STUDENTS'
UNION UCL

Branding and Editorial Style Guide • VERSION 2.0

where **more** happens

Contents

Our Brand is More Than a Logo

It's the way we speak and the way we look. But more than that it represents **who we are** and **what we stand for.**

Our brand tells our story. It defines the emotions people carry away after engaging with us - **the support, inspiration and connection** we help create within our community.

At the core of our brand are simple building blocks:

- Bold, bright and vibrant colours.
- Beautiful images that reflect our diverse student population.
- Clear layouts with a distinctive and accessible font.
- Friendly, honest, easy to understand language that's professional but not corporate.
- Content that is centred on our students and their experiences.

Our brand can flex and evolve to accommodate trends and innovations whilst staying aligned to its core components.

Brand Story

In 2017, our activities were popular among our members, but we weren't fully serving their needs. We had lost sight of who we were and what we stood for.

Our brand was disconnected from our members and not reflective of who we wanted to be, and more importantly, who our members wanted us to be. We began a process of identity renewal and transformation of our brand.

To guide us, we sought insights from our stakeholders - our members, UCL representatives, and our dedicated Union staff. Collaborating with a leading communications agency, we set out to craft a new brand proposition, a fresh set of values, a powerful mission, and a completely reinvented visual identity.

We decided to embrace and celebrate the vibrancy, diversity, and richness of the activities we offer at UCL. Our new tagline, "Where More Happens," became the catalyst for our brand proposition. It positions us at the heart of student life, a thriving hub of exploration and excitement. Our complete brand proposition, detailed in the pages of this guide, revolves around us being at the centre of the campus community.

This project also prompted us to revisit and refine our values and personality. In 2017, students voiced their desire for a Union that is transparent, useful, connecting, helpful, functional, friendly, engaging, fun, and reliable. Fast forward to 2023, and the picture has evolved. Unprompted students now describe us as inclusive, active, helpful, fun, diverse, and friendly.

In early 2023 we decided to take stock and measure the impact of our new visual and verbal identity. We found that the overwhelming majority of students (over 80%) agreed that we genuinely embody our values: inclusive, democratic, useful, community building, sustainable, and fun.

Our brand continues to develop and evolve to reflect our ever-changing members. This version 2.0 of our brand guidelines consolidates everything we've learnt about the way our brand works since 2017.

Our Identity

Being 'on brand' isn't just about using the logo or visual identity correctly (although that is really important). It's about creating a consistent, cohesive, and authentic experience for our members.

This document is a guide to how we should look, sound, and make people feel. By following the brand guidelines, it will help us speak with a clear voice and a distinct personality.

These guidelines will help us to:
- Keep tone, voice and messaging consistent, and true to our brand and personality.
- Produce materials using the logos, colours, typefaces and graphic components associated with our brand.
- Guide others on how to write for our audiences.
- Maintain a high standard of quality.
- Create more effective and engaging content.

Our mission

To build a vibrant and empowered student community with real influence in UCL and beyond, that enables students to enjoy their time at university; pursue their interests and passions; see the world in new ways; and develop the skills and experience to change the world for the better.

Our name

The name — **Students' Union UCL** — should be written in full the first time it is referenced to in a document or speech. Thereafter, we can be referred to as the Union. We should never refer to ourselves as SU, or any other acronym.

Why the apostrophe?

Students' Union UCL represents everyone. The placing of the apostrophe indicates that the union is led by many students, for the benefit of many students. It is not just for one or two.
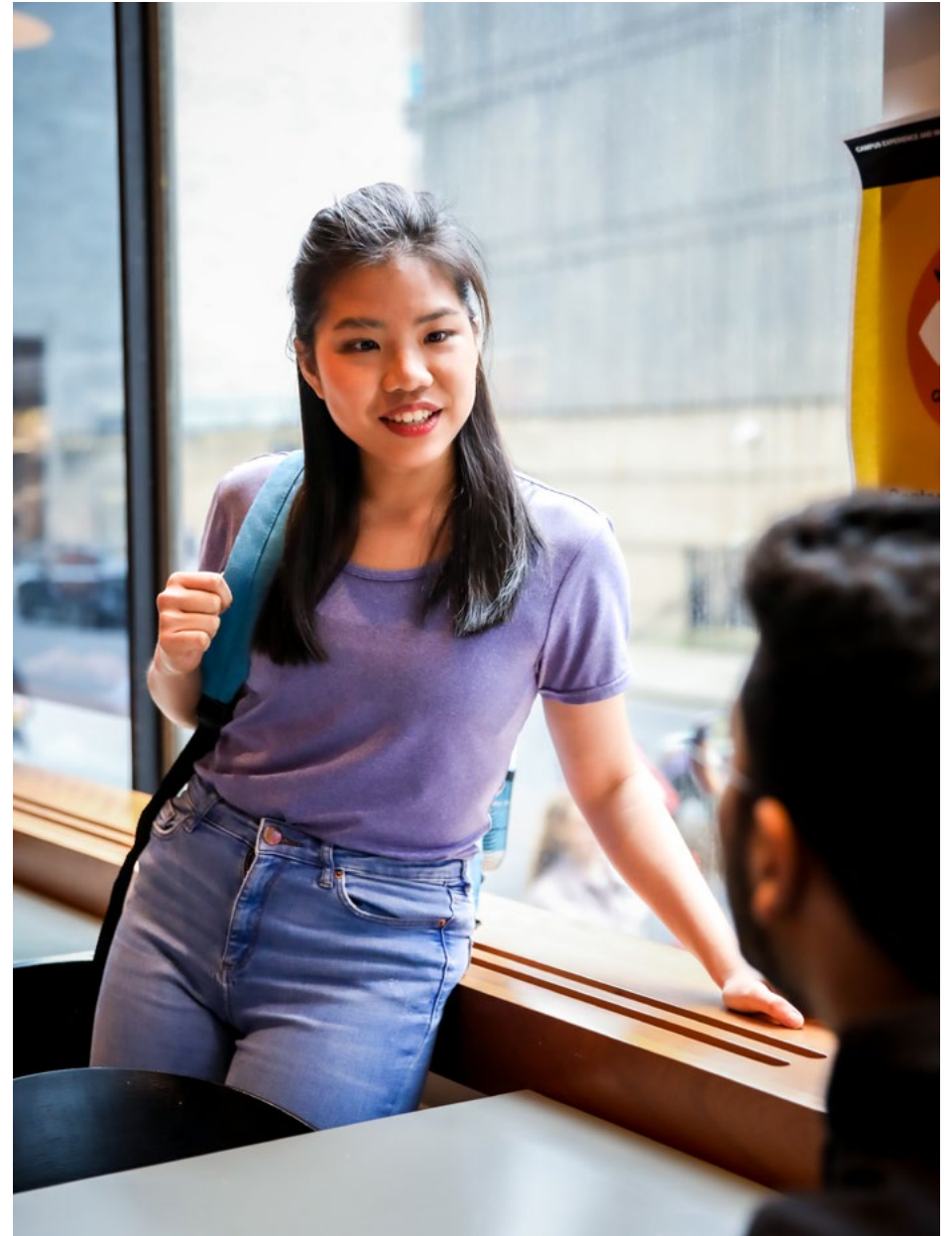
Our strapline

Students' Union UCL is a place **where more happens**. This strapline is designed to communicate to students that the Union does more than they might realise, and gives them more opportunities to get involved:

- More societies
- More support
- More impact
- More facilities
- More spaces
- And more...

Initially, the strapline should be used on core Union materials where possible and appropriate. However, to emphasise that the Union is a place where more happens, the strapline can also be amended to replace the word "more" with another, more specific, word:

- Where fun happens
- Where sport happens
- Where democracy happens
- Where Scalextric happens

The line should not be amended to add words. We should **not** say:

- Where more fun happens
- Where more sport happens
- Where more democracy happens

This sounds like hyperbole and conflicts with our aspiration to be honest and transparent.

where **more** happens

Our values

Our brand values are the principles that underpin who we are, how we talk, and how we act. Our aim is to put them at the centre of everything we say and do, so that they also become part of how others describe us.

Community Building

- We aim to build a strong sense of community for all our students.
- We want students to feel they belong and feel pride in being UCL students.
- We support and encourage our diverse student communities to grow and succeed.

Inclusive

- We are a diverse and vibrant community with many different opinions, viewpoints, needs and experiences.
- We value every member of our community and always try to ensure that our services enable everyone to participate in our activities and play a full role in student life.
- We believe that everyone has a right to express their views and to be listened to and respected as a member of our community.

Bold

- We are innovative and ambitious.
- We want to be one of the best student organisations anywhere in the world.
- Bold thinking is part of our DNA. We are part of a diverse, exciting city and a radical university which has welcomed imaginative thinkers and entrepreneurs for centuries.

Fun

- We want to make university life fun, distinctive and memorable.
- We want all our students to enjoy their time at UCL and are committed to doing all we can to achieve that.
- We embrace a positive, fun and inspiring working culture for our staff and officers.

Empowering

- We support and empower our students to develop their skills and confidence to change to the world for the better.
- We help students to pursue their passions, discover new interests, and do more than they thought possible.
- We provide support when students need it, helping them to access information, advice and support that enables them to overcome barriers and achieve their potential.

Democratic

- We believe in representative democracy and work to empower and support our elected officers to help them to be effective leaders of the Union and ambassadors for our members.
- We cherish our democratic structures and want as many students participating in them as possible.
- We recognise that not everyone will always agree, so we encourage our officers to listen to a broad range of student viewpoints and seek to ensure that they consider the breadth of student opinion before taking important decisions.

Sustainable

- We want to be the most sustainable students' union in the UK.
- We want to minimise our environmental footprint in every way possible.
- We want to hand the Union on to the next generation of student leaders and staff in better shape than we found it, protecting its assets and services for the future.

Sounding Like Students' Union UCL

A consistent tone of voice helps create a coherent experience for our members. How we sound is an essential part of representing our brand. Our simple set of guidelines helps make us distinctive from UCL.

Our personality

A students' union can mean different things to different people, and it is often hard to settle on a voice that is appropriate. These are the traits that reflect how we should talk to our audiences.

Friendly

Everyone that contacts us should think of us as approachable, and feel comfortable talking to us. We should be warm and welcoming at all times, be respectful, and listen to all feedback — whether it is positive or negative.

