**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?
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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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| **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?
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| **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?
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| **Limiting by language/s….**Ask yourself:* Do I only want to find articles published in English?
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| **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?
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| **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.
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| **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) or **Christian Bohm** (j.c.bohm@bham.ac.uk) |