MSGA

MALAYSIAN STUDENTS' GLOBAL ALLIANCE

MSGA RESEARCH GUIDELINES

PREPARED BY

DEPARTMENT OF ANALYTICS
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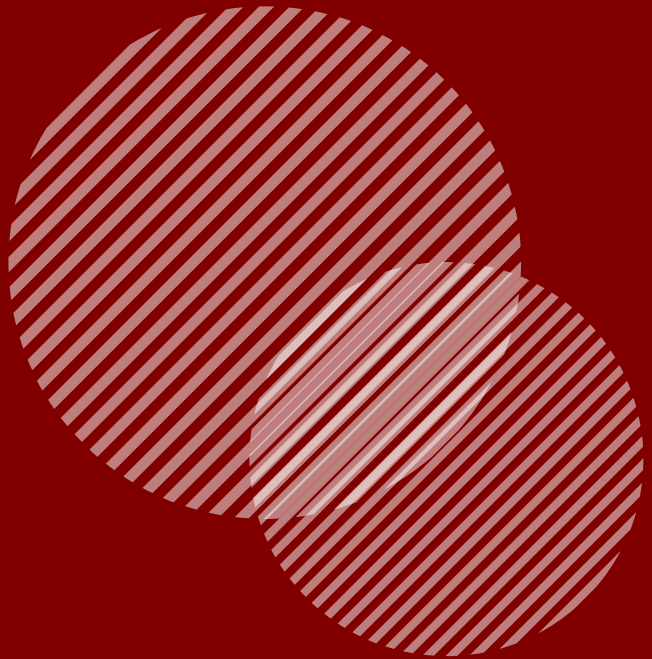
Talent Development

Policy Advocacy

Social Impact

BASE OF STANDARDS

This Guideline describes the current recommended and standard procedures and practices to be adopted by all departments in the Malaysian Students' Global Alliance (MSGA) in carrying out any research effort for the Alliance.

As a representative for Malaysian students and our esteemed Member Councils worldwide, it is our duty to protect and uphold our brand as it reflects on our stakeholders.

Our standardised branding and procedures ensure we have a consistent look and feel to our advocacy efforts, where professionalism is imperative and so is our responsibility to our students.

RESEARCH PAPER

WHAT IS IT? 🔍 Source

A **research paper** is a piece of academic writing that provides analysis, interpretation, and argument based on in-depth independent research.

Research papers are similar to academic essays, but they are usually longer and more detailed assignments, designed to assess not only your writing skills but also your skills in scholarly research.

Writing a research paper requires you to demonstrate a strong knowledge of your topic, engage with a variety of sources, and make an original contribution to the debate

Writing Process 🔍 Source

Understand the assignment

Choose research paper topic

Conduct preliminary research

Develop a thesis statement

Create research paper outline

First draft

Write an introduction

Write a compelling body of text

Write the conclusion

Second draft

Revision
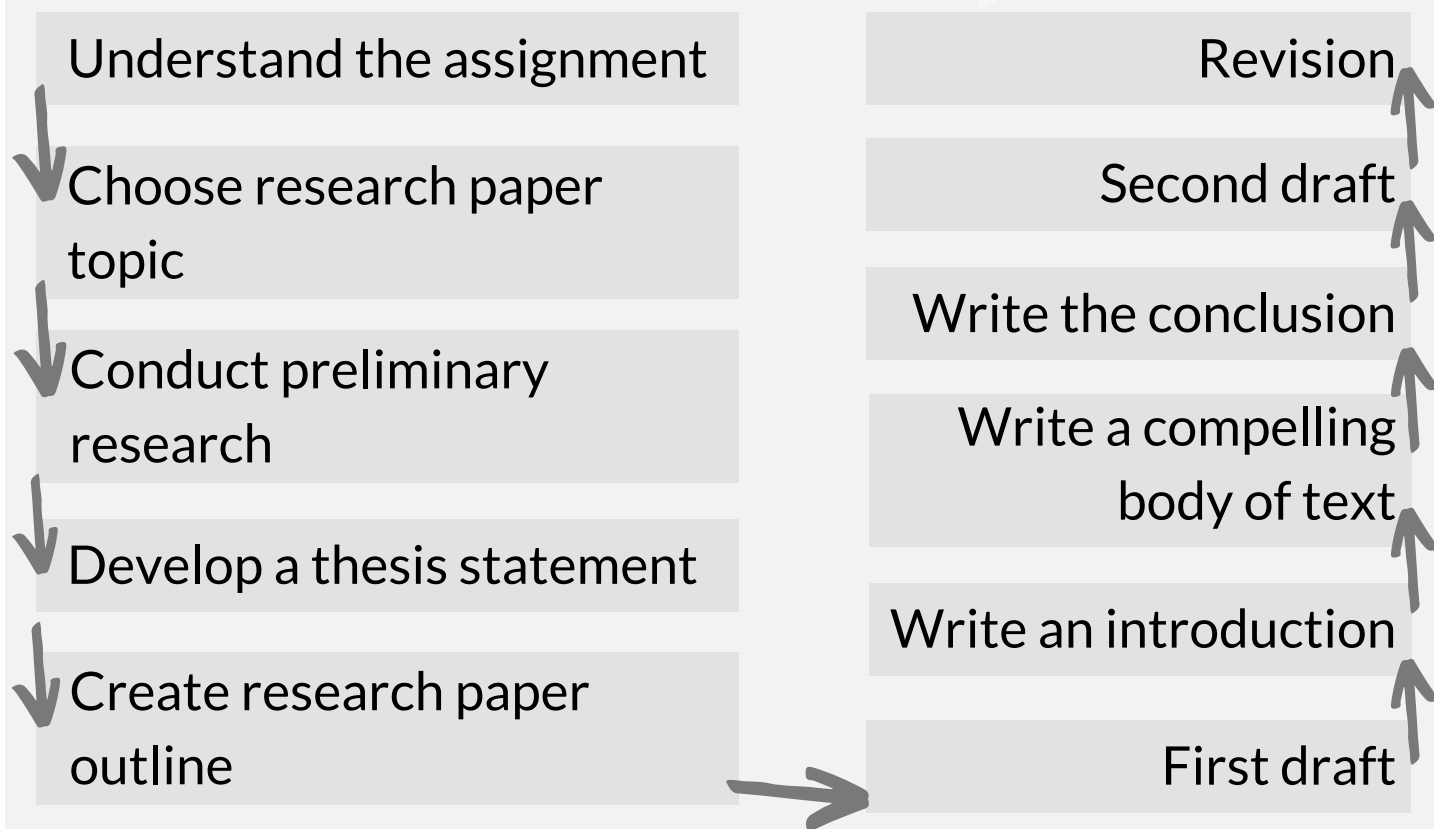
RESEARCH PAPER SECTIONS

There is **no one right style** or manner for writing an education paper. Content aside, the writing style and presentation of papers in different educational fields vary greatly. Nevertheless, certain parts are **common to most papers**, for example:

Source

> **Title/Cover Page**

> **Abstract (100–300 words)**

> **Introduction and Statement of the Problem**

> **Limitations of Study**

> **Methodology**

> **Literature Review**

> **Main Body of Paper/Argument**

> **Conclusion**

POLICY PAPERS

WHAT IS IT?

Policy papers are different from the standard research papers in several respects:

- They are usually addressed at a **non-academic audience**, such as a particular official, agency, or organization
- They often focus on *prescriptive* **questions**. They may begin by diagnosing a particular issue or situation, and typically argue for a solution that will address that issue or situation
- Often, policy papers are focused on being **persuasive**. The intention is to convince the target audience that your position is the correct one
- **Evidence** in support of a position is crucial. This is also important for research papers, but it tends to be absolutely critical in policy papers.
- Policy papers are **written efficiently**. The audience often does not have much time and does not want to read a book on the subject. Indeed, often policy papers are accompanied by policy briefs which summarize the papers in a page or less.

COMPONENTS

Context and importance

Policy Options

Criteria for Judging Policy Choices

Recommendation

POLICY PAPER COMPONENTS

As with research papers, there is not just one way to write a policy paper. Below are the basic elements of a policy paper

## Description of the context and importance of the problem

- It is helpful to careful define the problem and frame it as a specific question to be answered.

Discussion of a range of policy options.

- These are the choices for addressing the policy problem.

Criteria for judging policy choices.

- This is the step that often is missed in policy analysis. Writers often fail to be explicit and may even assume that everyone shares the same ideas of what the criteria for making a choice should be. This is a mistake. Indeed, it is an important service to the reader (and to the decision-maker) to know the reasons for recommending one policy (or set of policies) over others. There often is major debate about criteria that should be used.
- In his book, A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis, Eurgene Bardach helpfully notes that such criteria are best thought of as applied to "the projected outcomes" of a policy choice. He makes the useful distinction between evaluative criteria, such as efficiency and fairness, and practical criteria, such as legality and political acceptability.