Honest

We are straightforward, transparent and communicative. We may not always have the answers right away, but we should be clear about what we know, and what we need to find out.

Useful

Our members should feel like they are able to go to the Union for a variety of help, advice and support. We should be reliable, available, and respond promptly to any questions or requests.

Fun

The Union helps to make the university an exciting and vibrant place. We are a student body, run by students. We are sociable, and not afraid to poke fun at ourselves where appropriate.
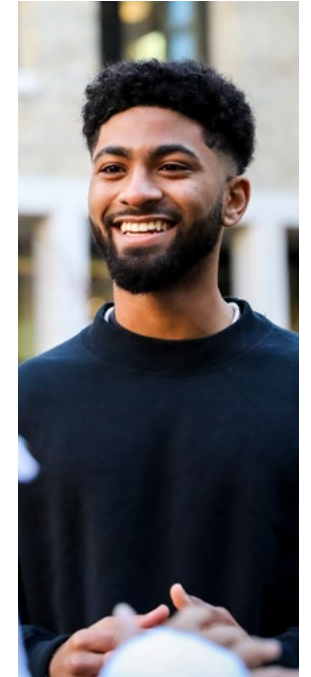
Language, style and tone

How should we speak as the Union? We should always be clear and concise, without using jargon or muddying our message. However, there are also guidelines we should bear in mind in order to get our personality across.

Inspiring and dynamic

We are direct, strong and positive. This should be reflected in how we talk.

In particular, we should:
- Always use active voice, not passive.
- Consider future tense when trying to build inspiration or aspiration .
- Ask questions (rhetorical or actual) to encourage your audience to consider how your copy, video/audio or presentation might apply to them.
- Consider using words that convey us as an institution that is forward-thinking.

Informative, but not overwhelming

University life can be a lot to take in. We want students to be able to come to us for answers that make them more confident, rather than more confused.

- Use clear directions to show students what action they need to take next.
- Limit the use of adjectives and adverbs.
- Use short headlines that begin with keywords. Summarise your writing in a way that would be understood in a list of search results. Have a first sentence that sums up the rest of your content. Use sub-headings at key points in your page.
- Be confident in using plain and simple English, instead of flowery language.
- When responding to requests, be as helpful as possible. Give as much information as you can in your first response. For example, if the answer to a student's question is on a specific web page, don't just provide the link — also give a quick response to their query.

Use...	Not...	Because...
How could you make your union better?	Make your union better.	Challenging the audience to think specifically about things that matter to them, rather than abstract ideas of "better".
We helped to change university policy.	University policy was changed by our actions.	The first example sounds more direct and proactive.

Use...	Not...	Because...
Hi Sam. The Anime Society meets every Tuesday, and stages events throughout the year. There is a contact number on their page if you want to get in touch [Insert specific link].	Hi there. You can find a list of all of our clubs and societies here [Insert general link to long page].	The first response is more helpful, and gives the impression you are engaging with the question rather than leaving them to sift through lots of overwhelming detail online.
We will try to find that out for you quickly.	We are endeavouring to promptly respond to your query.	Your response should be direct, clear, and without flowery language.

Professional and excellent, but not corporate

We are both a fun organisation, and a respected voice for students across the campus. We should maintain a light-hearted image where appropriate, while retaining a sense of competence and responsibility.

- Be accurate. Use the correct names for locations or organisations, make sure any numbers that are referenced are up to date, and have a process in place for checking if content needs to be amended in the future.
- Use correct grammar, spelling and punctuation.
- Avoid relying on management jargon and acronyms. Specialist language can be used sparingly where it helps to explain the subject better, but beware of confusing the audience.
- Be conversational. Use things like brackets sparingly, but do use them (they can make little asides sound more natural). Use contractions where appropriate to sound less formal.

Building trust, inclusivity and friendliness

We must be seen as friendly and approachable in order to win the trust of students. Therefore we should make sure we always appear warm and welcoming when we communicate.

- Use of first person narrative when talking about Students' Union UCL ("we", "us", "our" instead of "Students' Union UCL").
- Use second person narrative when referring to the audience ("you" instead of "students", etc.).
- As above, use questions to evoke a sense of conversation in your copy. Ensure that this extends to non-written forms of communication too.
- Avoid over censoring negative or less-flattering comments or insights. Including and acknowledging weaknesses can help to portray a level of openness and honesty that will make our content, and thus our brand, more trustworthy to audiences.
- Don't exaggerate. We want to make our content sound fun and exciting, but this should not come at the expense of being honest — don't promise that an event will be "the best night of your life" unless you know it absolutely will be.

Use...

We're planning the next event on 24 July.

Not...

The next gig is on 24 July if u want 2 go.

Because...

Communications should be conversational, but not too casual or grammatically sloppy.

Use...

We are a Union that's run for you.

Not...

Students' Union UCL puts the needs of students first.

Because...

Speaks more directly and warmly to the audience.

Fun, but not childish

As a students' union, we have the ability to be less formal and more playful than other university bodies. Where appropriate, we should be able to use humour and be a little more entertaining.

- Use the active voice to ensure content sounds lively.
- Use conversational language to avoid sounding stuffy or corporate.
- Humour is subjective, so it is important to be aware of the audience you're talking to.
- Bear in mind: any jokes that rely on insulting or demeaning an individual or group do not fit into our values.

[Note: it is likely that the Union's "fun" personality will be conveyed strongly through use of visuals as well as text content. It is always better to demonstrate that the Union is fun through evidence rather than trying to state it — "show, don't tell" is the key message here.]

It is important to strike the right balance between being fun and failing to be cool. The best way to avoid falling into the trap of trying to be "down with the kids" is to simply be natural. Write in a conversational, relaxed and clear way.

Active vs passive voice

We are direct, strong and positive. This should be reflected in how we talk. In particular, we should:

- Use active voice, not passive - e.g. 'We made it better' (active) instead of 'It is better because of our work' (passive).

Active

Emphasis on the person/thing performing an action.

We're running more than 300 events during Welcome Week.

It's over, **TeamUCL** have won Varsity.

Passive

Emphasis on the action or what the action has impacted.

300 events will be **running** during Welcome Week.

It's over, Varsity was **won** by TeamUCL.

Talk to students, not about them

We're running a workshop that could help improve your budgeting skills. ✓

At the event, students will be able to take part in a workshop on budgeting. ✗

Be Human

We care about your wellbeing. ✓

Students' Union UCL cares about your wellbeing. ✗

Key messages

Building off our strapline 'Students' Union UCL is a place where more happens' we want our key messages to always reflect, and come back to, our mission statement. Our key messages sum up what we do and why we do it.

Please use these messages online, in print or when you're talking with our members.

How to write about the Union

Students' Union UCL is run by students for students, helping everyone to make the most of their time at UCL. We care about being there for our community. We're here to:

- support you to get involved in the things you love.
- make sure you have the support you need.
- encourage you try something new.
- help you find the friends you'll have for life.

Make more of your time at UCL

We'll help you learn more than you're taught and give you the opportunities to create the university experience you always imagined. Make new friends. Enjoy nights out you'll talk about again and again. Find your voice and create change. Do things that will make you stand out from the crowd.

Try anything and everything. This is your chance to make more of your time at UCL.

Experience more through our clubs, societies and events

If you can imagine it, there's probably a society or club for it. With over 400 groups and nearly 6,000 events taking place across the year we have something for everyone.

Most groups meet at least once a week, so there's always something to get involved with.

Wherever your curiosity takes you, whatever passions inspire you, you'll find a home in one of our student-led groups or at one of our vibrant and diverse events.

Most of our groups are beginner friendly and open to everyone. So whether you're trying something out for the first time, or about the make it to the Olympics we have a group for you.

Get more of the support you need

University is a big and exciting place. There's so much opportunity but sometimes it can feel overwhelming.

We also know life isn't always easy. We're here to give you support when you need us.

No matter how big or small we're here to listening and help.

We care about the things you care about and we're here to fight with you when you need someone in your corner. Our job is to make sure you feel supported every day.

Make more of our collective voice

From the big things to the little things, we can all make change happen.

We're led by students. That means you're in charge. As your Union, we'll work with you to make things better, on campus and beyond. UCL is yours, so it should be what you want it to be.

We are a student-led organisation which means you have the power to elect your student leaders to represent you and your interests.

We run elections and policy zones to ensure that we have a healthy and vibrant democracy so that you have influence over the Union.

Feel more at home

Our spaces are your spaces. We have everything from cafés and common rooms to shops and bars that are designed for you, run by you.

We live by four promises. Four reasons our cafés, bars, shops and gym feel different to those elsewhere: we put every penny of profit back into your community, we're always better value than the high-street, we're at the centre of your campus community, and we choose planet over profit.

Editorial style guidelines

British spelling should be used when writing on behalf of the Union. If two or more spellings exist for a term, refer to www.theguardian.com/guardian-observer-style-guide.

Our style preferences for popular words are as follows:

- alumnus, alumni (note that we do not use the terms alumna or alumnae to refer to female students)
- degree (not Degree)
- PhD
- A-level
- Honours (not 'honours')
- Joint Honours
- MBBS
- Master's (not 'Masters' or 'masters')
- Bachelor's (not 'bachelors' or 'bachelor's')
- postdoctoral
- postgraduate
- Sabbatical Officers
- undergraduate
- website

Abbreviations

Where possible, write the word in full to ensure it is understandable. Do not abbreviate months (e.g. February not Feb) or titles (e.g. Professor not Prof). There will be exceptions to this where the abbreviation is more common (e.g. Dr not Doctor).

Ampersands

Ampersands should only be used when they form part of a title or name. In all other instances, 'and' should be spelt out.

Acronyms

An acronym is formed from the initial letters of words. Where possible, acronyms should not be used as they can be confusing. When you are repeatedly referring to an organisation, it is acceptable to write it out in full on the first occasion with the acronym in brackets afterwards, and then use the abbreviated version.

There may be times in which the acronym is more familiar than the full name (such as IBM), so use discretion. In most cases, the letters in acronyms should all be capitalised, and they should not be separated by full stops or spaces.

For example:
- National Union of Students (NUS)
- National Health Service (NHS)

However, some acronyms may feature irregular capitalisation or punctuation. When in doubt, check the organisation's official website for reference.

For example:
- P&G

People and titles

Specific job titles should be capitalised, but generic job titles do not require capitalisation.

