Style Guide for Academic Documentation

Purpose
This guidance is designed to ensure that all academic documentation follows a standardised and accessible format, as described in more detail below.

General
- Ensure the document can be customised by the user.
- Use a minimum font size of 12, but preferably 14, for Word and 24 for PowerPoint.
- Use a san serif font, e.g. Arial or Comic Sans.
- Use the 'styles' to format headings, e.g. use Heading 1 for titles, Heading 2 for section title, Heading 3 for sub-section title.
- Avoid using block capitals, underlining and italics (beyond the odd word).
- Avoid using pale colour text.
- Do not 'right justify' text (as dyslexic and visually impaired users find it difficult to track from line to line).
- Do not use dark coloured, patterned, picture or graded contrast backgrounds.
- Do not depend on colour alone to convey information, e.g. do not refer to 'the green line on the graph' as this will disadvantage anyone who is colour blind.
- Ensure all PDF documents are also available in Word.

Handouts
- Publish all handouts (e.g. lecture schedules, lecture notes, PowerPoints, reading lists, assessment briefs) to the intranet in advance of lectures so that students have the opportunity to print the material in a format suitable to their own particular needs.
- Try to produce handouts on light coloured paper to enhance contrast for easier visibility.
- Avoid poor quality photocopies and printing on shiny paper.
- Do not photo-reduce to an unreadable size.

PowerPoint
- Try to use a very pale grey or pastel background to take off the glare from the white screen.
- Avoid overcrowding with lots of text and distracting visual gimmicks.
- Always use the slide master to set up the text. Avoid inserting text boxes directly into slides as these are lost when saving as outline or when viewing with screen readers.
- Reproduce charts, graphs and other images in an accessible manner with small diagrams printed 1 slide per page as opposed to the more commonly used format of 3 slides to a page.