Aalto University School of Business | **Mikkeli Campus**

Style Guide

Bachelor's Program in International Business

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How to use this Style Guide

§   Tips in this Guide are preceded by this sign:

§   When searching for information, look for the entries in alphabetical order using a specific search term, e.g.: *Capitalisation* under 'C.' In the electronic version, press 'ctrl' and 'F' together, and insert the keyword in the search box.

§   Where there are differences between the rules in British and American English, these are indicated in the Guide: students should choose one of the two styles and use it consistently throughout their assignment. See Appendix 4 for other examples.

§   Where relevant, any exceptions to style rules are explained.

§   Questions & Answers (Q&As) are provided to offer additional guidance.

§   Further information can be found in the appendices.

û   Examples of unacceptable (or less effective) styles are shown next to a bullet point in the form of a cross.

ü   Examples of acceptable styles are shown next to a bullet point in the form of a tick.

§   **Important note**: students should ensure that the guidelines contained in this Style Guide are used in conjunction with any specific instructions given by professors associated with the Mikkeli Program at Aalto University.

Tip: when preparing for the thesis writing process, students must ensure that they consult the *Instructions for Bachelor's Thesis*, in addition to this Guide.

1. Introduction

1.1 Rationale behind a Style Guide

A Style Guide ensures that students understand and follow the conventions of academic work, and produce assignments to a standard and format approved by their educational establishment. Adhering to the rules of a stipulated Style Guide will mean that the essays, reports, projects and/or any other written work produced for assessment are presented in a professional way, instilling confidence in the reader. This creates a positive first impression before the reader engages with the content.

1.2 Objectives of this Style Guide

This Guide has been designed to:

§ create a brand style for Aalto University School of Business, BScBA Program in International Business, Mikkeli Campus (hereinafter referred to as the Mikkeli Program)

§ advise students on the formatting guidelines to be followed for assignments submitted to the Mikkeli Program

§ enable students to be both consistent and professional in the production of their academic work

§ assist students on how to present academic work to their audience with clarity, thereby enhancing their written communication and maximising their chances of success in course assessments

1.3 Key Stakeholders

This Style Guide has been produced as a reference tool for the following stakeholders associated with the Mikkeli Program:

§ students

§ staff

§ visiting faculty

Note: this Guide does not advise on the content of academic assignments, nor does it provide instructions on the writing process. In the case of the former, students should consult course faculty, while for the latter, it is strongly recommended that students follow the guidelines and training received during the Academic Writing Course in the Mikkeli Program.

2. Abbreviations

Carefully consider the use of abbreviations in academic writing. Some forms are unacceptable at all times – the most common being contractions (e.g.: *couldn't, I'm*), and the vast majority of informal terms (for instance: *biz* instead of business; *approx.* instead of approximately). The following *are* acceptable:

§ **acronyms**: a word or name formed using the first initials of a lexical set; e.g.: a SWOT analysis, where SWOT stands for the **s**trengths, **w**eaknesses, **o**pportunities and **t**hreats

§ **initialisms**: where the first initials of a lexical set do not form a distinct word or name, but must instead be pronounced by referring to each letter separately; e.g.: CFO, which is used for Chief Financial Officer

Tip: when using an acronym or initialism, only do so after providing the full form the first time it appears in the work. The abbreviation should be placed in upper case letters immediately after the full term, as shown below. The acronym or initialism must then be used throughout the document each time thereafter; also use an <u>article</u> where necessary; e.g.:

ü The current Chief Financial Officer (CFO) of the company was appointed two months earlier. Prior to this, <u>the</u> CFO was…

Also note that some abbreviations have become commonplace in everyday English, and so they are rarely spelled out in full; e.g.: PDF, meaning portable document format.

Q. Should I place dots between letters in acronyms and initialisms?

A. The period (US) or full-stop (UK) is used differently in American English and British English. Typically, in the former, abbreviations will have periods, while in the latter, full-stops tend to be omitted; e.g.: the B.B.C. vs. the BBC, respectively. Also note the following:

§ Where the first and last letter of a word are used to form the abbreviation, British English omits the full-stop at the end, while American English inserts it; e.g.:

Miste**r** | **D**octo**r** | **P**rofesso**r**

ü British English: Mr | Dr | Prof

ü American English: Mr. | Dr. | Prof.

3. Academic Writing Style

At university, students are expected to demonstrate a degree of sophistication in their work, particularly in assignments submitted for formal assessment. An academic writing style involves more than simply a focus on the language. It also includes the following:

3.1 Preparation

ü audience recognition & a purpose for writing

ü awareness of & adherence to set formats/guidelines

ü drafting & editing

ü reading & researching

ü reflecting on course & links between courses in the degree programme

ü time management & effective planning

ü understanding the set task

3.2 Structure

ü clear structure (macro- & micro-) & organisation

ü logical development of ideas

ü paragraphing

ü topic sentences

3.3 Content

ü analysis & critical thinking

ü exemplification

ü factual information

ü justification for claims

ü objectivity & non-biased argumentation

ü reference to external sources

ü stereotype & generalisation avoidance

ü subject knowledge

3.4 Language

- ü gender-neutral language
- ü genre-specific knowledge of writing styles
- ü hedging expressions, where appropriate
- ü language modified to suit audience needs
- ü non-emotive language
- ü signposting markers
- ü vocabulary (broad range of ~)

3.5 Proofreading

- ü absence of avoidable/careless errors
- ü accuracy in both form & content
- ü answering the set question/completing the assigned task
- ü consistency (e.g.: in UK or US spelling; in Harvard referencing…)
- ü evidence of proofread & carefully edited work before submission
- ü punctuation (effective ~)

4. Ampersand (&)

The ampersand should not be used in the main body of any academic genre – unless it is positioned in brackets/parentheses; for example, where students are citing an external source with more than one author, the ampersand is used to join the authors when named in brackets/parentheses at the end of the sentence. However, students must always use the full form of the word – i.e.: 'and' – in the main body for citations placed outside of parentheses, e.g.:

- ü Marcousé and Lines (2002) state that 'case study analysis is one of the most effective ways to learn the practical application of business tools' (p. 5).
- ü Many university courses employ the use of cases in their modules as it is argued that 'case study analysis is one of the most effective ways to learn the practical application of business tools' (Marcousé & Lines, 2002: 5).

