



UNIVERSAL CITATION *for* NORTH CAROLINA



We're very excited about continuing our work to modernize our unified court system, from the trial courts to the appellate courts, by really leveraging technology. This new format will expand access to justice and improve accessibility in a digital age.

CHIEF JUSTICE CHERI BEASLEY
SUPREME COURT OF NORTH CAROLINA



WHAT IS UNIVERSAL CITATION?

- Universal citation is a type of citation used for printed and electronically published appellate opinions that uses a paragraph-based numbering system rather than pages. Each case is given a sequential number for identification that is not dependent on any particular source, such as the volume and page number in the official printed reporter.
- Universal citation will be used as a parallel citation, replacing citation to the South Eastern Reporter, for opinions issued by both the Supreme Court of North Carolina and the North Carolina Court of Appeals.

WHY WAS IT ADOPTED?

- Universal citation increases access to judicial opinions by providing a unique identifying number that is not dependent on a particular source, such as the official printed reporter or a regional reporter printed by third-party publishers.
- Facilitates searching content on electronic sources.
- Provides a permanent citation the day opinions are made publicly available without waiting for publication of the official paginated reporter.

WHEN IS IT USED?

- Universal citation method is used for parallel citation ONLY.
- The official citation, meaning book and page citations to the official printed reporter, will remain the same.
- Universal citation will initially apply to judicial opinions filed on January 1, 2021, and afterward.

WHAT DOES UNIVERSAL CITATION LOOK LIKE?

- The Guidebook, the Supreme Court of North Carolina's citation, style, and usage guide (available at NCcourts.gov), contains the correct format for North Carolina cases.
- Citation details: Bluebook Rule 10.3.3
 - Includes the case name, the year of decision, the court abbreviation, the sequential number of the decision, and a paragraph number pin cite
- Example citations

State v. Smith, 375 N.C. 152, 2020-NCSC-45, ¶ 16.

(official citation) (parallel citation)

Case Name ↑
Year of Decision ———— ↑
Court Abbreviation ———— ↑
Opinion Number ———— ↑
Pinpoint Paragraph Number ———— ↑

- North Carolina Court of Appeals
State v. Smith, 255 N.C. App. 43, 2020-NCCOA-118, ¶ 23.

WHO USES UNIVERSAL CITATION?

- States using a public domain citation format include: Arkansas, Colorado, Illinois, Louisiana, Maine, Mississippi, Montana, New Mexico, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Utah, Vermont, Wisconsin, and Wyoming
- Other jurisdictions using a public domain citation format include: United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and Guam

WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES OF USING UNIVERSAL CITATION?

- Adapts citation format to the way that most practitioners and the public now use legal resources
- Increases accessibility of opinions by allowing them to be cited with a permanent citation as soon as they are published online
- Facilitates referencing and finding specific passages and quotations in an opinion by using paragraph numbering rather than page numbering, whether in an electronic or hard copy source

For more information, see the Supreme Court of North Carolina's Administrative Order dated December 4, 2019, on NCcourts.gov.



UNIVERSAL CITATION *for* NORTH CAROLINA



SUPREME COURT *of* NORTH CAROLINA

P.O. Box 2170
RALEIGH, NC 27602-2170

MONDAY - FRIDAY
8 A.M. - 5 P.M.

919-831-5700

WWW.NCCOURTS.GOV