Searching SPORTDiscus: a basic guide

SPORTDiscus provides details of articles and other documents from across hundreds of journals, and other forms of literature, on the subject of sport. Many of the following principles will help you search SPORTDiscus (and other databases) more effectively.

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1. Accessing SPORTDiscus

Go to the Library’s Health Resources at https://library.bath.ac.uk/home and click health within the “subject resources” section. Here, you will find a link to SportDiscus under the heading, “Databases”.

The Library

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2. **Identifying your search terms** - read before searching the database

2a. Search terms

When you conduct a basic SPORTDiscus search, the database looks for your search terms within titles and abstracts (summaries) of journal articles.

**You will need to think carefully about your search terms** before entering them into SPORTDiscus. Take a look at your assignment title. Identify the most important words or phrases that appear within the title i.e. those words that distinguish it from any other assignment title.
For the purpose of this exercise, we will use the following assignment title as an example: “Explore issues related to long distance running and motivation.”

2b. Sub-themes

The following are the most important words/phrases. Each represents a separate sub-theme that relates to the overall theme of the assignment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-theme</th>
<th>Alternative words / phrases</th>
<th>Any others?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>long distance running</td>
<td>marathon</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>motivation</td>
<td>Self-efficacy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2c. Identifying any alternative words or phrases

Identify any alternative words or phrases that might also be used to describe each separate sub-theme. By considering alternative words, this may help you to retrieve a larger number of search results when you search SPORTDiscus.

When considering alternative words, include any relevant terminology that you have discovered through reading around a topic or in lectures, in addition to any terminology used more commonly.

You might find it helpful to write down your alternative words/phrases in separately themed rows as in the following example:

3. Entering your search terms

3a. Using multiple search boxes

In SPORTDiscus: enter each set of key words into its own separate search box enter the word OR between each word/phrase. Be accurate with your spelling. Example:
“long distance running” **OR** marathon*

motivat** OR** self-efficacy

**TIP!** As in the examples above, try using an *asterisk* where relevant i.e. you can add this at the end of the stem of a word to find variations

e.g. manag* finds manage, manages, managing and management.

By using asterisks, you may increase your number of search results.

**TIP!** You can enter “*speech marks*” around a phrase – please use “speech marks” if you would like IBSS to search for an exact phrase.

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You can tick/select the **peer-reviewed option** further down the screen on the right-hand side – this will limit your results to those from peer-reviewed publications.

Note the **+ sign**: click this if you need to add further search boxes.

**Click Search.**

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**4. Refining your search terms & filtering your results**

**Are you retrieving too few results? – or too many irrelevant results?**

If so, reconsider the range of your search terms and the way in which you organise them in the search boxes. Re-read steps 3-7 and try different approaches; you may like to ask for advice.

You can also **filter your results** using the **subject: thesaurus terms** and **subject** filters in the column to the left of the results.
5. Engaging with abstracts

Click the magnifying glass to the right of any search result if you think it has potential value in supporting your assignment. This will provide you with more details, often including an abstract (summary) and related “subject headings”.

Note the terminology used in abstracts and subject headings: by increasing your awareness of relevant terminology, this may help you modify/expand your search terms and retrieve further relevant results. Some results include a link to an article’s own references; you could follow-up these to read some of sources that the author(s) cited.

6. Finding out if you can view a full article

6a. Checking online availability

Linking to full articles: Where you find a search-result of interest, click on the “PDF full-text” or “HTML full-text link”. Occasionally, you may find the following blue and white “links” button instead – if so, click on this to find the link: links

6b. If the full article is NOT available online:

Search the Library Catalogue via the Library homepage: https://library.bath.ac.uk/home

Search for the journal title (not the article title). If we provide the journal and its Catalogue record states ‘copies available’, we provide a print copy (click ‘copies available’ to find out if we hold the relevant year/volume/issue). If we do not provide the article in any format, and it is potentially important for your work, please contact your Subject Librarian for advice.

7. Saving & emailing results

7a. Click the folder icon next to any result in which you’re interested (located to the right of the magnifying glass). This will add the result to a temporary folder of results. Once you have collected all your individual results of interest, click the other folder icon which is located within the menu along the top of the screen.
7c. In the ‘folder’ screen, click the box next to each saved result. Using the right-hand menu options, save your folder of results to a drive of your choice (e.g. “save as file” and then save to a USB stick). Also, email the results to yourself. It is good practice to use more than one method to keep a record of the results that you have either already read or are intending to follow-up.

Try searching other databases as well. No single database provides details of all articles written on a topic. If you would like any further support in using this database, please contact your Subject Librarian, Peter Bradley: P.G.Bradley@bath.ac.uk

Peter Bradley 30/08/2019