Academic Research and Writing

Literature Review and Proper Referencing in Academic Writing

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Undergraduate Diploma in Business Administration

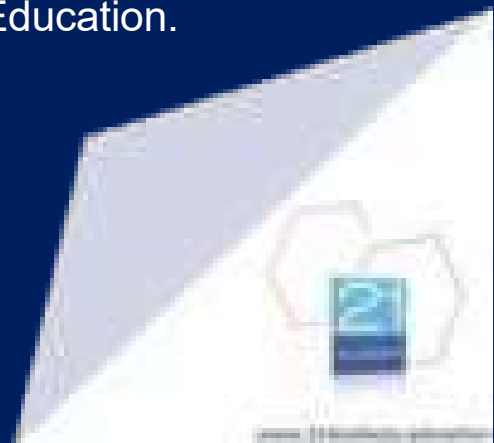
TEXT Books for this module….

Core textbooks

- McMillan, K. and Weyers, J. (2013). How to Write for University: Academic Writing for Success. Pearson.
- Pears, R. and Shields, G. (2019). Cite Them Right. The Essential Referencing Guide. Macmillan Education

Supplementary textbooks

- Bailey, S. (2019). The Essentials of Academic Writing for International Students. 3rd ed. Routledge.
- Cottrell, S. (2019). The Study Skills Handbook. 5th ed. Red Globe Press.
- Locker, K. O., & Kaczmarek, S. K. (2014). Business Communication: Building Critical Skills. McGraw-Hill Education.
- Swetnam, D. and Swetnam, R. (2020). Writing Your Dissertation. 3rd ed. Plymouth: How to Books.



Characteristics of a Good Summary:

- Concise
- Clear and Coherent
- Accurate
- Objective
- Focus on Main Ideas
- Proper Use of Own Words (Paraphrasing)
- Logical Structure

Literature Review

A **literature review** is a section of a research project that examines, summarises, and evaluates existing studies, books, and other reliable sources related to a research topic.

Purpose of a Literature Review

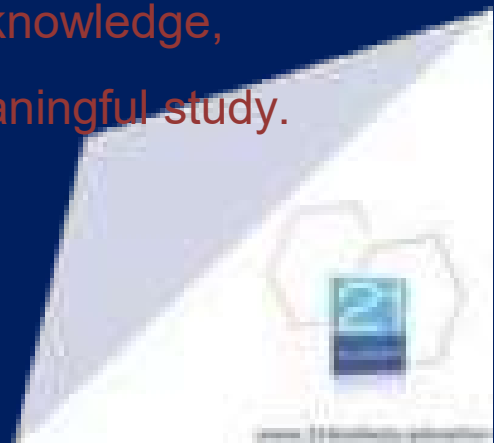
- Provides background information on the research topic.
- Identifies what is already known from previous research.
- Highlights gaps or unanswered questions that the new study can address.
- Develops a theoretical and conceptual foundation for the research.
- Helps refine the research question, objectives, and methodology.
- Avoids duplication by showing what has already been studied.

Literature Review

Importance of a Literature Review

- Demonstrates the researcher's understanding of the topic.
- Supports the credibility of the research by using evidence from reliable sources.
- Identifies trends, debates, and differing viewpoints in the existing literature.
- Helps justify why the research is necessary and significant.
- Guides the selection of appropriate research methods and data collection techniques.
- Provides a framework for interpreting and discussing the research findings.

In summary: A literature review is an essential part of research because it analyses existing knowledge, identifies research gaps, and provides the foundation for conducting a well-informed and meaningful study.



Academic and Professional Sources

1. **Peer-reviewed journal articles** – Research articles reviewed by experts before publication. They are highly reliable and commonly used in academic research.
2. **Books and textbooks** – Written by experts to provide detailed information, theories, and concepts on a subject.
3. **Conference papers and proceedings** – Research presented at academic or professional conferences, often containing recent findings.
4. **Theses and dissertations** – Original research completed by students for master's or doctoral degrees.
5. **Government publications** – Reports, statistics, policies, and official documents produced by government agencies.
6. **Professional and industry reports** – Publications by professional organisations, research institutes, or companies that provide industry data, trends, and best practices.

