



**RADCLIFFE
DEPARTMENT OF
MEDICINE**

Communications Style and Editorial Guide

A short user guide for departmental communicators.



This guide ensures consistency, clarity and strategic alignment across all RDM communications internal and external channels. It supports the RDM Communications Team and other content creators writing in a professional capacity. It draws on the [University's style guide](#) as a basis, and this should be referred to in the first instance.

Part 1: Style & Tone Guidelines

Principles

- Align with [University of Oxford style guide](#) unless otherwise specified
- Use concise, accessible language; prioritise clarity over formality
- University of Oxford or Oxford University are interchangeable, they can be alternated for variety or kept the same for consistency.

Tone of Voice

- Professional
- Friendly, confident, plain English; avoid jargon
- Use first person pronouns (we, us)
- Adopt more formal style, representative of the University for any high-profile announcements, or some external communications such as news articles and press releases.

Grammar, Spelling & Punctuation

- UK English
- No full stops or spaces in abbreviations (eg DPhil, NHS, Dr, St)
- Write numbers as numerals, including numbers below 10
- Use 12-hour clock with full stops (eg 9.30am), no "00" (6pm)
- Dates: "Monday 5 June" (no suffix or year if current year)

Capitalisation & Titles

- Use sentence case (initial cap for first word) for headlines and article titles.
- Italicise book, journal, or film titles if it is a complete published work.
- Use full job titles on first mention in press releases or formal outputs.
- Associate Professors may choose "Dr" or "Professor" as title.
- Don't use a capital for 'department' when referring to RDM, unless you are referring to the whole department name, ie Radcliffe Department of Medicine.

Part 2: Editorial Guidelines

RDM Weekly Bulletin

- Items: max 3–4 sentences, informal but to-the-point
- Events should lead with [Day, Date, Month, Time, Venue] in bold, no paragraph space underneath
- Limit to 1 hyperlink, placed in the blue button
- Button text to contain a deadline or single call to action, eg Apply by 12 May
- RDM staff names: bold but not hyperlinked
- Events or training sessions: listed in date order
- Email addresses: not hyperlinked.

News Articles (Website)

- Formal tone, accessible language where possible
- Use full department name in the first instance, then RDM thereafter
- Link to profile for internal names
- Use title + surname on second mention
- Add context for external individuals (affiliation, if not obvious).

RDM Blog

- Professional and friendly tone
- Non-corporate, personal perspectives, insight or advice
- Written in first person, ideally by one author
- Word count – approx. 300.

Press Release

- Formal, external-facing tone and accessible language
- Use full department name throughout
- Use Oxford brand voice; check with [Public Affairs Directorate](#) if needed
- Will appear as a news item on the website.

Social Media

- Tone: concise, confident, human. and use plain English
- Tag relevant people and accounts, eg partners, funders, co-leads
- Align messages with published content (Bulletin, web news)
- Use images where possible, always include alt text
- Should focus on people news, no internal communications
- Externally relevant news can be shared via a link back to the RDM news webpages
- Use emojis sparingly – no facial expression emojis.

Printed materials

- Ensure brand compliance for logos, fonts, colour. RDM's [branding guidelines](#) can be found on the RDM Communications webpages.

Part 3: Workflow

Content can be prioritised into three levels (top, mid and low tier), according to how the content performs across all channels, and its strategic significance.

Content Prioritisation Framework

Top Tier

- A combination of the most popular / most engaged with content, and / or content that aligns with RDM's strategic goals.
- Typically, there will only one of these items in any issue of the Bulletin, and they will almost certainly be the lead item.
- If there is more than one of these items per week, consider scheduling them across coming weeks, to ensure good engagement rates across multiple issues.
- These items won't be in every issue, because they tend to align with a regular cycle of events (for example the RDM awards, senior RDM appointments).
- These items will have a news story on the RDM website, or content elsewhere on the RDM website.
- Items will likely have social media posts (aside from internal departmental events).

Top tier content includes:

- *RDM Day (registration, programme confirmation, catch up article. Does not include RDM Day save the day)*
- *RDM Awards (Graduate Prize, Citizenship, Excellent Supervision)*
- *New RDM PIs*
- *New RDM Associate Professors*
- *Prestigious / notable fellowships, awards and appointments*
- *Major funding awards (over £3m), particularly if they are from key funding partners*
- *Novo Nordisk news – fellowship appointments, applications open / general news about the Fellowship.*
- *RDM Open Forum (could be a lead item for the first registration post, but would move further down when repeated in subsequent issues).*

Mid Tier

- This content makes up the bulk of the Bulletin issue.
- Items should be RDM specific where possible and will be prioritised.
- Content should have department-wide relevance in the most part.
- Non-RDM specific items will have strategic significance.
- Will come from a variety of places.
- RDM-specific items may also have a news story / content on the RDM website.
- Research findings / news / funding awards and RDM people news will also have social media posts.
- People awards will be suitable for a news item if the award allows the opportunity to highlight specific research.
- Other awards, for example, lifetime achievement awards / general recognition in a specific field, or a 'membership' award to a professional body may not have a news item, but can be linked via the Bulletin to the person's RDM profile and consider for social media.

Mid tier content includes:

- *RDM research findings / publications*
- *RDM Blog*
- *RDM in the news*
- *Early career / investigator awards*
- *Funding awards (under £3m) and senior appointments*
- *Other RDM people news*
- *RDM Committee news*
- *Funding opportunities*
- *Career Development news and opportunities (includes PDR /CDR and Reward and Recognition)*
- *RDM Researcher Association news and events*
- *RDM events*
- *Interesting non-academic, fun/leisure events*
- *Regular items scheduled on the annual content planner.*



Low Tier

- These are typically items that will come through other internal University channels.
- Items will still be broadly relevant to RDM audiences.
- These items will almost always be better suited to other channels and / or repeated in other University channels.
- Items can be considered as filler, and be 'bumped' to other issues, depending on other priority items.
- Items will be considered for the Bulletin, may occasionally need some content updated on the RDM website (for example policy changes), but will not be relevant for a news item or social media.

Low tier content includes:

- *Non-RDM events / lectures*
- *Need to know policies*
- *Vacancies*
- *Corporate news / updates from the University*



Channel Triage Process

- Ask: Who's the audience?
- What's the value to RDM?
- Is this time-sensitive?
- Prioritise based on tier, deadline, and effort required within timescales.
- Escalate unclear requests to Communications Team.

Contacts & Approvals

- Email: communications@rdm.ox.ac.uk for all queries.
- Visit <https://www.rdm.ox.ac.uk/intranet/communications> for more information about using RDM channels.