For example:
- The event will be hosted by Professor Anthony Smith, Vice-Provost (Education and Student Affairs).
- Contact the Rights and Advice Centre if you would like to speak to an advise.

Numbers

Numbers up to and including ten should be spelled out in full. Numbers after and including 11 should be written using numerals.

Within a single sentence, when talking about the same unit, consistency in use of written vs. numerals is preferred, even if this means disregarding the house style above.

Millions and billions are written as £X million (£5 million/billion). This is abbreviated to £5m or £5bn when these figures are used in headlines or pull quotes.

If a sentence begins with a number, it is preferable to spell that number out, even if it is a number above 11.

Student groups

Student groups are a key way for our members to organise themselves and form communities. When writing the name of the student group for an internal audience, drop the 'UCL'.

For example:
- Film & TV Society, not UCL Film & TV Society.

Student identities

Many of our members define themselves as one or more identity. For example, a student may define themselves as disabled and trans. Refer to the Equity and Inclusion Unit for further guidance on nomenclature of self-defined student groups.

Collective name for groups of students

We do not use the terms BAME (black, Asian and minority ethnic) and BME (black and minority ethnic) because they emphasise certain ethnic minority groups (Asian and black) and exclude others. Instead, we use 'People of Colour'.

Ordering of ethnic categories

Ethnic groups are ordered alphabetically in charts and tables, with 'other', and occasionally 'unknown', as a final category.

We recommend that when listing ethnicities (for the purpose of data collecting) writers use a list that matches the latest UK Census www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/style-guide/ethnic-groups

Dates and times

The 24 hour clock should be used, with the hour separated from the minutes by a full stop. The abbreviations 'am' and 'pm' should not be used with the 24 hour clock.

For example:
● The event begins at 10:00 and finishes at 16:00
● The voting deadline is 23:59

Dates should appear before the month, and ordinals (st, nd, rd, th) should not be used. If you would like to include the day, place it before the date. The year should only be used when necessary for clarity.

For example:
● Mental Health Awareness Week takes place between 8 May to 14 May
● This year's Welcome Festival begins on Sunday 30 September

To describe a period of time in written text, 'from' and 'to' should generally be used, with no dash.

Where space is limited, start and end times for a period of time can be separated by an en dash.

To refer to an academic year, separate the two years using an en dash.
● e.g. 2017–18

To refer to a span of years, an en dash or the words 'from' and 'to' are acceptable.

Telephone numbers

Numbers should be written as if dialled from within the UK, including the regional dialling code but not the international prefix.

For example:
● To find out more, please call 020 7679 2500

Websites

Online, web links text should never contain written web addresses. Instead, links should be embedded in a phrase that explains what the target page is, for accessibility purposes.

For example:
● "Visit our What's On listings"

NOT
● "For the latest events at the Union visit: http://studentsunionucl.org/whats-on"

In print do not use 'http://' before a web address unless it is necessary to the functionality of the address (this is the case for certain secure websites, when 'https://' may be required for the web address to be accessible).

Note that popular social media websites should generally be capitalised.

Email addresses

When referring to the email address of an individual in print, the person's full name should be included alongside their email address.

For example:
● Jeremy Bentham (j.bentham@ucl.ac.uk)

When referring to someone online their name should be linked to their email address, as with the websites section above.

URLs

URLs should be as self-explanatory as possible, with words separated by hyphens.

For example:
● studentsunionucl.org/whats-on

Digital accessibility

When creating digital assets, from word documents or PowerPoint presentations to webpages and social media posts, it is important that our work is accessible. For further resources, please visit the **Marketing and Communications intranet page**.

General considerations

Clean and structured
Whatever the format, use in-built formatting tools, and clean and structured content. This helps with accessibility and ensures accessibility tools can be used effectively.

When applicable, provide the original, editable content rather than converting to PDF. Users can then make their own adjustments.

Check your content
Check your content using accessibility checking tools within your software e.g. MS Office Accessibility Checker, and other tools such as WebAIM's contrast checker (colours) or the Hemingway app (language).

Check your content with a 3rd party, i.e. actual users, or colleagues (who can provide a fresh eye and perspective).

Contact and feedback options
Include details of how to contact you to obtain the content in an alternative format (e.g. Braille) if required.

Text and data

Structure
Always use Styles (Heading 1, Heading 2, Normal etc.) to help people navigate your content and make sure your main headings are larger than subheadings. In PowerPoint use the 'Title' box for slide titles and make sure these are unique. All of this makes things easier for screen-reader users, but will improve readability for everyone.

Formatting
Sans serif fonts (Freight Sans, Arial) are easier to read than serif fonts, and Normal or Body text in documents should use a font size of 11-12. If you want to emphasise text use bold rather than underlining or italics. This is because underlining is often used for hyperlinks and italics are more difficult to read. PowerPoint slides should ideally use at least 24 pt font.

Links
Links are great for navigation, but you need to signpost your links to help those using screen readers. Avoid using the URL itself, and don't use words like 'click here' – instead use descriptive text as your link text.

Wording
You can't always keep language simple, but do consider your writing style and how it might be experienced by those with dyslexia or other learning difficulties. See our Language, Style and Tone guidance for support on how to write and sound like the Union.

Tables
Tables should have a heading row and no merged or split cells. Data in tables should be logically structured and the guidance on use of colour and alt text in Visual Content also applies.

Visual content

Use of colour

Some colour combinations are problematic for people with colour vision deficiencies. You should also make sure that images and diagrams have good contrast and avoid using patterned backgrounds. See our Colour Palette; Accessibility section for more guidance.

Labelling (alt text)

If your content include images, you need to text explaining what the images are showing, this is called 'alt text' (or alternative text). This allows screen readers to give an accurate description of what the image is showing. If your images are purely decorative then you can mark them as 'Decorative' and the screen reader will ignore them.

Text in images

Text should not be used as part of an image unless it forms part of a logo. This is because it cannot be read by a screen reader. If an image does include any text then the text must be repeated in the alt text for that image.

Audio and video

Including video and other media in your content can make it much more accessible, but it can present challenges for some users. You can improve video and audio accessibility by providing captions and transcripts, audio descriptions, and descriptions of video images.

Acknowledgements
This content has been kindly shared with Students' Union UCL by UCL's Digital Accessibility Services.

How to write a headline

Short headlines are far more effective at grabbing the reader's attention than long blocks of text, especially in print or digital posters. Long headlines can also be hard to read. Use short headlines to encourage the reader to continue engaging with the rest of the copy.

Tips to writing a good headline:

Keep it short and to the point

Ideally no more than 5-6 words. We all have short attention spans, but lines of text aren't visually engaging either.

Have a clear call to action

What do you actually want your reader/audience to do? i.e. book tickets to an event, join a student group, be aware of a particular issue? If you're not sure what you're asking for, then how will they?

Remember your audience

Does your headline tell the reader why this should matter to them?

Talk to them, not about them

Embrace 'you' and make it personal i.e. 'Why you should join a society'.

Don't be afraid to be fun

We are a sociable and student led organisation, and we're not afraid to be fun. But remember, we don't want to appear unprofessional or childish, so the headline has to be appropriate to the content.

## Avoid fluffy, complicated words and jargon

We have a large community of international students, will your headline be clear to them?

Take your time

Think you've got the perfect headline? Spend a minute and see if you can cut anymore unnecessary words.

DON'T USE CAPITAL LETTERS

Headings should be written in CamelCase, and sub-headings should use sentence case. Our words should grab the reader's attention without relying in capital letters.
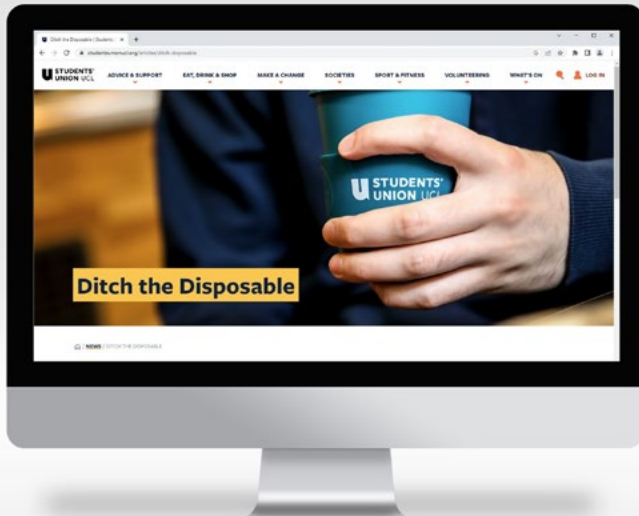
Our Visual Style

In previous sections, we have discussed how we can make sure the Union has a more consistent and engaging voice. But it is also important to be consistent in how we look, as well as in how we talk.

This section features logos, colours and typefaces that are associated with our brand. If we use these in the right way across all digital and print channels, our brand will be more immediately recognisable.

Our Logo

Our logo is hugely important to our brand. At a glance, it represents our style, our personality, and our identity. It is the signature of our Union.

It is vital that we present our logo so that we have a consistent look and identity. It should be immediately identifiable, clean and properly formatted on all of our communications. The following pages offer some guidelines on how to do this.
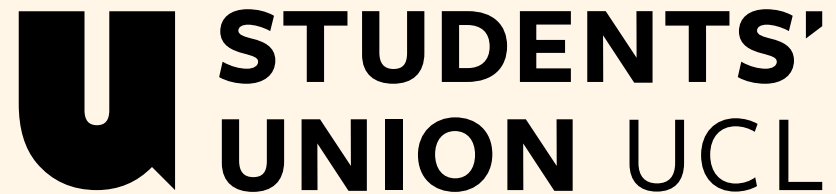
Note

- The union logo should never be altered, redrawn, distorted or rebuilt.
- Only official logo files should be used in communications.
- Official logo files can be downloaded from **studentsunionucl.org/brand**

Primary logo

U symbol

Wordmark

Our logo promotes Students' Union UCL and serves as an anchor and key identifier.
It is composed of two core elements: our U symbol and our wordmark.

Approved logo colours

Any approved version of the logo may only appear in the following colours:

1. Black

2. Midnight at Mully's (navy)

3. White

No other colours are permitted.

**1**

2

3

Positioning and minimum size

Size

To maintain full legibility, avoid using the primary logo at widths smaller than 25mm (for print) or 175 pixels (for screen) where possible.

