

POLICY

Referencing Policy

Contact Officer

Team Leader: Academic Services, Library Services

Purpose

The policy is to provide clear guidance for staff and students on the permissible approaches to academic referencing used by the University and the principles on which assessment of academic referencing is based.

Overview

All students will be directed to use a single referencing style for their subject, which in most cases will be the Harvard (Cite Them Right version), except where there are agreed different styles for specified subjects. At undergraduate level, teaching, learning and assessment should be focused on a student understanding and demonstrating use of the principles of referencing, rather than attention to specific stylistic accuracy.

Scope

All academic staff and all students.

The Policy

1. The adoption of official styles requires some compromise on the part of individual academics and subject areas in terms of their own preferences, but the policy is intended to offer a better, more consistent learning experience for undergraduate students, where the focus is on understanding and applying the principles of referencing, rather than on having to tackle competing preferences.

2. It is recognised that accurate referencing following a defined style is part of good academic practice. However, the primary focus of teaching and marking with regard to referencing at undergraduate level will be on pedagogic principles:

- understanding of when and why to reference
- consistency of referencing style throughout assignment
- ability to trace citations.

Students can therefore be marked down for contravening these basic tenets of referencing, but not for consistent use of a different version of Harvard, for example.

3. To help achieve this consistency, all undergraduate students will be directed to use a single, appropriate referencing style for their subject, agreed by the Learning, Teaching and Student

Experience Committee. For most subjects this will be Harvard (Cite Them Right version), except where academic convention or professional needs dictate that a different style is used, e.g. APA for Psychology, OSCOLA for Law, MHRA for History and English Literature, Vancouver for medical subjects.

4. Joint Honours students should be supported in using the referencing style suitable for each of the subjects taken, and it is expected they will be competent in applying the tenets and fundamental principles of the subject appropriate style/s by level 6. It follows that Joint Honours students who are required to learn two different referencing styles may, especially at levels 4 and 5, make stylistic errors or use the same system across both subjects. At undergraduate level, as stated, the primary focus of learning, teaching and assessment with regard to referencing will be on the understanding and application of the principles of referencing and not stylistic accuracy, and this will be reflected in marking practices. Library Services will provide support in using tools to assist students in navigating two separate styles. In practice most Joint Honours students will be studying across two disciplines that use the same style.

5. Library Services' referencing webpages will include a list of all subjects and the referencing style used by each: <http://libguides.worc.ac.uk/guides/study-skills/referencing>.

6. To avoid confusion, inconsistency and duplication of effort, Institutes and course teams will neither use variants of the official Worcester styles, nor produce bespoke guidance for the styles. Exemptions to the requirement to use agreed styles may be granted by the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee. To be agreed, new styles must have good online guidance and be available as a style in online tools (e.g. RefMe and Mendeley). Library Services can advise.

7. All course handbooks, including module handbooks, will clearly state the referencing style that is used by the Institute/subject and will direct students to the official guidance for that style on the Library Services webpages. This statement will include guidance for Joint Honours students, where appropriate, based on para 1.4.

8. Learning and Teaching Leads have ongoing responsibility for ensuring that the policy is communicated, enacted and adhered to within each Institute and communicated to external examiners. They will also have responsibility for ensuring that marking criteria regarding referencing align with the pedagogic principles outlined above.

9. There is no specified referencing system to be used for postgraduate and research students who are expected to acquire a more in-depth understanding of citing sources and referencing. Institutes and supervisors will provide guidance and support materials on the most appropriate referencing style.

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Related Policies, Procedures, Guidance, Forms or Templates	Supporting information via Library Services webpages UW Assessment Policy
Policies/Rules Superseded by this Policy	n/a