

## Checking your references

### 1 Checking in-text references

Good referencing will improve the overall quality of your assignment for several reasons:

- your arguments will be clearly supported by evidence
- your work will be more convincing
- your reader can find your sources
- your lecturer can see how widely you have read and whether you fully understand the work
- your work will reflect the academic values and good academic practice expected at the University of Kent.

In addition, you will be able to use your own sources for further research in the future. Use the following steps to proof-read the final draft of your assignment:

1. On a paper copy of your assignment, read each paragraph and highlight all the direct quotations:
  - Have you used quotation marks or indented quotes correctly? When and how to use indented quotations varies with different referencing styles: check the 'Academic Integrity: Referencing Style Guides'.
  - Have you included page numbers for each quotation? This will also depend on your referencing style, but most systems require page references on direct quotations.
2. Re-read your work and highlight all other references. Check all references, including quotations:
  - Have you included the citation with correct details i.e. if there are two authors, have you listed the two authors?
  - Is the year correct?
  - Have you used the correct style consistently?
3. Check that every cited source is on your reference list. You can do this in two ways:
  - If you have already prepared your reference list, read your assignment and tick off each citation against the reference list item. If you have an extra citation in the body of your work, then add the appropriate reference list entry. If you have an extra source in your list which you have not cited, remove it.
  - If you do not have a full reference list, create a table on a separate page. As you read your work, add each citation (i.e. the author details) to the table. This will give you a full list of authors and you can add the full bibliographic details from your notes. If you need an

alphabetical list, you can sort the table (remember to hide the lines around the table). If you are using a numerical referencing style, you will have your citations in the correct order.

4. On the final reading, check that the grammar around each citation flows naturally.

## 2 Checking your list of references

The most common error in the reference list is that students forget to check that their reference list is complete; every source you cite in your assignment must be listed in your reference list.

1. On your first reading, check that your list is complete - Use the steps listed in 'Checking your in-text references' above.
2. Is your list in the correct order? You may need to sort the list alphabetically or numerically depending on the referencing style that you are using.
3. Have you formatted the list consistently and correctly? Check:
  - Have you listed author names consistently? Look for full first name or initials only; using full stops and commas consistently etc.
  - The author's first name and family name. Have you listed the author's family name first? For example, how would you list the author 'David James'?

**Names in English** are written 'first name family name' with no comma between them. In this example, 'David' and 'James' can both exist as either a first name or a family name. If you see them written as David James, you can tell that James is the family name because there is no comma between the names. In a reference list, the author's name must be shown as James, David or as James, D. The comma after the name shows that 'James' is the family name.
4. For Internet sources:
  - Have you listed and author and date published? If this information is not available, have you used the page title?
  - Have you listed the URL in full plus the date accessed?
  - For information on the correct format for listing Internet sources see 'Academic Integrity: Referencing Style Guides' at <http://www.kent.ac.uk/uelt/ai/styleguides.html>.