IDEAS
INSTITUTE FOR DEMOCRACY AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

❰❰❰ Policy Paper Examples
by IDEAS
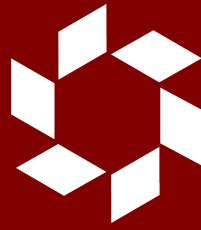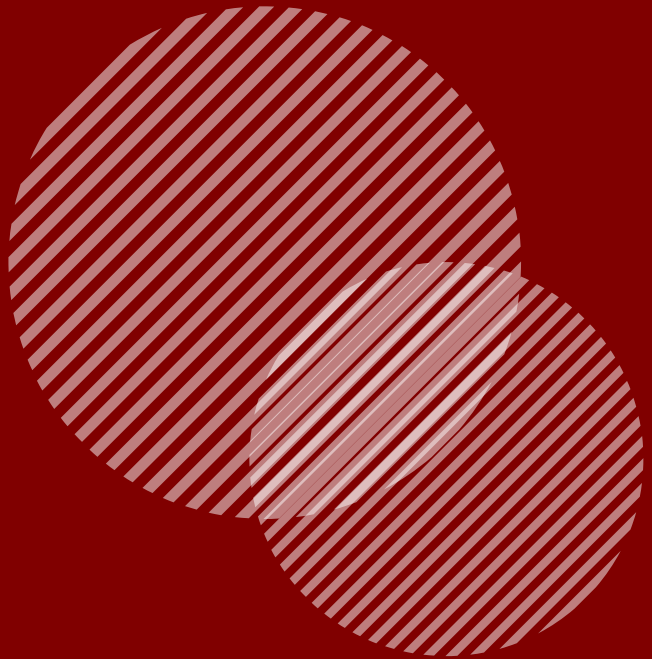
Privacy

ETHICS AND CONFIDENTIALITY

We begin with privacy. In research, the most important person is the people we serve and those we conduct research on. This reference tool is intended to aid researchers and Institutional Review Board (IRB) members to ensure that adequate provisions exist for the protection of research participant privacy, the maintenance of confidentiality of identifiable research data and data security.

PROTECTING PRIVACY

Source

Privacy is about people

Privacy is:
- a sense of being in control of access that others have to ourselves
- a right to be protected
- and is in the eye of the participant, not the researcher or the IRB

Subject Population
- What are the cultural norms of the proposed subject population? Some cultures are more private than others
- What are the ages of the population? There may be age differences in privacy preferences (e.g., teenagers less forthcoming than older adults)

Recruitment

Acceptable:
- Advertisements, notices, and/or media
- Send introduction letter to colleagues to distribute

Unacceptable:
- search through medical records or existing database (e.g., registry); then have a researcher with no previous contact with potential participant recruit
- retain sensitive information obtained at screening without their consent

Method of Data Collection

- Will participants feel comfortable providing the information in this manner?
- If passively observing the participant; could the individual have an expectation of privacy?
- Will the researcher collect information about a third party individual that is considered private (e.g., mental illness, substance abuse in family)?

MAINTAINING CONFIDENTIALITY

Source

Confidentiality is about data

Confidentiality is:
- About identifiable data
- An extension of privacy
- An agreement about maintenance and who has access to identifiable data.

Research Design

- Minimize the need to collect and maintain identifiable information e.g. name, emails, university
- Data should be collected anonymously and access to research data should be based on a "need to know" basis
- Limit access to data and disclose where and how the data is stored

Additional Provisions

If yes to any of the following, measures to maintain confidentiality should be incorporated into the protocol:
- Will confidentiality of identifiable data be offered?
- Are there legal/ethical requirements (e.g., HIPAA in the US for medical records)?
- Will release of data cause risk of harm?

CONSENT FORMS

Source

An "informed consent" is an agreement

"In studies involving human subjects, an "informed consent" is the voluntary agreement of an individual, or his or her authorized representative, who has the legal capacity to give consent, and who exercises free power of choice without any form of constraint or coercion to participate in research.

Consenting is a process where the researcher clearly communicates:
- key information about the study
- purpose of the study
- the risks and benefits
- the voluntary nature of participation
- expectations from the subject if they agree to participate
- confidentiality information and measures
- contact information of the researcher
- a way for the participants to consent (e.g. ticking a box in Google Forms)

If you're taking online surveys, include the consent form in the front page and require consent before proceeding to the questions

▶ EXAMPLES ◀

MSGA General Template

The policy recommendation.

- Ideally, the policy recommendation should flow from the logical application of your criteria to your policy choices. This is illustrated in the hypothetical example (see table) below.
- In this example, the researcher was able to make clear outcomes about how the policy choices met some criteria (Policy Choice A fails to meet the first criteria of legality). However, there is some uncertainty about others. For instance, it is unclear how Policy Choice B would affect the criteria of inclusiveness, or how to judge the cost-effectiveness of Policy Choice C. In the real world, we may need to incorporate such uncertainty into our policy judgments. But it is important for the policy analyst to be clear to readers and decision-makers where that uncertainty exists.
- Another thing to note is that not all criteria are equal. It may be useful to rank the importance of criteria. Many of us would likely consider legality a necessary criterion. This would allow us to immediately remove Policy Choice A from our list of choices without any further consideration.

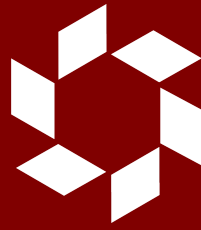| Policy Question: What should our town do to improve voter participation?	Policy Choice A: Pay people to vote	Policy Choice B: Schedule local elections on days when few people work	Policy Choice C: Increase spending on public messages encouraging voting
Criteria 1: Legality	No	Yes	Yes
Criteria 2: Cost effectiveness	No	Cost Neutral	Probably
Criteria 3: Inclusiveness (policy affects the broadest range of voters possible)	Yes	Probably	Yes
Recommend?	No	Yes	Yes

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARDS

Source

Ensuring research is ethical

An IRB, also known as an independent ethics committee (IEC) is a committee that applies research ethics by reviewing the methods proposed for research to ensure they are ethical, particularly for biomedical and behavioural research involving humans.

While specific to the United States, the Ministry of Health Malaysia also employs a similar committee as briefed in the Malaysian Guideline for Good Clinical Practice.

In the medium term, we do not expect that MSGA will conduct such intrusive research that requires institutional oversight but the reader should be aware when and if it is required, and request approval based on the researcher's location.

Data Collection

RESEARCH METHODS

Source
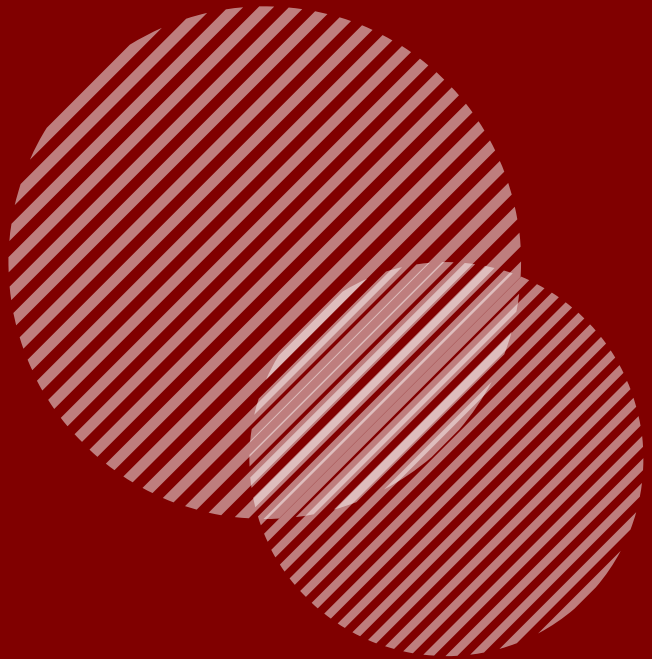
Aims and Hypotheses

- The aim of the study is a statement of what the researcher intents to investigate
- The hypothesis is an idea which can be verified or disproved by some kind of investigation
- The hypothesis can be one-tailed (has a direction) or two-tailed (no direction)

Sampling

- Volunteer sample: participants pick themselves through adverts or online
- Opportunity sampling: uses people who are available at the time the study is carried out
- Random sampling: every person in the target population has an equal chance of being selected
- Systematic sampling: a system is used to select participants
- Stratified sampling: identify the subgroups and select participants in proportion with their occurrences

Case Study

- Case studies are in-depth investigations of a single person, group, event, or community
- These provide rich qualitative data and have high levels of ecological validity, but are extremely limited in breadth since the study concerns only that group

Correlation

- Correlation means association—more precisely it is a measure of the extent to which two variables are related
- If an increase in one variable tends to be associated with an increase in the other then this is a positive correlation; vice versa for a negative correlation
- Remember, correlation does not imply causation
- The r-value (correlation coefficient) is used to indicate how closely the two variables relate. The closer r is to ±1, the more closely the two variables are related. Google "calculate r-value excel" to find out how to calculate the r using Excel

Interviews

Unstructured (informal) interviews are like a casual conversation
- no set questions
- the interviewer is allowed to raise whatever topics he/she feels are relevant and ask them in their own way
- more qualitative data is likely to be collected

Structured (formal) interviews are like a job interview
- a fixed, predetermined set of questions that are put to every participant in the same order and in the same way
- interviewer stays within their role
- maintains a gap distance from the interviewee

