

TONE OF VOICE GUIDELINES

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Tone of Voice

INTRODUCTION

How we write about IT Sligo defines the way people think about us. Through these guidelines we aim to help you with written communications with people inside and outside the Institute. Our basic rule of thumb is this: Remember that you are always writing for someone else.

Some people naturally enjoy writing, others find it more difficult. Good writing should inform. It should be simple, clear and logical. Hopefully this guide will help you write in a way that is welcoming, friendly, informative and engaging. You may feel for example that you should retain a formal tone in your writing. We are giving you encouragement and permission, if you need it, to be more personal.

Tone of voice guidelines are an essential component of our marketing mix to ensure that our communication tools reflect both the functional and emotional aspects of our brand. It is important that our communication strategy is mindful of the need to tailor the message to specific target audiences, yet maintain a consistent brand image. Implementing an effective communication strategy which encompasses our key brand values is challenging, given our diverse student cohort and our wide range of stakeholders. Our “Tone of Voice” should convey the qualities unique to IT Sligo and form the basis of a differentiation strategy which aims to position IT Sligo as the premium supplier of third level education within this region and beyond.

MISSION

Our Mission as a Higher Education Institution is to create an open, supportive and flexible environment that encourages and supports all learners to continue to learn and contribute to society by focusing on our goals;

- Raising standards through effective quality assurance
- Transforming the learning environment
- Promoting research and scholarship
- Advancing knowledge management systems
- Encouraging academic diversity
- Investing in staff development
- Supporting regional growth and success

VALUES

The pursuit of learning and purpose in our changing society will be inspired by a commitment to the universal values of;

| Excellence | Inclusion | Respect |
|-------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Progressiveness | Diversity | Honesty |
| Independence | Equality | Integrity |
| Courage | Openness | |
| Quality | Partnership | |

VISION

To be recognised nationally and internationally as a relevant, dynamic and innovative third level institution, stimulating and supporting the development of the region.

IT Sligo – The Essence of the Brand

Our new IT Sligo brand is designed to embrace our institutional values of excellence, inclusion and respect; the quality of life and opportunities we offer on campus; the close knit community focus that we have encouraged and the positive associations of Sligo and the surrounding region.

BRAND IDENTITY

When you are writing about IT Sligo, you should aim to reflect our brand identity;

- We have a student centred focus. At IT Sligo we put students at the centre of everything we do. They are our main focus and we have their needs at heart.
- **Innovative and Flexible.** We use technology and flexible delivery to make our programmes accessible to all; we have a range of programmes across a broad range of subject areas. We lead the sector in the provision of online learning. We are continually reviewing and updating our curriculum and developing new programmes and partnerships with other institutions in Ireland and abroad.
- **Research Driven and Entrepreneurial.** We promote development in the region through support for business, industry and community groups in the North West. We play an important role in economic and social development through research and innovation services. Our applied research as a key learning tool for our students and an invaluable resource for the wider business community.
- **Inclusive and Friendly.** The campus is intimate and friendly to visitors, staff and students; people soon get to know each other on campus, and there is a homely and welcoming atmosphere among students and staff. We pride ourselves on being inclusive and providing equality of access and opportunity.
- **Welcoming.** IT Sligo is located in an area of outstanding natural beauty. Sligo is one of Ireland's most picturesque counties,

internationally known as the Yeats County, surrounded by beautiful mountain landscapes, lakes and seascapes. There is lots on and lots to do. Sligo is a gateway city and one of Ireland's oldest ports. At IT Sligo we have a reputation for a buzzing nightlife and a vibrant music scene. The outdoor life is second to none with a wide range of sport on offer, and a rich heritage of archeology, culture and geography. We invite you to come away 'to the waters and the wild' and see for yourself.

- **Knowledgeable and Contemporary.** Our staff are our biggest resource and strongest asset; they are highly qualified; they work directly with the students every day delivering programmes, helping with problems and providing constant pastoral and professional support. They are modern, forward-looking and enthusiastic about their work. We have invested in the Learning Environment and Virtual Learning and our staff are highly proficient in using state of the art technology.

IT SLIGO TAGLINES

We have developed the **Better Believe IT** tagline.

The concept is that IT Sligo is a hidden treasure and we are inviting people to come and see for themselves. Seeing is believing.

The tagline plays on words, that IT Sligo is better. It is a dynamic phrase, answering a rhetorical question. It is quietly self confident and positive.

You can believe what we say about IT Sligo, simply because it is true.

It is also designed to work as part of a strap line system

Friendly? Better Believe IT!
Links with Business? Better Believe IT!
Sigerson winners? Better Believe IT!
Umbro Cup winners? Better Believe IT!
Good for Business? Better Believe IT!
Relevant Research? Better Believe IT!

IT Sligo – Vocabulary

We suggest the following words and phrases for use in your copy when you are writing about IT Sligo. They relate to the values we have identified as institutional priorities and are linked with the brand values outlined earlier. They are drawn from research exercises conducted with academic and administrative staff as well as students. They are in effect words that IT Sligo has used to describe itself.