U STUDENTS' UNION UCL

25mm or 175 pixels

Clear space

When using the logo, maintain adequate clear space around the logo to set it apart from other design elements. This maintains marked legibility and distinct prominence of the logo.
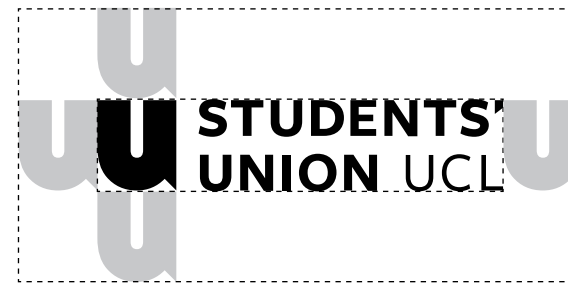
A mandatory "clear space" around the logo equal to the height of the "U symbol" must be incorporated into any design using the logo.

Placement

The preferred placement for the logo is in the top segment of communications (left, right or centre) and on the front of pieces. However it is permitted to place the logo anywhere that suits the design so long as the logo has adequate clear space and a observable place of prominence.
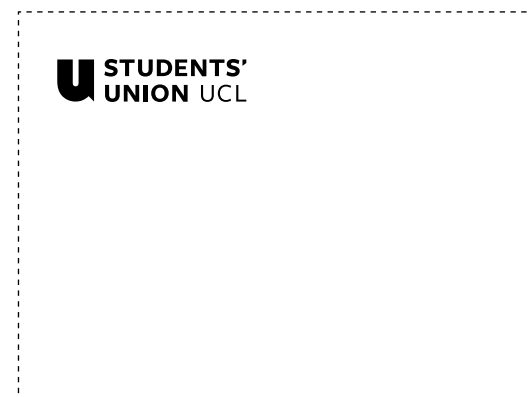
Improper usage

To maintain the integrity of the brand, avoid these practices when using the logo.

Never manipulate or distort the logo, for example, by stretching or compressing it.

Never alter the placement or scale of the elements.

Never add colours to individual elements.

Never use drop shadows, strokes or other visual effects.

Never add words or images to the logo to create a composite logo treatment.

Never change the colours of the logo. The logo may be used in black, Midnight at Mully's (navy) or reversed out in white. No other colours are permitted.

Never alter or replace the typefaces of the identity. Never try to redraw any element of the logo.

Never place the logo on a photograph whose complexity competes with the legibility of the logo. Never place the logo on a photograph that provides inadequate contrast.

Never place the logo on a colour that provides inadequate contrast.

UCL logo lock-up

When collaborating with UCL, the follow logo lock-up should be used, retaining the appropriate clear space.

All logos should be weighted evenly and colours would ideally be restricted to single colour versions when possible.

Maintain the mandatory clear space around the logo by using the U shape as a space guide.

Other logos lock-ups

The previous logo lock-up style can be applied to various other logos if suitable, however this rule does not need to be followed in all applications

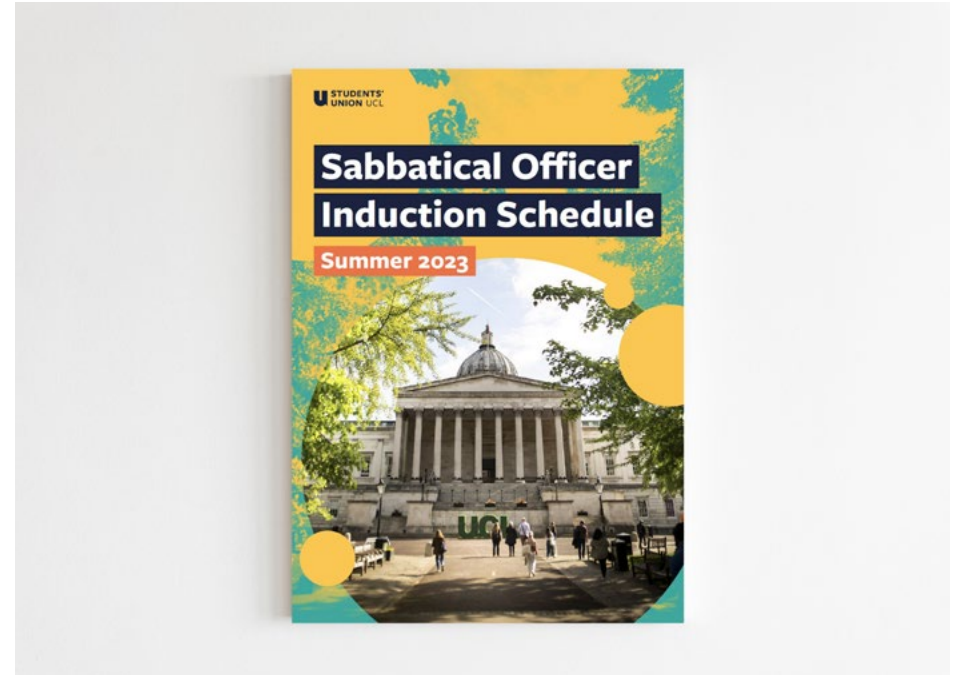It is important in all cases to strike an even visual balance between all logos.

Logo options

The primary logo

The horizontal stacked logo is the primary logo and should
be used when possible.

Appropriate usage include:
- On stationary
- In reports, documents and presentations
- In newsletters
- In communications not specifically regarding commercial outlets

Shield logo

The shield logo is the secondary logo, and has special case usage not covered by the horizontal logo.

Appropriate usage include:
- In commercial marketing, i.e. cafés, bars etc..
- In physical spaces
- On staff uniforms
- Social media profile pictures

Wordmark inside U symbol

Horizontal wide logo

The horizontal wide logo should only be used in applications where there are no other options, and when use of the primary or shield logo would reduce the text size to below acceptable size.

Appropriate usage include:
- Lanyards
- In physical spaces with restricted space

Example usage - staff uniforms

Example usage - staff lanyards

Horizontal wide logo

U Shape frame usage

The symbol mark can be used alone as an identifier of the brand. This should be used with care as the name recognition of the Union is important to maintain visual prominence.

Do not use the U symbol as a framing device.

The U symbol is available as a **U solid shape** whereby the centre line has been removed. This adapted shape can be used as a framing device for images.

DO NOT use the
U symbol for images.

DO use the U solid shape as a
framing device for images.

Our Brand Architecture

We offer a diverse and wide range of services and activities for our members, but if we only used our core visual identify to communicate everything from TeamUCL to our cafés, it would be difficult for our members to find what they needed, and difficult for us make each one of our services stand out.

This is why we use sub-brands. Sub-brands allow us to give separate identities to different departments, services, and projects so they stand out. Sub-brands can take many forms, however despite being distinctive, they each share one or more of our core brand building blocks outlined in this document.

Brand architecture

Our brand architecture uses a Hybrid approach, deploying different brand management approaches for different services and products.

In the hybrid model, some of our sub-brands will use our logo and core brand style, while others will have their own logos and identities.

Hybrid brand architecture is a mix of the branded house, house of brands, and endorsed models. In the Hybrid brand model, some products will use the parent organisations's name while others will be marketed under a sub-brand. In our hybrid approach, we use either the Branded House or Endorsed models.

For example: our Cafes offer a consistent product and service across multiple outlets and we use a Branded House approach for our cafe sub-brands - each cafe logo clearly shows the Union logo. TeamUCL is an Endorsed brand, it uses one of core colours, our font, and our most distinctive shape in it's logo, however it doesn't show the Union name or logo.

Where a sub-brand doesn't directly use our core logo, our logo will be used as part of a lock up.

For a full list of sub-brands, and individual sub-brand guidelines, visit the Marketing and Communications sharepoint site.

Glossary

- **Branded house:** All sub-brands share the same name and image/logo.
- **Endorsed brands:** Sub-brands have their identity but are supported by a parent brand by sharing certain visual aspects.
- **Hybrid approach:** Mixes elements of all the above approaches depending on the purpose of each sub-brand.

Example sub-brand	Brand management approach	Uses core font	Uses core colours	Uses union logo	Uses core image treatment style
GORDON'S Café	Branded house	✔	✔	✔	✔
TEAMUCL	Endorsed brand	✔	✔	✖	✔
THE HANGER	Endorsed brand	✔	✔	✖	✔
PROJECT ACTIVE	Endorsed brand	✔	✔	✔	✔
ACT!VE BYSTANDER	Endorsed brand	✔	✔	✖	✔
artsUCL	Endorsed brand	✔	✔	✖	✔
Advice Service	Branded house	✔	✔	✔	✔
SHOP	Endorsed brand	✔	✖	✔	✔

What constitutes a sub-brand

Most of the projects we deliver should use our core brand assets and styles. However, if you are developing a new on-going Union service, activity or product targeted at a specific group of students then creating a sub-brand might be appropriate.

If you're thinking about creating a sub-brand, get in touch with the Marketing and Communications team at the very start of the project. We'll work with you every step of the way to help you develop your sub-brand.

Please **do not** create a sub-brand without consulting the Marketing and Communications team.

Our Colour Palette

Colour is an essential element of our visual identity, helping to clearly denote our spaces and communication.

Using our core colours in a consistent way helps to reinforce our brand in everything we do.

We have chosen a small but varied palette of vibrant colours that draw from our heritage, help to express our personality, and reflect the environment in which our students live.

Our Coral echoes the brick colour of one our most identifiable Union spaces, 25 Gordon Street. Green reflects the environment and parks around our campuses in Bloomsbury and Stratford. Yellow is the colour of the sandstone buildings of UCL when the sun shines. Purple is our heritage colour, dating back more than 130 years. The dark Navy reflects the after-hours life our students enjoy.

The colour range is wide, covering primary (yellow and blue tones) and secondary (purple, green and orange tones) colours, giving the creative team flexibility in how hey approach their work.

Colour build charts

It is important to render the colours accurately. For best colour results, match the colour code most appropriate to your process and needs.

- **When printing digitally or lithography:** Always use the CMYK colour formula listed here when creating the colour for use in 4-colour process printing. They were adjusted for the best reproduction and **do not** match Pantone® Colour Bridge breakdowns.
- **When printing using spot colour:** Only use the Pantone Matching System (PMS) colours if you are printing with spot colours. This is often the case with items such as with silk-screening.
- **When using colour digitally:** For Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, or similar applications, use the RGB or hexadecimal values.

