

# Brand Guidelines 1.0

December 2021

^  
DEFY  
GRAVITY



UNIVERSITY OF  
TORONTO

---

## Purpose

Launching in December 2021, **Defy Gravity** is the University of Toronto's new brand expression, which brings to life the promise of inclusive excellence and caring, engaged community in a vivid, human, and relatable way.

This document establishes the University's tone of voice and visual elements, which will ultimately shape our brand's overall look, feel, and mood. Together, these elements will bring U of T's vision, mission, value proposition, and character to life in emotional and engaging ways. Correct use is vital to ensuring the delivery of a consistent experience across all touchpoints.

These guidelines should empower you to make creative decisions that work best for your specific marketing and communications needs. Treat this guide as a living document, knowing that details may change and evolve over time.

We encourage you to visit our brand portal to keep up to date on the brand's latest developments: **[brand.utoronto.ca](https://brand.utoronto.ca)**

**This document includes only a high-level overview of the key Defy Gravity brand elements. A more detailed version is currently in production and will be shared in 2022.**

---

---

# Table of Contents

## **Brand Strategy**

---

|                    |    |
|--------------------|----|
| Brand Story        | 05 |
| Vision and Mission | 06 |
| Brand Pyramid      | 07 |

## **Tone of Voice**

---

|                                  |    |
|----------------------------------|----|
| Who We Are                       | 09 |
| Tone and Manner                  | 10 |
| Our Writing Style                | 11 |
| What Makes a Defy Gravity Story? | 12 |
| Headlines                        | 13 |

## **Visual Identity**

---

|                                    |    |
|------------------------------------|----|
| <b>Defy Gravity Mark</b>           | 16 |
| Colours                            | 17 |
| Clear Space and Minimum Size       | 18 |
| Improper Usage                     | 19 |
| Relationship with U of T Signature | 20 |
| <b>Typography</b>                  | 22 |
| <b>Colour</b>                      | 23 |
| Tints                              | 24 |
| <b>Email Signature</b>             | 25 |

---

---

# Brand Strategy

The University has developed a brand strategy that aligns with our key goals and core values. It uniquely positions and sets us apart from other higher education institutes, maintains our global profile and reputation, and creates strategic and consistent communications for all audiences.

---

## **Brand Story**

It's always easier to say it can't be done. You can't cheat gravity, conquer disease, or change the system. But those who see limitations only never make waves or bend the arc of history.

At the University of Toronto, we see the impossible as a challenge, the uncharted as an invitation, and every obstacle or setback as motivation to push onward.

We revolutionized the world's understanding of mass media. We uncovered cyber-espionage networks, reinvented literary criticism, unearthed ancient civilizations, and helped preserve ancient and modern languages. We reimagined artificial intelligence, paving the way for new frontiers in science, technology, culture, and medicine. And, together with our hospital partners, we brought insulin to the world, helped conquer polio and smallpox, revolutionized transplant surgery, and pioneered stem-cell therapies.

Behind these incredible breakthroughs is a community of students, faculty, alumni, and supporters from every conceivable background and discipline, bound together by an insatiable drive to ask bold questions and collaborate on the world's toughest challenges. A community of fearless and compassionate thinkers who do not see the impossible as some foregone conclusion. A community that believes that conventional wisdom isn't always wise. A community that believes that talent and great ideas can rise above any challenge and change the calculus of what's possible.

**A community that defies gravity.**

---

## Vision and Mission

Our vision is unique to U of T. It acts as a roadmap, guiding us to what we want to accomplish in the future.

Our mission statement clearly communicates our purpose, objectives, and how we plan to serve our audiences. It is action-oriented and gives our audience an idea of what the University does and the impact we want to make.

