Academic Writing and Presentation Style & Regulations

Introduction

When reading for an academic degree with Ascencia Malta Business School, the following guidelines on style and presentation of writing need to be adhered to. Any piece of work that you will be required to submit and/or present should take the format indicated below. The style and presentation of your writing will be considered as part of your global grade.

Page Setup

- 2.5 cm OR 1-inch margins on all sides
- Recommended fonts: Arial 12 pt. or Times New Roman, with double-spacing
- Title is in the centre of the page just above the text
- Left-aligned text, with the first sentence of every paragraph indented by 0.5 inch
- Last name is at the top-right corner of the header, followed by page number
- Title page is centre-aligned
- Subheadings are in sentence case and left-aligned
- Text colour - Black

Using Citations

The practice of using citations within written text is a method used to demonstrate to your readers that you have conducted a thorough and appropriate literature search (I.e., that you have read in preparation for and whilst writing your work. When you are referencing, you provide the reader with detailed information on all sources consulted to compile an article, book chapter, essay or dissertation, both within the text (in-text citations) and at the end of your work (reference list or bibliography). This will allow readers to easily locate the original sources and consult them if they wish to do so. Referencing is an acknowledgement that you have used the ideas and written material belonging to other authors in your own work.

Referencing indicates to the reader that you have researched the subject widely and this adds weight to your arguments by supporting them with relevant literature. Correct referencing is a key component of good academic practice and enhances the presentation of your work: it shows that your writing is based on knowledge and informed by appropriate academic reading. It also separates your ideas/results from someone else's findings by giving credit to the authors of the cited works. Referencing shows the credibility and quality of resources used and helps you to avoid plagiarism. It is of utmost importance to reference all sources that you cited in your text (reference list) as well as the greater list of sources used to prepare the writing, even if they are not directly mentioned in the writing (bibliography).

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is defined as a way of writing whereby an author either purposely or unintentionally presents someone else's work as if it were their own work. In other words, it takes the words of others and does not indicate – by quotation marks ("") and an in-text citation – that these are not their own words. Always remember that if you are quoting, paraphrasing or summarising someone else's work, you always need to acknowledge the source.

Additionally, it is important to be careful of self-plagiarism. Using your previously submitted work without acknowledging it is also considered as a form of plagiarism.

Be aware that plagiarism is treated severely at Ascencia Malta and will result in disciplinary action against the student.

Harvard Style Referencing

Harvard is an "author-date" citation style, where sources are cited in the text. Meanwhile, the list of references is organised in alphabetical order by the author's last name.

In-text citations require the surname of the author and the year of publication of the source that you are using inside round brackets/parantheses. There is **no comma** between the Author's Last Name and the Year:

(Author's Last Name Year)

If you need to include a page number, add it after the year. Note that page ranges take a double 'p'.

(Author's Last Name Year, p. x **OR** pp. x-z)

One author

Example:
"There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so." (Shakespeare 1992)

Note that the parentheses go **outside** the punctuation mark of the sentence you are writing or quoting.

OR

In his tragedy, William Shakespeare (1992) writes, "...".

Two or more authors

When citing a work with **two** authors, include both names in the order that they appear on the publication cover:

(Beer, Eisenstat 2014)

OR

Beer and Eisenstat (2014)

For three or more authors

Include the names of the first two authors and type words "et al." *instead* of the other names:

(Giordmaina, Janus et al. 2022)

Unknown author

In cases where the author is unidentified, use the title of the publication in italics. When citing the source for the first time, use the full title:

(*The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark* 1992)

For every subsequent citation you may abbreviate the title to something sensible and identifiable:

(*Hamlet* 1992)

Group authors

When citing group authors (such as government agencies, organisations, associations, corporations, etc.) for **a single time only**, provide the group name and the date:

(American Psychological Society 2022)

If you need to cite this work **more than once**, add an abbreviation in your first citation in square brackets:

(American Psychological Society [APS] 2022)

For every subsequent citation, use the abbreviation only:
(APS 2022)

Unknown date

If there is no date available, write “n.d.”:

(Collins n.d.)

OR

In his article, Collins (n.d.) mentions…

Multiple works of the same author in the same year

References by the same author published in the same year are distinguished by adding

lowercase letters next to the year:

(Smith 2006a)

(Smith 2006b)

Citing more than one source in the same reference

When you want to cite more than one source at the same time, place citations in parentheses in alphabetical order by the first author’s surname. Make sure to separate the citations with commas:

(Borg 2019, Camilleri 2020)

Secondary referencing

Always try to cite the primary (original) source of information and use the footnotes in other authors’ works to take you the primary sources. However, if this is impossible, provide the secondary source.

For example, if **Borg** cited a work written by **Smith** and you did not read Smith’s work, start by mentioning the original work and indicate that it was cited in the secondary source:

Smith (2004 cited in Borg 2007, p. 4) claims that….

