The Oxford Standard for the Citation of Legal Authorities (OSCOLA) is the accepted referencing system for the academic stage of legal study at BPP University, and it is expected that LLB and GDL students will use this system when completing assignments.

This guide sets out the basic principles of OSCOLA, as well as providing ‘quick reference’ examples for the citation of various types of primary and secondary legal resources. Information is taken from the OSCOLA 4th ed. 2012 (published by Hart) and also the Quick Reference Guide, both of which are available along with further information and examples at www.law.ox.ac.uk/oscola.

**Footnotes**

OSCOLA is a footnote style: all citations appear in footnotes. OSCOLA does not use endnotes or in-text citations, such as ‘(Brown, 2007)’.

When citing any source, either directly (as a quotation) or indirectly (by referring to ideas in a source), cite the reference in a footnote, in the style indicated in OSCOLA. **Note, any words which have been quoted directly, must appear in quotation marks.**

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.

**Citing cases**

When citing a case, you must include the case name in the body of the text. This can be an abbreviation of the case name. E.g. *Pharmaceutical Society v Boots*. If you use an abbreviation of the case name in the body of the text, the full name of the case and its citation must be included in a footnote. The citation in the footnote should then consist of: the full name of the case, the neutral citation (if appropriate), date and/or volume, law report abbreviation and first page of the relevant law report, and where necessary the court e.g. *Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain v Boots Cash Chemists (Southern) Ltd* [1953] 1 QB 401

If the full name of the case is given in the text, it is not necessary to repeat the name in the footnote. You must, however, place the rest of the above mentioned information in the footnote. E.g.

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It is well represented in the case law, perhaps most notably in the expression of the no-conflict rule advocated by Lord Upjohn in *Phipps v Boardman*, and in the earlier Court of Appeal decision in *Boulting v Association of Cinematograph, Television and Allied Technicians*. In *Boulting* [or ‘in the *Boulting* case’], Upjohn LJ said that the rule ‘must be applied realistically to a state of affairs which discloses a real conflict of duty and interest and not to some theoretical or rhetorical conflict’. In *Phipps*, Lord Upjohn developed his view of the rule further by adding that there must be a ‘real sensible possibility of conflict’.
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The relevant footnotes would appear as follows:

31 [1967] 2 AC 46 (HL).
32 [1963] 2 QB 606 (CA).
33 Boulting (n 32) 638. OR 33 ibid 638.
34 Phipps (n 31) 124.

Where it says (n 31) or (n 32), this tells you in which footnote the case has previously been referred. Alternatively, you can use the word ‘ibid’ (an abbreviation of ‘bidem’ meaning ‘in the same place’) if referring to the same case/citation as the previous footnote.

The numbers at the end of footnotes 33 and 34 (638 and 124) are called ‘pinpoints’: they give the page on which the quotation can be found. It is also acceptable to include the full case reference in all footnotes.

### Citing legislation

A citation in a footnote is not required when citing legislation if all the information the reader needs about the source is provided in the text, as in the following sentence:

This case highlights the far-reaching judicial role ushered in by the Human Rights Act 1998.

Where the text does not include the name of the Act or the relevant section, this information should be provided in a footnote.

British courts must only consider Strasbourg jurisprudence: they are not bound by it.¹

¹ Human Rights Act 1998, s 2.

### Citing secondary sources

If relying on or referring to a secondary source, such as a book or an article, provide a citation for the work in a footnote.

Give the author’s name in the same form as in the publication. 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.

Hart wrote that the doctrine of precedent is compatible with ‘two types of creative or legislative activity’: distinguishing the earlier case by ‘narrowing the rule extracted from the precedent’, and widening the rule by discarding ‘a restriction found in the rule as formulated from the earlier case’.³⁴

Bibliographies

After the main body of the text and any appendices, you should include a list of cases, legislation and secondary sources used. Each list should be alphabetised.

The list of cases should contain the full name and case citation of the cases.

The list of legislation needs to contain the title of each piece of legislation and the relevant date. You could divide your list of legislation into different types of legislation e.g. statutes and statutory instruments.

The list of secondary sources should include all such sources cited in the work and need not be indexed.

Items in bibliographies take the same form as all other citations in OSCOLA, with three exceptions: (1) the author’s surname should precede his or her initial(s), with no comma separating them, but a comma after the final initial; (2) only initials should be used, and not forenames; and (3) the titles of unattributed works should be preceded by a double dash. Works should be arranged in alphabetical order of author surname, with unattributed works being listed at the beginning of the bibliography in alphabetical order of first major word of the title.

CITATION in a footnote


CITATION in a bibliography

Fisher E, Risk Regulation and Administrative Constitutionalism (Hart Publishing 2007)
Quick reference examples

**Primary Sources**

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

**Cases**

- 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, give the page number pinpoint after the court.

- 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 citing a particular judge:


**Statutes and statutory instruments**

- Act of Supremacy 1558
- Human Rights Act 1998, s 15(1)(b)
- Penalties for Disorderly Behaviour (Amendment of Minimum Age) Order 2004, SI 2004/3166

**EU legislation and cases**


**European Court of Human Rights**

- Omojudi v UK (2010) 51 EHRR 10
- Osman v UK ECHR 1998–VIII 3124
- Balogh v Hungary App no 47940/99 (ECHR, 20 July 2004)
- Simpson v UK (1989) 64 DR 188

**Secondary Sources**

**Books**


**Contributions to edited books**


**Encyclopedias**


**Journal articles**


When pinpointing, put a comma between the first page of the article and the page pinpoint.


**Online journals**


**Command papers and Law Commission reports**


**Websites and blogs**


**Newspaper articles**

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