



CENTRAL STYLE GUIDE

Linfield Central (linfield.edu/central) is Linfield University's intranet site. It is intended to share information with our internal community of students and employees. Maintaining consistency through language, tone, writing, styling and visuals strengthens our messaging.

This document is intended to be used as a resource for understanding the 'why' behind Central's presentation, as well as the 'how.' It is supplemental to Linfield's [brand guidelines](#) and [editorial style guide](#).

CONTENT OVERVIEW

Online messaging should meet the needs of the intended audience rather than our own. Online readers want to gather information quickly and efficiently. The following strategies will help shape your content:

1. Define your audience and frame the task of your page. Why is someone visiting your site? What do they need? Are you answering the most frequently asked questions of your department?
2. Remember that less is more. Understand your topic and talk about it in as few words as possible. Consider it your elevator pitch and keep it conversational.
3. Use clear, user-friendly language.
4. Limit the use of acronyms. If you use them, introduce the full phrase or meaning in the first instance. Ex. Information Technology Services (ITS).
5. Write with an active voice and with the use of pronouns.
6. Lists and bullet points are ideal for organizing information and supporting quick absorption.

General guidelines:

- There is only one heading per page, which serves as the title of your page. Keep it short.
- Sub-headings are used to organize and introduce the content on the page.
- A good rule of thumb for structuring web copy: less than 20 words per sentence, and no more than five sentences per paragraph.
- Reduce your copy. Web readers scan information and will only absorb 28% of what's on the page. Shorten it; then shorten it again.

STRUCTURING A PAGE

How content is structured on a page is particularly important for accessibility. Remember, web users want quick and easy information, so the page layout and content should make this as easy as possible. This can be done by adhering to the following guidance:

- There is only one Heading 1 per page. This is an imperative rule for accessibility. The page title/name in Central serves as the page's Heading 1. It is written in title case (ex. "Meet Our Team" instead of "Meet our team").
- Sub-headings (Heading 2, Heading 3) are nested and used to organize information, introduce the blocks of content on the page and guide the reader's eye or screen readers.
 - Heading 2, which is the sub-heading for Heading 1, is written in sentence case (ex. "Understanding your options" instead of "Understanding Your Options").
 - Heading 3 is the sub-heading under Heading 2 and is also written in sentence case.
- Limit content to three blocks of information or less – a block being a sub-headline followed by one or two descriptive paragraphs.
- The styling format for the body copy is Normal Text.

Using images

A picture is indeed worth a thousand words. When adding an image to your page, you must always:

- Add the image description (referred to as "Alternative Text" in Central). This is for accessibility purposes. Screen readers will read this description to visually impaired site visitors. Examples of appropriate descriptions include the person's name or building on campus. This is essential for images that are delivering information; decorative images that offer no relevant information to the page can be labeled as "decorative" in Alternative Text field. Use punctuation in the description; screen readers will read it back as a sentence. Review [accessibility best practices](#) for more information.
- Keep an eye on the file size. Smaller is better for web (100kb or less). Larger file sizes will impact load times on a page.
- The image should support the content on the page.
- In most circumstances, images or graphics built that include text do not comply with accessibility guidelines.

Naming conventions

For consistency purposes, Central items are created using the following guidelines:

- Central sites use title case in their naming conventions – the first letter of each word is capitalized (ex. /FacultySenate and /StudentLife).
- Pages are written using dashes between the words and in all lower case (ex. /FacultySenate/meeting-minutes and /StudentLife/meet-our-team).
 - A page can be renamed by going to the gear icon in the top right corner and selecting Site Contents > Site Pages, hover over the page and click on the three dots/ellipsis menu and choose Rename.

REVIEWING CONTENT

It's always good to have a second and even third set of eyes on the content. Things you can do review your content before publishing:

- Consider typing up the copy in Word first and reviewing for accuracy. Run spell check. This is a good time to also have a colleague review before you add to your Central site.
- How does it look on mobile? More than 60% of our users are here.

QUESTIONS?

[Learn more about Linfield Central](#), including video tutorials and FAQs.

We are also here as a resource!

If you have technical questions:
Information Technology Services (ITS)
Service desk
techsupport@support.linfield.edu

If you would like help organizing and streamlining your content:
Office of Strategic Communications
Chase Estep
cestep@linfield.edu