Referencing using OSCOLA (Oxford Standard for Citation of Legal Authorities)

When writing for an academic or professional audience, provide evidence for your claims by citing your sources in footnotes. Legal writing cites primary legal sources such as cases, law reports and legislation from the UK and the EU, as well as secondary sources such as books, journal articles, Hansard, websites and policy statements. OSCOLA is a footnote style: all citations appear in footnotes. It does not use endnotes or in-text citations.

OSCOLA was originally designed for use within Oxford University but is now used by law schools in the UK and overseas, and by a number of legal journals and publishers. As far as possible, the guidelines in OSCOLA are based on common practice in UK legal citation but with minimum punctuation.

How do I reference using OSCOLA 4th ed.?

Below are some examples of how to reference both primary and secondary sources using OSCOLA. For a complete and comprehensive guide, go to the OSCOLA website at www.law.ox.ac.uk/oscola.

Primary Sources

Do not use full stops in abbreviations. Separate citations with a semi-colon.

Cases

Give the name of the case, followed by the neutral citation (if appropriate), and the volume and first page of the relevant law report and where necessary the court.

If there is no neutral citation, give the Law Reports citation followed by the court in brackets. If the case is not reported in the Law Reports, cite the All ER or the WLR, or failing that a specialist report.

- Page v Smith [1996] AC 155 (HL)

Statutes and statutory instruments

Cite an Act by its short title and year, using capitals for the major words, and without a comma before the year.

When citing a statutory instrument, give the name, year and (after a comma) the SI number.

- Act of Supremacy 1558
• Human Rights Act 1998, s 15(1)(b)

**EU Legislation and cases**

When citing EU treaties and protocols, give the title of the legislation, including amendments if necessary, followed by the year of publication, the OJ series and the issue and page numbers. Older treaties were published in the C series. With notable exceptions, such as the Lisbon Treaty, legislation is now published in the L series.


**Secondary Sources**

**Books**

Give the author’s name in the same form as in the publications, except in bibliographies, where you should give only the surname followed by the initial(s). Italicise titles of books. Capitalise the first letter in all major words in a title. Give relevant information about editions, translators and so forth before the publisher, and give page numbers at the end of the citation, after the brackets.


**Contributions to edited books**


**Encyclopedias**


**Journal Articles**

When citing articles, give the author’s name first, followed by a comma, and the title of the article within single quotation marks. After the title, give the year of publication in brackets, the volume number (if applicable), the name of the journal with no full stops and finally the
first page of the article. Abbreviations for journals can be used (see appendix of OSCOLA guidelines for a full list of abbreviations) but be consistent when using them.

- Alison L Young, ‘In Defence of Due Deference’ (2009) 72 MLR

**Online Journals**

When citing journal articles which have been published only electronically, give publication details as for articles in hard copy journals, but note that online journals may lack some of the publications elements (eg page numbers). Follow the citation with the web address and the date you most recently accessed the article.


**Command Papers**

Command papers include White and Green Papers, relevant treaties, government responses to select committee reports, and reports of committees of inquiry. When citing a command paper, begin the citation with the name of the department or other body that produced the paper and then give the title of the paper in italics, followed by the command paper number and the year in brackets.


**Websites and Blogs**

Follow the general principles for secondary sources when citing websites and blogs. If no author can be identified, begin the citation with the title in the usual way. If there is no date of publication on the website, give only the date of access.


**Newspaper Articles**

When citing newspaper articles, give the author, the title, the name of the newspaper in italics and then in brackets the city of publication and the date. If know, give the number of the page on which the article was published, after the brackets.

- Jane Croft, ‘Supreme Court Warns on Quality’ *Financial Times* (London, 1 July 2010) 3
Further Help

For the full OSCOLA guidelines, a full list of abbreviations and more examples go to www.law.ox.ac.uk/OSCOLA

For help with legal abbreviations go to http://www.legalabbrevs.cardiff.ac.uk/

Further information on OSCOLA can be found on the Referencing page of the Law Library guide at http://libguides.swansea.ac.uk/law/referencing

For help with referencing using OSCOLA, contact the Law and Criminology team mailbox: lawcrimlib@swan.ac.uk