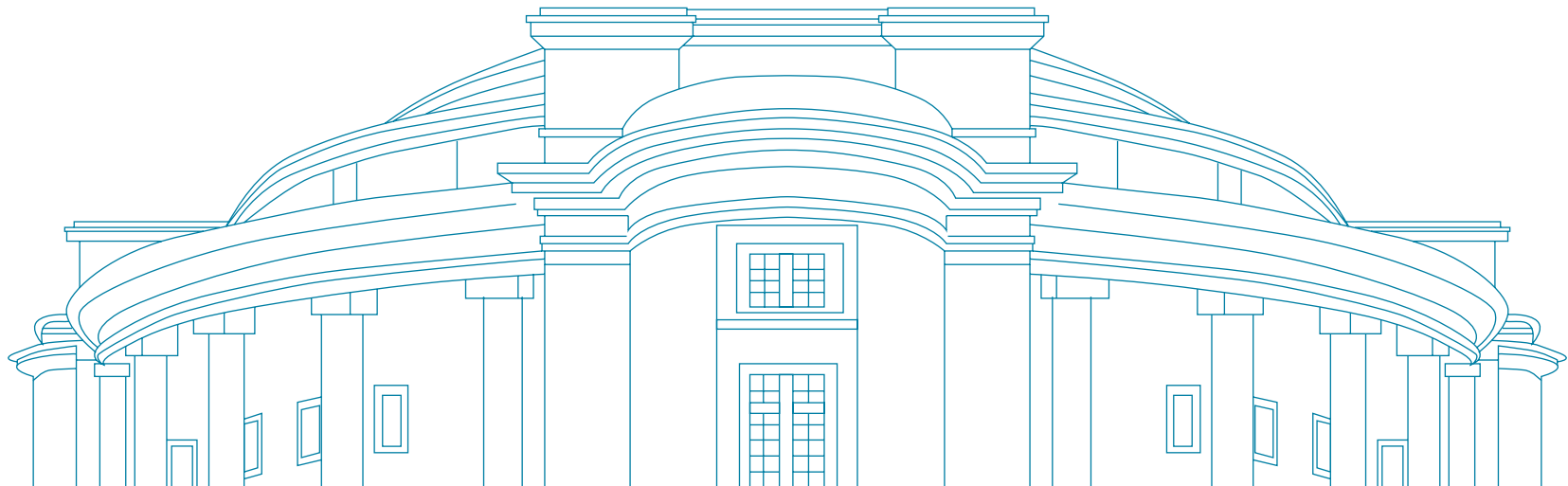
Both our vision and mission were developed through extensive consultations with the University community.

### Vision

To be one of the world's greatest catalysts of human potential, ingenuity, inclusivity, and positive change through groundbreaking research, innovative teaching, and enriching community partnerships.