Questionnaire

- Questionnaires can be thought of as a kind of written interview. They can be carried out face to face, by telephone or post
- The questions asked can be open-ended, allowing flexibility in the respondent's answers, or they can be more tightly structured requiring short answers or a choice of answers from given alternatives
- The choice of questions is important because of the need to avoid bias or ambiguity in the questions, 'leading' the respondent, or causing offence
- Recommended MSGA Standards of Survey Collection:
  - Have the questions be separated into the smallest sections to enable more uniform data collection, e.g., ask "Year" and "Course" separately instead of "Year and Course" for easier data analysis
  - Use more quantitative methods, e.g., a 1-5 scale instead of Poor-Excellent scale
  - Use more short text responses than longer ones so they can be charted in a word cloud
  - Explore alternative technology like TypeForm which gives a more customised experience

Observations

- Content analysis is a research tool used to indirectly observe the presence of certain words, images or concepts within the media (e.g. advertisements, books films etc.). For example, the content analysis could be used to study sex-role stereotyping
- Researchers quantify (count) and analyse (examine) the presence, meanings and relationships of words and concepts, then make inferences about the messages within the media, the writer(s), the audience, and even the culture and time of which these are a part of
- To conduct a content analysis on any such media, the media is coded or broken down, into manageable categories on a variety of levels—word, word sense, phrase, sentence, or theme—and then examined

Content Analysis

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Meta-Analysis

- A meta-analysis is a systematic review that involves identifying an aim and then searching for research studies that have addressed similar aims/hypotheses
- This is done by looking through various databases and then decisions are made about what studies are to be included/excluded
- Strengths: Increases the validity of the conclusions drawn as they're based on a wider range
- Weaknesses: Research designs in studies can vary so they are not truly comparable

Peer Review

- A researcher submits an article to a journal
- The journal selects two or more appropriate experts (psychologists working in a similar field) to peer review the article without payment. The peer reviewers assess: the methods and designs used, originality of the findings, the validity of the original research findings and its content, structure and language
- Peer review is important because it prevent faulty data from entering the public domain, it provides a way of checking the validity of findings

Reliablity

- A measure of consistency, if a particular measurement is repeated and the same result is obtained then it is described as being reliable
- Test-retest reliability—Assessing the same person on two different occasions which shows the extent to which the test produces the same answers
- Inter-observer reliability—the extent to which there is agreement between two or more observers

Statistical Testing

- A significant result is one where there is a low probability that chance factors were responsible for any observed difference, correlation or association in the variables tested
- If our test is significant, we can reject our null hypothesis and accept our alternative hypothesis
- A null hypothesis is a statement of no effect.
- In **industry standards**, we use $p < 0.05$ (as it strikes a balance between making a type I and II error)
- A type I error is when the null hypothesis is rejected when it should have been accepted (happens when a lenient significance level is used, an error of optimism)
- A type II error is when the null hypothesis is accepted when it should have been rejected (happened when a stringent significance level is used, an error of pessimism)
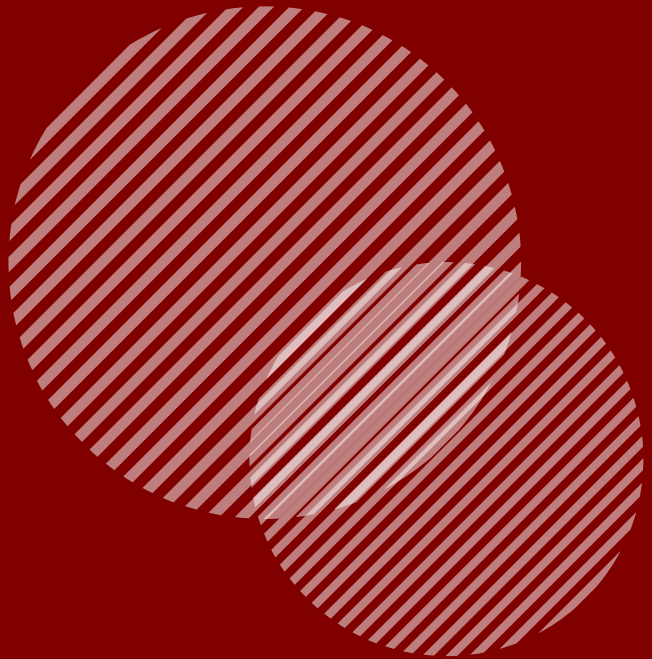
TIP: Knowing how to Google is a skill to learn. Not everyone knows how to use Mendeley to produce BibTeX files that work with LaTeX by simple Googling.

Data Quality

KEY CRITERIA FOR GOOD SOURCES

1

How was the data collected

Providing a clear statement of how data is collected

2

Who is the data provider

Ensuring the reliability of data provider

3

When was the data collected

Documenting the date of data collection

4

What type of data was collected

Differentiating the type of data collected

5

Why was the data collected

Defining the reasons of data collected

6

Whether the data is consistent with data from other sources

Providing guidelines of data consistency with data from other sources

Source

MAINTENANCE OF DATA COLLECTION

🔍 **Source**

Hyperdimension	Quality Dimension	Factors to consider
Source	Institutional/ Business Environment	• Sustainability of the entity-data provider • Reliability status • Transparency and interpretability
	Privacy and Security	• Legislation • Data Keeper vs. Data provider • Restrictions • Perception
Metadata	Complexity	• Technical constraints • Whether structured or unstructured • Readability • Presence of hierarchies and nesting
	Completeness	• Whether the metadata is available, interpretable and complete
	Usability	• Resources required to import and analyse • Risk analysis
	Time-related factors	• Timeliness • Periodicity • Changes through time

Hyperdimension	Quality Dimension	Factors to consider
Metadata	Linkability	• Presence and quality of linking variables • Linking level
	Coherence - consistency	• Standardisation • Metadata available for key variables (classification variables, construct being measured)
	Validity	• Transparency of methods and processes • Soundness of methods and processes
Data	Accuracy and selectivity	• Total survey error approach • Reference datasets • Selectivity
	Linkability	• Quality of linking variables
	Coherence - consistency	• Coherence between metadata description and observed data values
	Validity	• Coherence between processes and methods and observed data values

QUALITY DIMENSIONS

Source

INSTITUTIONAL AND BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

Ensure that the data from similar organisations and sources will be accessible in the future — e.g., The Wall Street Journal, The Economist, The Star, New Straits Times

- Stability and sustainability of the data provider
- Reliability status
- Transparency and interpretability

Indicators:

What is the risk that the data will not be available in the future from the data provider? If they don't, will there be similar sources of data in the future?

Source

PRIVACY AND SECURITY

It is necessary to provide sufficient evidence to conclude the privacy and confidentiality of data providers are completely assured. Data acquisition should also pay careful attention to whether consent is granted and whether this aligns with the rules, regulations, and regulatory framework of MSGA. Consent may be obtained through an "agreement to terms".

- Legislation
- Data provider
- Restrictions
- Perception

Indicators:

Was the data collected in compliance with the relevant privacy legislation? Does MSGA have the legal right to acquire the information?

Metadata

COMPLEXITY
- Technical constraints
- Readability
- Presence of hierarchies and nesting

Possible Indicators:
How simple would it be to construct the data source into a usable structure? (one record per observation)

COMPLETENESS
The quality of information relies entirely on the processes that have contributed to data collection, the processes related to data analysis and the definition of the data itself
- Available, interpretable and complete

USABILITY
The skills and considerable investment factor that are needed for collecting analysis of data.
- Risk analysis
- Additional resources

TIME-RELATED FACTORS
- Timeliness
- Periodicity
- Changes through time

Metadata

LINKABILITY

- Presence and quality of linking variables

COHERENCE/CONSISTENCY

- Standardisation
- Metadata available for key variables (classification variable)

VALIDITY

- Transparency of methods and processes
- Soundness of methods and processes

Data

ACCURACY AND SELECTIVITY

Avoid errors in statistical estimates that contribute to bias (systematic errors) and variance (random errors). Significant cause of error that may lead to inaccuracies (e.g., coverage, sampling, nonresponse, response)

- Total survey error approach
- Reference datasets
- Selectivity

Data

LINKABILITY

Ensure the data can be accurately linked to existing or multiple datasets

- Quality of linking variables

COHERENCE/CONSISTENCY

Make sure the dataset meets common standards, is consistent internally with other sources of data over time.

- Coherence between metadata description and observed data values

VALIDITY

Ensure that the availability and soundness of data on the processes and procedures for the production of statistical findings. All significant steps leading to the production and adjustments made to the data should be included in order to produce descriptive data analysis.

- Transparency of methods and processes
- Coherence between processes and methods and observed data values.

DATA QUALITY CHECKLIST TEMPLATE

Generally speaking, **data is of high quality** when it satisfies the requirements of its intended use for clients, decision-makers, downstream applications and processes.

Source

Basic Data Checks

Source

- Verify formatting is correct
- Confirm the data is what is expected
- Compare data to previous values to spot change is information where change is not expected
- Identify values that are not valid
- Perform random spot checks

Comprehensive Data Checks

- Accuracy—data should reflect reality
- Confirm that all red flags and errors were identified, fixed before data is submitted or approved
- Confirm that information on reports are the same as the original documents
- Determine if the information was recorded by someone with direct knowledge

Additional Information

It is also important to ensure the information is unique. Alphabetical sorting may be necessary to spot duplicate entries.

There should also be a check to compare the current information to last year's or last quarter's information. The data checklist should also include the timeliness of the data reported. The timestamp should be checked to confirm the version of data received is the most current.

Finally, the data should be checked for consistency. The information that is being reviewed and submitted should be the same in all of the departments within the organization.

