



University Alliance Communications and Style Guide

August 2017



Our narrative

Alliance universities have been proud leaders in technical and professional education since the industrial revolution and are still crucial to the success of cities and sectors today. We educate the professional workforce of the future, provide flexible and responsive R&D to businesses of all sizes and solve the problems facing society locally, nationally and across the globe. We are large enough to take risks, experienced at working with key partners and have never lost the enterprising mindset which says we must constantly innovate to stay fit for a changing world.

Education

We design our courses with employers to make sure they are relevant. Our leading research makes them cutting edge. We constantly innovate to keep our education fit for a changing world. We offer students from all parts of society the opportunity to achieve more than they ever expected. Our graduates are the professional workforce of the future, driving growth in our cities and regions.

Research

We excel at research with impact in the real world. It supports new technologies, addresses the challenges of today's society and drives prosperity locally, nationally and across the globe. As leading providers of professional doctorates, we combine our strength in applied research and teaching for the benefit of students and industry.

Innovation and Enterprise

We support businesses to succeed in our cities and regions and work with LEPs to solve strategic challenges. We offer world-class research and development to businesses of all sizes. Our graduates are enterprising, driving innovation for their employers or founding successful companies of their own.

Our objectives

As a mission group, our aim is to **champion technical and professional universities**.

We promote the value of Alliance universities to the UK and government policy goals in the context of Brexit, the Industrial Strategy and devolution to the nations of the UK and the English regions.

We maintain excellent links with decision-makers in government and Parliament to **shape policy**. We establish robust, evidence-based positions and use these to influence the policy debate.

We **collaborate on projects** that benefit our students, showcase our strengths and support our policy arguments.

Our values

- We are passionate about what we do and ambitious to achieve excellence across our mission.
- We are open-minded and entrepreneurial – willing to consider new ideas, to work with partners and to innovate.
- We provide opportunity for all, embrace diversity and work openly, honestly and constructively for the good of UK higher education.

Introduction to using our brand

University Alliance has a distinctive brand. Our brand narrative above sets out who we are. How we use this brand is also important. We are:

- Professional
- Positive
- Constructive
- Collaborative

These attributes describe both the way we work and what we deliver. We aim for consistency in the way we approach and present our work.

Our brand strategy is about increasing our visibility and credibility at the same time. Our brand permeates through our behaviour; our whole approach to what we do; our written and spoken word; our online and offline presence; and our events.

Text to describe University Alliance

Where it does not make sense to use the full narrative, the following text should be used (for example, introductory paragraphs in briefings, letters etc.

Alliance universities have been proud leaders in technical and professional education since the industrial revolution and are still crucial to the success of cities and sectors today. We educate the professional workforce of the future, provide flexible and responsive R&D to businesses of all sizes and solve the problems facing society locally, nationally and across the globe. We are large enough to take risks, experienced at working with key partners and have never lost the enterprising mindset which says we must constantly innovate to stay fit for a changing world.

Press releases should use this boilerplate in the notes for editors.

Logo

Our primary logo is below - this should be used wherever possible. A black & white, grayscale and smaller versions are available (only to used when necessary).Logos are saved in Google Drive / UA shared docs / Comms / Branding / UA Brand / 2015 logos

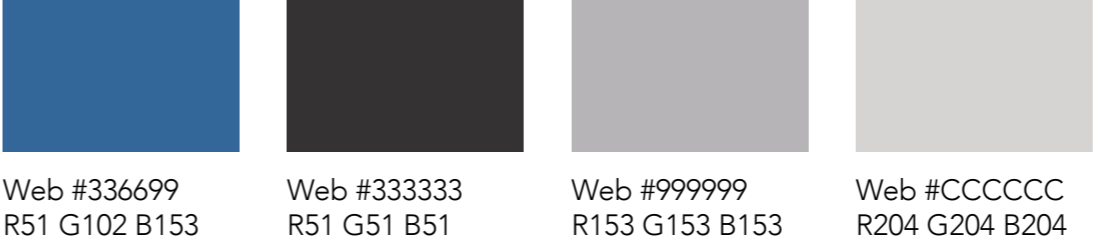


Colours

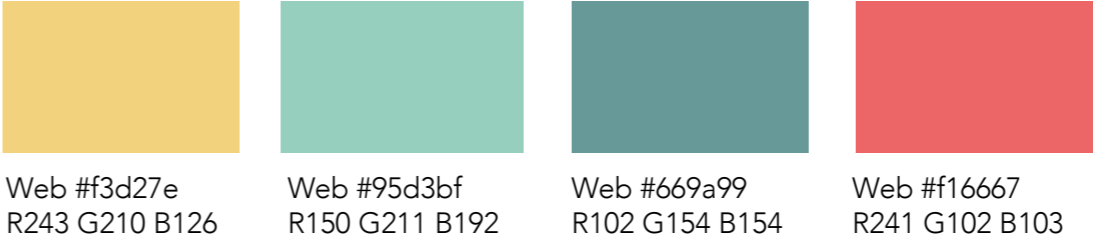
Below are the colour codes for our main colours. Be consistent with your use of colour throughout a document (e.g. keep headings the same colour throughout).

