

# LCBB4006

*by* Suraj Bala

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**Submission date:** 14-Jun-2023 02:50PM (UTC+0100)

**Submission ID:** 208919482

**File name:** 48017\_Suraj\_Bala\_LCBB4006\_504070\_1852164142 (1.09M)

**Word count:** 1476

**Character count:** 8907

Component 1 - Individual Report

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Academic Skills

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## **Introduction**

Students' ability to do research and properly cite their sources is crucial to their success in school because it gives them the background they need to think critically, solve problems, and learn new material. The capacity to efficiently do research and appropriately cite sources is more valuable in today's information-driven environment. In order to help students improve their research and citation skills, this paper will examine the value of these talents in academic and professional settings. The ability to do independent research helps students not only learn more about their chosen topics, but also become more critical thinkers and more capable of studying on their own initiative. In addition, knowing how to properly cite sources is essential for legitimate academic writing, as it helps students give credit where credit is due and prevent plagiarising the work of others. This paper will explore the value of research skills and proper referencing in both the academic and professional realms. In addition, we will provide concrete suggestions on how students might strengthen their research skills and develop better reference techniques. By adhering to these standards, students may improve their research skills and create higher-quality, more credible writing in their chosen disciplines (Yuan et al., 2020).

## **Importance of Research Skills**

Students' ability to do independent research is a vital skill in a wide range of industries. Individuals equipped with these abilities are better able to investigate their areas of study, consider other points of view, and amass a well-rounded understanding of their chosen fields. The ability to do thorough research is crucial for many reasons.

- Information gathering: Through research, students may learn from a variety of resources including books, journals, websites, and even interviews. Students may get a deeper, more

nuanced grasp of their chosen profession by doing methodical research into the topic (Agapoff, 2019).

- Analytical and critical thinking: Students who actively pursue knowledge via research develop these skills. They are tasked with determining the reliability and accuracy of information gathered from multiple resources, filling in knowledge gaps, and developing novel perspectives. These abilities are useful in any job where addressing problems is a priority.
- Evidence-based decision-making: In academic and professional settings, it is preferable to base choices on evidence rather than hearsay or conjecture. Students who have developed their research abilities have a better chance of making well-informed judgements based on solid information.
- Lifelong learning: Research abilities are not only useful in one's academic career, but also in one's professional and personal growth throughout one's lifetime. Learning how to do research effectively sets people prepared for a lifetime of staying abreast of developments, adjusting to novel situations, and expanding their knowledge base.

Students who are able to do independent research are better equipped to become independent learners and contribute to society. Students may become better learners and professionals by focusing on developing these abilities. They will be better prepared to solve difficult challenges and make significant contributions in their chosen professions (Agapoff, 2019).

### *Paraphrasing and In-text Citation:*

1

Paraphrasing is the process of rewriting someone else's words such that they sound different yet

still convey the intended meaning of the original text. It's crucial in academic writing since it lets authors bring in outside data and ideas for more credibility and context. To paraphrase effectively, one must read the original text, extract the important ideas, then restate them in one's own words while maintaining the original meaning. Recognising the original author of paraphrased material is essential. Brief in-text citations typically found in brackets and accompanied by the author's surname and the year of publication are provided. Readers may double-check the information and find the full reference in the bibliography or reference list thanks to in-text citations (Evans & Waring, 2020).

### *References and Citations:*

The UWTSD Harvard Referencing Style is a popular citation system with strict requirements for the presentation of cited materials. It offers a unified system for documenting the credibility of multiple sources, including print publications, online resources, and more. References must be correct and consistent so that readers may readily find and verify your sources. Reference lists are listings of all the sources that were used to create the work being referenced. The author's name, publication date, title, and publisher should all be included in each entry. It is crucial to adhere to the precise criteria offered by the selected reference style, which may differ based on the kind of source used (Evans & Waring, 2020).

