VLiGTA®
Writing and Formatting Style Guide

[Please take note of the Writing & Styling Guide and use the instructions to edit your manuscript for any publication submitted to the **Indic Pacific Legal Research LLP** & the **Indian Society of Artificial Intelligence and Law**.]

This guide has been adopted by the *Indian Society of Artificial Intelligence and Law*, in partnership with VLiGTA®, the research & innovation division of Indic Pacific Legal Research.

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Formatting Style for all Drafts Submitted

Line spacing – **1.5**

Font: Times New Roman

Paragraph Text – Normal

Text font size – **12** pt

Page size – A4

VLA.Digital Editorial Guidelines

- Word limit should be between **2,500-6,000 words**. If a submission is longer that the prescribed limit, it may be considered to be published in other forms as may be possible. We may publish guest submissions of word limit beyond as prescribed, which depends on the work's quality.

- We accept or consider submissions in English (UK).

- If further readings or a bibliography is to be featured by the author, please use the **OSCOLA Citation Style /ISO 690/ IEEE Citation Style**. We however recommend **hyperlinks** instead of footnotes wherever possible, provided the URLs embedded. Alternatively, we will allow the usage of number-based placeholders in **ISO 690/IEEE citation style**.

- Any submission which does not comply with the guidelines, and the basic standards of legal or policy writing, can be rejected from being published.

- It is recommended to mention abbreviations for the first time for any phrase, or term, and use the abbreviations throughout the submission.

- We will explain the ideas in the blog in graphic form, hence kindly ensure that the writing style of the submission is simple and lucid.

- **Any working or self-employed professional, research scholar, or student in the domains of law, digital technologies, artificial intelligence, strategic affairs, knowledge management and public policy respectively, can submit a manuscript on any legal/policy topic. It is our final and unconditional discretion to accept/reject any submission. Interested people can email the submission with their name, affiliation and contact details (phone number & E-Mail ID). You may add your social media URLs of X (Twitter), LinkedIn, etc., at your pleasure.**

- **We also accept submissions by professionals and scholars in other fields, provided the submission does have coherence with the basic aspects of the fields addressed**.

- It is recommended to mention primary data sources in tabular or infographic form (for example, mind maps, flowcharts, etc.,) with relevant citations, captions, endnotes or disclaimers.

- Authors are encouraged to use mind maps and flowcharts to explain complex or advanced ideas in their manuscripts.

- **Only applicable to manuscripts submitted to VLA.Digital (Visual Legal Analytica) & VLiGTA® by Indic Pacific Legal Research**: Additionally, the VLA.Digital Editorial Team or the VLiGTA team, at their discretion, may convert complex inputs into explanatory mind maps or infographics for clarity. This process will only proceed with the authors' consent after they review a draft of the proposed visual representation.

- **Only applicable to manuscripts submitted to VLA.Digital (Visual Legal Analytica) & VLiGTA® by Indic Pacific Legal Research:** The opinions expressed & published in VLA.Digital (Visual Legal Analytica) / reports/ collections of research / books by Indic Pacific Legal Research are those of the authors. They do not reflect the opinions or views of Indic Pacific Legal Research LLP or its members.

- Please refer to the Research Credibility and Administration Directive (RCAD-VLiGTA) at **https://indicpacific.com/guidelines** for further clarification on the **authorship considerations** for publication via **Indic Pacific Legal Research**. For the Indian Society of Artificial Intelligence and Law, please refer to their Guidelines & Terms and Conditions.

For **VLiGTA® & VLA.Digital by Indic Pacific Legal Research**: You can E-mail your submissions at **visual@indicpacific.com**.

For the **Indian Society of Artificial Intelligence and Law (ISAIL)**, please check their website to get the appropriate contact information. Any email with manuscript sent to the team of Indic Pacific Legal Research in the name of contacting ISAIL, **shall not be even entertained at the first place**. Hence, please check the websites of **ISAIL**, including **isail.in**, and **bharatpacific.com**.

