Find Databases

When looking for material to support an academic piece of work it is important to use reliable and respected sources of information. Searching within academic databases allows you to identify journal articles, books and other materials written by academics and experts in your field. You will be performing powerful searches, often across the full-text of resources, using highly efficient tools for refining and sorting your results. Depending on the type of research you do, you will often be expected to use multiple databases.

In this video, we will show you how to use Primo’s Find Databases tab. Find Databases lists all databases and e-book collections that the University of Aberdeen subscribes to and helps you:

- identify those relevant to your subject area
- find a particular database on the A-Z list

From Find Databases, you can also identify specialist databases containing information on theses from a range of countries.

You can access Primo from the Institution Page section of MyAberdeen or on the Library homepage. [www.abdn.ac.uk/library] Click on the Advanced Search link. Before you begin looking for relevant databases, make sure you log in to Primo with your University of Aberdeen username and password. This will ensure smooth access to any database or e-book collection, particularly if you are working off-campus. You will see your name displayed at the top of the screen.

On Primo’s search screen, click the Find Databases tab, located above the search platform. Change the category menu to the discipline that interests you e.g. Life Sciences and then select a sub-category; e.g. Biology. Click the Find databases button. Primo will display an alphabetical list of all databases and e-book collections that apply to Biology. Do not use the tick boxes; it is not possible to search across multiple databases at the same time. You will need to search each database individually. To find out about the focus, coverage and search hints for each of these collections, click the Show Info tab.

Alternatively, if you know the name of the database you want to use, click on the relevant letter in the All Databases A-Z index and select it from the list of databases starting with this letter. For example, if you are looking for the legal database Westlaw, click on ‘W’ and select Westlaw UK.

Tip: check the authentication route to the database that interests you; this lets you know the access method used when working off-campus. If the authentication route is Shibboleth, you can access the database with your username and password regardless of your location. If the authentication route is IP only, you will have to use the University’s Virtual Desktop Infrastructure when using this database off-campus. For more information, visit the university’s Toolkit at: www.abdn.ac.uk/toolkit/ and select the yellow “Remote Access” icon in the second row.

To link to a database, right-click on its name and open it in a new tab. If you use the left mouse button, the database will open in a browser without the backward and forward navigation arrows, and this can be frustrating to use. Right-click on a name and open the resource in a new tab. You may be asked to log in with your username and password. Once you are done using a database, log out of it and go back to Primo, to select another one. Also remember that databases have their own Help or Search Tips sections.
For guidance on how to plan a search in order to get the best possible results, see our video: Using Primo - Planning a search and using Boolean operators, available at: http://bit.ly/plan-Boolean_operators


For guidance on accessing online resources, particularly when off campus, see our Library guide: Accessing Electronic Information, available at: www.abdn.ac.uk/library/documents/guides/qgdbs005.pdf

For further guidance on Primo see our other videos or contact members of library staff. More help can also be found online.