

Ensuring Style Consistency in Your Manuscripts' References

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While writing for publication and preparing funding submissions or reports require focus on the content of the message being conveyed, the style in which reference lists are included is also important. Different publications and funding agencies may have specific instructions, and familiarity with styles and requirements at the outset can alleviate delays later in the submission cycle.

Reference Management Software

One of the easiest ways to ensure style consistency is to use a reference management software like [EndNote](#), which can help create bibliographies based on a number of available journal or [output styles](#). These include AMA (listed as JAMA in EndNote), APA (American Psychological Association), the Chicago Manual of Style, and others. Northwestern University has a site license for EndNote, and Galter librarians are available to teach and support it to researchers. However, EndNote isn't always completely accurate so it's worth checking the bibliographies it produces against the style guidelines provided by the journal itself.

Instructions to Authors

While many biomedical journals follow some form of the [AMA Manual of Style: A Guide for Authors and Editors](#), many have their own additional requirements and preferences. [Instructions to Authors in the Health Sciences](#) is a site maintained by the Mulford Health Science Library (The University of Toledo) and includes links to Web sites providing instructions to authors for over 6,000 journals in the health and life sciences.

International Committee of Medical Journal Editors

Further information on the use of references in manuscripts is available in the [International Committee of Medical Journal Editors' Recommendations for the Conduct, Reporting, Editing, and Publication of Scholarly Work in Medical Journals](#) (Formerly Uniform Requirements/Vancouver Style). Look here for guidance on citing primary vs. review articles, conference abstracts, data sets, and personal communications, as well as recommendations for verifying references or learning about retracted publications.

[Samples of Formatted References for Authors of Journal Articles](#) on the ICJME site can be found with more detail in: [Citing Medicine](#): The NLM Style Guide for Authors, Editors, and Publishers. This National Library of Medicine source provides assistance to authors, editors, publishers, and librarians in compiling lists of references for publication.

Data Files and Data Sets

Citing data files and data sets can provide referencing challenges. Data archives and organizations may provide guidance. The International Association for Social Science Information Services & Technology (IASSIST), an organization of data professionals, recommends consulting the [Quick Guide to Data Citation](#) for suggestions on the best way to cite data in APA, MLA, and Chicago styles. You could also consult the [Citing Data](#) section of Galter Library's [Data Organization and Documentation guide](#). In reference management software like EndNote, look for the "item type" for data files or data sets. If that is not available, the listing should follow standard reference conventions to identify not only the format and data file, but also the author/s, the title of the file, the year, and retrieval source.

DigitalHub Deposits and Grants

Those who wish to cite deposits stored in [DigitalHub](#), the institutional repository for Northwestern Medicine, can use the "Action > Citations" feature to generate a citation in a limited number of styles. (Further development of this feature is in the works.)

Granting agencies such as NIH can be helpful not only for font sizes, density, and margins, but also citation format. See [Format attachments](#) for more details.

Need Help?

Links to more useful tips and sites highlighted above can be found in various [GalterGuides](#), including [Writing, Citing & Publishing](#). You can also take an [EndNote class](#) or request a consultation with [liaison librarians](#) who are available to provide guidance on citation style questions.

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