Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark
Style Guide for Written Documents

CONTENTS

1. Spelling

Our standard is British English, unless when quoting American texts. Set your spell check in Word to British English – Engelsk Storbritannien.

1.1. Conventions

1.1.1. *British spelling*. Follow standard British usage, but remember that influences are crossing the Atlantic all the time (for example, the spellings *program* and *disk* have become normal British usage in data processing). Note, however, that the names of US bodies may retain the original spellings, e.g. *Department of Defense.*

1.1.2. *Words in -ise/-ize*. Use *-ise*. Both spellings are correct in British English, but the *-ise* form is now much more common in the media. Using the *-ise* spelling does away with the need to list the most common cases where it must be used anyway. There are up to 40 exceptions to the *-ize* convention: the lists vary in length, few claiming to be exhaustive.

1.1.3. *The -yse form*. For such words as *paralyse* and *analyse* is the only correct spelling in British English.

1.1.4. *Double consonants*. In British usage (unlike US practice), a final *-l* is doubled after a short vowel on adding *-ing* or *-ed* to verbs and adding *-er* to make nouns from verbs: *travel, travelling, travelled, traveller, level, levelling, levelled, leveller.* The sole exception to this rule is *parallel, paralleled.*

1.1.5. Other consonants double only if the last syllable of the root verb is stressed or carries a strong secondary stress: *admit, admitting, admitted, refer, referring, referred, format, formatting, formatted*, but *benefit, benefiting, benefited, focus, focusing, focused, combat, combating, combated, target, targeting, targeted.* Exception: a few verbs in *-p* (e.g. *handicapped, kidnapped, worshipped*, unlike *developed*).

1.1.6. Note that *per cent* is normally written as two words in British English. Use *per cent* where the number is also spelled out in words: *twenty per cent.* With figures, use the per cent sign (%).

1.1.7. *Confusion between English words*. Look out for errors involving the pairs below.
- dependent (adj. or noun) dependant (noun only)
- license (verb) licence (noun)
- practise (verb) practice (noun)
- principal (adj. or noun) principle (noun)
- stationary (adj.) stationery (noun)
- Note also: all together (*in a body*), altogether (*entirely*); premisses (*propositions*), premises (*building*); discreet (*careful in your actions*), discrete (*separate and distinct*).

1.2. For names of programmes, bodies, types of assistance etc.

Refer e.g. to Danida's Annual Report on the internet.
http://www.um.dk/en/menu/DevelopmentPolicy/DanishDevelopmentPolicy/AnnualReport/

2. *Abbreviations and Names of Bodies*

2.1.   Abbreviations

2.1.1. <u>*General*</u>. The prime consideration when using abbreviations should be to help the reader. Thus, they must first of all be easily understood. So when an abbreviation that may not be familiar to readers first occurs, it is best to write out the full term followed by the abbreviation in brackets: *The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPPC) won the Nobel Prize in 2007*.

2.1.2. <u>*Definitions*</u>. Abbreviations in the broad sense can be classed into two main categories, each in turn divided into two sub-categories:

    2.1.2.1.   **Acronyms and initialisms. Acronyms** are words formed from the first (or first few) letters of a series of words, and are pronounced as words (*UNESCO, NATO*). They never take points. **Initialisms** are formed from the initial letters of a series of words, usually written without points, and each separate letter is pronounced (*UNDP, USA*). For a useful list of UN acronyms see http://www.unric.org/html/swedish/glossary/list.htm.

    2.1.2.2.   **Contractions and truncations. Contractions** omit the middle of a word (*Mr, Dr*) and, in British usage, are not followed by a point. **Truncations** omit the end of a word (*Feb., Tues.*) and sometimes other letters as well (*cf.*), and end in a point.

2.1.3. Acronyms with five letters or less are uppercased: HIV, AIDS, NATO. Uppercase acronyms and initialisms unless the acronym gains common usage as an ordinary lowercase word (such as *scuba* and *laser)*.

