These brief “lessons” are designed to address common mistakes in English usage and to administer instruction in small doses.

Today we’ll look at “in accord” and “in accordance,” which have subtle but distinctly different meanings [1].

Both phrases take the preposition with [2].


“In accord” means “in agreement”
“In accordance” means “in compliance”

In accord is more likely to be used in science writing

In accordance is more likely to be used in legal writing and is probably wrong if used in a physics paper

Both accord and accordance take the prepositions in ... with

Examples of incorrect usage taken from recent Physical Review Letters:

In this system, in accordance to [should be in accord with] Kohn’s theorem, strong reduction of the energy level separation caused by the electron-electron interaction compensates the depolarization shift.

We have observed fine structures near sample edges that shift inward with an increase in magnetic field in accordance with [should be in accord with] the shift of the positions of the quantum-Hall edge states.

The simulated x-ray diffraction pattern, density, and bulk modulus of Cco-C₈ are in good accordance with [should be in good accord with] the experimental data on structurally undetermined superhard carbon recovered from cold compression of carbon nanotube bundles.

Mnemonic: “accordance” = “compliance”

If you mean “in agreement,” use “accord.” Or save yourself a whole lot of angst and just use “in agreement with” in the first place. –Ms. P.