

Edge Hill University Policy for the Assessment of Academic Referencing

Edge Hill University students are expected to demonstrate a range of reading and other types of research when submitting work for assessment. Academic referencing is an essential component of good academic practice and students are introduced to notions of plagiarism and referencing conventions from the point of induction. However, the development of referencing skills is likely to continue throughout a programme of study and more emphasis might usefully be placed on attributing sources than precise technical accuracy while students are still practising the application of Harvard (or other designated referencing system). On this basis for example, students at Level 4 of an undergraduate degree may be significantly penalised for failing to acknowledge sources but not for technical imprecision in the use of a particular referencing system (although this does not preclude assessors from rewarding technical competency that exceeds normal level expectations).

This policy acknowledges the notion of progression in academic referencing skills across Levels 4, 5 & 6 (undergraduate) and 7 (Masters) and enshrines a 'staged' approach to its assessment, based on consideration of:

- *Knowledge and understanding of the purpose and ethics of referencing (applicable at all levels);*
- *Learning resources and management of information – competency to access and select appropriate **resources** from a limited range of sources (**elementary**) to a 'full range' for the discipline (**advanced**);*
- *Communication - developing increasing technical competence from basic application (**elementary**) to thorough and syntactic correctness of a wide range of reference types (**advanced**).*

The following generic assessment criteria have been produced with full cognizance of national level descriptors¹ to assist in the development of marking guides for referencing:

Level 4

The emphasis at Level 4 is on principles and is aligned with the NICATS requirement for 'taking personal responsibility' and 'analysis of well-defined information and concepts' and providing information to locate references. Learning outcomes and marking criteria should require students to be able to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the purpose of referencing and its ethical basis in order to prevent plagiarism and malpractice.

¹ England, Wales and Northern Ireland (EWNI) generic credit level descriptors (also known as NICATS), QAA (2008) <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Documents/creditframework.pdf>

2. Include a limited range of appropriate references and citations in their work.
3. Cite sources correctly and include appropriate information in references in a consistent way, with some adherence to disciplinary standard formatting conventions. Students will not be penalised for any syntactic formatting inaccuracies and will receive appropriate developmental feedback to improve their use of the designated referencing system.

Level 5

Learning outcomes and marking criteria should require students to demonstrate understanding of the need to attribute sources by using the designated referencing system to an **acceptable standard**. Progression takes the form of greater knowledge of disciplinary referencing standards and ability to reference correctly a wider range of sources. Students will not be penalised for minor technical errors although credit should be given for correct use of the referencing system. They will be able to:

1. Demonstrate clearly their understanding of the purpose of referencing and its ethical basis in a range of situations and distinguish the referencing system used in their discipline.
2. Include a wide range of appropriate references and citations in their work.
3. Cite all sources correctly and include all appropriate information in references in a consistent way, with adherence to disciplinary standard formatting conventions.

Level 6

Learning outcomes and marking criteria should require students to demonstrate understanding of the need to attribute sources by using the designated referencing system to a **high standard**. Credit should be given for correct use of the referencing system although marks may be deducted for technical errors. Students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate thoroughly their understanding of the purpose of referencing, the concept of intellectual property and its ethical basis in a wide range of situations and the referencing system used in their discipline.
2. Include a wide range of appropriate and high quality² references and citations in their work from a variety of reference types.

² These criteria deliberately use phrases that require professional judgement to take account of the variation in disciplinary practice, for example 'high quality' = context-dependent.

3. Cite all sources correctly and include all appropriate information in references in a consistent way, with full adherence to disciplinary standard formatting conventions at a high standard.

Level 7

Students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate thoroughly their understanding of the concepts of intellectual property, and accept full accountability for outcomes.
2. Display mastery of referencing through selection and use of a wide range of high quality sources in a completely correct way according to disciplinary conventions and aiming to achieve publication standards (marks may be deducted for technical errors).

Learning and Teaching Committee
Edge Hill University
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