2.1.4. Initialisms are usually written in capitals, whatever their length, and take no points: UNHCR, WTO. If the full expressions are lower-case or mixed-case, however, the initialisms may follow suit: aka, BAe (British Aerospace), PhD.

2.1.5. Note that 'e.g.' and 'i.e.' are never capitalised (even at the beginning of footnotes) and take points (although The Economist now writes 'eg, ie…'). In contrast, 'plc' (public limited company) never takes points even though it, too, is never capitalised.

2.1.6. Truncations take a point at the end: *Jan., Sun., Co., fig., etc., cf., chap., dict., ibid*.

2.1.7. Acronyms constituting proper names do not take the definite article even if the full names do (*Danida, NATO, UNESCO*). Where used as common nouns, however, they take a definite (or indefinite) article as necessary (*a/the BLOB, WASP*).

2.1.8. Initialisms generally take the definite article if the expression they stand for does (*the OECD, the WTO*). However, there is a tendency to drop the article if the initialism is regarded more as a name in its own right, for example where the full expression is hardly ever used or no longer even known, e.g. *TNT*.

2.1.9. Plurals of abbreviations are formed in the usual way by adding a lower-case 's' without an apostrophe: *MDGs, PhDs*.

2.1.10.   <u>*Use of e.g. and i.e.*</u> Use a comma, colon, or dash before e.g. and i.e., but no comma after them. If a footnote begins with them, they nevertheless remain in lower case. If a list begins with e.g. do not end it with etc.

	Acronyms	Initialisms	Contractions	Truncations	e.g. and i.e.
Definition / explanation	UNESCO, NATO (form words)	UNDP, USA (do not form words)	Mr – **M**iste**r** Dr – **D**octo**r**	Feb. – **Feb**ruary Tues. - **Tues**day	e.g. – *exempli gratia, for example* i.e. – *id est, that is* (explanation)
Use of upper case	All uppercase	Generally all uppercase			No uppercase
Punctuation	No points	No points	No points	Points	Points
Use of article	Generally no article	Definite article when appropriate			

2.2.   Names of bodies

2.2.1. If a body, for example an international organisation, has an *official name in English*, always use that. Check on the internet.

2.2.2. <u>*Abbreviations*</u>. Where a body is referred to in the original language by an abbreviation, do not translate it with an improvised English one. Instead, give the English name followed by the original abbreviation (transliterating if necessary) in brackets (or vice versa) upon first mention, and include the original name as well if it is given: *SKAT (the Danish Central Customs and Tax Administration).*

3. Hyphens and Compound Words

3.1. <u>*General*</u>. Compounds may be written as two or more separate words, with hyphen(s), or as a single word. There is a tendency for compounds to develop into single words when they come to be used more frequently: *data base, data-base, database*. Use hyphens sparingly but to good purpose: in the phrase *crude oil production statistics* a hyphen can tell the reader that 'crude' applies to the oil rather than the statistics (*crude-oil production statistics*). Sometimes hyphens are absolutely necessary to clarify the sense: *re-cover (cover again)* — *recover (get better); re-creation (create again)* — *recreation (leisure); re-form (form again)* — *reform (improve through change); re-count (count again)* — *recount (describe incident)*. The following are examples of well-used hyphens: *user-friendly software; two-day meeting.*

3.2. In adverb-adjective modifiers, there is no hyphen when the adverb ends in -ly: *occupationally exposed worker; a beautifully phrased sentence*. With other adverbs, however, a hyphen is usually required: *well-known problem; above-mentioned report; (*but *a hotly disputed election); broad-based programme (*but *a broadly based programme).*

3.3. An adjective formed out of a noun and a participle should be hyphenated: *drug-related crime, crime-fighting unit; oil-bearing rock.*

3.4. Many phrases are treated as compounds, and thus need a hyphen, only when used as modifiers: *policy for the long term,* but *long-term effects, production on a large scale,* but *large-scale redundancies, loans with low interest,* but *low-interest loans, measures for flood control,* but *flood-control measures.*

