HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR GUIDE

We've put together the following best-practice guideline to make sure your Guide performs well and help you attract and engage students effectively.

It provides a quick overview of how to put together content for your Guide to give The Student Room users the best possible experience, and to keep search engines happy (getting traffic to your Guide from Google and other search engines is really important).

If you have any questions, or want advice on what will work best, we're more than happy to assist you in any way can. Just drop us an email or give us a call.

AVOID DUPLICATE CONTENT

Duplicate content is content that appears in more than one place on the web, and Google doesn't like it at all - it can penalise websites and remove pages or in extreme cases - whole sites from their search index. The Student Room has to be careful to keep Google happy in this respect, so we'll need to block any duplicate content from Google and other search engines (by using a 'no follow' tag if you're interested in the technical aspects).

To make sure your Guide can be found by search engines, avoid cutting and pasting content from your own website and write unique content specifically for The Student Room users.

And all our research shows that Guide copy produced specifically for The Student Room works so much better in engaging students- so everyone wins.

MAKE YOUR CONTENT RICH AND INFORMATIVE

Search engines want to see that each page of copy we publish is as valuable as possible to a user of our site. Producing pages with low quality content, or lack of content can be harmful both to us and your guide. When writing your Guide text, make sure each page has at least 300 words of quality, editorial content.

Users of The Student Room are actively using your guide to find out about you, so the more, high quality information you can provide the more effective your Guide will be on all fronts.

It is also important to make sure your content doesn't contain any spelling and grammatical errors and is factually correct, as these are also factors in how search engines rate the quality of your page.

MAKE YOUR GUIDE ACCESSIBLE

Our students value most Guides that feel like part of the wider Student Room experience and being accessible is an important part of that. But what does accessible sound like?

Accessible language is clear language. Make things easy to read and understand. Avoid anything that sounds like jargon, business language or pretentious marketing speak.

Accessible language is human language. Keep it lively and interesting. Use abbreviations. Have fun – and be witty once in a while. But always keep your meaning clear, and don't sound like you're trying too hard to be down with the kids!

BE NATURAL AND BE FRIENDLY

The Student Room tries to sound like a real human being is talking, and the more your Guide mirrors this, the better it will work. Use the active voice and everyday words that everyone can relate to. Avoid dull, robotic language or clichés. Think about your audience and talk with them in mind. Engage students with warm, conversational language.

USE KEYWORDS – BUT NOT TOO MUCH

Think about what a user might search for when trying to find the page you are creating – these are keywords, and using them well will help your Guide perform better in the search engines. Build these keywords into the text you produce, but keep it natural (don't stuff keywords on the page, if you over use the same terms it can be detrimental).

SOME QUICK TSR STYLE POINTS

These are some style points we use on The Student Room. If you build them into your Guide, it will feel more like a part of the whole TSR experience, which tends to work well with our users.

Capital letters | Important for consistency…
- University always has a lower-case 'u', unless it forms part of a name. So: "The University of Walford is a university I've just made up."
- Academic subjects are always lower case, except languages. So: "I'm studying English, maths and biology". The exception is where they form part of a course or faculty name. So: "Students can study BA(Hons) Geography at the Faculty of Earth Sciences."
- Job titles are never capitalised. We wouldn't capitalise police officer, taxi driver or waitress, so we don't capitalise prime minister, head of communications or vice-chancellor.

Dates | Number, then month, then - if appropriate - year. No ordinals. eg 18 November 2016.

Numbers | One to nine written in full, 10 and above written as numerals.

Exclamation marks | Please avoid wherever possible. Less is more here.

MOST IMPORTANTLY - HAVE FUN!

Enjoy writing your guide. Our audience will naturally respond to your content when it's written with a warm and lighthearted tone.