The Primary palette should be used for top level publications. We use the secondary palette as colour themes for our publications. Additional complimentary colour themes for publications can be adopted in consultation with the communications team.

Primary palette



Secondary palette



Fonts and formatting

Our font is Avenir. Use Avenir Medium for headings and Avenir Light for body text. body text. Use 11 point typeface for body text, 14 for main headings and 12 for sub-headings.

Document formatting templates

Templates for letters and other documents can be found in Comms / Branding / 3. Templates

Email and signature

For email text: Calibri, font 11pt

For signature: As right: Avenir Light for the font (size 11pt), grey text. Bold where indicated. Hyperlink to our website, blog and twitter feed.

On a PC

Change both in File > Options > Mail > Create or modify signatures for email – then:

First tab Email Signature
Second Personal Stationery tab for the email text font > New Mail messages and Reply messages

On a Mac

Change email fonts via Outlook: Preferences > Fonts > New mail

Change email signatures via Outlook: Preferences > Signatures > Standard > then right click and select Font to change

Avenir Medium 14 for headings
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxy^z1234567890

Avenir Medium 12 for sub-headings
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxy^z1234567890

Avenir Light 11 for body
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxy^z1234567890

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Visit our [website](#), read our [blog](#) and follow us on [Twitter](#).

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Using images

Images are a great way of getting a message across. We use a lot of images in our publications, online and in presentations. We tend to use photographs where possible. However, illustrations, particular vector illustrations, can also be used. Definitely *no clip art!*

Sourcing images

Images from Alliance institutions are available on the google drive (Comms / Photos & Images / New Image Library 2015 for web and print).

If you are sourcing other images from the web use images that are under ‘creative commons’ licenses, as these usually allow free-use on the proviso that the owner of the image is attributed. Tip: to search for Creative Commons images on Flickr select ‘The Commons’ rather than ‘Everyone’s photos’ in the search options.

We do have an accounts with online image libraries to purchase hi-res photos for use in publications. Speak to the Comms team about accessing these.

When choosing an image 300 dpi is the preferred size for use in print. 72 dpi for web usage is recommended.

File formats

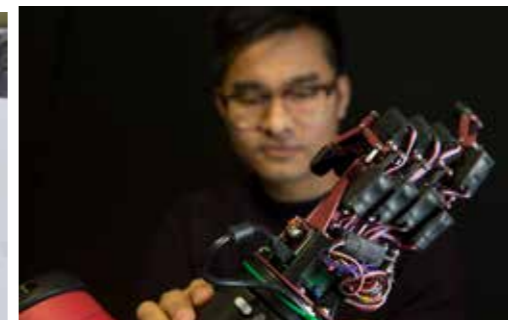
There are various file formats that can be used for pictures and logos. Depending on what is being produced (web or print), the following should be used:

EPS – is considered the best choice for logos, and other graphics, for print

JPEG / PNG – is a bitmap file format used specifically for photos.

GIF – is a low resolution graphics format used primarily on the internet. Not to be used for print.

TIFF – is a bitmap file format used as an alternative for high resolution printing.



What our publications look like



Position papers

These are short policy papers demonstrating the evidence-base behind what we are saying through data, graphs, tables and recommendations. They are more structured than the narrative publications and have a uniform look and feel. One colour is used for the theme throughout, while visuals and images are used to bring the topic alive. These tend to be A5 portrait and following a set template to facilitate a quick turnaround. For example, *Lifelong Learning: Ladder and Lifeline* or *GCRF* booklet.



Narrative booklets

These are easy-to-digest, short publications. They generally pull together case studies and stories to help get our messages across. They are text-light, image-heavy documents. A good example is the *Making Places* booklet. These are square booklets and are the most 'designed' of our outputs. They make creative use of our palette and tell their story using case studies, think-pieces and stories. They should be visually appealing by being bold, colourful and making use of imagery. A case study per member is preferable. All member logos should feature in the publication, either all together on the back or inside cover, or throughout the publication alongside case studies.