3.5. <u>*Prefixes*</u> are usually hyphenated in recent or ad hoc coinages: *anti-smoking campaign, co-responsibility levies, co-sponsor, ex-army, non-resident.* If they are of Latin or Greek origin, however, they tend to drop the hyphen as they become established: *antibody, codetermination, codecision, cofinancing, cooperation, subcommittee.* Others are more resistant to losing the hyphen: *end-user, end-phase, end-product.*

3.6. <u>*Nouns from phrasal verbs.*</u> These are often hyphenated or written as single words. The situation is fluid: *handout, takeover, comeback* but *follow-up, run-up, spin-off.*

3.7. *Present participles of phrasal verbs.* When used as attributes they are generally hyphenated: *cooling-off period.*

3.8. <u>*Avoiding double consonants and vowels.*</u> Hyphens are often used to avoid juxtaposing two consonants or two vowels: *aero-elastic, anti-intellectual, part-time, re-election, re-entry, re-examine.* However, the hyphen is often omitted in frequently used words: *bookkeeping, cooperation, coordinate, macroeconomic, microeconomic.*

3.9. <u>*Numbers and fractions.*</u> Numbers take hyphens when they are spelled out. Fractions take hyphens when used attributively, but not when used as nouns: *twenty-eight, two-thirds completed* but *an increase of two thirds.*

3.10. <u>*Prefixes before proper names.*</u> Prefixes before proper names are hyphenated: *pro-American, intra-EU, Pan-Arabism, trans-European.*

3.11. <u>*Coordination of compounds (parts of speech made up of two or more words).*</u> Hyphenated compounds may be coordinated as follows: *gamma- and beta-emitters, acid- and heat-resistant.*

3.12. Where compounds are not hyphenated (closed compounds), or should you choose to write them so, they should not be coordinated but written out in full: *macrostructural and microstructural changes, minicomputers and microcomputers, prenatal and postnatal effects, agricultural inputs and outputs* not *macro- and microstructural changes, mini- and microcomputers, pre- and postnatal effects, agricultural in- and outputs* (but of course if they are hyphenated, they should be coordinated: *macro- and micro-structural changes, pre- and post-natal effects*).

4. Punctuation

4.1. *Full stop*

4.1.1. No further full stop is required if a sentence ends with an abbreviation that takes a point (e.g. 'etc.') or with a quotation complete in itself that ends in a full stop, question mark or exclamation mark before the final quotes: *Charlemagne said 'To know another language is to have a second soul.'*

4.1.2. <u>*Full stops as omission marks (*</u>aka ellipsis points<u>*)*</u>. Always use three points, preceded by a hard space. In Word, use Alt + Ctrl + (full stop) to insert ellipsis points. The points are not enclosed in brackets: *'Promoting good governance and fighting corruption…constituted two other special priorities for the Government in 2007.'* If a sentence ends with an omission, no fourth full stop should be added. If any other punctuation mark follows, there is no space before it.

4.2. Colon

4.2.1. Colons are most often used to indicate that an expansion, qualification or explanation is about to follow (e.g. a list of items in running text). The part before the colon must be a full sentence in its own right, but the second need not be.

4.2.2. Do not use colons at the end of headings.

4.2.3. Colons do not require the next word to start with a capital: in contrast to Danish usage where capitals are required after colons.

4.2.4. See also the section on lists.

4.3. Semicolon

4.3.1. Use a semicolon rather than a comma to combine two sentences into one without a linking conjunction: *They could not reach an agreement; they decided to adjourn the meeting; The committee dealing with the question of commas agreed on a final text; however, the issue of semicolons was not considered.*

4.3.2. You may also use semicolons instead of commas to separate items in a series, especially phrases that themselves contain commas. See also the section on lists.

