



**QUEEN'S  
UNIVERSITY  
BELFAST**

**SCHOOL OF LAW**

***Legal Methods & Skills 2017-18***  
***Professor Murphy's Style Guide for Assessed Coursework***

➤ **ASSESSED COURSEWORK: FONTS AND MARGINS**

The main text should be 10 point verdana. It should also be 1.5 line-spaced, with top/bottom and left/right margins of 2.5cm.

Footnotes can be single-spaced, 8 point verdana.

➤ **ASSESSED COURSEWORK: PAGINATION AND PARAGRAPHING**

Paginate your work.

Indent each new paragraph *unless* the paragraph follows a heading, sub-heading or a block-indented quote.

➤ **ASSESSED COURSEWORK: CITATION**

The School adopts the *Oxford Standard for the Citation of Legal Authorities* (4<sup>th</sup> edn, 2012), widely known as OSCOLA, which is available at [www.law.ox.ac.uk/oscola](http://www.law.ox.ac.uk/oscola).

In addition to the long OSCOLA guide, the OSCOLA website features:

- (i) a *Quick Reference Guide* (in which you should find answers to most basic queries); and
- (ii) *OSCOLA 2006: Citing international law section*.

Below I outline the basics. You may find my outline easier to navigate than the full OSCOLA guide, so when you have a query I recommend you begin by checking what follows.

**LEGAL METHODS & SKILLS:  
A BASIC GUIDE TO CITATION**

**1. What should I put in footnotes?**

The general principle is that footnotes should be used for references, ie, documentary evidence to support the information in the main text.

Avoid using footnotes to conduct side arguments.

Also, essential or core material should be discussed in the main text not in footnotes.

## 2. Footnotes and endnotes: what, if anything, is the difference?

Footnotes appear at the bottom of each page; endnotes appear at the end of the essay, before the bibliography.

**In your assessed coursework for Legal Methods & Skills you must use footnotes.**

## 3. Where, in the text, should I insert the footnote symbol?

A numbered marker should be inserted as a superscript, eg footnote symbol.<sup>1</sup>

Footnotes should be numbered consecutively from the start of the text. Your word processing package will do this for you.

Note also the following, more detailed advice which I have taken from OSCOLA (the emphasis is mine—it draws attention to rules that are often ignored by students):

Indicate footnotes with a superscript number which should appear *after the relevant punctuation in the text* (if any).

*Put the footnote marker at the end of a sentence, unless for the sake of clarity it is necessary to put it directly after the word or phrase to which it relates.*

If the word or phrase to which the footnote marker relates is in brackets, put the marker before the closing bracket.

A quotation need not be footnoted separately from the name of the source from which it is derived if the two appear in the same sentence. Otherwise, separate notes should be used.

*Close footnotes with a full stop (or question or exclamation mark).*

*Where more than one citation is given in a single footnote reference, separate them with semi-colons.*

## 4. What are the most important things to remember about footnoting?

1. Consistency in style
2. Accuracy (ie, providing the reader with full and correct information so that she or he can find the source you have used)

## 5. How precisely do I cite ...?

- **A statute**

The short title is sufficient. Include the calendar year, eg, Human Rights Act 1998. *Note: do not use italics and do not put a comma between the title and the year.*

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1

You are permitted to abbreviate the short title after giving it in full on first use. Indicate the abbreviation you intend to use:

eg, the Human Rights Act 1998 (HRA 1998);  
 eg, the Human Rights Act 1998 (the Act) [this would be apt where you are discussing just one statute]

At the *start of a sentence in the main text*, use Section, Paragraph or Schedule; in the main text, do not abbreviate to s, ss, para or Sch.

Elsewhere use the full version or its abbreviated form (eg, s 1(1)(a)), but ensure that you choose one style and adhere to it throughout.

In footnotes, references to sections etc appear as follows:

Human Rights Act 1998, s 1. [for section 1]  
 Human Rights Act 1998, ss 1, 4. [sections 1 and 4. Note: no need for 'and']  
 Human Rights Act 1998, s 1(1). [for subsection 1 of section 1]  
 Human Rights Act 1998, s 1(1)(a). [for paragraph a of subsection 1 of section 1]

- **A case**

Here is the advice given by OSCOLA's *Quick Reference Guide*:

Give the party names, followed by the neutral citation, followed by the *Law Reports* citation (eg, AC, Ch, QB). 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.

*Corr v IBC Vehicles Ltd* [2008] UKHL 13, [2008] 1 AC 884.  
*R (Roberts) v Parole Board* [2004] EWCA Civ 1031, [2005] QB 410.  
*Page v Smith* [1996] AC 155 (HL).