5 Main Criteria to Data Quality

Up to Date

Source

Accuracy

Relevancy

Consistency

Completeness

Data Quality Checklist (by Steps)

Find the duplicate data
- If yes, remove duplicates or merge together by assigning different variables

Find the missing data
- If yes, but could not figure out the missing value, then assign a dummy value

Normalize data by creating a schema/naming convention to ensure all data follows the same formatting and structure.

Data Quality Framework

1. **Identify the aim of the research**
2. **Perform data findings on relevant topics for the research**
3. **Perform data quality check to see:**
   a. **Whether the data received matches expectations?**
   b. **Whether the data is too messy?**
   c. **Need to standardise?**
4. **Analyse the data with reference to the aim of the research**

7 Steps to Data Quality

Source

1. Rigorous **data profiling** and **control** of incoming data

2. Careful data pipeline design to **avoid duplicate data**

3. Accurate gathering of **data requirements**

4. Enforcement of **data integrity**

5. Integration of data lineage **traceability** into the data pipelines

6. Automated **regression testing** as part of change management

7. Capable data **quality control teams**
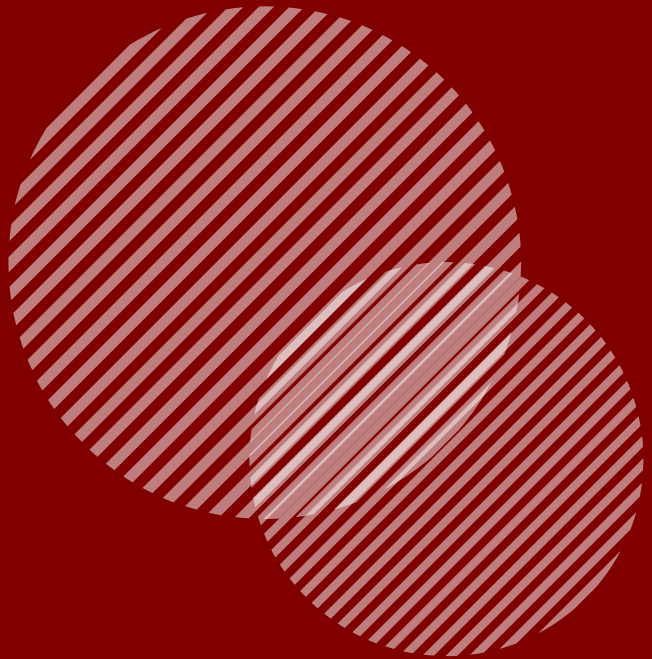
Interviews

INTERVIEWS

Before

Source

Determine the type of interview

Informal, conversational interview — no predetermined questions are asked, in order to remain as open and adaptable as possible to the interviewee's nature and priorities; during the interview, the interviewer "goes with the flow".

General interview guide approach — the guide approach is intended to ensure that the same general areas of information are collected from each interviewee; this provides more focus than the conversational approach, but still allows a degree of freedom and adaptability in getting information from the interviewee.

Standardized, open-ended interview — here, the same open-ended questions are asked to all interviewees (an open-ended question is where respondents are free to choose how to answer the question, i.e., they don't select "yes" or "no" or provide a numeric rating, etc.); this approach facilitates faster interviews that can be more easily analysed and compared.

Closed, fixed-response interview — all interviewees are asked the same questions and asked to choose answers from among the same set of alternatives. This format is useful for those not practised in interviewing.

Before

Setting

Having a casual environment helps the participant relax and speak more.

Choose a setting with little distraction. No loud noises, neat background. Set the tone with your clothing choice e.g., a suit for more professional tone.

Brief

1. **Explain the purpose of the interview**
2. **Check if they have questions**
3. **Address terms of confidentiality**
   Who gets to use the information?
   How will you analyse the information?
   Getting consent to use their information ex. Quote their comments.
4. **Explain the format of the interview**
   What type of interview they are having? When to ask questions? How long is it expected to be?

Prepare a recording medium

Do not rely on memory for their answers, prepare a form that you can take notes to record the interview

During

Methodology

Language. Cover as many languages to allow the participant speak in their most comfortable language

Wording should be open-ended. Respondents should be able to choose their own terms when answering questions.

Questions should be as neutral as possible. Avoid wording that might influence answers, e.g., evocative, judgmental wording.

Questions should be worded clearly.
This includes knowing any terms particular to the program or the respondents' culture.

Be careful asking "why" questions. This type of question infers a cause-effect relationship that may not truly exist. These questions may also cause respondents to feel defensive, e.g., that they have to justify their response, which may inhibit their responses to this and future questions. Instead, just ask how they feel about the topic.

Uniform and consistent questioning. Try to have the same interviewer for each interview, so the questioning methods and style are as similar as possible.

During

Source

Methodology

Occasionally verify the recording medium is working.

Ask one question at a time. Attempt to remain as neutral as possible. That is, don't show strong emotional reactions to their responses. Act as if "you've heard it all before."

Encourage responses with occasional nods of the head, "uh huh"s, etc.

Be careful about the appearance when note-taking. That is, if you jump to take a note, it may appear as if you're surprised or very pleased about an answer, which may influence answers to future questions.

Provide transition between major topics, e.g., "we've been talking about (some topic) and now I'd like to move on to (another topic)."

Don't lose control of the interview. This can occur when respondents stray to another topic, try not to interrupt participants if they veer off, but mind the time limit.

During

Methodology

Purpose. Make sure most of your questions stay true to the research topic

Respect. Try not to interrupt participants if they veer off, but mind the time limit

Clarity. Get details from participants to interpret vague questions

During
Methodology

Source

Get the respondents involved in the interview as soon as possible. Make them comfortable answering questions,starting from simple ones.

Before asking about controversial matters (such as feelings and conclusions), first ask about some facts. With this approach, respondents can more easily engage in the interview before warming up to more personal matters.

Intersperse fact-based questions throughout the interview to avoid long lists of fact-based questions, which tends to leave respondents disengaged.

Ask questions about the present before questions about the past or future. It's usually easier for them to talk about the present and then work into the past or future.

The last questions might be to allow respondents to provide any other information they prefer to add and their impressions of the interview.

During

Topics

Behaviors—about what a person has done or is doing

Opinions/values—about what a person thinks about a topic

Feelings—note that respondents sometimes respond with "I think ..." so be careful to note that you're looking for feelings

Knowledge—to get facts about a topic

Sensory—about what people have seen, touched, heard, tasted or smelled

Background/demographics—standard background questions, such as age, education, etc.

After

Verify recording medium worked.
Make notes on written notes
Clarify vague portions, scratchings
Write down observations made during interview
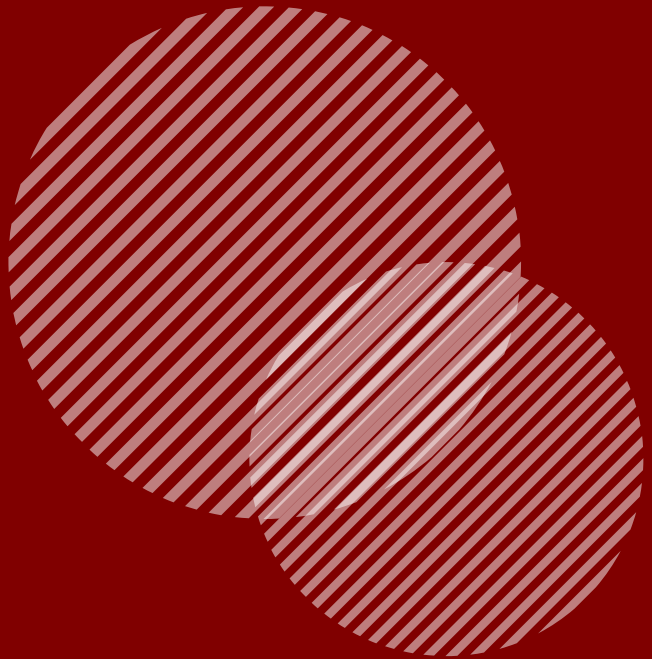
Branding

BRANDING GUIDELINES

If there is one thing to take away from this Guideline, it is this section. How you style your research output must be consistent because the Branding matters.

The following are style and typography guides for use as a basis in any MSGA publications, set by the Corporate Communications and Marketing Department (updated as of Feb 2021).

The reader should be aware of any changes set in this Guide by CCM and follow such changes.

