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# A short guide to referencing figures and tables for Postgraduate Taught students



# Referencing figures and tables

## Introduction

**How do you go about referring to figures, tables and other visuals in your academic writing? What do you do when you want to include tables that are all your own work, or a table that is adapted from the work of another author?**

This Short Guide will either give you the answers, or refer you to other sources of information. Please use it in conjunction with its companion guide from the ASC, **Short Guide to using visuals in your writing** (University of Birmingham, 2015).

There is no standard practice across the University of Birmingham. Some individual departments will have their own guidelines, and others may have no guidelines at all. So here are a few tips to help you to confidently use tables and figures in your academic writing.

### **Guidelines – a health warning**

This complements whatever you get told by individual lecturers. Obviously, guidance from within your School always takes priority over this general guide to good practice.

### **Tables and figures**

Visuals are normally divided into two categories for use in your writing. Tables are – fairly obviously – columns of words or data that you would create in a package such as Microsoft Word™ or Excel™.

Figures are everything else, for instance pictures, drawings, scanned material, photographs, charts and graphs etc. In some schools, all visual materials may be grouped together and known as ‘Figures’.

### **Copyright**

You can normally use copyright material for your private study. However, images you will see on the web are protected by copyright law and cannot be simply cut and pasted into your work. You must always give a source for the figure or table, and never use copyright material without acknowledgement. We strongly advise you to find out more from the University of Birmingham webpage on fair dealing (University of Birmingham, 2015a), and the web page on digital content (University of Birmingham, 2015b).

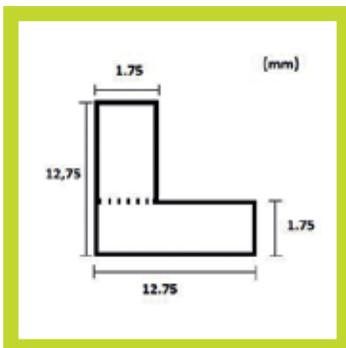
Images may also be available to you under what is called the Creative Commons agreement. In other words, this is an arrangement for the legal sharing of content which individuals have created. As well as acknowledging the creator of the work, it's also a good idea to use a low resolution image from a high-resolution work. Again, find out more about this at the University website (University of Birmingham 2015b).

Using Creative Commons means you will avoid the risk of copyright theft, and also plagiarism. To learn more, go to the Creative Commons website (Creative Commons, 2014).

### Labelling your work

Unless you are told to the contrary, tables should be labelled sequentially as Table 1, Table 2, Table 3 etc. Everything else is labelled sequentially as Figure 1, Figure 2, Figure 3 etc.

### Example



**Figure 1.**  
Dimensions of the cross-section of the beam (Frei, 2012. Used with permission).

The label is usually placed beneath the figure or table. But be aware of practice in your own School.



## Tables

Make sure that any reference to percentages always includes

the specific number. The normal shorthand is N=45 (where the study refers to 45 respondents).

