

Using the Scopus database

Information Skills Practical Workshop

This worksheet will give you a taster of the information available to you via the Scopus bibliographic database. Other databases will work in a similar way. 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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STEP 1: Plan your search

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**
- Searches are not case sensitive
- 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 the truncation symbol e.g. **cigar***


STEP 2: Carry out your initial search in Scopus

Access to Scopus:

1. Go to **Primo** at <http://primo.abdn.ac.uk> and sign in at the top right-hand side of the screen
2. Select **Find Databases** which is above the search boxes
3. Enter Scopus into the **Database Search** box at top of screen and click on the search button. Primo will return one result. Click on the name - Scopus (Elsevier). This opens the database's details page in Primo. In the **View Online** section, click on Scopus (Elsevier). You may be asked to provide your username and password

Note: If you wish to find databases in your subject area, repeat steps 1 & 2, then click on the right arrow next to a discipline from the options on the left (e.g. Social Science) and select a subject area (e.g. Sociology). Primo will display a list containing academic databases in Sociology.

Searching in Scopus:

1. Click on the  symbol to add a second search box
2. 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) into the first search box
Type one keyword or phrase for your second concept (idea) into the second search box

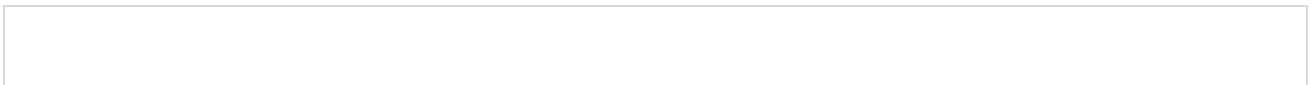
3. Click on **Search**
4. Look at the Scopus results. How many records have been found?
5. Now improve your search –look at the search terms you thought about on your planning sheet/matrix. Click on **Edit** (above your results) and add to the search your alternative words/phrases for each idea, making sure that you apply the truncation symbol and search rules at appropriate points.
6. Click on **Search**. Look at the Scopus results. How many records have been found?
7. **Search within results**: use the box to the left of your document results to add another set of keywords to your search, e.g. a third idea/concept. 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.

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.

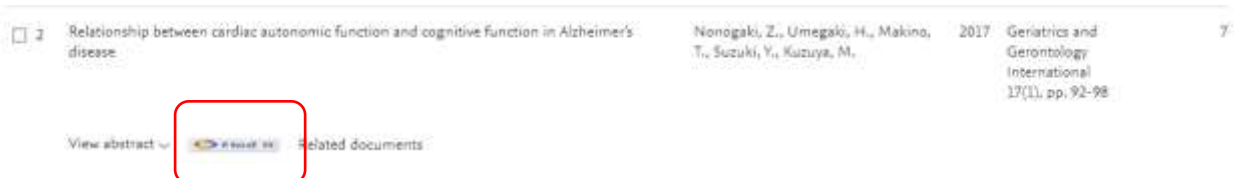
STEP 3: View and evaluate your results

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 **View abstract** to obtain more information on a paper
 - b) Click on **the 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** icon under a title that interests you



This will link you back to Primo and the details page for the selected item. **Available Online** means that we have full-text access to a paper. Where Primo displays **Check holdings**, it means that we may have the document in physical format.

Relationship between cardiac autonomic function and cognitive function in Alzheimer's disease
Nonogaki, Zen; Umegaki, Hiroyuki; Makino, Taeko; Suzuki, Yusuke; Kuzuya, Masafumi
ISSN: 1444-1586 , 1447-0594; DOI: 10.1111/ggi.12679
Geriatrics and gerontology international. , 2017, Vol.17(1), p.92-98
[Available Online](#)

Top
View Online
Send to

View Online

Full text availability

KB+ SHEDL Wiley Online Library Full Collection 2019
Available from 2001 volume: 1 issue: 1.
Online version available for university members only. This requires an institutional login off-campus

Where we have online access to a document, click on the name of the provider, e.g. Wiley Online Library. Primo will open their website in a new tab.

Note: There will be instances where we don't have access to a document in physical or electronic format.

Additional note: For oil/gas/petroleum engineers and geologists: Society of Petroleum Engineers, Offshore Technology Conference and related papers are available in full text through the OnePetro database. OnePetro does not allow access to their data through Scopus. If you find SPE and related papers in databases such as Scopus, you will need to perform a search within OnePetro for these documents.

2. **Displaying/sorting your results:** the default setting for displaying results is for the most recent item to be at the top of your results list with the oldest item at the bottom. You can change this sort order to assist your evaluation of what you have found. The options for changing the sort order are located in the top right-hand corner of the screen, above your list of results.



← Click here to open all sorting options

- a) Change the **Sort on** option to **Relevance**: this sorts the results list based on where your search terms appear within the reference
- b) Change the **Sort on** option to **Cited by (highest)**: 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

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.

STEP 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.

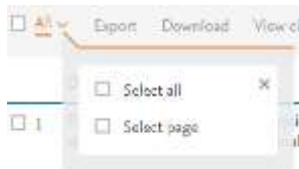
1. Refining by **Subject area**: To the left of your results list Scopus presents additional options for refining and limiting your search. Skim down the options presented and select one or more of the topics (click on the check box to the left hand side of the subject), then click on the **Limit to** button. This is located at the top and bottom of this section.
2. Refining by **Document type**: 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 to**. How many records are found?
3. Refining by other means: in the default setting of the **Refine** listing Scopus allows you to refine/limit your results by a variety of other 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?