OUR BRAND ETHOS

MSGA acts as a <u>representative</u> for Malaysian students worldwide, channeling their views and aspirations as a whole, while developing and advocating for them

WE ARE AN *ALLIANCE*

WE *SUPPORT* AND ENCOURAGE GROWTH

WE *SERVE* OUR STAKEHOLDERS WITHOUT BEING DEPENDENT ON THEM

COLOUR PALETTE

Primary Colours

#800000

25%

75%   50%

#797979

25%

75%   50%
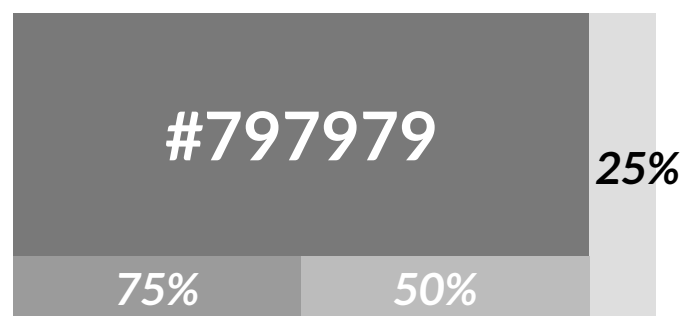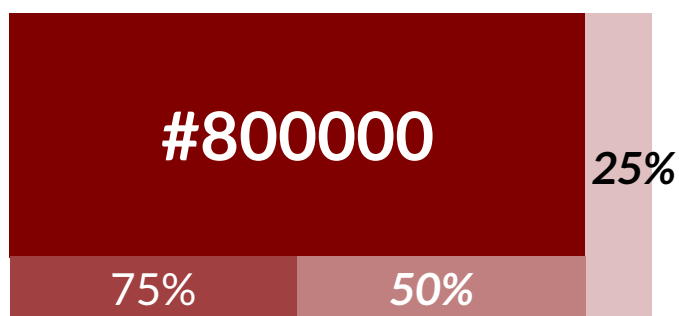
➤ **R** 128 **G** 0 **B** 0
➤ **C** 0% **M** 50% **Y** 50% **K** 50%

➤ **R** 121 **G** 121 **B** 121
➤ **C** 0% **M** 0% **Y** 0% **K** 53%

See Full Guidelines

TYPOGRAPHY

Primary Typeface

Download Font

Montserrat

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 0123456789

Montserrat Classic

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 0123456789

Montserrat Semi-Bold

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 0123456789

Montserrat Extra Bold

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 0123456789

LOGO

Horizontal Primary

Stacked Secondary

A secondary version of the logo where horizontal space designated for logo presence is minimal (not enough horizontal space on a document)

Favicon

A version of the logo where both horizontal and vertical space designated for logo presence is minimal.

Allowed for common use only as an anchor image, decoration or campaign-specific icon-making purposes.

Logo Variants—Primary

Full Colour Logo (Major)

Full Colour Logo (Minor)

➢ Only for use in situations and designs where red letterings are not appropriate (e.g: when there are red/maroon elements behind the subtext but an overall light design)

Reversed Logo

➢ Use on colour documents where logo sits on a dark or black background area
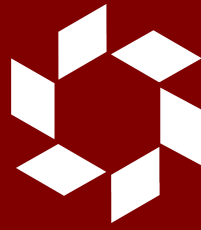
Logo Placement

If our identity is important to your audience, then it makes sense to place the logo in the top right corner of the page.

If the information itself is the drawcard for your audience, then it makes sense to place the MSGA logo in the bottom left corner of the piece, where it acts more as a "presented by" sign-off.
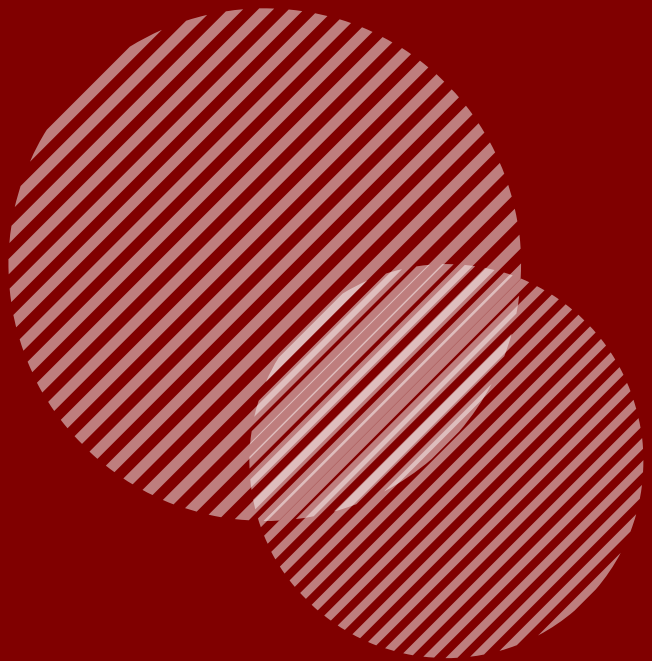
Language

LANGUAGE

BRITISH ENGLISH

MSGA standardises all English communications to UK English where possible. General language should be kept simple and free from overly technical terms/words. It needs to be clear, concise and avoid ambiguity. Be prosaic and to the point.

Grammar Points

Oxford Comma (,) 🔍 Source

Avoid it. The serial comma is not standard in UK English styles except in only one style guide (Oxford).

✅ His favourite writers were Robert Harris, Sansom and Speller.

❌ His favourite writers were Robert Harris, Sansom, and Speller.

➤ **Please use Grammarly to ensure proper grammar and spelling by British English standards**

Slash and Spaces 🔍 Source

No spaces before and after (/) in general cases.

To Indicate Or

✅ his/her backpack   ❌ his/ her backpack

To Indicate Connecting and Conflicting Relationships

✅ pro-life/pro-choice debate

✅ Word War I/ First World War

To Denote Dates and Fractions

✅ 11/17/16

To Separate Lines in Prose *(space is needed)*

✅ Mary had a little lamb/ little lamb, little lamb/ Mary had a little lamb/ whose fleece was white as snow.

Colons and Spaces 🔍 Source

Always put one white space after (:), none before.

✅ a terrifying problem: drought   ❌ a problem : drought

-, –, —   🔍 **Source**

Hyphen (-)

Compound terms
- eye-opener
- rubber-stamp
- two-, three-, and four-bedroom units

En Dash (–)

Range of numbers
- chapters 8–12
- 11:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.

Scores
- UCLA beat USC 28–14

Conflict/connection
- liberal–conservative
- Perth–Dubai flight

Em Dash (—)

In place of commas (,), parentheses (( )), and colons (:)
- when the car was finally delivered—nearly three months after it was ordered—she decided she no longer wanted it
- with his direction—or, rather, lack of direction
- a unanimous verdict—guilty

Note: If you introduce a span or range with words such as from or between, do not use the en dash. Use "from 1996 to 1999", not "from 1996–1999".

Note: The symbol (-) on your keyboard is a hyphen.

Full Stop in Name Abbreviations

In British English, omit the full stop   🔍 **Source**

✅ Mr Mrs Ms Dr   ❌ Mr. Mrs. Ms. Dr.

Gender Inclusive Language

🔍 **Source**

What is gendered language, and why should you be aware of it?

English has changed since the time when "man" used to refer to the whole of humanity and not just men. Clear communication requires writers to be more previse and using gender-neutral language has become standard practice in both journalistic and academic writing.

Gendered nouns

These are some examples of gendered nouns and their alternatices. Use what is best for your witing but avoid using gendered nouns when possible

Gendered noun	Gender-neutral noun
man	human, person, individual
mankind	people, humans, humanity
the common man	the average person
Dear Sir	Dear Sir or Madam
The male nurse walked in	The nurse walked in

Gender Inclusive Language

Source

Titles and names

✅ **Use Ms (e.g. Ms Sarah)** in general situations when addressing women as it doesn't indicate marital status

❌ **Avoid Miss or Mrs** which indicate marital status

Pronouns (e.g. he, she, they)

When faced with a gender-neutral language solutions, you have several options.

1. Use more than one pronoun

"When the winner has been selected, <u>she or he</u> will be advanced to the next round of the competition."

While this solution works well in many situations, some readers find it stylistically awkward, especially when "she or he" or "she/he" is repeated many times throughout a piece of writing.

Also, this approach risks calling attention to gender when it's not relevant.

Gender Inclusive Language

Source

Pronouns (e.g. he, she, they)

2. Alternate genders and pronouns

"Ask <u>her</u> to describe her purpose and audience and show how she has taken them into account in her writing.

Respond as a reader, explaining what you were thinking as you read his text so that <u>he</u> can discover where a reader might struggle with his writing."

This option will work only in certain situations, though—usually hypothetical situations in which the referent is equally likely to be male or female.

Another approach would be to simply repeat "the reader," but repeating it too much doesn't sound good.

3. Try making the nouns and pronouns plural

✔ *"<u>Students</u> who lose too much sleep may have trouble focusing during <u>their</u> exams."*

✘ *"<u>A student</u> who loses too much sleep may have trouble focusing during [<u>his/her</u>] exams."*

Gender Inclusive Language

Source

Pronouns (e.g. he, she, they)

4. Use "they" as a singular pronoun

"Look for the rental car company's <u>representative</u> at the airport exit; <u>they</u> will be holding a sign with your name on it."

Some people argue that "they" should be adopted as English's standard third-person, gender-neutral pronoun in all writing and speaking contexts. Others, however, are strongly opposed to the use of "they" with singular antecedents, so keep your audience in mind in using this solution.

This is the common pronoun this Guidelines recommend to use as it encompasses all genders and is generally less distracting than other solutions

Checklist for gender-related revisions

As you review your writing, ask yourself the following questions:

- Have you used "man" or "men" or words containing them to refer to people who may not be men?
- Have you used "he," "him," "his," or "himself" to refer to people who may not be men?
- If you have mentioned someone's sex or gender, was it necessary to do so?
- Do you use any occupational (or other) stereotypes?
- Do you provide the same kinds of information and descriptions when writing about people of different genders?

Position of Bahasa Melayu

Be Inclusive

As the official and primary language of Malaysia, it is our responsibility to use Bahasa Melayu (Malay) in all manners possible to ensure any research materials, surveys, consent forms, and public materials are understandable to the Malaysian public.

