



Supporting students with referencing

The University of Hertfordshire requires all student work to be referenced using APA7. There are some key elements that we regularly see students doing incorrectly, and so we've pulled them together in a central list.

When providing feedback for students on their referencing, please give at least a couple of specific examples. A general comment of 'Referencing incorrect' or 'Small errors in referencing' or 'Please see referencing guidelines' makes it very difficult for students to know what they're doing wrong! There's no need to correct every reference, but by providing a couple of specific examples, students will be able to make improvements in the future.

Common referencing errors

- **Reference lists should be formatted as follows:**
 - Begin on a new page
 - Title of References in bold and centred
 - Ordered alphabetically by author
 - Hanging indent of 0.5" (1.27cm) – this is MS Word's default indent size
 - Double spaced
 - While these may all seem like small items, it is valuable to teach students to follow these guidelines. This ensures their close attention to detail and concordance with the referencing principles.
- **DOIs** (Digital Object Identifiers) should be included for all works that have one. If an online work has a DOI and a URL, only the DOI should be included in the reference.
- For **online works that have URLs but not DOIs**, the URL should be included in the reference, unless the URL leads to an academic research database. If the URL is for an academic research database, the URL doesn't need to be included. For both DOIs and URLs, the words 'Retrieved from' or 'Accessed from' do not need to be included.
- For websites, **APA7 does not require the use of a retrieval date for URLs for most websites.** The retrieval date should only be included when the



page's content is likely to change over time: for example, for an entry in a wiki.

- APA7 has slightly changed the guidelines for **citing works with multiple authors**. When citing a source with three to 20 authors, the surname of the first author only should be included in the in-text citation, followed by 'et al.' The surname and initial(s) of all the authors should appear in the full reference, with commas separating the authors and an ampersand before the last one. For sources with more than 20 authors, the same principle applies, except that in the reference list the first 19 authors are listed, then an ellipsis, and then the final attributed author, with no ampersand.
- In-text citations must give the author(s) surnames and the year. Direct quotes should also include a page number. Ideally students will be discussing sources critically, and so will incorporate their surnames into the flow of their assignment, adding the year in parentheses. However, particularly at Levels 5 and 6, students tend more towards providing the entire citation in parentheses at the end of the sentence. Either way, you need to flag if students are not providing the necessary information in their in-text citations; even if they have included a correct reference list at the end, if they are not citing their sources as they go along, they may be in danger of academic misconduct. **It's therefore vital that we provide feedback and adjust their mark and highlights on the marking grid accordingly to reflect any lack of referencing.**

Tools to help with referencing

Every Canvas course site has a page under the 'Academic skills' unit about referencing. This page lists several tools that students can use to help them reference correctly. These include:

- The University of Hertfordshire's guide to APA7 (downloadable in Canvas)
- Zotero: free software that can create a database of sources and sync with Microsoft Word to insert citations. There are other similar tools that do the same thing, and Microsoft Word also has its own built-in citation generator.
 - The issue with all of these tools is that they're only as good as the information that's put into them – if students fill in fields incorrectly, the citations will be incorrect. If students use these, they should still carefully check all the references that are generated!
- [Cite Them Right](#): the University provides access to this tool that provides useful summaries of citation patterns for different types of source.



- Choose 'Sign in via your institution', select the University of Hertfordshire, and then log in using your university credentials. Select the APA7 referencing system, and the website will then provide full details of how to correctly cite any kind of material.