**Academic Style Summary:**

*Points 1-4 below are some general principles concerning the style suitable for academic writing.*

**1 Use formal rather than informal language**

(i) Avoid contracted forms:

* ~~can’t~~ > *cannot*
* ~~it’s~~ > *it is*

(ii) Avoid colloquial language ('spoken' language):

* The results from ~~a lot of~~ >*many of* these recent projects have been pretty ~~good~~ *encouraging.*

(iii) Avoid punctuation indicating your attitude:

* Turnout in the election was Jess than 20 percent~~!~~ > replace with a full stop.
* So it was to be made of this? > *This is a result certain to provoke questions.*

**2 Be concise and precise**

(i) In general, use a one-word verb where we might prefer a phrasal verb in speech (c.f. also document on latinate verbs):

* The issue was ~~brought up~~ > *raised* during the meeting.

(ii) Avoid vague words common in speech such as big (bigger, biggest), good, thing, and nice:

* Government policy has a ~~big~~ > *major/significant/important* impact on the way business is conducted.

(iii) Avoid *etc.,* and *so on*, and *and so forth* where it would be better to provide a full list or summarise the features of the items in the list:

Elements in the periodic table can be divided into ~~metals, non-metals, etc~~*.* > *metals, non-metals, and metal/aids (semi-metals).*

(iv) Consider nominalisation to express ideas efficiently:

The number of cases is increasing and this is causing great concern among health authorities.

> *The increase in the number of cases is causing great concern among health authorities.*

**3 Use impersonal language**

(i) Avoid using I (me, my, mine) or we (our, ours) (referring to yourself) to express an opinion:

* ~~I think~~ > *It is likely that* mobile phone technology will be used increasingly in education.

(ii) Avoid addressing the reader as *you* or *the reader*:

* ~~You~~ can see the results in Table 3. > The *results are shown* in Table 3.

**4 Be cautious in what you say**

(i) Use hedges to qualify your statements:

NB. A hedge is the deliberate softening of an opinion or a deliberate concession, the admission that there are other opinions, or that exceptions can be found:

* In Australia, beef cattle ~~are found~~ > *are mostly found* in Queensland and New South Wales.
* The virus ~~is~~ *appears to be* widespread in central Asia.

(ii) Avoid words that express your emotion rather than show evidence:

* It is ~~ridiculous to think that~~ > *debatable whether* the problems can be solved by economic means.

Adapted from Frith, M., Sowton, C., Hewings, M., Thane, C., (2012) *Cambridge Academic English – Advanced,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press