### *Enhancing Research Skills:*

Developing essential abilities is necessary for productive research. Students must be able to locate credible sources, assess their reliability, and use that knowledge effectively, therefore information literacy is a must. Research, data analysis, and information synthesis all need competent time management, organisation, and critical thinking. In order to do well in school, kids must be able

to do research that is both productive and comprehensive. Students with these abilities can find their way through information troves, make informed decisions about the reliability of various sources, and write convincing, well-researched papers. Students may greatly improve their research ability by mastering the following techniques. The capacity to seek out, appraise, and make useful application of knowledge from a variety of sources. Learning to locate appropriate resources, evaluate their reliability and usefulness, and incorporate their findings into one's own work constitutes this skill. To improve their information literacy, students should spend time exploring library databases, using search engines, and reading academic materials (McCartney, 2017).



*Figure 1: Research Skills*

Researching effectively requires the ability to think critically. In order to do this, you must examine data, search for any biases or holes in reasoning, and assess the quality of your sources. <sup>6</sup> It is important for students to develop the skills necessary to critically evaluate information, weigh the merits of competing arguments, and reach their own well-informed opinions. Time management is essential in research because it guarantees that available time is used effectively and that deadlines are met. Students need to learn to plan their research effectively, establish attainable objectives, and prioritise their assignments. Students may remain on track and prevent last-minute

panic by breaking down the research process into small phases and making a schedule (Schwartz, 2021). It is crucial to examine the credibility of the sources you utilise in your study. Students need to think about how reliable, authoritative, up-to-date, and relevant their sources are. To assure the legitimacy and correctness of the material, they should seek for peer-reviewed studies, trustworthy books, and reliable websites. Working with others and asking advice from academics, librarians, and topic specialists may enrich research efforts with new perspectives and helpful pointers. A person's research abilities and worldview may benefit by participation in conversations, attendance at workshops or research seminars, and the use of academic materials. Students may make significant contributions to the progress of knowledge in their subjects and improve the quality of their own academic work by mastering these essential research skills. Honing these abilities requires constant practise, involvement with academic materials, and a proactive commitment to learning (Schwartz, 2021).

### **Recommendations for Students:**

There are a variety of approaches students may use to improve their research abilities and citation techniques. Effective information searching procedures, systematic note-taking practises, and the use of appropriate data analysis instruments all fall under this category. Consulting academic resources and librarians may help you learn how to do research and comply with citation styles (Yuan et al., 2020).

### **Conclusion:**

Academic writing requires strong research abilities and proper citation. Using correct citations and footnotes helps students stay away from plagiarism. Both the originality and readability of a piece of writing benefit from the use of paraphrasing and in-text citations. Using the UWTSD Harvard Referencing Style ensures that citations are consistently formatted. Students can do more in-depth