## Belbin roles

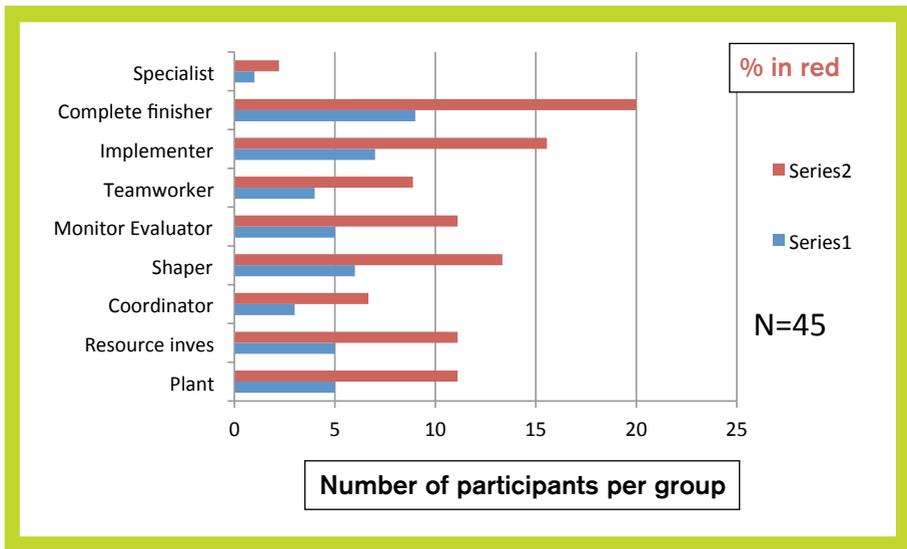


Figure 2. Belbin roles (Source: Personal collection)

## Referring to your work in the text of your assignment

When you have gone to a lot of trouble to create tables and figures, it is important to make sure that you use them effectively.

So always refer directly to the figure. For instance:

*'Figure 7, above, suggests that...'*

*'Table 4, page 19, is a powerful argument for...'*

*'Figure 17, over page, provides clear evidence that...'*

### Who created your table or figure?

Always give a source for your table or figure, or if you have found an image that you want to use after altering it.



**Figure 3. Creative Commons logo** (Creative Commons, 2015).

Some visuals that you might want to use are copyright and as previously mentioned, other materials may be available to you under the Creative Commons agreement.

There is a very useful way to locate images within the Creative Commons scheme. You can find the search tool at a University of Derby website (2015). This lists a wide range of relevant sources of copyright free images.

In addition, the University of Nottingham (2015) has produced a very helpful search tool for saving time when you have found an image. This useful tool embeds the attribution in the image, thus making it clear that the work is cleared of copyright problems. You can find the Nottingham Xpert tool here: <http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/xpert/attribution>

In order to use these two great free services:

1. **Decide** what kind of image you need.
2. **Locate** the web address of an image using University of Derby (2015) service.
3. **Copy** the web address and paste it into the University of Nottingham (2015) Xpert database.
4. **Download** the image. You will notice that it now has a list of credits at its base. This box displays the technical information you need to display.
5. **Save** that image and then paste it into your document.



**Figure 3. Creative Commons attribution** on an image of a palace. (Gabowich, 2009).

As an example: here is a mind map with the attribution automatically added.

The official 'attribution' under Creative Commons is tucked discreetly down in the bottom left corner

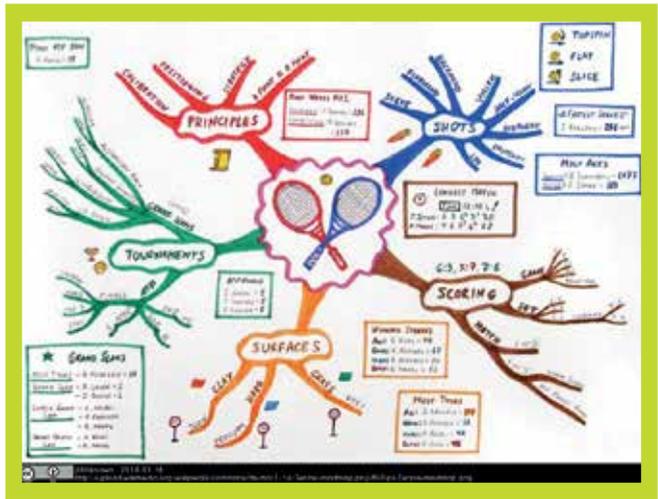


Figure 4. Example of mind map. (Gabowich, 2009, cc BY 2.5).

**Reminder:** please note that the image has both a copyright statement in at the bottom of the figure, plus the figure number and a caption.

You need both sets of identification. If the image does not show up on the University of Nottingham Xpert database, it is perfectly permissible to add your own attribution.

