Academic research and professional writing are powerful vehicles for communicating your thoughts and ideas not only in your field of study but also in the global workplace. University writing assignments allow you to practice academic and professional writing in a way that supports ethical and honorable writing choices that clearly communicate your ideas and learning.

Your classes and programs are designed to guide you step-by-step through the development of your written communication skills. For example, assignments provide the parameters for each writing situation, so following the instructions is important in getting started and successfully completing each piece of university writing.

Characteristics of University Writing

1. **Considerations of Audience**—In the university, you are writing for an audience of peers and members of the academic and professional community. Your audience determines how broadly or narrowly you describe your topic, what examples to use, and which words are most important.

2. **Critical Thinking**—University writing involves critical thinking as you analyze and evaluate research and readings to form new ideas.

3. **Original Contributions**—University writing seeks to contribute an original idea to a larger conversation. Within this conversation, you can analyze, evaluate, argue, create consensus, and solve problems. University writing creates opportunities for learning, discovery, innovation, and making change.

4. **Scholarly Research**—University writing consults and cites scholarly research to create a non-fiction, research-based discussion.

5. **Formal Style**—University writing uses a professional, polite tone and Standard English for word choice, grammar, and punctuation.

To write with integrity, be honest with your reader and yourself. Know when and how to use APA or the required documentation style for your class or course of study, and be sure to accurately implement it.
RESEARCH

University writing assignments are designed to guide you toward critical thinking, meaningful learning, and the confident demonstration of knowledge. Using research allows you to advance your learning beyond common knowledge and build on the ideas of others. Reading the works of others helps writers

- discover ideas and topics;
- collect details, data, quotations, and similar evidence;
- narrow your focus;
- craft a thesis;
- support or counter assertions, claims, and facts;
- develop your own perspectives on a topic;
- and select the most effective and relevant evidence from all you have read.

Writers also use research in their writing to communicate professionally within their fields and across the disciplines. Research-based writing does not simply report others’ ideas and words, but instead builds on them to demonstrate a writer’s understanding and credibility as an ethical researcher, effective communicator, and critical thinker. Writing with integrity requires creating an original piece of writing while discussing the original ideas of others and properly integrating and citing these research-based ideas in your writing.

### Integrating Research

There are three ways to integrate research within academic and professional writing.

1. **Quoting**: Using a source without altering it in any way—the work is used word for word. It is critical that quotation marks enclose all directly quoted passages.

2. **Paraphrasing**: Using a source by breaking it down and placing it in your own words—the meaning is extracted or restated in new wording and phrasing in just as many words or slightly more words than the original.

3. **Summarizing**: Using a source by synthesizing many points or simplifying a long text into a brief synopsis in your own words.

To write with integrity (and avoid plagiarism) when integrating research, cite all borrowed information according to the citation style you are using.
CITATION

Citation or citing sources means to include select information about books or articles you read on a topic and use in your paper. Citation is required when quoting, paraphrasing, or using the ideas (artwork, photos, videos, etc.) or words of others. There are two main terms associated with citation: in-text citation and reference list entries.

Why We Cite

1. Citation differentiates the writer’s original ideas from what information already existed.
2. Citation supports arguments in a field of study.
3. Citation enables readers to locate your sources and additional information.
4. Citation ensures ethical research and scholarly practice.
5. Citation guarantees proper attribution of all ideas and avoids plagiarism.

Why Plagiarism Matters

Plagiarism compromises a writer's integrity and reputation and usually results in serious consequences, both within the university and in the world of work. Fortunately, guidelines have been established to help you with academic and career-related writing. Your classes are designed to give you practice using one such approach.

APA

The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA) establishes a national standard for the layout of an academic paper and gives a method for referencing sources used in these types of papers. APA is one citation style, and it is the most used citation style at Purdue Global. Please check your assignment instructions for your professor’s citation expectations. In the professional world other citation styles may be used.

The Elements of an APA Paper

There are three major elements in an APA-formatted paper:

1. manuscript format (header, margins, font, spacing, etc.);
2. in-text citations, often formatted as parenthetical citations; and
3. reference list entries, sometimes called references or full citations.
APA In-Text Citations

In-text citations are notations in the sentence of the paper where the research is being used. In APA style, these notations provide author and date information and in the instance of quotes, also the page number. In-text citations take two common forms: as a signal phrase before the cited material or as a parenthetical citation at the end of the cited material.

- **Signal phrase to cite a paraphrase**: Smith (2010) recognized that more online learning opportunities are needed to reach marginalized high school students and decrease the dropout rate.

- **Signal phrase to cite a quote** (Note the page number is added at the end of the quote in a second set of parentheses): Smith (2010) stressed, “The importance of dedicated study time for online courses is crucial for student success” (p. 3).

- **Parenthetical citation for a paraphrase**: Online learning opportunities are needed to reach marginalized high school students and decrease the dropout rate (Smith, 2010).