When pinpointing, give paragraph numbers in square brackets at the end of the citation. If the judgment has no paragraph numbers, provide the page number pinpoint after the court.

*Callery v Gray* [2001] EWCA Civ 1117, [2001] 1 WLR 2112 [42], [45].  
*Bunt v Tilley* [2006] EWHC 407 (QB), [2006] 3 All ER 336 [1]–[37].  
*R v Leeds County Court, ex p Morris* [1990] QB 523 (QB) 530–31.

If it is an ECtHR case, use para x, as opposed to putting the paragraph number in square brackets.

If citing a particular judge:

*Arcott v The Coal Authority* [2004] EWCA Civ 892, [2005] Env LR 6 [27] (Laws LJ).

**NB case names must be italicised.**

The first time you mention a case in your text, you should provide its full name. Thereafter, you may refer to the case using a sensible shorthand.

eg, *Arscott v The Coal Authority (Arscott)*

- **A book**

For full information on how to cite a book, read from 1-4 below.

1. Begin with the author(s) name(s), followed by a comma.

Include *either* first name *or* initials: decide at the start which style you are adopting and use that style throughout—do not switch and change.

If there are more than three authors (for a book or any other secondary source), give the name of the first-listed author followed by 'and others'.

eg, T Murphy and others,

2. Next, provide the *Title of the Book* (in italics)
3. Then the publication details: (edition [if appropriate, ie, if the book in question has more than one edition—many books do not], publisher year of publication).

eg, (2<sup>nd</sup> edn, OUP 2007)

*NB edn not ed; also no comma between publisher and year of publication.*

*OUP stands for Oxford University Press. Cambridge University Press is CUP.*

4. Page number(s), if required, eg, 6.

So a full example would be: T Murphy, *Title of the Book* (Edition (if apt) Publisher Year of Publication) 6.

*NB no comma before pinpoint.*

If the text you are using contains a quote from *another* text, you may use the quote provided you indicate that you have not consulted the original source. For example, by giving the reference for the original source and then adding ', quoted in T Murphy, *Title of the Book* (3<sup>rd</sup> edn, Publisher Year of Publication) 2.

As a general rule, it is better to use the original: if the author on whom you are relying has misquoted or otherwise misrepresented the original, you will repeat her/his mistake.

- **An edited collection**

T Murphy (ed), *Title of Edited Collection* (Publisher Year of Publication).

T Murphy and U Murphy (eds), *Title of Edited Collection* (Publisher Year of Publication).

*NB (ed) where one editor but (eds) where more than one.*

- **An individual chapter/essay in an edited collection**

T Murphy, 'Title of Individual Chapter' in T Murphy (ed), *Title of the Edited Collection* (Publisher Year of Publication).

If you need to refer the reader to a particular page in this individual chapter, do the following:

T Murphy, 'Title of Individual Chapter' in T Murphy (ed), *Title of the Edited Collection* (Publisher Year of Publication) 75.

- **An article in an academic journal**

T Murphy, 'Title of Article' (Year of Publication) XX [ie, volume number] Title of the Journal XX [ie, number of first page of article].

*NB single* quotation marks enclose the title of the article.

If you need to refer your readers to a particular page in the article, do the following:

T Murphy, 'Title of Article' (Year of Publication) XX [ie, volume number] Title of Journal XX [ie, number of first page of article], YY [ie, page on which quote can be found].

Increasingly, references provide the *full title of journals*: this makes it easier for the reader. That said, most law journals have accepted abbreviations: eg MLR for the Modern Law Review; PL for Public Law; NILQ for the Northern Ireland Legal Quarterly. Choose a style (full title or abbreviation) and maintain it throughout your coursework.

- **An article in a newspaper**

T Murphy, 'Title of Article' *Title of Newspaper* (City of Publication, full date) page

eg, T Murphy, 'Title' *The Guardian* (London, 1 November 2015) 2.

- **A www site**

Author(s) Name(s), 'Title of Article' <web address> accessed XX November 2017.

- **When citing more than one item inside a single footnote**

Within any individual footnote, separate citations with a semi-colon.

OSCOLA offers the following additional guidance:

When citing more than one source of the same kind for a single proposition, put the sources in chronological order, with the oldest first. Separate the citations with semi-colons, and do not precede the final citation with 'and'. If one or more of the sources are more directly relevant than the others, cite these first, and then cite the less relevant ones in a new sentence, beginning 'See also'. If citing legislation and case law for a single proposition, put the legislation before the cases, and if citing primary and secondary sources for a single proposition, put the primary sources before the secondary ones.

