

Writing a Press Release

Official Name

The University's official title is:

National University of Ireland Galway
or Ollscoil na hÉireann Gaillimh

The only official abbreviation is:

NUI Galway

This in-house Writing a Press Release Style Guide is intended primarily for the use of the Marketing and Communications Office staff, and those working with the office on news releases.

The Press and Information team at NUI Galway issues hundreds of press releases every year. Even with such a high output, not every story on campus can make it to a general news release. However, we are always happy to consider your story.

We appreciate when efforts are made to submit a 'Draft Press Release', and hopefully this guide will help with that process. The 'Draft Press Release' is can be sent for consideration to pressoffice@nuigalway.ie

We will then review, edit and polish the text before sending it back to you for final approval. After that, the 'Final Press Release' can be sent to the appropriate contacts in our journalist database.

In everything we write we try to use language that is as clear, simple, and accessible as possible. The *Times New Roman* typeface family is the preferred typeface for use on all communications produced in-house.

Specific style guides are also available on the NUI Galway web page <http://www.nuigalway.ie/staff/>. Of particular interest might be:

Grammar Spelling and Punctuation

Copywriting for Promotional Literature

Length

A press release should be no more than 500 words. No matter how important you think it is, remember it's up to the journalist to make up their minds as to its newsworthiness.

Timing

We need to get your 'Draft Press Release' at least three weeks before you might hope to see it appear in a paper. More notice, even better.

Photos

High resolution images can add to the story. If you have some, please send them to us with your draft release.

For press releases we refer to the
President as
Dr Jim Browne

To simplify our style, we use
PhD not Ph.D.
MA not M.A.
BA not B.A.

Writing a Press Release

Running on average to 400 words, press releases should be written as you would expect it to appear in a news story, with the most important information first.

Wherever possible, all draft press releases submitted to the Press & Information office should be written in the following structured manner considering some key points.

1. The Headline

Make the headline catchy and to the point. Don't worry about not being able to fit in as much information as possible in the headline.

2. The First Paragraph

The first paragraph (two to three sentences) must sum up the story and further paragraphs should elaborate. In a fast-paced world, neither journalists nor other readers would read the entire press release if the opening paragraph doesn't generate interest.

3. Further Paragraphs

The 'middle' of a press release should pull out the most interesting aspects of the event/research finding/funding announcement etc. Think of the reader (the journalist) and the audience (the reader of the newspaper). What can be included here to make this story relevant to them - a current affairs angle perhaps?

If the story is about science, for example astrophysics, never assume the reader will understand all the words that might be commonly used in your field. Try not to pepper your text with acronyms or technical words. Read the paragraph through and imagine you are completely new to the subject - does it make sense?

4. Quotes

A quote must be included from the relevant NUI Galway spokesperson. Try to make the quote as newsy, punchy and relevant as possible. Not just 'we are delighted to welcome'. Additional quotes from third parties can add to the release - especially if that person is a guest speaker for example. Three quotes are stretching it.

5. Closing Paragraph

The closing paragraph often provides additional detail and a contact phone number, or website if you want that printed.

6. End

Mark the end of the release with the word –ends– in the centre of the page

-ends-

7. Contact for Further Information

Contact details should be added to the end of the release. Include a name, phone number, email address, website link and if possible a mobile number.

Writing Style

When it comes to your writing style, our top tips include:

- Avoid using flowery language, buzzwords, jargon, bureaucratic phrasing or clichés. This only clutters your story and will also make the release unnecessarily longer than it should be.
- Keep it simple with just the facts. This is not a treatise.
- Avoid using very long sentences and paragraphs, as the reader is scanning.
- No exclamation marks please! We are not writing an advert.

- Spell out everything in the first instance and then use the acronym in brackets after, e.g. International Press Releases Writing Institute (IPWI).
- No claims of biggest, best, unique. We are still not writing an advert.
- Don't worry if it's not perfect. The Press & Information Office will review, edit, proof and polish the text.

Lots of examples of press releases can be found on the University website. <http://www.nuigalway.ie/about-us/news-and-events/>