In research publications, for example, two separate documents could be produced in English and Bahasa Melayu. In survey forms, a Bahasa Melayu translation could be included in the description of the questions.
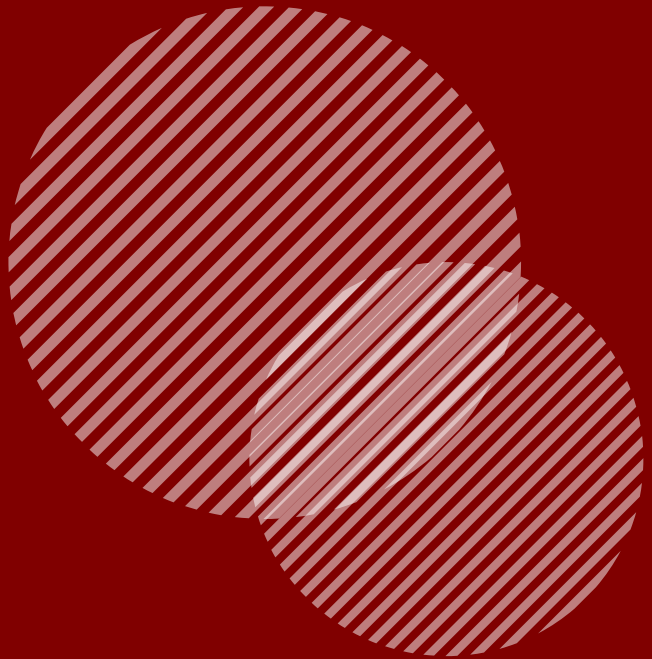
You may produce articles in other languages as may be necessary.
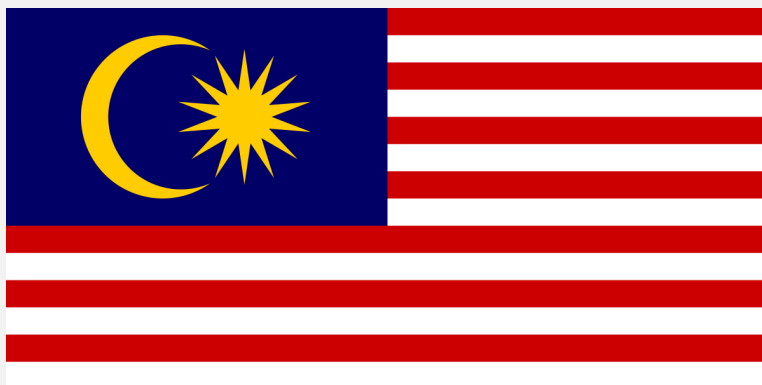
Google Docs

GOOGLE DOCS

JUSTIFY

Justify to make your long text more aesthetic

Multiple studies show that although there have been efforts to strive towards gender equality, our progress is stalling and in some cases, even reversing. A study in 2017 by the International Labor Office found that about 70 per cent of the women interviewed said that they would prefer to be in paid work, and 66.5 per cent of men agreed that they should be. However, in 2018 only 45.3 per cent of women had a job, which equates to a gap of almost 25 percentage points between the desired and the actual employment rate for women (Valentina, 2019).[6] On top of that, almost half of women's productive potential globally is unutilised, compared to 22 per cent of men's, according to the International Labour Organization.[7] This emphasises the urgency for women empowerment to take place across all sectors in the labour market.

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Try not to Left align

Source: Faris Durrani et al. (2020) *Women Empowerment In Malaysian Student Organisations* [online]. MSGA. Available at: www.msga.my/research-publications/women-empowerment (Accessed: 08 January 2020).

Note: British English prefers "per cent" and not "percent"

USE HEADINGS & STYLES

This is not the same as changing the font size and font style (**B**, *I*, U).

Changing the text style requires you to modify the Styles setting on Google Docs where, for example, **Heading 1** should be used when opening a broad section of your document.

This affects the metadata of the document, allowing you to see the Outline of your document which carries on if you export it into PDF, and enables the dynamic Table of Contents function (discussed next page).

Document Outline

USE DYNAMIC TABLE OF CONTENTS

In Google Docs, it is highly recommended you use the dynamic Table of Contents (TOC) function, which inserts a TOC that can update itself whenever there is a change in the document.

The TOC lists and follows the pages of the headers and subheaders made, which is why using **Headers** is important

1. Inserting a Table of Contents

2. Updating Table of Contents

Click here to update your TOC

Your TOC corresponds to your headers and subheaders, which is why using them is important
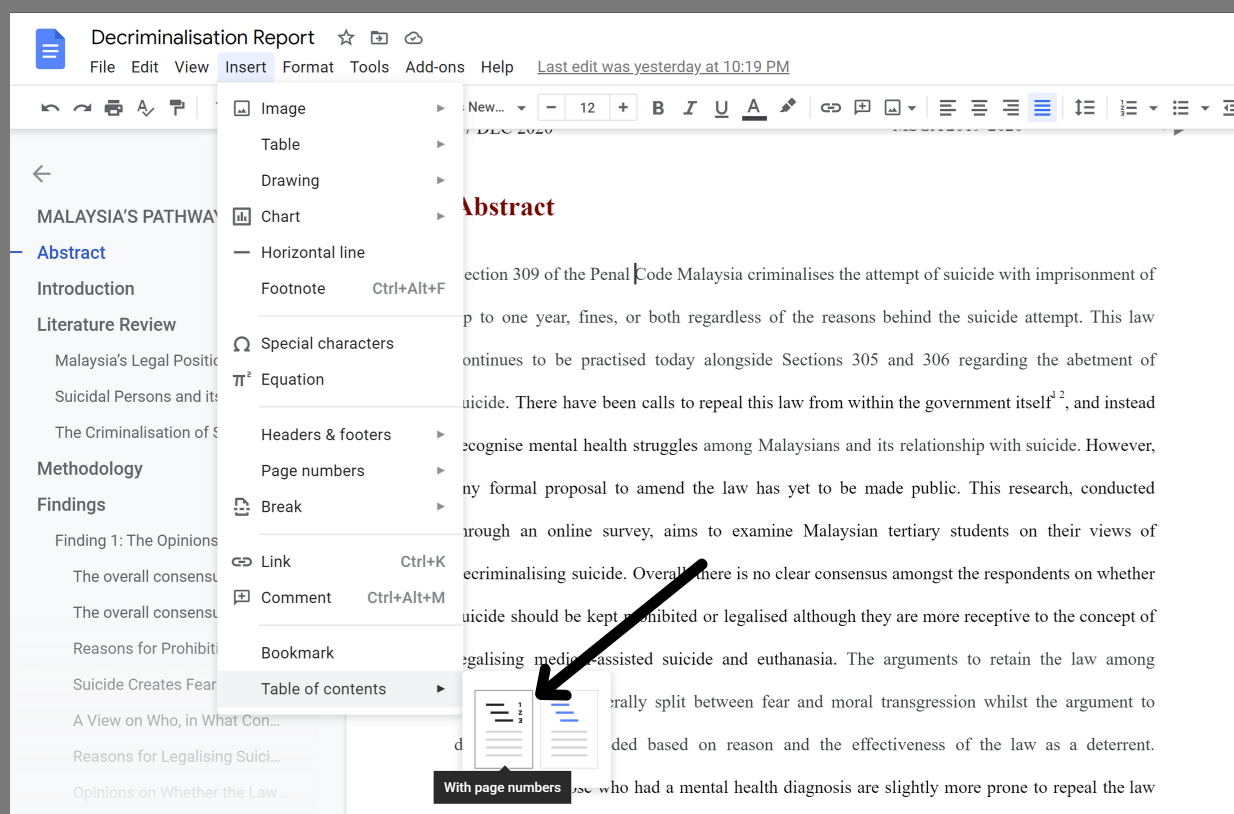
Source: Faris Durrani et al. (2020) *Malaysia's Pathway To The Decriminalisation Of Suicides: Students' Opinion And Discussions* [online]. MSGA. Available at: www.msga.my/research-publications/decriminalisation-of-suicides-discussions (Accessed: 08 January 2020).

USE FOOTNOTES IF NEEDED

Using footnotes for additional information   🔍 **Source**

Even if your citation style uses <u>parenthetical citation</u> instead of footnotes, you might choose to include footnotes to provide the reader with supplementary information.

For example, MLA footnotes can be used to direct the reader to further relevant sources or add information that could be useful but is not critical to your text.

Note: In Harvard citation, you should keep your full references at the back of the document though you can use footnotes whenever helpful

If you wish to include footnotes or endnotes because you want to provide supplementary information, you should consider:
- The number of notes. Too many footnotes can clutter the page.
- The reader's perspective. What is more convenient for them?

