Music

Dissertation - Advanced Research Skills

www.rhul.ac.uk/library
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1. Planning Your Literature Search

Once you have decided on your dissertation topic you will need to carry out a literature search. A literature search is a detailed and organised step by step search for all the material available on a topic. Effective literature searching requires a strategic approach.

1.1 Identifying Keywords

Before you begin searching, think about the words you need to use in your search. Spending five minutes at the start and being systematic and organized will save you having to re-run searches with words you have forgotten to use.

Step 1: Write our your search as a sentence or question

Here is an example topic written out as a sentence:

Dreamscapes and the nocturnal in the music of Benjamin Britten?

Step 2: Identify the important words/concepts

Translate your sentence into keywords. As databases will search for exactly what you type in, you need to consider the following:

- **synonyms** - these are different words with the same meaning e.g. nocturnal and nighttime - not all words have these but if they do they should be included in your list of keywords
- **acronyms** - this is where your keywords can be condensed into a set of capital letters e.g. LSO is London Symphony Orchestra - use both the full term and the acronym when searching
- **alternative spellings** - remember to try UK and US spellings, e.g. theatre and theater
- **alternative and related terms**, e.g. music, works, compositions
- **international terms**, e.g. film and motion picture
- **former terms** (including non-pc versions), e.g. burden and drone, or madness and mental illness
- **changes of place name**, e.g. Germany and West Germany / East Germany
- **broader and narrower terms** - you must be sure your results will be pitched at the right level and broader terms can help find more results, but the results can be too general; narrower terms help you reduce the number of results, but the results may be too specific.

Additionally, many databases provide a thesaurus of keywords, which is used to classify the work held in the database. Use this helpful tool if possible, as it provides consistency when searching. If you don’t do this you might not find the most relevant articles.
The following example shows how our sentence has been broken down into possible keywords and grouped by concept.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept 1</th>
<th>Concept 2</th>
<th>Concept 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>dreamscapes</td>
<td>nocturnal</td>
<td>music of Benjamin Britten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dreamlike</td>
<td>night-time</td>
<td>works of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>surreal</td>
<td>night-loving</td>
<td>compositions of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fantasy</td>
<td>after dark</td>
<td>specific works</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you have difficulties clarifying the concepts which make up your research question or if you are not sure about which keywords work together consider drawing a mind map before organizing your lists of keywords.

**Step 3: Think about ways you could limit your search**

You might find too many references on your topic, so think about ways you could limit your search.

Most databases will also allow you to limit your search in these ways:

- **date** – do you only want items published before or after a certain date?
- **language** – do you only want references in English or do you read other languages?
- **geography** – do you want information about a specific place or published in a particular country?
- **type of publication** – do you only want references to scholarly journal articles or would you also like to find books, newspaper articles or theses, for example. This will influence your choice of database to search as many databases only give information about one type of publication.
Exercise 1: Think about your own dissertation topic and plan your search

Topic

_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________

Keywords and concepts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept 1</th>
<th>Concept 2</th>
<th>Concept 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AND</td>
<td>AND</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OR</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Can I set limits?

Dates

Language

Type of publication
2. Developing a Search Strategy

2.1 Identifying suitable resources

Once you have identified your keywords you need to identify which tools and online resources would be best suited for your research and where to find these resources. The Library homepage http://www.rhul.ac.uk/library provides a good starting point for using all types of Library resources, as it provides a link to the library catalogue, e-journals, databases and other online resources.

You should also use the Library Subject Page for Music which provides information about library services and links to resources relevant to Music. To find the Music Subject Page go to the Library homepage www.rhul.ac.uk/library then click on ‘Subject Guides’ on the left hand menu and select Music.

Don’t forget: Useful databases for research in Music include databases of music performances, images, video clips, TV and radio, listings information, filmographic data, etc.

Exercise 2: Spend 2-3 minutes noting down which resources or types of resources you think you would use to carry out your research

(Some useful databases for Music are listed in the appendix of this handout)

2.2 Developing your search

Once you have identified your resources you then need to develop a search strategy. This section describes some important methods you can use to search efficiently and effectively. Guidance is provided on:

- using symbols to search for alternative word endings and spellings
- combining your concepts in a search statement
- searching for phrases
- performing more specific searches

2.3 Truncation / wildcard searching

> Use to: widen your search and ensure you don’t miss relevant search results

Some databases are quite basic, they will just search for exactly what you type in. Truncation and wildcard symbols enable you to overcome this limitation. These search techniques find information on similar words by replacing part of the word with a symbol usually a * or ?.
- In **truncation** the end of the word is replaced. For example **theat** will find results including the words **theatre**, **theater**, **theatric**, **theatrical** and so on.

