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Translation, Minutes and
Council Support

English Translation section

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CERN ENGLISH LANGUAGE STYLE GUIDE

*CERN Translation, Minutes and Council
Support group*

This Style Guide is continuously updated and supplemented. Suggestions for additions or improvements are welcome, and should be submitted to the English Translation section (e-mail: lisa.morris@cern.ch).

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FOREWORD

This document is primarily intended to provide members of the CERN Translation, Minutes and Council Support group's English section (DG-TMC-ES) with a style guide for the purpose of **drafting official texts in English (translations and minutes)**. It is also available to authors, administrative assistants, editors, proofreaders and anyone else called upon to draft or check official documents in English, with a view to ensuring consistent practice and the elimination of unnecessary corrections at successive stages of the drafting process.

It should be borne in mind that English is a constantly evolving language and that some practices may be a question of taste or preference. For example, those drafting outreach documents, e.g. press releases and other communications to the general public, may prefer a more informal style involving less frequent use of upper case or hyphenation. Therefore, the intention is not to put authors in a straitjacket but rather to illustrate TMC's own house style in English. The most important point to bear in mind is that usage should be consistent throughout a single document or set of documents.

This guide is certainly not exhaustive. On the contrary, a deliberate effort has been made to keep it concise, simple, easy to refer to, and even readable. The points covered are those on which the English section frequently receives questions and queries or in respect of which it has noted persistent misuse.

N.B. This document is not intended to be a guide to the writing of good English; readers seeking such a guide are referred to the standard works listed in [section 1](#) on written style. Typography, formatting and layout are not covered.

Moreover, we recognise that services such as the Education, Communications and Outreach group have specific outreach and other imperatives that may lead them to adopt different style practices. A “best practice” guide for writers and editors contributing content in English to CERN's public websites can be found [here](#).

1. WRITTEN STYLE

It is important that CERN publications, records and other documents be written in clear, simple language and without ambiguity, not least because they will be read by many people whose native language is not English.

It is assumed that the users of this Style Guide have a good knowledge of English style and usage. There are, however, numerous standard works on written style and English usage that may usefully be consulted, including:

H.W. Fowler: A dictionary of modern English usage

The Oxford Dictionary for Writers and Editors

The Economist Style Guide

The Oxford Guide to English Usage

The Oxford Plain English Guide

Sir Ernest Gowers: The Complete Plain Words

E. Partridge: Usage and abusage

2. SPELLING

a) Standard spelling

The spelling given on the [Oxford Dictionaries \(OED\) website](#) should generally be followed. Where alternative forms are given, the preferred spelling should be used. The preferred spelling is the one that is presented first (e.g. “judgement, judgment”: use *judgement*) or to which the reader is referred (e.g. “tire, US variant of “tyre”: use *tyre*). A notable exception is our preference for the suffix *-ise*, rather than *-ize*, in words like *organise* and *recognise* (see [section 2.c](#)). For other exceptions, and words that often cause difficulty, see the word list in [annex 3](#).

As a general rule, preference is given to British rather than US spelling, in such instances as:

- *centre* (rather than *center*), unless we are referring to a facility or organisation using the US spelling (e.g. the *World Trade Center*, the *Geneva Business Center*);
- *labour* (rather than *labor*) and other words ending in *-our*, such as *behaviour*, *honour*, *colour*, *valour*, etc.;
- *organisation* (except in the *European Organization for Nuclear Research*, in line with the spelling used in the CERN Convention);
- *practise* (verb), *practice* (noun) – note that US English uses *practice* for both noun and verb.

b) Official name of the Organization

The official name of CERN is the European Organization for Nuclear Research (often abbreviated as “the Organization” or “the Laboratory”). The name CERN is derived from the acronym for the French *Conseil Européen pour la Recherche Nucléaire*, or European Council for Nuclear Research, a provisional body founded in 1952 with the mandate of establishing a world-class fundamental physics research organisation in Europe. *European Laboratory for Particle Physics* is sometimes used as an explanatory subheading, but it has no legal validity.

c) Words ending in *-ize*, *-ise* and *-yse*

As noted in [section 2.a](#) above, where there is a choice between the suffix *-ize* or *-ise* (e.g. *harmonise*, *liberalisation*, *organise*, *normalise*, *standardisation*), *-ise* is preferred. However, note the official name of the Organization.

For some words, where *-ise* is not a suffix but part of the root of the word, there is no choice and *-ise* **must** be used (e.g. *advertise*, *comprise*, *enterprise*, *franchise*, *improvise*, *surprise*). Similarly, the suffix *-yse* must be used for certain words (e.g. *analyse*, *dialyse* and *hydrolyse*). Common words of this type are included in the word list in [annex 3](#).

d) Formation of past tenses

The past tense of several verbs, such as to *dream*, to *learn* or to *spell*, can be formed in two different ways, both of which are generally considered to be correct. For example, in the case of the verb “to dream”, there is essentially no difference between the versions “dreamed” and “dreamt”, although some dictionaries say that British English favours the “-t” variant and American English the “-ed” variant.

For the sake of consistency, we have decided to use the “-ed” option, i.e.:

- *Burned, dreamed, kneeled, leaned, leaped, learned, spelled, spilled, spoiled* (rather than *burnt, dreamt, knelt, leant, leapt, learnt, spelt, spoilt, spilt*).

e) Homophones

Some words sound the same but are spelled differently according to their meaning. The following, in particular, tend to be a source of confusion:

- “work *programme*”, but “computer *program*”;
- “hard *disk*” and “floppy *disk*”, but “compact *disc*” (“disk” is the preferred spelling for computer-related objects, while “disc” is used in most other contexts, including the music industry);
- “the car is *stationary*” but “office *stationery*”;
- “Legal *Counsel*” but “the CERN *Council*”.

f) Compounds

Unfortunately, there are no hard and fast rules governing the use of compounds (words formed from two or more other words), which may be written as a single word (e.g. *keyboard*), with a hyphen (e.g. *end-user*) or as two separate words (e.g. *test bench*). Language is always evolving, the general trend being towards consolidation in a single word as compounds become gradually more familiar (e.g. *database* used to be written as two words and *worldwide* used to be hyphenated, but they are now consolidated).

Some of the more common compounds are given in the word list in [annex 3](#).

N.B. Some compounds are written as two separate words when used as a noun but hyphenated when used adjectivally (e.g. “an investor in *real estate*” (noun), “*real-estate* investments” (adjective)). See [section 3](#) on hyphens.

g) Formation of plurals

For foreign words that have been assimilated into English and that have alternative plural forms, the English form is to be preferred (e.g. *forums, bienniums*). Exceptions include the plural of “*bureau*”, which is *bureaux* (not *bureaus*), and of *gateau* (*gateaux*, not *gateaus*).

In some cases, the choice of plural is governed by the particular sense in which the word is used (e.g. *antennae* [of insects], *antennas* [of radios]; *formulae* [mathematical], *formulas* [general]; *indices* [in mathematics], *indexes* [in books]).

Commonly encountered plurals of this kind are given in the word list in [annex 3](#).

N.B. Collective nouns such as *audience, committee* and *police* can be construed as either singular or plural, according to whether the word is perceived as a unit or as individual items. In such cases, it may be legitimate to use a plural verb with a singular noun, as in the following examples:

- “The police *is* a fine institution” BUT “The police *are* currently working on this case”;
- “The team *has* been awarded a prize” BUT “The team *have* been working on this project” (*has* would also be acceptable in the latter case, depending on your point of view);
- “The committee gave *its* unanimous approval to the plans” BUT “The committee enjoyed biscuits with *their* tea”;

- “The family can trace *its* history back to the middle ages” BUT “Before the recession, my brother’s family *were* quite well off, but now *they are* hard up.”

Conversely, a state always takes a singular verb: e.g. “The United States *has its* own systems”; “The United Arab Emirates *has* decided to apply a country-wide lifting of customs duties on cement and steel.”

Some words, such as “equipment” and (usually) “infrastructure” have no plural form but tend to have a plural meaning, e.g. “all the equipment is now installed”, “the infrastructure is in need of renovation” (BUT “the telecommunications and HVAC infrastructures”, where it is clear that separate categories of infrastructure are being referred to).

In addition, in the following example where the subject consists of several different components that can be deemed to constitute a single item, the case can be made for using a singular verb:

“The **rental, collection and transport of containers for all types of waste**, including confidential documents, **is** charged to the requestor’s budget” (however, a plural verb would also be acceptable).

3. HYPHENS AND EN DASHES

Hyphens and en dashes are two distinct punctuation marks that are frequently confused. Note that another form of dash, the em dash, which can serve as an alternative to parentheses, commas, colons or quotation marks in certain cases, is NOT used in CERN style.

Hyphen: -

En dash: –

Em dash: —

To type an en dash, hold down the Ctrl key and press the - key on the numeric keypad or, alternatively, hold down Alt and type the code 0150. Note that Microsoft Word automatically replaces hyphens with en dashes as you type when there is a space on either side – like so.

The different uses of hyphens and en dashes are set out below.

Hyphens

Hyphens are often regarded as an unnecessary punctuation mark but actually play an important role in providing clarity and preventing ambiguity. The key is to use common sense, avoiding over-hyphenation and ensuring consistency. For the hyphenation of commonly encountered words, see the word list in [annex 3](#).

a) General principles of hyphenation

Hyphens are used to connect words that are more closely linked to each other than to the surrounding syntax. They **must** be used where ambiguity needs to be avoided, as in some cases a hyphen can substantially change the meaning of an expression, e.g. compare “thirty-odd participants” and “thirty odd participants”, or “the one-armed bandit” and “the one armed bandit”).

The consequences of not using a hyphen can be readily appreciated in the following sentence: “Near the hotel is a large moor reserved for shooting-visitors” (Fowler).

b) Permanent hyphens

As indicated in [section 2](#) on spelling, some compound words have permanent hyphens (e.g. *Director-General*, *ex-partner*, *great-grandmother*, *set-up* (noun), *vice-chancellor*).

A number of compound nouns in English deriving from phrasal verbs always take a hyphen to distinguish them from the verb form. For example:

Verb form	Noun form
<i>To break in</i>	<i>a break-in</i>
<i>To build up</i>	<i>a build-up (of)</i>
<i>to call out</i>	<i>a call-out</i>
<i>to check up (on)</i>	<i>a check-up</i>
<i>to pile up</i>	<i>a pile-up</i>
<i>to set up</i>	<i>a set-up</i>

In many cases, however, the noun is not hyphenated but written as a single word. For example:

Verb form	Noun form
<i>to break down</i>	<i>a breakdown</i>
<i>to lay out</i>	<i>a layout</i>
<i>to feed back</i>	<i>feedback</i>

There is an increasing trend towards eliding prefixes with the main word, removing the hyphen to create a single word (e.g. *multipath*, *repatriate*, *extracurricular*, *interregional*, *semiconductor*, *tripartite*, *bilateral*, *microcomputer*, *preselection*, *antisocial*, *cybersecurity*) but it is difficult to determine a hard and fast rule in this area. In certain instances, listed below, hyphens **should** be retained:

- i) the prefixes non-, self-, quasi- or ex- (in the sense of “formerly”): e.g. *non-existent*, *self-sufficient*, *quasi-neutrality*, *ex-boss*;
- ii) when the prefix or combining form ends with a vowel and the next word begins with the same vowel or a “y”: e.g. *pre-eminent*, *semi-intensive*, *multi-year*, *re-enact*, *re-emphasise*, *anti-ion*, *re-elect*;
- iii) so as to avoid any other awkward or misleading juxtapositions of letters: e.g. *co-worker*, *co-pilot*, *inter-agency*;
- iv) to distinguish between similarly spelled words with different meanings: e.g. *re-sent* (meaning “sent a second time”, as opposed to *resent* meaning “feel indignation towards”);
- v) when the next word begins with a capital letter: e.g. *sub-Saharan*, *inter-American*, *pan-African*.

Note, however, that many words formed with a prefix in the above categories have become so common and familiar that they are now treated as a single unit and no longer follow the general pattern (e.g. *cooperation*, *coordination*, *reunite*, *reinterpret*).

The large and growing number of words beginning with the prefix “e-” (for “electronic”) should generally be hyphenated (*e-commerce*, *e-health*, *e-government*, *e-business*, *e-learning*, etc.). The main exception is “e-mail” and “email”, which are both in standard usage, although we observe an increasing trend towards “email”.

Units beginning with the prefixes “milli”, “kilo”, etc. are not hyphenated. Words beginning with the prefix “tele” are not hyphenated, unless the first letter of the root word is a vowel (*telemedicine*, *telephony*, *telematics*, BUT *tele-education*).

c) Temporary hyphens

In a compound adjectival expression used attributively, the temporary hyphen is used to join together two or more words that would normally be written separately, in order to avoid ambiguity and to facilitate comprehension:

<i>16-metre-long tubes</i>	<i>cost-benefit ratio</i>
<i>better-trained staff</i>	<i>cost-variation index</i>
<i>black-cab driver</i>	<i>ever-increasing number</i>
<i>cast-iron blocks</i>	<i>first-class results</i>
<i>civil-engineering work</i>	<i>four one-year extensions</i>

<i>high-energy physics</i>	<i>on-site hostels</i>
<i>high-precision geodetic metrology</i>	<i>part-time work</i>
<i>high-voltage electrical boards</i>	<i>real-estate investments</i>
<i>ill-equipped team</i>	<i>seven-year-old girl</i>
<i>in-house transport services</i>	<i>third-generation network</i>
<i>labour-intensive industry</i>	<i>three must-know facts</i>
<i>long-standing commitment</i>	<i>time-limited project</i>
<i>long-term plan</i>	<i>up-to-date information</i>
<i>medium-term plan</i>	<i>well-established principle</i>
<i>much-needed resources</i>	<i>world-renowned physicist</i>
<i>multi-technique assistance work</i>	

Note that where a compound expression is not used adjectivally, no hyphen is required (e.g. “in the medium term”).

Moreover, compound expressions used adjectivally are hyphenated before but not after the noun (e.g. “better-trained staff” BUT “the staff are better trained,” see [section 3.f](#)) below).

Hyphens are particularly useful in helping the reader to understand complex expressions, such as:

- “radiation-resistant coil insulation”;
- “cast-resin dry-type power transformers”;
- “modular metal-enclosed 400/230 V switchboards”;
- “computer-aided engineering (CAE) software tools”.

Note, however, that it may be better to omit hyphens from lengthy adjectival expressions if there is no risk of ambiguity (“current 10 gigabits per second circuits”) and better still to avoid them by redrafting.

In expressions such as “high-energy physics”, “particle-physics community” and “civil-engineering work”, where there is no doubt as to meaning, there is a tendency to drop the hyphen. This is particularly true for names of facilities, e.g. the Low Energy Ion Ring (LEIR), the Extra Low ENergy Antiproton ring (ELENA).

d) Pendant hyphens

In series of two or more compound words, pendant hyphens are permissible (e.g. “two-, three- and four-year periods”; “cost- and staff-reduction programme”). It is usually preferable, however, to avoid them by redrafting (e.g. “periods of two, three and four years”) or simply repeating the common base (e.g. “cost-reduction and staff-reduction programme”).

e) Hyphens with units of measurement

Whenever units of measurement are used adjectivally, regardless of whether or not they are abbreviated, hyphens must be used:

the *100-km tunnel*, or *the 100-kilometre tunnel*, but: *the tunnel measures 100 kilometres (or 100 km)*

the 60-m-deep cavern, or *the 60-metre-deep cavern*, but: *the cavern is 60 metres (or 60 m) deep*

f) Cases where no hyphen is used

No hyphen is used, unless omission would give rise to ambiguity or hesitation, when:

i) the first word of a compound adjectival expression is an adverb that ends in “-ly”:

readily available data *partially implemented project*
highly contentious issue

(N.B. An exception generally applies when the phrase is longer than two words, e.g. *poorly-thought-out strategy*.)

ii) the expression is derived from a proper name:

the New York cable infrastructure
Latin American telecommunication operators
Host State media
Member State contributions

iii) the expression consists of a foreign-language expression that is not normally hyphenated:

ad hoc group *per diem allowance* *ex officio member*

(BUT: *laissez-faire policy*).

As noted in [section 3.c](#)), no hyphen is used in compound adjectival expressions used AFTER the noun, i.e.:

<i>better-prepared experts</i> , but:	<i>these experts are better prepared</i>
<i>up-to-date documents</i> , but:	<i>bring the documents up to date</i>
<i>part-time work</i> , but:	<i>application to work part time</i>
<i>real-estate investments</i> , but:	<i>he has invested in real estate</i>
<i>long-term plan</i> , but:	<i>in the long term</i>
<i>a cost-neutral solution</i> , but:	<i>this programme is cost neutral</i>
<i>an in-house engineer</i> , but:	<i>this was designed in house</i>

Furthermore, compound nouns formed from a noun followed by a gerund (e.g. air handling, awareness raising, contact tracing, data taking, decision making, mountain climbing) or a gerund followed by a noun (e.g. cooking class, running shoes) should not be hyphenated unless they are used adjectivally, i.e.:

<i>Good air handling is vital</i>	<i>ten air-handling units were ordered</i>
<i>Awareness raising is key</i>	<i>the awareness-raising campaign</i>
<i>Measures to enhance contact tracing</i>	<i>contact-tracing measures</i>
<i>Data taking will start soon</i>	<i>their data-taking needs are huge</i>
<i>Decision making must be sound</i>	<i>the decision-making process</i>
<i>I love mountain climbing</i>	<i>a mountain-climbing enthusiast</i>
<i>I attend a cooking class</i>	<i>the cooking-class participants</i>
<i>My running shoes are brand new</i>	<i>a running-shoe sale</i>

However, when the compound noun describes a person, it is normally hyphenated. For example, decision-maker, minute-writer, office-holder, policy-maker.

En dashes

a) En dashes to indicate parenthetical content

En dashes can be used as an alternative to brackets or commas to provide additional information that should be read parenthetically. For example:

My cousin – who is getting married next month – lives in Portugal.

The picnic will be held – come rain or shine! – on Thursday afternoon.

b) En dashes for date, time and number spans

The Medium-Term Plan for the period 2021–2026

203rd Council Session, 17–18 June 2021

2.30–5.30 p.m.

pp. 40–45

c) En dashes for scores and results of contests

The match ended in a 2–2 draw

The committee voted 10–1 in favour of the proposal

d) En dashes for directions

A Geneva–London flight takes less than two hours

The north–south railway

e) En dashes to indicate a link between two entities or items

The CERN–ESO Agreement

The CERN–Russia Committee

Quark–gluon plasma

Electron–positron collider

Proton–proton collisions

f) En dashes in compound adjectives

En dashes can be used in **compound adjectives** when at least one of the elements is made up of two or more words, to indicate that all the words are linked together and not just those immediately before and after the dash. Compare the following:

A prize-winning physicist (hyphen)

A Nobel prize–winning physicist (en dash)

Superconductor-coated conductors (hyphen)

High-temperature superconductor–coated conductors (en dash)

However, this is NOT normal CERN usage. The first example would usually be rendered as either “A Nobel prize-winning physicist” or, preferably, “A Nobel-prize-winning physicist”, and the second as “High-temperature-superconductor-coated conductors” (in this case all three hyphens are needed to make it clear that it is the superconductor, not the conductors, that is at a high temperature).

4. PUNCTUATION

Since the reader of this Style Guide is assumed to have a good knowledge of the English language, basic punctuation is not covered in detail.