4.4. Comma

4.4.1. *Items in a series.* Here, the comma may be considered to stand for a missing 'and' or 'or'. *John mowed the lawn, Mary did the cooking and Frank lazed around. He came, saw and conquered.* In American usage, a comma is included before the final conjunction in a list. However, in British English an additional comma may only be inserted before the final 'and' (or 'or') if it is needed for emphasis or for clarification: *sugar, beef and veal, and milk products.* A comma also comes before 'etc.' in a series: *sugar, beef, milk products, etc.* but not if no series is involved: *They discussed milk products etc., then moved on to sugar.*

4.4.2. *Linked sentences.* Use a comma to separate two sentences linked by a conjunction such as 'but', 'yet', 'while' or 'so' to form a single sentence: *The committee dealing with the question of commas agreed on a final text, but the issue of semicolons was not considered.* Where there is no conjunction, use a semicolon.

4.4.3. *Parenthetic phrases.* If a phrase is intended to complement the information in a sentence and has a separate emphasis of its own, it is set off by a comma, or by a pair of commas if inside the sentence: *The committee on commas is composed of old fogeys, as you know. The committee on commas, however, was of a different opinion.* Note that the sentence must remain a complete sentence even if the parenthetic phrase is omitted. Parenthetic phrases may also be created by setting off part of the sentence with a comma (or commas) while retaining the normal word order. Both the following are possible: *The President was a great man despite his flaws. The President was a great man, despite his flaws.* Without the comma, the phrase 'despite his flaws' forms part of the statement. With the comma, the phrase complements it, i.e. the sentence retains its sense if the phrase is omitted. The comma is therefore correctly left out in the following sentence: *Phrases must not be set off by commas if this changes the intended meaning of the sentence.*

4.4.4. *Introductory phrases.* If a phrase introduces the information in a sentence or provides a separate emphasis simply by virtue of being moved out of position, for example to the beginning of the sentence, a comma is required: *Mindful of the need to fudge the issue, the committee on commas never came to a conclusion. If this changes the intended meaning of the sentence,*

phrases must not be set off by commas. Note, though, that short introductory phrases need not have any separate emphasis of their own, i.e. they may be run into the rest of the sentence. Both the following are possible: *In 2003, the committee took three decisions. In 2003 the committee took three decisions.*

4.4.5. <u>*Non-defining relative clauses.*</u> Non-defining relative clauses are special cases of parenthetic phrases. Note the difference compared with relative clauses that define the preceding noun phrase (i.e. 'the translations' in the examples below): *The translations, which have been revised, can now be sent out (*added detail — they have all been revised*). The translations which* (or better*: that*) *have been revised can now be sent out (*defining the subset that is to be sent out — only those that have been revised are to be sent out*).*

4.4.6. <u>*Combined uses of commas.*</u> The uses of commas described above can of course be combined. Worth noting is that an initial comma is not needed before introductory phrases in linked sentences: *The committee dealing with the question of commas agreed on a final text, but despite the importance of the matter, the relationship with semicolons was not considered.*

4.5. Dashes

4.5.1. <u>*Em dashes*</u> may be used to punctuate a sentence instead of commas or round brackets. They increase the contrast or emphasis of the text set off in this way. However, use no more than one in a sentence, or — if used with inserted phrases — one set of paired dashes. In Microsoft Word, the keyboard shortcut for the em dash is Alt + Ctrl + - (on the numeric keypad).

4.5.2. <u>*En dashes*</u> are used to join coordinate or contrasting pairs (*the London–Paris route, the height–depth ratio*). These are not subject to hyphen rules. In Microsoft Word, the keyboard shortcut for the en dash is Ctrl + - (on the numeric keypad).

4.6.   Question mark

4.6.1. <u>*Courtesy questions.*</u> No question mark is needed after a request or instruction put as a question for courtesy: *Would you please sign and return the attached form.*

4.7.   Quotation marks

4.7.1. <u>*Double vs single quotation marks.*</u> Use single quotation marks to signal direct speech and verbatim quotes, and double quotation marks for quotations within these. You may also use single quotation marks to identify words and phrases that are not themselves quotes but to which you wish to draw attention as lexical items. The so-called 'professor' had no degree at all.