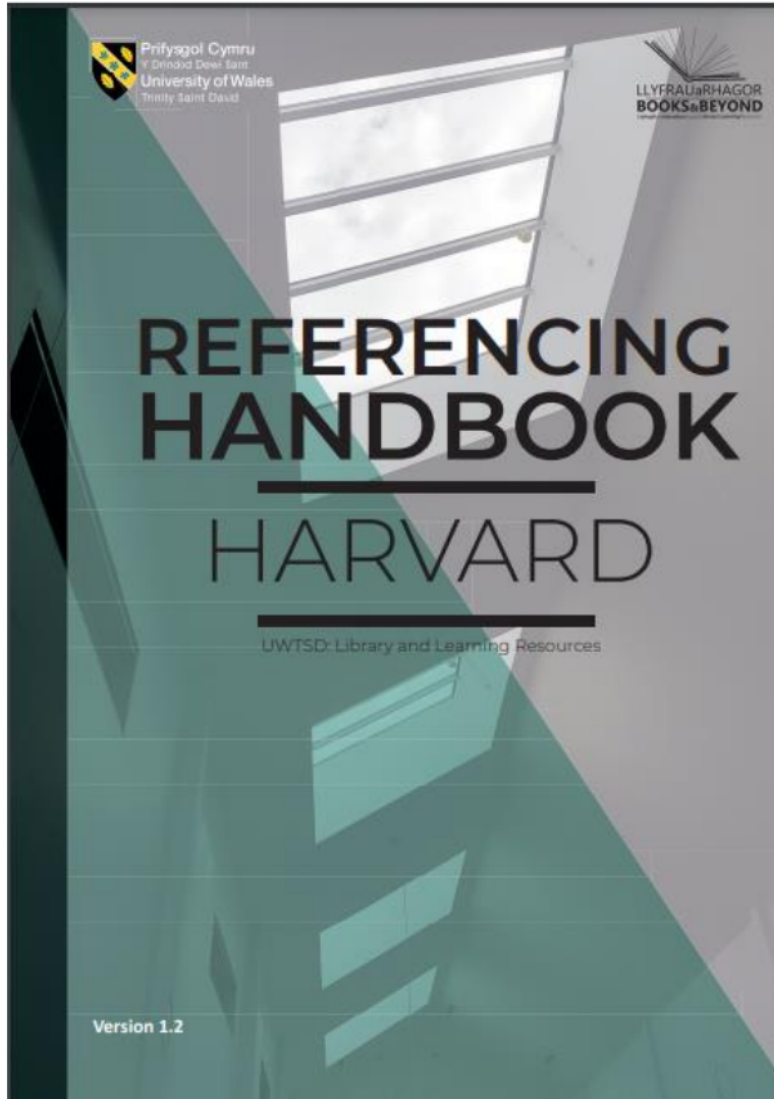
and reliable research if they are equipped with research skills such as information literacy, time management, organisation, and critical thinking. Students may increase the quality and impact of their academic writing by adopting the practises recommended in this paper, including developing strong research skills and good reference practises.

## **References**

- Agapoff, J.R. (2019) 'How may I help you?', *Academic Medicine*, 94<sup>5</sup>(7), p. 962. doi:10.1097/acm.0000000000002666.
- <sup>1</sup> Evans, C. and Waring, M. (2020) 'Enhancing students' assessment feedback skills within Higher Education', *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Education* [Preprint]. doi:10.1093/acrefore/9780190264093.013.932.
- McCartney, G. (2017) 'Text citations', *Evelyn Waugh and the Modernist Tradition*, pp. 1–1. doi:10.4324/9781351311045-1.
- <sup>4</sup> Schwartz, S.J. (2021) 'Plagiarism, citations, and paraphrasing', *The Savvy Academic*, pp. 202–225. doi:10.1093/oso/9780190095918.003.0008.
- <sup>2</sup> Yuan, R., Yang, M. and Stapleton, P. (2020) 'Enhancing undergraduates' critical thinking through research engagement: A practitioner research approach', *Thinking Skills and Creativity*, 38, p. 100737. doi:10.1016/j.tsc.2020.100737.

**Appendix A – Any relevant supporting documents/ information**

*UWTSD Harvard Referencing Guide*



## Welcome

Welcome to the 1<sup>st</sup> revised edition of the University of Wales Trinity Saint David's Referencing Handbooks!

Referencing accurately is an essential skill to learn during your studies, and these handbooks are designed to support you in your learning and help you to navigate what can sometimes seem quite confusing. The referencing handbooks are available for the four styles used at UWTSD, with suggestions for further, in-depth resources and advice on getting support from your Academic Liaison Librarian.

We would like to thank the academic staff involved for their time and input in developing these handbooks, and hope these provide a useful resource.

We are happy to receive feedback on these guides, which will be reviewed. Please contact [library@uwtsd.ac.uk](mailto:library@uwtsd.ac.uk) with any suggestions.