A good overview of the use of punctuation marks may be found in Appendix 11 of the Concise Oxford Dictionary (eleventh edition, 2006) or on the Oxford Dictionaries website under the [punctuation](#) heading of the grammar and usage section.

a) Use of inverted commas/quotation marks

Inverted commas are mainly used in the following cases:

i) to mark the beginning and end of direct speech (i.e. a speaker's words written down exactly as they were spoken):

- *"That," he said, "is nonsense."*
- *"What time will he arrive?", she asked.*
- *President Nixon declared "I'm not a crook"* (N.B. In this case, no other punctuation, such as a colon or comma before the quotation, should be used);

ii) to mark off a word or phrase that's being discussed, or that's being directly quoted from somewhere else:

- *We need to determine whether the phrase "As a result of circumstances beyond our control" in the document is sufficiently explanatory.*
- *The Prime Minister condemned what he called "simple-minded solutions".*

N.B. Capitalise the first word in quotations, provided that the quoted material is a complete sentence, e.g.:

- *R. W. Emerson said, "The only way to have a friend is to be one."*

Note also that, when the quoted text is a full grammatical sentence that can stand alone, as is the case in the example above, the full stop is placed inside the quotation marks. When the quoted text is an incomplete sentence that cannot stand alone, the full stop comes after the closing quotation mark.

Aside from their obvious use to indicate quotation from a document or a statement and when quoting the names of publications or literary works, inverted commas should be avoided since their use outside these contexts has a very specific ironic meaning, i.e. to imply that something is not what it claims to be. This roughly equates to the meaning of, and is sometimes used in conjunction with, "so-called". This confusion arises because people mistakenly think that by using inverted commas they are underlining what an item or a body is actually called. However, such use can have an unintended effect.

For instance:

- *This "publication" is riddled with errors* implies that the document does not deserve the distinction of being referred to as a publication;

- *The group has developed a “robot” to handle irradiated objects* implies that the item is NOT a robot, whereas in fact it is;
- *This document has been referred to the “LHC Machine Committee”* could imply that the writer does not accept the status of the body concerned;
- *CERN called upon its “experts” to tackle this problem* calls the expertise of the persons involved into question.

However, the following usage would be correct:

- *The “evidence” for this state of matter turned out to be fundamentally flawed.*
- *The “young man” turned out to be as old as Methuselah!*

The expression “known as” can sometimes be a useful way of introducing new concepts to the reader without the suggestion of irony that is associated with inverted commas. This may be illustrated by the following examples:

- *Physicists use a theory known as quantum chromodynamics to describe the actions of quarks.*
- *Physicists use the so-called theory of quantum chromodynamics to describe the actions of quarks.*
- *Physicists use “quantum chromodynamics” to describe the actions of quarks.*

Only the first of these three sentences tells the reader that a new concept is coming without implying that QCD is not a real theory at all.

b) Use of commas

The use of commas in English is prescribed in many style guides and strict rules apply.

As a general rule, subordinate clauses, i.e. those that are not essential to the meaning of the main sentence but provide additional information, require commas.

E.g. “The Higgs boson, which proved extremely elusive for decades, was finally discovered in 2012.”

See the [“Which/That” section in annex 2](#) for more examples.

The use of commas should not be regarded as a matter of taste in English, since commas contribute materially to meaning.

Thus, the Economist Style Guide gives the example of the difference between “Mozart’s 40th symphony, in G minor, ...” (meaning that *this* symphony is written in G minor but the previous 39 may have been in a different key), and “Mozart’s 40th symphony in G minor...” (implying that he wrote 39 other symphonies in the same key).

Here are a few examples from the CERN context where the presence or absence of a comma can fundamentally change the meaning of a sentence.

Compare the following:

1. “Each Member State shall notify the Director-General in writing of the appointment of its representatives who are appointed by the Ministry”

with:

2. “Each Member State shall notify the Director-General in writing of the appointment of its representatives, who are appointed by the Ministry.”

In 1, the Member States need notify the Director-General ONLY where their representatives are appointed by the Ministry.

In 2, the final clause is decoupled from the main clause and its meaning, and represents additional information. However, it renders a specific meaning, namely that ALL representatives are automatically appointed by the relevant Ministry.

Compare also:

1. “The Finance Committee decided to recommend that the Council should approve the document, on the understanding that its provisions would be implemented as soon as possible.”

with:

2. “The Finance Committee decided to recommend the Council to approve the document on the understanding that its provisions would be implemented as soon as possible.”

In the first case, the meaning is that the Finance Committee makes its recommendation assuming that the provisions will be implemented as soon as possible, i.e. it is the understanding of the Finance Committee and not of the Council.

In the second case, the Finance Committee is inviting the Council to take its decision on the assumption that the document’s provisions would be implemented as soon as possible, i.e. the Council must take its decision on this understanding.

c) Serial or Oxford comma

The serial comma (also known as an Oxford comma or Harvard comma) is sometimes used to separate the last two items in a list of at least three items, immediately before the word “and” or “or”. At CERN, we generally do not use it, except where it is needed to avoid ambiguity. Compare the following two sentences:

“I would like to thank my parents, Fabiola Gianotti and Peter Higgs.”

“I would like to thank my parents, Fabiola Gianotti, and Peter Higgs.”

In the second case, the serial comma clarifies that Fabiola Gianotti and Peter Higgs are not your parents.

A serial comma can be particularly useful in longer, more complex lists. For example:

“Three of the recommendations were of particular relevance to CERN, namely support for world-leading ISOL facilities, support for the full exploitation of

existing and emerging facilities, and support for the heavy-ion programme at the LHC, in particular ALICE.”

The serial comma in this case comes after “emerging facilities”.

d) Use of italics

As in many areas of English grammar, there are no hard and fast rules governing the use of italics, and practice tends to vary from one organisation/publisher/newspaper/style guide to another.

- Foreign words and expressions

Foreign words and expressions are often italicised in CERN texts: e.g. *fait accompli*, *force majeure*, *inter alia*, *a posteriori*, *a priori*, *raison d'être*. However, those that may be considered to have been adopted into the English language should be printed in Roman type (e.g. *ad hoc*, *coup d'état*, *cliché*, *communiqué*, *crèche*, *curriculum vitae*, *de facto*, *en masse*, *en route*, *et al.*, *ex officio*, *hors d'oeuvre*, *in situ*, *leitmotiv*, *matinée*, *per capita*, *per se*, *pro rata*, *protégé*, *status quo*, *vice versa*).

The use of italics for foreign words can be particularly useful to make it clear what is being referred to when there is an English word spelled in the same way, e.g. the German *Land* of Baden-Württemberg.

Commonly encountered foreign words and expressions are included in the word list in [annex 3](#), showing whether they are italicised or printed in Roman type in CERN texts.

If in doubt, refer to the Oxford Dictionary for Writers and Editors.

- Quotations

Quotations may be written in italics to make it easier for the reader to distinguish them from the non-quoted part of the text, e.g.:

The general consensus of opinion was that “*the situation is improving and should be resolved by 2013*”.

However, note that this practice is much less common in English than in French.

In italic passages or headings, all words or letters that would normally be in italics should be printed in Roman type, e.g. *The chapter dealing with amour propre was rather long.*

- Titles of programmes, events and awards

The titles of programmes, events and awards, such as the L'Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science programme, Dark Matter Day and the Special Breakthrough Prize in Fundamental Physics, should generally be written in normal title case with no special formatting. However, if there is any risk of confusion with the surrounding sentence, they should be italicised or, if that is technically impossible, for example in a headline, written in quotation marks, e.g.:

Today, we celebrate the *International Day of LGBTQ+ People in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths* at CERN.

The following should generally be written in italics, without inverted commas:

- Titles of publications

Examples: She works for the *Daily Telegraph*

This is a quotation from *The Catcher in the Rye*

The article appeared in *Nature*

N.B. The prefix “the” is a potential source of confusion. If it is part of the title of a book, it should be in italics. In the case of periodicals, it is generally printed in lower case in Roman type, but notable exceptions include *The Times* and *The Economist* as this is the preference of these publications, as well as foreign newspapers such as *Le Monde* and *Die Zeit*.

Titles of chapters of books and articles in periodicals should not generally be italicised. E.g. the famous chapter of *The Natural History of Ireland* entitled “Concerning Snakes”, which reads: “There are no snakes to be found throughout the whole island”.

- Titles of films, plays, operas, poems, works of art, etc.

Examples: Have you seen the latest version of *Far From the Madding Crowd*?

The Geneva Opera staged a version of *Hamlet* last year

The *Mona Lisa* is displayed in the Louvre

- Names of ships, aircraft, etc.

Examples: *HMS Illustrious*

The *Challenger* space shuttle

Names of houses, pubs, restaurants, streets, landmarks, geographical features, etc. should be written in Roman print without quotation marks and without italics (e.g. Swan Cottage, the Red Lion, the Auberge de Cussy, Wall Street, the Trevi Fountain, the Nant d’Avril, Lake Victoria, Mont Blanc). However, if there is any risk of confusion with the surrounding sentence, they should be italicised or, if that is technically impossible, for example in a headline, written in quotation marks.

If a place or landmark is well known in English, such as the Eiffel Tower, it is best to translate it. If a name is better known untranslated, such as the Champs-Élysées, leave it in the original language. Roads on the CERN site are known by their French names: Route Abdus Salam NOT Abdus Salam Road.

See also [section 6.c](#)), which explains when to use italics for the names of organisations.

e) Use of apostrophes

Use of apostrophes is covered by all standard reference books on grammar.

The examples below illustrate possible sources of confusion:

1. *Incorrect: Other CERN’s installations*

Correct: “Other CERN installations” or “CERN’s other installations” (both are correct, but with slightly different meanings)

2. *Incorrect: For the ECFA information*

Correct: For ECFA's information

3. *Incorrect: The ALICE goal is to study the first moments of the Universe after the Big Bang*

Correct: ALICE's goal (or: the goal of ALICE) is to study ...

However, we can say *The ATLAS calorimeter, CERN engineers and Council delegates* – in these cases the proper noun (ATLAS, CERN, the Council) is used like an adjective to describe something or someone that is part of it.

This usage changes the meaning slightly compared with use of the possessive apostrophe: *CERN's engineers* may be interpreted to mean all engineers working at CERN, whereas *CERN engineers* suggests that we are referring to only some of them. For example, we would say: *Several CERN physicists attended a conference on women in science, BUT CERN's physicists [i.e. all of them] conduct cutting-edge research.*

4. *Incorrect: User's Office and Users' Office*

Correct: Users Office (the office is FOR users but does not belong to them)

5. No apostrophe should be used for plurals of acronyms.

Incorrect: MTP's, ILO's, VDU's, DPO's, MPA's, MPE's, etc.

Correct: MTPs, ILOs, VDUs, DPOs, MPAs and MPEs

However, acronyms ending in "s", such as GLIMOS, are invariable.

6. *Incorrect: In the 1970's*

Correct: In the 1970s

7. *Its* is the possessive of *it*, *it's* is the abbreviated form of *it is*.

f) Lists with bullet points

There is no hard and fast rule about what kind of punctuation mark should appear at the end of each item in a bullet-pointed list. Items that are full sentences usually start with a capital letter and end with a full stop, while items that are sentence fragments usually start with a lower-case letter and can end with a comma, a semi-colon or no punctuation at all. The important thing is that you choose one system and use it consistently throughout your document.

5. NUMBERS

a) General rule¹

Numbers from one to ten should be spelled out in full in the body of the text:

“The conference, attended by 155 delegates, adopted two resolutions, eight recommendations and ten reports.”

In CERN’s scientific context, % tends to be used in preference to *per cent* and units in general are expressed in their abbreviated form, e.g. GeV, TeV, fb⁻¹, MCHF, kCHF.

b) Spelling

A hyphen is used when a number above 20 is spelled out, and also between the numerator and denominator of spelled-out fractions (unless the denominator is already hyphenated):

<i>twenty-three</i>	<i>two hundred and sixty-eight</i>
<i>two-thirds</i>	<i>two twenty-sixths</i>

Where numbers are used adjectivally, hyphens should be used throughout:

Hundred-and-thirty-fifth meeting

c) Exceptions and specific cases

Figures should always be used before *million* and *billion*, and for dates and times of day, percentages, ratios, units of currency or measurement, page references, serial numbers, etc.:

<i>3 million</i>	<i>6 June 1984</i>	<i>2.00 p.m.</i>
<i>10 per cent/10%</i>	<i>400 CHF</i>	<i>3 km</i>
<i>7 MHz</i>	<i>1 inverse femtobarn/1 fb⁻¹</i>	
<i>page 5</i>	<i>chapter 4</i>	
<i>figure 2</i>	<i>example 6</i>	

Note the following exceptions:

- A number that forms the first word of a sentence should be spelled out regardless of the above rules (e.g. “Two hundred and eighty-five courses were given in 1998”). Ugly examples can usually be avoided by redrafting (e.g. “The year 1980 was one of solid achievement” NOT “Nineteen eighty was a year ...”).

¹ This general rule applies to legal, formal, literary and narrative texts. In scientific, technical and statistical texts, figures are used almost exclusively.

- Numbers preceding units of currency or measurement that are obviously intended to be approximate or occur in non-technical contexts can be spelled out.

Numbers consisting of up to four figures do not take a comma or a space (e.g. *6590 kHz*, *1500 assignments*).

Values in excess of four figures do not usually need to be written out in full; use the following form in the case of round millions or billions or those with up to two decimal places: *27 million* (not *27 000 000*), *4.5 MCHF* (not *4 500 000 CHF*), *23.03 million lines* (not *23 030 000 lines*) *6.5 billion* (not *6 500 000 000*). Otherwise, the figure should be written out in full with non-breaking spaces (not commas) between each three digits, e.g. *3 426 000*, *2 203 750*.

N.B. Commas are often seen in English as thousands separators in large numbers. However, spaces are preferred to avoid confusion with languages in which a decimal point is denoted by a comma and periods are used as thousands separators. Avoiding commas also facilitates copying, pasting and importing of electronic files containing tables.

The word *billion* is now accepted in both American and British usage as meaning *1000 million*. The word *trillion* is best avoided as being unclear; use instead *1000 billion*.

Dates are written in the following format: *Monday, 17 January 2011*. N.B. The suffixes *st*, *nd*, *rd* and *th* are not used.

Care must be taken when abbreviating dates, since expressions such as *02/10/94* can be ambiguous, meaning *2 October 1994* to a British reader and *10 February 1994* to a US reader.

Spell out centuries (e.g. *the twentieth century*; *the mid-nineteenth century*), but use the following forms when referring to decades, without an apostrophe in either case: *in the early twenties*, *in the late 1980s*.

In general, times of the day should be expressed using the 12-hour system as follows: *9.00 a.m.*, *noon*, *1.15 p.m.*, *3.00 p.m.*, *9.05 p.m.* (not *9.5 p.m.*), *midnight*. For event announcements, e.g. in the Bulletin or on the website, start and end times on the hour can be written in the “5 p.m.” format.

Times of the day expressed in four figures, using the 24-hour system, should be written as follows: *21.00* (not *21:00 hours* or *21h00* or *2100*).

For periods or ranges, either an en dash or “from ... to ...” may be used, but not a combination of the two:

1914–18

1994–1998

6–10 May 1996

from 1914 to 1918

from 1994 to 1998

from 6 to 10 May 1996

but NOT *from 6–10 May 1996*.

d) Decimals and fractions

Decimal fractions below unity should be preceded by a zero, both in tables, figures, etc., and in the text, e.g. *0.5%*.

Vulgar fractions below unity should be spelled out if figures are not required by the rules set out above and if the resulting text is not unduly cumbersome:

one-tenth, one twenty-fifth, one and a half, two-thirds

but

3½ inches, 19 17/52

It is often convenient to convert vulgar fractions into decimals:

0.1, 0.04, 1.5, 8.75

e) Ordinals

Ordinal numbers are spelled out up to and including *tenth*; figures are used from *11th* onwards, except when reference is made to centuries:

Eighth meeting, 14th meeting, 171st meeting

The ninth reason is that...

In the nineteenth century...

For simplicity, the ordinal suffix (i.e. *st*, *nd*, *rd* or *th*) is written in normal type on the line, and not as a superscript (overriding the autocorrect function of Microsoft Word).

f) Series of numbers to which different rules apply

When two or more numbers to which different rules apply occur in a series, referring to the same thing, the rule applying to the higher or highest number should apply to all (e.g. “14, previously 9” not “14, previously nine”).

g) Two numbers occurring together

When two numbers occur together, they should be expressed in different styles, according to the nature of the elements and the context, in the interests of readability (e.g. “twenty 15-cent stamps”; “120 fifteen-cent stamps”; “five 15-year-old boys”; “20 three-year-old girls”; “12 ten-foot poles”).

6. PROPER NAMES

a) Names of countries and observers

In documentation for the Council and its committees, and for almost all other purposes, the short country names in the following tables are used. The long forms are used only in the most formal contexts, such as in accession agreements signed between new Member States and CERN.

The information below is correct as of the date of publication of this edition of the Style Guide. See [here](#) for an up-to-date list.

Member States

Short country name	Long country name	Adjective
Austria	Republic of Austria (the)	Austrian
Belgium	Kingdom of Belgium (the)	Belgian
Bulgaria	Republic of Bulgaria (the)	Bulgarian
Czech Republic (the)	Czech Republic (the)	Czech
Denmark	Kingdom of Denmark (the)	Danish
Finland	Republic of Finland (the)	Finnish
France	French Republic (the)	French
Germany	Federal Republic of Germany (the)	German
Greece	Hellenic Republic (the)	Greek
Hungary	Hungary	Hungarian
Israel	State of Israel (the)	Israeli
Italy	Republic of Italy (the)	Italian
Netherlands (the)	Kingdom of the Netherlands (the)	Dutch/Netherlands
Norway	Kingdom of Norway (the)	Norwegian
Poland	Republic of Poland (the)	Polish
Portugal	Portuguese Republic (the)	Portuguese
Romania	Romania	Romanian
Serbia	Republic of Serbia (the)	Serbian
Slovakia	Slovak Republic (the)	Slovak

Spain	Kingdom of Spain (the)	Spanish
Sweden	Kingdom of Sweden (the)	Swedish
Switzerland	Swiss Confederation (the)	Swiss
United Kingdom (the), UK (the)	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (the)	British/United Kingdom/UK

Associate Member States in the pre-stage to Membership

Short country name	Long country name	Adjective
Cyprus	Republic of Cyprus (the)	Cypriot
Estonia	Republic of Estonia (the)	Estonian
Slovenia	Republic of Slovenia (the)	Slovene

Associate Member States

Short country name	Long country name	Adjective
Croatia	Republic of Croatia (the)	Croatian
India	Republic of India (the)	Indian
Latvia	Republic of Latvia (the)	Latvian
Lithuania	Republic of Lithuania (the)	Lithuanian
Pakistan	Islamic Republic of Pakistan (the)	Pakistan ²
Türkiye ³	Republic of Türkiye (the)	Turkish
Ukraine	Ukraine	Ukrainian

Observer States

Short country name	Long country name	Adjective
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² The term "Pakistani" should be used as a proper noun only.

³ When capitalised, the name of the country should be written as TÜRKİYE, as "İ" is a distinct letter in the Turkish alphabet.

