



Systematic Review Support available from Library Staff

- MTU library staff provide introductory systematic review training and support for staff and research students.
- If you require systematic review support, library staff offer 'one to one' training or a group session which highlights key aspects of the review process. (This session normally takes between 60 – 90 minutes).

During this session, you will receive guidance on the following:

- Overview of the systematic review process
- The structure of the systematic review.
- The importance of carrying out a detailed literature search.
- Developing an efficient search strategy and Protocol using a suitable framework.
- Suggested databases for searching & appropriate instruction if required.
- Identifying other types of research material appropriate to the topic.
- Basic citation manager training, if required.
- Staying up to date with the research topic by setting up 'search alerts' in appropriate online databases.
- Reporting on the search methodology used throughout the review.

What you need to do before meeting library staff

1. Before the initial consultation with library staff, you should familiarize yourself with MTU's Guide to the [Systematic Review process](#), this user-friendly guide describes every step of the process. Reviewing this guide will also allow you to formulate questions that you might like addressed during the meeting with library staff.
2. You should also send library staff the proposed title and a brief description of your research topic **one week** before the meeting, this will allow us to review your research topic in advance and suggest appropriate databases and resources for your research.
3. It is also essential that you know what is expected of you when asked to carry out a review. You should discuss with your supervisor if you need to carry out a **Literature Review**, a **Systematic Literature Review** or a **full Systematic Review**.

The differences between a basic Literature Review, A Systematic Literature Review Systematic Review and a Systematic Review are as follows:

Basic Literature Review	Systematic Literature Review	Systematic Review
Literature reviews are structured in a similar way to a standard essay, with an introduction, a body and a conclusion.	Provides a subjective summary of the literature on a topic	Brings together the results of studies to answer a specific question
The aim of a literature review is to demonstrate that you have read & understood the main trends and concepts of the topic, taking account of contrasting or opposing views.	Thorough search of published literature	Extensive search covering published literature. More detailed systematic reviews will also include grey literature.
A literature review is not a summary - it analyses, critically evaluates & synthesises to give a clear picture of the current knowledge base of a subject.	Includes a detailed search strategy	Involves a detailed protocol often developed using the PICO framework
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If a literature review is part of your undergraduate or postgrad research paper, it is important to ask your instructor for clarification on the following: - How many databases you are expected to use - The types of sources that should be consulted (e.g. should grey literature be included). - How in-depth you should evaluate and explore your sources, searching for common themes and/or controversies 	Can be produced by a single person , so open to bias	Usually involves three or more people to eliminate bias (*A more limited version can be done by a single student for their dissertation)
A Literature Review Identifies gaps in the literature and points the way forward for future research	Can take weeks or months to complete.	Large, professional systematic reviews can take months or years to produce

<p>The literature review also establishes credibility for your own work.</p>	<p>Includes...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction • Methods - search strategy • Discussion • Conclusion • Long reference list 	<p>Includes...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A detailed protocol • Systematic search strategy • Review of results against eligibility criteria • Evaluation of studies • Interpretation and presentation of results • Extensive reference list • Detailed appendices showing search strategies
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Summary adapted from: Kysh, L. (n.d.) *What's in a name? The difference between a systematic review and a literature review and why it matters*. URL: https://figshare.com/articles/Difference_between_a_systematic_review_and_a_literature_review/766364 [30 Jan. 2025]

The support that you can expect from library staff

- Due to the in-depth and time-intensive nature of the systematic review process and other work commitments, library staff will not be able to undertake a review on behalf of an individual or research group or work alongside them during the review process.
- Library staff will offer advice on the development of a search strategy during the initial consultation; however, we will not be able to contribute to the development of this search strategy over the course of the entire review process.
- Unfortunately, Library staff will not be able to execute searches, de-duplicate lists of results or create a reference management database on behalf of the individual / research group. The individual or group involved in the review process will however receive initial guidance on the skills required to carry out these tasks.
- Your research supervisor will be able to provide additional guidance on such matters as developing your study methodology (research protocol), evaluating findings, and writing the systematic review.

Disclaimer:

- Systematic review training sessions will be provided on an appointment basis only.
- Requests for systematic review training sessions will be provided on a first-come, first served basis.

- These sessions can be arranged at any time throughout the year and are available by appointment.
- Bookings on MTU Cork campuses can be made by mailing library.infocork@mtu.ie
- Bookings on MTU Kerry campuses can be made by e-mailing kerrylibrary@mtu.ie