Coral
Portico Sunset

CMYK PRINT	C0 M75 Y80 K0
SPOT	PANTONE 2026
DIGITAL	R242 G102 B65
HEX	#F26640

Navy
Midnight at Mully's

CMYK PRINT	C100 M85 Y40 K50
SPOT	PANTONE (PMS) 655
DIGITAL	R8 G34 B68
HEX	#082244

Yellow
Bentham's Teeth

CMYK PRINT	C0 M25 Y85 K0
SPOT	PANTONE 1225
DIGITAL	R254 G195 B64
HEX	#FEC340

Green
CSC Skirting Board

CMYK PRINT	C75 M10 Y45 K0
SPOT	PANTONE 3262
DIGITAL	R42 G170 B158
HEX	#2AAA9E

Purple
125 Plum

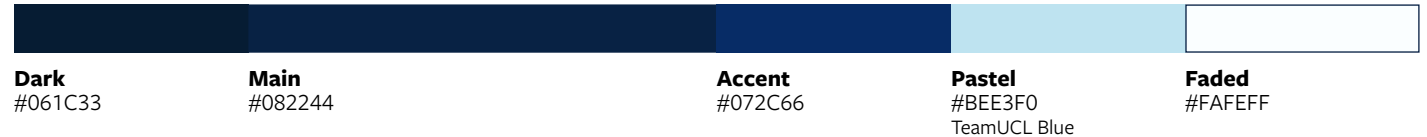|	
CMYK PRINT	C70 M90 Y0 K0
SPOT	PANTONE 2097
DIGITAL	R108 G63 B153
HEX	#6C3F99

Extended colour palette

For each main colour in our palette, there are four additional colours that cover a wide range of value. These extended colours are to be used sparingly as accent colours in a design or document, or specifically with the pastel and faded colours, as background fills to add a subtle visual texture.
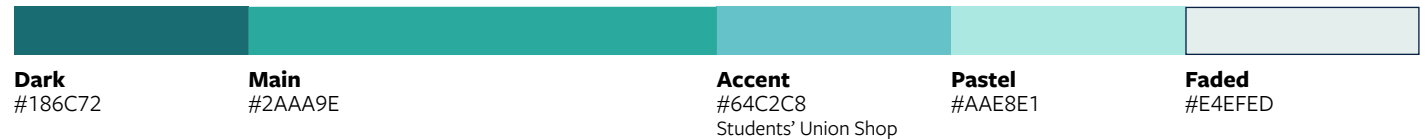
Coral

Dark	Main	Accent	Pastel	Faded
#983333	#F26640	#FF4E08	#FFAF99	#FCEFED

Navy

Dark	Main	Accent	Pastel	Faded
#061C33	#082244	#072C66	#BEE3F0 TeamUCL Blue	#FAFEFF

Yellow

Dark	Main	Accent	Pastel	Faded
#FFB000 TeamUCL Gold	#FEC340	FBAE2C	#F9D180	#FFF7E8

Teal

Dark	Main	Accent	Pastel	Faded
#186C72	#2AAA9E	#64C2C8 Students' Union Shop	#AAE8E1	#E4EFED

Purple

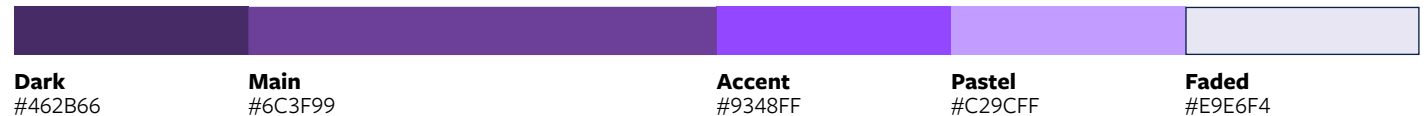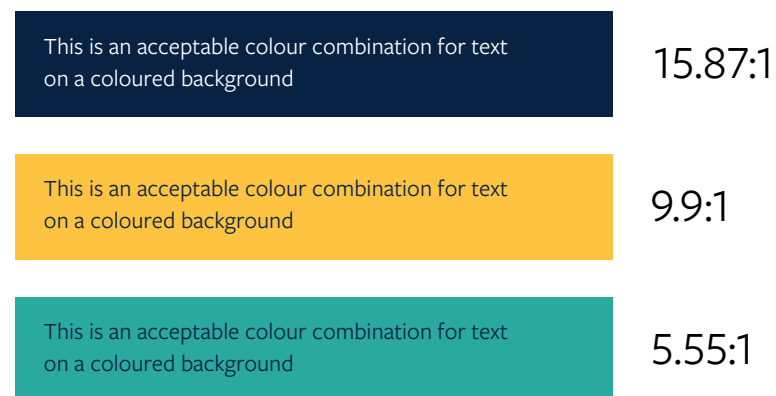| Dark	Main	Accent	Pastel	Faded
#462B66	#6C3F99	#9348FF	#C29CFF	#E9E6F4

Accessibility

Do not use text and colour combinations that have a colour contrast of below 4.5:1. When using two colours together that do not involve text, but are a main feature of a design, use colours that have a luminance contrast of above 30%.

The accessibility of colours is determined by the **Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0**.

Acceptable colour combinations for text (above 4.5:1)

This is an acceptable colour combination for text on a coloured background	15.87:1
This is an acceptable colour combination for text on a coloured background	9.9:1
This is an acceptable colour combination for text on a coloured background	5.55:1

Unacceptable colour combinations for text (below 4.5:1)

This is an unacceptable colour combination for text on a coloured background	1.93:1
This is an unacceptable colour combination for text on a coloured background	2.12:1

Colour contrast ratios can be tested at **www.webaim.org/resources/contrastchecker**

Acceptable luminance contrast (above 30%)

	61.3%
	43.1%
	34.7%
	39.2%
	84.5%
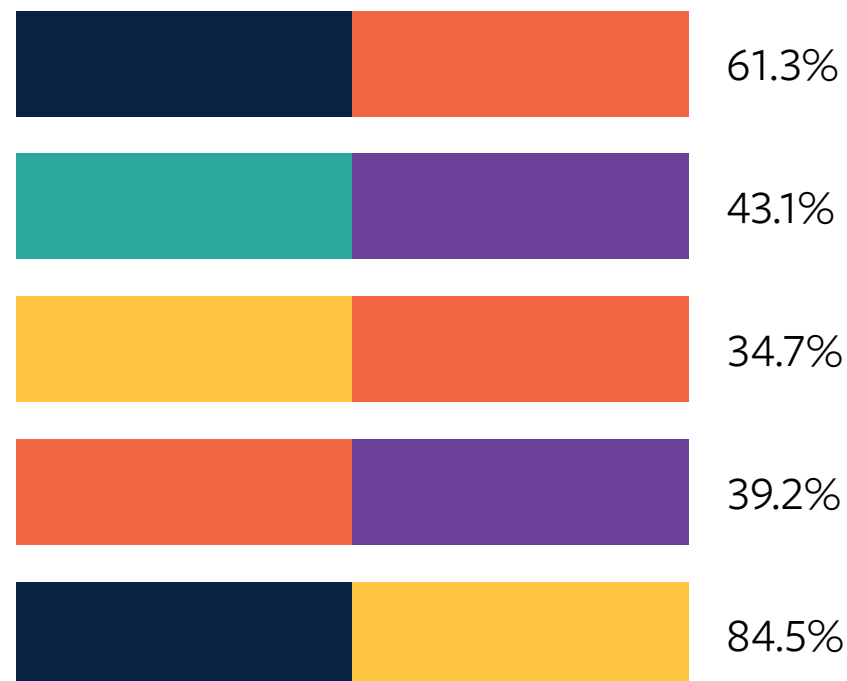
Unacceptable luminance contrast (below 30%)

	26%
	4.3%

Luminance contrast can be tested at **www.otm.sg/luminance-contrast-calculator**

Our Typographic Palettes

Typography can be a powerful tool for establishing the style of a brand, and giving it a consistent identity. The fonts chosen for Students' Union UCL communicate clearly and cleanly, and are suitable for a wide range of uses. When selecting a typeface from the approved list, consider the usage and target audience.

Official typefaces

Freight Pro Family

Available in Adobe Typekit

Fonts

Primary font: Freight Sans

Our primary typeface is Freight Sans, a modern and legible sans-serif font that presents a warm, friendly and professional appearance that unifies our brand.

There are two main weights (book, and bold) and two style (regular and italic) options for general use.

This font is appropriate for all uses, from headlines to captions.

Secondary typeface usage:

The Freight Pro family has distinct variations that can be applied where suited to create diversity and variety within our visual communications, whilst maintaining a consistent and unified typographic style.

The two most suitable alternate typefaces are **Freight Macro** and **Freight Text**.

Using an alternative font

To ensure documents and emails display in a predictable way when sending to people outside of Students' Union UCL, use Arial font instead of Freight Sans. Use this approach when creating digital documents using MS Teams applications.

Freight Sans

Aa   **Aa**
Aa   ***Aa***

Book   **Bold**

Freight Macro

Aa   **Aa**
Aa   ***Aa***

Book   **Bold**

Freight Text

Aa   **Aa**
Aa   ***Aa***

Book   **Bold**

Character Set:

Freight Sans

Hello

welcome

invited

students

CAPITALS — 24 PT.

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

LOWERCASE — 24 PT.

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

SMALL CAPS — 24 PT

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
0123456789
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
0123456789

NUMERALS, PUNCTUATION AND GLYPHS

123456789¼½¾~!@#$%^&*([{}])_+|:"<>?
`¡™£¢∞§¶•ªº–≠«<""æ…÷≥≤©*«
△▷▲▶↑→↓←□□▨■■○○◍●✿

Highlighted text

Text can be combined with colours for extra punch, particularly when superimposed on photos or other visual designs. The style of this text can vary depending on whether it is body text or headline text.

When using highlighted text, be aware of the colour palette of your overall design, and choose complementing colours that make the text clear and readable.

Do not use full stops in headings that use this style.