4.7.2. <u>*Placing of quotation marks.*</u> Quotation marks at the end of a sentence normally precede the concluding full stop, question mark or exclamation mark: *The American Government favours 'a two-way street in arms procurement'.* However, if the quotation itself contains a concluding mark, no full stop is required after the quotation mark. *Walther Rathenau once said 'We stand or fall on our economic performance.'*

4.7.3. <u>*So-called.*</u> *Using q*uotation marks or 'known as' is preferable to *so-called*, which has pejorative connotations, to render *såkaldt, soi-disant, sogenannt,* etc.

4.8. Apostrophe

4.8.1. <u>*Possessive of nouns*</u>. The possessive form of nouns is marked by an apostrophe followed by an *–s: Danida's*. After the plural ending 's', however, the possessive *-s* is omitted: *women's rights*. Note that the apostrophe is never used in possessive adjectives: *its (*as distinct from it's, i.e. 'it is'*), ours, theirs, yours*.

4.8.2. <u>*Nouns ending in -s*</u>, including proper names and abbreviations, form their singular possessive with *-'s*, just like nouns ending in other letters: *an actress's pay; Mr Jones's paper*.

4.8.3. <u>*Plurals of abbreviations*</u>. Plurals of abbreviations (*MDGs, SMEs,*) do not take an apostrophe.

4.8.4. <u>*Plurals of figures*</u>. Plurals of figures do not take an apostrophe: *Pilots of 747s undergo special training*.

4.8.5. <u>*Plurals of single letters*</u>. The plurals of single lower-case letters may, however, take an apostrophe to avoid misunderstanding: *Dot your i's. Mind your p's and q's.*

4.9. Capital letters

4.9.1. <u>*General*</u>. The titles and names of persons, bodies, programmes, legal acts, documents, etc. are normally capitalised: *the Danish Board for International Development Cooperation, Secretary-General.*

4.9.2. <u>*Headings*</u>. Capitalise the initial letters of the most important words (nouns, verbs, adjectives) in top-level headings only. In all other headings, capitalise only the initial letter of the first word.

4.9.3. <u>*Seasons, etc*</u>. No capitals for *spring, summer, autumn, winter*; capitals for weekdays, months and feast-days (*Ascension Day, pre-Christmas business*).

4.9.4. <u>*Celestial bodies and objects*</u>. Since they are proper nouns, the names of planets, moons, stars and artificial satellites are capitalised (*Venus, Rigel, Palapa B*). However, the earth, the moon and the sun do not normally take an initial capital unless they are specifically referred to as celestial bodies. *The Starship Enterprise returned to Earth* but *The daydreamer returned to earth.*

4.9.5. <u>*Initial capitals in quotations*</u>. Start with a capital in running text only if the quotation is a complete sentence in itself: *The American Government favours 'a two-way street in arms procurement'.*

4.9.6. <u>*Compass points*</u>. No capitals for *north, north-west, north-western*, etc. unless part of an administrative or political unit or a distinct regional entity. Hence *South Africa, Northern Ireland but southern Africa, northern France*. Note, however, *Central and Eastern European countries* (capitalised because the connotations are more political than geographic). Compass bearings are abbreviated without a point (54°E).

4.9.7. <u>*Compound compass points*</u>. Compound compass points are hyphenated and, in official designations, each part is capitalised (*South-West Germany, the North-West Frontier*); always abbreviate as capitals without stops (*NW France).*

5. Numbers

5.1. Numbers

5.1.1. <u>*General*</u>. As a general rule write low numbers (up to *nine* inclusive) in words and larger numbers (*10* and above) in figures. If the passage contains both kinds, however, use either figures or words for all the numbers.