Also note that the ampersand is used for multi-authored texts in the Reference List at the end of an assignment, e.g.:

ü **Reference List**

Cavalier, J.C., Klein, J.D. & Cavalier, F.J. (1995) 'Effects of cooperative learning on performance, attitude, and group behaviors in a technical team environment.' *Educational Technology Research and Development*; 43 (2): 61-71.

Deutsch, M. (1949) 'A theory of cooperation and competition.' *Human Relations*; 2 (April): 129-151.

Fisher, S.G., Hunter, T.A. & Macrosson, W.D.K. (1997) 'Team or group? Managers' perceptions of the differences.' *Journal of Managerial Psychology*; 12 (4): 232-42.

Harris, P.R. & Harris, K.G. (1996) 'Managing effectively through teams.' *Team Performance Management: An International Journal;* 2 (3): 23-36.

Hayes, C. (1995) 'The new spin on corporate work teams.' *Black Enterprise*; 24 (11): 229-32.

5. Capitalisation

Words should only be capitalised in-text where necessary. Students must never use all uppercase letters to emphasise a word or series of words in a sentence, i.e.: the following is ***in**appropriate in academic writing:

û Students must NEVER use all uppercase letters to emphasise a word or series of words in a sentence.

Writers should capitalise the first letter of each of the following:

ü acronyms & initialisms (**note**: these are in *complete* uppercase)
ü brand/company names
ü days of the week & months of the year
ü first word at the start of a sentence & the first one after a full-stop
ü governmental departments, e.g.: Ministry of the Interior
ü headings & subheadings (content words only)
ü historical events, e.g.: World War II
ü national holidays, e.g.: Vappu
ü institutional names

ü natural or built structures, e.g.: Päijänne Water Tunnel

ü proper nouns & names of companies, e.g.: Antti Herlin, Finland, Kone

ü races, nationalities, tribes, religions

ü special occasions, e.g.: the Olympic Games

ü street & road names

6. Colour

Assignments should be presented in black typeface. The use of colour is rare in academic work (aside from in title pages) and should therefore only be used in the main body of the work if absolutely necessary. For instance, colour-coding may be used in visuals (e.g.: pie charts/graphs…) or to explain complex material where the reader's attention needs to be drawn to specific parts of the text. In the case of the latter, consider the use of *italics*, **bold** and <u>underline</u>, before resorting to colour.

7. Cover Page & Declaration

The first page of assignments for the Mikkeli Program should consist of the cover page and declaration shown in Appendix 1 of this Style Guide.

8. Format

All academic work (essays, literature reviews, projects, proposals, reports…) must be typed. Higher Education institutions do not concur about whether students should use a serif or sans serif font in their work (see Appendix 2 for an explanation of the main differences between the two). Students on the Mikkeli Program should adhere to these formatting guidelines:

§ **alignment**: justified on the left and right

§ **bold, italics, underline**: typeface may be bolded, italicised or underlined only when warranted (e.g.: in referencing, or to sparingly emphasise text)

§ **colour**: avoid using colour typeface (also see no. 6 above)

§ **contents page**: provide headings and page numbers for up to two levels only, e.g.: 1 and 1.1 (not 1.1.1)

- § **cover sheet**: insert a completed cover sheet and declaration as the first page of all submissions (see Appendix 1)
- § **document format/file type**: Word
- § **double-sided**: print text on both sides of any hard copy submissions
- § **font**: Arial 12
- § **footer**: insert page number in the format given below (see '**pagination**')
- § **header**: enter surname in top right position
- § **headings & subheadings**: divide work into sections using succinct subheadings, in bold, and one size larger than the main body text
- § **margins**: select A4 size and use 'normal' template in Microsoft Word (i.e.: top, bottom, left & right margins should be 2.54 cm)
- § **pagination**: use Arial 11 to number all pages (excluding the title page), in the format 'Page **X** of **Y**' in bottom centre from the first text page
- § **paragraphs**: skip one space between paragraphs; do not use indentation
- § **plagiarism**: ensure all submissions are free from any form of academic misconduct, including self-plagiarism (see Appendix 5 for further details)
- § **referencing**: follow Harvard conventions in-text and in list of references; for details, see *Aalto Citation & Referencing Guide* (3rd edition)
- § **spacing**: present main text in 1.5 line spacing & any footnotes in 1.0; one or two spaces between sentences (European and American usage, respectively)

9. Genre-Specific Styles

The rules surrounding the style of writing to be used in academic genres tend to be similar; e.g.: students should avoid informal lexis, slang, idiomatic language, colloquialisms, contractions…and instead express themselves objectively and with clarity, consistency and reference to external sources to back their claims. There are, however, some variations between the characteristic features of some genres of writing. Students who have an awareness of these genre-specific styles are likely to be able to produce more sophisticated pieces of work. They should also be cognisant of their audience at all times, and write in a style that is suitable for and expected by the same. The genre-specific characteristics of the most common academic genres of writing are listed below in alphabetical order:

