**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 thesaurus to identify Subject Headings?
* What additional keywords do I want to use?
* Have I used snowballing techniques to identify further keywords/synonyms?
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| 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
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| **Searching features: wildcards, truncation, advanced/adjacent searching.**Ask yourself:* Where can I used the wildcard function “?” to good effect? e.g. organi?ation
* Can I use the truncation symbols ($ or \*) .e.g. social network$
* Can I use the adjacent search function at all? e.g. social media adj3 public health
* Have I searched in the title/abstract fields for further keywords?
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| **Search parameters:****Year of publication:**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?
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| **Publication types:** Ask yourself:* Am I looking for specific publication types, e.g. systematic reviews, RCTs, meta-analyses or journal articles?
* Should I be supplement my database searches with grey literature searching?
* Can I identify any key authors in this field?
* Do I know of any key papers on this topic?
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| **Country of Origin:** Ask yourself:* Do I want everything from everywhere on this topic?
* Am I only looking for UK (NHS) based information only?
* Do I want to make an international comparison of the literature?
* Do I only want to find articles published in English?
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| **Databases**Ask yourself:* Have I identified the key databases that I want to search?
* What grey literature sources might I want to search? e.g. key organizational websites
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| **Referencing software:**Ask yourself:* Have I thought about using referencing software to manage my results?
* Which referencing software package should I use?
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| **Further help:**Ask yourself:* Do I know how to ask for further help and advice?
* Have I checked Canvas, the HSMC website or the VC for further training resources?
* Did I know that I can ask for a “virtual training session” from the HSMC library team?
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| If you need help or advice with any aspect of literature searching please contact either **Emma Green** (e.green@bham.ac.uk) or **Rachel Posaner** (r.d.posaner@bham.ac.uk) |