


Ms. Particular Presents:
In Accord vs. In Accordance

With thanks to Ryan Swindeman, who first brought the issue to Ms. Particular's attention

Celia M. Elliott
Department of Physics
University of Illinois

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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].

1. Bryan A. Garner, *Garner’s Modern American Usage* (Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 12-13.
2. Theodore M. Bernstein, *The Careful Writer: A Modern Guide to English Usage* (New York, Atheneum, 1977), p. 11.

“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.