9.1 Essays

- contain appendices &/or in-text visuals, where relevant
- contain paragraphs with central topics indicated through topic sentences
- employ multi-clause sentences, with frequent use of verb phrases
- exclude bullet points/vertical lists in most essay types
- follow the basic *introduction-main body-conclusion* macro-structure
- have coherent & cohesive argumentation
- have in-text citations (quotes/paraphrased text) & reference list at end*
- include sub-section headings (tend to be optional – check with faculty)
- incorporate discursive/narrative/persuasive text with exemplification
- use signposting expressions

   *practices vary as to what is expected in an essay, hence students should consult faculty about whether their assignment is a think piece or research essay

9.2 Literature Reviews

- contain a summary, synthesis & critique of the literature being reviewed
- define key concepts & ideas related to a particular subject
- demonstrate the writer's understanding of the field
- evaluate & group the results of previous research according to patterns
- explain rationale behind research by others &/or to be done by the writer
- identify relevant methodological issues, including scope & limitations
- place writer's own work/research within a broader context of study
- provide a foundation &/or justification for a specific area of enquiry
- rarely include long quotations
- update knowledge within the field

9.3 Projects

- are presented in sections & sub-sections
- are task-based with deliverables & show clear, measurable objectives
- employ active sentences with frequent verb phrases
- have a finite start & end surrounding an area of enquiry
- have a specific aim; e.g.: problem-solving, developing a new idea…
- include introduction, background, timeline, procedure, results & summary
- include reference to external sources, where warranted

9.4 Reports

- are informative & fact-based
- are usually written in the passive voice, with greater use of noun phrases
- divide work into separate sections, with succinct & transparent headings
- have a clear aim/purpose & a specific reader/audience in mind
- have an abstract/executive summary
- have introduction, methodology, results, conclusions, recommendations
- may contain technical language/jargon (with a glossary of terms)
- may include bullet points
- often include visual data (e.g.: tables, graphs, charts…)
- refer to external sources, only where relevant
- tend not to include quotations
- written in succinct sentences – usually with no more than two clauses

9.5 Research Plan or Proposals

- explain why the idea is worthy of investigation &/or investment
- highlight methodology to be employed
- identify scope & limitations
- include a central idea, with rationale & background information
- include hypothesis, if relevant
- outline aim & objectives of proposed study
- present overview of potential problems & how these might be overcome
- refer to resources needed – including physical, monetary &/or personnel
- show a timeline/schedule

9.6 Thesis

- See Mikkeli Program *Instructions for Bachelor's Thesis*

10. Headings & Subheadings

There are genres of writing that always contain headings and subheadings, e.g.: reports, literature reviews, theses…Some professors also stipulate the inclusion of headings in essays. While generic subheadings like *Introduction, Main Body, Conclusion* are frequently used by writers, they are very general. The main purpose of subheadings is to allow readers to quickly glean what each section contains, and to obtain an overall appreciation of the content of a text. Therefore, it is important to ensure that the subheadings – particularly at the second and third level – are self-explanatory, succinct and an accurate reflection of the contents in that section. For instance, note how these lengthy subheadings could be rephrased:

> û   Motivating employees through reward systems
>
> *…would be better shortened to the following succinct form:*
>
> ü   Incentive Schemes
>
>
> û   The demographics of all the BRIC countries
>
> *…could be shortened to:*
>
> ü   BRIC Demographics

Also, students should ensure that headings and subheadings are numbered and easily identifiable in the text: bold typeface, and a larger font size is often used for this purpose. See Appendix 3 for an example of the headings and subheadings presented in a report: note the font formatting, numbering and spacing (or indentation) shown.

Tip: do not place full-stops/periods at the end of headings and subheadings; also, omit articles and prepositions, where possible.

Q: Should headings and subheadings be in sentence case (first word capitalised) or must each word be capitalised?

A: To some extent, this depends on the length of the subheading. Where these consist of up to three words, each content word (noun, verb) is capitalised. However, if the subheading is longer, sentence case is recommended.

11. Hedging (or 'academic caution')

It is important to be factual when writing assignments. Any claims made should be supported by evidence, and logical argumentation. Where it is not possible to find an authoritative source to endorse a claim or argument, students will need to reduce the degree of certainty being expressed in their writing. This is called *hedging*, or academic caution. Hedging can be used for a variety of reasons, e.g.: to…

§ conform to an accepted academic writing style

§ enable the writer to be as precise as possible when reporting results (i.e.: by stating the extent to which something is considered to be true)

§ execute a degree of humility in which writers can acknowledge possible flaws in their work

§ express certainty that is proportionate to the evidence presented, or lack thereof

§ minimise the possibility of the reader opposing the claims being made

§ soften a controversial claim when discussing a sensitive/contentious topic

There are a number of grammatical techniques that students can use to hedge in their academic assignments, as shown below (**note**: this list and the examples provided are not exhaustive):

ü **adverbs of frequency**: often, sometimes, usually

ü **it + modal + adjective + to clause**: It could be reasonable to assume...

ü **lexical verbs**: assume, believe, suggest

ü **modal adjectives**: certain, definite, clear, probable, possible

ü **modal adverbs**: certainly, definitely, probably, possibly, conceivably, perhaps

ü **modal nouns**: assumption, probability, possibility, likelihood, prospect

ü **modal verbs**: will, must, ought to, can, would, may, might, could

Q: Won't the use of hedging language make me sound unsure and vague as a writer?