STEP 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 check box at the very top of the results list and choose either the **Select all** or **Select page** check box



2. Once records have been selected, click on any of the options provided in the navigation bar above your results:



3. Choosing **Export** will enable you to send the details of these records to RefWorks
4. By selecting the ... dots next to **Add to List** you will be presented with further options to **View references** or **Create bibliography**
5. You can create a bibliography of your selected items very simply. Select HTML and a style from the the drop-down menu. Click on **Create bibliography**

STEP 6: Advanced features: personal account, alternative search approaches

Using a personal account in Scopus (or other databases) can save you a great deal of time and effort by allowing you to store records of documents you want to read and complex search strategies in one place. Save document records as you find them (select records and **Add to List**) and, at the end of your search session, return to your saved list to download full text files (where available) or output them in different ways. If you have created an account with RefWorks (bibliographic management software) you can register these details within your Scopus account for speedier exporting of records from Scopus into RefWorks.

Creating a Scopus account allows you to save, manage and organise the content and supporting materials you find within the database.

1. Click on the **Create account** option (top right-hand corner) and in the pop-up window enter your email address
2. Fill in the registration form and click on **Register** - you will receive an email confirming your registration
3. Click **Continue** to log in with your new username and password. Your initials will appear at the top right of the page

If you already have an account:


Click on **Sign in**. Enter your institutional email address and on the next screen, click on the **Sign in via your institution** link. You may be asked to provide your university username and password. If working off-campus, choose **UK Access Management Federation** from the regions list, then click on University of Aberdeen. You can access your saved documents and change your preferences by clicking on your initials – they should now appear at the top right of the screen.

Advanced Features – searching, results and analysing search results

You can search across the database using a wide variety of information including author names, affiliation, CAS numbers or source title. At the beginning of your literature review your searches are likely to concentrate on a keyword approach although author searches may also be extremely useful if you are aware of key researchers in the field. Affiliation searches can be useful if you are aware of key institutions involved in particular areas of research.

1. Try building up your search in individual steps (one idea at a time – using the OR operator as appropriate within each concept/idea box) and then combining these sets in different ways in the **Search history** option. This can be much more flexible and powerful than the traditional “all keywords at once” approach.
2. Try using the **Authors** or the **Affiliations** tabs if you think these may be relevant to your area of research:
 - Look for papers as listed within Scopus as authored by your PhD supervisor(s). Note that they may appear under different versions of their name and that not all their papers may be listed within this database. Scopus will only list those that appear in the journals indexed by the database.
 - Look for papers authored by researchers at the University of Aberdeen on one of the aspects of your PhD research area.
 - Note: You can set up alerts for new papers in any of these categories by using the Scopus options to save your search and set an alert. Be on top of what is being produced from this (or another) institution, or by your supervisor(s)!

NOTE: You must have a Scopus personal account to take advantage of this feature.
3. The earlier search sections concentrated on looking at results from journals and conference proceedings as given under the Scopus results tab. However, if you need to look beyond this type of result try using the options from the links above your results list. **View secondary documents** or **Patents** links may be of interest. Results from these sources are, by default, sorted by relevance. However, they can be changed to date (newest or oldest) if this is preferred.
 - **Secondary documents:** References from Scopus documents that match your search but the records for these are not available on Scopus. You cannot open the document or view the abstract.

These non-Scopus references have a special symbol associated with them: 

 - **Patents:** US and European patent databases and LexisNexis records.
4. You also have the option at the top of your search results to **Analyze search results**. Select this for further ways to interrogate and understand the results you get back from any search you perform. There are many powerful and useful features available here. These options can only be accessed from the original set of results, not the secondary documents or the patents.
5. Provided you have set up a personal Scopus account look at options for saving search strategies, lists of results and setting up alerts. Once you have honed your search strategies and keywords saving those searches and setting up alerts can make effective use of your time. Using this sort of awareness tool enables you to concentrate on your reading, lab work, research and writing rather than having to carry out literature checks on a regular basis.

STEP 7: How to access Scopus

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. Use the **Find Databases** option in Primo as the portal to databases including Scopus - see STEP 2
Select Scopus from the **Find Databases** function in Primo
2. For access to additional features and access to your Scopus personal account (if you have created one) select the **Sign in** option – see STEP 6 (page 4)

When using your own device on campus you will need to configure them to access our wireless network. Once you have connected to our wireless network you can link out to electronic resources as given above. More information can be found at www.abdn.ac.uk/library/documents/guides/qgdb005.pdf

Off-Campus Access

We strongly recommend that you always link to databases via Primo as in STEP 2 (don't use Google). Google will find a database but may not take you through the correct access and login route which may mean that you are unable to access the database at all, or that you are unable to access subscribed materials in full text (and you'll be asked to pay for them).

Scopus can be accessed from off-campus by following the instructions as given above for on-campus access. You must use the **Sign in** option to ensure full access to the search and other databases facilities.

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

- Further information on VDI and VPN (for remote access to your H: drive) is available at: www.abdn.ac.uk/toolkit/intermediate/remote-access/
- Detailed library guidance on accessing electronic resources is available at: www.abdn.ac.uk/library/documents/guides/qgdb005.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 (use this for the out of hours service: 1700-0800 Mon – Fri and anytime at the weekend)