Why remove "that?" Well, in academic writing we are often trying to be as concise as possible, and removing unnecessary words can help us do this.

THAT in Relative Clauses

You can usually omit "that" in relative clauses. You can tell if "that" begins a relative clause if you can substitute "which." Here are some examples:

A strong correlation between sugar consumption and obesity was found in the studies that were all conducted before the obesity rate skyrocketed (Smith, 2014; Wallaby & Peters, 2013).

→ A strong correlation between sugar consumption and obesity was found in the studies conducted before the obesity rate skyrocketed (Smith, 2014; Wallaby & Peters, 2013).

Artificial sweeteners are aggressively marketed by companies that are seeking to present a health-conscious brand (Wallaby & Peters, 2013).

→ Artificial sweeteners are aggressively marketed by companies seeking to present a health-conscious brand (Wallaby & Peters, 2013).

THAT as a Conjunction

You can **sometimes** remove "that" when it's used as a conjunction to join a subordinate clause after a transitive verb (a verb that requires a direct object). However, sometimes "that" is important to clarity, especially on a first read.

"That" **should not** be omitted if doing so can results in the reader's initial misreading of the sentence. Here is an example:

Harrison admitted that being under the influence of alcohol leaders to significantly lower reaction times.

Including "that" ensures that readers won't think the sentence is going to say that Harrison admitted to being under the influence of alcohol. In this case, we must keep "that" for clarity. **Keep in mind that it is always correct to include "that" to join a clause as an object of a verb. If you are not sure whether you need it or not, it is best to leave it in. If you are sure the sentence cannot be misread, then you can omit it.**