Highlighted text
that gives a punch of
colour to a piece

It can be used in headlines
with bold as well

Headline
Example

Header Styles

Freight Sans Bold inside coloured box
Spacing between header lines = 1/7 of colour box height
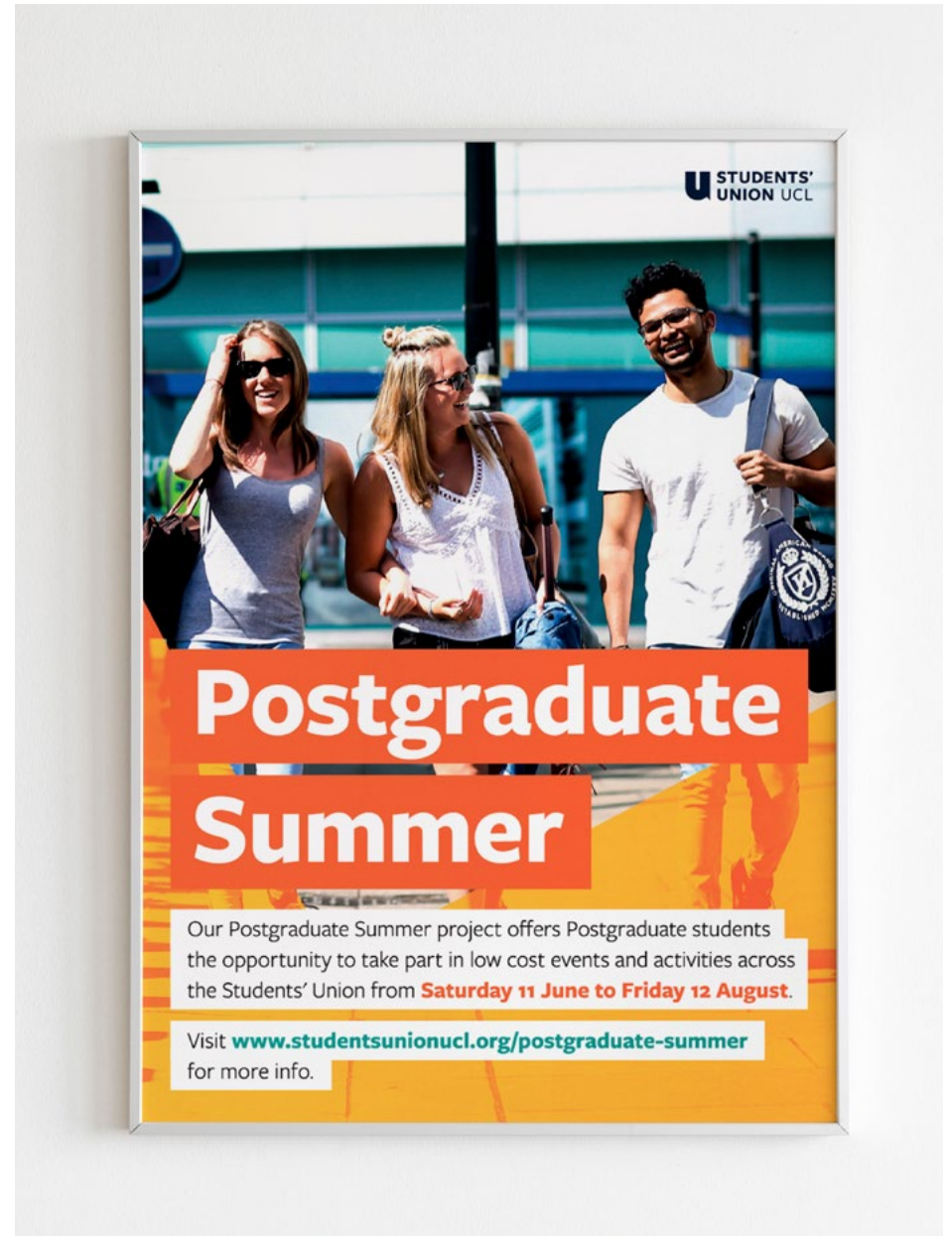
Text Box Colour Combinations

Yellow Box Navy Text

Purple Box White Text

Teal Box White Text

Navy Box White Text

Coral Box White Text

Graphic Elements

A selection of graphic elements can be utilised to expand the visual direction of the brand, bringing a varied look and a sense of continuity to our communications. These elements and styles can be emphasized or used with minimal focus to add visual interest to designs and enhance our storytelling.

Our architecture

There are three main shapes which form significant characteristics to the architecture of the UCL campus: the semi-circle, the rectangle, and the triangle.

UCL's many neoclassical buildings are well known for their use of arched windows, arcades and doors.

The most iconic building on campus is the Wilkins Portico, a ten-column Corinthian portico with a triangular gable.
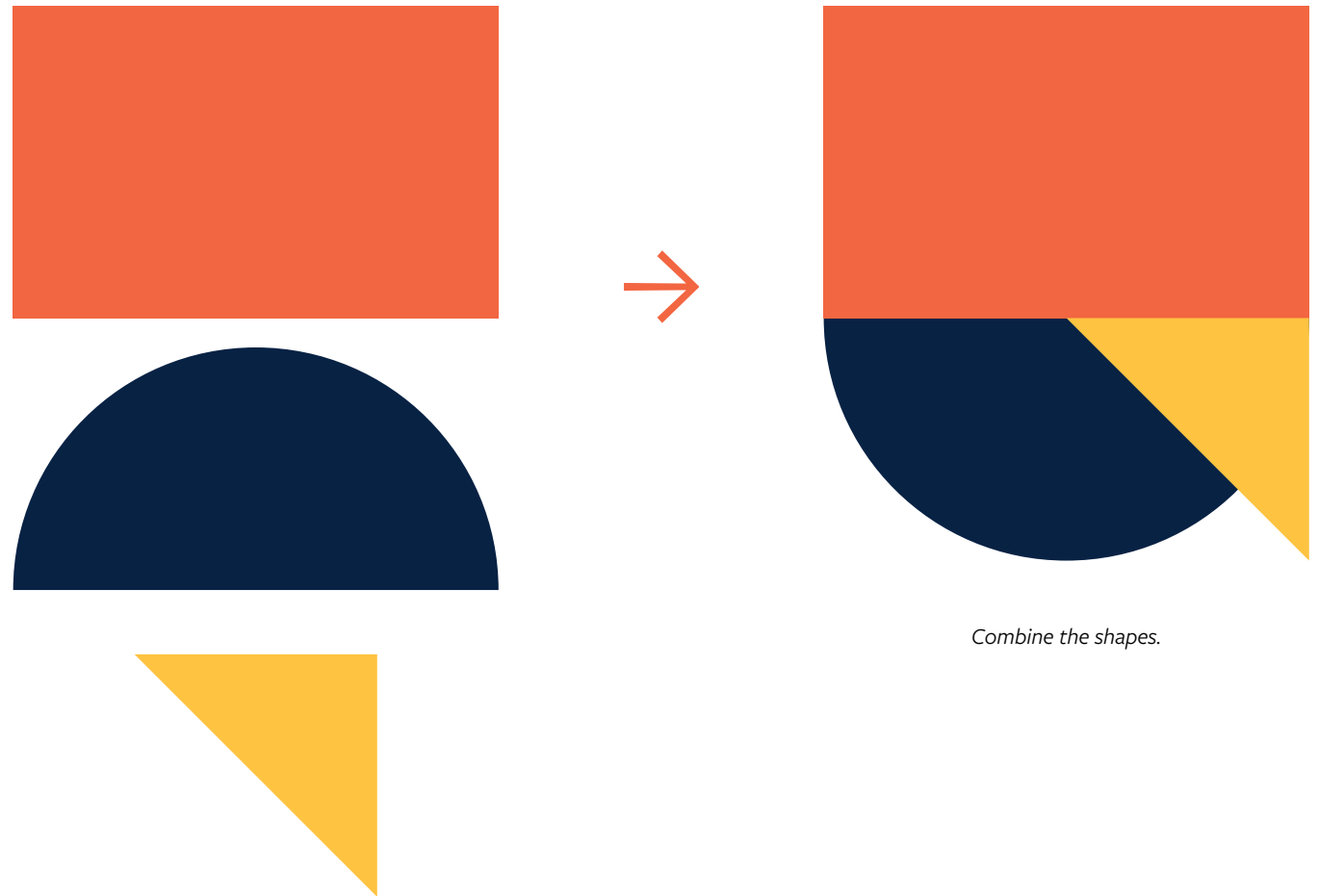
The Edwardian rectangular stripes of red brick and white stone are used in both exterior and interior settings.
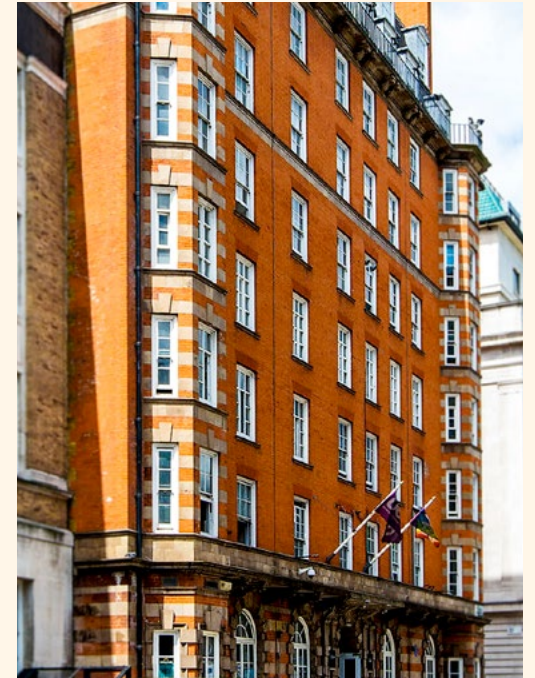
Geometric shapes

The three geometric shapes form the underlying structure of our logo and pay homage to our architectural heritage.

By combining them, the solid U shape is created.

Combine the shapes.

Physical Spaces

How we reflect our brand in our physical spaces goes far beyond logos and signage.

The environment we create for our members and other customers should reflect our values and organisational ethos. People who visit our spaces should recognise it as part of Students' Union UCL before they've seen a logo or other signage.

We can create a sense of coherence and consistency across our spaces through the use of materials, the atmosphere we create through music and lighting, our excellent customer service, and repeated design choices like furniture.

In research of over 4,800 students conducted in 2023, 66% of those who use our cafés, bars and shops agree that the Union has a strong and distinctive brand. With only 11% disagreeing.

