deaf, and hard of hearing users.

PDFs

- For attached or linked PDFs to be accessible, you should be able to select the text with a mouse (a screen reading device will then be able to read it).
- For more information, see CUNY's [Creating Accessible PDF and Microsoft Office Documents](#).

Videos

- Include closed captions or transcripts for any audio or video elements.
- For more information, see CUNY's [Captioning Videos](#).

General

- All documents should have descriptive titles.
- Sans serif fonts such as Arial, Helvetica or Verdana work best on screens. Use 12 point or larger.
- Be cautious as to the colors you choose. Some colors and color combinations can be difficult to read, especially for someone who has color blindness. Provide sufficient color contrast.
- Use descriptive hypertext links.
- If a link goes to a pdf indicate that, i.e. [link \(pdf\)](#)
- Use bulleted and numeric lists for related items.
- See CUNY's [Making Content Accessible](#) page for more information.

ACADEMIC DEPARTMENT WEBPAGE FORMAT

Here is an example of the style and format we are using for academic departments.


Allied Health Sciences




- [Allied Health Sciences](#)
- [Course Listings](#)
- [Faculty](#)
- [Health Informatics Certificate](#)

PROGRAMS OFFERED

- [Health Information Technology](#)
- [Paramedic](#)
- [Respiratory Therapy](#)



[Academic & Career Communities Brochure \(pdf\)](#)



[Comprehensive Academic Brochure](#)
[Read online](#)
[Download pdf](#)

The Department of Allied Health Sciences offers three professional programs: [Paramedic](#), [Health Information Technology](#), and [Respiratory Therapy](#). Students successfully completing these programs are awarded the Associate in Applied Science (A.A.S.) degree and are qualified to work as technicians or therapists in a variety of health care agencies.

Programs Offered

- [Health Information Technology](#) will teach you specific skills to work in the health information management (HIM) profession, including working with patient medical information or charts (e.g., completion, reimbursement, state, city, government laws and regulations, charging for services rendered, lawsuits, access). Graduates with this degree can find employment in nursing homes, rehab centers, doctor's offices, insurance companies, government, and more.
- [Paramedics](#) are specialist healthcare professionals who respond to emergency calls for medical help outside of a hospital. Paramedics often work as part of the emergency medical services (EMS), in settings such as a public ambulance service, a fire department, a hospital based service, a private company working under contract and more.
- [Respiratory Therapy](#) prepares you for a career as a licensed healthcare professional who can treat people with conditions affecting the cardiopulmonary system such as asthma, emphysema, pneumonia, cardiovascular disorders, and trauma. Respiratory therapists provide care and life support to patients in the emergency room, intensive care units, general hospital areas, the pulmonary diagnostics laboratory and other specialty areas such as outpatient clinics and pulmonary rehabilitation units.

CONTACT

Allied Health Sciences Department
199 Chambers St, Room N-799
New York, NY 10007
(212) 220- 8335


UPCOMING EVENTS

[LiveStream of Paramedic Graduation](#)
November 10 | 4:15 PM - 5:30 PM
Livestream

[Health, Human Services/Behavioral Sciences and Education Virtual Career Fair](#)
November 17 | 1:00 PM - 4:30 PM
Career Express (online)

NEWS

[Commencement Ceremonies Celebrate Respiratory Therapy and Health Information Technology Classes of 2021](#)



On June 16 and 17, events in Theatre II showcase RT and HIT graduates who are entering dynamic healthcare

Use Keywords in Introductory Sentence and Paragraph

“The Department of Allied Health Sciences offers three professional programs: [Paramedic](#), [Health Information Technology](#), and [Respiratory Therapy](#). Students successfully completing these programs are awarded the Associate in Applied Science (A.A.S.) degree and are qualified to work as [technicians](#) or [therapists](#) in a variety of [health care agencies](#).”

The highlighted words are terms that potential students might search for on the internet.

SUCCESS PROGRAM FORMAT

Conexiones & Connections

Mission Statement and Goals

Staff and Faculty Training

The Conexiones & Connections program is open to all students who are interested in exploring and refining their purpose through their college experience. In addition to serving all students, the program offers a community of support for males of color. Our Spanish-speaking staff members offer bilingual support for our Latinx students. Program activities are designed for students to:

- clarify their academic and career paths,
- develop habits for academic success,
- cultivate relationships with mentors and coaches,
- explore career-oriented employment and internship opportunities,
- and expand their networking skills and leadership abilities.