Indo-Pacific Principles of Legal and Policy Writing

Commemorating the art of clarity and brevity in legal and policy discourse

- **Precision Over Prolixity**: Every word should earn its place. If it doesn't add value, it doesn't belong. Do avoid overloading your sentences with unnecessary modifiers or adjectives. While they can add flair, too many can feel like an attempt to impress rather than communicate clearly. Instead, focus on clarity and precision, using modifiers only when they genuinely enhance the meaning.

- **Nuance and Novelty Matter**: Do try to produce interesting, nuanced, and unique ideas in your writing. Avoid lengthy, redundant literature reviews disguised as original content. Write something meaningful, keeping only those references that provide clear explanatory relevance to your submission.

- **Be Unassailable**: Your arguments should be sharp enough to cut through noise, yet so grounded that they stand unshaken. Avoid writing to impress a research guide—write with the awareness that your contribution might be read by non-legal or non-technical audiences as well. Maintain rigor, but adopt an explanatory approach that makes your work accessible without oversimplifying.

- **Clarity Is Authority**: Complex ideas demand simple expressions. If the reader struggles to understand, the writer hasn't mastered the craft. Avoid verbosity or convoluted reasoning; instead, ensure your ideas resonate by keeping them concise and impactful.

- **Visuals Amplify Words**: When diagrams, mind maps, or flowcharts clarify a point better than text, let them do the talking. Visual aids not only enhance comprehension but also enrich the overall reading experience

- **Always Anchor in Relevance**: Every sentence should drive home the purpose. Stray thoughts dilute strength; focus sharpens it. Remember, long-winded explanations rarely add value.

- **Respect the Reader's Time**: Avoid writing lengthy, unfocused sections or overexplaining ideas. Long story short: write with purpose and precision, aiming for content that both informs and engages.

Citation Style (For Further Readings / Bibliography)

Since we do not show footnotes or endnotes in any manuscripts, once they are finalised for publication, we recommend editors, curators, contributors and authors to use hyperlinks to redirect to the appropriate webpage, blog page, PDF/ document or any source that may be opened in a web browser, or is possible to be downloaded. If the link has expired, please cross check it again before sending it to us.

We recommend using the OSCOLA Style of citation, to create a list of further readings / bibliography for every reference taken. Here are some basic and advanced rules of citation in OSCOLA, some of which we have modified for tailor-made purposes.

[*Please note: the OSCOLA Citation Style is a property of Oxford University and we have only presented the citation style for reference purposes with modifications.*]

Subsequent citations

The first time a source is mentioned, you must give the citation in full.

In subsequent citations, briefly identify the source, and give the footnote number where the full citation can be found. See the example in the Subsequent citation of a case box below.

If a subsequent citation IMMEDIATELY follows the full citation, you can use ibid.

See the boxes below for examples of subsequent citations for a case, a piece of legislation and a book.

Subsequent citation of a case

Full citation

[1] Phelps v Hillington LBC [2001] 2 AC 619 (HL).

Subsequent citation immediately after the full citation:

[2] ibid.

. . .

Subsequent citation using shortened form of case name and a cross-citation to footnote 1 where the full citation can be found

[10] Phelps (n 1).

Subsequent citation of legislation

Full citation with name of statute and shortened version:

[32] Nuclear Installations Act 1965 (NIA 1965) s 7(1).

. . .

Subsequent citation using shortened version of the statute

[40] NIA 1965, s 12.

Subsequent citation of a book

Full citation:

[3] Jonathan Herring, Medical Law (OUP 2011) 52.

. . .

Authors' surname and cross-citation to footnote number 3:

[26] Herring (n 3) 125.

Original source cited again but with different page numbers:

[27] ibid 271-78.

Books with one author

Below you will find guidance and examples of how to set out a footnote reference to a book with one author and in the bibliography.

Footnote

To use a footnote, put a superscript number into your text and then the footnote at the bottom of the page.

Format:

Author, *Title* (edition, Publisher | year) page number.

Example:

[12] Jonathan Herring, *Medical Law and Ethics* (4th edn, Oxford University Press 2012) 146.

Books with two or three authors

Below you will find guidance and examples of how to set out a footnote reference to a book with two or three authors and in the bibliography.

Footnote

For two or three authors, all named authors must be included. You must insert an 'and' before the last author's name. To use a footnote, put a superscript number into your text and then the footnote at the bottom of the page.