Japan	Japan	Japanese
Russian Federation (the) ⁴	Russian Federation (the)	of the Russian Federation/Russian
United States (of America) (the), US (the), USA (the)	United States of America (the)	United States/US

Other Observers

European Union (the) ⁵
JINR ⁶
UNESCO

For all other countries, refer to the UNHQ country entries in [UNTERM](#).

In lists of countries in official documents, the alphabetical order must be followed, which means that the order will be different in English and French.

For countries whose names are preceded by the definite article in running text (e.g. “the Netherlands” or “the United Kingdom”), the article should normally be omitted from tables, headings and lists (other than lists in running text).

As noted in [section 2.f](#)) on the formation of plurals, names of all countries are regarded as singular nouns of neuter gender (e.g. “the United States *has* (not *have*) *its* (not *their*) own systems”).

b) Other geographical names

Geographical names should normally be spelled according to the official usage of the country concerned, where there exists an official local spelling in letters of the Roman alphabet (e.g. Basel, Beijing, Bern, Lyon, Marseille, Mumbai, Strasbourg).

However, where a well-established English conventional form exists that is different from the official usage of the country concerned, it should be used (e.g. Athens, Belgrade, Brussels, Copenhagen, Cracow, Florence, Geneva, Kiev, Lisbon, Milan, Moscow, Munich, Prague, Rome, The Hague, Tokyo, Turin, Venice, Vienna, Warsaw, Zurich).

⁴ The Observer status of the Russian Federation is suspended in accordance with the CERN Council Resolution of 8 March 2022.

⁵ Currently, the European Union is represented by the European Commission at Open meetings of the CERN Council.

⁶ The Observer status of JINR is suspended in accordance with the CERN Council Resolution of 25 March 2022.

c) Names of organisations

When an organisation or entity has English as one of its official or working languages, the English spelling and hyphenation that it uses for its own name and for the titles of its officials should be followed, even if it conflicts with standard CERN usage (e.g. Computer Research Center of Moscow State University).

Similarly, when citing the names of organisations, organs and institutions of an English-speaking country, the national usage should be followed, even if it conflicts with standard CERN usage (e.g. Berkeley Center for Theoretical Physics). It should be followed also for the titles of officials and styles of address (e.g. Ministry of Defence (UK), Ministry of Defense (US)).

When citing such names in a foreign language, in running text (as opposed to a list), the name should appear in italics, e.g. “The thermometer was constructed by the *Institut de Física Corpuscular* in Valencia, Spain”.

d) Names of bodies, facilities and conferences

Note that we write:

- “the Council” and not simply “Council”;
- “the CERN Pension Fund” (BUT “Swiss pension funds”);
- “the Pension Fund Governing Board”, which may be abbreviated to “the PFGB”⁷;
- “the Standing *Concertation* Committee” (the word “*concertation*” is italicised because it is a French term);
- “International Conference on High Energy Physics” (ICHEP) (i.e. all capitalised).

e) Names of CERN’s main legal instruments

The names of CERN’s main legal instruments should be written as follows:

- the CERN Convention;
- the Protocol on Privileges and Immunities;
- the Financial Rules and Implementing Regulations;
- the Staff Rules and Regulations;
- the Status Agreement (sometimes referred to as the “Headquarters Agreement”).

f) Forms of address and titles

In the formal context of minutes in particular, the British convention for academic titles, i.e. *Dr* and *Professor*, is used before surnames. *Professor* is not abbreviated. Specific national conventions, such as *Dr.-Ing.*, or *Lic.*, are not used.

Titles such as *H.E.* (for a minister/ambassador), *H.R.H.* (royalty), *Rev.* (clergy), *Lord* or *Sir* must be used.

⁷ See [annex 4](#) for a list of CERN acronyms.

In all other cases, names are prefaced by *Mr* or *Ms* (other titles, such as *Mrs*, *Miss*, *Mx*⁸ and *Ind.*⁹ may be used where the person concerned specifically requests to be thus referred to, see [section 9](#) on non-discriminatory language).

There is no full stop after *Dr*, *Mr*, *Mrs*, *Ms* and *Mx*.

Use of ministerial titles tends to differ according to context:

- “H.E. Mr Smith” (minutes);
- “Mr Smith, Minister for Education and Science” (minutes and formal texts);
- “Minister for Education and Science, George Smith” (informal usage in journalistic articles).

⁸ Mx is a title commonly used by non-binary people.

⁹ Ind. is a gender-inclusive title short for “Individual”.

7. CAPITALISATION

a) General rule

A variety of different practices can be found in the use of upper and lower case in English, ranging from systematic use of capitals, e.g. certain newspapers' headlines, to the current fashion to even drop them altogether. Hard and fast rules are therefore difficult to lay down, but this section contains some guidelines for use of upper and lower case in official CERN documents.

A simple guiding rule is to use:

- initial capitals for the specific;
- lower case for the generic;
- lower case wherever there is any doubt.

The sections below illustrate this rule (and exceptions to it) and give examples of CERN usage.

b) Official titles

Only in specific references, in the singular, should initial capital letters be used for the official titles of persons, councils, committees, secretariats, organisations, institutions, political entities, working groups and the like, and for the official titles of treaties and international conventions.

Examples:

General (lower case)	Specific (initial caps)
Some conferences adopt more resolutions and recommendations than others.	Pursuant to the Council Resolution concerning the Admission of xxx as Associate Member State in the pre-stage to Membership at CERN...
World high-energy physics conferences consider input from study groups and working parties, on the basis of recommendations from previous workshops.	The Working Group on CERN Purchasing Rules and Procedures decided...
A drafting group and seven working groups were set up by the different committees.	As expected, the HR department's Team 7 completed its work on time, and the document was submitted to TREF via the Standing <i>Concertation</i> Committee.
Replies from administrations will be processed by a special task force. Five governments have responded to date.	The Administration of France wishes to participate, on behalf of the French Government, in the second meeting of the Task Force on Gender Issues.
Several ministers asked for the action plan and work programme by the Wednesday following the symposium, but the rapporteurs said that time was too short to compile data for a handbook.	The Minister of Foreign Affairs of xxx, referring to article XVI of the CERN Convention, said that under the terms of the Convention and the annexed Financial Protocol, the instruments of

	ratification must be deposited with the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.
The chairs of committees can co-opt experts as rapporteurs of ad hoc groups.	The Chair of the Finance Committee invited the Chair of the Industrial Liaison Officers Forum to conduct a survey of procurement rules in the Member States (BUT the CERN Procurement Rules).

Upper case should be used for specific committees, working groups and other bodies and should be maintained in all instances throughout a text, even when the name is subsequently abbreviated. This is particularly important where a clear distinction needs to be made between a specific body and other bodies generically referred to in the same text (as in the second example below).

Examples:

- “The Working Group on Procurement Policy and Procedures met on six occasions during the year. At its February meeting, the Working Group agreed...”
- “The Scientific Policy Committee discussed whether to recommend the project to the Council for approval. With that aim in mind, the Committee called upon national working groups, scientific committees and other research-related bodies in the Member States to conduct surveys of user interest in the project.”

c) References to documents and parts thereof

Capital letters should not be used when referring to documents, texts and publications unless a specific title is quoted. Examples:

General (lower case)	Specific (initial caps)
The Council has adopted many resolutions over the years.	The Council Resolution on the 2020 update of the European Strategy for Particle Physics was adopted in June 2020.
Members of the personnel must familiarise themselves with all applicable rules and regulations.	Members of the personnel must familiarise themselves with the Staff Rules and Regulations.
Comprehensive reports are issued by the relevant working groups.	The Annual Progress Report for 2020 was presented to the Scientific Policy Committee.
The CERN Management is developing a policy on space management.	The Open Science Policy was adopted in 2022.

The following words relating to parts of a document are not capitalised in either general or specific usage: “annex”, “article”, “chapter”, “figure”, “paragraph”,

“section” and “table”. The words “paragraph” and “section” are sometimes replaced by the § sign – or §§ for plural – followed by a space, e.g. § 2.1, §§ 2.1-3.1.

Similarly, the word “page” is not capitalised. References to page numbers should be used with caution when dealing with texts printed in different language versions without parallel pagination.

d) Capitalised titles

When a title (e.g. of a specific conference or entity) has to be capitalised under the above rules, all the words it comprises should have initial capitals, except for the definite and indefinite articles, conjunctions and prepositions.

Note that we capitalise “Nobel Prize” when referring to a specific one, e.g. “She won the Nobel Prize in Physics”, but not when it is used in a more generic sense with the indefinite article, e.g. “He won a Nobel prize” (“Nobel” is still capitalised because the prize is named after Alfred Nobel).

e) Capitalisation of quotations

As noted in [section 4.a](#)) on punctuation, the first word in quotations should be capitalised, provided that the quoted material is a complete sentence, e.g.:

R. W. Emerson said, “The only way to have a friend is to be one.”

f) Capitalisation of astronomical objects

The names of the **planets** should be always be capitalised (e.g. Jupiter, Mars, Saturn).

Earth should be capitalised like any other planet, except in idioms (“Where on earth is it?”, “a down-to-earth approach to the subject”) and when we are referring to our world from a surface perspective (“He travelled to the four corners of the earth”; “Shale gas is extracted from beneath the surface of the earth through a process called fracking”) or to its soil (“The earth here is full of clay”).

N.B. “Earth,” when used as the name of the planet, is not preceded by the definite article (“Earth is a planet in the Solar System”), in the same way as you would not write “the Jupiter” or “the Mars.”

The terms **Universe**, **Sun**, **Moon** and **Solar System** should be capitalised when used in an astronomical context to refer to our own entities, but otherwise written in lower case. For example, “The Moon orbits our planet roughly every 28 days” but “Jupiter’s moons”; “The Sun is just one of many stars”, but “Some known exoplanets have two suns”.

However, in non-technical texts and in idioms, “sun” and moon” are usually written in lower case. For example, “She shielded her eyes from the sun”; “There’s a full moon tonight”; “Once in a blue moon”.

For other astronomical bodies and phenomena, proper names should be capitalised (Orion’s Belt, the North Star, Ursa Major, the Great Bear), but not the generic word that forms part of the name: the Virgo cluster; the Milky Way galaxy;

the Orion constellation; the asteroid Geographos; the Allende meteorite; Halley's comet.

Exceptions: the Horsehead Nebula, aurora borealis, aurora australis, the northern lights.

g) Always capitalised

The following are always capitalised at CERN:

- the European Organization for Nuclear Research; the Organization;
- the Council;
- the CERN Convention and other key institutional documents, such as the Status Agreements with France and Switzerland;
- Member State (BUT non-Member State);
- Associate Member State;
- Host State(s);
- Observer State, the Observers;
- the Director-General, the Director for Accelerators and Technology, the Head of the Engineering department, etc.;
- the CERN Management (BUT staff are answerable to their line management);
- the Pension Fund, the Pension Fund Governing Board, the Research Board;
- the Staff Rules and Regulations, the Financial Rules and Implementing Regulations, Administrative/Operational Circular No. 1 (BUT "these matters will be covered in an administrative or operational circular");
- the President of Council, the Vice-President of Council, the President's Group, the Council Secretariat;
- the External Auditors, the Specialised Auditor, the Actuary;
- the Financial Statements, the Accounts, the Budget of the Organization;
- points of the LHC ring, e.g. Point 1;
- the Large Hadron Collider, the Low Energy Ion Ring (LEIR), the Compact Linear Collider (BUT linear collider technology), Tier 0 computing centre;
- Building 501, the Main Building, the Main Auditorium, the Reception Building, Gate A, Restaurant No. 1, the CERN Control Centre (CCC), etc.

h) Not capitalised

General concepts and technologies do NOT require a capital letter, e.g. *recruitment, safety, physics, high-energy physics, priorities, social protection, management, collimation, science, research, environmental protection, etc.*

However, note that the CERN HSE unit capitalises the word "Safety" whenever it is used as a generic term covering health and safety and the protection of the environment.

The following should not be capitalised, except where grammar so requires:

- delegate, delegation;
- a non-governmental organisation (NGO);
- information technology (IT), except for the name of the department;
- departmental secretariat(s), human resources advisers (i.e. when a term is common to several entities or persons, rather than being a single identifiable unit or function such as the Salaries Office or the Ombud);
- the management of a project, the CMS management (exception: the CERN Management, also referred to as “the Management”);
- members of the personnel, staff members, fellows, apprentices, visiting scientists, guest professors, project associates, students, users, etc. (as per the Staff Rules and Regulations);
- sector: the Accelerators and Technology sector, the Research and Computing sector, the Finance and Human Resources sector;
- department: the Physics department, the Human Resources department, etc.;
- group: the Accelerators and Beam Physics group, the Treasury Processes and Reporting group, the Radiation Protection group, etc.;
- section: the Logistics section, the Site Services section, etc.;
- service: the Internal Audit service, the Cards service, the Installation service, the Procurement service, the Mobility service, etc. (exceptions: the Legal Service and the Medical Service, because the preceding word is an adjective);
- unit: the HSE unit;
- department head, group leader, section leader, project leader (unless referring to a specific person’s job title, e.g. the Head of the Engineering department);
- programme: the Summer Student programme, the Alumni programme, the Diversity & Inclusion programme;
- club: the Fitness club, the Games club, the Ski club;
- currencies, e.g. *the Swiss franc*, *the pound sterling*, *the euro*, *the US dollar*, *the yen*, etc. (see also [section 8.g](#)) on currency units);
- the seasons (spring, summer, autumn, winter).

N.B. The existence of an abbreviation coined for convenience does not imply that the full term needs to be capitalised. Thus, items such as *programmable logic controllers* (PLCs), *uninterruptible power supplies* (UPSs), *unidentified falling objects* (UFOs), *single-event upsets* (SEUs), *gas electron multipliers* (GEMs), etc., do not require initial capitals.

By the same token, the names of bodies and events take normal title case, i.e. all words capitalised except articles, prepositions and conjunctions, regardless of any acronym deriving from them. For example, the full name of the WOMAD festival is written as follows: World of Music, Arts and Dance. Although “O” appears in the acronym, the “of” is not capitalised when the full name is spelled out.

Similarly, the names of experiments take normal title case, regardless of which letters are used to form the acronym. So COMPASS is written as Common (not COmmon) Muon and Proton Apparatus for Structure and Spectroscopy, and CLOUD as Cosmics Leaving Outdoor (not OUtdoor) Droplets. A good example of why we do this is the ATTRACT programme, which stands for breAkThrough innovaTion pRogrAmme for deteCtor / infrAstructure eCosysTem!

8. ABBREVIATIONS

a) General principles

In a scientific research establishment such as CERN, the extensive use of abbreviations (acronyms¹⁰ and initialisms¹¹) for sometimes complex technical ideas, procedures, facilities, technologies or phenomena is to be expected and is desirable. For instance, CERN's facilities are invariably abbreviated, e.g. *PS*, *SPS*, *LHC*, *Linac*, *AD*, *n_TOF*, *ISOLDE*, *HIE-ISOLDE*, *CNGS*, *ALARA*, *ELENA*, etc. If they are likely to be unfamiliar or are long-term future projects, it may be helpful to the target reader to accompany the abbreviation with the full title, e.g. "SPL (Superconducting Proton Linac)", "ILC (International Linear Collider)", "HiLumi or HL-LHC (High-Luminosity LHC)".

Abbreviations are used to save space and to avoid distracting the reader with the repeated spelling-out of long words and phrases. Anything that would be ambiguous or puzzling if abbreviated should, however, be spelled out.

Thus, two-letter abbreviations, which are often highly ambiguous, should generally be avoided (e.g. *MS* could mean *mobile service*, *mobile station*, *maritime station*, etc.), unless the target audience is familiar with them or it is otherwise clear from the context what they denote.

However, abbreviations are sometimes introduced purely for convenience in a given document without being generally recognised acronyms or initialisms. These should not appear in the title and must be identified on first appearance in the text (and separately in the abstract/cover page if used there). This is best done by giving the words in full, followed by the abbreviation in brackets.

With abbreviations of a more general nature, a decision has to be made – depending on the type of document and the intended readership – as to whether they fall into class a) or class b) below:

- a) Abbreviations that the average reader of the text may not be expected to know. These should be treated as described above.
- b) Abbreviations that the average reader of the text can reasonably be expected to know. These may be used without explanation.

As an example, the abbreviations "MTP" (Medium-Term Plan) and "CVI" (cost-variation index) would fall into category b) in a document intended for the Finance Committee, but would come under a) in a general article on CERN's financial procedures intended for the general reader.

Similarly, the abbreviations "SEU" (single-event upset) and "UFO" (unidentified falling object) would fall into category b) in a document intended for the CERN Research Board, but would come under a) in a document intended for the Finance Committee and the CERN Council.

Thus, while abbreviations for new or longer-term projects such as the HL-LHC are commonly used in scientific reports, this future upgrade of the LHC should be

¹⁰ An acronym is an abbreviation that can be pronounced as a word, e.g. CERN, ATLAS, ALICE, EIROForum, TREF.

¹¹ An initialism is an abbreviation that is pronounced one letter at a time, e.g. CVI, MTP, UFO.

referred to in full (“High-Luminosity LHC”) in a text intended for a non-scientific audience, such as national funding agencies.

If a number of unfamiliar abbreviations are to be used extensively in a long document, it is a good idea to provide a separate list of abbreviations at the beginning or end of the text or insert hyperlinks.

Where space is an important consideration, as in tables and figures, abbreviations should be used extensively, with explanations provided, if necessary, in a footnote or at the end of a figure caption, e.g. “DDU price” (delivered duty unpaid) in award-of-contract proposal documents for the Finance Committee.

Commonly recognised abbreviations of organisations and institutions, such as *CERN*, *INFN*, *ITER*, *CEA*, *DESY*, *RAL*, etc., can be used in formal official texts such as resolutions, agreements, etc. However, the names should be written out in full at the beginning of the text and in the title. E.g. “Agreement between the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) on the one hand, and the Joint Institute for Nuclear Research (JINR) on the other hand”. Other abbreviations should generally be avoided in formal texts of this nature.

N.B. Some abbreviated concepts are now so familiar that they do not need spelling out in full, even in a formal context, e.g. *BBC*, *DVD*, *FAQ*, *FBI*, *R&D*, *UN*, *VIP*.

A list of abbreviations and acronyms commonly used at CERN is given in [annex 4](#).

b) Units of measurement

Abbreviations of units of measurement are commonly used in all scientific texts as well as in official documentation for the Council and its Committees, without the need for an explanation. Common examples:

27 km

55 mm

2.7 K

-271.3 °C

5 fb⁻¹

cm²

14 TeV

125 GeV

10³⁵ cm⁻²s⁻¹

200 MCHF

100 kCHF

60 kg

Note that a space should be inserted before the degree symbol in temperatures, as for all units of measurement (5 m, 100 kg, etc.), but not for other uses of the

degree symbol, such as 40° north or a 90° angle. As in the above list, temperatures in kelvin are written without a degree symbol.

c) Plurals

The plural of a fully capitalised abbreviation (where such usage cannot be avoided) is formed by adding a lower case “s” **without an apostrophe**, e.g. *LEDs* (not *LED’s* or *LEDS*), *HRAs*, *ILOs*. See also [section 2.f](#)).

d) Use of the definite article

The general policy followed at CERN is to omit the definite article before abbreviations identifying organisations, bodies or committees that can be pronounced as words, e.g. CERN (NOT the CERN), TREF, ECFA, ICFA, etc., but: *the* PFGB, *the* IC, *the* UN, *the* SCC, *the* SPC. Hence also “the Chair of TREF”, but “the Chair of *the* PFGB”.