Conexiones prepares students for success at BMCC as well as their transition to a bachelor's degree program and beyond. Students are eligible to receive incentives for active participation including stipends, summer and winter tuition waivers, and opportunities to apply for paid summer leadership and career prep programs.

Program Benefits

As a Conexiones student, you will receive:

- A personalized plan and support team developed to meet your goals
- Bilingual support from staff and peer mentors
- Events* to meet and interact with other students
- Assistance with career-oriented employment and internships
- Financial literacy workshops and counseling in Spanish
- Civic engagement and service learning providing Co-Curricular Transcript (CCT) credit
- Conexiones & Connections Leadership Academy
- Transfer preparation
- Free winter or summer course (subject to program conditions, requirements, and funding availability)

* virtual and/or in-person

Eligibility

- All majors accepted
- Exempt or placed into highest level of developmental reading and writing
- Not already a member of ASAP, BMCC Learning Academy, College Discovery, Degree Under Three, Panther Partners, or Year Up
- International and part-time students are eligible

Interested in Joining?

The program accepts students throughout the semester. Please fill out our [interest form](#) and we will contact you with additional information.

Any questions or concerns? Visit our virtual walk-in hours or contact us directly by emailing connections@bmcc.cuny.edu.

CONTACT

Tiffany James
Office of Student Affairs
connections@bmcc.cuny.edu

Hours of Operation:
Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
Phone/Text: (347) 352-5153

Virtual Walk-in Daytime Hours

Learn more about the program, ask questions, connect with us.
Monday-Friday, 12-5 p.m.
Contact us via this [Zoom link](#)
Meeting ID: 895 7404 8637
Passcode: 447020

UPCOMING EVENTS

Career Development: Black Men in Public Service
November 10 | 3:00 PM - 4:00 PM
Zoom

Brief Description of Program: A short (50-75 word) paragraph describing the program.

Benefits: A bullet list of the benefits your program offers to students.

Eligibility Requirements: What are the requirements for a student to apply to the program.

Call to Action/How to Apply: Link to an application or interest form. Mention whom to contact to apply for the program or for more information. State any relevant deadlines.

CALENDAR ENTRIES

Out in Two Information Session

October 29 at 10:00 am - 11:30 am | Zoom



Is fall 2021 your first semester in college? Would you like to graduate from BMCC by spring 2023? Then, the [Out in Two Scholarship Program](#)—BMCC's prestigious presidential scholarship—may be the right fit for you! Students accepted into the program receive \$1600 for each of their remaining semesters at BMCC.

Join us to learn more. [RSVP](#) for this session!

For more information about this event, contact Jonathan Matamoros or Maria Ramirez by email at outintwo@bmcc.cuny.edu.



Details

Date:
October 29

Time:
10:00 AM - 11:30 AM

Event categories:
[Academic Advisement & Transfer, Featured](#)

Open to:
The BMCC Community

Calendar entries should contain:

Short Description of Event: 50 to 75 words. You can hyperlink to further information.

Images of similar event in past—not a flyer or clip art

The Office of Public Affairs provides images for most calendar entries. We try to use photos of real BMCC students involved in classes and activities.

CALENDAR ENTRIES, CONTINUED

Location: building, room or Zoom

State which building the event is in, then the room number. For example:

- Fiterman Hall, room F-306
- 199 Chambers St., room S-402
- Zoom

Who can attend the event?

We generally post events that are either:

- Open to BMCC community
- Open to the BMCC community and other CUNY schools
- Open to the general public

Note: If an event is for members of one department or program only, it would not be appropriate for the web calendar.

Contact Information

There should be a name and email and/or phone number to contact for more information. Include a hyperlink to the department or office sponsoring the event.

Since the web calendar is part of our public facing website, we don't post events on the calendar that are just for a single department or program. Events must be open to all BMCC students.

OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Main Number: (212) 346-8501

Email: publicaffairs@bmcc.cuny.edu

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