This worksheet will give you a taster of the information available to you via the bibliographic databases available through ProQuest. 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

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1: Plan your search – ProQuest search rules

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 ProQuest.

Search rules for ProQuest:

- Boolean operators: **AND, OR, NOT** (in capital letters)
- Exact phrase in quotation marks e.g. **"time travel"**
- Truncation symbol ***** e.g. **comput*** will find compute, computer, computers, computation, computing
- Truncation symbol ***** e.g. **colo*r** will find color, colour
- Wildcard symbol **?** e.g. **sm?th** will find smith, smyth, smooth

2: Carry out your initial search in ProQuest

1. Go to Primo at http://primo.abdn.ac.uk/ and click on the **Find Databases** tab
2. Type **ProQuest** into the **Name** box and hit the Find Databases button
3. Scroll down to the specific database you want to search and click on its name. Primo will open its details page
4. In the **View Online** section, click on the database's name e.g. Ecology Abstracts (ProQuest). Primo will open the database in a new tab

If you wish to search across all ProQuest databases:

1. Go to: https://search.proquest.com/
2. Click on the **Advanced Search** link (above the basic 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 just now – you will use them later to see if they make a difference!

4. Type one keyword or phrase for your first concept (idea) in the first search box then click on **Search**

5. Look at the 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. (Click on **Modify search** at the top of your results.)

7. Click on **Search**. Look at the 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 Abstract/Details to view the 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 **Find It** button underneath a record to find out if we have access to the full-text of an article. This takes you back to Primo and the details page for the selected paper. If the item is available online, in the **View Online** section in Primo, click on the name of the provider, e.g. ScienceDirect. Primo will open the provider's website in a new tab. From there you will be able to access the article's full-text.

2. **Displaying/sorting your results**: the default setting in the **Sorted by** box (to the left of the results) is by relevance based on where your search terms appear within the reference. You can change this sort order to assist your evaluation of what you have found.

   a) Change the **Sorted by** option to **Most recent first**: this sorts the results list with the most recent item at the top of the list and the oldest item at the bottom – useful if currency is important.
   b) Change the **Sorted by** option to **Oldest first**: this sorts the list with the oldest item at the top of the list and the most recent item at the bottom – useful for researching background and trends.

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 (may 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. **Modify search:**
   At the top of the results click on the **Modify search** link, then on **Add a row** to introduce a second/third keyword to your previous search. Click on **Search**. How many records are found?

You can continue to use this option to add more and more ideas

2. Refining by **Subject**: To the left of your results list, there is a table containing refinement options.

   Click on **Subject** to open a pop-up list of relevant subjects to your search.

3. Refining by **Document type**: To the left of your results list, there is a table containing further refinement options. Click on Document type to open a pop-up list of document types contained in your results. Make a selection. How many records are found?

4. Refining by other means: ProQuest allows you to refine/limit your results by a variety of means including **Publication Title** (name of the journal in which papers were published), **Date** (year of publication), and **Language**.

   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 **Select 1-20** check box in the blue navigation bar above the list of results. 1-20 is the default number of results per page but may be changed at the bottom of the page

2. Once records have been selected click on any of the options provided in the navigation bar above your results: **Cite, Email, Save to My Research, All save options** (including exporting to RefWorks).

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 ProQuest follow these steps:

1. Go to http://search.proquest.com (note there is no www section in the URL)
2. Click on **My Research** in the top right-hand corner of the screen
3. Click on **Sign into My Research**, then select **Create an account**. Complete the form and click on the **Create account** button
4. You've now set up your own personal account in ProQuest, and can save search strategies and results lists, set up alerts and manage your settings

7: How to access ProQuest

On-Campus Access

All university computers have been set-up so that you only need your university username and password to access most of our electronic resources.

1. Select ProQuest from the **Find Databases** function in Primo, our resource discovery tool
2. You will be taken through Shibboleth, a service used by many universities for accessing databases
3. You may need to select the location of this university (UK) and then scroll down to select University of Aberdeen
4. Enter your university username and password to access the resource

When using your own devices on campus you will need to configure them to access our wireless network. Once you have connected to our wireless network you will link out to electronic resources in the same way as above. More information can be found at www.abdn.ac.uk/library/documents/guides/qgdbs005.pdf

Off-Campus Access

When off-campus, most of our electronic resources are still accessible via the Shibboleth log-in route, requiring only your username and password. ProQuest is still accessible in this way from off-campus.

You can also access electronic resources from off campus through the University's Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI).

- Details on doing this are available at:
  www.abdn.ac.uk/toolkit/systems/remote-access/

- More detailed library guidance on accessing electronic resources is available at:
  www.abdn.ac.uk/library/documents/guides/qgdbs005.pdf

8: Help and advice

Library staff and Information Consultants can help with any difficulties using any library resource
Information Consultant contact details: http://bit.ly/InfoConsultants
IT staff are able to help with specific IT related problems you may be having
IT Service Desk - Log any IT problems at https://myit.abdn.ac.uk Tel. 01224 273636 (24-hour service available)