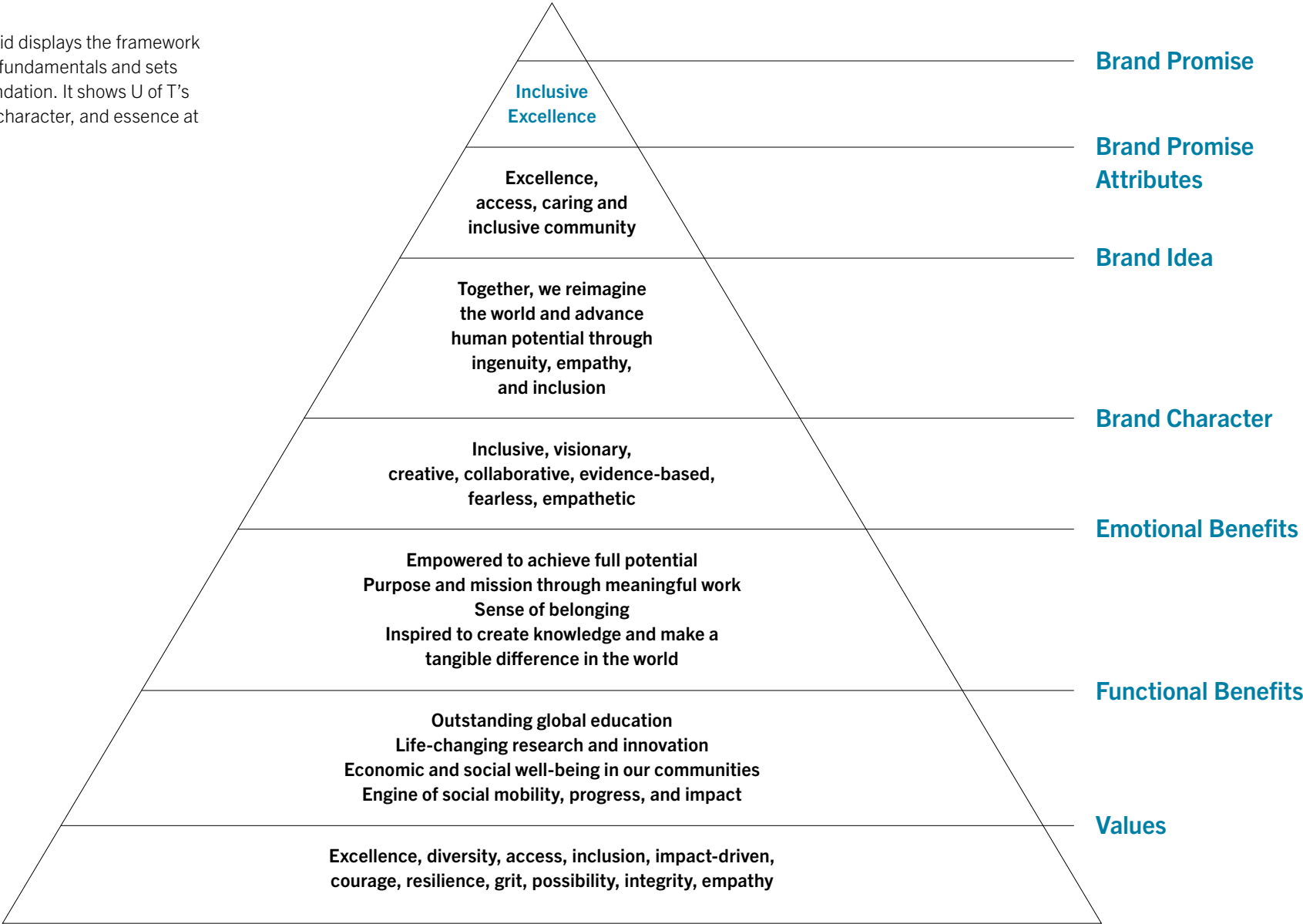
### Mission

To provide an outstanding global education and student experience, ignite life-changing research and innovation, and promote social well-being, prosperity, and vitality in our communities.



# Brand Pyramid

Our brand pyramid displays the framework of U of T's brand fundamentals and sets the strategic foundation. It shows U of T's mission, values, character, and essence at a glance.



---

# Tone of Voice

Our tone of voice embodies and expresses the University of Toronto's personality and core values. It speaks to the tone and manner we use to define the voice of the University and ensures we are creating and maintaining a strong identity, with consistency and purpose in all our communications.

When we all use a consistent voice, we live up to our brand strategy, and we empower all communicators within the University to connect with their specific audiences.



---

# Who We Are

## We are inclusive

At the University of Toronto—residing in the world’s most diverse city—we’re bringing together bright people from every conceivable background, culture, and discipline. We exist to empower people to achieve their full potential. We believe in asking bold questions and collaborating on the world’s toughest challenges because we know that we can achieve more when we work together.

## We are visionaries

We envision things previously thought impossible. We imagine the world we want to live in and then take the steps to make it a reality. Our community is committed to developing groundbreaking ideas about what the future will and could look like. Together, we shape the future we believe in.

## We are creative

Our students and faculty are remarkably creative. It’s how we look at the problems in front of us and how we explore new ways of doing things. Our creativity allows us to generate knowledge, ideas, and possibilities that make a tangible difference in the world.

## We are collaborative

Our community thrives on collaboration. We are bound together in our desire to make waves and create a better world for us all. We recognize that alone, we can accomplish great things. But when we come together to work towards shared goals, we can make lasting, game-changing impact. Our experts converge from nearly every field, collaborating across disciplines and geographical boundaries.

## We are evidence-based

U of T is home to some of the world’s most talented thinkers, inventors, innovators, and educators. Together, we believe in facts, evidence, and integrity.

## We are fearless

We do not see the impossible as some foregone conclusion. We are not afraid to explore. We don't let obstacles or setbacks deter us. We defy conventional thought and push the limits of knowledge. Part of being fearless is about always being curious. Our community is always asking questions. What if? Why not? Why not now? These questions are catalysts that expand our knowledge and hold the potential to fundamentally alter how we understand ourselves and the world around us.

## We are empathetic

We are smart, but we aren’t robotic. We genuinely care for each other and the world at large. We provide an unwavering commitment to opening new vistas for human expression, scientific discovery, and social progress that the world so desperately craves.

---

## Tone and Manner

In order to successfully convey who we are at the University of Toronto, our tone and manner must be:

### Inspiring

Provide hope for today and for the future.

### Energetic

We're enthusiastic about the work we do at U of T, and we want our readers and viewers to be too. Show that we're excited, optimistic, and provide a sense of momentum.

### Intelligent

We strive to convey information clearly, but we don't boast or brag. Part of our intelligence is breaking down complicated research jargon into approachable, easy-to-understand terms.

### Human

Insulin didn't invent itself. Behind every great breakthrough are the people who made it happen. Students, researchers, donors, alumni. They're human. Make sure you speak to them as such.

### Caring

Always show how we genuinely care about our community. Celebrate the work that we have done, but also the impact it has had.

---

## Our Writing Style

When developing copy, please keep the following top of mind:

### Speak to impact.

We aim to inform but also inspire with our stories. Make sure the impact of what you're describing is tangible and relatable. Don't leave the reader wondering, so what?

### Write in an active voice.

It's clearer, requires fewer words, and centres copy around the doer, helping us celebrate who did something—an inspiring student, researcher, award winner, etc.—as well as what they did.

Active: U of T researchers were the first to uncover *GhostNet*—a massive cyber-espionage network.