A: If overdone, or done inappropriately, then yes it will. However, if academic caution is expressed only where needed (as indicated in this section) then the reader will appreciate the objectivity and the cautious writing style.

12. Inclusive Language

Students are encouraged to use gender-neutral terms when referring to non-specific people. This is not only more inclusive than using gender-specific language, but when pluralised, it also facilitates the use of words like *their*, *them*, and *they*, therefore eliminating the need to employ expressions such as *his/hers* and *he/she* throughout the work – terms which not only clutter the text, but also needlessly involve the use of more words, which can be problematic when adhering to word limits. Using inclusive language also means ensuring that the content of academic work does not discriminate against, unnecessarily identify, or over-emphasise a specific social group with protected characteristics; e.g.:

§ **age**
  û The company have a number of elderly employees.
  ü The company have a number of employees over the age of...

§ **disability** (including physical, mental & learning disabilities)
  û The building must be adapted to cater for people who are wheelchair bound.
  ü The building must be adapted for wheelchair users.

§ **marriage/civil partnerships**
  û Staff were encouraged to bring their husbands/wives to the Christmas meal.
  ü Staff were encouraged to bring their partners to the Christmas meal.

§ **pregnancy & maternity**
  û This role is particularly suitable for someone balancing work and motherhood.
  ü This role is particularly suitable for someone balancing work and parenthood.

§ **race**
  û The team consisted of people of different races, including Blacks and Orientals.
  ü The team consisted of people from a range of ethnic backgrounds.

§ **religion & belief systems**

- û Syed Mukhtar Al Bukhari, a Muslim billionaire from Malaysia, has a diversified business which includes power generation, transportation and logistics, property development, defence and armoury.
- ü Syed Mukhtar Al Bukhari, a billionaire from Malaysia, has a diversified business which includes power generation, transportation and logistics, property development, defence and armoury.

§ **sex & gender**

- û Four girls and two men were employed in administrative roles.
- ü Four females and two males were employed in administrative roles.

§ **sexual orientation**

- û Candidates with both heterosexual and homosexual orientation can apply.
- ü Applications are invited from the heterosexual and LGBTQIA community.

Q. Is it better to simply avoid making reference to [people from] specific social groups?

A. Unnecessary reference to an individual from/or an entire social group should be avoided. However, if the characteristic is of relevance to the point being made, then it is acceptable to refer to it in a way which is inclusive, rather than discriminatory, derogatory or implying that an individual is representative of the entire social group.

Tip: certain words or expressions, while acceptable in the past, now carry negative connotations; for instance: *dual heritage* is preferable to *mixed-race*; *visually impaired* is more sensitive than *blind*; referring to someone who has *epilepsy* is more appropriate than using the words *fits*. When writing, students should therefore consider what the reader might infer from their compositions.

13. Language Style

A formal style and register should be employed in all academic assignments, irrespective of their genre. This means that students should **avoid** each of the following:

- û adverbs in initial or final positions of sentences (place these close to the verb instead), e.g.:
  - û He held meetings on Friday mornings *regularly*.
  - *…should be changed to…*
  - ü He *regularly held* Friday morning meetings.
- û colloquialisms (e.g.: idiomatic language; slang; taboo words…)
- û contractions (e.g.: *can't; didn't; wouldn't…*)
- û direct/rhetorical questions to the reader (this excludes research questions)
- û emotive/subjective adjectives (e.g.: *terrible; brilliant; excellent…*)
- û exclamation marks (e.g.: *The location is ideal!*)
- û incomplete sentences
- û informal abbreviations (e.g.: *biz* for business…)
- û informal lexis (e.g.: *a lot; a bit; kind of…*)
- û phrasal verbs (e.g.: *look into* (instead of *investigate*); *bring up* (instead of *raise*)…)
- û run-on expressions (e.g.: *etc.; and so on; and so forth…*)
- û superlatives &/or intensifiers – unless there is evidence to support claims

Additionally, assignments should **not** include:

- û anecdotes
- û clichés
- û proverbs & sayings

Tip: reflective writing often has a semi-formal tone, and may therefore include some of the exclusions listed above.

14. Numbers

Numerals are used in academic work for times, dates, percentages, measurements, monetary data and figures over ten, e.g.:

- ü The training workshops start at 09:00 and end at 17:00.
- ü The faculty development programme was launched on 5 September 2016.
- ü Aalto University was established in 2010.
- ü International IDEA (2016) reported that 66.85 per cent of the population voted in the 2015 Finnish elections.
- ü In their August 2016 news report, the Bank of Finland reported that in June 2016, about half (224) of the investment funds registered in Finland held UK assets.
- ü A total of 14 people were appointed to the committee; this number was previously nine.

Note: in academic writing, each of the following is *in*correct:

- û …from 14:00 pm to 15:00 pm…
- û …from 2-3 pm…
- û …from 2 pm-15:00…
- û …from 2 till 3 in the afternoon…
- û …from 14-15…

Tip: when referring to times, use the 24-hour clock, as shown in the first example in the previous list in this section.

