

# How you can improve administrative texts

## TEXT PURPOSE

- » Is writing a text the best approach or would a phone call be more expedient?
- » Assess the purpose of the text.  
Is it designed to inform readers, convince them or appeal to them to act in a certain way?
- » Choose the main purpose and emphasise the aspects of the text that serve this purpose.

## AUDIENCE

- » Consider the audience. Are they people who know the topic well (your colleagues or experts in the matter), or are they people who are perhaps not so familiar with the topic? Use vocabulary and text structure that are familiar to the reader.
- » Think about the tone of the text and how it comes across to the reader. For example, assertive statements or legal expressions that you might consider neutral may sound rude or threatening to the reader.

## CONTENTS

- » Ensure that the text includes enough background information and context for the reader to understand the essential message. Would additional information, such as a link, brochure or contact details, help the reader?
- » Make sure to omit information that is only relevant to your supervisor or colleagues. Information that is not essential might distract the reader from concentrating on the main topic of the text.

## FIT FOR PURPOSE

- » Start with the main point, unless there is a particular reason not to do so. Use subheadings to arrange information into logical sections. Use vocabulary familiar to the reader, and if technical terms cannot be avoided, explain them.
- » Use lists, diagrams and other visual presentations, including colours.
- » Decide whether the text could be made shorter.

## NAMES, JOB TITLES AND TERMS

- » Decide who should take part in creating new names and terms. Allow time for consulting in-house experts as well as language and other specialists who can give advice on how to formulate new names and terms. Consider whether clients or other stakeholders should also be consulted.
- » Are the names, titles and terms clear and easy for clients to use?  
Remember that all names and abbreviations must work in all relevant languages. Names that are not transparent can be difficult to remember and use.
- » If equivalents for names are needed in foreign languages, they are translated separately. As a rule, avoid using foreign-language names in texts other than those written in a foreign language.