**Literature search strategy form**

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| **Write out your search question:** | |
| **Separate your question into separate topic areas** | |
| 1.  2.  3.  4. | |
| **Identifying Subject Headings, keywords and synonyms**  Ask yourself:   * Have I searched the database’s index to identify relevant Subject Headings? * What additional keywords/phrases do I want to use? * Have I used snowballing techniques to identify further keywords/synonyms? | |
| Topic | Synonym/keywords |
| **Note any phrases, alternative spellings or regional variations :**  Ask yourself:   * Can I identify where there might be regional variations of terminology? e.g. GP (UK) vs “physician” (US) * Can I identify where there might be variations of spellings? e.g. organization/organisation * Can I identify where there might be differences in terminology? e.g. old versus new | |
| **Other questions to ask yourself:**   * Does searching in just the title/abstract fields help in finding further keywords? * Can I identify any key authors in this field to help with snowballing for additional terms? * Do I know of any key papers on this topic to help with snowballing for additional terms? | |
| **Ways to limit your search…**  **Limiting by year….**  Ask yourself:   * Should I place a limit on how far back I search? * If I need to limit my search, how far back should I go and how might this affect my search results? | |
| **Limiting by language/s….**  Ask yourself:   * Do I only want to find articles published in English? | |
| **Limiting by country…..**  Ask yourself:   * Do I want to find “everything from everywhere” on this topic? * Do I want to focus solely on UK (NHS) based information only? * Do I want to make an international comparison of the literature? | |
| **Other questions to ask yourself?**  Ask yourself:   * Have I identified the key databases that I want to search? * Have I supplemented my database searches with grey literature searching? E.g. organisational websites? * Have I thought about using referencing software to manage my results? – we would recommend using Endnote Online. | |
| **Further help:**  If you need help or advice with any aspect of literature searching please contact either **Rachel Posaner** ([r.d.posaner@bham.ac.uk](mailto:r.d.posaner@bham.ac.uk)) or **Christian Bohm** ([j.c.bohm@bham.ac.uk](mailto:j.c.bohm@bham.ac.uk)) | |