Inserting a Footnote in Google Docs
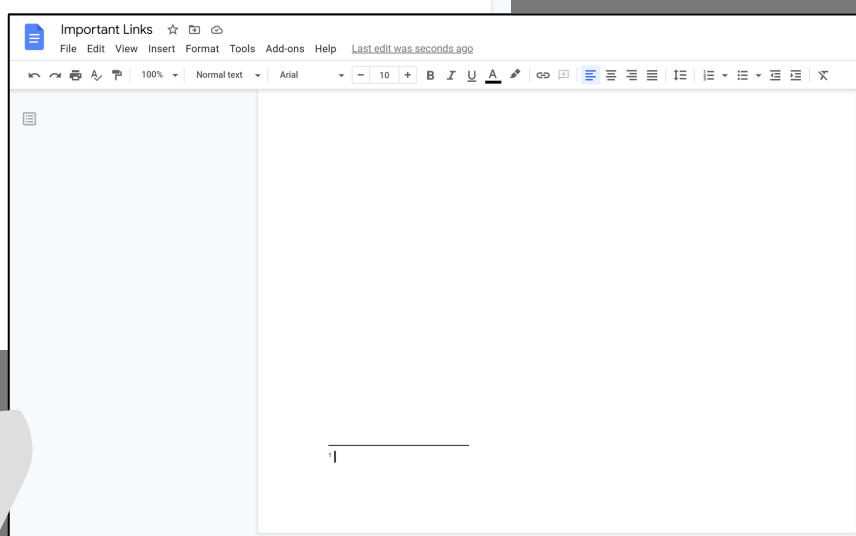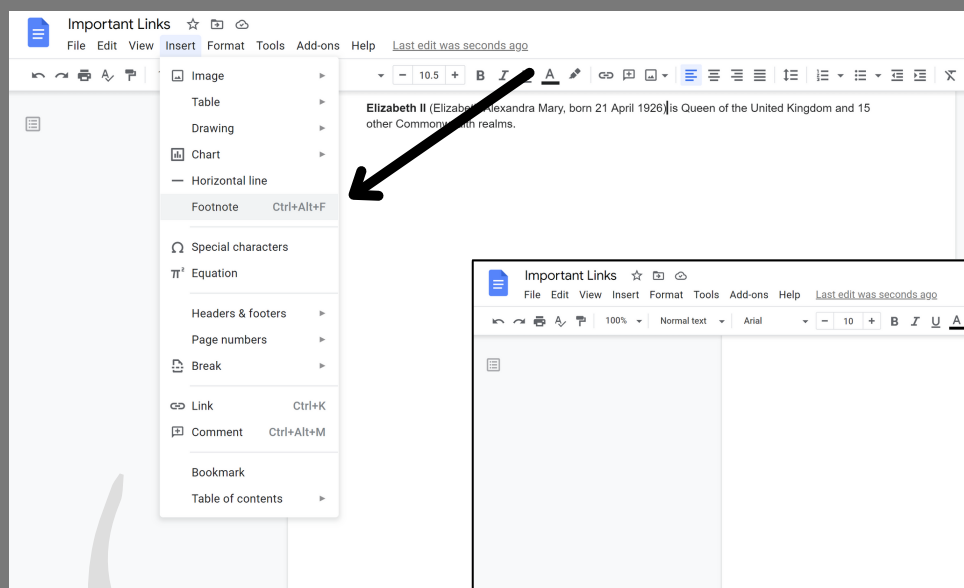
Referencing
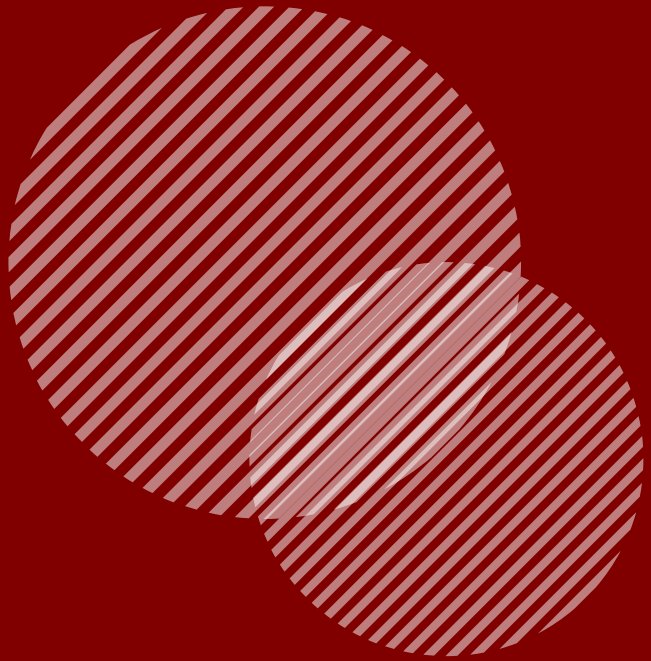
CITATION STYLE: HARVARD

A citation is a way to give information about the sources you used to produce your publication. It would typically contain the name of the author of the source, the title, its publisher, and where relevant, the page numbers. Whenever you borrow another idea or data, you need to cite the source even if it is from a YouTube video.

Reasons to Cite

Provide credibility in your work especially when it comes to collected data

Protect you from misleading the public if the ideas or data sourced contain misinformation

Supports those who would want to find more about the work you did

Prevent accusations of plagiarism for not giving credit to other people's work *(these can be extremely serious)*

The main formal citation style to be used in MSGA's long publications (e.g. research papers, policy papers) is the Harvard Format Citation Style.

Harvard is an Author-Date style that uses in-text citations and an alphabetically-ordered reference list.

The Harvard Style is widely used, but with numerous variations. Below is a comprehensive guide to one variation of Harvard in-text and reference list citations from citethisforme.com which MSGA uses. This guide also uses Mendeley when citethisforme provides unclear guidance.

MSGA'S CITATION STYLE

The Harvard Style

🔍 **Source**

IN-TEXT CITATION

In-text references are references included in the main body of text following the use of a quote or paraphrase from another piece of work.

Standard	• Mitchell, Smith and Thomson (2017, p. 189) states... • (Mitchell, Coyne and Thomson, 2017, p. 189)
4+ authors	• Mitchell et al. (2017, p. 189) states... • (Mitchell et al., 2017, p, 189)
No author¹	• (*A guide to citation*, 2017, pp. 189-201)
Multiple works	• (Mitchell, 2017, p. 189; Smith, 200; Andrews, 1989, pp. 165-176)
Secondary Source	• Smith 2000 (cited in Mitchell, 2017, p. 189) states... • (Smith, 2000, cited in Mitchell, 2017, p. 189)

¹When no author is available, use title in *italics*

Note: use p. for one page and pp. for multiple pages

REFERENCE LIST

A reference list is a complete list of references used in a publication. A Harvard reference list must:

Be on a separate sheet at the end of the document

Be organised alphabetically by author

Be double spaced: there should be a full, blank line of space between each line of text

Contain full references for all in-text references used

Below are common source types and how to cite them. We recommend to use citethisforme.com first

Book (Standard)

- Mitchell, J.A. and Thomson, M. (2017) *A guide to citation.* 3rd edn. London: London Publishings.

Edited Book²

- William, S.T. (ed.) (2015) *Referencing: a guide to citation rules.* New York: My Publisher
- Smith, John D., Jones, R. L. and Harper, S. G. (eds.). (2012) *Referencing: a guide to citation rules.* New York: My Publisher

E-book

- Mitchell, J.A., Thomson, M. and Coyne, R.P. (2017) *A guide to citation.* 3rd edn. *E-book library* [ebook]. Available at: <https://www.mendeley.com/reference-management/reference-manager> [Accessed: 10 September 2016]

²Edited books are collations of chapters written by different authors. Their reference format is very similar to the book reference except instead of the author name, the editor name is used followed by (eds.) to distinguish them as an editor.

Note: use ed. for one editor and eds. for multiple editors

Journal Article³

- Mitchell, J.A. 'How citation changed the research world', *The Mendeley*, 62(9), pp. 70-81.
- Mitchell, J.A. 'How citation changed the research world', *The Mendeley*, 62(9) [online]. Available at: <https://www.mendeley.com/reference-management/reference-manager> [Accessed: 15 November 2016]

Newspaper Article

- Mitchell, J.A. (2017) 'Changes to citation formats shake the research world', *The Mendeley Telegraph* (Weekend edition), 6 July, pp. 9-12.
- Hardcastle, G. (2015). 'The White Rose of Yorkshire is still Flying High in the Cricket', *The Press, York*, 18 June. Available at: <http://www.yorkpress.co.uk/sport/13339665.Gale_gears_up_for_pivotal_spell_for_Yorkshire> [Accessed: 19 June 2015].

³Author surname(s), initial(s). (Year Published) 'Title of article', *Title*, volume(issue/season etc.), page numbers.

Entire Website

- Mitchell, J.A and Thomson, M. (2017). *How and when to reference* [Online]. Available at: <https://www.howandwhentoreference.com/APAcitation> [Accessed: 21 August 2017].

Web Page[4]

- Thomson, M. (2017). *APA citation* [Online]. How and when to reference. Available at: <https://www.howandwhentoreference.com/APAcitation> [Accessed: 21 August 2017].

Blog Post

- Defeo, C. (2017). *New webinar on research careers* [Blog] Mendeley blog. Available at: <https://blog.mendeley.com/2017/08/04/new-webinar-on-research-careers/> [Accessed: 21 August 2017].

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[4]Author surname(s), initial(s). (Year of publishing). *Title of page* [Online]. Title of site. Available at: URL (Accessed: day month year)

Tweet

- Mendeley_com. (2017). *We applauded our final @pintofscience talk & feeling sad. But we literally zoomed from #atomstogalaxies and it was a perfect finale* [Twitter]. 17 May. Available at: <https://twitter.com/mendeley_com/status/864947989797896194> [Accessed: 21 August 2017].

