Guide to using bibliographies and references in social care

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Introduction

This is a guide to selecting and citing sources using the ‘Harvard’ system of referencing.

For all assignments you will need to indicate the sources you have used in developing your work. A bibliography needs to be provided for all formal essays or presentations. This usually means a list of the specific sources you have consulted during the preparation of your essay/report/project. This should include:

- Sources which you have quoted in the text of your essay/report/project
- Sources you have cited (but not quoted from)
- All other sources consulted but not specifically cited or quoted from in the body of the assignment

The most common way of recording sources of information in the social sciences is the Harvard system. This was developed to apply to printed materials and has since been adapted for more modern sources such as the internet.

There are other methods of referencing, for example footnoting, and it’s important not to confuse one method of referencing with another. Check which method of referencing your manager/tutor wants you to use.

Harvard System

Under this system all sources referred to must be cited twice. The first time is as a reference in the main body of your assignment (i.e. text) where, as a minimum, you provide the author’s surname, the year of publication and (where appropriate) pages number(s). The second time is with full details in a bibliography, organised alphabetically, at the end of your assignment.

Here are some appropriate formats to use with different types of source materials under the Harvard system. In following examples the use of italics or quotation marks is used for titles as a part of the system of referencing.

Books

Book references in full must be in the following order: author’s name, year of publication, title, place of publication, publisher.
Single author

In the text: Fowler (2003, p. 134) notes that...


Two authors

In the text: Cleaver and Nicholson (2007) found that...


More than two authors

In the text: Dale et al. (2005) have suggested that...

In the bibliography: Dale, Peter; Green, Richard and Fellows, Ron (2005), Child Protection Assessment Following Serious Injuries to Infants: Fine Judgments, Chichester: John Wiley & Sons.

An author’s chapter in an edited collection

In the text: Daniel (2008) argued that...


If a book has more than one edition, make clear in the bibliography which edition you have used.

In the text: Payne (2005) states …

Articles in journals and magazines

In the text: Chand and Thoburn (2006) indicate that...


Or:

In the text: Spila et al. (2008) state...


The two examples listed above use different punctuation to indicate volume, issue number, month(s) and pagination for the cited articles. However these are stylistic differences; both provide appropriate references. Consistency should be used in punctuation so that the same style of punctuation is used for all journal articles.

The conventions for single, joint and multiple authorship of articles are the same as for books (see above).

Sometimes students find citation of short articles from professional magazines confusing. However the same conventions should be followed as far as possible for academic journals. For example:

In the text: Vevers (2008) suggests that...


Government publications

In the text: It was stated that … (HM Government 2003)


Legislation

In the text: … the paramount principle underpinning practice within the Children Act 1989

In the bibliography: Children Act 1989, London: HMSO
Primary/secondary sources

This method needs to be used where a student has read about one author’s ideas or research in another author’s work (or, alternatively, where one source has quoted from another author, and this quotation is being used in the student’s assignment).

In the text: Stewart-Clark and Hayward (1996 cited in Owusu-Bempah 2007) found that…


The full details in the bibliography are provided separate listings in alphabetical order. In other words, depending on which letters of the alphabet the author surnames start with, the two listings may not appear immediately next to one another.

Audio-Visual and online sources

Video or CD-Rom

Fostering Voices (2004), directed by Ian and Val Phillips, Research in Practice/Dept for Education and Skills (CD-Rom)

Internet

Reference in the following order: Author/editor, year, title, edition, place of publication, publisher (if ascertainable) URL (internet address in angle brackets), accessed date (the date you accessed the work on the internet. For example:

In the text: HM Government 2006


Write ‘no date’ when the electronic publication date is not available. The publisher may be a conventional publisher or the organisation which maintains the internet website. The ‘accessed date’ is the date on which you viewed or downloaded the file. This allows for any subsequent modifications to the file (which are common with internet communications).
Organising your bibliography

All the materials you used should be listed in alphabetical order by the author surname in your bibliography. For each author, single-authored items come first, then joint items, and finally multiple items. Items should be listed in date order within the single-authored, joint authored and multiple-authored sections. All items should be listed in date order.

If two or more items by the same author have the same date, the items should be listed with a lower-case letter (a, b, c, etc) after the date. This applies both in the text and in the list of references. For example:

In the text: Owusu-Bempah and Howitt (2000a)
Owusu-Bempah and Howitt (2000b)


Variations between subject disciplines and journal or book styles

As you complete library research you will probably notice that individual journals/publishers have their own internal conventions and those other systems of referencing may be used by other individual subject areas. When you are writing for publication, you must follow the publisher’s guidelines precisely. Similarly, it is possible that your programme may have strict style requirements which may differ slightly from the examples set out in these guidance notes. If in doubt ask for advice.

Punctuation in the textual references and the bibliography

Regardless of which referencing system is adopted by a particular publisher, the way each publication uses punctuation is called the ‘house style’. The current trend is away from using excessive punctuation with many commas and full stops. However, your programme may have style requirements about what punctuation you should use in your references and these need to be followed. Regardless of which conventions or ‘house style’ of punctuation is followed, it is extremely important to be consistent throughout any one piece of work. This may mean that, when citing primary/secondary sources and copying the listing of the primary source from the bibliography of secondary source, you need to change the punctuation to ensure it is consistent with the style you are using within your own assignment (and consistent with the requirements of your programme).

- Use of capital letters, underlining etc
- Your organisation may have specific stylistic requirements which it wants you to adopt in your assignments and if this is the case they should be followed. Here is some general advice:
You should normally retain any capital letters given in the title of the publication.

Use either italics, or underlining, or bold to indicate book or journal titles (or major government publications).

Be consistent throughout a piece of work. For example, do not use italics for the titles of some sources, underlining for others and bold for a few more.

More tips for bibliographies

Be clear about the differences between editors who have compiled collections of articles/chapters into books and the authors of those chapters/articles within the edited collections.

Make sure you list the date of publication, not the reprint date, and use the date of the edition you are using – not an earlier version.

Avoid abbreviations (e.g. ‘OUP’ could mean either Oxford University Press or Open University Press)

When books are published simultaneously in more than one country, only the town from the country of origin of the source you used need be listed.

When listing the place of publication please distinguish between the county and the town. It is the latter which you need to use. Example: Russell House Publishing is located in Lyme Regis in Dorset. You need to use ‘Lyme Regis’, not ‘Dorset’.

When listing the place of publication, make sure you use the town where the publisher is located, not the printer. If you are not sure what the difference is, ask a tutor to explain.

Bibliographies are normally printed in single space format, with a clear line or space left between each source.

All ideas and information paraphrased from books, articles and other sources need a reference to be cited, even when the source has not been quoted directly.

All quotations and statistics require a specific page reference, noted in the body of the assignment, next to the quotation or statistics.

Do not place specific page references for quotations or statistics into the bibliography.