Tutorial Letter: Harvard Referencing System Guide update
2025-S2

Dear Students,

The **IMM Graduate School Harvard Referencing System Guide,** dated June 2025 for use in 2025-S2, has been updated and simplified with a focus on the types of sources you're most likely to encounter and need to reference.

Correctly referencing your work is essential as it ensures:
- you give credit to original authors,
- supports your arguments with credible sources,
- helps you avoid plagiarism, and
- illustrates commitment to maintain academic integrity in the work you do using the correct referencing style, both in-text and in your reference list.

Summary of updates

Refer to an overview of the changes / updates to the Referencing Guide below:
- A **linked table of contents** for easy navigation.
- **Section A** provides general guidance on referencing, including how to use the guide and a glossary of abbreviations.
- **Section B** includes examples of sources, showing both in-text citation and reference list formats.
- **Standardisation** across all social media and publication references, with unnecessary symbols removed for clarity and easier application.
- **Improved examples and explanations** to address student questions and make the guide more user-friendly.

It is important that you print and study the 'IMM Graduate School Referencing System Guide' well ahead of your assignment / project submission dates as it is a document you have to be familiar with and which does not lend itself to a quick scan when you are facing a submission deadline. Many types of sources are included as examples in the Referencing Guide and it is required reading for every student.

Workshop sessions: Referencing

Several online workshops will be hosted during this semester. These workshops can be accessed via Big Blue Button on eLearn to support all students before assignment submissions.

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NOTE: SMS and email communication will be forwarded to inform you of dates, times and Big Blue Button links as applicable.

Common mistakes when referencing

Here are some of the most common mistakes students make when referencing:
Citations:

i. A citation never contains the initials of the author nor does it ever contain a URL from an online source,

ii. when appearing at the end of a sentence, the citation must be inserted before the full-stop,

iii. if you construct a paragraph with information from a single source, do not cite the source after every sentence in the paragraph but do so at the end of the paragraph,

iv. if the sentence contains the name of the author, it should form part of the sentence, i.e. "According to Hastings (2019) the best way to reference is …",

v. the ampersand should be used when there is more than one author mentioned, i.e. (Ndlovu & Makatu, 2020), but if the surnames are part of the sentence, the ampersand is never used, i.e. "According to Ndlovu and Makatu (2020) the best way to reference …",

vi. if the publication has multiple authors, you need to mention all their surnames when you cite the source the first time, following this, you may use only the first author followed by 'et al.' as this term indicates that there are more authors but they have already been previously mentioned:- this does not apply to cases where there are 3 authors or fewer in which case all the authors have to be mentioned at every citation,

vii. you may not use or reference Wikipedia, Bizzcommunity, any blogs or assignment mills (easyessay, ukessays, studentfriend, coursehero, slideshare) as these are not academic sources,

viii. the eStudy Guide is cited as follows: (IMM Graduate School, 2024),

ix. citations include the page number on which the information was found only if you are using a direct quote (something you should preferably avoid doing - rather paraphrase source content), i.e. (Smith, 2023, p. 17),

x. the bulk of your sources should be less than 5 years old.

Reference list:

i. The reference list appears at the end of the submission, but before any addendums,

ii. each item in the reference list should have, as the first word of the reference list item, the source name you used in the citation,

iii. the first word in the item dictates the alphabetical order in which the items should be listed,

iv. there should be spaces between the reference list items,

v. the reference list should be left aligned and be in the same font as the body of your

        assignment,

vi.   reference list items are never numbered or bullet-pointed,

vii.   the study guide author should be listed as 'IMM Graduate School' and the publication house is 'IMM Graduate School', i.e, IMM Graduate School (2024). *Business Communication (BC101B)*. South Africa: IMM Graduate School.

viii.   the term 'et al.' never appears in a reference list as all the authors should be mentioned,

ix.   the use of the ampersand in a reference list is not allowed,

x.   the reference list is often the first page the examiner looks at – it is a window into the level of care and focus applied to the rest of the submission.

Bear in mind that referencing for academic purposes does not allow for the 'it is almost correct' option: - citations and reference lists must comply with the requirements fully in every one of its constituent parts.

Please post your academic queries on the eDiscussion Forum or contact helpme@immgsm.ac.za for any questions about referencing.

We wish you the best with your studies.

The IMM Graduate School Faculty