- In **wildcard** searching, single letters from inside the word are replaced with a symbol. For example **wom?n** will retrieve the terms **woman** and **women**.

**Please note!** Different databases use different symbols for truncation and wildcard searching, so use the online help option to check what is used.

### 2.4 Search operators

- **> Use to:** combine your search words and include synonyms

Also known as **Boolean operators**, search operators allow you to join terms together, widen a search or exclude terms from your search results. This means you can be more precise in locating your information.

- **AND** - Narrows your search by combining words. The results found must contain all the words which you have joined by using AND.

- **OR** - Broadens your search to include resources which contain any or all of the terms connected by OR.

- **NOT** - Narrows your search by excluding a term. Beware! By using this operator you might exclude relevant records because you will lose those records which include both words.

**Please note!** Check the online help screens for details of the search operators recognized by the database you are searching; some use symbols instead of words, e.g. + or &.

### 2.5 Phrase searching

- **> Use to:** make your search more specific

**Phrase searching** is a technique that narrows your search down by searching for an exact phrase or sentence. It is particularly useful when searching for a title or a quotation. Usually speech marks are used to connect the words together. For example “**Dance of the sugar plum fairy**” will find results which contain that phrase. Some search tools may use (brackets) or 'single quote marks' rather than speech marks so check the online help.

### 2.6 Focusing a search by date, language or document type

There are many ways to focus your search and all databases offer different ways of doing this. Check the help facilities if the options are not immediately obvious. Some of the ways of limiting your search are as follows:

- Date of publication
- Language
- Place of publication
- Publication type
- Age groups
- Type of material e.g. chapters in books, review articles, book reviews
2.7 “Cited reference” / “cited by” / “times cited” search

When you find a useful article or book, looking at its bibliography will give you information about other, older, books and articles on your research topic. Some databases also allow you to search for literature which has cited the article or book you have found. This can give you useful leads on more recent research on the same topic. There is no standard name for this type of search; depending on which database you are searching it may be referred to as “Cited reference” or “cited by” or “times cited”.

Exercise 3: Go to your subject pages and select a database or use LibrarySearch and try out a few searches using your keywords and some of the search techniques above.

2.8 Saving your search results

You usually have the option to select specific search results to keep by marking or tagging them. Most databases will offer the following methods of saving your search results:

- **Email** search results to yourself.
- **Save** to your PC or memory stick.
- **Create your own account** within certain databases to save your searches to re-run later or set up alerts
- **Print** out
- **Export** to bibliographic management software such as RefWorks or Endnote
- You can use alerting services such as Zetoc Alerts to receive regular e-mails to update you on new publications. Once the alert is set up, it happens automatically, so you do not need to re-run literature searches at a later stage, unless you wish to - [http://zetoc.mimas.ac.uk/](http://zetoc.mimas.ac.uk/)

It is good practice to keep a record of which database you used and the search query you used.

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3. Citing and Referencing

When researching your subject it is vital that you maintain an accurate record from the start of any sources you may have consulted and cited in your work. This ensures ethical use of the work in:

- Acknowledging the original author
- Enabling the item to be traced by others
- Providing evidence of the scope and depth of your research.
Your research supervisor or departmental handbook can offer guidance on what citation style is required for the piece of work you are doing. Internet materials need to be referenced just the same as printed sources.

3.1 Managing your references using RefWorks

RefWorks is an online bibliographic management program which enables you to capture, save and organize references into your own personal database. As a member of RHUL you can access it via the library homepage link to E-resources A-Z. It enables you to:

- Capture and save references generated from online databases
- Automatically generate a bibliography in your document
- Insert citations directly into your research (i.e. word document)
- Format your references in a wide range of citation styles

RefWorks includes a comprehensive set of online self-help tutorials, or you may wish to sign up for the one of the RefWorks sessions that the Library regularly runs or try the self-study start up guide: http://www.rhul.ac.uk/library/helpandsupport/findinginformation.aspx

4. Off Campus Access

There are two ways in which you can access online resources subscribed to by Royal Holloway Library while away from campus.

Royal Holloway Virtual Private Network Service (Campus Anywhere)

If you are on campus you will not need to log in to access most of our electronic resources.

The only way to access all of our electronic resources off campus is to use the Virtual Private Network (VPN) service, also known as 'CampusAnywhere'. The VPN service sets up a secure connection between your computer at home and the College network. Using this connection you can access the library’s electronic journals and databases as well as other College services, such as your Y Drive, the College Intranet and other restricted websites. Your computer is given the appearance of being part of the Royal Holloway Campus network.