OR

An excellent point with regards to recycling (Smith 2004 cited in Borg 2007) states that…

Personal communication

Personal communication includes electronic communication (emails, messages, bulletins, etc.), letters, interviews and phone conversations.

Personal communication should be cited **in-text only** by providing the first letter of the name, full surname of the communicator and full date. Between year and date write "pers. comm.":

(B Martin 2015, pers. comm. 3 May)

Final list of references/ bibliography

There may be items which you have consulted for your work, but not cited. These can be listed at the end of your writing in a 'bibliography'. These items should be listed in alphabetical order by author and laid out in the same way as the items in your reference list. If you can cite from every work you consulted, you will only need a reference list. If you wish to show to your reader (examiner) the unused research you carried out, the bibliography will show your extra effort.

Always check the guidance you are given for coursework, dissertations, etc., to find out if you are expected to submit work with a reference list and a bibliography. If in doubt, ask your lecturer or supervisor. The list of references/bibliography is organised in alphabetical order by the author's last name. This is your list of all the sources that have been cited in the assignment. The list is inclusive, showing books, journals, etc., placed in **one** list and **not** in separate lists according to source type.

One author

In Harvard style, the references list should be arranged in alphabetical order by author's surname followed by initials.

Borg, C., 2017.

Chetcuti, C., 2013.

Multiple authors

In case of two authors, write both names starting with surname, followed by a comma, followed by an initial with a fullstop to indicate abbreviation. Connect the two authors with *and:*

Godwin, P. and Parker, J., 2012. Information literacy....

Where there are more authors, print all names and place *and* before the last surname:

Young, H.D., Freedman, R.A., Sandin, T.R. and Ford, A.L., HOW TO REFERENCE (HARVARD REFERENCING STYLE).

Same author, different year

In case of several works by the same author, arrange the publications by year starting from the most recent.

Borg, C., 2020.
Borg, C., 2017.

Borg, C., 2013.

Same author, same year

Publications written by the same author in the same year should be arranged in alphabetical order by title and distinguished by placing a lowercase letter (*a, b, c*...) immediately after the year **with no spaces**.

Azzopardi, Z., 2021a. Critical analysis...

Azzopardi, Z., 2021b. Principles of...

Same first author, different co-authors

In case of works with the same first author but different second, third authors and so on, arrange the works in alphabetical order by the first letter of the surname of the second author.

Borg, C. and Camilleri, Z., 2013.
Borg C. and Zammit, L., 2015.

Different authors, same surname

In case of works with different authors having the same surname, arrange the works in alphabetical order by the author's first name initial:

Janus, M., 2017.
Janus, Z., 2015.

No author

If no author is provided, place the reference in alphabetical order by the first significant word of the title (omit articles ['The', 'A'] and prepositions ['On']) above the list of references with author.

Books

Author(s) last name, Initial(s)., Year of publication. *Title – written in italics.* Place of publication: Publisher. Note that these last two items can usually be found on the inside cover or on the front matter of the book.

Bell, E., Bryman, A. and Harley, B., 2022. *Business research methods*. Oxford university press.

Chapter in a book

Chapter Author(s) last name, Initial(s)., Year of publication. Chapter Title. In: Editor's Initial(s) Surname, (ed./eds), *Book Title - written in italics*. Place of Publication: Publisher, page range numbers of chapter.

Barondes, S. (2012) ' Each of us is ordinary, yet one of a kind', in Brockman, J. (ed.) *This will make you smarter*. New York: Harper Perennial, p. 32.

Journal articles

Author(s) last name, Initial(s)., Year of publication. Article Title, *Journal Title– written in italics*, volume number (issue number), page numbers.

Ghosh, S., Hughes, M., Hodgkinson, I. and Hughes, P., 2022. Digital transformation of industrial businesses: A dynamic capability approach. *Technovation*, *113*, p.102414.

In case of electronic articles, provide the DOI number after the page number.

Website

Author(s) last name, Initial(s)., Year-last update, Title of Document/Webpage/Website [Organisation/Host], [Online]. Available: www... [Month Day, Year].

Ingle, S. (2020) 'Geraint Thomas insists he has nothing to prove at road world championships', *The Guardian,* 24 September. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/sprot/2020/sep/24/geraint-thomas-insists-he-has-nothing-to-prove-at-road-world-championships-cycling (Accessed: 11 October 2020).

Computer programs

If you cannot find the author of the computer program, reference it as a work with no author/s.

Author(s) last name, Initial(s) (or developer's name), Year of publication. *Title of the software version x.y – written in italics*. Place of publication: publisher.

THOMSON RESEARCHSOFT, 2007. *EndNote.version 9.0.2.* Stamford: Thomson.

Non-text material

If there is no author, begin with the title. If there is no date, use "n.d.".

Drawing/ Painting/ Sculpture/ Photograph:

Author(s) last name, Initial(s)., Year of publication. *Title – written in italics*, City (Location): name of the museum or gallery.

