Web of Science

Worksheet for Biomedical and Life Sciences

How to access Web of Science
If you are off-campus, it’s a good idea log on to the Library’s OneSearch service or use the Lancaster University VPN to ensure smooth access to WoS.

A link for Web of Science is available from the Subject Guide for Biomedical and Life Sciences or from the Library’s A-Z of Databases. If you are in OneSearch, you can click on the Databases link at the top of the page to get to the A-Z.

How to use this Worksheet
Go to Web of Science and follow the examples in this Worksheet. Search terms to enter are in red. These examples will illustrate a number of tools and features in Web of Science, and will help you to search effectively in this database.

Web of Science: An Overview
Web of Science indexes thousands of high quality, peer-reviewed journals and draws its bibliographic data from a range of indexes including:

- Science Citation Index
- Social Science Citation Index
- Arts & Humanities Citation Index
- Conference Proceedings Citation Index

You can add or exclude any of these citation indexes by clicking More Settings on the Web of Science homepage.

This gives you a list where you can exclude indexes if they are not relevant to your search.
A simple search on Web of Science

In this example we’ll look for recent information on the diagnosis of lung cancer, in particular delays in diagnosis in the UK. We won’t exclude any indexes, though for Biomedical and Life Sciences topics you may want to routinely exclude the Arts & Humanities and Social Sciences Citation Indexes.

Go to Web of Science and type “lung cancer” in the search box. (Putting “lung cancer” into speechmarks means that Web of Science will search for this as a phrase rather than as separate words).

Note that the drop-down menu on the right of the box says Topic.

Now click on “Add another field”.

Type diagnosis into the second box. The two fields are linked with AND.

Scroll down the page. You will see the Timespan area.
You are taken to your results. You should have over 13,000 – far too many!

You must now focus your search.

As we just need recent literature, change the timespan to 2005-2016.

Click on Search.

On the left of the screen you will see the Refine Results panel.

It allows you to limit your results to particular document types, languages or subject areas.

At the bottom of the panel is another search box, which allows you to add another term to your search. Type Delay*. [Using the * means Web of Science will search for Delay, Delays, Delaying, Delayed…]

Click on the Magnifying Glass icon to Search. You should have over 400 results.

You can now limit your search to papers discussing the UK. At the bottom of the Refine Results panel, you will see Countries/Territories.

Click on this and you will see a list of countries, including England. To see all the countries of the UK, click on more options/values. Tick the boxes against England and Wales and Scotland and Northern Ireland, and click on Refine.

You should now have about 80 articles.

You can navigate through the pages of results by using the arrows or Page function.
On the second page you should see:

Is increased time to diagnosis and treatment in symptomatic cancer associated with poorer outcomes? Systematic review
By: Neal, R. D.; Tharmanathan, P.; France, B.; et al.

To see details of the article, click on its title (in blue in Web of Science).

The display includes full bibliographical details of the article, an abstract, and the keywords used to describe this article. (The keywords – given by the author or generated by Web of Science – may give you ideas for further search terms.)

On the right of the screen is a panel headed Citation Network.

At the top there is Times Cited, which gives information on later articles which have cited this one.

The Cited References option allows you to see the sources Keeble et al used.

The next option is to look at Related Records – articles which use the same references as Keeble et al, and therefore should be on the same topic. There are likely to be a lot!

At the top left of the screen is a drop down menu headed Full Text Options.

Click on this menu and select one of the following options. If you see a Full Text from Publisher link, click it to be taken through to the article.

Where this link does not appear you will need to click Find It.
Find It will open OneSearch in a new tab, where it checks Lancaster University Library’s holdings and shows whether we have access to this article.

You will need to click the View Online tab in the new OneSearch window to get the link to the full-text article. In some cases we may have access to a journal title from a number of providers: make sure you choose a link that covers the date of the article in question.

**Using Search History to build a search**

*In this example we are looking for recent material about compassion fatigue or burnout in doctors. You want an overview, rather than individual reports.*

You can use the Search History feature in Web of Science to combine separate sets of search results.

Go back to the Search Screen (by clicking Search in the orange section of the header bar or by clicking the Web of Science logo).

Clear your previous search from the screen by clicking on the Reset Form button.
Type **Burnout** in the top box, leave the field as Topic.

Type **“Compassion fatigue”** in the second box.

Use the drop-down menu to link the two boxes with **OR**.

Scroll down the page and change the timespan to 2005-2016. Click on Search.

You have a lot of material, of course. And it covers lots of professions.

Now go back to the Search Screen and click **Reset Form** to clear your previous search from the screen.

Type **Doctor** in the top box. Then type **Physician** in the second box.

Link the two boxes with **OR**.

Click on Search.

Once again you have a lot of records. Now we can combine the two sets, but by using **AND** we can find records that contain all these search terms (helping us to find more relevant results!).

Look towards the top right of the screen. Click on **Search History**.

Here you can see all your searches from this session listed in chronological order.
Tick the boxes against the two large sets you have just created.

We’re going to combine the sets using **AND**.

Click the **AND** button, then click **Combine**.

Web of Science will create a third set of results, combining the first two searches to fit your criteria. You should have a set of around 1,700 items. Click on the number to see your results.

To limit the results to review articles, look at the **Refine Results** panel on the left of the screen.

Under **Document Types**, you’ll see Review. Tick this box and click on **Refine**.

You should have about 70 relevant articles.
If you want to be able to save search sets to refer to again and again, you might want to register for a Web of Science Account. You can register using your own personal email address and this will enable you to view your Search History across multiple sessions, save searches and set alerts.

To register for a Web of Science account go to the Sign In drop down menu at the top of the screen and click Register.

Please note that registering for a Web of Science Account only gives you access to further features while using Web of Science as a Lancaster student. It does not give you subscriber access to Web of Science after leaving the University.

For further help and support with Web of Science or any other Library resources, please get in touch with the Library’s Academic Services Team via academicliaison@lancaster.ac.uk.