Notable exceptions to this rule, based on common usage, include *the* CHIS, as well as collaborations, where we omit the definite article before CMS, LHCb and WLCG (this also ensures consistency with ATLAS, ALICE, ISOLDE, etc.). However, we speak of “*the* FCC” and therefore “*the* FCC-ee”, “*the* FCC-hh”, etc.

e) Punctuation

A full stop is normally used at the end of an abbreviated word when the final letter of the abbreviation is not the same as the final letter of the complete word (e.g. *Corp.*). In most cases, there should be no full stop at the end of an abbreviation when the final letter of the abbreviation is the same as the final letter of the complete word (e.g. *Ltd*). Thus, there is no full stop after *Mr*, or after the plurals of the following:

Ref. [1]	but	Refs [1, 2]
Fig. 1	but	Figs 3 and 4
Vol. 1	but	Vols 7-9
Eq. (5)	but	Eqs (5, 6)

Note the following forms, however:

p. 1, pp. 1-9

f) Use of the ampersand

The ampersand (&) should preferably be avoided, except in the case of specific abbreviations, such as R&D, official titles, such as the CERN & Society Foundation and the Diversity & Inclusion programme, and where space is limited, such as in tables.

g) Abbreviation of dates and times

The accepted abbreviation of the names of the months is the first three letters followed by a full stop, except for May, June and July, which should not generally be abbreviated.

The abbreviations for the days of the week are:

Mon. Tues. Wed. Thurs. Fri. Sat. Sun.

However, in a figure or table where all the days of the week appear in sequence, they may be written: M T W T F S S.

h) Currency units

Authors of official CERN documents are encouraged to adhere to ISO Standard 4217-1995, which takes the form of a separate three-letter code for each currency. However, this practice should be avoided in the specific case of Bulletin articles and press releases.

A list of the ISO codes can be found [here](#).

Some currencies frequently referred to in CERN texts are given below:

CHF: Swiss franc(s)

EUR: euro(s)

GBP: United Kingdom pound(s) sterling

JPY: Japanese yen

USD: United States dollar(s)

ISO codes should be written after the amount, e.g. 500 CHF (*not* CHF 500). They can be combined with M or B to denote million/billion, e.g. 50 MJPY (50 million Japanese yen), 5 BEUR (5 billion euros).

N.B. See [section 7](#) on capitalisation for how to write the names of currencies in full.

In less formal contexts, single-character currency symbols may be used **before** the number, e.g.:

€10

£62.90

¥82 million

However, in cases where multiple currencies use the same symbol (e.g. \$ could represent US/Canadian/Australian dollars), it is preferable to use the ISO code or write out the currency name in full.

i) CERN structure

The official abbreviations of the different structural units of CERN appear at the top of the [CERN directory](#). Departments should normally be referred to in full in formal texts, e.g. “the Human Resources department”, “the Theoretical Physics department”, etc., but for internal communication purposes, these can be abbreviated to “the HR department”, “the TH department”, etc. (N.B. always preceded by the definite article). In very informal communications such as memos between department heads, departments are sometimes referred to merely by their abbreviation (e.g. HR, TH).

9. INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

a) General guidelines

In the preamble to its Staff Rules and Regulations, CERN reaffirms equality of treatment as one of the basic principles of its personnel policy and commits to not discriminating between members of its personnel, in particular on account of nationality, gender, age, profession, beliefs, sexual orientation or disability. In this spirit of equality, authors drafting documents on behalf of CERN should take care to avoid any discriminatory language that could cause offence, show bias, exclude certain groups of people or serve to reinforce stereotypes. In particular, authors should adhere to the following guidelines for inclusive writing:

- Gender-inclusive job titles such as “chair”, “spokesperson”, “firefighter”, etc. should always be used, irrespective of the gender of the person concerned, in preference to “chairman”, “spokesman”, “fireman”, etc. By the same token, the title of CERN’s mediator in personnel disputes is the “Ombud”. Naturally, the appropriate pronoun should still be used when referring to a specific person whose gender is identifiable (e.g. “The Chair wished to convey **her** thanks to...”).

Most job titles using the feminine suffix “-ess” (e.g. “manageress”, “sculptress”, “mayoress”) are rarely seen or heard in English-speaking societies nowadays. Exceptions are “waitress” and “hostess”, but the non-gender-specific alternatives (“waiter”/“server” and “host”) are preferred. Similarly, female comedians and actors no longer need to be identified as “comediennes” and “actresses”, and both “barmen” and “barmaids” can be referred to as “bar staff”. However, royal or noble titles bearing a gendered suffix, such as “princess”, “duchess” and “baroness”, are still used.

- Where alternatives exist, general terms containing the prefix or suffix “man” should be avoided. For example, “manpower” can often be replaced with “human resources”, “personnel” or “workforce”, and “mankind” can be replaced with “humanity” or “humankind”. Similarly, phrases such as “the man in the street” can easily be replaced with more inclusive phrases like “the average person” or “the general public”.
- Specify an individual’s gender only if it is relevant in the context. For example, it is not usually necessary to refer to a “lady doctor”, a “female scientist” or a “male secretary”; they are simply doctors, scientists or secretaries. In occasional cases, however, such as an outreach text about initiatives to promote women in science, it may be appropriate to draw attention to the gender of key individuals.
- To avoid assumptions about gender, sexual orientation or marital status, neutral terms such as “spouse” or “partner” rather than “wife” or “husband” should be used. For example, by saying “Visiting research scientists often bring their partners and children with them”, we make no assumptions about any of these aspects.
- Just as “Mr” makes no reference to a man’s marital status, the neutral title “Ms” is to be used for women in preference to “Mrs” or “Miss”, unless the woman in question specifically requests otherwise. If people prefer to use non-binary titles (e.g. Mx, Ind.) and pronouns (e.g. they), their wishes

should be respected.¹² Of course, academic titles such as “Dr” and “Professor” should be used for all genders where applicable (see [section 6.f](#) on forms of address and titles”).

- Northern hemisphere bias: while CERN is originally a European organisation and its facilities are located in the Geneva area, it is expanding to encompass countries outside Europe and in the southern hemisphere and it collaborates with institutes and facilities around the world. In addition, events in the particle physics community have a global reach. As the designations of the seasons relate to different times of the year in the northern and southern hemispheres, they should be used with care. While their use is still acceptable when the location is specific and clear (e.g. “During the winter months, energy consumption from heating CERN’s buildings increases.”), more general statements should avoid referring to the seasons (e.g. “The conference will be held in spring 2023” should be altered to “The conference will be held in early 2023/the first quarter of 2023/March 2023”).

b) Gender bias and pronouns

Personal pronouns and possessive adjectives are the most frequently encountered problem when writing gender-inclusive texts in English. It is no longer considered appropriate to use the masculine forms “he”, “his”, “him” and “himself” to refer to a person whose gender is not known; a more inclusive solution should be sought. Dual forms such as “he or she”, “his/her” and “s/he” are not inclusive and should be avoided by rephrasing in any one of a number of ways:

- Use a plural form

Example 1

AVOID “**A member** of the personnel shall conduct **himself** with due regard to the interests and proper functioning of the Organization.”

USE “**Members** of the personnel shall conduct **themselves** with due regard to the interests and proper functioning of the Organization.”

Example 2

AVOID “**A member** of the personnel shall have access to **his** personal administrative **file**.”

USE “**Members** of the personnel shall have access to **their** personal administrative **files**.”

- Replace the personal pronoun or possessive adjective with an article

Example 1

AVOID “The trainee is often the best judge of **his** training”

¹² A wide range of resources are available online, such as the [Conscious Style Guide](#), the [Diversity Style Guide](#), the UK government’s [Guide to Gender-Neutral Drafting](#) and the [NHS Content Style Guide](#), offering more guidance on gender-inclusive pronouns and other related issues.

USE “The trainee is often the best judge of **the** training.”

Example 2

AVOID “When the staff member creates a request, it is forwarded to **his** supervisor for approval.”

USE “When the staff member creates a request, it is forwarded to **the** supervisor for approval.

- Omit the pronoun altogether

Example 1

AVOID “The FGSO for an experiment is appointed by the head of the host department **and he/she is** accountable to the (LEX)GLIMOS.”

USE “The FGSO for an experiment is appointed by the head of the host department **and is** accountable to the (LEX)GLIMOS.”

Example 2

AVOID “The person who has been granted access must bring ID and a printed copy of the e-mail confirming **his/her** access authorisation to the CERN site.”

USE “The person who has been granted access must bring ID and a printed copy of the e-mail **confirming access authorisation** to the CERN site.

- Merge sentences to avoid the need to repeat the subject

Example 1

AVOID “The Complex Manager is appointed by the Director-General. **He ensures** the safe operation of all of CERN’s complexes.”

USE “The Complex Manager is appointed by the Director-General **and ensures** the safe operation of all of CERN’s complexes.”

Example 2

AVOID “The role of a dispatcher is to process emergency calls. **He** receives calls and initiates the appropriate rescue responses.”

USE “The role of a dispatcher is to process emergency calls, **which entails** receiving calls and initiating the appropriate rescue responses.”

- Rewrite in the passive form

Example 1

AVOID “**He/she must complete** the form before the establishment of the contract.”

USE “The form **must be completed** before the establishment of the contract.”

Example 2

AVOID “**He must report** any malfunctions immediately.”

USE “Any malfunctions **must be reported** immediately.”

- Rephrase to avoid the need for a pronoun

Example 1

AVOID “The coordinator must **keep himself** informed on matters of safety.”

USE “The coordinator must **keep up to date** on matters of safety.”

Example 2

AVOID “If a visitor arrives after 6.00 p.m., **he or she** should report to the security guard.”

USE “**Visitors arriving** after 6.00 p.m. should report to the security guard.”

- Repeat the noun or use an alternative noun

Example 1

AVOID “A staff member wishing to take advantage of these measures must create an EDH training request, ticking the relevant box. The request is then sent to **his or her** supervisor and Human Resources Adviser for approval.

USE “A staff member wishing to take advantage of these measures must create an EDH training request, ticking the relevant box. The request is then sent to **the staff member’s** supervisor and Human Resources Adviser for approval.”

OR “The request is then sent to the **individual’s** supervisor and Human Resources Adviser for approval.”

Example 2

AVOID “A dispatcher processes requests for assistance and informs the entities concerned in compliance with the procedures in force. **He or she** must be proficient in the use of specialised IT tools.”

USE “A dispatcher processes requests for assistance and informs the entities concerned in compliance with the procedures in force. **Dispatchers** must be proficient in the use of specialised IT tools.”

- Use the second person singular (“you”) or an imperative verb

These options can be useful in texts that address the reader directly (for example, in training contexts, guidelines or vacancy notices).

Example 1

AVOID “A guide is responsible for the visitors in **his** group.”

USE “As a guide, **you** are responsible for the visitors in **your** group.”

Example 2

AVOID “The officer **should inform his** supervisor of any problems.”

USE “**Inform your** supervisor of any problems.”

- Use “who”

Example 1

AVOID “If an employee receives income from other sources, **he** must declare it.”

USE “An employee **who** receives income from other sources must declare it.”

Example 2

AVOID “If a delegate is unable to attend the meeting, **he** should inform the secretary in advance.

USE “Delegates **who** are unable to attend the meeting should inform the secretary in advance.”

Example 3

AVOID “Once a staff member has successfully completed the probation period, **he** may apply for an indefinite contract.”

USE “A staff member **who** has successfully completed the probation period may apply for an indefinite contract.”

- Use the singular “they”

Particularly in informal contexts or reported speech, it is acceptable to use “they”, “them”, “their”, etc. as singular subject pronouns, especially with certain nouns such as “someone”, “anyone”, “nobody” or “everyone”, or in a “who” question. In addition, people may identify as “they” (and use the associated reflexive form “themselves”).

Example 1

AVOID “Everyone will have the chance to test **his** skills.”

USE “Everyone will have the chance to test **their** skills.”

Example 2

AVOID “Who would like to give **his** opinion?” or “Would anyone like to give **his** opinion?”

USE “Who would like to give **their** opinion?” or “Would anyone like to give **their** opinion?”

Use of the singular “they” is increasingly common in both spoken and written English, although in cases where it can cause confusion, it should be avoided by rewriting the text using one of the examples listed above. For example:

“The facility manager is the sole person responsible for the installations and for the safety of everyone working on them. The facility manager may delegate this role to external experts. They must...”

In this case, the reader might (wrongly, as it happens) assume that the list of responsibilities that follows refers to the external experts rather than to the facility manager.

Similarly, in the following paragraph:

“This interview, between the new staff member and their supervisor, shall take place as soon as possible and at the latest within six weeks of them taking up their duties...”

the plural pronoun in the second sentence suggests that the interview must take place within six weeks of the staff member AND the supervisor taking up their duties, which is not the intended meaning.

N.B. CERN’s writing conventions have changed over time and, consequently, some older official texts, including several administrative and operational circulars, use “he” and its derivatives throughout, with a disclaimer at the

beginning of the text explaining the usage. The English version of the Staff Rules and Regulations has recently been updated (in June 2021) to be gender-inclusive.

10. CORRESPONDENCE¹³

In English, certain specific forms of salutation (e.g. “Dear Sir”) call for corresponding specific closing formulas (e.g. “Yours faithfully”). The main combinations are set out in the table below:

Salutation	Closing
Dear Sir,	Yours faithfully,
Dear Madam,	Yours faithfully,
Dear Mr/Ms [NAME],	Yours sincerely,
Sir,	Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration
Madam,	Accept, Madam, the assurances of my highest consideration

Note that “Yours sincerely” and “Yours faithfully” can be made more formal by ending the letter with the words “I remain”.

Example: *Looking forward to meeting you, I remain,*

Yours faithfully,
[signature]

When the gender of the recipient is not known, or in circular or multi-address letters, the salutation “Dear Sir/Madam” is used.

Note that a more informal style may be appropriate in email correspondence.

a) Formulas for official correspondence

The precise formulas to be used in official correspondence are set out in the table below.

Type of letter	Address	Salutation	Closing
Minister (formal)	His [Her] Excellency Mr [Ms] Minister of	Sir [Madam],	Accept, Sir [Madam], the assurances of my highest consideration,
Minister (informal)	His [Her] Excellency	Dear Minister,	I remain, dear Minister, Yours sincerely, <i>or simply</i>

¹³ This chapter is currently under review for gender inclusivity purposes.

	Mr [Ms] Minister of		Yours sincerely,
Ambassador (formal)	His [Her] Excellency Mr [Ms] Ambassador	Sir [Madam],	Accept, Sir [Madam], the assurances of my highest consideration,
Ambassador (informal)	His [Her] Excellency Mr [Ms] Ambassador	Dear Mr [Ms] Ambassador, <i>or</i> Dear Ambassador,	I remain, dear Mr [Ms] Ambassador, Yours sincerely, <i>or simply</i> Yours sincerely,
Secretary-General of the United Nations	The Honourable António Guterres Secretary-General United Nations	Dear Mr Secretary- General,	Yours faithfully,
Head of specialised agency (formal)	Mr [Ms] Director-General [Secretary- General]	Dear Mr [Ms] Director-General [Secretary-General], <i>or</i> Dear Sir [Madam],	Yours faithfully,
Head of specialised agency (informal)	Mr [Ms] Director-General [Secretary- General]	Dear Mr [Ms],	Yours sincerely,
Director-General of an administration	The Director- General	Dear Sir [Madam],	Yours faithfully,
Others (formal)		Dear Sir [Madam],	Yours faithfully,
Others (informal)		Dear Mr [Ms],	Yours sincerely,

ANNEX 1: PLAIN ENGLISH

Plain English is a concise, grammatically accurate form of writing that is clear and accessible and can be read quickly. The aim is not to “dumb down” the language but to communicate the desired message to the intended audience effectively, notably by using terms and expressions that are likely to be familiar to the reader and avoiding complex, jargon-filled texts that can be difficult to follow.

The use of plain English may be appropriate in many cases, depending on the target audience. In the specific context of an international organisation like CERN, where the majority of people reading documents are not native English speakers, plain English can promote understanding. It helps the reader to focus on the message of a text, rather than on how it is written.

In addition, plain English can benefit people with dyslexia, especially when used in conjunction with certain types of formatting and layout, such as single-colour backgrounds and large spaces between characters, words and lines. Sans serif fonts (e.g. Arial) are preferable to serif fonts (e.g. Times New Roman) as they are less decorative and therefore easier to read. These kinds of considerations are set out in more detail in the British Dyslexia Association’s [Dyslexia Style Guide](#).

Here are some guidelines for writing in plain English, which are intended to help everyone at CERN, regardless of their native language. Some links to useful reference material are provided at the end.

General principles

- The focus of plain English should be on the **audience**; writing should be **clear and concise**, to ensure that the reader understands the message.
- The English used should be **adapted to the target audience’s knowledge level**, insofar as this can be known.
- The use of **in-house jargon** might be suitable for specialist readers but should be avoided in documents aimed at a wider audience.
- Remember that what you write may be reused later on **in other contexts and for other audiences**.

Sentence structure

- Keep sentences fairly **short** (roughly 15–20 words long).
- Include only **one idea per sentence**, with the occasional secondary point.
- Keep the subject, verb and object of the sentence as **close together** as possible.
- Place the **main idea at the beginning** of the sentence, with any exceptions or conditions introduced later.

Paragraphs

- Each paragraph should explore a **single topic** only.

- Use **topic sentences** (i.e. sentences that sum up the main point being made, usually at the beginning of the paragraph) to introduce the paragraph's content. Ideally, the reader should be able to understand the structure, or argument, of the document by reading only the topic sentences.
- **Vary paragraph length** and format the document to leave significant **white space**.
- Use **transition words and connectors** (e.g. "however", "similarly", "although", "additionally") to move smoothly from one paragraph to another.
- **Avoid overusing topic-introducing phrases**, such as "As far as xxx is concerned...", "In terms of...", "Regarding...", "When it comes to...", etc. For example, the sentence "As far as the LHC is concerned, it is important to underline that the machine's performance has exceeded expectations" could be rendered more simply as "It is important to underline that the LHC's performance has exceeded expectations".

Verbs and nouns

- Use **imperatives** to give clear, precise instructions. If necessary, these can be softened by adding "please" before the verb. For example, "Please switch the lights off when you leave".
- If you have a choice between using the present, future or conditional tense, remember that the **present** tense is easier to understand, especially for non-native readers. For example, "Throughout their contract, graduates ~~will be~~ **are** paid a stipend ... Any financial benefits of a similar nature received from a source outside the Organization ~~will be~~ **are** deducted from this amount."
- **Avoid the use of the possessive gerund**. For example, "Your leaving early was a wise decision" ⇒ "You were wise to leave early".
- **Avoid nominalisations** (where verbs or other parts of speech are transformed into a noun), as they tend to make sentences longer and can obscure the subject or the action of the sentence. For example, "make an application for" ⇒ "apply for"; "the wearing of masks is compulsory" ⇒ "it is compulsory to wear a mask".
- **Avoid noun strings** (phrases with many consecutive nouns) as they can create confusion for the reader, especially one who is not familiar with the subject matter. For the sake of clarity, break up such strings with verbs, prepositions and articles. For example, "Draft laboratory animal rights protection regulations" ⇒ "Draft regulations to protect the rights of laboratory animals".
- **Beware of dangling and misplaced participles (also known as "modifiers")**, i.e. participles that refer to a noun which is not in the text (and are therefore "dangling") or that are incorrectly placed in a sentence ("misplaced") so that they refer to the wrong object. The phrase "Arriving home, the door was open" is an example of a dangling modifier: it suggests

that the door arrived home! The phrase: “Plunging hundreds of metres into the gorge, we saw the waterfall” is an example of a misplaced modifier: it suggests that we, rather than the waterfall, did the plunging. Unlike misplaced modifiers, dangling modifiers cannot be corrected by simply moving them to a different place in a sentence but require reformulation.