15. Personal Pronouns (I…you…we…)

When personal pronouns are used in academic writing, the tone of the work may become semi-formal and subjective. As a general rule, students are encouraged to avoid the use of personal pronouns in order to maintain a formal and objective style. In either case, however, the work must be supported by evidence and facts. Changing an active sentence into a passive construct is often the simplest way of creating neutral sentences; e.g.:

ü In this report, I demonstrate the ways in which... [active]

…*could also be rephrased to:*

ü This report demonstrates the ways in which… [passive]

ü We administered the questionnaire to all first year students at... [active]

…*could also be rephrased to:*

ü The questionnaire was administered to all first year students at… [passive]

Some students assume that the use of personal pronouns cannot be avoided where an essay or task asks them to provide an opinion, or refer to personal experience to support their arguments. While it is difficult to avoid 'I', 'me' or 'we' in the latter (though the use of these pronouns can still be minimised), in the case of the former, it *is* possible to express an opinion without using 'I think…', 'I agree with…', 'I believe…' or similar phrases. Consider the following examples:

ü The generalisability of his findings is questionable, however, as both his sample size and scope of the research was noticeably limited.

ü As Baker (1992) argues, isomorphic equivalents are rare in target text translations.

In the first example, the writer expresses an opinion about some results by using the words 'is questionable.' An alternative would have been to hedge the opinion with a phrase like 'might be questionable.' In the second example above, the use of the word 'As' at the start of the sentence signals that the writer agrees with Baker.

Note: the use of the second person pronoun ('you') is typically conversational and should therefore be avoided in academic writing.

Tip: the use of personal pronouns is considered acceptable (or at times, necessary) by academics in some genres of work; for instance: towards the end of an introduction where an essay-map is provided; in a proposal; or in the methodology section of a research-based assignment. However, even in these cases, personal pronouns should be used in moderation. If in doubt, students should check with their course faculty.

16. Punctuation

16.1 Apostrophes

These are used to indicate possession, whereby **'s** is placed after singular nouns, indefinite pronouns and plural nouns which do not end in an 's', e.g.:

- ü Jutta**'s** office was on the first floor of the building.
- ü The cleaner**'s** room is next to the kitchen.

Where a plural noun ends in an 's', add the apostrophe after it, e.g.:

- ü The manager was impressed by her employee**s'** behaviour.

Where a name ends in an 's' [or 'z'], students are advised to modify the sentence structure to avoid the addition of the possessive apostrophe; e.g.:

- û Juliu**s's** car had to be written off.

…could be rephrased as:

- ü The car owned by Julius had to be written off.

The apostrophe should not be used to indicate possession for *its* when it is analogous with *his*, *hers*, or *theirs*. If an apostrophe were to be used here, it would be considered a contraction of *it is* (it's). Contractions must be avoided in academic writing.

Tip: sentences which use the possessive form are very common in *spoken* English; thus, where possible, avoid the use of possessive apostrophes in academic writing by rephrasing the sentence completely; for instance:

- ü The student**s'** success was celebrated across the institution.

…could be rephrased to:

- ü The success of the students was celebrated across the institution.

…or:

- ü The whole institution celebrated their student success.

16.2   **Brackets** (British English) **| Parentheses** (American English)

As a general rule, these should only be used in the case of the following: around a non-defining clause which offers an explanation for the purpose of clarity or for citation dates: that is, when providing additional information which could be of value to the reader. Brackets should be used sparingly and selectively in the main body of an assignment. There are several styles of brackets/parentheses, and each type is used for different purposes; e.g.:

	British English	American English	used for
( )	brackets	parentheses	non-defining clauses; in-text citations
[ ]	square brackets	brackets	referencing accessed on date for websites; addition to quotes
{ }	curly brackets	braces	computing; music; poetry

See Appendix 4 for more examples of differences between British and American English.

16.3   **Bullet Points (or Vertical Lists)**

These are commonly used in academic writing when listing the objectives of research or a project, using the infinitive form of the verb; e.g.:

> The objectives of this research are to:
> - collect student feedback through a questionnaire
> - invite suggestions from faculty on ways in which the Guide can be improved
> - update the document to reflect the latest developments in social media

Bullet points may also be used in reports to provide a summary of key points, or to ensure that important information is communicated to the reader with clarity. Avoid decorative bullet points: select either round or square bullet points instead. Also, ensure vertical lists have parallel structures; that is, the first word of each list should follow the same grammatical/logical pattern (as shown above).

The following example of a bullet-point list is **incorrect** as neither a parallel grammatical nor logical structure has been used:

The objectives of this research are to:
- be collecting student feedback through a questionnaire
- invite suggestions from faculty on ways in which the Guide can be improved
- a document to reflect the latest developments in social media is created

Q: Should each bullet point be punctuated with a full-stop/period at the end?

A: This depends on the text listed in the bullet points: if these consist of words or short phrases, or part sentences as in the example for the objectives above, then the full-stop is omitted. However, where complete sentences are formed for a series of bullet points, they should be punctuated as normal, with a full-stop at the end of each bullet point sentence. Also note that in American English, irrespective of its style and/or length, a period tends to be placed after the last bullet point, as this is similar to marking the end of a sentence.

Tip: bullet points are rarely used in essays, as this genre is more discursive in nature, and therefore demands the inclusion of complete sentences.

16.4 Colons

The colon is used to introduce a sub-clause where the two parts of the sentence are logically connected. It may also be used before a list or an example; e.g.:

- The manager indicated that two reward systems were soon to be introduced**:** a group bonus scheme and a bonus for *employee of the month*.
- The manager indicated that two reward systems might soon be introduced in the company; for example**:** a group bonus scheme and a bonus for *employee of the month*.