Passive: *GhostNet*—a massive cyber-espionage network—was first uncovered by U of T researchers.

### Keep copy free of hyperbole.

Be judicious with words like revolutionary, groundbreaking, game-changing, breakthrough, etc. Don't overpromise and claim we're going to cure something or solve a global problem like climate change. While that may be our goal, our audience includes people who will scrutinize every word and expect them to be backed up with evidence. Say we're working, aiming, tackling, trying, collaborating, leveraging our breadth and depth across disciplines, etc.

### Favour optimism.

The world faces many grave challenges, and it's tempting to dwell on the negative. As much as possible, we want to present an optimistic vision for the future. Focus on how our students and faculty are addressing these issues.

### Keep your audience in mind.

Always put yourself in the shoes of your audience. Is it a Facebook or transit shelter ad or a room full of astrophysicists? Prospective donors or prospective students? Don't presume people outside the University will understand academic terms and titles, but don't talk down to readers either. Use smart, everyday language.

### Be clear and concise.

Focus on the single most important message you are trying to convey, and remove anything distracting or unnecessary. Avoid jargon or insider language that might alienate the reader.

### Community over institution.

When possible, use direct quotes from U of T community members (i.e., real students, faculty, staff, and alumni) to tell honest Defy Gravity stories and our institutional voice to support the narrative. We don't take credit for people's accomplishments—U of T is fortunate to support this great work.

### But be judicious with quotes.

If you're using quotes, make sure they have a purpose and don't repeat information but elevate or advance it. If they contain jargon or errors, paraphrase them rather than using too many square brackets, which are confusing to readers. In general, always use double quotation marks except for headlines and quotes within a quote.

### Don't overuse the words “defy” and “gravity.”

We'll be telling many stories of how the U of T community is defying gravity metaphorically, but use the phrase itself sparingly and don't stretch it by using related phrases like “float above,” “defy the laws of physics,” etc. You can easily describe how our community defies gravity without ever using those words in body copy.

---

## What Makes a Defy Gravity Story?

Defy Gravity stories are about overcoming obstacles to achieve something profound and inspiring. Of course, that includes historic U of T milestones such as discovering insulin or becoming the first Canadian woman to go to space. But it also encompasses more personal triumphs like the student who's the first in their family to attend university, took an arduous path to get here, or tested their own limits to accomplish something meaningful.

Defy Gravity also speaks to our mindset as a community. We don't just accept the world as it is. We have a defiant streak. We don't shrink from big challenges. We're a community that wants to change the world for the better. We may not always succeed, but we don't let that hold us back. We use every setback as motivation to push onwards. Defy Gravity is shorthand for our character, values, mettle, and view of the world.

Defy Gravity also expresses our commitment to inclusive excellence. For us, excellence is inclusive excellence. Our community embraces the broadest range of ideas, cultures, experiences, and perspectives, which results in bold and compassionate thinking. Thinking that disrupts conformity. Thinking that shifts the calculus of what's possible. Thinking that defies gravity.

This is what the world needs most right now. Thinkers who are willing to challenge orthodoxy, ask big questions, and push boundaries. People who want to rise above division, cynicism, and narrow-mindedness. People who never cease to believe that we can overcome the toughest barriers when we work together.

These are the kinds of people we want to tell stories about.

### A Defy Gravity Story Checklist:

- Does it show a positive impact on an individual, a group, a community, or the world at large?
- Does it highlight U of T's commitment to inclusive excellence?
- Does the story incorporate collaboration and something unique to U of T? Are we highlighting our breadth, depth, interdisciplinarity, and the chemistry we make when we work together?
- Is it authentic? Does it put people first? Are we celebrating students, faculty, and alumni versus the University that helped them?
- Is it relatable? We're celebrating achievements, but are we also highlighting some of the obstacles and triumphs that were part of the creative process?
- Is it interesting? Will it hold the reader's attention?

---

# Headlines

In an age of information overload, headlines can make the difference between stopping to learn more or scrolling or walking on by. Good headlines capture our audience's attention, creating curiosity that motivates people to read further and take action. They also help to frame the Defy Gravity story we're telling and offer a lens through which to understand it.

We have developed four headline constructs to start with. All approaches support the overall tone of Defy Gravity and provide succinct ways to communicate our inclusive excellence.

Please select the approach that best suits the message you are trying to convey while considering the medium and context in which the copy will appear.

As the brand evolves, we'll update the Brand Portal with more options and styles. We'd love to hear about your ideas and approaches that resonate with your audience.

## Headline Direction 1: How's That Possible?

These headlines use wordplay to generate curiosity and challenge reader expectations. They use gerunds (ending in -ing) to provide a sense of momentum and action, offering a connection to Defy Gravity and showcasing a unique and intriguing U of T solution.