- At IT Sligo, we provide a youthful, stimulating and encouraging, yet relaxed environment for staff and students. We embrace innovation and entrepreneurship.
 - *Buoyant, vibrant, young, exciting, fun, community, energetic, enterprising, international flavour, caring, cultural atmosphere, craic, dynamic, flair drive ambition, focus.*
- We offer Online learning and we use innovative ways to deliver programmes to ensure a flexible approach. By listening to our students and reviewing competing programmes, we have increased the quality and scope of courses through innovation and flexible delivery.
 - *Innovative, partnership, collaboration, flexible, accessible, applied, practical, changing, pedigree, convenient, State-of-the-art*
- Visitors, staff and students constantly comment on the positive, friendly and welcoming atmosphere on campus. Irrespective of who you are you will soon feel at home and welcome at IT Sligo.
 - *People get to know each other easily, there is a great social life, warm atmosphere, relaxed campus, intimate, welcoming, accommodating, helpful, caring.*
- We have a particular focus on selected areas of Applied Research, Technology and Knowledge Transfer to support wealth creation and quality of life. Our research is practically focused, and it is directly related to the needs of business, industry and the community. We are a source of energy in the Regional Development of the Northwest which means that by engaging directly with business, industry, civic life, cultural and sporting organisations we make a direct contribution to the region.
 - *entrepreneurial, innovative, stimulating, practical, punch above our weight, relevant, engaged, problem solving, working with business, outreach, progressive, focused on achievement, regional leader, national player, influential, open door policy, welcoming, internationally recognised, contribute to the knowledge base economy, local engagement, targeted alignment of skills, thematic areas.*
- At IT Sligo we focus on students' needs and listen to employers. We are approachable and helpful, and our support services have been developed with students in mind.
 - *We encourage student diversity and see our students as individuals; we are caring, listening, understanding, adaptable, flexible approachable. Our staff are understanding and helpful and we offer pastoral support to our students.*
- At IT Sligo our core business is teaching and knowledge creation and exploitation. Our research activities are applied and relevant. We value our links with business and the wider community.
 - *We have student-centred support facilities, we provide pastoral support, staff are understanding and helpful. We offer contemporary and purpose-built facilities, it's great for sport, an inspiring location with a great atmosphere, we have integrity; we are risk-takers, offering inspiring education and learning; we are sector leaders, high quality, with academic integrity.*

IT Sligo – Vocabulary

IT Sligo Bullets

- The campus is centrally located in Sligo with ease of access to public transport
- The Buildings comprise 33,000m² and are located on a greenfield 69 acre site.
- The Campus Buildings include the new Student Centre and state of the art Library/ Learning Resource Centre which provides students with a dynamic focus for learning and study.
- Sports Facilities include:
 - Knocknarea Arena - 1,500 m² multipurpose sports arena equipped for a range of indoor sports including football and basketball.
 - International standard outdoor athletics track.
 - Floodlit fullsize soccer and gaelic pitches.
 - Leisure gym facilities for health and fitness of all staff and students.
- Student Accommodation

There are 2100 bedspaces provided by external providers within 8km of campus - the Institute provides internet access in bedrooms.
- Parking

We provide spaces for 950 vehicles on campus with both visitor, pay and display and free parking.

Executing the Tone of Voice

When writing, always bear in mind **who** it is that you are communicating with. Every piece of written communication is read by someone, so when writing, try to think of the person that you are writing for. Read your material, if necessary read it aloud and listen to what you are actually saying. Is it clear and concise?

Speak to your reader directly. Use the second person singular 'you' to personalise your writing, engage your audience and draw them into what you are saying.

Example: 'You will be able to explore our campus when you attend the Open Day'

Rather than, 'Students will be able to explore the campus when they attend the Open Day'

WHEN WRITING, USE THE ACTIVE VOICE

Avoid the passive voice. It is impersonal and unappealing. It also usually requires more words.

- Example: 'We offer programmes that will help you get a job.'
- Rather than: 'Programmes that are practical and help you get a job are offered.'

AVOID JARGON

There's always a temptation to use jargon, especially when you are writing about a subject you know very well. There may be terminology that you use every day in speaking to colleagues or peers.

You may not even be conscious that your language uses jargon, but it will be very obvious to the person who is not an expert. To them it is off-putting and an unnecessary barrier to communication. Try and avoid excessive abbreviations and technical language when you are writing.

One simple rule of thumb is not to write in language that you would never use when talking to your family. Also,

- Avoid using office speak and clichés.
- Use short simple modern words
- Do not use colloquial terms that will not be understood.
- Use UK English rather US English.

Below are some simple suggestions. The main guideline is remember the audience and keep the message clear.

instead of this

additionally
amongst
approximately
ascertain
at present
commence
commonly
concept
demonstrate
facilitate
finalise
firstly
frequently
give rise to
in close proximity to
in excess of
in excess of
in order to
in the course of
in the region of
indicate
inform
is able to
is dependent on
less expensive
locate
prior to
purchase
regarding
situated near
sufficient
terminate
transportation
utilise
venue
we will take appropriate action

use this

and/also
among
about
learn
now
begin
often
idea
show
help
complete
first
often
cause
near
more than
more than
to
during
about
show, point,
tell
can
depends on
cheaper
find
before
buy
about
near
enough
end
transport
use
place
we will do it