Referencing and citing – an introduction

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QG CIT001   [http://www.abdn.ac.uk/library/documents/guides/qgcit001.pdf]

What is referencing?

Referencing is recording what you have read and/or referred to in your written work, both within the text (citing) and at the end of your written work (reference list or bibliography). It is vital that you acknowledge what resources – print and electronic (including the Internet) – you have referred to in your assignment.

Why reference?

It is important to reference for the following reasons:

Academic reasons
- to support the argument or discussion in your work
- to demonstrate the breadth of your knowledge of the literature on the subject
- to add context to your work

Ethical reasons
- to acknowledge other people's ideas

Practical reasons
- to enable readers to trace your sources
- to enable you to retrace your steps.

> If you don't reference, you can be accused of **plagiarism** – the unacknowledged use of other people's words and ideas. **This is cheating**.

When to reference?

You should provide a reference to any idea which is not your own. This includes direct quotes, paraphrasing, images, data, tables etc. It is not necessary to reference your own ideas within the particular assignment or common knowledge. **Common knowledge** is information that everyone within your field is expected to know. If you are unsure if a piece of information is common knowledge, ask your supervisor.

How to reference?

There are 2 systems of referencing: author/date and numeric. Within these systems there are more than 3000 different styles. There is no single style used across the University. In fact style preferences can vary within a School or Department.

Always check your course handbook and/or ask your supervisor. You may lose marks for poor referencing.

> **(i)** **Students of the Business School, School of Education, and the School of Law have their own specific referencing styles and they should use the separate education, business and law guides**.

We also have separate library guides covering the **Harvard** and **Vancouver/Uniform** styles.

Regardless of the style used, a reference should answer the following questions:

WHO: who created it – who is the author, creator, editor, publisher?

WHAT: what is it called – what is the title of the article, chapter, journal, book, webpage?

WHEN: when was it published – what year, what year was it updated or uploaded?

WHERE: where can it be found – what volume, pages number(s), web address, DOI, etc.?

Within the text

When you refer in your written work to someone else's ideas, whether you are using your own words (paraphrasing) or quoting their exact words (never more than a couple of sentences), you **must** provide a short citation in the text using **either**:

- The author's surname and year of publication in brackets **(Author/Date system)**
- A running number in the text which links to the numbering in the bibliography at the end **(Numeric system)**.

Using quotations

Short quotations of a few words should be enclosed in 'quotation marks' within the body of the text.
If you are quoting more than a few words indent the quotation from the rest of the text. This is instead of quotation marks.

Citing a secondary person

Only cite the work that you have actually read. If you read a source that refers to the work of someone else ideally you should find and read the work that has been referred to. However, if you are unable to locate the original work you must make it clear to your reader that you are citing work that you have not read. The work that you have read is 'secondary' as you are relying on someone else's interpretation or opinion of the original work rather than your own. In your bibliography only reference the book you have read.

Citing personal communications, lecture notes etc.

Requirements for this depend on your discipline and/or referencing style. In most instances such works are cited within the text; however a fuller citation within the reference list may not be permitted. Check your course handbook or with your supervisor.

Electronic/print format references

References are intended to point the reader to the source of a statement or argument. Sources may be in print or electronic format and some styles require that the reference indicates the document format. Check your course handbook or with your supervisor to find out whether the source format is important (there can be slight variations in pagination or content between formats) and how much information you should present for electronic sources.

Corporate authors

Some publications are created or written by corporate organisations rather than being attributed to individual people. This may often be the case for organisational reports and web pages. The name of the organisation is known as the "corporate author", e.g. University of Aberdeen.

The bibliography/reference list at the end of your written work

The details required in a reference vary according to the type of document you are citing, e.g. whole books, journal articles, conference proceedings. The Library has separate guides on Harvard and Vancouver/Uniform styles.

The Library also has style manuals and books on referencing & citing. Check Primo: http://primo.abdn.ac.uk.

Abbreviations of journal titles

If you are using a referencing style that requires abbreviated journal titles, the following sites and resources may help you to locate the correct abbreviation:

Journal Citation Reports (a database within Web of Science): https://jcr.clarivate.com/

Journal Abbreviation Sources (All That JAS): https://www.abbreviations.com/jas.php

Cardiff Index to Legal Abbreviations: http://www.legalabbrevs.cardiff.ac.uk/

Useful websites

APA: https://apastyle.apa.org/

Chicago: https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html

MHRA: http://www.mhra.org.uk/style

MLA: https://writing.wisc.edu/handbook/documentation/docmla/

Search **Google Advanced** and limit to *ac.uk* domain sites to find examples and advice from UK universities.

Further information

There are software packages that are useful for formatting bibliographies/reference lists, e.g. RefWorks, Mendeley, and Zotero. The Information Consultants provide support for RefWorks.
All of our library guides are available at www.abdn.ac.uk/library/support/library-guides-101.php. Remember to check your course handbook and/or your supervisor for advice on the referencing style required for your assignments. The Information Consultants can provide assistance but won't necessarily know which specific style is required for your course.