*Examples*

**Using CO2 to reverse our carbon footprint.**

**Breaking the glass ceiling from space.**

**Living a full life with a deadly disease.**

## Headline Direction 2: In Their Words

There's nothing like a powerful, pithy, and authentic quote to grab someone's attention and build a sense of connection and empathy. They allow us to amplify diverse and inspiring voices from across our campuses and celebrate stories of personal triumph. They must be real!

Keep quotes short, preferably around seven words. Use single quotation marks in headlines and decks.

*Examples*

**'I changed space.'**

**'They doubted me, but here I am.'**

**'Doctors should reflect the community they serve.'**

---

# Headlines

## Headline Direction 3: What's Next?

These headlines lean into the University of Toronto's legacy, acting as a reminder of the historic breakthroughs that have occurred across our campuses and showing that our groundbreaking work continues. Start with a succinct fact, followed by a closely related and visionary question tied to specific research.

*Examples*

- We discovered insulin.**  
**Is the next diabetes breakthrough within reach?**
- We developed the Glycemic Index.**  
**Can we fundamentally alter the way we eat next?**
- We pioneered machine learning.**  
**Could it hold the key to unlocking genetic disorders?**

## Headline Direction 4: Help Drive the Solution

These headlines (which appear with initiatives on the campaign website) highlight a U of T solution to a specific problem. They use imperative verbs (build, create, teach, transform, etc.) to create a sense of urgency and to compel the reader to join us to address a difficult challenge.

They're short and direct, ideally 4-8 words.

*Examples*

- Teach the body to repair itself.**
- Stop heart failure's fatal progression.**
- Bring health-care innovations out of the lab.**

---

# Visual Identity

Our visual identity elements are a critical component of our communications toolkit. They act as our visual language, helping to reinforce our brand personality and our Defy Gravity message.

---

## Defy Gravity Mark

The Defy Gravity mark visually represents U of T's belief that our community of thinkers and doers can rise above any challenge.

**The Caret** symbol signifies exponential power, while the type treatment provides a sense of weightlessness. Together, these elements convey a sense of ascending, expanding, and changing the calculus of what's possible.

The font used in the Defy Gravity mark is Trade Gothic Next Bold — set in all caps with expanded tracking. Using U of T's official brand colour (Pantone® 655), it's a distinct mark that reinforces U of T's legacy identity.

These two elements should always remain intact and in the correct order.

**Note:** Although the Caret alone can be modified and used as a graphic element for campaign creative, never alter it when used in the Defy Gravity mark.





# Defy Gravity Mark

## Colours

The Defy Gravity mark's official brand colour is U of T Blue (Pantone® 655).

We recommend using the black mark only when colour is not permitted or available.

When the mark is on a background that is dark coloured or busy (i.e. a photograph), we recommend using the reverse mark.

**Note:** The Defy Gravity mark can only be placed over an image provided the image does not impede the visibility of the mark or compromise its integrity in any way.



**U of T Blue**

**Pantone® 655**

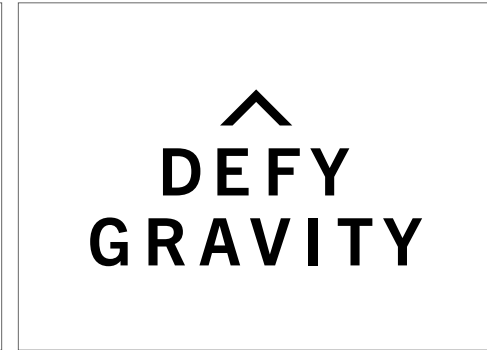
CMYK 100 / 79 / 12 / 59

RGB 30 / 55 / 101

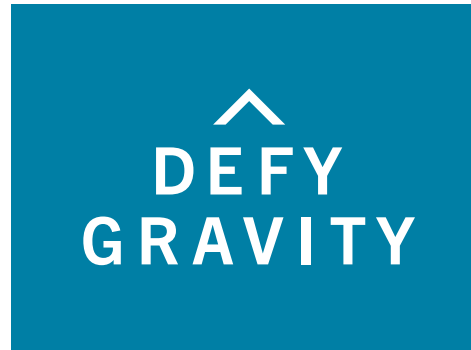
HEX #1E3765



Defy Gravity mark in U of T Blue (Pantone® 655).



Defy Gravity mark in black.



Defy Gravity mark in reverse on coloured background.



Defy Gravity mark in reverse on an image.

---

## Defy Gravity Mark

### Clear Space and Minimum Size

#### Clear Space

There must always be a minimum margin of clear space around the Defy Gravity mark. The minimum clear space is equal to the height of the capital “E.”

