



# Referencing Code of Practice

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Publication date:	November 2022
Amended:	-
Review date:	July 2025

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# Referencing Code of Practice

## Background and purpose

1. The referencing of sources is a fundamental concept in academic work and study, scholarly publishing and research communications. Accurate referencing ensures that evidence presented in support of arguments can be verified, displays evidence in assessed work of wide reading, and acts as an aid to critical thinking around the validity of sources. It is a key academic and research skill, in which all students need to be supported to learn and apply.
2. Consistent and high-quality teaching, learning and marking of referencing, with clear and consistent guidance and support, is key to ensuring that the expectations set out in the University's Academic Offence Procedures<sup>1</sup> are met. Namely, that students are "familiar and act in accordance with the conventions of academic writing including appropriate referencing of sources and acknowledgement of assistance"<sup>2</sup>. A whole-University approach to referencing education and support is also part of a range of measures and actions to reduce academic offence cases relating to plagiarism.
3. All staff and students working to an agreed policy on referencing ensures a whole community approach is being taken to the understanding and application of referencing. This baseline should reduce confusion and anxieties which can arise around referencing, and empower students and staff to focus on the higher-level knowledge and skills which form academic integrity and academic skills. This approach is consistent with the QAA Academic Integrity Charter<sup>3</sup>, to which the University is a signatory.
4. This Referencing Code of Practice sets out the University's expectations on Academic Departments and Schools, Professional Service Sections, and staff and students, in the teaching, learning, assessment and supporting of referencing. It seeks to ensure consistency and clarity for both students and staff, reducing confusion and anxieties, and empowering all to use referencing for their achievement, success and development of academic practice.
5. This Code builds upon a set of referencing policy terms agreed by Education Committee in 2017, which Academic Departments and Schools and Professional Service Sections have worked collaboratively to embed.

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<sup>1</sup> Wright, J. *Academic Offence Procedures 2021-22* (2021) <<https://www.essex.ac.uk/governance-and-strategy/governance/policies>> [accessed 21 April 2022].

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> QAA *Academic Integrity Charter* (2020) <<https://www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us/what-we-do/academic-integrity/charter>> [accessed 21 April 2022].

## **Department and School selection and use of referencing styles and versions**

6. **Each Department and School should select a single referencing style and version, from a limited list of approved styles maintained by Library and Cultural Services. Only this style and version should be used across all taught programmes, both undergraduate and postgraduate.** Departments and Schools should ensure that the style and version are consistently embedded into practice, across teaching, learning, assessment and in all guidance to students and staff. The style must be chosen from a list of styles, versions and supporting resources maintained by Library and Cultural Services. The selection of a single style is optional for use with postgraduate research (PGR) cohorts, but Departments and Schools are still asked to embed the broad approach to referencing education, as set out in this Code.
7. **Departments and Schools may choose multiple styles from the limited list of approved styles where there is a clear pedagogic and/or subject-based justification across different programmes.** i.e. where multiple subjects co-exist within one Department/School, which have differing referencing and citation requirements and conventions, or where students are studying joint programmes across Departments/Schools.
8. **The Essex Pathways Department will use multiple styles from the list, corresponding to the subjects they teach, as chosen by that corresponding Department/School.** Due to the unique position of the Essex Pathways Department in teaching subjects which exist across other Departments and Schools, and students who will become undergraduates in those Departments and Schools, Essex Pathways will take this bespoke approach.

## **Teaching, learning and assessment of referencing**

9. **Teaching and learning of referencing and academic integrity should be embedded into all taught programmes.** This should be through in-module teaching of the Department/School's chosen referencing style, utilising the University's digital learning materials on referencing, which include the Moodle Academic Integrity Module, learning materials in the Skills@Essex resource and the Library's referencing webpages.
10. **In-curriculum teaching of referencing should be designed within the context of the development of subject-specific academic and research skills and academic integrity.** Academic teams and Library and Skills for Success professionals should work together to develop these approaches within programmes.
11. **Where there is marking criteria on referencing as part of an assessment, no student should fail based upon inaccurate application of the referencing style alone. Exceptions to this principle would occur where a test of referencing and citations is the objective of the assessment.** Where the student has made a clear attempt to apply the correct style, supportive

feedback should be given in-line with the University assessment policy and local approach in Departments and Schools.

- 12. Third-party software and digital referencing management tools may be taught and promoted to students, but these should retain consistency with the style and version of that style used by the Department/School.** The University purchases access to referencing management software (currently EndNote) and this is regularly updated to contain the Departmental and School referencing styles and versions (see 14).

## **Support and guidance for students and academic staff**

- 13. A list of referencing styles, with approved versions and guidance resources, will be maintained by the Library.** Departments and Schools will be consulted to select their style(s) from this list. The Library will purchase and maintain access to any subscription-based referencing resources.
- 14. The University's supported referencing management software will contain the referencing styles and versions from the Library maintained list.** Digital Innovation and Technology Services (DITS) will ensure that the Library's list of referencing styles are within the University's supported referencing management software (currently EndNote).
- 15. The student-facing referencing support page will continue to be maintained by the Library and embedded by Departments and Schools.** This will contain learning resources and content, as well as links to the Departmental and School styles. All other student-facing referencing guidance (e.g. webpages, videos, student handbooks) should link to this page. The Library will add links to this page and the Departmental/School styles to each reading list.
- 16. Supporting workshop, drop-in and appointments services for students on referencing and referencing management will continue to be provided by the Library's Academic and Research Services Team, the Skills for Success Team, and Digital Innovation and Technology Services (DITS).** These teams will work in collaboration on referencing support. These sessions will be advertised via CareerHub and the Skills at Library webpages, and offered both online and in-person.
- 17. A referencing and academic integrity development group will lead the implementation of this Code of Practice and development of pedagogic approaches to referencing and academic integrity across the University.** This will be linked to the Educator Development Framework and the Curriculum Review, and will have representation from academic staff and relevant professional support services staff.

18. **A central hub of guidance and information on referencing and academic integrity will be developed for academic and professional support staff, to ensure ongoing pedagogic development and consistency of practice.** This will sit within the Teaching and Learning section of the University website and be developed by the referencing and academic integrity development group.

## Document Control Panel

Title	Referencing Code of Practice
<b>Policy Classification</b>	Code of Practice
<b>Security Classification</b>	Open
<b>Security Rationale</b>	Not applicable
<b>Policy Manager Role</b>	Assistant Director: Academic and Research Services
<b>Nominated Contact</b>	<a href="mailto:jw21042@essex.ac.uk">jw21042@essex.ac.uk</a>
<b>Responsible UoE Section</b>	Library and Cultural Services
<b>Approval Body</b>	Senate
<b>Signed Off Date</b>	29 June 2022
<b>Publication Status</b>	Published
<b>Published Date</b>	22 November 2022
<b>Last Review Date</b>	June 2022
<b>Minimum Review Frequency</b>	3-yearly
<b>Review Date</b>	31 July 2025
<b>UoE Identifier</b>	0064

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