- **Parenthetical citation for a quote**: Many researchers agree: “Online education is a viable way to help working adults earn a college degree, but it is not for everyone” (Smith, 2010, p. 4).

**No Author?**

If there is no individual author, name the corporate author or sponsoring organization:

(National Geographic, 2011, p. 78).

If there is no individual or corporate author, use a shortened version of the title for the in-text citation:

(“Whales of the Atlantic,” 2010).

**No Year or Page Number?**

No year? Use n.d., short for “no date,” in the citation: (Sagorski, n.d.).

No page number? Use the paragraph number. To determine the paragraph, begin at the title or heading and count the paragraphs to get to the one that contains your quote: (Sagorski, n.d., para. 4).

APA Reference List Entries

Reference list entries are formatted on a separate page at the end of your paper and provide the full bibliographic information for each source cited in text (Figure 1). These citations tell who the author is, when the publication was, what the title is, and where the source was published. In Academic Writer, you will find the specifics for formatting references.

Figure 1. Sample APA Reference List
PLAGIARISM FAQ

What is Purdue Global’s official policy on plagiarism?

Purdue Global’s official policy on plagiarism is available in the University Catalog. See the Code of Student Conduct for details.

What is the difference between accidental and intentional plagiarism?

Accidental plagiarism may result from improperly using or inaccurately citing a source, while intentional plagiarism is knowingly using a source without proper citation or any citation. Both accidental and intentional plagiarism can be prevented with proper credit of the borrowed information, but both accidental and intentional plagiarism also have the same consequences of plagiarism. See the Code of Student Conduct for details.

What is self-citation?

While original work is expected for each course and each assignment, there are instances when it is appropriate for a student to build on ideas from a previous assignment by citing himself or herself. You may therefore cite small selected portions of previous work in a new work using the appropriate citation method. Note: Copying large portions or entire assignments for use in more than one course or academic assignment is considered cheating and is not permitted. See the Self-Citation Policy for details.

What is the Coursework Resubmission Policy?

The Coursework Resubmission Policy allows students who are retaking a Purdue Global Course after a failed attempt to resubmit previous coursework with proper citation and advance notice to the instructor. Read the Coursework Resubmission Policy Resource for details and stipulations. Note: This policy does not apply to Concord Law students.

What about programs that automatically format papers according to APA standards?

Most automatic formatting programs and citation generators rely heavily on the users’ ability to plug in information correctly; therefore, these types of tools should be used sparingly and cautiously and usually only after the user has a basic understanding of APA style. The Writing Center recommends Academic Writer, which has templates for APA formatting.

What citation style should I use at work?

There are many citation styles, and your field of work determines which to use or how you reference other source material. It is important to remember to always give credit to the work and ideas of others.

What about citing images?

Like other types of research, visuals such as photographs, tables, or charts borrowed or copied directly from a source have to be cited both in the text and on a reference list. On the other hand, if you use your own photography in your paper, you will not need to cite it. For borrowed images, the source of the image must be credited in a caption with a copyright statement adjacent to the image and in a corresponding reference citation. For examples of citations for images, refer to The APA Style Blog or the Writing Center guide on Citing Graphics and Visuals in APA Style.

What about common knowledge?
Unless taken word for word from a source, there are specific times when content that is not originally yours does not need to be cited. Certain characteristics must be met for content to be considered common knowledge:

- The same information can be located in a minimum of five different research sources.
- Your reader should already know this information.
- The information is easily accessible in general information sources.
- The information comes from folklore, mythology, or well-known stories.
- The facts are well known in your field of study—and will be well known to your audience.

If you take a well-known fact **word for word** from a source, a citation is required to attribute the wording to the source and to avoid plagiarism, and if you use another writer’s interpretation of common knowledge, that writer needs to be cited, as the interpretation is not common knowledge or original to your writing. Additionally, **statistics** require citation because statistical information is not typically equally represented in general information sources; the source of the statistic, either as a primary or secondary source, needs to be cited.

You might not know if something is common knowledge until you find it explained the same way in several sources, so it’s best to cite it like you normally would until you adequately prove to yourself that it is common knowledge.

**How can the Writing Center help me with APA and avoiding plagiarism?**

Writing Center services are available to all Purdue Global students. From the campus homepage, click the My Studies menu and select Academic Success Center (ASC) where you’ll find the following:

**ASK A TUTOR:** Have questions? Ask a tutor! Submit your question, paper, project, or discussion post for feedback by email, or connect with a tutor for a live session. The ASC uses a platform called Cranium Café. Tutors in Writing, Math, Science, Business, and Technology have Cranium Café Cards, and when online, there is a Knock on Door button, and it’s as simple as that!

**STUDY STUDIO:** From the ASC home page, click Writing Resources to find webpages, documents, videos, interactive tutorials, and podcasts that offer specific help with writing.

**WEBINARS:** From the ASC home page, click Join a Webinar to see the most up-to-date times of writing workshops and archives on using APA, integrating sources, avoiding plagiarism, and more.