The mark should never be closer to an edge (page, sign, screen, etc.) than the minimum clear space.

#### Minimum Size

The minimum size is 0.6” wide for print applications and 44 pixels wide for digital applications. Our standard for minimum size ensures mark readability and visual presence.

**Note:** Exceptions will be made where appropriate (e.g. social media avatars and merchandise).



0.6” / 44 pixels



# Defy Gravity Mark

## Improper Usage

These examples illustrate improper use of the Defy Gravity mark. Altering or manipulating the approved mark artwork is never permitted.

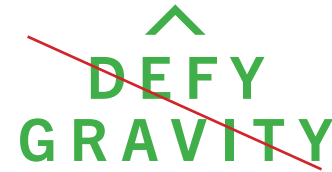
Use the Defy Gravity mark correctly to preserve the mark's visual impact and integrity.

Only reproduce the mark from approved electronic artwork.

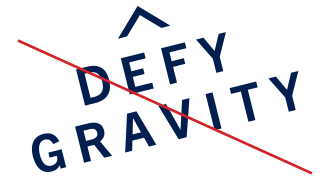
**Note:** These are examples only and are not a complete list of incorrect usage.



Do not condense, expand, or otherwise distort the mark.



Do not change the colour of the mark.



Do not angle or rotate the mark.



Do not add any drop shadows to the mark.



Do not change the font in the mark.



Do not use the mark as a transparent. When placing the mark over a background, ensure it is legible.



Do not put "Defy Gravity" on one line.



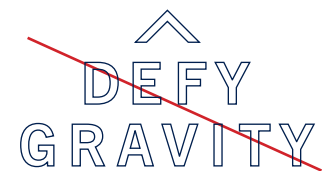
Do not alter the mark.



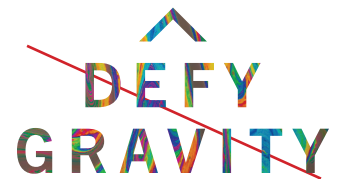
Do not add additional elements to the mark.



Do not use "Defy Gravity" without the Caret.



Do not outline the mark.



Do not apply images, patterns, or textures to the mark.

# Defy Gravity Mark

## Relationship with U of T Signature

The Defy Gravity mark and U of T signature should reside in different zones, not in a lock-up. It must never look like they are competing for attention.

**Note:** In some applications, the Defy Gravity mark may appear without the U of T signature. In these instances, the U of T signature should appear close by. For example, a static social post on a U of T-owned channel can include the Defy Gravity mark with the U of T signature as our social avatar.



**Note:** You can place the two elements separately on a page, with the U of T signature on the front and the Defy Gravity mark on the back.

---

# Defy Gravity Mark

## Relationship with U of T Signature

### Placement

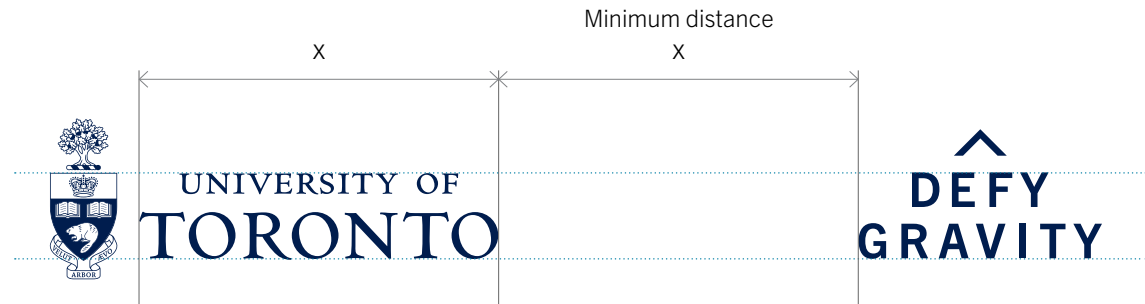
To determine the minimum distance between the U of T signature and the Defy Gravity mark, we measure the width of "Toronto" in the U of T signature, indicated here by "x."

**Note:** Exceptions will be made where appropriate (e.g. email signatures).

### Alignment

The top of the Defy Gravity mark should align with the top of "University of" in the U of T signature.

The baseline of the Defy Gravity mark should align with the baseline of "Toronto" in the U of T signature.



---

## Typography

Our primary typefaces are Trade Gothic and Bembo.

When using Trade Gothic, the minimum font size in body copy for print should be no smaller than 9.25 point. For photo captions, asterisk notes, and legal text, the point size should be smaller but no smaller than 7 point.

When using Bembo, we use old style figures. The minimum font size in body copy for print should be no smaller than 10.5 point.

