



## Primo – how to do an Advanced Search successfully

Elaine Shallcross - Adapted from the Ex Libris guide 'Perform Advanced Searches in Primo', April 2020

QG PRI003 [https://www.abdn.ac.uk/library/documents/guides/qgpri003.pdf]

### Introduction

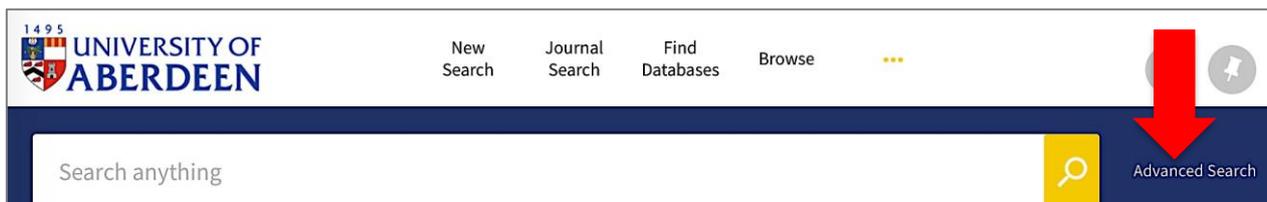
Advanced Search on Primo is particularly useful for finding materials on a subject because it offers you much better control on how and where you search than in the Simple Search option. It allows you to apply filters before you search eg resource type, publication date range and language, enabling you to focus much more precisely on what you need. These additional options will reduce the number of results retrieved and they should be far more relevant.

### Primo Search Rules

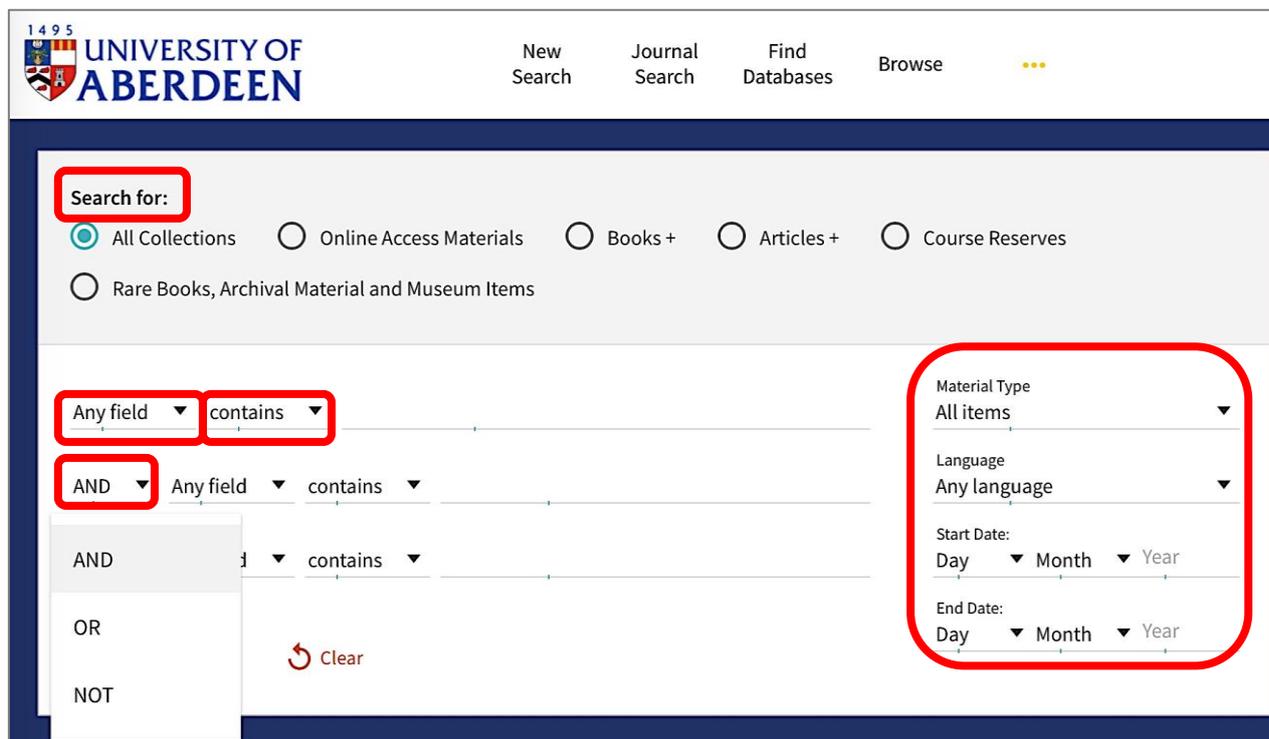
<b>Boolean Operators</b>	You can affect the number of records you find by using these to combine your keywords
<b>AND</b>	This operator reduces the number of results you retrieve, eg <b>plastic AND pollution</b> only finds records containing both keywords
<b>OR</b>	This operator increases the number of results you retrieve, eg <b>microplastics OR macroplastics</b> finds records that contain either or both keywords
<b>NOT</b>	This operator excludes unwanted results (use with care!), eg <b>ocean NOT land</b> finds records that contain the word 'ocean' but not the word 'land'
<b>Phrase search " "</b>	Enclose two or more words in "double quotes" to find an exact phrase ie words that must occur together in a specific order eg <b>"greenhouse gases"</b>
<b>Truncation search *</b>	This symbol increases the number of records you retrieve by finding the root of a keyword and any potential endings, eg <b>pollut*</b> finds <b>pollute, pollutes, pollutant, pollutants, polluting, pollution</b>
<b>Wildcard search ?</b>	This symbol increases the number of records you retrieve by finding a single alternative or additional letter within a keyword, eg <b>labo?r</b> finds <b>labour</b> and <b>labor</b> ; <b>wom?n</b> finds <b>woman</b> and <b>women</b>
<b>Parentheses ( )</b>	If you use two or more Boolean operators in your search box, group keywords within parentheses to make it clear exactly how you want to search eg <b>microplastic AND (pollution OR contamination)</b> = the keywords 'microplastic' and either 'pollution' or 'contamination' must be found in the records you retrieve