Use of active and passive

- In general, **use the active** rather than the **passive** voice because it is usually clearer and more concise and avoids ambiguity over who has done/is supposed to do what. For example, if we write, in the passive, “The software was used for the data analysis”, we don’t know who used the software.
- However, **the passive voice may be preferable in some circumstances**, such as when:
 - the performer is unknown or irrelevant (“up to 90% of the energy in light bulbs is wasted in the form of heat”, or “my car was stolen yesterday”);
 - the performer is less important than the action (“The solution was heated to 90 degrees and then allowed to cool”);
 - the object of the action is the main topic (“Carbohydrates are produced by green plants in the presence of light and chlorophyll”);
 - you want to make a sentence sound less hostile/confrontational or avoid placing the blame on someone (“Mistakes were made”);
 - use of the active voice would be unnatural (“He was injured in a motorcycle accident”, rather than “A motorcycle accident injured him”).

Words

- **Use simple, familiar words** rather than obscure, complex ones (e.g. promulgate ⇒ announce, publish, make known).
- **Prefer concrete language to abstract language** that may be vague or open to interpretation (e.g. “We have many issues with the proposal” ⇒ “We do not support the proposal”).
- **Avoid compound constructions** that use three or four words when one would be enough (e.g. “in the event that” ⇒ “if”).
- **Beware of using idioms** that could actively exclude people who are unfamiliar with the cultural reference. While an idiom like “It’s raining cats and dogs” is easily understandable, the meaning of “shipshape and Bristol fashion” is not immediately obvious.
- Avoid overusing **abbreviations and acronyms**. Only use ones you are sure your audience will be familiar with. If you have to use an unfamiliar abbreviation, also write the full name out when you first introduce it.
- **Avoid the use of jargon**, unless you are certain that your audience will understand it. If the use of jargon is unavoidable, define the term in plain

English, as in: “Member State contributions are indexed according to the “corridor” principle, i.e. by a minimum of 0% and a maximum of 2%, depending on the calculated CVI (cost-variation index)”.

- Keep in mind that **words of Anglo-Saxon origin tend to be better suited to plain English than Romance words** (e.g. “begin” or “start” rather than “commence”; “eat” rather than “consume”).
- **Avoid Latin and other foreign terms** where an English term has the same meaning (e.g. modus operandi ⇒ way of working, method).
- **Omit redundant words** (e.g. a number of ⇒ several, some; at this point in time ⇒ now).

However, bear in mind that varying your word choice and register can help to create variety and interest for the reader.

Clear organisation

- Where appropriate, **use bullet points or numbered lists**.
- Use **examples** to help to clarify complicated ideas.
- Use **tables and diagrams** to present complex material.
- Use **subheadings** to break up text into shorter sections.
- **Bold or italics** can help to emphasise important concepts.
- **Avoid excessive use of capitals** (hard to read). A simple guiding rule is to use initial capitals for the specific and lower case for the generic.
- **Avoid capitalising whole words** (may be perceived as aggressive).
- **Avoid underlining** (hard to read, may be taken for a hyperlink).

Other points to consider

- **Cut out long-winded phrases**, e.g. “welders who have obtained the relevant authorisation to practise the profession of welder” ⇒ “authorised welders”.
- **Replace negatives with positives**, e.g. “If you don’t arrive by 5.00 p.m., I won’t be able to pick you up” ⇒ “Make sure you’re there by 5.00 p.m. if you want me to pick you up”.
- **Avoid double negatives**, e.g. “It is not uncommon for applications to be rejected” ⇒ “It is common for applications to be rejected”.
- In some cases, it may be better to **replace the impersonal by the direct “you” (the reader) or “we” (the Organization)**. For example, “Further information and application details can be found at the following link” ⇒ “You can find out more and apply at the following link”. The singular pronoun “you” also avoids the issue of gender inclusivity.

Differences between English and French

- While French paragraphs are often “end-loading” (i.e. the important information is given at the end of the paragraph), **English prefers “front-loading” paragraphs** (the important information tends to be included in the first sentence). In plain English, it is preferable to make the main point early on, which is something that French writers of English should bear in mind.
- French often uses nouns where a verb structure would be more natural in English (e.g. *Connaître le fonctionnement* ⇒ find out how it works). **Long noun strings** and the frequent use of **nominalisations** are best avoided in plain English.
- “**Elegant variation**”, i.e. calling the same thing a different name each time you mention it to avoid repetition (e.g. “Mr. W., the well-known mining engineer, paid a visit to the scene of the disaster. The expert gave the opinion that no blame could be attached...”) is more common in French. In plain English, it is better to avoid this technique so as not to confuse the reader.
- French uses certain **Latin terms** (e.g. a fortiori, a posteriori) more frequently than English does. Remember that the overuse of Latin or other foreign words can alienate readers if they do not understand those languages.

Examples

The table below provides some examples of how some sentences from CERN texts were reformulated in plain English to make them clearer and easier to read.

☹	☺	Technique used
The following are the permutation of scenarios which have been examined.	The following scenarios have been examined.	long-winded → simple, everyday language
Given the low presence of the primary population using CERN hostels	Given that fewer people than usual are staying in the CERN hostels	
The CineGlobe International Film Festival took place at CERN for its 10th edition.	CERN hosted the 10th edition of the CineGlobe International Film Festival.	more concise
For the last 10 years, within the framework of the <i>Be a Scientist</i> project, local schools have been receiving strange	For the last 10 years, as part of the <i>Be a Scientist</i> project, CERN has been providing	heavy/convoluted → simpler, active sentence structure

mystery boxes provided by CERN.	local schools with strange mystery boxes.	
Astronauts are hoping to visit Mars. The red planet may have water. If astronauts find water on the fourth planet from the sun it could be the next step in the space race.	Astronauts are hoping to visit Mars, which may have water. If they find water on Mars it could be the next step in the space race.	avoidance of “elegant variation”
The Beamline for Schools competition was initiated by CERN with an aim to attract young people to science, and serve as a driver for tomorrow’s science and engineering graduates.	The Beamline for Schools competition was set up by CERN to attract young people to science and set them on the path to becoming tomorrow’s science and engineering graduates.	heavy Romance verb → Anglo-Saxon verb; simplify and cut out jargon
This constitutes a collaborative game to understand the functioning of detectors.	This is a collaborative game to understand how detectors work.	abstract noun → verb
“Connect” is a programme of residencies for artists with a keen interest in a cross-disciplinary approach and a strong motivation for scientific thinking and fundamental science.	“Connect” is a programme of residencies for artists who are keenly interested in a cross-disciplinary approach and strongly motivated by scientific thinking and fundamental science.	abstract nouns → adjectives
Applications and further information on the programme can be found in the following links.	You can find more information and apply to the programme at the following links.	impersonal passive → direct “you”
The wearing of masks is now compulsory at all times inside shared offices and meeting rooms.	You must wear a mask at all times in shared offices and meeting rooms.	noun → verb; impersonal → direct “you”
The app’s features allow end users to check the status of their access requirements at any point in time and to solve potential issues right away,	You can use the app to check the status of your access requirements at any time and to solve potential issues right away, so you	third person → second person “you”; simpler language

eliminating the need to return to their desktops or call support.	don't need to return to your computer or call support.	
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Useful reference material

- Martin Cutts, *Oxford Guide to Plain English*
- European Commission, "Claire's Clear Writing Tips":
https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/clear_writing_tips_en.pdf
- European Commission English Style Guide:
https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/styleguide_english_dgt_en.pdf
- European Commission, "Clear English, Tips for Translators":
https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/clear-english-tips-translators_en.pdf
- ISO (International Organization for Standardization) House Style Guide:
<https://www.iso.org/ISO-house-style.html>
- Plain Language Commission Style Guide:
<https://clearest.co.uk/plain-language-commission-style-guide/>
- Plain English Campaign Alternative Words:
<http://www.plainenglish.co.uk/the-a-z-of-alternative-words.html>
- Columbia Law School, Plain English Handout, "Writing in Plain English":
<https://web.law.columbia.edu/writing-center/handouts>
- US Government's Federal Plain Language Guidelines:
<https://www.plainlanguage.gov/guidelines/>
- European Commission, Directorate-General for Translation, "How to Write Clearly":
<https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2782/54318>

ANNEX 2: COMMON DIFFICULTIES AND INCORRECT USAGE

This annex contains a list of verbs, nouns and expressions that tend to create difficulties, even for native English speakers, and/or in respect of which the English translation section frequently encounters mistakes and misuse or is asked to provide guidance. The intention is to supplement it regularly, time permitting, as and when new issues are brought to the section's attention.

a) Commonly encountered “Gallicisms”

The following French verbs, nouns and expressions tend to cause confusion owing to the existence of similar English words with different meanings. These “false friends” should generally be translated as follows:

- ASSURER

“Ensure” (NOT “assure” or “insure”), conveying the meaning of “making it certain that something will happen”, as in “*The main purpose of the supervisory board is to ensure compliance with the regulations*”.

- ATTESTATION

“Certificate” or “proof of...”, e.g. “insurance certificate” (“*attestation d’assurance*”) or “proof of employment” (“*attestation d’emploi*”).

“Attestation” has a very specific formal and legalistic meaning in English (an attesting declaration; testimony; evidence) and should normally be avoided. However, it may be acceptable to use it in italics if referring to a specific document issued solely in French, where it could be confusing to refer to it otherwise (for example, the Swiss “Ci Permit” is referred to by the Swiss authorities as an “attestation”).

- CERNOIS

The term “Cernois” or “CERNois”, used in French and, less frequently, in English to refer to one or more members of the CERN community, is acceptable in internal usage, such as in Bulletin articles, but not in texts designed for a wider audience. Bear in mind that an alternative term, such as “(a member of) the CERN community”, “(a member of) the CERN personnel”, “(a) CERN colleague(s)” and “a person/people working at CERN”, may make it clearer to whom exactly you are referring.

- CONFÉRENCE

“Lecture”, denoting a single educational talk to an audience (NOT “conference”, which means a formal meeting of people with a shared interest, typically taking place over several days, for the purposes of consultation, exchange of information or discussion).

- DEMANDE

“Application” or “claim” (NOT “request”), in such expressions as “an application for asylum” (“*demande d’asile*”) or “a reimbursement claim” (“*demande de remboursement*”).

- DÉPENDRE

“Depend on” (NOT “of”).

- (UNE) FORMATION

“Training course/session” (NOT “a training”, although “training” on its own can be used without an article, as in: “*All personnel are required to follow safety training*”).

- INSCRIPTION (S’INSCRIRE)

The French noun “*inscription*” should be translated as “registration” or “enrolment” (NOT “inscription”, which in English refers only to text written or engraved e.g. on a monument or at the beginning of a book).

Similarly, the verb “*s’inscrire*” can be translated as “register”, “enrol” or “sign up for”.

See the following examples:

Registration is now open for the CineGlobe festival.

Staff should enrol in the computer security course in the Learning Hub.

Don’t forget to sign up for a free guided tour of LHCb.

- INTERVENTION

Either “work/operation/activity” or “statement/comment/remark”, depending on the intended meaning (NOT “intervention”, which in English has the following meanings:

- the action or process of intervening, e.g. “*a high degree of state intervention in the economy*”;
- interference by a state in another’s affairs, e.g. “*the government was reported to be considering military intervention*”;
- action taken to improve a medical disorder, e.g. “*two patients were referred for surgical intervention*”.

- ISOLATION

“Insulation” to convey a covering/protection to prevent electricity, sound, heat, etc. from penetrating/escaping the item being insulated (NOT “isolation”, which means the condition of being alone or separate from other people or places, e.g. “geographical isolation”).

- MATÉRIEL/MATÉRIAUX/MATIÈRE

These three words are often misused by writers in English, mainly due to interference from the French. Here are a few basic rules of thumb:

- *matériel* translates as “equipment” or “hardware” (NEVER “material”); most commonly found in “*matériel informatique*”, which translates as “computer equipment” or “computer hardware”;
- *matériau* (plural with x) translates as “material” (plural with s); most commonly found in building/construction contexts;

- *matière*, in the physics context, always translates as “matter”, but beware that “*matières premières*” translates as “raw materials”; and more metaphorically, “*matière à réflexion*” translates as “food for thought”.

- MODALITÉS

Rarely “modalities”, which is much rarer than the French term and has specialised meanings in fields such as grammar, philosophy, medicine and physiology. Useful alternatives include method, procedure, arrangements, mode, means and way.

- OCCASION

“Opportunity” (NOT “possibility” or “occasion”) to convey the meaning of a chance to do something or an occasion when it is easy for you to do something, as in “*The new scheme provides staff members with the opportunity to save up leave until the end of their careers*”.

However, the following are correct: “*There is a possibility that the Council may wish to discuss this proposal*” and “*World Water Day is a good occasion to remember the still enormous problem of drinking water and sanitation worldwide*”.

- PARKING

Car park (NOT “the parking”).

- PARTICIPER

Participate IN (NOT “to”).

- PAYS ANGLO-SAXONS

“English-speaking countries” (NOT “Anglo-Saxon”, as this term refers to the tribes – Angles, Saxons and Jutes – that settled in Britain from the fifth century AD).

- PLANNING

“Schedule” (NOT “planning”) for a list of planned activities or things to be done, showing the times or dates when they are intended to happen or be done. E.g. “An engineering schedule”, or “a production schedule”, “*The LS1 schedule begins in January and lasts for two years*”.

“Planning” is the process of making plans, not the plan itself, e.g. “*Planning for LS2 has now begun*”.

- PRÉPARER

The French verb “*préparer*” is often used without a preposition where one is required in English, for example in expressions such as “*préparer l’avenir*”. In English, this must be translated as “prepare for” rather than just “prepare”.

To **prepare** something means to make it ready:

- The collaboration is preparing the detector.
- I’ve prepared a cake.
- The Council Secretariat will prepare the agenda.

To **prepare for** something means to get yourself ready for it or make the necessary arrangements:

- The collaboration is preparing for the HL-LHC era.
- To prepare for its future, CERN should continue to develop a vibrant R&D programme.
- She has prepared well for her job interview.

- (SE) PRÉSENTER

The French verb “*présenter*” can be used to refer to both people and things, but in English we tend to “introduce” people but “present” things, as in the following examples:

- *Je me présente.* = Let me introduce myself.
- *Je voudrais vous présenter le nouveau chef de groupe.* = I'd like to introduce you to the new group leader.
- *L'intervenant a présenté des diapositives sur l'étude de faisabilité.* = The speaker presented slides on the feasibility study.

See also: “[present](#)”.

- PRÉVOIR

The French verb “*prévoir*” has several meanings. It should not be translated into English as “foresee”, unless the meaning is predicting that something is going to happen, as in the following examples:

- “Few analysts foresaw that inflation would rise so sharply”;
- “The web took off in ways that could not have been foreseen”;
- “The fortune-teller foresaw a journey over water”;
- “We don't foresee any difficulties with this project”.

The other meanings of “*prévoir*” may be rendered, depending on the context, by verbs such as “provide for”, “provide that”, “set out”, “lay down”, “intend”, “plan”, “schedule”, “include”, “expect”, etc.

Some examples:

- “CERN's Staff Rules and Regulations **provide for** a social security system safeguarding the members of its personnel against the financial consequences of old age and disability”;
- “The experiment's completion is **scheduled for** 15 February”;
- “Country X is **expected** to become an Associate Member State in 2017”.

- PROFITER

Unlike in French, “profit” in English is used primarily in the sense of financial advantage or gain, for example:

Financial trading allows investors to profit from falling as well as rising markets.

Banks don't profit from the lower borrowing costs.

The pre-school is not a business but a registered charity, forbidden by law to operate at a profit.

In the rare cases that “profit” is used figuratively, it is still used to refer to a clearly defined benefit, for example:

All children would profit from this kind of schooling.

I profited enormously from working with her.

The following examples show a variety of ways of translating the verb “profiter” into English:

Profite de tes vacances !	Enjoy your holiday!
Il fera beau ce week-end. Profitez-en bien !	The weather will be good this weekend. Make the most of it!
Je profite de cette occasion pour remercier mes collègues.	I would like to take this opportunity to thank my colleagues.
Il peut profiter de ce moment pour procéder à la formation tant réclamée.	He can make use of this time to do the training that he has been clamouring for.
Les expériences profiteront du retard sur le calendrier pour avancer le programme d'améliorations.	The experiments will take advantage of the schedule delay to move ahead with the upgrades.
Nous pouvons tous profiter des compétences du groupe pour explorer de nouvelles techniques.	We can all benefit from the group's skill set to explore new techniques.

- QUALIFICATION

“Rating” to convey how good someone’s performance is (NOT “qualification”, whose basic meanings are: an official record that someone has passed an examination or successfully completed a course, especially one conferring status as a recognised practitioner of a profession or activity, e.g. “a teaching qualification”; a skill, ability, characteristic, quality or experience that makes you suitable for a particular job or activity, e.g. “*Some nursing experience is an essential qualification for this job*”; something you add to a statement to limit its effect or meaning, e.g. “*The Committee supported our plans but with certain qualifications*”); reaching the necessary standard to enter a sports competition, e.g. “*Country A needs to beat Country B to qualify for the semi-finals*”).

- RADIOPROTECTION

“Radiation protection” (NOT “radioprotection”).

- RESPONSABLE

“The person responsible” or “the person in charge” (NOT “the responsible” as “responsible” is always an adjective in English and never a noun).

- RETENIR

“Select/choose” (NOT “retain”, which means “keep”), e.g. in the context of calls for tenders: *l'entreprise retenue* = the firm selected.

- TRANSMETTRE

“Forward/send” (a document) (NOT “transmit”, which refers to radio, television or data).

b) Verbs

This section contains a list of verbs that tend to create some confusion, even for native English speakers.

- AFFECT, EFFECT

In the context of an action that produces a change in someone or something, “affect” is the verb and “effect” the noun, e.g. “This issue *affects* (NOT “effects”) us all”, and “What *effect* do you think the election will have on the population?”

The verb form of “effect” is fairly formal and means to implement or make something happen, e.g. to effect changes or a plan of action.

- ALLOW, ENABLE, PERMIT

These verbs require an object and cannot be followed directly by an infinitive.

Incorrect: “The work under way will allow to assess potential gains”

Correct: “The work under way will allow the management to assess the potential gains”

Incorrect: “This new equipment will allow to replace the obsolete milling machines”

Correct: “This new equipment will allow **the department** to replace its obsolete milling machines”

Incorrect: “This training course enabled to improve communication skills”

Correct: “This training course enabled **us** to improve **our** communication skills”

Incorrect: “The card permits to access the CERN site”

Correct: “The card permits **personnel** to access the CERN site” or simply “The card **permits access** to the CERN site”

N.B. The only way to avoid using an object in cases like these is to use the expression “makes it possible to”, as in “The new tramline makes it possible to reach the CERN site directly from the centre of Geneva”.

- ALLOW/ALLOW FOR

The difference between “to allow” and “to allow for” tends to create some confusion.