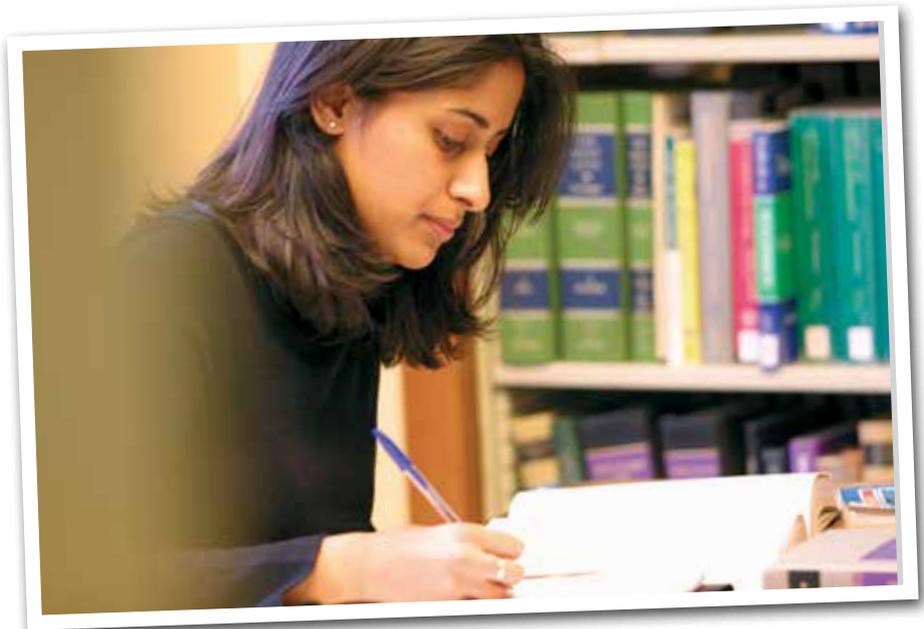
## Questions

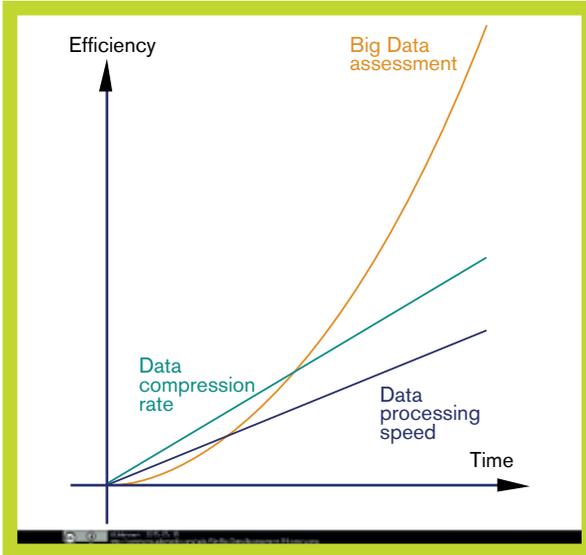
**Do I need to cite the University of Derby and University of Nottingham searching tools in my assignments?**

No, they are just search engines to help you find appropriate images, in the same way as Google, Bing or the Library Services FindIt@Birmingham search engines.

**Are other image searching tools available?**

Yes of course there are lots which you are probably already aware of. We are mentioning the University of Derby and the University of Nottingham tools because they are so useful, and refer you to fully licensed materials.



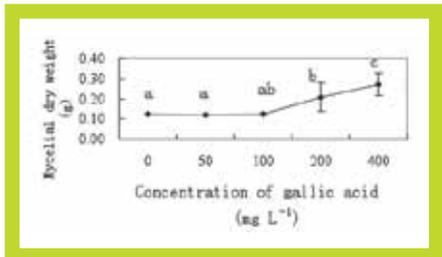


Creative Commons statement, prepared by the student who wants to use someone else's image. This caption is perfectly acceptable.

**Figure 5.** Data processing speed, data compression rate and Big Data assessment versus time. (Bautsch, 2014) cc BY 1.0.

### More examples of referencing tables and figures

Tables and figures should always be referenced. Treat the visuals exactly as though they were quotations taken from a published work. Consequently your reader can go back to check the original reference.



