**Overview: When should I use this database?**

Scopus comprises more than 70 million citations of literature in all subject areas, being pulled from tens of thousands of journals, book series, and trade journals. Featured data sources include both Embase and Medline (1996 to the present), but more recent results from these sources can sometimes face delays because of indexing. Scopus is run by the publisher Elsevier and claims to be the largest abstract and citation database in the world.

**Keywords**

**How to Find & Use**

- Keyword terms can be single words or phrases.
- Use quotes around all phrases to ensure that the phrase is search instead of each word individually.

**Controlled Vocabularies — How to Find & Use**

- Scopus does not have its own controlled vocabulary and instead relies on index terms (controlled vocabulary) from outside thesauri. These index terms are assigned by in-house professional indexers. Thesauri used include: Ei Thesauri, Emtree, MeSH, and GEOBASE. Unlike databases like PubMed or Embase, there is no way to browse through these controlled vocabularies in Scopus.
- Searches can be limited to subject terms by using field codes (see page 3 of this handout for more info on field codes).
Combining Searches Using Boolean Operators

- **Boolean operators** are used to combine search terms. In Scopus, you can use the operators AND, OR, AND NOT

- Boolean operators MUST be used as upper case
  
  - **OR**—use OR between similar keywords, like synonyms, acronyms, and variations in spelling within the same idea or concept
  
  - **AND**—use AND to link ideas and concepts where you want to see both ideas or concepts in your search results
  
  - **AND NOT**—used to exclude specific keywords from the search, however, you will want to use AND NOT with caution because you may end up missing something important. In Scopus this operator only works in the advanced search tab

- Note: Scopus recommends using { } brackets to enclose search terms, but we recommend using double quotations and standard parentheses instead ( ). For example, searching TITLE (“critical care” OR “intensive care”) would find either of the quoted phrases in the title field.

Types of Searches

**Documents Search Tab**

- Document searching is the default search from the Scopus homepage; this option allows for basic keyword searching.

- This option pulls results by searching in the Article title, Abstract, and Keywords fields, but it can be narrowed by selecting the drop down menu beside the search box

- Simply type your keyword terms in the search bar to use this option.

**Authors Search Tab**

- The author search allows you to search by an author's last name, first name, affiliation, and ORCID.

**Affiliations Search Tab**

- Use the Affiliation Search tab to search by affiliation and see what research is being produced by scholars at different organizations. Scopus enters uniform names for the departments, universities, and/or affiliated research institutes for individual researchers who author publications.

**Advanced Search Tab**

- Use Advanced Search to conduct a more complex search. In the Advanced Search, you can access more fields and enter Boolean operators, field codes, and proximity operators (see below).
Cited Reference Search

- Scopus allows for finding out which publications are most cited by other publications. The number of citations by other studies is located beside each search result, on the far-right of the screen, under a heading labeled “Cited by”
- Click on the number to see the studies that have cited the search result.
- To view the most cited search result within your results, expand the "Sort on:" drop down menu and select "Cited by (highest)"
- To export the most highly cited search results, check the boxes beside the result number and title. Then, click the export button at the top of the search results. From there you will be provided with a set of options for exporting the results, either to a citation manager or a document format (RIS, CSV, BibTeX, etc.)

Field Codes

You can use field codes to specify where the database looks for the search term. In SCOPUS go to the Advanced Search tab to use these codes. This page will describe the codes that you can use. In total there are over 60 different field codes in Scopus. Useful codes include, but are not limited to the following:

- **SUBJAREA** — Searches the “Subject Areas” field which contains indexed terms describing each document under four sub-categories (Health Science, Life Sciences, Physical Sciences, and Social Sciences)
- **TITLE-ABS-KEY** — Searches the Title field, Abstract field, and the Keywords field at the same time
- **KEY** — Searches the “Keywords” field, a field combining the Author Keywords, Index Terms, Trade Name, and Chemical Name fields
- **AFFIL** — Searches the “Affiliation” field to find author affiliations

A full list of codes can be found on the right-side of the screen in the advanced search tab. Click here to learn more about field codes through Scopus’ help page.

Applying Filters

- Within the Documents search tab there is a link beneath the search box to limit (filter) your search. Clicking on this link will provide options to limit the date range, document type, and/or the access type (open access).
- To limit your results, simply select the limits you want to include and then click search.
- You can also add limits to your search from the results page by clicking on the desired limits on the left hand side of the page.
Proximity

- Scopus allows for proximity searching through the use of two operators along with a number to indicate the proximity of the words (up to 255 words).

- PRE/ operator: The PRE/ operator stands for "precedes by." Typing PRE/5 follows the order the words are typed, with the first word always preceding the second. *(therapy PRE/5 sleep)* looks for the word “therapy” and “sleep” separated by 5 or fewer words, with “therapy” always being before “sleep.” (e.g. it would find the phrase “therapy for improved sleep,” but it would not find “sleep therapy”)

- W/ operator: The W operator stands for "Within." Typing W/5 would find two words within 5 words of each other without considering the order in which the words are entered. *(therapy W/5 sleep)* looks for the word “therapy” within 5 words of sleep.

Wildcards/Truncation

- In Scopus you can use a * at the root of a word to find multiple endings. For example:
  
  *arthroplast* will return arthroplasty, arthroplasties, arthroplastic, arthroplastics, etc.

  *mobili* will return mobility, mobilization, mobilisation, mobilize, etc.

- You can also use a ? as a wildcard to search for letter variants within a word (e.g. wom?n finds women and woman)

- Note: Only one type of wildcard can be included in a single search term (i.e. you can’t use both ? And * in a single term)

Accessing Full Text

In Scopus, the FIND IT icon (above) will often appear within a citation. Clicking on the icon will take you to an external page that will show a listing of full-text options. If the full text is not available, you will see a heading that says, "Request a copy from Interlibrary Loan." Click on "Welch Medical Library Borrowers" link to request the article free of charge (only available for Hopkins students, faculty, and staff).

More Information

- General principles on [searching in any database](#)

- [Scopus: Content Coverage Guide (pdf)](#)

- [Scopus: Access and use Support Center](#)