**The UWTSD Academic Liaison team, Library and Learning Resources**

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## Introduction

There are four recommended referencing styles in use at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David:

- APA (American Psychological Association)
- Harvard
- IEEE (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers)
- MHRA (Modern Humanities Research Association)

You can find out which referencing standard you should be using by looking in your Programme Handbook. All of the referencing handbooks are available online: <https://uwtsd.ac.uk/library/student-essentials/referencing-handbooks/>

A shorter, handy, quick reference version is also available either online or in your nearest UWTSD library.

## How do I use this guide?

The purpose of this handbook is to provide you with the basic principles of referencing, and to get you started in understanding the how and why of referencing. This handbook provides examples of how to produce in-text citations and references from a selection of some of the most widely used sources you may encounter over the course of your studies.

An example of how the reference should appear in your text will be shown in this box.

An example of how the reference should appear in your reference list or bibliography will be shown in this box.

However, this guide is not intended to be exhaustive, and additional examples and guidance can be found in:

**Pears, R. and Shields, G. (2019) *Cite them right: the essential referencing guide*. 11th edn. Basingstoke: Palgrave.**

Copies can be found in all UWTSD libraries.

## What is referencing?

When producing an academic assignment, you will be expected to acknowledge other people's work by referencing them in a recognised and consistent format. You will also need to provide details of the resources you have read for your assignment. There are a number of reasons why this is necessary:

- To demonstrate the breadth of research you have undertaken.
- To add academic credibility to your arguments.
- To enable readers to find the sources you have used in your work.
- To acknowledge the work of others and avoid accidental plagiarism.

## How do I avoid plagiarism?

Accurate referencing also means you avoid plagiarism, which is passing off someone else's work as your own. The University's full definition of plagiarism can be found within the University regulations: <http://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/academic-office/university-regulations-student-guide/>

Plagiarism can be deliberate or accidental; without accurate referencing, it is possible to accidentally plagiarise someone else's work. Therefore, understanding when and how to reference will help you to easily avoid this.

## Do you have any tips before I begin my work?

- Make sure that you know which referencing style your School recommends before you begin. This information is included in your Programme Handbook.
- Keep a record of the sources you read as you go along.
- Be consistent in the records you keep and in the way you reference.
- Give yourself enough time to check your work.
- Try to put yourself in the shoes of the reader. Think: "if I wanted to find the source of this information, could I?"
- If in doubt, seek clarification or ask for help!

## How can I get further help and support?

You will be given an in-class session on referencing during the first year of your course, and regular workshops and drop-in opportunities are also made available throughout the academic year via our InfoSkills programme: <http://uwtsd.ac.uk/library/infoskills/>. Follow @UWTSOLib on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram for updates on when and where these will be held.

There is a dedicated Academic Liaison Librarian for each academic area, and their role is to support you with a variety of information skills throughout your course. Find out who your Academic Liaison Librarian is and book an appointment here: <https://uwtsd.ac.uk/library/student-essentials/meet-your-academic-liaison-librarian/> or by popping into your nearest UWTSO library.

Support for referencing is also available from Student Services, and study skills drop-ins are available across the campuses.

Students at Partner Institutions should check with the library at their home institution to find out which standard they should be using and where to get support.

## Harvard Referencing: The Basics

The Harvard referencing style consists of:

### In-text citations

These are used when referring to a source of information within the text of your assignment to show where it came from. They are abbreviated details of the source you are referring to and generally consist of the author's / editor's surname, year of publication and, if required, page numbers e.g. (Pears and Shields, 2016, p. 6).

You do not need to include the author's surname in the in-text citation if it is referred to within the body of your work e.g. According to Pears and Shields (2006, p.6). This would just be unnecessary repetition!

### A reference list

The purpose of the in-text citation is to refer you to the full details of the publication within a full reference list or bibliography at the end of your work. Full publication details of the citation should be found in the reference list at the end of your assignment. This contains the full bibliographical record of the references cited in your text e.g.

