


How to search the literature effectively: a step by step guide to success (STEP e-learning modules)

FAQs for library staff

Why were the modules created?

- To improve access to training on literature search skills for healthcare staff who cannot easily attend library training due to location or time.
- For all healthcare libraries to be able to signpost users to online training without having to create something in-house. The modules are generically branded and so are not tied to a particular library service.
- For library staff to be able incorporate elements of the modules into their own training programme.

Who are the modules aimed at?

- The modules are aimed at anyone doing a literature search on a health related topic. They are primarily targeted towards novice searchers or those who would like a refresher. Each module has a glossary explaining key terminology in further detail 

How do you access the modules?

The modules are available on the Learning Hub

<https://learninghub.nhs.uk/catalogue/literaturesearching>

They can also be found on the Learning Hub site via the A-Z list at Browse Catalogues entering Literature Searching in the search box.

Direct links for each module

- Module 1: Introduction to searching <https://learninghub.nhs.uk/Resource/72817/Item>
- Module 2: Where do I start searching? <https://learninghub.nhs.uk/Resource/72820/Item>
- Module 3: How do I start to develop a search strategy? <https://learninghub.nhs.uk/Resource/72821/Item>
- Modules 4: Too many results? How to narrow your search <https://learninghub.nhs.uk/Resource/72819/Item>
- Module 5: Too few results? How to broaden your search <https://learninghub.nhs.uk/Resource/72823/Item>
- Module 6: Searching with subject headings <https://learninghub.nhs.uk/Resource/72826/Item>

- Module 7: Searching the NHS Knowledge and Library Hub and bibliographic databases
<https://learninghub.nhs.uk/Resource/72830/Item>

Is a login required?

A login is required to access the modules. The button to Play the elearning resource does not appear until the user is logged in.

It is possible to login using OpenAthens or using a Learning Hub account.

Your learning is tracked either way.

Can I obtain a copy of the modules to add into our local Learning Management System?

Yes, we can arrange for the files to be sent to you so that you can embed them in your local LMS.

Contact alan.fricker@nhs.net if you would like to arrange this.

Are the modules available on ESR?

The Learning Hub includes a link on each module page so you can set up the modules to play via ESR.

What are the minimum browser requirements?

The modules were tested as part of the transfer to the Learning Hub and are compatible with browsers current in the NHS.

Do the modules work on all types of devices?

Yes, the modules have been tested on a variety of devices and browsers. Be aware that that some of the navigation buttons are displayed differently on a mobile device compared to a PC.

Are the modules accessible to those with a form of sensory loss?

The modules have been tested on a screen reader at the point of creation.

There is very little audio throughout the modules. All videos have full transcripts. The AND/OR animation is available with subtitles.

Is there a module completion certificate?

Yes, each module has the option to download a certificate. The user can enter their name and the date the module was accessed. The Learning Hub also keeps your certificates for later download.

What does each module cover?

Building the foundations

1. Introduction to searching. This module provides an overview of the searching process and its main purpose is to get the user to think about their current level of knowledge. Where gaps are identified, users are directed to the most relevant modules. It may also be helpful to signpost users to this module prior to attending any face to face training.

2. Where do I start searching? This module aims to help the user look in the right places for information based on the topic and the type of information required. It starts with some of limitations of using Google and signposts users to other resources including Core content. It also includes a demonstration on how to register for an NHS OpenAthens account and how to access full-text journals.

3. How do I start to develop a search strategy? This module aims to show the user the benefits of planning a search strategy using tools such as PICO and 4Ws as well as identifying keywords and synonyms. It also covers when to use AND and when to use OR using a short video animation. This animation is also available as a Reusable Learning Object from YouTube.

AND/OR <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N258crAefSo>

AND <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yS2hHNR8pmo>

OR <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xQDkleNPrnc>

Developing the skills

4. Too many results? How to narrow your search This module provides an overview of key search techniques to reduce the number of results:

- using limits
- title searching
- phrase searching
- adding another keyword
- using more precise keywords

5. Too few results? How to broaden your search This module provides an overview of key search techniques to increase the number of results:

- removing limits
- truncation
- removing a keyword
- using broader keywords

NB Modules 4 and 5 largely mirror each other so it may not be necessary to do both modules.

6. Searching with subject headings This module is aimed at those who already know some of the basics of searching but aren't confident in using the thesaurus. It covers what subject headings are and when and how to use them.


Applying the skills

7. Searching the NHS Knowledge and Library Hub and bibliographic databases This module is useful for those who want practice going through the process of completing a search from start to finish. It includes a link to the introductory video for the Hub (7 mins) that is also available on Youtube - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Ks8gz-Wupc>

There are a number of other videos for parts of the process. These are shared outside the module in a folder called Video Library on the Literature Searching catalogue. We are trying to get these made downloadable.

Do *all* the modules need to be completed?


No, users can choose whether they wish to use all 7 modules or to pick one or two.

There is no need to complete a module from start to finish. The menu  enables learners to jump to a particular section they feel they need help with.

Which search platform are the modules based on?

The modules mostly do not refer to or have screenshots of a particular search interface with the exception of *Module 7: Searching the NHS Knowledge and Library Hub and bibliographic databases*. The majority of the modules are based on a generic search box to demonstrate search techniques. This reflects the varying search interfaces in use and to keep the focus on the learning on the principles of searching which can then be applied to any database.

Can you print the modules?

No, but some modules include a downloadable resources handout. Look for the resources icon at the top hand right of the screen 

How are the users directed to finding further help with searching?

Users are signposted to their local library service via the Health Library and Information Services Directory throughout.

Who decided on the module content?

The module titles and learning objectives were developed in consultation with library staff and healthcare staff based on results of an initial survey. Overall module content was led by Michelle Maden, Independent Information Consultant, with guidance from the two project leads at the time (Tracey Pratchett and Sarah Lewis). Where possible, they consulted with a Virtual Reference Group made up of over 40 library staff from health and related sectors as well as a Steering Group which included representation from Higher Education, Public Health England and NICE as well as NHS.

The refresh of the modules was carried out by Alan Fricker, NHS England.

I have some feedback, who should I contact?

Please contact Alan.Fricker@nhs.net