The verb “allow” means simply to permit, enable, authorise (e.g. “Your generous gift allowed me to travel for a month”), while “to allow for” means to take something into account when you are planning something, i.e. to consider all the

possible facts, problems, costs, etc. involved in a plan or situation and make sure that you can deal with them successfully, as in the following examples:

“Allowing for inflation, the total cost of the project is 2 MCHF”;

“We allowed for living expenses of 20 euros per day”;

“You should allow for staff absences when you draw up the work schedule”;

“The survey did not allow for the fact that some of the students were attending only part time”.

The following is thus incorrect: “*They agreed to a ceasefire to allow for talks with the government*”. The correct formulation would be: “They agreed to a ceasefire to **allow** talks with the government”.

Similarly, “*consolidation of the splices to allow for safe operation of the machine up to 7 TeV/beam*” is also incorrect. The correct formulation would be “... to **allow** the safe operation of the machine...” or better: “... to **allow** the machine to **operate** safely up to ...”.

- CHECK/CONTROL

The verb “to check” has two principal meanings: 1) to examine (something) in order to determine its accuracy, quality or condition, or to detect the presence of something; and 2) stop or slow the progress of (something, typically something undesirable).

The normal meaning of “control” is not to check or verify but to exercise influence over or to direct or drive something or someone.

Thus, “the XX department controls project Y”, does not mean that the department audits the project or checks/verifies its progress, but that it runs or is responsible for the project.

The confusion partly arises from the fact that the noun “control(s)” often denotes systems that are in place to check that everything is as it should be and, if not, to take remedial action, such as the “CERN accelerator control system” or “passport controls”. Alternative terms are “safeguards” (e.g. “A number of safeguards are built into the system to ensure that...”) and “inspections” (generally more in-depth/thorough, careful and critical examinations than “checks”).

- COMPARE TO/WITH

The verb “compare” can be followed by either “to” or “with”, depending on the intended meaning.

To compare something *to* something else means to observe that the two things are similar. Examples:

“She compared my fruit cake to a paving slab”;

“The mass of a proton is comparable to that of a neutron”;

“His achievements don’t compare to mine”.

However, to compare something *with* something else means to consider the similarities and differences between them. Examples:

“If you compare that graph with this one, the difference is obvious”;

“The initiative was highly successful, compared with the previous attempt”;

“Your attitude compares favourably with hers”.

- ENQUIRE/INQUIRE

The verb “enquire” means to ask a question, while the similar verb “inquire” means to investigate. See the examples below:

“How are you?” he enquired.”

“She came to see me to enquire about a job.”

“The police are inquiring into the man’s death.”

The same is true for the related nouns, so an “enquiry” is a question and an “inquiry” is an official investigation.

- HELP

Must always be followed by an object or pronoun, except where it is preceded by “it” and followed by an infinitive. See the examples below:

Incorrect: “This manual helps to understand how the equipment works”, “This manual helps understanding how the equipment works”.

Correct: “This manual helps users to understand how the equipment works”.

Correct: “It helps to have the right equipment” or “The style guide helps us to formulate our texts correctly.”

N.B. The verb “to help” may be used with or without “to” and with or without an object before the infinitive. Thus, the following are both correct:

Could you help (me) **to look for my car keys**? I can’t find them anywhere.

Could you help (me) **look for my car keys**? I can’t find them anywhere.

However, the second example is arguably less formal.

- LAY/LIE

The verbs “to lay” and “to lie” are often confused.

“Lay” is a transitive verb (i.e. it always takes a direct object) meaning “to put something or someone down”, whereas “lie” is an intransitive verb (i.e. it does not take a direct object) meaning “to be in or assume a horizontal position”:

“She is **laying** the baby on the sofa.”

“She is **lying** on the sofa.”

The source of the confusion is probably the past tense, in which “lie” becomes “lay” and “lay” becomes “laid”:

“She **lay** on the sofa yesterday.”

“She **laid** the baby on the sofa yesterday.”

- LEAD/LED

The past tense of the verb “to lead” (i.e. “to show the way” or “to be in charge of”) is “led”, not “lead” (a very common mistake, as “lead”, the metal Pb, is pronounced the same as “led”).

- MUST/SHALL

There are different schools of thought on the use of “shall” and “must” to convey the notion of a duty or obligation and there is no hard and fast rule. Some people argue that “shall” is overused and tends to be confusing as it can also convey the notion of “future” (“I shall go there next week” = “I will go there next week”). However, in common usage, “shall” is rarely used to indicate future time, except in questions, such as “What shall we do tomorrow?”. Moreover, the verb “must” can also have different meanings, depending on the context.

For example, compare the following:

1. He must be at the cinema (conjecture)
2. She must do something about her problems (a preference or recommendation)
3. I must start going to the gym this year (a pious wish).

None of these has anything to do with duty or obligation. It could even be said that these alternative meanings of “must” tend to dilute its legal impact when used in the sense of an alternative to “shall”.

The TMC group has traditionally used “shall...” to express obligation in the specific context of contracts/technical specifications. This seems to be an unambiguous way of stipulating what contractors commit themselves to doing, without running the risk of misinterpretation.

However, in general statements we tend to use “is/are required to” or “must”, e.g. “All contractors working on the CERN site are required to/must comply with the provisions of document xxx”.

We also use “must” when the subject of the requirement is not a person or body. E.g. “Equipment must be used and stored in accordance with the requirements laid down in document xxx”.

- OFFER/INVITE

The verb “to offer” implies that the recipient has the right to either accept or reject what is being presented to them, e.g. “I was offered the chance to speak at a conference”.

Unlike its French equivalent, it does not necessarily imply “free of charge” in English. Thus we would say, for example, “Lunch will be provided by the host” rather than “Lunch will be offered by the host” to indicate that no payment is required.

Similarly, “to invite” in English simply means to give someone the opportunity to come, not necessarily to pay for them, whereas “*Je vous invite*” in French means that the speaker will pay.

- ORGANISE/HOLD

“To organise” means “to plan” or “to make arrangements for”: it refers to the preparation of an event rather than to the event itself. It is therefore wrong to say, for example, “CERN is organising an open day on 5 June”, if the organisation is actually done before 5 June. When indicating the date or venue of an event, use an alternative such as “to hold” or “to take place”, e.g. “CERN will be holding an

open day on 5 June” or “CERN is organising an open day, which is scheduled to take place on 5 June”.

- PRESENT

The verb “to present”, when used in the sense of giving something to someone, often formally or ceremoniously, should be followed by “with” or “to”, depending on the structure of the sentence, unless the recipient of the item being presented is not mentioned. See the following examples:

These final-year CERN apprentices were presented **with** prizes awarded by the *Union industrielle genevoise* at a special ceremony;

The experiment’s spokesperson presented a prize **to** the student judged to have completed the best PhD thesis;

The Director-General presented the medals.

The following sentence is thus *incorrect*: “She presented the incoming Chair the gavel” and should read either: “She presented the incoming Chair **with** the gavel” or “She presented the gavel **to** the incoming Chair”. Note that there is no difference in meaning between the latter two options.

See also: “*(se) présenter*”.

- PROVIDE (FOR, WITH, TO)

This verb is normally used in the following ways:

To provide something **for** someone. E.g. “The hotel provides a laundry service for its guests”.

To provide someone **with** something. E.g. “The organisers provided us with all the information we needed”, “The Social Affairs service provides members of the personnel with advice”, “We were provided with a map of the area”.

Or simply “to provide”, without specifying who the receiver is. E.g. “I’ll provide the food if you bring the wine” or “Our office can provide information on the local area”.

However, the use of “provide **to**” appears to be increasingly accepted nowadays. E.g. “We provide useful information to our clients”.

The verb “provide for” sometimes creates confusion. It has the following meanings:

1. To make sure that people have what they need to live. E.g. “I was afraid that, without a job, I would be unable to provide for my family”.
2. To make provisions/preparations in order to allow something to happen in the future or to be able to deal with a possible future event. E.g. “The rules provide for a salary increase after one year”.
3. If a law or agreement provides for something, it allows it to happen or to exist. E.g. “Current legislation provides for the detention of those suspected of terrorism”.

The verb “provide that” has a similar meaning to 3 above. E.g. “The ruling provided that the child should have no contact with its father.”

- RECALL

The verb “recall” has several meanings, the most common of which are to remember, to recount a past experience, and to allude to something. For example:

When I saw my sister’s suitcase, I recalled that I had invited her to stay = I **remembered** that I had invited her to stay

She recalled her excitement when the Higgs boson was discovered = She **remembered** OR **recounted** her excitement

Recalling the precarious funding situation, he suggested that the project should be scaled down = **Alluding to** the precarious funding situation

It can also be used in impersonal constructions, although this is generally limited to formal or academic contexts. For example:

It is recalled that the Committee has two main aims.

However, the construction “recall that” is often incorrectly used to introduce speech, probably due to interference from the French verb “*rappeler*”, in sentences such as “She recalled that registration for the conference was now open”. Unless you want to say that she *remembered* that registration was now open, this is incorrect. Some ways to reformulate correctly:

She reminded me/the Council/her colleagues that registration for the conference was now open (if you know whom she reminded).

She said/stated/announced/reiterated that registration for the conference was now open (if you don’t know whom she reminded).

- RECOMMEND, SUGGEST

These verbs should not be followed directly by a verb in the infinitive.

Incorrect: The SPC recommended to approve the document”, “I recommend you to read this book”, “It is recommended to consult your supervisor”, “You are recommended to check”, “I suggest to remove this sentence”.

Correct:

Followed by a noun: “The SPC recommended the approval of the document”, “The Committee recommended Ms X for the position of Chair”, “She recommended the book to me”, “He suggested another date for the meeting”.

Followed by “that” (plus subjunctive or “should” + root): “The SPC recommended that the Council (should) approve the document”, “Doctors recommend that all children (should) be vaccinated against ...”, “They suggested that we (should) include the clause in the contract”.

Followed by a gerund: “The manufacturers recommend changing the oil after 20 000 km”, “He suggested removing the sentence from the document”.

N.B. The verb “advise” may sometimes provide a useful alternative, as illustrated by the following examples:

“It is advisable to check availability before planning your trip”;

“You are advised not to leave your luggage unattended”;

“The manufacturer advises caution in the use of this product”;

“I advise you to visit the site to see for yourself”.

- REMIND

Must always be followed by an object or pronoun.

Incorrect: “She reminded of a decision made at the previous meeting.”

Correct: “I would like to remind **you** that we have a meeting tomorrow.”

Correct: “The Chair reminded **the members** to send him their feedback.”

Correct: “She reminded **them** of a decision made at the previous meeting.”

c) Miscellaneous

- AMONG/AMONGST

Both are correct and there is no difference in meaning, but prefer “among” unless in a direct quotation.

- AS SUCH

The phrase “as such” is often incorrectly used to mean “therefore”, as in the following examples:

Recognition by CERN means that the child continues to be considered a dependent child and, as such, the member of the personnel concerned is entitled to financial support.

The beam dump itself is heavy and voluminous and, as such, civil-engineering infrastructure upgrades are required in the ECX5 cavern in which it will be located.

The correct meaning is “as being what the name or description implies; in that capacity”, as in the following examples:

CERN is an international laboratory and, as such (i.e. as an international laboratory), receives funding from its Member States.

Snakes are reptiles and, as such (i.e. as reptiles), have cold blood.

Lemonade is full of sugar and, as such (i.e. as a drink that is full of sugar), is not healthy.

Indonesia is on the equator and, as such (i.e. as a country that is on the equator), has a tropical climate.

- AT HAND/IN HAND/ON HAND/TO HAND

“At hand” means physically near, readily accessible when needed or about to happen, e.g. “A breakthrough in the search for dark matter may be at hand” = “A breakthrough in the search for dark matter may be imminent”.

“To hand” can also mean close by or readily accessible, e.g. “I always keep a dictionary at/to hand” = “I always keep a dictionary nearby/available to me”.

“In hand” means receiving or requiring immediate attention, in progress, ready for use if required or under control, e.g. “The problem with excess spending is in hand” = “The problem with excess spending is under control”.

“On hand” means present, especially for a specific purpose, e.g. “The Fire and Rescue service is on hand in case of an emergency” = “The Fire and Rescue service is standing by in case of an emergency”.

- CASE/EVENT

The following are often confused:

- in the case of
- in the event of
- in case of

“In the case of” should be used to distinguish one category of something from another, e.g. “In the case of staff members, CERN pays a salary, whereas in the case of fellows, it pays a stipend”.

“In the event of” means “if and when something happens”, e.g. “In the event of a volcano erupting, planes will not be allowed to fly”.

“In case of” suggests preventive action, e.g. “I’ll leave you my phone number in case of an emergency”.

The following examples underline the need for caution:

“The government intends to send provisions to that region in case of famine”

This means an action taken as a pre-emptive move, i.e. so as to be ready IF a famine breaks out.

It does NOT mean “in the event of famine”, i.e. WHEN a famine breaks out.

“In case of fire, do not use this lift”

Strictly speaking, this means that you should not use the lift at all since there is a risk that it could catch fire!

Correct: “**In the event of fire**, do not use this lift” (in other words “do not use this lift if a fire breaks out”).

Other examples of **correct** usage:

“Take an umbrella **in case of rain**” (this does NOT mean take an umbrella when it rains but take an umbrella so that you will stay dry if it rains). Alternatively: “Take an umbrella **in case it rains**”.

“**In the case of the LHC experiments**, funding is controlled by the Resources Review Boards and not by the Finance Committee, whereas **in the case of CERN**, the latter body is responsible for the Budget.”

“**In the event of rain**, the race will be cancelled.”

- CASE LAW/JURISPRUDENCE

These terms are often confused.

Jurisprudence is the study and theory of law. The term should not be used to denote actual systems of law, or current views of law.

Case law is the law as established by the outcome of previous cases and precedents.

- COMPETENCE, COMPETENCY

Competence:

1. the ability to do something successfully or efficiently (no plural), as in:

“Courses to improve the competence of staff”, “No one questioned his competence as a doctor”

2. a special area of knowledge (no plural), as in:

“It is not within my competence to rule on this matter”

3. a skill needed to do a particular job (pl. competences), as in:

“The knowledge of several languages is not the only competence required of a translator”.

Competency, pl. competencies:

A human resources management term for skills (synonymous with 3 above), as in “competency-based learning”, “CERN competency model”.

- CONDITION/CRITERION

The word “condition” denotes a situation that must exist before something else is possible or permitted, whereas “criterion” means a principle or standard by which something may be judged or decided. A “condition” is therefore an essential prerequisite but a “criterion” is a benchmark against which something is judged and is not necessarily essential.

- CONTINUOUSLY/CONTINUALLY/CONSTANTLY/CONSISTENTLY

Continuous: Without a break between the beginning and the end / forming an unbroken whole without interruption, non-stop.

Examples:

Staff members shall be entitled to benefits under the Unemployment Insurance Scheme if they have held a staff contract for a continuous period of at least six months.

In June, the LHC experiments had already demonstrated their readiness for data taking with collisions in two intensive weeks of continuous operation.

Continual: Always going on or recurring at short intervals and never coming (or regarded as never coming) to an end / forming a sequence in which the same action or event is repeated frequently, incessant.

Examples:

In order to satisfy the requirements of Run 3 and Run 4, continual investment by all funding agencies is required.

The risks are continually mitigated and an extensive consolidation programme is under way to keep the current injectors running for 25 years.

Constant: Occurring continuously over a period of time, remaining the same over a period of time, unchanging, uniform.

Examples:

Another key question is whether the gamma ray flux is constant, or whether it varies, pointing to an origin near the Schwarzschild radius of the central black hole.

Isolated particles called “cosmic rays” are constantly passing through our bodies.

Consistent: Acting or done in the same way over time, especially so as to be fair or accurate / unchanging in nature, delivered to the same standard or having the same effect over time / compatible or in agreement with something.

Examples:

The risk assessment is accomplished by using a uniform process and criteria for the consistent definition and measurement of risk across all operations.

Fermilab’s near and far detectors are both running consistently at 425 kW.

It is important for European particle physics that the activities of Observer States are consistent with the European Strategy.

- DATA

Data can be perceived as either singular or plural, depending on the context.

In computing and communications, data is thought of as uncountable: the digital 1s and 0s that are stored on a hard disk or sent down a phone line and mean nothing individually. Used in this context, “data” is a mass noun: it takes a singular verb and can be referred to as “it”.

However, many scientists think of “data”, meaning experimental results, as a set of results whose individual members are identifiable and meaningful. This gives the word a plural character.

To avoid confusion and inconsistency, it is best to use “data” with a singular verb. When “data” in the second sense is meant, there are two ways to deal with it:

1. Word the sentence in a way that makes it impossible to tell whether “data” is being treated as singular or plural.
2. Consider replacing the word “data” with a plural alternative, such as “readings”, “measurements”, “results”, “findings”, “data sets”, etc.

In direct quotes, using a plural verb is permissible if that is what the speaker or writer did, as long as it does not clash with a singular “data” nearby.

- DIFFERENT(LY) FROM/TO/THAN

“Different from” and “different to” are both acceptable, but “different than”, although acceptable in US English, should not be used. So:

“Apples are different **from/to** oranges.”

“Her eyes are a different colour **from/to** mine.”

“Bosons behave differently **from/to** fermions.”

But NOT

“The weather in Geneva is different **than** the weather in Florida.”

- EDITION

To be avoided when speaking of events as it refers to publications in principle, i.e. a particular form or version of a published text. Use the following instead: “the tenth annual Researchers’ Night” or “the 2017 CineGlobe film festival” (the year should come first, unless the official title of an event has it at the end, e.g. “Global Physics Photowalk 2015”).

- GUIDELINES/INSTRUCTIONS

These words should normally be used in the plural. A document containing several pieces of advice, principles or informal rules is a “set of guidelines/instructions”; “guideline/instruction” in the singular should be used only to refer to one specific point within the document. E.g. “CERN has issued guidelines/instructions for people working in radiation-controlled areas”, but “The employee followed the guideline/instruction stating that a dosimeter should be worn”.

- HAZARD/RISK

The words “risk” and “hazard” are often used interchangeably and can both be translated by “*risque*” in French, but the meanings in English are slightly different.

In the context of health and safety, a “hazard” is any **source of potential damage, harm or adverse health effects**. Examples of hazards are asbestos, since it has the potential to cause respiratory problems; a wet floor, since it has the potential to cause someone to slip; or working at a height, since it has the potential to lead to a fall.

“Risk”, on the other hand, refers to the **probability or likelihood** of someone suffering harm or adverse effects as a result of exposure to a hazard. It may be expressed either as a number or simply as “high” or “low”, for example. The level of risk depends on factors such as the number of people exposed to the hazard, the duration and frequency of exposure, and the nature and seriousness of the potential adverse effects.

- INTO/IN TO

“Into” is a preposition that can have various meanings including movement, action or change, and it is also part of some phrasal verbs (i.e. a verb whose meaning changes when followed by a particular preposition). E.g. “The discussion turned into an argument”, “An investigation into the feasibility of the project is under way”, “He walked into the meeting an hour late”.

“In to” is simply two separate words with different functions occurring together. “In” can act as a preposition, an adverb or an adjective, or can be part of a phrasal verb, while “to” can be a preposition, an adverb or part of the infinitive of a verb (i.e. the dictionary form, such as “to do” and “to be”).

E.g. “They gave in to her demands eventually” (“gave in” is a phrasal verb, “to” is a preposition).