Format:

Author, *Title* (edition, Publisher | year) page number.

Example:

[13] Hugh Jones and Christopher Benson, *Publishing Law* (4th edn, Routledge 2011) 32

Books with four or more authors

Below you will find guidance and examples of how to set out a footnote reference to a book with four or more authors and in the bibliography.

Footnote

To use a footnote, put a superscript number into your text and then the footnote at the bottom of the page.

Format:

Author, *Title* (edition, Publisher | year) page number.

Example:

[12] Roy Goode and others, *Transnational Commercial Law: International Instruments and Commentary* (OUP 2004)

Chapter in an edited book

Below you will find guidance and examples of how to set out a footnote reference to a chapter in an edited book and in the bibliography.

Footnote

To use a footnote, put a superscript number into your text and then the footnote at the bottom of the page.

Format:

Author, 'Chapter Title', in Editor (ed), *Book Title* (edition, Publisher | year)

Example:

[12] Justine Pila, 'The Value of Authorship in the Digital Environment' in William H Dutton and Paul W Jeffreys (eds), *World Wide Research: Reshaping the Sciences and Humanities in the Century of Information* (MIT Press 2010)

Editor or Translator

If there is no author listed, use the editor or the translator in place of the author, adding (ed) or (tr) as appropriate. If there are multiple editors use (eds) or (trs) for multiple translators.

Footnote

To use a footnote, put a superscript number into your text and then the footnote at the bottom of the page.

Format:

Editor (ed) OR Translator (tr), *Title* (edition, Publisher | year) page number.

Example:

[12] Jeremy Horder (ed), *Oxford Essays in Jurisprudence: Fourth Series* (OUP 2000) 146.

Author AND Editor OR Translator

If a work has an editor or a translator as well as an author you will need to include both in your reference. Start your reference with the author as usual and then include the editor or the translator with the publication information.

Footnote

To use a footnote, put a superscript number into your text and then the footnote at the bottom of the page.

Format:

Author, *Title* (edition, Editor (ed) OR Translator (tr), Publisher | year) page number.

Example:

K Zweigert and H Kötz, *An Introduction to Comparative Law* (Tony Weir tr, 3rd edn, OUP 1998) 66

Dissertation or Thesis

To create a reference to a dissertation or a thesis, you should include the Author and the title, followed by the type of thesis, University and year of completion in brackets

Format: Author, 'Title' (type of thesis/dissertation, University | year of completion)

Example: Javan Herberg, 'Injunctive Relief for Wrongful Termination of Employment' (DPhil thesis, University of Oxford 1989).

There is no change in format between a footnote reference and a bibliography entry except that in the bibliography, the author's surname should come first followed by the intial(s).

Example: Herberg J, 'Injunctive Relief for Wrongful Termination of Employment' (DPhil thesis, University of Oxford 1989).

Cases with a neutral citation

Cases published after 2001 will have a neutral citation which must be used.

Cases are numbered consecutively throughout the year and the abbreviation (UKHL, EWCH) indicates which court the case was heard in rather than a law report series.

If a case is subsequently reported in a law report, use a comma to separate the neutral citation from the law report citation.

Below are examples of how to reference a case with neutral citations as a footnote and in the bibliography.

Footnote

Format:

Name of case in italics │ [year] │ court │ case number, [year of publication] │ **OR** (year of judgement) │ volume │report abbreviation │ first page.

Example of a case which has been subsequently reported in a law report series:

NRAM Ltd v Evans [2017] EWCA Civ 1013, [2018] 1 WLR 639.

[For all jurisdictions, kindly check out their referencing styles. In the case of Indian courts, SCC, SCR and AIR are the prominent sources of case citation. For High Courts in India, and subordinate courts, it may be a reference to a petition or application with number and other details. Hence, we recommend you to cross-check with the original court documents before citing them.]

Print Journal Articles

[You can use the full name of the Journal / Magazine with ISSN and do not require to make abbreviation.]

To cite a print journal use the following **format**:

Author, │'title' │[year] │journal name or abbreviation │first page of article

[OR]

Author, │'title' │(year) │volume │journal name or abbreviation │first page of article

Use [ ] if the date of publication is needed to find the article eg. there is no volume number.

