

This worksheet will give you a taster of the information available to you via bibliographic databases such as Scopus and Web of Knowledge/Science. Literature searching from the website of any database is more powerful than searching via the Primo tool or with Google Scholar.

**Please ask for help at any time if you need it**

1. Plan your search – Scopus search rules	Page 1
2. Carry out your initial search in Scopus	Page 1
3. View and evaluate your results	Page 2
4. Refine your search	Page 2
5. Output your results	Page 3
6. Advanced features	Page 4
7. Off campus access	Page 4
8. Help and advice	Page 4

## 1: Plan your search

What are you looking for information on? What is the title of your assignment?

Use the **Search Strategy** planning grid included in your pack to help you to decide on the keyword search approach you will use in this database. Remember to apply the search rules for Scopus.

Search rules for Scopus:

- Boolean operators: **and, or, and not**
- Exact phrase in quotation marks e.g. **“oil production”**
- Truncation symbol \* e.g. **comput\*** will find compute, computer, computers, computation, computing
- Can use \* in an exact phrase search
- Automatic truncation operates on singular form of word (e.g. **cigar** will pick up **cigars** but may not pick up **cigarette** or **cigarettes**) so it is more effective to use truncation symbol e.g. **cigar\***

## 2: Carry out your initial search in Scopus

1. Go to **www.scopus.com**
2. Click on **Add search field** to add a second search box
3. Let's try a “quick and dirty” search using only one of your words/phrases for each of your ideas. Don't use any truncation symbols at this point – you will use them later to see if they make a difference!

Type one keyword or phrase for your first concept (idea) in the first search box

Type one keyword or phrase for your second concept (idea) in the second search box

4. Click on **Search**
5. Look at the Scopus results. How many records have been found?


6. Now improve your search – go back and look at the search terms you thought about on your planning sheet/matrix. Use more of your alternative words/phrases for each idea and make sure that you apply the truncation symbol at appropriate points.
7. Click on **Search**
8. Look at the Scopus results. How many records have been found?

**You will use a combination of the options presented in Section 3 (View and evaluate your results) and Section 4 (Refine your search) to improve the records that you find.**

### 3: View and evaluate your results

You never get the perfect search first time and you will modify and refine your search as you go along. This involves looking at what you have found and modifying, refining and improving your search strategy.

1. **Viewing your results:** there are a number of options available to you
  - a) Click on **Show Abstract**
  - b) Click on the blue title link for any of the papers. Skim down the information given in this display. Are there any other keywords that you could use to improve your search? If there are note them down as you may want to use them at a later stage of your search.

- c) Click on the **Full Text** link for any of the papers that have this icon. In the SFX pop-up window select one of the given suppliers. (Make Elsevier your first choice if this is provided, and if Swetswise is an option make this your last choice supplier – you will end up in the same place but takes a few extra clicks to get there).
  - d) Identify a reference where there is no **Full text** icon and instead click on the  link. Use the **Go** link to move through to the library catalogue to check our paper holdings for the journal in which this paper was published. Do we have the reference that you were interested in?
2. **Displaying/sorting your results:** the default setting in the **Sort by** box (above your results list to the right hand side) is the most recent item is at the top of your results list with the oldest item at the bottom (Date (Newest). You can change this sort order to assist your evaluation of what you have found.
  - a) Change the **Sort by** option to **Relevance**: this sorts the results list based on where your search terms appear within the reference.
  - b) Change the **Sort by** option to **Citations**: this sorts the list so that the paper with the highest number of citations appears at the top. This is likely to be an older paper, but not necessarily the oldest paper.
3. **Evaluating your results:** this depends on your own knowledge of the topic. Skim read the results and abstracts as appropriate. Look for: relevant words in the title and in the abstract; recognised/known authors or institutions. Consider the references used and the number of times a paper has been cited since publication (does not apply if it is a recent paper!). Think about whether the journal in which the paper was published is an important one in this subject area.

### 4: Refine your search

You never get the perfect search first time. You have to modify and refine as you go along. There are different ways in which you can do this. The following options are available and you will use a combination of these as you evaluate your results and develop your search strategy to identify relevant papers.