Developing new spaces

Expressing our values

Our spaces should express our values and social enterprise promises, particularly the values and promises which suit communication through the physical environment, for example:

- **Values:** Bold, sustainable, fun, community building and inclusive
- **Promises:** 'We always put planet before profit' and 'At the centre of your campus community'

Materials

The choice of materials used in our physical spaces is key to communicating a sense of our sustainable principles. Using raw, unfinished, and natural materials like wood, glass, stone, steel, or brick helps to create a feeling of simplicity grounded in nature. Materials like ceramic and concrete are a practical base tone for other more playful materials like plants. Plastic materials like wood effect veneers remove the sense authenticity we should be aiming to create in our spaces.

Playfulness

Our spaces should be fun, unique, and most importantly, different from other spaces on campus. Use lighting to bring colour and playfulness into neutral spaces. Use found or recycled objects decoratively to add interest and curiosity to spaces, helping to highlight our sustainability brand promise.

Our members

Above all else, our public spaces should be designed for use by our members. Spaces should utilise the rich history of student life at UCL, using decorative photos and ephemera that are deeply rooted in our community.

Our spaces should feel relaxed, open, and inclusive – places where all students feel welcome.

Other values and social enterprise promises should be communicated through other methods in our physical spaces – for example, through the customer service, choice of products, and presentation of key messages.

Colour and signage

Logo

The shield logo lock-up is best suited to physical spaces. This version of the logo is visible applied to glass or on raw, textured surfaces like brick. The text remains clear and legible as the shield shape acts as a container. The format of logo also suits

Colour

Our colour palette is developed primarily for use in digital and print, and our core five colours rarely work when applied to a full wall or large area. Instead, use neutral tones and apply brand colours as highlights.

When using large areas of colour, it is often preferable to take one of our core five brand colours up or down in tone – to either make it brighter and lighter, or deeper and darker – depending on the environment you're trying to create.

For example - when decorating interiors, use an off-white as a base tone, and introduce colour through soft furnishings like lampshades, upholstery, or fixtures and fittings like door handles. Brand colours used on items with high interaction, like chairs, tables, and handles, is a subtle way to introduce a consistent theme.

In our café spaces, we have chosen to use our core yellow as highlights on uniforms, disposable cups, table tops, and in signage like shelf edging, whilst retaining an open and airy feel in the space through the neutral wall and floor colour.

Image Treatment

A core part of our brand is the application of duotone effects to our images. Our duotones are generally made up of two contrasting colours from our brand colour palette and can be used either as a stand-alone effect or in combination with one or more graphic elements.

Gradient duotones

There are two main ways we use duotone effects in our images: one is to use it as a framing device to draw attention to specific areas of an image such as a person or product, and the other is to apply the effect to the entire image in order to create some visual interest without taking too much attention away from other information.

The six approved duotone combinations are:
Navy and coral
Navy and yellow
Coral and yellow
Purple and coral
Teal and yellow
Purple and teal

Main duotone implementation

Our main graphic style for image treatment is to utilise one of the previously mentioned colour combinations in a gradient duotone effect over an image as the base for a design. A full colour version of the same image is then masked over the top, creating a cut-out effect.

Important features of the images, such as faces, objects, and features of locations/buildings, such always be included in the full colour image.

Care should be taken to ensure a strong contrast is achieved with the gradient duotone. This involves both careful consideration of which colour combination works best for each image, as well as creating a sufficient contrast when using the gradient mask tool.

Secondary duotone implementation

A secondary implementation of the duotone gradient effect can be applied to images that are working as background features to visual communications, such as website thumbnails and support graphics.

This employs the same gradient duotone effect as outlined in the main visual style, however the full colour cut-out effect is not implemented. This is to keep focus directed at the main feature accompanying the image, such as a headline or other text.
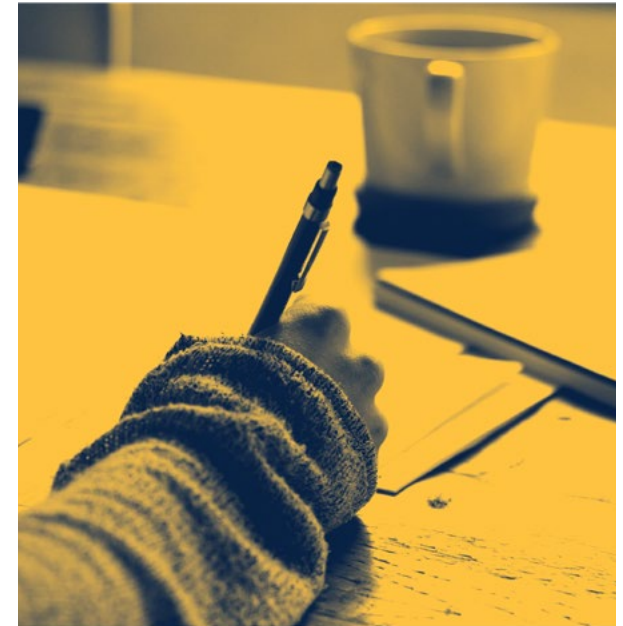
Tips for preparing for your exams

The main exam period will take place from 24 April to 26 May 2023. To help you navigate these...

Photography and Videography

Our photography is crucial in capturing our vibrant, diverse and dynamic community. It shows the friendly, welcoming side of our campus, and helps us communicate with our audience in a powerful way.

Our images offer a glimpse of our urban campuses, and the people and places that make it special. We use high-quality professionally-shot photographs with an energetic and vivid tone. The high saturation and strong contrast of the visuals brings a crisp, bold, and honest look to our images.

Colour

We use colour photography, which has strong vibrancy and captures bright, saturated colours. They are a sharpened way of seeing life on our campus.

We are always on the look out for splashes of colour in our environment. Colour is everywhere — a yellow wall, hot pink fuzzy slippers, a fuchsia blouse, or a cherry red ice-lolly truck.

The colours should pop, but not explode. We want to feel a bit edgy with a sense of fun, but not overwhelm by being too overloaded.

Photo-journalistic

Our shots have a candid and realistic feel: natural smiles, genuine interactions, and spontaneous and authentic movement. They should be reflective of the energy, mood, and activity that permeates our campus.

Our images and videos should showcase the vibrant community, beautiful architecture and unique spaces that make both our campuses special.

The mood in the shots should capture energy, diversity and emotion — from a serious student engrossed in their studies, to a chatting group of friends. They can be wide shots to establish scope, or close up shots to showcase detail. Shooting high, low or straight on: have fun with it.

The texture of our spaces is important to capture: brick, limestone, wood, glass, metal as well as green spaces.
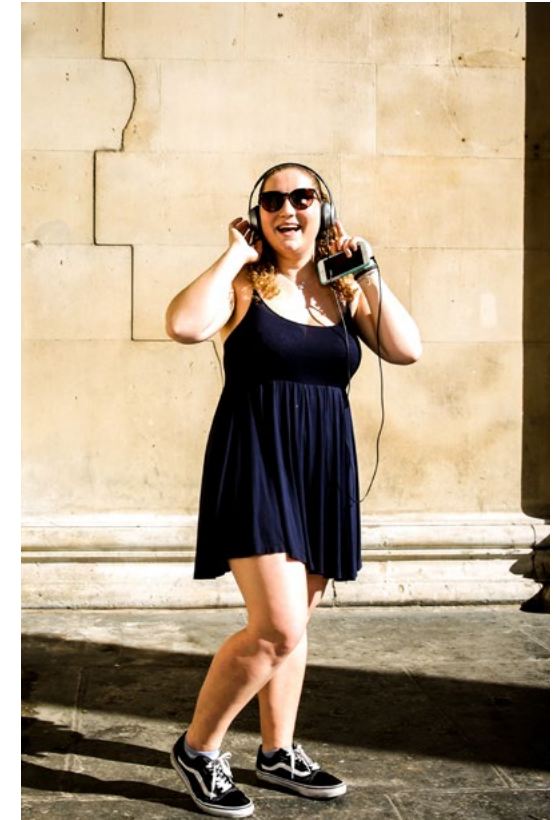
Composition

We can achieve a strong look by using single-focus compositions. These hold the foreground or subject in clear focus, while permitting the background to go softly out of focus.

Images should be composed with areas of clear space, so there is room to include copy and graphics.

We encourage experimentation. We want to capture the essence of the moment, and the unexpected moments that occur on and off campus.

Things to avoid

We should avoid using images that are too busy, too complicated, out of focus, low resolution, or too darkly lit.

Campus and spaces

UCL has two campuses based in Bloomsbury and Stratford. Both spaces are unique and bursting with culture, life, and personality. Both spaces offer something completely different, but both iconically London. From the nooks and crannies of Bloomsbury to the iconic Olympic Park in Stratford, our spaces provide so many opportunities to showcase a wide range of ways our members interact with life at UCL.

Posed portraits

When portraits are created, they should feel natural and informal. Attitude, individuality and personality are key to our people and to our photos. The shots demonstrate we don't take ourselves too seriously. Our subjects are comfortable in their own skin and have an authentic confidence in who they are. Portraits are shot as strong compositions, avoiding being too identically posed.

The backgrounds should not be too cluttered, fussy, overly textured or visually distracting.

Diversity

It is important to reflect the diversity of UCL's student body in all photoshoots. This means including models from varied ethnic and cultural backgrounds, as well as showcasing differences in gender identity, age, body type etc.

Tips to remember

- Ensure that core photographs are high quality, and taken by a professional photographer when possible.
- Ensure that scenes are recorded in multiple formats for flexibility (portrait, landscape and ideally wide to be compatible with header images online).
- Focus on individuals — show UCL students in recognisable locations all over campus.
- Aim for authenticity — avoid overly posed individuals or 'stock' photography looks.
- Amp up the drama for specific portrait shots — find interesting locations and use a bit of soft flash to add stronger highlights and contrast to the shots.

How to brief photographers

It is important ahead of any photoshoot to fully communicate to the photographer the purpose of the shoot, as well as the locations, subjects, and values that we wish to capture. This means creating a thorough itinerary of the shoot, as well as providing example images from our stock library of similar shots to replicate.

As well as making sure we're able to keep track of everything we wish to capture, this also helps inform the photographer what equipment and assistance they need on the day, which in-turn effects the cost of the shoot.

Photoshoots can be costly and time-consuming to organise, so it's imperative to set them up for success by briefing in the photographer ahead of the date and with as much information as possible.