**Note:** The use of these typefaces requires the purchase of a commercial licence. Divisions are responsible for securing font licensing for their respective offices.

### Trade Gothic

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

123456789!@#\$%&

The acceptable replacement for Trade Gothic, which is available on most computer operating systems, is **Arial**.

### Bembo

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

1234567890!@#\$%&

The acceptable replacement for Bembo, which is available on most computer operating systems, is **Times New Roman**.

# Colour

## Primary Colour

U of T Blue is an integral element of our brand. It represents the University's history, legacy, reputation, and excellence both locally and internationally. It connects all divisions, campuses, and the larger U of T community.

We must always ensure U of T Blue's presence within the composition of marketing and communication materials. Do not overuse the U of T Blue, particularly when using divisional colours—we recommend using it in a complementary way.

## Secondary Colour

Our secondary colour palette complements the U of T Blue. Use these colours as accents only for subheads, call-outs, charts, graphs, icons, and other small editorial details to add vibrancy and energy to the brand.

Avoid using unapproved colours or creating a new colour palette, with the exception of tints of the approved colours and the varying colours in images.

## Neutrals

Our neutral colour palette is available for support purposes. Black can be used for headlines, body copy, and captions. Use white as a background for most instances. Cool Gray 2 is also available as a background tone where appropriate to provide impact and variety.

**Note:** Avoid using black as background colour.

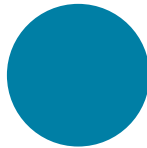
## Primary



### U of T Blue Pantone 655

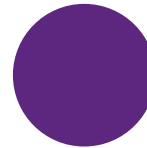
CMYK 100/79/12/59  
RGB 30/55/101  
HEX #1E3765

## Secondary



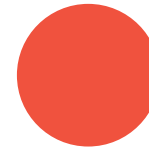
### Pantone 633

CMYK 98/6/10/29  
RGB 0/127/163  
HEX #007FA3



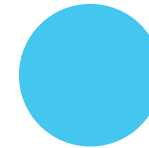
### Pantone 2613

CMYK 74/99/5/11  
RGB 109/36/122  
HEX #6D247A



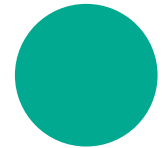
### Pantone Warm Red

CMYK 0/83/80/0  
RGB 220/70/51  
HEX #DC4633



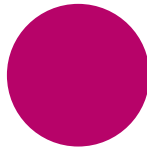
### Pantone 2985

CMYK 60/0/3/0  
RGB 111/199/234  
HEX #6FC7EA



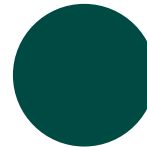
### Pantone 3285

CMYK 98/0/59/0  
RGB 0/161/137  
HEX #00A189



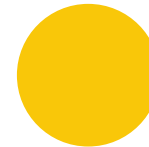
### Pantone 227

CMYK 7/100/10/21  
RGB 171/19/104  
HEX #AB1368



### Pantone 7722

CMYK 89/0/45/72  
RGB 13/83/77  
HEX #0D534D



### Pantone 7406

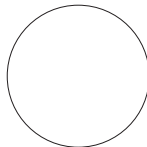
CMYK 0/20/100/2  
RGB 241/197/0  
HEX #F1C500



### Pantone 376

CMYK 54/0/100/0  
RGB 141/191/46  
HEX #8DBF2E

## Neutrals



### White

CMYK 0/0/0/0  
RGB 0/0/0  
HEX #FFFFFF



### Pantone Cool Gray 2

CMYK 5/3/5/11  
RGB 208/209/201  
HEX #D0D1C9



### Black

CMYK 0/0/0/100  
RGB 0/0/0  
HEX #000000

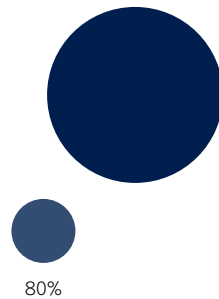
# Colour

## Tints

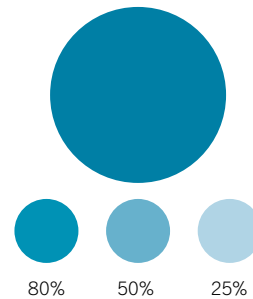
For further flexibility when using the secondary and neutrals colour palettes, we recommend using tints. We have included a sampling of percentage breakdowns; however, you can use any percentage as long as there's enough contrast between the tint and overlaid text and/or graphics.

Whenever possible, use U of T Blue at 100%. If a tint is required, a minimum of 80% is allowed.

