

Referencing guide for Law

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Referencing for Law

When writing up your project/assignment it is important that you provide details of the various resources you have consulted. You need to use a recognised referencing system. There are several of these.

For Law, the **OSCOLA** system is the most widely used. An online tutorial called “Citing the Law: Referencing Using OSCOLA” written by Information Services staff at Cardiff University is available at: https://xerte.cardiff.ac.uk/play_6716 together with an A-Z list of examples at: https://xerte.cardiff.ac.uk/play_4069#page4.

Both are available to access from the School of Law subject guide webpage at: <https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/microsites/library/subject-resources/subject-guides/law>

Further support material is also available on the OSCOLA website at: <https://www.law.ox.ac.uk/research-subject-groups/publications/oscola>

For other subject areas, the LJMU Harvard system is used the most at LJMU, a guide and tutorials are available at: <https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/microsites/library/subject-resources/referencing>

When do you need to give a reference?

- if you quote the exact words of another author
- if you paraphrase or summarise a passage by another author
- if you use an idea or material based directly on the work of another author

Why should you reference?

- it enables you to easily find an item you have consulted previously
- it allows you to pass on to a friend or colleague details of an item that you have consulted, secure in the knowledge that he/she will be able to trace it easily
- it helps the reader understand how you have reached your conclusions
- to avoid accusations of plagiarism
- it enables you to identify the sources of quotations

When do you need to reference?

In all academic and professional fields some ideas are regarded as “common knowledge” and do not need to be referenced. Pears and Shields define common knowledge as “facts, dates, events and information that are expected to be known by someone studying or working in a particular area or field” (2016, p.3). They suggest that students who are unsure whether “the material you want to use in your assignment constitutes common knowledge, ... need to ask ... the following questions:

- Did I know this information before I started my course?
- Did this information/idea come from my own brain?

If the answer to either or both of the questions is “No”, then the information is not common knowledge to you. In these cases you should cite and reference the sources.”

Bibliography and Reference List - the difference

Generally, a bibliography identifies books and articles relevant to the text but not restricted to items cited in the text and a list of references is a list of publications cited in the text. However, some people use these terms synonymously so always check with your department. A reference list is only items you have cited in your text.

Pears, R. and Shields, G. (2016) *Cite them right: the essential referencing guide*. 10th ed. London: Palgrave

Further Help

Further guidance is available from your Academic Engagement Librarian via LJMU HelpMe:

<https://helpme.ljmu.ac.uk/#dashboard>

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