

Plagiarism and Citation

M.Sc. in Mathematical Modelling and Scientific Computing

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Plagiarism

It is important to avoid plagiarism in all aspects of the M.Sc. course and this includes special topics, case study reports and dissertations. The University's policy on plagiarism can be found at <https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/skills/plagiarism?wssl=1> and everyone is encouraged to read this carefully. In particular, plagiarism is defined on this webpage as follows:

“Presenting work or ideas from another source as your own, with or without consent of the original author, by incorporating it into your work without full acknowledgement. All published and unpublished material, whether in manuscript, printed or electronic form, is covered under this definition, as is the use of material generated wholly or in part through use of artificial intelligence (save when use of AI for assessment has received prior authorisation e.g. as a reasonable adjustment for a student's disability). Plagiarism can also include re-using your own work without citation. Under the regulations for examinations, intentional or reckless plagiarism is a disciplinary offence.”

Citation

When you are preparing reports for submission you should be sure to make it clear where all your ideas come from. This includes not only direct quotations, paraphrasing and equations but also figures. Thus any figures that appear in your work which you did not produce yourself should appear with a credit to the appropriate source, ideally in both the figure caption and in the text where you refer to the figure.

There are, of course, many reasons to ensure you cite the work of others. One of the main reasons is academic honesty — you should not try to pass off the work of others as your own (even unintentionally). Related to this is the reason of clarity. If you never cite any other work it will be hard for a reader (or an examiner) to tell when you stop describing the work of others and begin to describe your own novel research. Citing the work of others clearly enables a reader to see more easily what part of your work is new. Additionally, citing other work allows you to skip over the basics and more quickly get to the interesting mathematics and this is especially important given the page limits on your reports.

How Much to Cite

Citing references in every sentence or so can interrupt the flow of your work and it is often unnecessary (apart perhaps from in a literature review or an introduction to your work). If a section of your work is based heavily on a particular book or paper then it is perfectly acceptable to have, at the beginning of that section, a sentence of the form “The work in this section follows the ideas of Ref. [1] very closely”. It is certainly not necessary to cite very elementary results (e.g. Pythagoras’ Theorem). When you list your references think which articles you read, which books you used and what might be helpful background reading. Sentences of the form “For a good background reference on finite difference methods see the book by Morton and Mayers [1]” are perfectly appropriate. If you are unsure about how much to cite then your supervisor will be able to give some advice.

How to Cite

The standard way to cite references is to have a list of references at the end of your work and to refer to these from the main body of the text. It is important that *all* the items in the list of references are referred to from the text. Perhaps the easiest way to ensure this happens is to use `BIBTEX` which automatically adds entries to the list of references only when they are cited from the text.

When you write your entries for the list of references, bear the reader in mind. You need to give enough information for them to be able to find the reference you list. For example [2] is not good enough — we have no idea if this is a book, a journal article, conference proceedings For a book you should give the author(s), the title, the publisher and the year published. If it is not the first edition it helps to say that too. Also when you refer to a book it can be helpful to say in the text which chapter (or even page) the reader should look at. So for example you might say “For a description of the Thomas Algorithm see [1, p23].” (This is achieved in `LATEX` with a command of the form `\cite[p23]{morton}`.) For a journal article you should give the author(s), the journal title (in abbreviated form), the volume and pages numbers and the year published. This is actually enough to uniquely identify the article but in mathematics it is fairly standard to also give the name of the article as in [3]. Other types of work are possible too including conference proceedings, theses, lecture notes, and webpages. For webpages, it is standard to give the URL as well as the date accessed. In all cases the important thing to remember is to give enough information that someone else could easily find the same reference. The ordering of the information is a matter of personal choice, although it is standard to put the authors and title first, but you should take care to be consistent with the order of the information and the formatting.

References

- [1] K. W. Morton and D. F. Mayers. Numerical Solution of Partial Differential Equations. Cambridge University Press, 1994.
- [2] K. W. Morton and D. F. Mayers. Numerical Solution of Partial Differential Equations.
- [3] J. T. Oden, I. Babuška and C. Baumann. A Discontinuous *hp*-FEM for Diffusion Problems, *J. Comput. Phys.*, volume 146 (1998), pp. 491–519.