

# PREPOSITIONS IN ACADEMIC WRITING

The following prepositions are the ones most commonly used in academic writing. You may like to add to the list as you come across more prepositions in your own reading.

## **about/concerning**

comments about  
a conference about  
data about  
a debate about  
issues about  
a lecture about  
legislation about  
a policy about  
research about  
statistics about  
a theory about  
a thesis about  
to worry about

## **against**

discriminated against

## **as**

to conceive of sth as  
to emerge as  
to identify s.o./sth as –ing  
to perceive sth as  
its status as

## **at**

at the end of the semester  
to estimate sth at  
at fault  
at a university  
at a/the x level

## **between**

a comparison between  
a connection between  
a contrast between  
a differentiation between\  
a distinction between  
an interaction between  
a partnership between

## **by**

allocation by  
followed by  
offset by  
preceded by

## **for**

adequate for  
to apply for sth  
appropriate for  
available for  
a capacity for sth  
a challenge for s.o.  
compensation for  
a contract for  
criteria for  
difficult for s.o. to do sth  
imperative for s.o. to do sth  
to have implications for  
an incentive for –ing  
a justification for  
a mechanism for –ing  
a need for  
an option for s.o.  
to prepare (s.o). for  
a problem for s.o.  
problematic for s.o.  
responsible for  
scope for  
strategies for  
to be suitable for  
a tendency for s.o. to do sth  
for a year (e.g. statistics for 2004)

**from**

derived from  
 a deviation from  
 to discourage s.o. from doing sth  
 excluded from  
 protected from  
 removed from

**in**

in the area of  
 in conformity with  
 in a university department  
 to engage in  
 an error in  
 to have experience in  
 in . . . field/sphere  
 to fill in  
 in . . . font  
 in . . . format  
 an improvement in  
 inherent in  
 interested in  
 involved in  
 to have instruction in  
 intrinsic in  
 to invest in  
 current issues in  
 to be involved in  
 in a . . . manner  
 to occur in  
 participation in  
 persistent in -ing  
 proficiency in sth  
 in . . . region  
 to conduct research in  
 resident in  
 a revolution in  
 to have a role in doing sth  
 . . . in scope  
 in the first semester  
 a shift in  
 significant in  
 in a topic  
 to have training in sth

**into**

to conduct research into  
 integration into  
 an investigation into

**of**

accused of  
 an analysis of sth/to analyse sth  
 ashamed of  
 an awareness of

on behalf of  
 capable of -ing  
 composed of sth  
 to conceive of sth (as)  
 constraints of  
 critical of  
 a definition of sth/to define sth  
 evidence of  
 an extract of  
 a fear of sth  
 a guarantee of  
 an implication of  
 the importance of  
 an incidence of  
 an indication of  
 indicative of sth/to indicate sth  
 of interest to  
 an instance of  
 issues of  
 a limitation of  
 to make use of  
 an objective of  
 on the part of  
 proud of  
 of relevance to  
 the scope of  
 a source of  
 the status of  
 a survey of  
 a theory of  
 to be unaware of  
 (in) violation of  
 a vision of

**on**

on average  
 on a . . . basis  
 (to) comment on  
 a concentration on  
 to have an effect on sth/to affect sth  
 an emphasis on sth/to emphasise sth  
 (to) focus on  
 (to) impact on  
 imposed on  
 information on  
 a lecture on  
 a levy on  
 to major on  
 a perspective on  
 to prevail on s.o. to do sth  
 to answer questions on  
 a questionnaire on  
 a reliance on  
 to rely on  
 to do research on

to put/lay stress on sth/to stress sth  
a thesis on

**to**

to have access to  
accustomed to  
adjacent to  
an adjustment to sth/to adjust sth  
allocate sth to  
an amendment to sth/to amend sth  
analogous to  
to be apparent to s.o.  
to apply to s.o.  
an approach to  
appropriate to (do) sth  
an alternative to  
an attitude to/towards  
a challenge to s.o./to challenge s.o.  
a commitment to  
committed to  
confined to  
to consent to  
a contribution to  
corresponding to  
devoted to  
due to  
equivalent to  
exposure to  
external to sth  
fundamental to  
grateful to  
important to s.o.  
identical to  
inherent to  
intrinsic to  
known/unknown to

to object to  
obvious to  
prior to  
proportionate to  
a reaction to  
related to  
relevant to  
reluctant to  
resistant to  
restricted to  
significant to  
similar to  
specific to  
subordinate to  
subsequent to  
supplementary to  
to transfer to

**with**

to agree with  
to argue with s.o. about sth  
associated with  
to coincide with  
compared with  
(in)compatible with  
concurrent with  
in conformity with  
to be consistent with  
to deal with  
familiar with  
to identify with s.o./sth  
interaction with  
partnership with  
to provide s.o. with sth  
satisfied with

These words are mostly taken from Coxhead, A, *The academic word list*, viewed 21 June 2005,  
<<http://massey.ac.nz/staff/awl/sublists.shtml>>.

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