7. **Scholarly review articles** – Articles that summarise and evaluate existing research on a specific topic.
8. **Reference sources** – Encyclopedias, dictionaries, and handbooks that provide background information and definitions.
9. **Reliable websites** – Websites from universities, government agencies, and recognized organisations that provide accurate and up-to-date information.
10. **Newspapers and magazines** – Useful for current events and public opinion, though they are generally less scholarly than peer-reviewed sources.

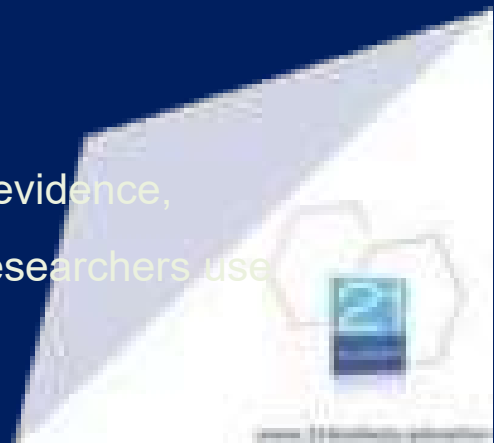
Academic and professional sources provide reliable, evidence-based information. The most trusted sources for research are **peer-reviewed journal articles, scholarly books, conference papers, theses, government publications, and professional reports**, as they are produced by experts and supported by research.

Critical Analysis of Academic Literature

Critical reading involves evaluating and interpreting academic sources rather than simply accepting the information they contain.

- Skim the Article First
- Identify the Research Purpose
- Evaluate the Methodology
- Analyse the Evidence
- Identify Strengths and Limitations
- Compare with other source
- Evaluate the Author's Credibility
- Take Organised Notes

Critical analysis of academic literature requires careful reading, evaluation of the research methods and evidence, comparison with other studies, and identification of strengths and weaknesses. These techniques help researchers use reliable information and develop well-supported arguments in their own work.



What is Referencing?

Referencing is the process of **acknowledging the sources** of information, ideas, data, or words that you use in your academic work. It shows **where your information came from** and gives **credit to the original authors**.

Importance of Using References

- Avoids plagiarism
- Gives credit to original authors
- Supports your arguments
- Proves your research effort
- Guides readers to original sources
- Meets academic standards

Harvard Style Referencing

Harvard style referencing is an author-date method. Sources are cited within the body of your assignment by giving the name of the author(s) followed by the date of publication. All other details about the publication are given in the list of references or bibliography at the end.

- In-text Citations
- Full Reference List or Bibliography

Referencing in the Harvard style is a two–part process:

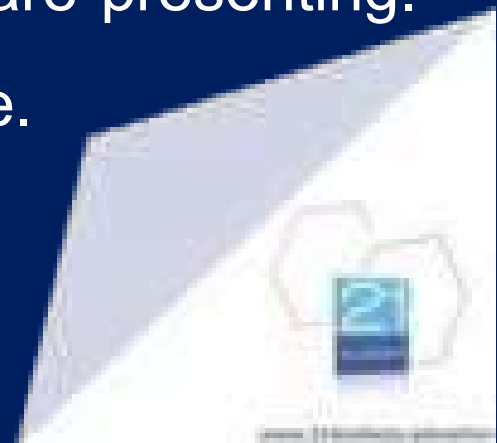
1. Citation in the text: this is the brief indication of the source within the text of your work immediately following the use of the source whether quoted or summarised.
2. Reference list: a complete list of all the cited references used in your work with full bibliographic details, to allow the reader to follow up these references and find the original text.

Citations which are used with direct quotations or are referring to a particular part of a source, should include the page number in your citation, e.g. (Smith, 2017, p. 42) or Smith (2017, p. 42).

