
OSCOLA quick guide

What is OSCOLA

OSCOLA is the referencing system used in Law. It uses superscript numbers, so the citations appear as footnotes. Both quotations and paraphrases should be footnoted, unless your lecturers advise otherwise.

To insert a footnote in Word, go to the **References** tab and **Insert Footnote**.

Full information about OSCOLA can be found on the library pages here -

<https://www.bradford.ac.uk/library/help/referencing-and-plagiarism/oscola-referencing-style/>

Some OSCOLA rules

Author names

- In **footnotes**, give the author's full name including any initials. Note, the forename comes first (e.g. John Smith or John LD Smith).
- In the **bibliography**, the family name comes first, and all forenames are reduced to initials (e.g. Smith J or Smith JLD).
- **More than three authors**, give the first author's name followed by 'and others'.
- **Anonymous works** list by title in footnotes. In bibliography these should be preceded by a double em-dash (– –).

Abbreviations

Use the **Cardiff Index to Legal Abbreviations** to find abbreviations for titles of journals and law reports.¹ There is a list of commonly used abbreviations in section 5.2 of the full OSCOLA guide.²

¹ <http://www.legalabbrevs.cardiff.ac.uk/>

² <https://www.law.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2026-03/OSCOLA%205.pdf>

Dates

If there is **no volume number** for the journal or law report, include the date in **[square brackets]**. If there is a **volume number** use **(round brackets)**.

Case names

Case names should appear in italics. If the parties are given in the text, there is no need to repeat them in a footnote.

Legislation

If all the information about a piece of legislation is given in the text, there is no need to repeat the information in a footnote.

Neutral citations

Include the neutral citation where available – this is the **year of judgment, the court** and the **judgment number**. (e.g. *Corr v IBC Vehicles Ltd* [2008] UKHL 13). If no neutral citation, list the most authoritative report.

Quotations and Pinpoints

- Quotes of up to 3 lines should not be indented.
- If longer than 3 lines use a **block quote**.
- If a direct quotation, include the **page number** the quote is from, this is known as a **pinpoint**.

Repeated citations

For citations used before, indicate author and the footnote number in brackets (n 3). For citations used immediately previously you can use *ibid*.

Bibliography

Should be arranged as follows:

- Table of cases
- Table of Legislation
- All other secondary sources, listed in alphabetical order with family name first (e.g. Smith J or Smith JLD).