“An expert was brought in to assess the situation” (“in” is an adverb, “to assess” is an infinitive).

- IN VIEW OF/WITH A VIEW TO

The expressions “in view of” and “with a view to” are often confused. Although they sound similar, they do not share the same meaning.

“In view of” means “taking into account” or “considering”. Examples:

“In view of the weather forecast, the football match has been cancelled.”

“In view of the number of participants, the lecture will now take place in the Main Auditorium.”

“With a view to” means “with the aim of”. Examples:

“With a view to decreasing pollution, the government has introduced a congestion charge.”

“I am reading the Style Guide with a view to improving my English.”

- LESS/FEWER and AMOUNT/NUMBER

“**Fewer**” is used to refer to objects or people in the plural, as in “Fewer students are studying foreign languages these days” and “The stationery cupboard contained fewer than ten pencils”.

“**Less**” is used to refer to something that cannot be counted or does not have a plural, such as money, water, time or music, as in “It’s a better job but they pay you less money” and “He eats less food than he should”, BUT: “She consumes **fewer** calories (countable) than he does”.

“**Less**” is also used to express specific amounts of weight, distance, time, age and money, as in “The package weighed less than 10 kilograms”, “CERN is less than five miles from Geneva city centre”, “Their marriage lasted less than two years”, “All the components are less than five years old” and “He paid less than ten Swiss francs for it”.

N.B. You would use “fewer than” with an amount of money only if you were talking about specific bills or coins, as in “I have fewer than twenty silver dollars in my collection”.

Similarly, “**amount**” is used to refer to something that is uncountable or does not have a plural, whereas “**number**” is used for plurals.

For example: “The accident rate is very low considering the **number of people** working on the site.” Or “A machine like the LHC consumes a huge **amount of energy**.”

- LOOSE/LOSE

Due to their similar spellings, the words “loose” and “lose” are often confused, despite having completely different meanings and different pronunciations (the former rhymes with “goose” and the latter with “whose”).

“Loose” is an adjective that means the opposite of “tight”.

“Lose” is a verb usually meaning to mislay, to fail to win or to be deprived of/cease to have.

- ONLY

The word “only” is often positioned incorrectly in a sentence, creating confusion. It should be placed directly before the word or phrase to which it applies.

Consider the sentence “She said she liked him”. Inserting the word “only” into the sentence in different places results in a different meaning each time:

“**Only** she said she liked him” = She was the only person who said she liked him

“She **only** said she liked him” = She did nothing other than say she liked him

“She said **only** she liked him” = She said she was the only person who liked him

“She said she **only** liked him” = She said she liked him, but she didn’t love him

“She said she liked **only** him” = She said she liked no one but him

- OVERSIGHT

Two seemingly contradictory meanings (but both perfectly acceptable):

1. An unintentional failure to notice or do something.
2. The action of overseeing, i.e. supervising, something.

- PREVENTIVE/PREVENTATIVE

Both forms are acceptable.

- PRINCIPLE/PRINCIPAL

“**Principal**” can be an adjective or a noun.

Example of adjectival use: “My principal (i.e. main, most important) complaint is that he never listens to me.”

Used as a noun, it can mean:

- the person in charge of a college or university;
- an amount of money that someone invests or lends in order to receive interest, as in “She lives off the interest and tries to keep the principal intact”;
- a person having a leading or starring role, as in “The two principals received glowing reviews”;
- a person who empowers another to act as his representative, as in “I will have to consult my principal before I can give you an answer on that”;
- the person commissioning the work in a construction contract.

“**Principle**”, only ever a noun, has the following meanings:

- a moral rule or set of ideas governing how you behave, as in “She resigned as a matter of principle”;
- the rule explaining how a process works, as in “The principle of the internal combustion engine is that combustion creates power that causes components within the engine to move with great speed and force”;
- an ideal, as in “He’s a man of principle”, meaning a man with strong ideas of what is morally right or wrong.

- PROVEN/PROVED

The verb “to prove” has two past participles, “proved” and “proven”, which can be used interchangeably. Examples:

This experiment has proved/proven to be a failure.

I have proved/proven you wrong.

Piltown Man was proved/proven to be a hoax.

However, note that the simple past form is always “proved”, e.g. “The detectives proved that he had committed the crime”, and the adjective is “proven”, e.g. “It is a proven fact that vegetables are healthier than chocolate, but not as tasty”.

- QUOTE/QUOTATION

Our policy is to use “quotation” in formal texts, although we recognise that in speech and informal written contexts, “quote” and “quotation” are interchangeable, both meaning “a passage quoted from a book, speech or other source” and “an amount stated as the price of a stock or of any commodity for sale”.

- RATIONAL/RATIONALE

“Rational” is an adjective meaning logical or sensible, e.g. “They made a very rational decision considering the circumstances”.

“Rationale” is the associated noun, referring to the justifications for taking a decision or holding a certain belief, e.g. “The Director-General explained the rationale behind the decision to increase staff numbers”.

- RELATING TO/RELATED TO

There is a distinct difference in meaning between these two expressions.

The difference is best expressed by examples:

- “No information **relating to** (= concerning) our latest invention should be released to the press before it is launched in September.”

- “This matter is **related to** (= has some connection with, is to some extent relevant for) our investigation but is not our main area of interest.”

Incorrect: “*Bidders were requested to quote prices for each of the work packages related to the HVAC system*”, where “relating to” is clearly the intended meaning.

- RESPECTIVELY, RESPECTIVE

“Respectively” is often used wrongly when “each” is meant.

Incorrect: “*Funding of 20 MCHF was granted to ATLAS and CMS respectively.*”

Correct: “ATLAS and CMS were each granted funding of 20 MCHF.”

“Respectively” means “separately and individually and in the order already mentioned”, e.g. “ATLAS and CMS were granted funding of 20 MCHF and 15 MCHF respectively”, or “Cherries and bananas are red and yellow respectively”.

“Respective” means “belonging or relating separately to each of two or more people or things”.

Incorrect: "Any notice or other communication under this guarantee shall be made by registered letter to the respective addresses set out above."

The addresses cannot be "respective" because they do not relate to anything else in the sentence.

Correct: "Any communication regarding vehicle hire or waste disposal shall be made by registered letter to the respective addresses set out above" – in this case there would be two addresses listed above, the first for a vehicle hire company and the second for a waste disposal company.

- SHOWSTOPPER

Two seemingly contradictory meanings (but both perfectly acceptable):

1. Something that is striking or has great popular appeal.
2. An obstacle to further progress.

- SINCE

"Since" is used as a preposition, conjunction or adverb to refer back to a previous point in time.

Examples:

"He has been a staff member since January 2002";

"In the 12 months since I last wrote, a lot has happened";

"They haven't met since the wedding";

"Since he started the diet he's lost quite a lot of weight";

"It's been so long since I saw him";

"She's been back to the office many times since she retired";

"Since moving to Geneva, I've made friends of many different nationalities".

Common errors in the choice of tense with "since":

Incorrect: "He is/has been studying this phenomenon since three years."

Correct: "He *has been* studying this phenomenon *for* (the last) three years."

Incorrect: "Since several years, the department develops/has developed a consolidation plan."

Correct: "The department *has been developing* a consolidation plan *for/over* several years."

- TRANSPORT/TRANSPORTATION

Although these two words are often used interchangeably, they have slightly different meanings. "Transportation" refers to the action of moving goods or people, while "transport" as a noun generally denotes the system or means of moving them or the subject area in general. E.g.:

"The transportation of components requires careful planning."

"Using local products reduces transportation costs."

"The compact design with a handle ensures easy transportation."

“People should be encouraged to use public transport.”

“CERN will arrange transport between the sites.”

“EU transport ministers came to a joint decision.”

- WEIGHT/WEIGHTING

“Weight” is the much more common term, denoting heaviness, relative mass or a heavy object, e.g. “The surface needs to be strong enough to take its weight” or “The bodybuilder lifts weights in the gym”. The associated verb is “to weigh”, e.g. “The detector weighs 6 kilotonnes”.

A “weighting” is an adjustment or allowance made in a calculation to compensate for a distorting factor or to give higher priority to more important factors. E.g. “Each score is then multiplied by the appropriate weighting”. The associated verb is “to weight”, which is most commonly used in its past participle form, as in “weighted average”, which is the average calculated when weightings are applied.

- WHICH/THAT

These pronouns both introduce a new clause but “that” defines the subject, while “which” gives extra, non-essential information. A “which” clause should usually be enclosed in commas, whereas a “that” clause should not. See the following examples:

1. “The car, which she drives to work, is red.” In this sentence, the woman has only one car and the colour of the car is the key information; the fact that she drives it to work is simply an additional fact. Note that removing the “which” clause would not change the basic meaning of the sentence (“The car is red”).

2. “The car that she drives to work is red.” In this sentence, it is likely that the woman has more than one car but the writer is referring only to the one that she drives to work. Removing the “that” clause would remove information essential for the reader to understand which car is being described. It is possible to omit the word “that” in such cases, e.g. “The car she drives to work is red”.

“Which” should be used if preceded by a preposition, e.g. “The office in which he is working is on the ground floor”.

N.B. When referring to a person, use “who/whom” (see below) instead of “that” or “which”.

- WHILE/WHILST

Both are correct and there is no difference in meaning, but prefer “while” unless in a direct quotation.

- WHO/WHOM

“Who” and “whom” are both used to link two clauses referring to a person rather than a place or a thing.

“Who” is used if the same person remains the subject of the second clause that it introduces, whereas “whom” is used if the person becomes the object of a verb or a preposition.

Examples:

“The physicist who made the discovery is world renowned.”

“The man with whom she is working is Spanish.”

“The Director-General, who is responsible for the day-to-day management of the Laboratory, is appointed by the Council.”

“Mr Smith, whom I met last week, will be at the meeting.”

Incorrect: “The group wants to recruit someone whom has experience in financial management.”

Incorrect: “Who do you think we should call?”

- WITHIN (TEMPORAL USE OF)

The following usage is **correct**: “The appeal must be lodged **within 60 days of** the decision”.

However, this construction is often misunderstood by non-native speakers and should thus preferably be avoided by using the following alternative: “The appeal must be lodged **within the 60 days following** the decision”.

ANNEX 3: WORD LIST

Abbreviations used in the word list

Adj. = adjective

Pl. = plural

Pred. = predicate

above-mentioned	bandwidth	common law (noun); common-law (adj.)
addendum (pl. addenda)	baseline	communiqué (no italics)
ad hoc (no italics)	beamline	compel, compelled, compelling
ad hoc group	beam pipe	competence: see annex 2
<i>ad interim</i>	BEH mechanism (Brout–Englert–Higgs mechanism)	comprise
administration (<i>but</i> the French Administration)	behaviour	compromise
administrative circular (<i>but</i> Administrative Circular No. 5)	benchmark	<i>concertation</i>
advertise	biannual (twice a year)	connection
advise, adviser, advisable (<i>not</i> advisor)	biennial (every second year)	consensus
aesthetic	Big Bang	consortium (pl. consortia)
aforementioned	bilateral	contact tracing (noun), contact-tracing (adj.)
age (5 years of age, <i>but</i> a 5-year-old child)	bimonthly	converter
aged (aged 5 years or more)	bits per second; bit/s; kbit/s; Mbit/s; Gbit/s	cooperate, cooperation
ageing; ageism	black hole	coordinate, coordination
agenda (pl. agendas)	bona fide (no italics)	coronavirus
aide-mémoire (pl. aides-mémoire)	book-keeping (adj. and noun)	corrigendum (pl. corrigenda)
air conditioning (<i>but</i> air-conditioning system)	boson (not capitalised; Higgs boson)	cost accounting (noun); cost-accounting (adj.)
air-conditioned	bottleneck	cost allocation (noun); cost-allocation (adj.)
air handling (noun), air-handling (adj.)	brand new	cost-benefit (adj.)
allot, allotted, allotment	breakdown (noun); break down (verb)	cost centre
alumna (female)	break-up (noun); break up (verb);	cost-effective (adj.); cost effective (pred.); cost-effectiveness (noun)
alumnus (male)	breakthrough (noun); break through (verb)	cost-oriented (in preference to cost-orientated)
alumni (plural)	broadband	councillor (member of a council)
alumnae (female plural)	budget (<i>but</i> the CERN Budget)	counsellor, senior counsellor (N.B. legal counsel)
<i>amour propre</i>	budgeted	countermeasure
analog	build-up (noun); build up (verb)	counterproductive
analyse	bureau (pl. bureaux)	COVID-19
antennae (of insects)	busbar	criterion (pl. criteria)
antennas (of radios)	bypass (noun and verb)	cross-border (adj.)
antiatom	by-product	cross-reference (noun and verb)
antibaryon	cancel, cancelled, cancelling	cross-section (general usage)
antihydrogen	capacity-building (adj. and noun)	cross section (in the physics context, a measure of probability)
anti-ion	car park (<i>not</i> carpark)	curriculum (pl. curricula)
antimatter	carry-over (noun); carry over (verb)	curriculum vitae (no italics)
antinucleus	case-by-case (adj.)	cutback (noun); cut back (verb)
antiparticle	case law	cut-off (adj. and noun); cut off (verb)
antiproton	case study	cybersecurity
<i>a posteriori</i>	catalogue	cybercafé; cyberterrorism; cyberattack; cyberthreat; etc. (no hyphens)
<i>a priori</i>	catalogue	
associate (category of member of the personnel)	catalogue	
Associate Member State	centre, centred, centring	
audiovisual	centre of excellence	
autumn	CERN Data Centre in Meyrin	
avant-garde	CERN Data Centre in Prévessin (<i>not</i> Prévessin Computer Centre, PCC)	
awareness raising (noun), awareness-raising (adj.)	chair (<i>not</i> chairman, chairwoman, chairperson)	
	channel, channelled, channelling	
	chargé d'affaires (pl. chargés d'affaires) (no italics)	
	checklist	
	check-up (noun); check up (verb)	
	cheque (bank)	
	coefficient	
	coexistence	
	colloquium (pl. colloquia)	
	colour	
		dark matter (<i>not</i> capitalised)
		dark energy (<i>not</i> capitalised)
		databank
		database
		data centre (two words)
		data processing (noun); data-processing (adj.)
		data taking (noun), data-taking (adj.)
		daytime
		deadline
		debug, debugged, debugging
		début
bachelor's degree (no capitals), BA, BSc		
back-up (adj. and noun); back up (verb)		
bail-out (noun); bail out (verb)		
balance of payments (noun);		
balance-of-payments (adj.)		
balance sheet (noun); balance-sheet (adj.)		

decision-maker, decision making (noun), decision-making (adj.)	External Auditors	information and communication technologies (ICTs)
deep space (noun); deep-space (adj.)	extrabudgetary	infrared
de facto	extraterrestrial	input (always singular)
defence (but Department of Defense (US))	façade	in situ (no italics)
de jure	fact sheet	insofar as
delegation, delegate (<i>not</i> Delegation, Delegate)	<i>fait accompli</i>	install, installation, installed
demise	fallback (noun, adj.); fall back (verb)	instalment
dependant (noun)	fallout (noun, adj.); fall out (verb)	insure (take out insurance)
dependency allowance	favour; favourable	inter-agency (adj.)
dependent (adj.)	feedback	<i>inter alia</i>
depository (of a text or instrument)	feedthrough (noun); feed through (verb)	intercede
depository (warehouse)	fibre	interconnection (<i>not</i> interconnect)
desktop	fibre-optic (adj.) (noun: optical fibre)	intergovernmental
device (noun: piece of equipment)	first-quarter (adj.), first quarter (pred.)	internet
devise (verb: invent)	flagpole	Internet of Things (IoT)
dial, dialling, dialled	flow chart; flow diagram	interregional
dialogue (<i>but</i> dialog in computing context)	focused, focusing	interrelated
dialyse	follow-up (noun); follow up (verb)	intra-regional
dielectron	<i>force majeure</i>	intra-subregional
dilepton	forego (precede)	in vitro
dimuon	forgo (go without)	<i>ipso facto</i>
Director-General (pl. Directors-General)	formulae (mathematical)	
disc (except hard and floppy disks)	formulas (general)	judgement (<i>not</i> judgment)
distance learning (noun); distance- learning (adj.)	forum (pl. forums <i>not</i> fora)	
dot-com	freelance	kelvin (unit), pl. kelvins
downlink	fulfil, fulfilment, fulfilled, fulfilling	kiloampere
download	fundraising (adj. and noun)	kilometre (km)
down payment		know-how (noun)
downtime	gateau (pl. gateaux)	Kiev
Dr	gauge	
dreamed (past tense)	generation (second-, third-, next- generation) (adj.)	label, labelled, labelling
	globe (generic)	labour
e- (all compound forms hyphenated)	Globe of Science and Innovation	laissez-passer (no italics)
Earth (only in specific reference to the planet); earth station	groundbreaking	laptop
Earth-to-space	groundwork	large-scale (adj.); large scale (pred.)
e-business		layout (noun); lay out (verb)
e-commerce	hadron therapy	lead time
e.g. (not followed by a comma)	half-life	learned (past tense)
e-government	hand-held	Legal Service (at CERN)
e-health	hands-free	liaison
e-learning	head of delegation	licence (noun)
electronic (adj.) (<i>but</i> electronics engineer)	headquarters (<i>not</i> Headquarters)	license (verb), licensing, licensee
e-mail, email (both accepted)	healthcare (adj. and noun)	life-sized (<i>not</i> life-size)
<i>en bloc</i>	healthcare (adj. and noun)	lifelong
en masse	heatwave	lifestyle
endeavour	helpdesk	lifetime
end user (noun); end-user (adj.)	Higgs boson (boson not capitalised)	Linac4 (no space)
enrol, enrolment	high-tech	litre (<i>not</i> liter)
en route	homemade	logbook
ensure (make sure that)	home page	log in (verb)
enterprise	honour	login (noun)
entrepreneur	hot spot	longlist (noun and verb)
erratum (pl. errata) (no italics)	hydrolyse	long-standing
et al.	hyperlink	long-term (adj.); long term (pred.)
etc. (must be preceded by a comma)		
ethernet	<i>ibid.</i>	macroeconomic
euro (pl. euros)	implementer (<i>not</i> implementor)	make-up (noun); make up (verb)
eurozone (no initial capital)	improvise	manoeuvre
everyday (adj.), <i>but</i> every day as in each day	in the light of (<i>not</i> in light of)	many-sided
ex officio (no italics or hyphen)	inasmuch as	marketplace
expertise	in-depth (adj.); in depth (pred.)	master's degree (no capitals), MA, MSc, MPhil
	index (pl. indices [maths]; indexes [books])	medium-term (adj.); medium term (pred.)
	information (no plural: refer to items or pieces of information, some information, or data)	Medium-Term Plan
		Member State (adj. and noun)
		memorandum (pl. memoranda)