16.5 Commas

Commas are used for each of the following:

§ to surround non-defining clauses; this includes clauses using *which* or *who*, but not *that*

§ after an introductory adverb, adverbial phrase or subordinate clause appearing at the start of a sentence (if used mid-sentence, two commas are placed around the adverbial phrase or subordinate clause)

§ between multiple qualitative adjectives

Here are some examples:

ü Antti Herlin, who is the chairman of Kone, is the richest man in Finland.

ü He has been described as a skilled, conscientious, and diligent businessman.

ü Under his leadership, the company has excelled both nationally and at an international level.

Tip: do not place a comma after e.g. or i.e. in-text; instead, use a colon:

û e.g., | i.e.,

ü e.g.: | i.e.:

16.6 Semicolons

The semicolon is used to link two parts of a sentence which could stand alone as separate, grammatically complete sentences; e.g.:

ü The announcement of an internal review came as a complete surprise to the department; previously, it was repeatedly stressed to staff that there were no plans to consider cost-cutting or possible redundancies.

It is also used to separate items in a list – particularly where these items already include commas; e.g.:

ü Several key personnel attended the controversial meeting, including: Dorota Pacek, EISU Director; Phil Treece, EAP Director; Roland Brandstaetter, UCU Representative; and Gail Horton, Senior Administrator.

16.7 Quotation Marks

According to British English conventions, when citing the exact words of an external source in-text, short quotes are embedded within the paragraph in single inverted commas, without italics. Double quotation marks are used for any quote which may be *nested within* the quoted content. In American English, this stylistic pattern is reversed, for instance:

- ü **British English**: Marcousé and Lines (2002: 5) state that '…case study analysis is "one of the most effective ways" to learn the practical application of business tools'.
- ü **American English**: Marcousé and Lines (2002: 5) state that "…case study analysis is 'one of the most effective ways' to learn the practical application of business tools."

Also note the position of the period/full-stop that appears after quoted content in each style of English. While both of the above formats are acceptable, students should select one – British or American – and use this consistently throughout their work. It is worth highlighting that quotation marks are not commonly used for long quotations, as these are indented between paragraphs. In Reference Lists, use single inverted commas around the titles of articles in journals/newspapers; chapters in books; social media posts; and other embedded text-types.

Tip: quotation marks (single or double) are also used when referring to content which is ambiguous, technical or contentious. The effect of this is to draw attention to the word/phrase, similar to that of highlighting the term through italics; e.g.:

- ü Some writers use 'scare quotes' to highlight unusual, inaccurate or ironic content.
- ü When a mutual society which is owned by its members becomes a public company owned by its shareholders, 'demutualisation' is said to have occurred.
- ü The manager expressed a preference to employ 'native' personnel.

16.8 Other Punctuation Marks

The most commonly used punctuation marks in academic writing are the comma, full-stop/period, colon, semi-colon and brackets/parentheses. The following are rarely seen in academic work, if at all, and should therefore be avoided:

- § dashes [–]
- § exclamation marks [!]
- § question marks [?]

Tip: do not hyphenate words with prefixes; e.g.: write subsection, not sub-section; database, not data-base.

17. Visuals

When considering the inclusion of a visual (e.g.: graph, chart, table, image, artwork…) in an assignment, students should establish whether it will add value to their work in terms of aiding reader understanding of the content, and if so, where it would be best placed – in the main body, or as supporting evidence in an appendix.

17.1 Main Body Visuals

When placing visuals in the main body of assignments, students should ensure that:

- § the quality of the image or artwork is clear, and not blurred
- § the font size of the label is one size smaller than the main text, e.g.:
    - ü Figure 2: UK Unemployment Rates 2005-16 (Financial Times, 2016)
- § where a visual is taken from another source and is adapted, this is indicated as follows:
    - ü Figure 2: UK Unemployment Rates 2005-16 (adapted from Financial Times, 2016)
- § the full bibliographic details of sources for visuals are listed in the reference list
- § the graphic (including any created by the student) is numbered and labelled – and cited with the source if not self-produced – all under the visual; e.g.:

Figure 1: Finnish Unemployment Rates 2005-16 (Financial Times, 2016)
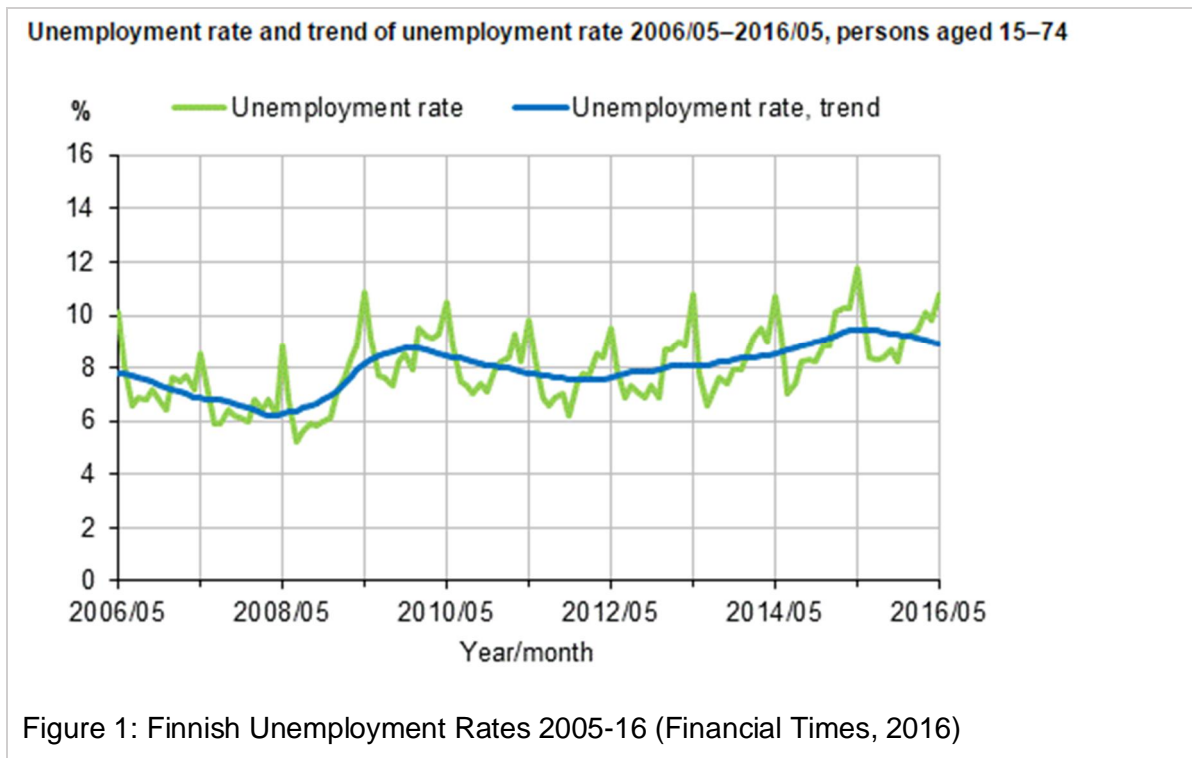
Note: when visuals are placed in appendices, they are labelled after the appendix number, in the same font and font size as subheadings in the work; e.g.:

ü **Appendix 1: Finnish Employment Rates 2005-16 (Financial Times, 2016)**

Tip: photos, graphs, charts and other images are labelled as figures, i.e.: Figure 1: X; Figure 2: Y…), while data presented in tabular form is presented as Table 1: A; Table 2: B… It is perfectly acceptable for one assignment to contain both types of visuals, that is, figures and tables. *Each visual type* must be labelled in ascending order; e.g.: if there were tables on pages 2 and 5, and figures on pages 2 and 4 of a document, the table on page 2 would be Table 1 and the one on page 5 would be Table 2. Page 2 would then also have a Figure 1, followed by Figure 2 on page 4.

17.2 PowerPoint Presentation Slides

When inserting visuals in PowerPoint, follow the guidelines given in section 17.1 above. Additionally, avoid dense/busy graphics, as it will be difficult for the audience to process the data in the visual while simultaneously listening to the presenter. Remember, visuals are intended to *aid* understanding for the audience.

Adhere to these guidelines when preparing PowerPoint presentation slides:

- ü Start with a Title slide, followed by the presentation Overview/Outline
- ü Select a high contrast design (e.g.: dark text on white/light background, or vice versa)
- ü Use a sans serif font only, in large size (e.g.: Arial 24)
- ü Insert slide numbers
- ü Insert a footer with your name & full date
- ü Use keywords &/or short bullet-pointed sentences
- ü Use high quality visuals & always cite source, where relevant
- ü Use a simple 'on-click' animation style (i.e.: avoid bounce, fly, swivel…)
- ü Check spelling & grammar
- ü Minimise the number of slides in the presentation, overall
- ü End with *a thank you* slide before the Q&A

18. Checklist

Finally, before submitting assignments, students on the Mikkeli Program may find it useful to use this checklist to review their work to ensure it conforms to the set guidelines:

- ü **alignment**: justified on left and right
- ü **contents page** (not required for all genres): lists sections & pages for up to two levels
- ü **cover sheet**: title & declaration page at start of document
- ü **font**: Arial 12
- ü **footer/page numbers**: centre bottom as: Page **X** of **Y** in Arial 11
- ü **header**: surname in top right
- ü **headings & subheadings**: in bold, one size larger than main text
- ü **in-text citations**: all cited sources are listed in reference list (& vice versa)
- ü **language**: formal, academic writing style
- ü **margins**: A4 size with top, bottom, left & right margins at 2.54 cm
- ü **paragraphs**: central idea – with topic sentences; extra space between each
- ü **referencing system**: Harvard, with plagiarism-free content
- ü **spacing**: 1.5 line spacing; 1.0 for footnotes; one/two between sentences

Bibliography

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Appendix 1: Cover Sheet & Declaration

A! **Aalto University** | **Mikkeli Campus**
School of Business

[CLICK AND INSERT TITLE OF YOUR ASSIGNMENT IN BLOCK LETTERS]

[Click and insert subtitle of your assignment in small letters]

[Click and insert your name in small letters]

[Click and insert course title here.]
Instructor: [Click and insert the name of your instructor here.]
Date of submission: [Click and insert date here.]

Declaration

By completing this cover sheet and declaration, I confirm that this assignment is my own work, is not copied from the work (published or unpublished) of any other person, and has not previously been submitted for assessment either at Aalto University, or another educational establishment. Any direct or indirect uses of material (e.g.: text, visuals, ideas…) from other sources have been fully acknowledged and cited according to the conventions of the Harvard Referencing System.