**Figure 6.** Effective gallic acid on biomass of *Fusarium oxysporum* f. sp. (Wu et al., 2009, p.300).

Referencing another writer's graph.

**Amending another writer’s work**

If you have adapted the data, then use ‘Amended from’.  
For instance, if you had worked on Figure 6, above and slightly altered or changed it, your caption would read:

**Figure 7.** Effective gallic acid on biomass of *Fusarium oxysporum* f. sp. (Amended from Wu et al., 2009, p300).

```
clc
clear all
p = [0.001113, - 0.001713,
(13.19 - 380)];
roots(p);
```

**Figure 8.** MATLAB script for x (Amended from Duncan, 2012).

Amending someone else’s data.



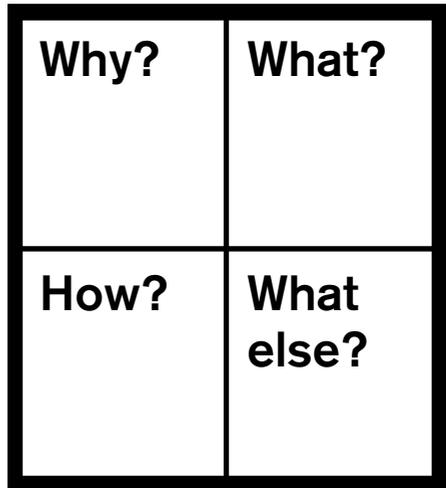
**Further example of amended data.**

**All your own work**

If you have created your own original figure, you write:

**Name of image**  
(Source: Personal collection),

as the following example illustrates.



**Figure 9.** A revised 4Mat grid (Source: Personal collection).

Referencing your own visual eg, graph or chart

## Tables and figures in the list of references

### A table or figure from a book

Give the Originator's Surname, INITIALS. (Year of publication) Title of image [type of image]. **Title of book.** Place of publication: Publisher.

Example:

Timbrell, J. (2000) Additional reaction [Diagram] . In: **Principles of biochemical toxicology.** 3rd. ed. London: Taylor and Francis, p.101.

### A table or figure from a journal article

Give the Originator's Surname, INITIALS. (Year of publication) Title of image [type of image]. Source In: Title of Journal article. **Journal title,** number (part): pages.

Example:

Wu, G., Fang y and Yang S. (2004) Figure 1: Multiplicity of Glutathione roles in mammalian organisms [JPEG]. In: Gluthione metabolism and its implications for health. **Journal of Nutrition,** 134 (3): 489-492.

### A table or figure from an online source

Give the Originator's Surname, INITIALS. (Year of publication) Title of image [type of image]. Source [Online]. Available from: URL [Accessed: date].

Example of online reference:

Gunning, V. (2012) Figure 2: Chemical structure of 2,4,6-Trinitrotoluene [Diagram]. In: **The role of glutathione transferases in TNT detoxification.** Figure 1.1, p1. MSc thesis. University of York. Department of Biology. [online]. Available from: [http://etheses.whiterose.ac.uk/3785/1/Vanda\\_Gunning\\_thesis.pdf](http://etheses.whiterose.ac.uk/3785/1/Vanda_Gunning_thesis.pdf) [Accessed: 10 February 2015].



## List of references

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*[This is one of the best places to look when you want to find a wide range of image search engines for copyright-cleared material].*

University of Nottingham. (2015) **Xpert attribution tool** [online].

Available from: <http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/xpert/attribution> [Accessed: 15 February 2015 ]. *[The tool allows you to attribute the author in your visual].*

### With special thanks to:

- Nancy Graham, formerly Subject Advisor, Library Services, who drew the ASC's attention to the University of Derby and University of Nottingham tools.
- Alex Fenlon, University of Birmingham, Copyright and Licensing Officer, for invaluable advice on copyright matters and Creative Commons.
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- Jenny Frei and Ian Duncan (University of Birmingham students), for allowing the ASC to use samples of their materials.

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