VAN GOGH, V., 1887. *Sunflowers*. Amsterdam, Netherlands: Van Gogh Museum.

Image found online:

Author(s) last name, Initial(s)., Year – last updated, Title of Document/Webpage/Website [Organisation/Host], [Online]. Available: www... [Month Day, Year].

Audio and video resources

Audio-visual material includes motion pictures and audio or television broadcast.

Motion picture:

Director(s) last name, Initial(s)., Year of release. Title – written in italics. Place of Publication: Production company.

Pride & Prejudice (2005) Directed by J. Wright. UK: Universal Pictures. Available at: Netflix (Accessed: 29 September 2020).

Music recording:

Music recordings are referenced the same way as books:

Author(s) last name, Initial(s)., Year of publication. Title - written in italics. Place of publication: Publisher.

Sheeran, E., Mac, S. and McDaid, J., 2017. *Shape of you*. London: Rokstone Studios.

Online videos:
Author(s) last name, Initial(s)., Year-last update, Title of Document/Webpage/Website [Organisation/Host], [Online]. Available: www... [Month Day, Year].

Unpublished material

Author(s) last name, Initial(s)., Year of publication. *Title - written in italics.* Unpublished research or document type (Ph.D. Thesis, M.A. Dissertation), Place of publication: Institution.

Pisani, R., 2017. *The role of digital literacy when teaching information literacy skills to primary and secondary schoolchildren*. Ph.D. Thesis, Malta: University of Malta.

If the work is available online, provide the URL at the end.

Legal documents

Acts of Parliament:
Title of the Act and year (chapter number of the act; abbreviated to 'c.'). Place of publication: Publisher.

Statutes:
Title of the Statutory Instrument and year (SI year/number). Place of publication: Publisher.

Government publications

Reference government publications like you would reference books. If there is no author or issuing body, use group author (government agency or department).

NAME OF ISSUING BODY (Year) *Title - written in italics.* Place of publication: Publisher, Report no. (where relevant).

MINISTRY FOR TRANSPORT & INFRASTRUCTURE (2013) *Tal-linja cards: the next steps.* Valletta: Ministry for Transport & Infrastructure.

Tips on good quotation practice
Quotations are introduced with double quotation marks (" "). A quotation inside a quotation is indicated with single quotation marks ('). Only the original punctuation is included within it (i.e., if the fullstop is your own, add it outside the closing quotation mark).

In the introduction of the book, the author describes a memory of his father. "Dad was fond of saying, 'There's no such thing as a free lunch, Jimmy,' but it seemed a little disingenuous because he wasn't much of a lunch-eater anyway."

To show that you have left words out from the middle of the original quote, it is good practice to represent the missing words with [...]. This is not necessary if you leave words out from the beginning or the end of the quote. For example, the original quote by Sigmund Freud reads:

"The voice of the intellect is a soft one, but it does not rest until it has gained a hearing. Ultimately, after endless rebuffs, it succeeds. This is one of the few points in which one may be optimistic about the future of mankind."

To shorten it:

"The voice of the intellect is a soft one, but [...] Ultimately, after endless rebuffs, it succeeds."

Quotations longer than two lines or 40 words should be inserted as a separate, indented paragraph.

Smith (2004) summarises the importance of mathematics to society and the knowledge economy, stating that:

"Mathematics provides a powerful universal language and intellectual toolkit for abstraction, generalization and synthesis. It is the language of science and technology. It enables us to probe the natural universe and to develop new technologies that have helped us control and master our environment, and change societal expectations and standards of living." (p.11)

or

A recent UK report summarised the importance of mathematics to society and the knowledge economy, stating that:

"Mathematics provides a powerful universal language and intellectual toolkit for abstraction, generalization and synthesis. It is the language of science and technology. It enables us to probe the natural universe and to develop new technologies that have helped us control and master our environment, and change societal expectations and standards of living." (Smith 2004: p.11)

Conclusion

In conclusion, every piece of writing that you submit needs to be formatted into an organised way as mentioned above and must include citations and a list of references and/or a bibliography. In addition, it is important to refer to reputable sources of literature when completing your work as all resources will be cited and you will be evaluated on what types of resources you are making use of. For example, a whole piece of writing with citations only from Wikipedia will not be sufficient. In addition, when making general or sweeping statements, it is of utmost importance to cite a minimum of 3 different authors who all agree on the same concept.

Remember: The more credible, recent and varied your citations are, the better your writing will be.

NB: This document is not an exhaustive document on writing in Harvard Style, but an introductory document prepared to help you with your first steps in academic writing. In addition, changes may be made by the administrators of the Harvard Style, and it is up to you as students to always look up the latest version of the Harvard Style to use, and when in doubt refer to the lecturer/supervisor who has assigned the work to you.

Student's name and surname: _____

Date: _____

Student's signature: _____