And by way of reminder: cases, statutes and international instruments (eg, the ECHR) are primary sources, whereas academic commentaries (eg, books, edited collections and articles) are secondary sources.

## **6. I have encountered some stylistic devices which I am not sure I understand. Can you help?**

- **square brackets (ie, [ ])**

Used when the actual year of the law report, etc is vital, ie, without the year, one could not track down the case.

- **round brackets/parentheses (ie, ( ))**

Used when the actual year of the law report, etc is not vital but is included as a matter of interest. In other words, it is possible to track down the case using the volume number and the name of the report series.

- **a block indent on a quote in the main text**

Where the material you wish to quote is longer than approx 40 words/three lines, it should be block indented and single-spaced.

*Do not enclose the block indent with quotation marks; the indent signifies a quotation. (But note that shorter, non-indented quotes do require single quotation marks.) Also, do not put the quotation in italics; italics are used for emphasis.*

Avoid too many lengthy quotes; it is likely they will disrupt the flow of your argument.

When quoting from a source, be exact; avoid errors in transcription.

If there is a major factual, spelling or grammatical error in the original, you can show that you have recognised this by adding [sic] after the error.

## **7. I have encountered the following Latin gadgets. What do they signify and should I be using them?**

In line with OSCOLA, the School of Law recommends that you use *ibid*, but that you avoid the other Latin gadgets listed below. This fits with the growing emphasis on plain language.

- **ibid**

Use this to redirect the reader to the **immediately preceding** footnote.

If the reference is to the same publication but at a different page, use 'ibid xx.' (ie, ibid followed by the relevant page number).

Do not use ibid in string-fashion. Use it exclusively to direct the reader to the immediately preceding footnote. Thereafter use eg 'Murphy (n x) xx'.

Do not italicise ibid.

- **infra**

This means 'below'. For example, 'Infra n X' = 'Below n X'.

Do not use infra; instead use, eg, 'Murphy (n X)'.

- **supra**

This means 'above'. For example, 'Supra n X' = 'Above n X'.

Do not use supra; instead use, eg, 'Murphy (n X)'.

If necessary, include more information. For example, where the earlier footnote refers to more than one source and the later reference is to just one of these, make this clear, eg by giving the title of the relevant book:

eg, 'Murphy, *Health and Human Rights* (n X)'.

- **op cit**

Refers to any **book** by an author already cited in the footnotes/endnotes.

Do not use this; instead use, eg, 'Murphy (n X)'.

- **loc cit**

Refers to any publication **other than a book** by an author, already cited in the footnotes/endnotes

Do not use this: instead use, eg, 'Murphy (n X)'.

## 8. What should go in a bibliography?

Please ensure that your bibliography includes *all primary and secondary materials* directly relied upon in preparing your coursework. This material may or may not have been cited in the actual coursework.

In a book, primary sources are generally placed in separate lists at the front of the work, and the bibliography features secondary sources alone. I am not asking for separate lists at the front of your assessed coursework; hence, both primary and secondary sources should appear in your bibliography.

## 9. How should a bibliography be presented?

It should appear at the very end of the coursework.

A consistent referencing style should be used. Provide the 'raw' reference, ie, omit pinpoints to pages featuring quoted material. This means of course that you may not be able to cut and paste from footnotes.

**Begin with the secondary sources.** These entries must be in alphabetical order based on *author's second name*.

eg, Murphy T, *Title of Book* etc.

**Then, as required, include (i) a list of cases and (ii) a list of legislation and international instruments.**

## 10. Professor Murphy, what are the most common style mistakes in student work?

Here is my advice on how to avoid the most common mistakes:

Place a full stop at the end of each footnote.

For numbers from 10 upwards, use digits (unless the number is at the start of a sentence); for the numbers 1-9, use words.

'It's' is the short form of 'it is'. 'Its' is used for the possessive.

For the decision of a court, it is 'judgment' not 'judgement'.

Paginate your assessed coursework.

Do not write your name on your assessed coursework; the School uses anonymous marking.

On the coursework cover sheet, where it says 'The word count for the essay is: [WORD COUNT] words', you should insert the word limit for your assessed coursework.

By contrast, where it says 'Actual No of Words', indicate (i) the number of words you used in your actual answers (text + footnotes), followed by the total number of words in parentheses.

The total number of words includes the questions themselves (if you wrote them out as part of your coursework) and the bibliography, in addition to the main text and footnotes.