Pears, R. and Shields, G. (2016) *Cite them right: the essential referencing guide*. 10<sup>th</sup> rev. edn. Basingstoke: Palgrave.

It should enable any reader to locate your original source. A reference list is arranged in alphabetical order by the author's surname or, if there is no author, by title. A bibliography can also sometimes be requested by your tutor. A bibliography is a list of all the sources you have read for your assignment, whether or not you have cited them in your text and therefore more exhaustive than a reference list. If you're not sure which is required, ask your lecturer.

## How do I quote, paraphrase and summarise in my work?

### Quotations

A quotation means that you take the exact wording as used by another author and insert it in your work. Direct quotations should be used sparingly and only when they are relevant to the argument you are making in your work.

#### Long quotation – more than 30 words or 2 lines

##### Format:

- Enter as a separate paragraph
- Indent the paragraph
- Quotation marks are not required
- Author's surname, year of publication and page number / URL enclosed (in round brackets)

##### Example:

King describes the intertwining of fate and memory in many evocative passages such as:

So the three of them rode towards their end of the Great Road, while summer lay all about them, breathless as a gasp. Roland looked up and saw something that made him forget all about the Wizard's Rainbow. It was his mother, leaning out of her apartment's bedroom window: the oval of her face surrounded by the timeless gray stone of the castle's west wing!

(King, 1997, pp. 553-554)

#### Short quotation – up to 30 words or 2 lines

##### Format:

- Include in the body of text
- Enclose in double quotation marks
- Author's surname, year of publication and page number / URL enclosed (in round brackets)

##### Example:

Hardy's characters are not simple types. They are "fully realized human beings, with all their potential for individual freedom of choice and action" (Dunmore, 2017, p. 35).

### Paraphrasing and summarising

Paraphrasing is when you take someone else's idea and put it into your own words. Summarising is when you provide a brief overview of someone else's idea. You would only need to provide a page number if you are referring to a very specific area or part of the text. You will need to use your judgment as to whether this is necessary. Put yourself in the shoes of the reader: are you referring to a whole work or concept or a very small part of it?

##### Example:

Dunmore (2017) notes that Hardy presents the reader with rounded characters capable of acting with autonomy, but that these are placed in a context in which their choices are severely constrained by the operation of chance and fate. This she ascribes to the intellectual environment in which he wrote – in particular, the pessimistic spiritual context of late Victorian England.

## How do I reference specific types of resources?

### 1. Books and e-books

Most references to books should adhere to the following general format. Elements may vary slightly. Specific examples are provided.

#### In-text citation:

(Author's surname, year of publication, page number)

(Smith, 2016, p. 5)

#### Reference list / Bibliography:

- Author/editor
- Publication year (in round brackets)
- Title (in italics)
- Edition (if relevant)
- Place of publication: publisher

Smith, E. (2016) *How to improve your research project*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. Plymouth: Kiln Press.

As print and electronic books are virtually identical, there is no need to indicate whether or not it is electronic unless the electronic version is not an identical version of a print publication.

#### 1.1 Book with two or three authors

(Phillips and Renton, 2012, p. 54)

Phillips, E.O. and Renton, P. (2012) *Teaching mathematics today*. Reading: Canalside Press.

#### 1.2 Book with four or more authors

(Morton *et al.* 2014, p. 37)

Morton, A.C. *et al.* (2014) *Walking and learning*. Swansea: Sandpaper Press.

#### 1.3 Chapter within an edited book

(Hardy, 2015, p. 53)

Hardy, P.T. (2015) 'Outdoor play and how it can help learning', in Walker, E. (ed.) *A new approach to teaching in the primary school*. London: Todcaster and Frome.

#### 1.4 Book without an author or editor

In this case you would use the title rather than the author. When listing in the reference list and/or bibliography you would list it alphabetically but by its title.

(*How to make an impact*, 2009, p. 1)

*How to make an impact* (2009) London: Avery and Perch.

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