Nursing & Midwifery Council

Punctuation

Last Updated: 16/11/2020

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Hyphenation

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Use hyphens only where needed.

Use where the meaning would be ambiguous, for example, re-creation/recreation, re-sign/resign. Also, use where two or more words form an adjective or adverb, for example, 'ill-prepared report', 'long-term solution', 'decision-making body'. Therefore, you would write "I met John face to face", and "John and I had a face-to-face meeting."

Don't use a hyphen with adverbs ending in --ly, for example, 'wholly owned' should not be hyphenated. In tables, use an en dash (--) instead of a hyphen (-) when denoting the number 0 or blank text.

The following should appear as single words: caseload, cooperate, coordinate, healthcare, helpline, reapply, roadshow, timeframe, whistleblowing, wellbeing, workstream.

These should appear as two words: case law, high quality, lay person, record keeping.

Additionally, we use: post-registration, pre-registration, striking-off, decision-making, practise-related and risk-based.

Slashes

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Don't put spaces on either side of a slash, for example, 'either/or' not 'either / or'.

Quotation marks

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Use double "quotation marks" only when quoting someone and 'single quotation marks' for points which you wish to emphasise in a special way within the text. However, use italics if this is more appropriate for the type of emphasis you want to make. Also, use single quotation marks for quotes within quotes.

Ellipses

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There's no space between ellipses...when used in a sentence. An ellipsis should only be three dots.

Brackets

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Use round brackets ( ) throughout. Only use square brackets [ ] only within round brackets. (If the whole sentence is within brackets, the full stop should appear within the brackets.)

If only part of the sentence is in brackets, the full stop should appear outside of the brackets (like in this sentence).