memorandum of understanding (MoU)		pro rata (no italics)
merchandise	occur, occurred, occurring, occurrence	pseudorapidity
meter (instrument)	offline	publicly (<i>not</i> publically)
metre (unit of length)	offset	
microcomputer	offshore	quality-assurance (adj.); quality assurance (noun)
microeconomic	old age (noun); old-age (adj.)	quantum chromodynamics (QCD)
microfiche	Ombud (<i>not</i> Ombuds or Ombudsman)	quantum electrodynamics (QED)
microfilm	omnidirectional	quasi-linear
microorganism	on-board (adj.); on board (pred.)	
microprocessor	ongoing	radioactive
mid-1980s	online	radiation protection (<i>not</i> radioprotection)
mid-afternoon	on-site (adj.); on site (pred.)	radiocommunication (adj.); radiocommunications (noun)
midday	open access publishing	radiofrequency
midnight	openlab (<i>not</i> capitalised)	<i>raison d'être</i>
mileage	open source software	rapporteur
Milky Way (the)	optical fibre (noun); (<u>adj.</u> : fibre-optic)	readout (noun); read out (verb)
milliampere	organisation, organise (<i>but</i> the Organization = CERN)	real-estate (adj.); real estate (noun)
mindset	out-of-date (adj.); out of date (pred.)	realise
minute-writer, minute writing (noun), minute-writing (adj.)	overall	re-emphasise
misspelled	overestimate	re-enact
mobile phone	overload	re-establish
mock-up (adj. and noun)	overvoltage	refer, referral, referred
modelled, modelling		reinsure
Moon (ours)	packet-switched; packet-switching	reinterpret
moon (generic)	<i>par excellence</i>	relocate; relocatable
Mr	payphone	reorganise
Mrs	per capita (no italics)	replan, replanning, replanned
Ms	per cent; percentage	restart (noun, verb)
Miss	per diem (no italics)	reunite
Mx	per se (no italics)	reuse; reusable
much-needed (adj.); much needed (pred.)	Phase 2 upgrades	revise
multiband	PhD (<i>not</i> Ph.D.)	rigorous
multibeam	photodiode	rigour
multichannel	photoelectric	road map
multidimensional	photoelectron	roll-out (noun); roll out (verb)
multiframe	photonuclear	round table (noun); round-table (adj.)
multifrequency	photoproduction	Run 3
multilateral	piecemeal	<i>savoir-faire</i>
multimedia	pile-up (noun); pile up (verb)	secretariat (<i>not</i> Secretariat, except when referring to a specific secretariat, e.g. the Council Secretariat)
multilingual	pipeline	Secretary-General (ITU, UN)
multinational	Point 1 (of the LHC)	semicircle
multiplan	policy-maker, policy making (noun), policy-making (adj.)	semiconductor
multiplex	postcode	set-back (noun); set back (verb)
multipurpose	postgraduate	set-up (noun); set up (verb)
multistakeholder	postpone	shortlist (noun and verb)
multiwire proportional chamber	postscript	short-term (adj.); short term (pred.)
	post-shutdown (adj.)	skilful
narrow-band (adj.); narrow band (noun)	post-war	small-scale (adj.); small scale (pred.)
nationwide	practice (noun)	Solar System (ours)
nature (not capitalised)	practise (verb)	solar system (generic)
neighbour	pre-assigned	sometimes (<i>but</i> some time in June)
nevertheless	précis-writer, précis writing (noun), précis-writing (adj.)	south-east(ern) (adj.); south east (noun)
next-generation (adj.); next generation (pred.)	predefined	south-west(ern) (adj.); south west (noun)
night-time	pre-empt	space, outer space (not capitalised)
No., Nos. (i.e. number(s); <i>not</i> n°)	pre-investment	space-to-space (adj.)
no one	prepaid	specialise
non-existent	principal (adj.)	spelled (past tense)
non-governmental	principal (noun: head person)	spin-off (noun + adj.); spin off (verb)
non-linear	principle (noun: idea, concept)	spokesperson (pl. spokespersons, <i>not</i> spokespeople)
non-Member State	printout (noun); print out (verb)	spring (the season)
noncommittal	prizewinner (<i>but</i> gold-prize winner)	standalone (adj.)
nonetheless	proactive	
north-east(ern)	Professor (<i>not</i> Prof.)	
north-west(ern)	programme (<i>but</i> computer program)	
note verbale (no italics)		

the Standard Model	testbed	value-added (adj.)
standby (adj. and noun); stand by (verb)	test bench	var (volt ampere)
startup (noun + adj.); start up (verb)	textbook	VaR (value at risk)
state-of-the-art (adj.); state of the art (pred.)	third-generation network	vice-chair; (Vice-Chair when referring to a specific individual)
stationary (not moving)	time-consuming	Vice-President of Council
stationery (writing materials)	time frame	vice versa (no italics)
status quo (no italics)	time limit	videoconference
stocktaking	timescale	viewpoint
straightforward	time sheet	vis-à-vis (no italics)
subassembly	timetable	waveform
subcommittee	ton (imperial/US)	waveguide
subcontractor	tonne (metric)	wavelength
subdetector	totalling, totalled	the web
subdivision	touchscreen	webpage
subgroup	trademark	website
subheading	transatlantic	weekday
sub-item	trans-border	weekend
subject matter	transboundary	well-being
subnetwork	travelling, travelled	well-known (adj.); well known (pred.)
subparagraph	turnkey	wideband
subregion; subregional	twofold	Wi-Fi
subsection	two-thirds (adj. and noun)	winter
subsystem	ultra-high frequency (noun); ultra-high-frequency (adj.)	wireless
subtropical	ultra-high vacuum (noun); ultra-high-vacuum (adj.)	WLCG (no article)
summer	ultrarelativistic	word-processing (adj.); word processing (noun)
Sun (ours)	underdeveloped	workload
sun (generic)	undersea	work plan
superbeam	under way (<i>not</i> underway)	worksheet
supersede	underestimate	worksite
supervise	underserved	workstation
supervisor	underutilise	worldwide
surprise	UNESCO (<i>not</i> Unesco)	World Wide Web
symposium (pl. symposia)	unidirectional	worthwhile
synchronise	Universe (ours)	X-ray
synthesis, synthesise	universe (generic)	yearbook
telecommunication (adj.); telecommunications (noun)	uplink	year-long (adj.), <i>but</i> all year long
teleconference	up-to-date (adj.); up to date (pred.)	zeitgeist (no italics)
tele-education	updated	
telehealth (prefer e-health)	upgrade (noun and verb); upgradable	
telelearning	upload	
telemedicine	usability	
televise	usable	
telework	user-friendly (adj.); user-friendliness	
tesla (unit), pl. tesla	Users Office (<i>not</i> Users' Office)	

ANNEX 4: ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

The following is a non-exhaustive list of abbreviations and acronyms commonly used at CERN.

AC	Audit Committee (replaced SACA in 2017)
ACCU	Advisory Committee of CERN Users
ACE	Antiproton Cell Experiment
AD	Antiproton Decelerator
AEgIS ¹⁴	Antihydrogen Experiment: Gravity, Interferometry, Spectroscopy
ALARA	as low as reasonably achievable
ALICE	A Large Ion Collider Experiment
ALPHA-2	Antihydrogen Laser Physics Apparatus-2 (preceded by ALPHA)
AMS	Alpha Magnetic Spectrometer
APPEC	Astroparticle Physics European Consortium (an interest grouping of national funding agencies)
APR	Annual Progress Report
ASACUSA	Atomic Spectroscopy and Collisions Using Slow Antiprotons
ASPERA	Astroparticle European Research Area Network (network of government agencies responsible for coordinating and funding national research efforts in astroparticle physics)
ATC	Actuarial and Technical Committee (CERN Pension Fund)
ATLAS	A Toroidal LHC Apparatus
ATRAP	Antihydrogen TRAP Experiments
AWAKE	Advanced Wakefield Experiment
BASE	Baryon Antibaryon Symmetry Experiment
CAC	CERN Audit Committee (replaced by SACA)
CAS	CERN Accelerator School
CAST	CERN Axion Solar Telescope
CBD	cumulative budget deficit
CCC	CERN Control Centre
CCP	<i>Comité de Concertation Permanente</i> (Standing Concertation Committee ¹⁵)
CDR	conceptual design report
CDS	CERN Document Server
CEA	<i>Commissariat à l'énergie atomique et aux énergies alternatives</i> (French Alternative Energies and Atomic Energy Commission)
CET	CERN Expenditure Tracking application
CHF	Swiss francs
CHIS	CERN Health Insurance Scheme
CHISB	CERN Health Insurance Scheme Board
CIXP	CERN Internet Exchange Point
CLIC	Compact Linear Collider
CLICdp	CLIC Detector and Physics study
CLOUD	Cosmics Leaving Outdoor Droplets (PS 215 experiment)
CMAC	CERN Machine Advisory Committee
CMS	Compact Muon Solenoid
CNGS	CERN Neutrinos to Gran Sasso
CNRS	<i>Conseil National de la Recherche Scientifique</i> (France)
COMPASS	Common Muon and Proton Apparatus for Structure and Spectroscopy (NA58 experiment)

¹⁴ Note that “AEgIS” is sometimes stylised with a bar over the g to indicate antimatter, and that the alternative spelling “AEGIS” is also used by the collaboration.

¹⁵ Note that this committee is very often referred to as “the CCP” even in English texts.

CP	Charge and parity (as in CP violation)
C-RBB	Computing Resources Review Board
C-RSG	Computing Resources Scrutiny Group
CtC	cost-to-completion
CTF3	CLIC Test Facility
CVaR	conditional value at risk
CVI	Cost-Variation Index
DAI	<i>demande d'achat interne</i> (internal purchase order)
DAO	Departmental Administrative Officer
Dcal	Di-jet Calorimeter (ALICE)
DDU	delivered duty unpaid
DESY	<i>Deutsches Elektronen-Synchrotron</i> (German electron synchrotron facility)
DIRAC	Dimension Relativistic Atom Complex (PS212)
DOE	Department of Energy (USA)
DPO	Departmental Planning Officer
DTO	Departmental Training Officer
DUSEL	Deep Underground Science and Engineering Laboratory
EA	East Area
EAR-2	Experimental Area 2 of CERN's neutron source facility, n_TOF
ECAL	Electromagnetic Calorimeter
ECFA	European Committee for Future Accelerators
EDH	Electronic Document Handling
EDMS	Electronic Document Management System
EEN	Enterprise Europe Network (European Commission)
EFDA	European Fusion Development Agreement
EGEE	Enabling Grids for E-science
EIROforum	Forum for European Intergovernmental Research Organisations (Comprises: CERN, EUROfusion, EMBL, ESA, ESO, ESRF, European XFEL, ILL)
ELENA	Extra Low Energy Antiprotons (experiment at CERN's AD facility)
EMBL	European Molecular Biology Laboratory
ENET	CERN's external knowledge transfer network (replaced by KT Forum)
ENLIGHT	European Network for Light Ion Therapy
EPPCN	European Particle Physics Communication Network
EPS	European Physical Society
ERC	European Research Council
ERL	Energy Recovery Linac
ESA	European Space Agency
ESFRI	European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures
ESO	European Southern Observatory
ESRF	European Synchrotron Radiation Facility
ESS	European Spallation Source
EuCARD	European Coordination for Accelerator Research & Development project
FAIR	Facility for Antiproton and Ion Research (GSI)
FALC	Funding Agencies for Large Colliders
fb	femtobarn (fb ⁻¹ : inverse femtobarn)
FCC	Future Circular Collider (the FCC study)
FEL	free-electron laser
FNAL	Fermilab National Accelerator Laboratory (US)
FP7	EU Seventh Framework Programme for Research
FTA	active full-time equivalent
FTE	full-time equivalent

GAC	<i>Groupement des Anciens du CERN</i> (CERN Pensioners Association)
GBAR	Gravitational Behaviour of Antihydrogen at Rest (experiment at CERN's AD facility)
GDB	Grid Deployment Board (for WLCG)
GDE	Global Design Effort (for the ILC)
GeV	gigaelectronvolt (one thousand million electronvolts)
GIF++	Gamma Irradiation Facility
GLIMOS	Group Leader in Matters of Safety
GSI	GSI Helmholtz Centre for Heavy Ion Research (originally from the German <i>Gesellschaft für Schwerionenforschung</i>)
H2020	Horizon 2020 (EU research funding)
HE-LHC	High-Energy LHC
HEP	high-energy physics
HEPAP	High-Energy Physics Advisory Panel (in the US)
HEPTech	Technology transfer network of institutions active in particle, astroparticle and nuclear physics
HFM	high-field magnets
HIE-ISOLDE	High-Intensity and Energy ISOLDE
HiLumi	High-Luminosity LHC (<u>also</u> : HL-LHC)
HiRadMat	High-Radiation to Materials test facility
HL-LHC	High-Luminosity LHC (<u>also</u> : HiLumi)
HMPID	High-Momentum Particle Identification Detector
HP-SPL	High-Power Superconducting Proton Linac
IBL	Insertable B-layer (ATLAS subdetector upgrade)
IC	Investment Committee (CERN Pension Fund)
ICFA	International Committee for Future Accelerators
ICHEP	International Conference on High Energy Physics
ILC	International Linear Collider
ILD	International Large Detector (for the ILC)
ILL	<i>Institut Laue-Langevin</i> (France)
ILO	Industrial Liaison Officer (also ILO Forum)
ILOAT	Administrative Tribunal of the International Labour Organization
INFN	<i>Istituto Nazionale di Fisica Nucleare</i> (Italian Institute for Nuclear Physics)
INET	CERN's internal knowledge transfer network
INSPIRE	high-energy physics information system
INTC	ISOLDE and Neutron Time-of-Flight Experiments Committee
IP	intellectual property
IPPOG	International Particle Physics Outreach Group
ISOLDE	Isotope Separator Online Detector (also known as the Online Isotope Mass Separator)
ISR	Intersecting Storage Rings
ITS	Inner Tracking System (ALICE experiment)
JARDB	Joint Advisory Rehabilitation and Disability Board
JINR	Joint Institute for Nuclear Research, (Dubna, Russia)
K	kelvin
KM3NeT	Cubic Kilometre Neutrino Telescope
KT Forum	CERN's external knowledge transfer network (replaced ENET)
LAGUNA	Large Apparatus Studying Grand Unification and Neutrino Astrophysics
LAr	liquid argon
LAr1-ND	Liquid Argon Near Detector (part of LBNF)
LBL	long-baseline (concerning neutrino experiments)
LBNE	Long-Baseline Neutrino Experiment (US collaboration)
LBNF	Long-Baseline Neutrino Facility (in the US)

LBNL	Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (California, US)
LBNO	Long-Baseline Neutrino Oscillations (European collaboration)
LCB	Linear Collider Board
LCC	Linear Collider Collaboration
LEAR	Low-Energy Antiproton Ring
LEIR	Low-Energy Ion Ring
LENA	Low-Energy Neutrino Astronomy
LEP	Large Electron–Positron Collider
LEXGLIMOS	Large Experiment Group Leader in Matters of Safety
LHC	Large Hadron Collider
LHCb	Large Hadron Collider Beauty experiment
LHCC	LHC Experiments Committee
LHCf	Large Hadron Collider Forward experiment
LHeC	Large Hadron–Electron Collider
LINAC2,3,4	Linear Accelerator 2, 3, 4 (N.B. no space before the number)
LIU	LHC Injectors Upgrade project
LP-SPL	Low-Power Super Proton Linac
LS1,2,3	Long Shutdown 1, 2, 3
MAPS	Merit Advancement and Promotion Scheme (replaced by MARS)
MARS	Merit Appraisal and Recognition Scheme (replaced by MERIT)
MCHF	million Swiss francs
MEDICIS	Medical Isotopes Collected from ISOLDE (medical applications facility at ISOLDE)
MERIT	Merit Evaluation and Recognition Integrated Toolkit
MeV	megaelectronvolts (one million electronvolts)
MicroBooNE	Micro Booster Neutrino Experiment (preceded by MiniBooNE)
MiniBooNE	Mini Booster Neutrino Experiment
MOAS	Merit-Oriented Advancement Scheme (replaced by MAPS)
MoEDAL	Monopole and Exotics Detector at the LHC
MPA(c/x/t)	associated member of the personnel (for the purpose of international collaboration/exchange of scientists/training)
MPE(Ts/Fb/Ap)	employed member of the personnel (staff member/fellow/apprentice)
MTP	Medium-Term Plan
Mu2e	Muon-to-Electron Conversion Experiment (Fermilab)
NA58	North Area experiment 58 (COMPASS)
NA61	North Area experiment 61 (SHINE)
NA62	North Area experiment 62
Nikhef	Dutch National Institute for Subatomic Physics (only initial letter capitalised, originally from the Dutch <i>Nationaal Instituut voor Kernfysica en Hoge-Energiefysica</i>)
NSF	National Science Foundation (US)
n_TOF	Neutron Time-Of-Flight facility
NuPECC	Nuclear Physics European Collaboration Committee (an Expert Committee of the European Science Foundation)
NuSTORM	Neutrinos from Stored Muons (Fermilab project)
OSQAR	Optical Search for QED Vacuum Magnetic Birefringence, Axions and Photon Regeneration (experiment at CERN)
P5	Particle Physics Project Prioritization Panel (in the US)

pA collisions	proton–nucleus collisions
PECFA	Plenary ECFA
PFGB	Pension Fund Governing Board
PHOS	Photon Spectrometer (ALICE experiment)
PIC(-LHC)	performance-improving consolidation of the LHC
pp	proton–proton
ProtoDUNE	prototypes of the future DUNE (Deep Underground Neutrino Experiment) detector
PS	Proton Synchrotron
PSB	Proton Synchrotron Booster
PSI	Paul Scherrer Institute (Switzerland)
QCD	quantum chromodynamics
QED	quantum electrodynamics
QGP	quark–gluon plasma
QPS	quench protection system
R2E	Radiation to Electronics
R&D	research and development
RAL	Rutherford Appleton Laboratory
RAMSES	Radiation Monitoring System for the Environment and Safety
RB	Research Board
RECFA	Restricted ECFA
REX(-ISOLDE)	Radiation Beam Experiment
RF	radiofrequency (<u>not</u> rf)
RHIC	Relativistic Heavy Ion Collider (at Brookhaven, US)
RMS	root mean square (<u>not</u> r.m.s.)
RRB	(LHC) Resources Review Board
RSSO	Radiation Safety Support Officer (HSE unit)
RTG8	document outlining the mandate, membership and working procedures of TREF
SACA	Standing Advisory Committee on Audits (replaced CAC, replaced by AC)
SAPOCO	Safety Policy Committee
SBL	short-baseline (concerning neutrino experiments)
SESAME	Synchrotron-Light for Experimental Science and Applications in the Middle East
SEU	single-event upset
SHINE	SPS Heavy Ion and Neutrino Experiment (NA61)
SLAC	Stanford Linear Accelerator Center, US (now named SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory)
SLIMOS	Shift Leader in Matters of Safety
SLS	Saved Leave Scheme
SPC	Scientific Policy Committee
SPL	Superconducting Proton Linac
SPS	Super Proton Synchrotron
SPSC	SPS and PS Experiments Committee
STSLS	Short-Term Saved Leave Scheme
SUSY	supersymmetry
STFC	Science and Technology Facilities Council (UK)
T	(unit of measurement) tesla
t	(unit of measurement) tonne
TDR	technical design report
TeV	teraelectronvolt (one million million electronvolts)

TLEP	high-luminosity e^+e^- collider
TOTEM	Total Cross Section, Elastic Scattering and Diffraction Dissociation Measurement at the LHC
TPC	Time Projection Chamber
TREF	Tripartite Employment Conditions Forum
TSR(@ISOLDE)	Test Storage Ring (at ISOLDE)
TSO	Territorial Safety Officer
UFO	unidentified falling object
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
VELO	Vertex Locator detector (part of the LHCb detector)
VHE-LHC	Very-High-Energy LHC
WLCG	Worldwide LHC Computing Grid
XFEL	European X-ray Free-Electron Laser