

ACM Style Guide – Citing Thesis or Dissertations

APSU Writing Center Handout

What is an in-text citation?

An in-text citation is a short reference within your writing that shows where your information came from. ACM uses numbered citations in square brackets.

- Do NOT include years in in-text citations.
- Do NOT use author-date style (like APA or ASA)

Examples:

Single source → [1] Multiple sources → [1, 2]

Example Sentences:

This approach has been widely adopted in recent systems [2].

Several studies have shown improvements in performance [3, 4].

What is a Reference Page?

A reference page is a list at the end of your paper that gives full details about all the sources you cited. List references in the order they appear in your paper.

Do NOT alphabetize. Do NOT use hanging indents in ACM format unless stated by your professor. ACM papers are typically formatted using an official template, so students should follow the template instead of formatting citations on their own.

Example (Book Chapter):

BLESS, H. 2000. The Interplay of Affect and Cognition. In *Feeling and Thinking: The Role of Affect in Social Cognition*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 201–222.

ACM (Computing Machinery) Style - Citing a Technical Report

A **technical report** is a document that presents research or findings from an organization or lab, often before formal publication.

In-text Citation Format: [number]

Use the number corresponding to the reference in your reference list.

Sentence with In-Text Citation Example 1:

Harel's foundational work introduced axiomatic approaches to program logic [1].

Sentence with In-Text Citation Example 2:

Technical reports can provide early insights into new algorithms before journal publication [2].

Reference Format:

[number] Author(s). Year. *Title*. Report Type Report Number. Institution, City, State/Country.

Reference Examples:

[1] David Harel. 1978. *LOGICS of Programs: AXIOMATICS and DESCRIPTIVE POWER*. MIT Research Lab Technical Report TR-200. Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA.

[2] John Hopcroft and Jeffrey Ullman. 1979. *Formal Languages and Their Relation to Automata*. Stanford Computer Science Technical Report STAN-CS-79-676. Stanford University, Stanford, CA.

ACM (Computing Machinery) Style - Citing a Doctoral Dissertation

A **doctoral dissertation** is an original research project submitted to a university to fulfill the requirements for a Ph.D.

In-text Citation Format: [number]

- Use the number corresponding to the reference in your reference list.

Sentence with In-Text Citation Example 1:

Clarkson's dissertation introduced efficient algorithms for solving closest-point problems in computational geometry [1].

Sentence with In-Text Citation Example 2:

Doctoral dissertations often serve as primary sources for advanced research in specialized fields [2].

Reference Format:

[number] Author. Year. *Title* (Optional: Field). Ph.D. Dissertation. University, City, State/Country. UMI Order Number (if needed).

Reference Examples:

[1] Kenneth L. Clarkson. 1985. *Algorithms for Closest-Point Problems (Computational Geometry)*. Ph.D. Dissertation. Stanford University, Palo Alto, CA. UMI Order Number: AAT 8506171.

[2] Jennifer L. Welch. 2012. *Optimizing Distributed Data Structures for Cloud Computing*. Ph.D. Dissertation. Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA. UMI Order Number: AAT 3506123.

ACM (Computing Machinery) Style - Citing a master's Thesis

A **master's thesis** is a research project completed to fulfill the requirements for a master's degree.

In-text Citation Format: [number]

Use the number corresponding to the reference in your reference list.

Sentence with In-Text Citation Example 1:

Anisi's thesis explores techniques for optimal motion control in ground vehicles [1].

Sentence with In-Text Citation Example 2:

Master's theses often provide detailed experimental results that support future research [2].

Reference Format:

[number] Author. Year. *Title*. Master's thesis. University, City, State/Country.

Reference Examples:

[1] David A. Anisi. 2003. *Optimal Motion Control of a Ground Vehicle*. Master's thesis. Royal Institute of Technology (KTH), Stockholm, Sweden.

[2] Maria L. Johansson. 2010. *Energy-Efficient Path Planning for Autonomous Robots*. Master's thesis. Lund University, Lund, Sweden.

References

Association for Computing Machinery. (2023, July 11). *Reference formatting*. ACM.

<https://www.acm.org/publications/authors/reference-formatting>

Association for Computing Machinery. (2021). *CHI 2021 example papers*. CHI 2021.

<https://chi2021.acm.org/for-authors/presenting/papers/example-papers>