WHAT IS SCOPUS?

Scopus is the largest abstract and citation database of research literature and quality web sources. Its comprehensive coverage and user-friendly interface provides a quick and easy way for researchers to find the information they need. Updated daily, Scopus offers:

- More coverage of scientific, technical, medical and social science literature (20,000+ titles) than any other database
- Full text links directly from the results list.
- Coverage back to 1823; Abstracts back to 1966; References back to 1996
- Innovative tools to help you refine your search to relevant results.

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How to access Scopus

1. Login to the student/staff intranet and navigate through to the library homepage: http://www.liv.ac.uk/library

2. In the Quick Links section, select Electronic Library.

3. In the Key Sites section, select Scopus

4. This will link you directly to the Scopus search screen
Searching Scopus

The first screen offers a basic search covering the Subject Areas of Life Sciences, Health Sciences, Physical Sciences and Social Sciences & Humanities.

Leave the check boxes as they are for a comprehensive search, or uncheck to exclude one or more of the Subject Areas. The default search option is to look within the Article Title, Abstract, and Keywords for any keyword or phrase typed into the Search for box.

The ‘AND’ search

For the best results, do not add your search query in ‘sentence style’ as you perhaps would on Google.

Instead, identify the key terms and combine them with ‘AND’. This will ensure that the results will contain all of the terms.

Click on the Add search field link to include more search boxes and enter each key term in a separate box. This helps you to lay out your search more clearly.
The ‘OR’ search

To search for alternative or related key terms, combine each term with an ‘OR’.

This will ensure that you get results whichever term is used:

For a more comprehensive search for ‘cancer’, you would also have to consider the terms ‘tumour’ or neoplasm as well.

Note:
Your search strategy will often consist of a combination of AND and OR searches. For a successful search, keep each set of related terms together in one box, as in the two examples at the top of this page.

Searching tip: Title search

If you just want a few relevant articles on a topic, change the default search to Article Title. The search will not be comprehensive, but the results should be highly relevant.
Viewing your results

Your search results will be displayed with the latest date first.

Each result shows the Title of the article, the Author(s), the Date and the Journal in which it is published, including volume, issue and page numbers.

To view a summary of the article and see a list of the references that the author(s) have cited in the article, click on the article title.

If you find relevant papers in the reference list, you can link through to full text, view a summary and check references, just as you would do with your main search results.

Select the button to link to the full text of the article (if available).

If full text is available you will see something similar to:

Click on a link to access full text
Viewing tips:

Click on the **Relevance** sort option to bring the most relevant articles to the top of the list.

Even if your results’ set is large, this feature makes it much easier to pinpoint relevant articles.

Click on the **Citations** sort option to bring the most highly cited articles to the top of the list.

This feature can help you to identify key papers for your topic.

To view the citing articles, click on the number in the **Citations** column.
Improving your search results

Limiting your search

Because Scopus has such comprehensive coverage of STEM literature, you may find that however carefully you select your key terms, the search produces too many results.

Pre-search limits

One way to reduce the number of results is to limit by Date Range. This can be done before the search is executed.

Other ‘pre-search’ limits available are Document Type and Subject Area.

Refine results

Often, it will be after the search has been run when you find there are too many results.

To limit results ‘post-search’, use the Refine Results section.

There are several ways to refine your search results, including limiting/excluding by Year, Journal, Language.

You can Search within the results set for particular terms to further refine your search.
Using wildcards and other techniques

This section covers Wildcards, Phrase searching and Proximity searching

These techniques can be incorporated into a search strategy to further improve your results.

**Wildcards**

The standard Wildcard symbol is an asterisk *

The asterisk is used to represent a letter or letters (or no letters) at the beginning, in the middle or at the end of a word. As such it can be used to search for variant spellings, prefixes and suffixes.

The question mark ? replaces one character anywhere in the word.

**Note:** Using the singular form of a word in your search automatically retrieves the singular, plural, and possessive forms of most words, so there’s no need to use the * to retrieve plurals.

This search will return results for **tumor(s)** or **tumour(s)**

This search will return results for **pharmacologic, pharmacological, pharmacologist(s)** or **pharmacology**

This search will return results for **statin(s), simvastatin, somatostatin, atorvastatin, etc.**

A search for **cell signalling** mechanisms AND **muscle** AND **contraction** could be improved by the use of the * wildcard

**Note:** Scopus will return most US/UK spelling variants automatically, but there’s no harm in using the * just to be on the safe side.
Phrase searching

An exact phrase can be searched by surrounding it with double quotation marks “”.

This search will return results for the exact phrase “combination therapy”.

If you search for combination therapy without the “” Scopus will by default search for combination and therapy.

Although this will include relevant results, it will also return results such as:

... however, a combination of meristem-tip culture and heat therapy produced 100% virus-free material...

Phrase searching is a good technique to use if your initial search returns too many results. It will significantly reduce your result set and is particularly effective when applied to a phrase made up of commonly used words.

For example: “Medical communication”
**Proximity Searching**

Proximity searching returns results where two terms occur within a stipulated number of words of each other. The closer two terms are to each other, the more likely it is that the results will be relevant.

This type of search is ‘looser’ than a phrase search, and more precise than an ‘AND’ search (where two terms can appear anywhere, so may be unrelated).

Scopus uses 2 proximity operators:

- **w/n** Where two terms appear in any order within a specified number of words (n)
- **pre/n** Where the first term must precede the second term within a specified number of words (n)

For example, **Cell w/4 structure** will find results where cell and structure appear within 4 words of each other, in any order. It will return results for:

- **Cell Structure**
- **Cell wall structure**
- **Structure of cell walls**
- **Structure and function of the cell**

If this technique is compared with the phrase search for **Medical communication** (on page 9), you will see that more results are returned, but relevancy is still high.

**Medical w/3 communication**

Will return results for:

- **Communication skills between the medical**
- **Medical visit communication**
- **Communication of Medical**
Early pre/3 treatment will find results where early precedes treatment by 3 or fewer words. It will return results for:

**Early** treatment,

**Early** detection and treatment

**Early** hormonal treatment,

But would exclude:

**Treatment** during early postnatal development...

**Treatment** of early glottis cancer...

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**Note:**

You can use any number (up to 255) after the **w/** or **pre/**

But as a guide:

3, 4 or 5 will find terms in the same phrase

15 will find words in the same sentence

50 will find terms in the same paragraph

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**But would exclude these results:**

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**Note:**

**Wildcards and proximity searching**

It’s OK to use the wildcard * with proximity searches:

**Tumo*r w/3 suppress**
Exporting your results, saving search strategies and setting up alerts and RSS feeds

To export your results, mark the records you want to export and select the Export option.

You can export to bibliographic software packages such as Endnote/Refworks, or save as a text file or spreadsheet etc.

To save your search strategies and set up alerts and RSS feeds you must first register with Scopus to set up a personal account.

Then login and carry out a search

Access your Search history from the main search page. Set up RSS feeds, email Alerts and save your searches here.

To access previously saved searches and alerts, select the Settings tab
Help and Contacts

Online help is available from Scopus through the Live Chat, Help and Tutorials tabs.

You can also ask for help via the Library’s Ask Us service, which is accessible from the library web pages.

For any more information, please contact your Liaison Librarian. Their details can be found from the following link:

http://www.liv.ac.uk.ezproxy.liv.ac.uk/library/help/subject