5.1.2. On the other hand, try not to start a sentence with a figure or a symbol followed by a figure. Either write out in full or, if this does not work, make use of devices such as inversion: *Altogether 92 cases were found …, Of the total, DKK 55 million was spent on …*

5.1.3. Always use figures with units of measurement that are denoted by symbols or abbreviations: *EUR 50* or *fifty euros, 250 kW* or *two hundred and fifty kilowatts, 205 µg* or *two hundred and five micrograms, 5 °C* or *five degrees Celsius*. The converse does not hold. If the units of measurement are spelled out, the numbers do not also have to be spelled out but may be written with figures: *250 kilowatts, 500 metres.*

5.1.4. With *hundred* and *thousand* there is a choice of using figures or words: *300* or *three hundred* but not 3 hundred *EUR 3000* or *three thousand euros* but not EUR 3 thousand. Million and billion, however, may be combined with figures: *2.5 million, 3 million, 31 billion.*

5.2.   Writing out numbers

5.2.1. As a rule, avoid combining single-digit figures and words using hyphens (a 2-hour journey) but write out instead: *a three-year period, a five-door car.* But note set phrases such as: 40-hour week, 24-hour clock, 4-wheel drive.

5.2.2. When two numbers are adjacent, spell out one of them: *90 fifty-gram weights, seventy 25-cent stamps.*

5.2.3. <u>*Billion*</u>. Use *billion* to designate *thousand million* (rather than *million million*). Leading British newspapers and journals (such as the *Financial Times* and *The Economist*) have adopted the convention.

5.2.4. <u>*Abbreviating 'million' and 'billion'*</u>. Do not use mio. The letters *m* and *bn* can be used for sums of money to avoid frequent repetitions of *million, billion*; this applies particularly in tables where space is limited.

5.3.   Punctuation in numbers

5.3.1. <u>*Commas*</u>. In contrast to Danish, which uses a full stop, commas are used in English as digit separators to mark thousands: *DKK 3,000,000.*

5.3.2. <u>*Full stops*</u>. In contrast to Danish, which uses commas, full stops are used in English s decimal markers: *DKK 28.7 billion*; *72.8873%.*

5.4.   Fractions

5.4.1. <u>*Written out*</u>. Insert hyphens in fractions used as adverbs or adjectives but not if they are nouns: *a two-thirds increase,* but *an increase of two thirds.*

5.4.2. Avoid combining figures and words: *two-thirds completed,* not *2/3 completed.*

5.5.   Ranges

5.5.1. <u>*Written out*</u>. When a range is written out, repeat symbols and multiples (i.e. thousand, million, etc.): *from EUR 20 million to EUR 30 million, between 10 °C and 70 °C.*

5.6.   Dates and times

5.6.1.*Dates*. Write out the month, preceded by a simple figure for the day: *23 July 2007*. Use all four digits when referring to specific years (i.e. *2007* not *'07*). However, in footnotes and where space is at a premium, the month can be written as a number (e.g. *23.7.2007*).

5.6.2.*Decades*. When referring to decades write *the 1990s* (no apostrophe).

5.6.3.Note the following patterns: *from 1990 to 1995* (not from 1990–95), *between 1990 and 1995* (not between 1990–95), *1990 to 1995 inclusive* (not 1990–95 inclusive).

6. Lists

6.1. The four basic types of list are illustrated below. In multi-level lists, follow the same rules for each level.

6.1.1.*Lists of short items* (without main verbs) should be introduced by a full sentence and have the following features:
- introductory colon
- indentation or appropriate bullet
- no initial capitals
- no punctuation (very short items) or comma after each item
- a full stop at the end.

6.1.2.*Where each item completes* the introductory sentence, you should:
- begin with the introductory colon;
- label each item with the appropriate bullet, number or letter;
- end each item with a semicolon;
- close with a full stop.

6.1.3.*If all items are complete statements* without a grammatical link to the introductory sentence, proceed as follows:
- introduce the list with a colon;
- label each item with the appropriate bullet, number or letter;
- start each item with a lowercase letter;
- end each one with a semicolon;
- put a full stop at the end.

6.1.4.*If any one item consists of several* complete sentences, announce the list with a complete sentence and continue as indicated below:
- Introduce the list with a colon.
- Label each item with the appropriate bullet, number or letter.
- Begin each item with a capital letter.
- End each statement with a full stop. This allows several sentences to be included under a single item without throwing punctuation into confusion.

