# Section 3 – Develop the skills you'll need at university

## Referencing

Referencing correctly is an important part of academic writing at University. Referencing allows you to demonstrate how widely you have researched your subject, to show the basis of your argument and conclusions and helps you to avoid plagiarism.

Referencing is a way of acknowledging other peoples' ideas and work. You do this through a citation (in the text of your work) and a reference at the end of your work.

It is something you will need to learn how to do correctly when you go to university.

**Why do I need to reference my work?**

Referencing ensures that you can demonstrate how your ideas build upon the research of others. If someone is reading your assignment, they should be able to use your referencing to find the sources you have used in your assignment.

Most assignments during your time at University will be assessed on the quality of your referencing which will count towards your grade. Correct referencing helps to ensure that you avoid being accused of plagiarism so it's a good idea to read your own university and department's guide to referencing before you get there so you know where to look when you start doing your course assignments.

You should include references in your work order to:

- acknowledge that the work/idea belongs to another person

- provide evidence of your own research

- illustrate a particular point

- support an argument or theory

- allow others to locate the resources you have used

**And most importantly to:**

- avoid accusations of plagiarism

**Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is taking the words, ideas or work of other people and passing them off as your own. In the UK, plagiarism is considered a form of cheating. Most universities takes cases of plagiarism very seriously. If you are found to have plagiarised, you will face disciplinary procedures which could ultimately result in your expulsion from your University.

In order not to risk being accused of plagiarising the work of others, you must cite your sources and add them to your reference list.

**What referencing system should I use?**

There are several referencing systems used within universities and in departments. You need to check which one will be appropriate for your course.

In principle, most references will at least include the following elements:

| Author | Date | Title | Publication |
|---|---|---|---|
| Who wrote or created it? This might be an author, journalist, artist or institution. | When was it published, put online or released? | What is it called? | Where did you find it? This might be a journal issue, book or web address. |

Referencing should be used both when you are paraphrasing a source and when quoting directly from it. Direct quotations should only be used if you are unable to paraphrase something more clearly or economically or where it is important to use the exact words, for example, to show how a particular author is defining a specific concept or topic or you need to cite the exact words of a reported speech from a significant figure.

As a rule of thumb, students are advised to try to keep direct quotation to under 5 percent of the total word count. Paraphrasing is preferable because it is more economical, less distracting for the reader and helps you to demonstrate that you have understood the text in question.

**Harvard referencing style**

Harvard is a commonly used author-date style. There are lots of different Harvard styles, so you do need to make sure that you are using a version that your department and university recognises. The differences between the different styles relates to which parts of the reference are put into capitals, brackets, bold and italics. The order in which you cite the different parts of the reference remains the same.

In the Harvard system, whenever you refer to a source, its author's surname and the year of publication are inserted in the text as in the following examples.

**Keeping good records of your research sources will help you reference correctly (Kirton, 2011).**

If the author's surname is used to construct your sentence, only the year is in brackets.

**Kirton (2011) recommends keeping good records of your research sources to help you reference correctly.**

If you quote directly from a source you must use quotation marks and insert the author's surname, year of publication and the page number of the quotation. Check with your department or university if they require single or double quotation marks as this varies.

**"Search engine optimization and marketing communication are keys to finding and keeping customers" (Poloian, 2013, p217).**

The year and page number can be given at the end of the quote, as in the example below.

**Poloian states that "search engine optimization and marketing communication are keys to fnding and keeping customers" (2013, p217).**

Hopefully, the examples above will give you a small insight into how referencing works.  If you would like to look at this in more detail, check your own university's guide and/or have a look at the university guides below:

https://library.leeds.ac.uk/referencing-examples/9/leeds-harvard

https://library.aru.ac.uk/referencing/harvard.htm

https://www.westminster.ac.uk/sites/default/public-files/general-documents/referencing-your-work.pdf