Use ( ) if the date of publication is NOT needed to find the article eg. there is a volume number.

The bibliography is the same format as the footnote except that the author is now listed surname first followed by their initials, page numbers are not included and there is no full stop at the end of the reference.

Examples of citations in a footnote:

Paul Craig, 'Theory, "Pure Theory" and Values in Public Law' [2005] PL 440.

Alison L Young, 'In Defense of Due Deference' (2009) 72 MLR 554.

Example of citations in a bibliography:

Craig P, 'Theory, "Pure Theory" and Values in Public Law' [2005] PL 440

Young AL, 'In Defense of Due Deference' (2009) 72 MLR 554

Pinpointing in a journal article

When pinpointing (referring to a specific page in an article) put the first page of the article followed by a comma, a space and the page of the pinpoint.

JAG Griffith, 'The Common Law and the Political Constitution' (2001) 117 LQR 42, 64.

Pinpointing is **not** used in the bibliography.

Square brackets or round brackets

Square brackets [ ] are used when the year is crucial to identify the relevant volume of the journal (e.g. when there is no volume number).

Round brackets ( ) are used when the year is not necessary to identify the relevant volume of the journal (e.g. if there is a volume number in addition to the year).

In most cases journal titles have both a volume number and a year so round brackets will normally be used.

Online Journal Articles

[You can use the full name of the Journal / Magazine with ISSN and do not require to make abbreviation.]

- If an article/pdf/ebook is available anywhere in print format, you should cite it as you would a printed piece of work (even if you have read it online).
- However if the article is only available online, use the same format as for print journals but at the end of the citation add the web address within < > marks and the date you most recently accessed the article.
- In general only include the web address when the document is only available online, when the web address ia especially helpful for finding the document and when the web address is static (eg. not a result of a search in a database).

An example of a footnote for an online article:

James Gobert, 'The Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007: Thirteen Years in the Making but was it Worth the Wait?' (2008) 71 MRL 413 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25151209> accessed 15 Jan 2014.

The bibliography is the same format as the footnote except that the author's last name comes first, only the author's initial(s) are used and there is no full stop at the end of the citation.

An example of the bibliography for an online article:

Gobert J, 'The Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007: Thirteen Years in the Making but was it Worth the Wait?' (2008) 71 MRL 413 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25151209> accessed 15 Jan 2014

Blogs

To reference information from a blog, you should include the author's name, the entry title and then the blog name and publication date in brackets. You should end with the URL and accessed date.

> **Format:** Author, 'Entry Title' (*Blog Name,* publication date) <URL> accessed date.

> **Example:** R Moorhead, 'Solicitors First' (*Lawyer Watch,* 25 March 2011) <http://lawyerwatch.wordpress.com/2011/03/25/solictiors-first/> accessed 13 April 2011.

If no author is named, use the name of the organisation producing the blog. If no person or organisation can be identified as being responsible for the blog, begin your footnote with the title of the blog. If there is no publication date you can omit it, but always give the access date.

There is no change in format between a footnote reference and a bibliography entry.

Websites, in general

To reference information from a website,you should include the author's name, the webpage title and then the website name and publication date in brackets. You should end with the URL and accessed date.

If there is no date of publication on the website, give only the date of access

Format: Author, 'Webpage' (*Website,* publication date) <URL> accessed date.

Example in a footnote: Simon Myerson, 'Applying Yourself to Pupillage' (*LawCareers.net,* 5 April 2011) <www.lawcareers.net/Information/Feature/Detail.aspx?r=1355> accessed 12 April 2011

Example in the bibliography: Myerson S, 'Applying Yourself to Pupillage' (*LawCareers.net,* 5 April 2011) <www.lawcareers.net/Information/Feature/Detail.aspx?r=1355> accessed 12 April 2011

If the author of a website is an organisation e.g. Solicitors Regulation Society, there is no difference between the footnote and the bibliography.

If there is no named author, use the name of the organisation responsible for the webpage. If there is no name person or organisation, you can begin your reference with the title of the webpage.