	List of short items	Item completes the introductory sentence	All items are complete statements	One or more items consist of several sentences

Begin	:	:	:	:
Label	None	Bullet, number or letter	Bullet, number or letter	Bullet, number or letter
Start sentence with	Lowercase	Lowercase	Lowercase	Uppercase
End sentence with	Nothing	;	;	.
End list with	.	.	.	.

7. Grammar and Language Use

7.1. Singular or plural agreement

7.1.1. Use the singular when the emphasis is on the whole entity: *The Government is considering the matter. The Security Council meets today.* Use the plural when the emphasis is on the individual members: *The police have failed to trace the goods. A majority of the Committee were in favour.*

7.1.2. Countries and organisations with a plural name take the singular: *The United States is reconsidering its position. The United Nations was unable to reach agreement.*

7.1.3. Use a singular verb when a multiple subject clearly forms a whole: *Checking and stamping the forms is the job of the customs authorities.*

7.1.4. *Words in -ics.* These are singular when used to denote a scientific discipline or body of knowledge (mathematics, statistics, economics) but plural in all other contexts. *Economics is commonly regarded as a soft science. The economics of the new process were studied in depth.*

7.2. That and which

Both *which* and *that* can function as relative pronouns to introduce relative clauses. *Which* is used to refer to things; *that* can be used to refer to both things and people. (*Who* can also function as a relative pronoun to refer to people). *Which* can be used in both defining and non-defining relative clauses (cf. 4.4.5.), while *that* can only be used in defining relative clauses.

Using *which* in defining relative clauses, while permissible, can seem overly formal. *That* reads more naturally and helps make the grammatical sense of sentences clear.

7.3. Prepositions

Prepositions are a particularly problematic area for non-native speakers. When in doubt, it is best to consult a work of reference such as a dictionary or a collocations dictionary.

Longman English Dictionary Online: http://www.ldoceonline.com/.

Oxford Collocations Dictionary for Students of English: http://www.lixiaolai.com/ocd/.

7.4.   Language use

In general, clarity should be strived for in all formal writing. Grammar, syntax, word choice and punctuation should all work towards that end. Sentences should begin with the subject unless, for example, an adverbial phrase or clause deserves to be stressed, e.g. *The summit took place in 2008; In 2008 the summit finally took place*. Similarly, parenthetical phrases and clauses should be used only when necessary, for example to make the meaning of a sentence clearer. The level of language should be appropriately formal, but jargon should be avoided as much as possible.

7.5.   Gender-neutral language

7.5.1. *He/she*. Avoid the clumsy *he/she* etc., except perhaps in non-running text such as application forms. The best solution is often to use the plural, which in any case is more commonly used in English for the generic form as it does not require the definite article. It is also acceptable to use forms such as *everyone has their own views on this* (see *usage note* for *they* in the Concise Oxford Dictionary).

7.5.2. *Noun forms*. Use your judgment in choosing noun forms to emphasise or deemphasise gender, such as *Chairman*, *Chairwoman* or *Chair*. For certain occupations, a substitute for a gender-specific term is now commonly used to refer to persons working in those occupations, e.g. we now write *firefighters* instead of *firemen* and *police officer* instead of *policeman* or *policewoman*.

7.5.3. For a more comprehensive discussion of this issue and a more detailed description of possible areas of concern and suggestions for how to deal with these issues, please see UNESCO's "Guidelines on Gender-Neutral Language" at http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0011/001149/114950mo.pdf.

8. Useful online resources

Danida's Annual Report:

http://www.um.dk/en/menu/DevelopmentPolicy/DanishDevelopmentPolicy/AnnualReport/

Longman English Dictionary Online:

http://www.ldoceonline.com/

Oxford Collocations Dictionary for Students of English:

http://www.lixiaolai.com/ocd/

UNESCO's "Guidelines on Gender-Neutral Language":
http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0011/001149/114950mo.pdf