YouTube

- Mendeley. (2014). *Getting started with Mendeley* [Online video]. 3 April. Available at: <https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=Gv6_HuCYExM> [Accessed: 21 August 2017].

MSGA Previous Examples
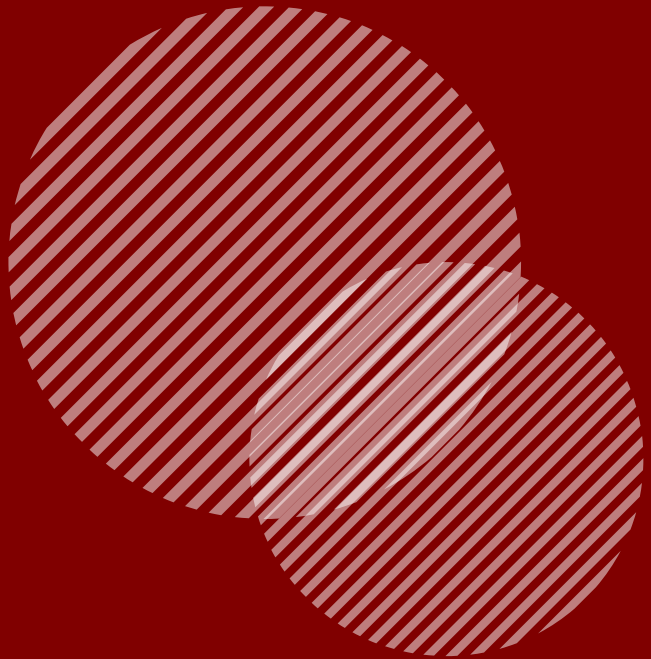
Examples

EXAMPLES

Unprofessional referencing

🔍 **Source**

Challenges Faced by Malaysian Association for the Blind (MAB)

Malaysian Association for the Blind (MAB) Chief Executive Officer, George Thomas said that MAB was also struggling financially as donations and income dropped by 85% when events and face-to-face fundraisers could not be held, leaving a question mark on the sustainability and survival of the organisation.

▶ MAB is an organisation which blind workers by providing donations that include dry items and food packages.
▶ MAB needs close to RM400,000 each month to operate the three training centres and other services.
▶ MAB is a NGO but only gets 5% assistance from the government every year. The rest of the support is given by the public.
▶ Usual income for MAB in general from donations and this January was around RM300,000. However, it dropped significantly to RM26,000 in April.

Add dates, location of announcement or **source** for credibility

Too much text

🔍 **Source**

Hearing Impaired Persons

number of impaired in Malaysia estimated to be 300 000

Around 30-35% are legally registered to receive the status of a PWD.

In Malaysia, each state has at least one school for deaf children, with a total of 23 elementary schools, two vocational schools and one secondary school. Most are residential schools where local Deaf children live at home. However, some of the schools do not have adequate facilities for the deaf.

The prevalence of dual sensory impairment (i.e. someone who is deaf-mute, etc) and hearing impairment were at 10.5% and 76.2% respectively.

Use **infographics** instead of long paragraphs describing information

Cluttered questions

Link unavailable to non-MSGA members

 Source

Background Information / Maklumat Latar Belakang

Description (optional)

Occupation / Pekerjaan : *

○ Educator / Pendidik

○ Student / Pelajar

○ Other...

Education: The Effects of COVID-19 on Education Inequality / Kesan COVID-19 ke atas Jurang Ketidaksamaan Dalam Pendidikan

The purpose of this survey is to understand the effects of COVID-19 on the education inequality gap in Malaysia. As we shift to online learning in pursuit of minimising the economic and health impacts of COVID-19 through the Movement Control Order (MCO) initiated by the government, this has understandably created adverse impacts for our education. The shift to online teaching and learning has also shed light on the importance of accessibility as we need to ensure that every student is provided with equal opportunities to participate in their online learning. This survey is conducted to analyse the severity and magnitude of the effects of COVID-19 on the education in Malaysia.

Tujuan tinjauan ini adalah untuk memahami kesan COVID-19 ke atas jurang ketidaksamaan dalam pendidikan di Malaysia. Lebih-lebih lagi dengan peralihan ke pembelajaran atas talian dalam usaha untuk meminimumkan kesan ekonomi & kesihatan COVID-19 semasa Perintah Kawalan Pergerakan (MCO) yang dimulakan oleh kerajaan, terdapat beberapa kesan buruk bagi sektor pendidikan. Peralihan kepada pengajaran & pembelajaran dalam talian juga mengetengahkan isu aksesibiliti dalam memastikan setiap pelajar diberi peluang yang sama untuk mengambil bahagian dalam pembelajaran atas talian. Tinjauan ini dilakukan untuk menganalisis tahap keparahan kesan COVID-19 terhadap pendidikan di Malaysia.

Make **separate** forms for different languages to make it less convoluted and more readable

Non-uniform referencing

Link unavailable to non-MSGA members

🔍 **Source**

18. Maniam T. "Suicide and parasuicide in a hill resort in Malaysia." *The British journal of psychiatry : the journal of mental science* 1988;153:222-5.

19. Shah, Alize. "[EXCLUSIVE] Yeoh: Criminalising suicide bid archaic." *New Straits Times,* published 2018-08-27, www.nst.com.my/news/exclusive/2018/08/405154/exclusive-yeoh-criminalising-suicide-bid-archaic. Accessed 2020-05-27.

20. Ng Yin Ping, Ravivarma Rao Panirselvam. "The Endgame of Section 309? An Appeal for Decriminalisation of Suicide." *Malaysian Journal Of Psychiatry,* Vol. 28, No. 1, June 2019, www.mjpsychiatry.org/index.php/mjp/article/download/508/387. Accessed 2020-12-06.

21. "Matters of life and death: Abortion and euthanasia." *BBC.* www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zhbqf4j. Accessed 2020-12-06.

22. Moore, Sheila. "The decriminalisation of suicide". PhD thesis, *London School of Economics and Political Science (United Kingdom),* January 2000, pp. 41-42. etheses.lse.ac.uk/id/eprint/1573. Accessed 2020-12-06.

23. "Prevent Suicide by Recognizing Early Warning Signs". *Cummings Graduate Institute of Behavioral Health Studies.* cgi.edu/biodyne-model-therapists-masters-suicide-assessment-prevention. Accessed 2020-12-06.

24. Cummings, N. A. & Cummings, J. L. (2012). *Refocused psychotherapy as the first line intervention in behavioral health.* New York, NY: Routledge.
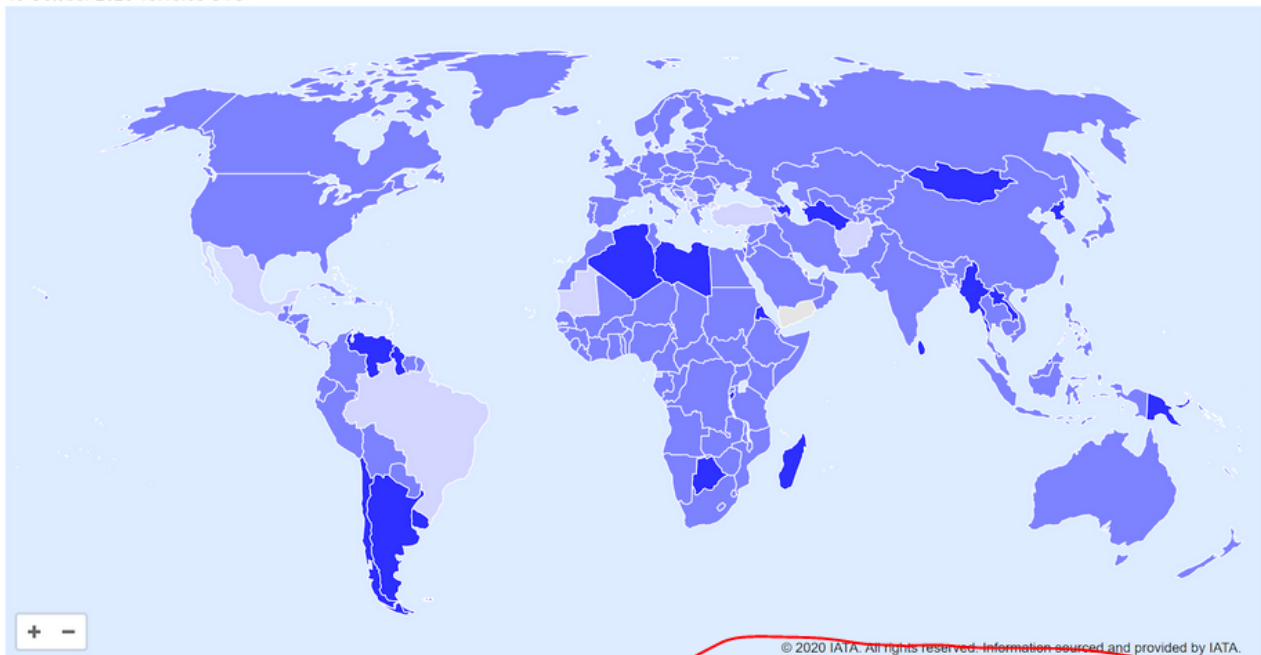
Referencing on 24 is not the **same**
as other references

Clutter in images

🔍 **Source**

COVID-19 Travel Regulations Map* (powered by Timatic)

Do put in effort to make used
images look **clean**

Good Luck