Reports

These are longer research publications in A4 size. We have moved away from using these in 2017 in favour of the 'position paper style publications. A previous example is the Regional Leadership Series.

Presentations

We give a lot of presentations. They can generally be grouped into two types: Introduction / overview presentations; and detailed policy presentations.

For presentations that are used as an introduction or overview of who we are or a specific projects the key is to keep them simple. Use lots of images and not too many words. House fonts and colours should be used throughout.

The basic Introduction to University Alliance presentation can be found in the 'Comms / branding / uni logos and montage and about us slides' folder. This can be used as a base for creating other presentations (just copy and paste a slide to use the formatting and image size).



Writing guide

Tone and best practice

We write a lot of content as an organisation. The following offers a guide for what you write whether it is intended for internal or external outlets (particularly for the latter).

The key rule is to keep sentences short and simple. If you are struggling with the structure of a sentence or a particular word, chances are it is too complex. Try writing it another way. Write in an appropriate way for different channels (e.g. blog vs. speech vs. report).

When producing content for University Alliance it is important to adopt an appropriate tone. Remember that the University Alliance tone is always constructive and solutions-based. University Alliance is the sensible and trusted voice of the sector. This should be reflected in all of our output.

We use a combination of the Universities UK and Guardian style guides together with our own developed over time. A few that come up a lot are:

Our universities can be referred to as 'Alliance universities' or the Alliance group rather than 'institutions'. We also use lower case 'The university...' rather than 'The University is...'

- University Alliance (UA)
- Alliance universities
- Use lower case 'The university...' and not 'The University is...'
- Vice-Chancellor
- Pro Vice-Chancellor
- Write out numbers up to and including ten and use numerals for numbers from 11 onwards.
- %
- E.g. and i.e.
- Avoid spurious accuracy (e.g. rather than 22, 345, write over or more than 22,000)
- £12m and £12bn
- Part-time
- Regions should be lower-case. For example north-west, south-west and north of England
- postgraduate

Choose your words carefully

The words we use are important in how we want people to think about us.

Therefore we should aim to avoid using words or phrases that looks tired or cliched. Below is a collection of words that may benefit from a rewrite!

Worn out

Coherent
Challenging
True partnership
Roadmap
Robust
Proactive
Dynamic
Cutting-edge
Vision
Radical
Engagement
Passion
Ground-breaking

Irrelevant

Key priorities
Going forward(s)
Added value
Head(s) up
Progress (vb)
Outward-facing
Genuine
Shared ambition
Change
Customer offer
Joined up
Meaningful dialogue

Nauseating

Synergy
Holistic
Exciting
Embed/power
Disruptive
Conversation
Action (vb)
Customer journey
Behaviours
Metrics
Incentivise
Disconnect

Implausible

Seamless
World-class
In this space
Unique
Bespoke
Integrated
Transformational
Strategic
Best practice
Step change
Win-win
Streamlined

Say what?

Granularity
Blueprint
Crunchy
Leverage
Take offline
Leverage
Interface (vb)
Upskilling
[anything] 2.0, 3.0 or even 4.0
Up/downstream
Pathfinder
Live the values

Writing – tips to remember

Who, why, what where, how and when

Think before you write.
Why are you writing this now?
Who is/are your audience(s)?
What do you need them to KNOW, FEEL and DO?

Rules of engagement

What's the format?
Is this the best tool to use?
What are the rules of this format - word count, issues and accessibility?
Make your sentences readable.
Try to keep it short.

Inspiration and infrastructure

What's your story?
Say something interesting or don't bother.
Make your argument as clear and strong as possible.
Let your structure do the work.

Tone and technique

Put yourself in your readers' shoes.
Know what they know. Read what they read. Speak their language.
Be direct. Be human. Make it memorable.

Edit and evaluate

Don't be afraid of feedback.
When you're editing, structure your feedback so it's clear.
Start positive.
Avoid a sea of red.
Develop a thick skin!

Blogs

Commissioning external writers to do blogs for our website

We commission people working in our universities or for other organisations to write blogs for our website. These blogs would be written by them as 'guest bloggers'. Our *Style Guide* rules and advice also apply to these blogs – although we may edit what they send us and ask them to sign off any changes. But it may be helpful to let them know what we are looking for before they start writing. For example: it should:

- tell a story rather than be a straight-forward news item
- be interesting and informative
- showcase the university and the difference it is making
- be roughly 500 - 700 words long
- be accompanied by a couple of visually attractive photos
- include an angle that focuses on the challenge the 'writer' was aiming to tackle through the project
- include interesting details about the process/journey
- include some points on what other universities (or organisations) could learn about what they've done and discovered during the process.

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