1. Refining by **keyword**: To the left of your document results you can add another set of keywords to the **Search within results** box – e.g. a third idea/concept.

In the **Search within results** box add another keyword(s) if necessary. Click on **Search**. How many records are found?

You can continue to use this option to add more and more ideas. It carries out an automatic **and** search against the previous set of results.

2. Refining by **Subject Area**: To the left of your results list in a table entitled **Refine results** Scopus presents additional options for refining and limiting your search.

Skim down the options presented to you under the **Subject Area** column. **Select** one or more of the topics (click on the check box to the left hand side of the subject), then click on the **Limit** button at the bottom of this section.

3. Refining by **Document Type**: To the left of your results list in a table entitled **Refine results** Scopus presents additional options for refining and limiting your search.

Skim down the sections looking for **Document Type** and open this if it is not yet open. If you have the option to limit by Review use this (can be extremely useful in the early part of a literature review). Put a tick against **Review** under Document type and click on **Limit**. How many records are found?

4. Refining by other means: in the default setting of the **Refine results** listing Scopus allows you to refine/limit your results by a variety of means including **Source Title** (name of the journal in which papers were published), **Author Name**, **Year**, **Keyword**.

Do any of these options provide you with useful results?

## 5: Output your results

Almost all databases allow you to mark and output results in a variety of ways.

1. **Selecting/marking results:**

- a) you can select small numbers of individual records by clicking in the check box to the left of each record
- b) to select a greater number of references use the **All** or **Page** check box in the Document results header bar (left hand side)

2. Once records have been selected click on any of the options provided in the grey navigation bar above your results: Download PDF, Export, Print, Email, Create bibliography, Add to My List, View citation overview, View citations, View references

- a) Click on Create bibliography. Use the drop down menu to select HTML and then select a style from the second drop down menu. Click on **Create**

## 6: Advanced features

Many databases allow you to set up time saving features such as personal profiles (or accounts), saved search strategies or results lists and alerting features.

To create a personal account in Scopus follow these steps:

1. Go to **www.scopus.com**
2. Click on **Register** in the top right-hand corner of the screen
3. Complete the form and click on the **Register** button at the bottom
4. You've now set up your own personal account in Scopus, and can save search strategies and results lists, set up alerts and manage your settings

## 7: Off campus access

If you do not have the proxy set on your own computer (instructions on how to set the proxy at **www.abdn.ac.uk/proxy**), log in to Scopus following these steps:

1. Go to **www.scopus.com**
2. Click on **Login** in the top right-hand corner of the screen
3. Click on the **Go to the Athens/Other Institution login** link
4. Under **To login using your institution's login credentials, select a region or group** click on the drop-down menu and select **UK Access Management Federation**
5. Scroll down the list on the right-hand side and click on **University of Aberdeen**
6. A security window will open. Enter your university username and password and click on **Login**

## 8: Help and advice

If you have any problems with accessing Scopus or using any of the features, please contact Susan, Elaine or Janet below, or the Service Desk. Information Consultants can also help with any difficulties you encounter with subject specific topics.

### **IT technical problems, including access to databases: Service Desk**

Email: [servicedesk@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:servicedesk@abdn.ac.uk) (only staffed Monday to Friday 09:00 – 17:00 hours)

Tel.: 01224 27-3636 (anytime – an out of hours service is provided after 17:00 and at weekends)

### **Advice and support on using databases:**

Arts and Humanities – Janet MacKay ([j.i.mackay@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:j.i.mackay@abdn.ac.uk))

Education, Social Sciences, Music – Claire Molloy ([c.a.l.molloy@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:c.a.l.molloy@abdn.ac.uk))

Law and Business – Elaine Shallcross ([e.shallcross@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:e.shallcross@abdn.ac.uk))

Medicine and Medical Sciences – Mel Bickerton ([m.bickerton@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:m.bickerton@abdn.ac.uk))

Science and Engineering – Susan McCourt ([s.mccourt@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:s.mccourt@abdn.ac.uk))

All workshop materials are available at: <http://aberdeenunilibskills.pbworks.com>