Appendix 2: Serif vs. Sans Serif Typefaces

A *serif* font is one which has small finishing strokes, or lines, which extend the length of each character. A *sans serif* font is one without any finishing strokes; for example:

For decades, researchers have argued that finishing strokes in roman script are responsible for increasing the recognisability of words, as they carry the eye of the reader horizontally across the page in a smooth flow, with ease and speed. However, in recent years, some studies have differentiated between the readability and legibility of serif and sans serif fonts in print and online form, stating that this differs in each case: it is claimed that a serif typeface is better for print documents, while sans serif fonts are preferable for websites due to their lower resolution on screen, finishing strokes cannot be rendered effectively online (Poole, 2008). The most popular fonts in each category are:

Serif	Sans Serif
Baskerville Garamond Georgia Times New Roman	Arial Calibri Helvetica Verdana

[source: Shoaf, 2016]

Appendix 3: Report Headings & Subheadings – Example

This example highlights the format, length and style of headings and subheadings for a report [which examines the suitability of a site for the construction of a factory]. The text under each heading and subheading has been kept deliberately brief, so as to draw attention to the aforementioned. **Note**: the style of headings and subheadings in academic assignments can vary (e.g.: upper case headings may be replaced by capitalising each word instead). The main purpose of the example below is to illustrate that students must ensure that headings and subheadings are easily understood and distinguishable from the rest of the text.

REPORT ON PROPOSED NEW FACTORY SITE: COLDHARBOUR BUSINESS PARK

1.   TERMS OF REFERENCE

In accordance with the instructions of the Board, to report on the possibility of acquiring a site for a new factory on the Coldharbour Business Park, and to make recommendations as appropriate.

2.   PROCEDURE

This report was compiled following a visit to the Coldharbour Business Park. Interviews were conducted with the Estate Manager, local building firms and the local office of the Department of Employment.

3.   COLDHARBOUR BUSINESS PARK

3.1   Location
The Coldharbour Business Park is a purpose-built enterprise situated approximately two miles from Speymouth, with unobstructed accessibility and road communication.

3.2   Proposed Site
The site is well drained, adjacent to the main road which passes through the estate, and is within 0.5 miles of the M94.

3.3 Utilities

Water, light and power supplies on the estate are currently in place, thus requiring no action on the part of the company in this regard. Rate charges compare favourably with those in similar industrial areas nationwide.

3.4 Building & Planning Permission

Regional contractors are available to commence building work with immediate effect. Furthermore, the Government has designated the proposed site as a 'development area.' Therefore, planning permission will also be readily obtainable.

3.5 Labour

3.5.1 Skilled & Semi-skilled
Supplies of local skilled and semi-skilled staff are abundant. The employment of 600 personnel would reflect plans by the Department of Education and Employment to increase jobs in the area, thereby being of benefit to the local community.

3.5.2 Operatives & Technicians
It would be necessary for the Company to employ a number of skilled operatives and technicians.

3.5.3 Worker Accommodation
The accommodation of the key workers is likely to present difficulties, as there is an acute housing shortage in the area. Building temporary hostel accommodation or using local hotel accommodation could provide interim solutions to this problem.

4. CONCLUSION

In summary, the site is accessible by main roads and motorways and has existing utilities in place. It also offers competitive rate charges, with an immediate supply of local skilled and semi-skilled labour. Investigations suggest that there are no known planning problems.

Despite the current difficulties surrounding accommodation for the workers, the site appears to be well-suited to the requirements of the Company in all other aspects.

5.   RECOMMENDATION

That the Company accept the site and proceed with the building of the factory with immediate effect.

Signed:

J. Longman
Development Officer

Example of Report using *Schematic Format*

[adapted from Stanton, N. (1996) *Mastering Communication* (3rd edition).   New York: Palgrave Macmillan]

Appendix 4: British vs. American English

Some of the most common differences between these two styles of English are shown below (adapted from University of Oxford Style Guide, 2016):

Spelling		
British	**American**	**Examples**
-our	-or	colour/color
-ise	-ize	organise/organize
-yse	-yze	analyse/analyze
-re	-er	centre/center
-lling	-ling	travelling/traveling
-lled	-led	travelled/traveled
-ller	-ler	traveller/traveler

Some words are spelt differently depending on whether they are being used as a verb or noun. See the examples below:

UK noun	UK verb	US noun	US verb
defence	defend	defense	defend
licence	license	license	license
offence	offend	offense	offend
practice	practise	practice	practice
pretence	pretend	pretense	pretend

Tip: when quoting a source, writers must retain the spellings used by the author.

Appendix 5: Plagiarism Chart

```
                          ┌─────────────────┐
                          │   PLAGIARISM:   │
                          │  Literary Theft │
                          │    or Fraud     │
                          └────────┬────────┘
              ┌────────────────────┴────────────────────┐
      ┌───────┴───────┐                          ┌───────┴───────┐
      │  DELIBERATE   │                          │   ACCIDENTAL  │
      │  PLAGIARISM   │                          │   PLAGIARISM  │
      └───────────────┘                          └───────────────┘
```

DELIBERATE PLAGIARISM				ACCIDENTAL PLAGIARISM		
copying without citing source	providing false citation details	buying, 'borrowing', or stealing a paper	colluding	paraphrasing too closely to the original	citations in main body, but not at end of work, or vice versa	building on someone's ideas, without citation
from ANY source		asking or paying someone to write or sit a paper for you	partners in crime: working in pairs or groups to submit the same/similar work	changing some words, but not the original structure		making use of a table, diagram or any illustration without mention of the author
				failing to put a quotation in "…"		

Tip: as some professors do not distinguish between *deliberate* and *accidental* plagiarism, to avoid problems, students are strongly advised to give credit where due. Failure to acknowledge an intellectual debt is a serious academic offense that can result in a possible breach of copyright law, or the instigation of disciplinary procedures on the Mikkeli Program.

NOTES