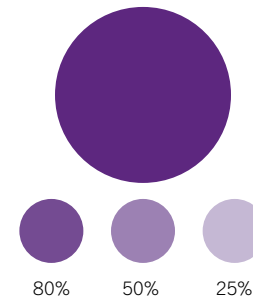
**Note:** Make sure to test print for visibility when using Pantone percentages.



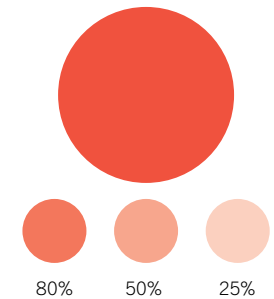
**U of T Blue**  
**Pantone 655**



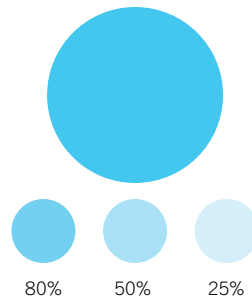
**Pantone 633**



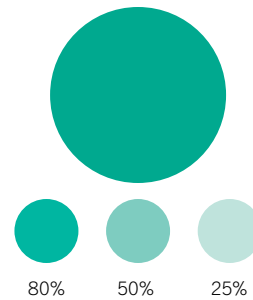
**Pantone 2613**



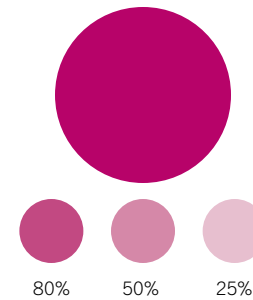
**Pantone Warm Red**



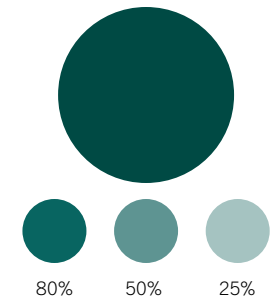
**Pantone 2985**



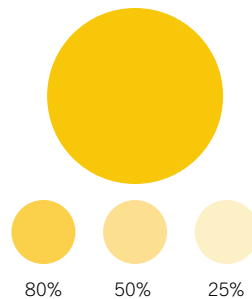
**Pantone 3285**



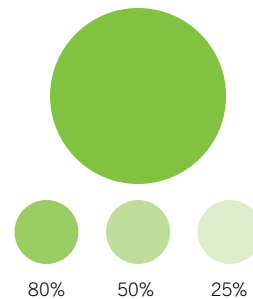
**Pantone 227**



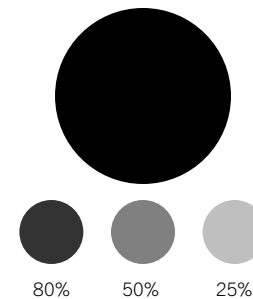
**Pantone 7722**



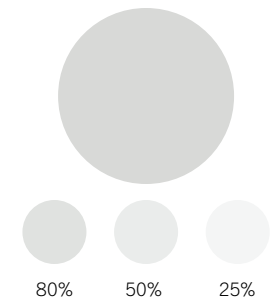
**Pantone 7406**



**Pantone 376**



**Black**



**Pantone Cool Gray 2**



---

# Email Signature

## Email Signature Font

Use Arial for your email signature to ensure it will display correctly across different platforms and devices.

Names are in Arial Bold, all caps, and 10 points. Additional information uses Arial Regular in 10 points.

## Formal Signature

The formal signature is for initial email communications. It includes all relevant information as well as the U of T signature and Defy Gravity mark.

**Note:** Ensure your email is set to HTML mode to ensure the graphics display correctly.

## Simplified Signature

The simplified signature is for replies and ongoing emails to reduce clutter in an email chain.

**Note:** You will need to add the simplified signature to your email client in addition to the formal signature. Check your email client's technical support for whether or not this feature is available.

## Formal Signature

—

**FIRSTNAME LASTNAME**  
Official Title

Department  
University of Toronto  
Address Line 1  
Address Line 2  
123 Street Address  
City, Province, Postal Code

Office: 000-000-0000  
Mobile: 000-000-0000  
[emailaddress@utoronto.ca](mailto:emailaddress@utoronto.ca)

[websiteurl.utoronto.ca](http://websiteurl.utoronto.ca)



**Note:** The short line above the signature is optional. It acts as a divider between the content of the email and the signature.

## Simplified Signature

—

**FIRSTNAME LASTNAME**  
Official Title

Department  
University of Toronto

Office: 000-000-0000  
Mobile: 000-000-0000  
[emailaddress@utoronto.ca](mailto:emailaddress@utoronto.ca)

If you have questions about these guidelines or something not included here, please reach out to Brand Hub:

**[brand@utoronto.ca](mailto:brand@utoronto.ca)**

