
UT/ITC Module 11: MSc Research Skills

Assignment: Literature review skills

Grading guidelines

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The objective of this exercise are to give students experience:

1. searching various scientific databases for relevant material;
2. building a bibliographic database (e.g., in Mendeley) mainly by importing the results of searching scientific databases;
3. placing citations properly in text;
4. formatting a list of references.

The quality of the search can not be too strictly assessed at this point in the student's research skills development; further unless the grader is a specialist in the student's topic s/he will have difficulty evaluating completeness and relevance of results, or proper use of synonymns, keywords and truncation. So the grading is by necessity somewhat mechanical.

Grading criteria

1. If any of these conditions are met, **no grade** (assignment not complete):
 - Submitted document mis-named*
 - Student name and/or e-mail not given in text document;
 - Reference list and in-text citations not formatted with the "APA-6th" citation and reference style.
2. For **each** of the **seven** required references: **1 point if correct**; 0 points if missing; for both of following, independently, ½ point can

* see assignment instructions

be deducted (so the result could be zero):

(a) missing or incomplete **search strategy**, or not reporting the number of hits: -½ point for each, or using the incorrect database to find the reference*

- There should be enough detail for grader to reproduce the search – note it is not intended that the grader reproduce each search, only ones where the results do not seem to match the search, or the number of hits seems unlikely, or a few searches at random;
- The final list for each search (except for ITC thesis) should contain from 6 to 60 hits*

(b) incorrectly-formatted or placed **in-text citation** or **reference list entry**: -½ point for each

- Do not deduct for decisions by the reference manager style, if it's used consistently. Formatting errors come from incorrect entries in the reference manager.
- However, the student should have checked all imported references for format and correctness, so problems with import filters, not corrected by the student, are cause for deduction.

3. **Coherent paragraph** relating references to topic: up to 3 points.

- 3 all references in context and the flow between references is clear;
- 2 some references not in context or flow not clear;
- 1 most references not in context;
- 0 missing or all references not in context. No grading for structure or English (as long as the context is comprehensible).