For details on how to set up the VPN connection go to the Computer Centre homepage at: http://www.rhul.ac.uk/it/home.aspx and follow the link: CampusAnywhere (VPN)

Login with your College username and password

From the library homepage click on E-Resources A-Z (if you are looking for a database) or E-Journals A-Z (if you have a reference to an article). Search for the database or journal you wish to access and click on the link. You will be prompted to enter a username and password. Some resources will require you to login to Athens first and this will be indicated in the Access links information.

Further information on off-campus access can be found on our website http://www.rhul.ac.uk/library/helpandsupport/offcampusaccess/offcampusaccess.aspx
5. Using Other Libraries

Depending on your research topic you may wish to use other library collections. The following are particularly useful.

**Senate House Library, University of London**

Senate House Library holds a national research level collection covering the Humanities and Social Sciences and has a good collection of books, scores, journals and online resources for Music. Library membership is available to all Royal Holloway students free of charge. In order to join Senate House Library, you need to take your RHUL College Card with you on your first visit. Alternatively, you can also sign up to Senate House e-journals and databases online.

For more information see: [http://www.senatehouselibrary.ac.uk/](http://www.senatehouselibrary.ac.uk/)
*Location: Senate House, Malet Street, London, WC1E 7HU*

**British Film Institute Library**

The British Film Institute Library is the UK's largest film and television library. It is for reference use only, i.e. you may not borrow materials from this library.

For more information see: [http://www.bfi.org.uk/education-research/bfi-reuben-library](http://www.bfi.org.uk/education-research/bfi-reuben-library)
*Location: BFI Southbank, Belvedere Road, South Bank, London SE1 8XT*

The BFI website also provides good source guides, which can be downloaded free of charge: [http://www.bfi.org.uk/education-research/bfi-reuben-library/research-resources/16-source-guides](http://www.bfi.org.uk/education-research/bfi-reuben-library/research-resources/16-source-guides)

**M25 Group of libraries**

The M25 group of libraries ([http://www.search25.ac.uk/](http://www.search25.ac.uk/)) includes most of the universities in the London area. Many of these will admit you, although use will generally be **REFERENCE ONLY**.

Libraries which are part of the University of London will generally admit you if you show your valid RHUL College Card. Other libraries may require a **SCONUL Access card** or other documentation. You can get the **SCONUL Access card** from the Founder’s or Bedford Library Helpdesk.

**British Library**

The British Library at St Pancras is the national library holding all books published in the UK. It also has a wide range of journals and online resources. All students are eligible for a reader’s pass. To apply for a pass to the British Library Reading Rooms, you must make your first visit during the opening hours of the Reader Admissions office.

For more information about applying for a British Library reader’s pass check: [http://www.bl.uk/](http://www.bl.uk/)
*Location: British Library, St Pancras, 96 Euston Road, London, NW1 2DB*
6. Inter Library Loans - ILLs

One alternative resource if the library does not have what you are looking for is the Inter-library Loan service. This service is available to members of College, though students are required to obtain permission from their tutor/supervisor. Our main supplier is the British Library Document Supply Centre; if it is unable to supply, we then apply to other libraries.

You will need to get an ILL voucher number from your department. These are held by the departmental administrator or by individual tutors.

ILL requests are submitted online.

Go to the Library Catalogue: [http://library.rhul.ac.uk/](http://library.rhul.ac.uk/)

Select **Inter-library Loans** from the banner and enter your User Name and Password.

From ‘Options' top left select the format required – ‘Request Book' for a loan of a book or copy of a chapter, ‘Request Journal' for a copy of an article or a loan of a journal part. Enter ILL voucher number and complete all compulsory fields before submitting.

Please note that if you are ordering a copy of a journal article or a book chapter you will need to acknowledge that you have read the copyright declaration by ticking the appropriate box on the online request form.

If you would prefer to receive your article as a print copy rather than via email which is the default option, please tick the relevant box on the form. See 'Requesting and receiving articles' below for further information.

When the request has been submitted, you will see a screen giving your order number. Please retain this information in case of queries.

For more information on ILLs please our help page: [http://www.rhul.ac.uk/library/usingourlibraries/interlibraryloans.aspx](http://www.rhul.ac.uk/library/usingourlibraries/interlibraryloans.aspx)
7. Help with library enquiries

If you would like more help or guidance on any of the topics explored in this course at any time during your research, please contact the Library Information Consultant for Music:

**Russell Burke:** russell.burke@rhul.ac.uk

or email: library@rhul.ac.uk

Ask Questions on Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/rhul.library

Or Twitter: http://twitter.com/RHUL_Library

Further information can also be found on the Library website: http://rhul.ac.uk/library/

And for information relating to Library Services for Music:

http://libguides.rhul.ac.uk/Music