Acumen Style Sheet

Heading hierarchies, see Headings.

Preferred spellings, see Spelling.

He/she/they etc, see Grammar.

Serial commas etc, see Punctuation.

Editorial notes to authors/editors

Surround note with three asterisks, e.g. ***editor: please insert table here***

Bullet points

- Use minimal punctuation and capitalisation in bullet lists
- We do not use a list comma
- Only use semicolons if bullet points become very complicated
- The final item of the bullet list should end with a full stop.

Capitalisation

Minimal capitalisation. So, 'Canterbury University' but 'the university'.

Commonwealth, State, Territory and Local Government, but when it appears by itself, lower-case government.

Initial caps for both parts of a hyphenated word in a title, e.g. Self-Actualising

standard(s), where not part of proper name – not Standards(s)

Colons and semicolons

Colons and semicolons are not interchangeable.

Simply put, the colon is used to provide a pause before introducing related information (before a list, or bullets for instance), while semicolon are used to join two independent clauses, where a full stop would be too strong and a comma too weak:

1. The ferry was overloaded; the owners were clearly liable.

The rules are the same whether you are writing lists or sentences: use a colon when you could use the word 'namely' and after something that could be a complete sentence on its own.

2. Our values are as follows:

- One community

- Innovation

- Accountability

- Respect

- Collaboration

Grammar

The singular pronoun 'they' – that is, 'he/she' or 'he or she' vs. 'they' should be used consistently and in a manner which avoids confusion. The Chicago Manual of Style notes:

> On the one hand, it is unacceptable to a great many reasonable readers to use the generic masculine pronoun (he in reference to no one in particular). On the other hand, it is unacceptable to a great many readers either to resort to non-traditional gimmicks to avoid the generic masculine (by using he/she or s/he, for example) or to use they as a kind of singular pronoun. Either way, credibility is lost with some readers.

The author can decide for him/her/themselves which is more appropriate. For 'traditionalists' though, please note this quote from Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet: 'Arise; one knocks. / Hark, how they knock!'

Headings

Use sentence case – e.g. 'Impacts associated with cell manufacture'

Acumen notes have only three heading levels: HD1, HD2, HD3. (Note, in the Acumen CMS Content section these are rendered as <h4>, <h5>, <h6>)

Numbers

0–9   spell out (i.e. seven)

≥10   use digits, except at the opening of a sentence

1000   (no comma), 10,000 (comma)

date format: 16 July 2010

 '30 to 35' not '30–35'

Percentages: '5 to 20% / 3%', not 'Five–20 per cent / three per cent'

Space before units of measurement, so '22 mm', '30 kWh' '6.30 pm'

Abbreviate common units of measurement, so '2 m', *not* '2 metres' or 'two metres'.

Punctuation

No comma before the final 'and' in list unless it helps with clarity.

Space, full stop after initials, so 'M F Mohamed'

Spelling

and (not &)

catalogue

e.g.

et al.

etc.

i.e.

online (not on-line)

updates

no-one

OHS (not OH&S)

program

subcontractor(s)

subconsultant(s)

veranda

vs.

website

while (not whilst)

workers' compensation

workplace