Quoting is including a section of a source in your own work using the same words as those used by the original author.

Paraphrasing can be used to avoid inserting too many direct quotations into your work, as this can distract from the coherence of the argument you are presenting.

The use of quotations varies considerably from discipline to discipline.



Summarising means briefly stating the main ideas or arguments of a complete information source or a substantial portion of an information source.

A citation for a summary should include the author and date, e.g. (Smith, 2017) or Smith (2017), but there is no need to include a specific page number.

- For in-text citations

Spell out the authors' family name, or corporate name, in roman script.

- For references in the reference list/bibliography

Family name, title of item, journal or book title (if it's an edited book), publisher name – full roman script

The title should be translated into English and placed in square brackets immediately after the romanised title. The words in the square brackets should not use italics.

For Example:

Terao, M. (1998) Denai kugi wa suterareru [The nail that does not stick up may be thrown away]. Tokyo: Fusosha.

Formatting & Utilising – Citations & References

Formatting refers to the way information is structured and presented in a document. In academic work, formatting ensures your writing is clear, professional, and consistent, following specific rules or styles.

- Document layout – refer assignment guidelines from course resource centre
- Headings and Subheadings
- Citations and References
- Tables, Figures, and Appendices
- Overall referencing style – Harvard

Let's Practice:

The rise of artificial intelligence (AI) and automation is one of the most influential digital trends shaping today's workforce. Many businesses are adopting AI-driven tools to improve efficiency and decision-making. According to research, AI is expected to contribute up to $15.7 trillion to the global economy by 2030 (Purdy and Daugherty, 2017). This shift calls for urgent adaptation in skills training and education.

Let’s Practice:

Step-by-step instructions for creating in-text citations and reference list entries-

1. Identify the author's name and publication year.
2. Determine if a page number is needed for direct quotations.
3. Create an in-text citation by placing the author's name and year in parentheses.
4. Add a corresponding entry in the reference list at the end of the document.

Let's Practice:

Answers –

1. Authors: Purdy, M. and Daugherty, P.- Year: 2017
2. page numbers are optional for paraphrasing
3. (Purdy and Daugherty, 2017)
4. Purdy, M. and Daugherty, P. (2017) Why artificial intelligence is the future of growth. Dublin: Accenture. Available at: https://www.accenture.com/us-en/insight-ai-investment-growth (Accessed: 15 July 2025).

Reference Verbs in Academic Writing

In academic writing, reference verbs (reporting verbs) are used to introduce and discuss other people's ideas or research. Choosing the right verb helps clearly express the author's attitude, argument, or level of certainty about the source material.

Function	Examples	Use When...
Neutral	states, describes, reports, explains	Presenting factual or descriptive content
Supportive	agrees, confirms, demonstrates, shows	Citing work that supports your point
Critical or Contrasting	challenges, disputes, criticizes, questions	Highlighting disagreement or limitations
Tentative or Cautious	suggests, proposes, indicates, hypothesizes	Introducing a theory, idea, or less certain claim
Assertive or Strong	argues, claims, insists, maintains	Presenting a strong opinion or position

Examples in Sentences

- Neutral: Smith (2021) describes the impact of AI on the retail sector.
- Supportive: Johnson (2020) demonstrates how automation can improve efficiency in manufacturing.
- Critical: Lee (2019) challenges the view that AI will replace all human jobs.
- Tentative: Ahmed (2022) suggests that digital transformation may widen the skills gap.
- Assertive: Brown (2018) argues that data privacy is the most urgent issue in digital trends.

Let's Practice:

Fill in the blank with an appropriate reference verb from the list:

suggests, explains, criticizes, supports, observes

1. Khan (2020) _____ that digital learning improves student engagement.
2. Roberts (2019) _____ the weaknesses in current data protection policies.
3. Lin (2021) _____ how cloud storage works in virtual environments.
4. Peterson (2022) _____ the use of mobile apps in health monitoring.
5. Taylor (2018) _____ that older adults are becoming more active online.

THANK YOU