OSCOLA: a basic guide

Citations and footnotes
It is important to provide evidence for your points by citing your sources: primary legal sources (cases, statutes and so on), as well as secondary sources such as books, journal articles, websites and policy statements in footnotes.

OSCOLA is a footnote style: all citations appear in footnotes. OSCOLA does not use endnotes or in-text citations, such as ‘(Brown, 2007)’. Longer works, such as books and theses, also include citations in tables of cases and legislation, and bibliographies.

When citing any source, either directly (as a quotation) or indirectly (by paraphrasing or referring to ideas in a source), cite the reference in a footnote, in the style indicated in OSCOLA.

Indicate footnotes with a superscript number (eg. murder is the unlawful killing of a human being.) 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).

Citing cases
When citing cases, give the name of the case, the neutral citation (if appropriate), and volume and first page of the relevant law report, and where necessary the court. If the name of the case is given in the text, it is not necessary to repeat it in the footnote.

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 (e.g. 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 giving : the name of the Act, the year and section.

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

Examples of citations are overleaf.
For more detail see the link to the full text OSCOLA rules on the Law Libguide:
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Primary Sources
Do not use full stops in abbreviations. Separate citations with a semi-colon.

Cases
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 citing a particular judge:

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

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* (2009) 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
Give the author’s name in the same form as in the publication, except in bibliographies, where you should give only the surname followed by the initial(s). Give relevant information about editions, translators etc. before the publisher, and give page numbers at the end of the citation, after the brackets.


Contributions to edited books


Encyclopedias

*Halsbury’s Laws* (5th edn, 2010) vol 57, para 53

Journal articles
Use square brackets if it identifies the volume, round if there is a separate volume number


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)