Referencing at the University of Dundee

A Code of Practice for Staff

Why do we need a Code of Practice for Referencing?

The ability to construct references effectively is a key academic skill required by all students and staff. Accurate and consistent use of referencing is therefore an important aspect of assessments, demonstrating an understanding of academic practice and displaying an approach to the use of information appropriate to an academic context.

This Code of Practice sets out standards for use of referencing as part of academic study, and also provides recommendations for staff in assessing referencing and effective selection of resources. Its main aim is to facilitate the consistent application and assessment of referencing techniques across the University rather than simply prescribe a set of rules to be followed.

What resources should be used to support Referencing?

Resources which should be used for the teaching and assessment of referencing styles fall into two categories;

- **Official style manuals** maintained by the organisations or bodies responsible for their creation
- **Reference works** which interpret the use of these styles

The official styles known to be used at the University of Dundee include the following;

- **APA** (American Psychological Association)
- **Chicago**
- **Harvard** (‘Cite Them Right’ standard)
- **MHRA** (Modern Humanities Research Association)
- **MLA** (Modern Language Association)
- **Oscola** (Oxford University Standard for Citation of Legal Authorities)
- **Vancouver**

**Appendix 1** details the location of official style manuals from the bodies or organisations responsible for their creation.

The **Reference work** used by the University of Dundee as a central resource is **Cite Them Right Online**, a website/eBook based on the best-selling book by Graham Shields & Richard Pears (www.citethemrightonline.com). This is a dynamic and exhaustive online resource covering all the major referencing styles and their application to writing practice. The website is available to all students and staff via the Library website. Its use is promoted across the University in preference to other interpretative guides.
What should not be recommended to students are reference guides produced by other Higher Education Institutions. These may be inaccurate or incorporate local variations on the main styles. Also, they may disappear or be amended without warning by their owners, and consequently the advice they offer may be at variance with ‘official’ style guides.

Online tools for reference management are now popular with students. These are often used simply as a management tool for gathering references but can also be used to construct correctly-formatted references in the varying styles. Use of these tools should be permitted, with the proviso that reliance on them should not be absolute and that students should always check references for accuracy rather than assuming they have been correctly produced by the chosen tool.

Reference management/construction products and tools include:

- **EndNote** (the University’s reference management tool of choice, available on the UoD IT desktop)
- **Mendeley** (free, online at [https://www.mendeley.com/](https://www.mendeley.com/))
- **Zotero** (free, online at [https://www.zotero.org/](https://www.zotero.org/))
- **Papers** (requires paid licence, online at [http://www.readcube.com/papers/](http://www.readcube.com/papers/))
- **Cite This For Me** (free, online at [http://www.citethisforme.com/](http://www.citethisforme.com/))

Expert assistance with queries on referencing can be sought via the **Academic Liaison Team** in the **Library & Learning Centre** or via the **Academic Skills Centre**.

What should Schools do to support Referencing?

There are a number of actions which Schools can take to ensure that Referencing is taught, supported and assessed in a consistent manner;

- Each School will ideally identify a **single referencing style** for all assessments across all Programmes;
  - It may be, however, that some Schools use several styles across different disciplines within a School, e.g. the School of Humanities may require the use of **MLA, MHRA and Harvard** across concurrent modules drawn from different disciplines. There are also some styles which are associated with one specific discipline (i.e. Law=OSCOLA, Psychology= APA)
  - Other Schools may permit the use of more than one standard in a specific Programme or Module to reflect the varying backgrounds of postgraduate students (e.g. a mixture of students studying Law, Economics and Business in CEPMLP may be required to use the standard favoured by their discipline)
  - Although sometimes unavoidable, this requirement to be familiar with multiple standards should be kept to a minimum and, wherever possible, students should only be required to learn and use one standard concurrently

- Deviations from or amendments to the agreed School (or discipline) style in order to reflect personal preferences are confusing to students and should be avoided.
• The importance of correct referencing should be consistently emphasised to students, with assessment of referencing weighted as consistently as possible throughout a School or discipline. It is crucial to highlight the need for appropriate use of information in all forms of assessment, although it is accepted that greater weighting may be given to referencing at higher levels of study than at entry level.

• A summary of guidance for referencing should appear in all Student Handbooks and assessment guidelines, with a consistently-worded statement identifying the chosen style and the sources of guidance ('Official' source and Cite Them Right Online). Further help on an individual level is available from the Library & Learning Centre and from the Academic Skills Centre.

• Additional documentation providing examples of subject-specific references to illustrate the agreed style can also be provided if there is a need
  ○ Such guides should not replace the 'official' guide/Cite Them Right Online.
  ○ Schools can work with the LLC to produce such additional documentation.

• All programmes of study must incorporate a session on appropriate use of information in academic study and research early in the curriculum, covering Referencing and Copyright issues for students
  ○ This session to be consistent between all agencies currently delivering content – Library & Learning Centre, Academic Skills Centre and Schools - and that responsibility for delivering sessions be clarified in each programme.

• In some assessments it may be useful to set out clear rubrics for staff to help with assessing referencing – see Appendix 2 for samples of such.
  ○ It is not essential that rubrics are in place, though they can be useful
  ○ A general mark should be awarded for demonstrating an overall understanding of references rather than penalising occasional mistakes in application of the referencing style.

Appendix 1  Resources from official authors/owners of referencing styles

APA  http://www.apastyle.org/
Chicago  http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/
Harvard  There are several variations of Harvard: use the Cite Them Right version (https://www.citethemrightonline.com)
MHRA  http://www.mhra.org.uk/style
MLA  https://style.mla.org/
Vancouver  https://www.nlm.nih.gov/bsd/uniform_requirements.html
Cite Them Right  via all LLC Subject Guides at http://libguides.dundee.ac.uk/
Appendix 2  Sample rubrics for potential use in referencing within assessments

NOTE: The proportion of marks for referencing and use of materials will naturally vary between assessments, but these rubrics give simple examples of how other institutions assess the general quality of student referencing and their selection of sources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion</th>
<th>Unsatisfactory</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate citation of sources using the chosen style</td>
<td>The assessment does not include any citations and/or a reference list.</td>
<td>The assessment follows a referencing style that does not comply with the chosen style, or only includes either the in-text citations or the reference list.</td>
<td>The assessment follows a referencing style that mostly complies with the chosen style, though the in-text citations are not made purposefully.</td>
<td>The report follows a referencing style that complies with the chosen style, and the in-text citations are mostly purposeful.</td>
<td>The report follows a referencing style that complies with the chosen style, and the in-text citations are made purposefully.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion</th>
<th>Incomplete</th>
<th>Partially Proficient</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Exemplary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Citation &amp; Referencing</td>
<td>Created citations which were incomplete, missing or inaccurate, and provided no way to check the validity of the information gathered.</td>
<td>Cited most sources of information and images improperly and provided little or no supporting documentation to check accuracy</td>
<td>Cited most sources of information and images in proper format and documented sources to enable accuracy checking.</td>
<td>Cited all sources of information and images accurately to demonstrate the credibility and authority of the information presented.</td>
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from St Patrick's College, Australia (http://krc.stpats.vic.edu.au/referencing-rubric.htm)