We often use a range of different photographers depending on availability and budget, however the final edited photos should all feel part of our wider visual identity. Make sure the photographers selected for projects are able to match the photo style set out in the brand guidelines.

A template for a photographer brief can be found on the **Marketing and Communications intranet page**.

Videography

Our videography style takes cues from our photography style: natural and casual in feel, using vibrant colour and recognisable backdrops around campus.

Technical advice:

- Weather permitting, set-up the subject outdoors where there is lots of natural light.

- Try to capture even lighting on the subject/s, avoiding harsh cast shadows.

- Set up your camera and lighting for a shallow depth of field to draw focus to the subject.

- Subjects must be framed with plenty of negative space around the top of the head and upper body to ensure that the footage can be edited into multiple aspect ratios for use across different online platforms. This is easiest achieved by filming in landscape.

- Where possible, film at 4K 30fps. Never film below 1080p resolution.

- Having a two camera set-up helps maintain the visual interest of a video by providing b-roll or a second angle to cut away to.


Camera screen view
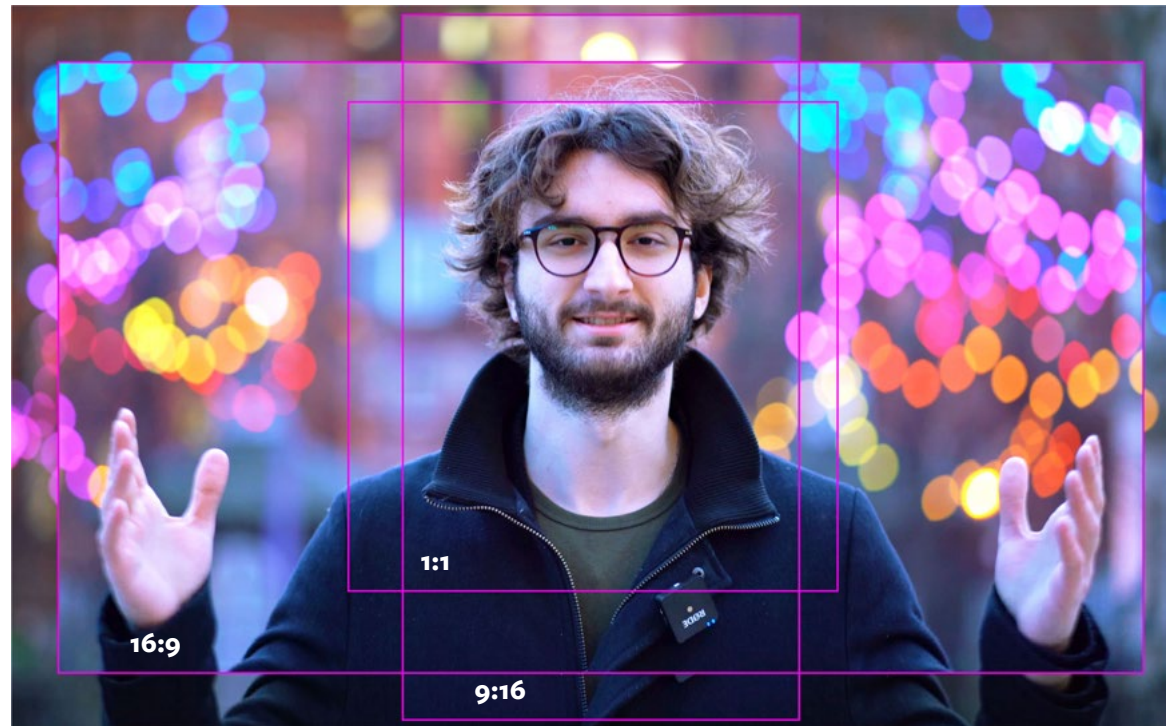
Aspect ratio guides

Editing

- Adjust the white balance, vibrancy, shadows, and highlights of the source footage to create a bright and vivid image.

- Use standardised aspect ratios - create sequences in 16:9, 9:16 and 1:1 to cover all necessary platforms, from digital screens to social media posts.

- Captions should be created for all relevant projects for accessibility. The Union caption style is Freight Sans Bold in navy blue, 60pts inside a white box at 95% transparency, and are positioned in the lower 1/4 of the frame.

- Export the final product in H.264 codec and mp4 file format. This ensures the best compatibility between different operating systems and online platforms.

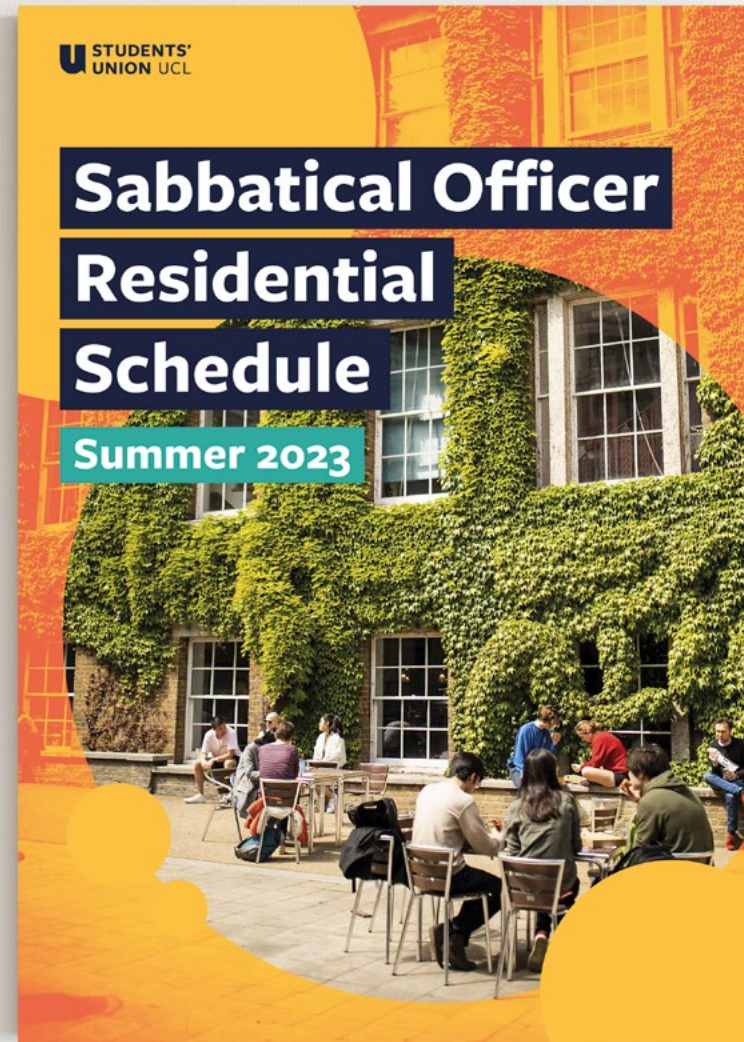- Add a standard and consistent outro animation.
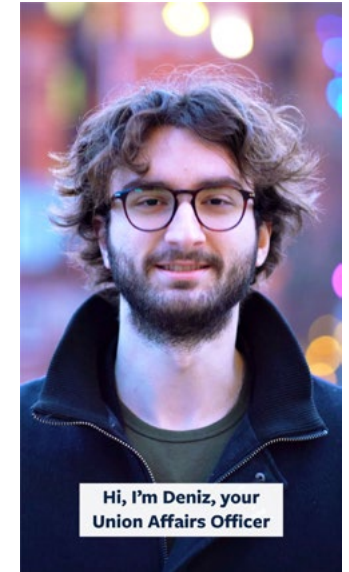
Captions style
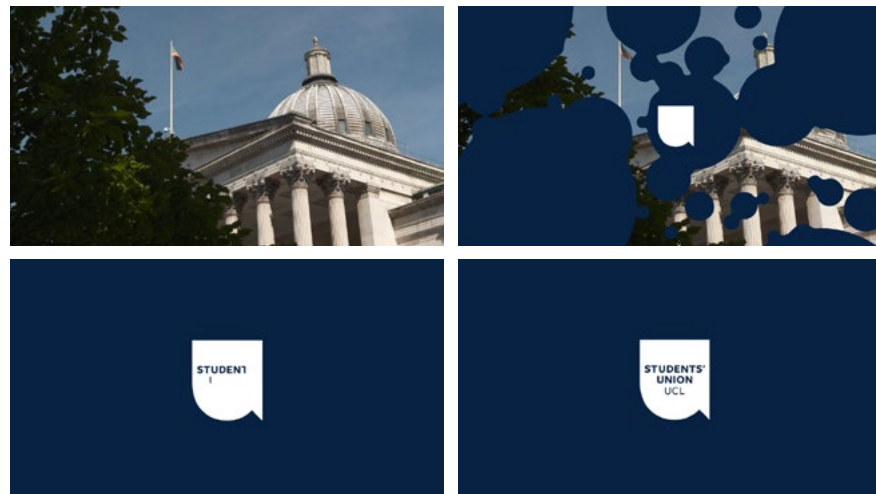
Animated outro style

Core Brand Implementation

Examples of the core Union brand in action, showcasing the signature highlighted text, gradient duotones, and graphic shapes used as image framing.

Project Active x UCL Accommodation

Undergrad

Pilates

Tuesday 16 May, 10:00 - 11:00

Conference Room, Bloomsbury Theatre Building

Financial Support

studentsunionucl.org/financial-support

We aim to support students who find themselves in unexpected financial difficulty and need support with living costs to continue or complete their studies, or to take part in student activities.

Get in contact:

Volunteering

Connecting inspiring people and changing communities in London

UCL East

Academic Experience Survey

Student Submission for TEF 2023

Students' Union UCL

where **more** happens

Maintaining Our Brand

The marketing and communications department
are the guardians of the Union's brand identity.

Working with the marketing and communications team

At the beginning of every major project that will require design or marketing support please
involve the marketing and communications team from the start. We can provide creative input
to help you bring your projects to life.

To submit a design brief please visit the **Marketing and Communications intranet page**.

Guidelines, templates and logos

Please find access to our guidelines, templates and logos on the **Marketing and Communications intranet page**.

Enquiries

If you have any further queries regarding the production of marketing materials
or photography in accordance with the Union's brand guidelines, please e-mail
su.marketing@ucl.ac.uk.