### General guidelines for preparing written materials

**Layout**

* Use line spacing between text to break up text. There should be more spaces between paragraphs than between lines of text
* Leave plenty of space between columns of text
* Left-justify text and leave the right margin jagged. This makes it easier to follow lines of text for people with dyslexia
* Use bullet points and short notes instead of continuous prose. Try limiting lines to 60 to 70 characters and keep paragraphs brief. Short, simple text is easier to read and understand
* Try to have only one topic per slide, and no more than six or seven bullet points
* Using boxes to show prominence or highlight important text can be effective.

**Text/Font**

* Provide typed handouts preferably in a sans serif font like Arial, Helvetica or Trebuchet MS
* Use at least 12pt font in publications, 12pt or 14pt on handouts and 24pt on slides. Most people find larger print easier to read, including people with some kinds of visual impairment, dyslexia or concentration difficulties
* Avoid excessive use of CAPITALISATION and underlining. People with dyslexia often recognise words by patterns they form. Capitalisation removes these differences between words because all letters are the same height. Underlining can make text run together, again making it difficult to read
* Use **bold** text for headings and avoid faint text at all times. Avoid the use of *italics* or text at an angle. It can be difficult for people with visual impairments and dyslexia to read
* If writing in pen, use a medium tip pen or a felt pen. Black pen is easier to read, as it provides a good contrast and is usually darker than a blue pen
* Avoid using red and green. People who are colour-blind will find these impossible to read.

**Paper**

* Ensure there is good contrast between text colour and background colour, but be aware that black on white can cause glare. Provide publications and handouts on pastel-coloured paper, if possible
* Print text on a plain background. Printing text on a patterned background can obscure the text and make it difficult to read
* Ensure any paper used is heavy enough to minimise ‘shadow’ from the opposite side. Good quality 80 or 90 gm paper is effective
* Avoid using glossy paper. Material printed on matt paper is easier to read and creates less eye strain.

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