### Preparing for an Advanced Search

- Before you begin we recommend you plan your search by selecting words (**keywords**) and **phrases** relevant to your topic, then apply **Primo search rules** (see Library Guide [QG PRI002 Primo – how to do a Simple Search successfully](#) for examples of how to apply Primo search rules)
  - These steps help you to find information which is much more relevant to what you need and ultimately save you a lot of time
- Navigate to <http://primo.abdn.ac.uk>
- **Sign In** (via a link located on the top right hand corner of the screen) using your University computer username and password so that you can link out of Primo easily to our electronic resources



- On Primo navigate to the **Advanced Search** screen by clicking on the link located to the right hand side of the Simple Search box
- The **Advanced Search** screen offers a number of different options:
  - ❖ **Search for** = allows you search a particular category of materials that belong to the University, such as online materials, books+, articles+ and course reading
  - ❖ **Add a new line** = it is possible to have up to seven lines of keywords and phrases that are relevant to different aspects of your research – each line is automatically linked by the Boolean Operator **AND**
  - ❖ **Field selector** = Primo automatically searches across all fields, but you also have an opportunity to narrow your search to a particular field such as **title** or **subject**
  - ❖ **Search type** (the **contains** link) = gives you three options:
    - **contains** to retrieve records that contain all your keywords in a phrase, but the words may be in a different order and may not be close together
    - **is (exact)** to focus your search for an exact phrase
    - **starts with** = Primo retrieves records that contain the keywords that start the specified search line
  - ❖ **Filters** allow you to narrow your search to specific material type (books, journals, articles, theses), language and date range



## Boolean Operators

- As with Simple Searches you can include the Boolean Operators **AND**, **OR**, **NOT** between words and phrases in each search line
- For more information on how to use Boolean Operators in a search see Library Guide [QG PRI002 Primo – how to do a Simple Search successfully](#)
- The **Operator** drop-down menu also allows you to select an operator to use between lines  
To begin with, we recommend you leave the default **AND** operator between lines.

To show you how to do an **Advanced Search** on Primo we will use the following example:

**Discuss the importance of avoiding plagiarism in academic writing**

- On Advanced Search we recommend you use a separate line for each topic within your research subject
  - In our example **avoiding plagiarism** would be one topic, **academic writing** a second topic and **referencing** a third topic
- It is important to apply Primo's search rules to improve the search results (see page 1)
  - Adding an \* to the end of the root of a keyword searches for all possible endings for that word eg **referenc\*** = Primo will look for **reference, references** and **referencing**
  - Using the Boolean Operator **AND** - Primo must retrieve records that contain all the keywords and phrases in your search = the more 'ANDs' you use the smaller the number of records will be found
  - If you want the search for an **exact phrase** ie two or more words that must occur together in a specific order, you can either enclose the phrase in **quotation marks** eg **"academic writing"** or open the **contains** menu and select **is (exact)** = by looking for an exact phrase you reduce the number of records found
- Primo summarises your search at the bottom of the search pane and includes keywords and phrases, fields and Boolean connectors used

The screenshot displays the Primo Advanced Search interface. At the top, the 'Search for:' section is highlighted with a red box, showing radio buttons for 'All Collections' (selected), 'Online Access Materials', 'Books +', 'Articles +', 'Course Reserves', and 'Rare Books, Archival Material and Museum Items'. Below this, three search lines are visible: 'Any field contains avoid\* AND plagiaris\*', 'AND Any field contains referenc\*', and 'AND Any field contains "academic writing"'. The 'contains' dropdown in the third line is highlighted with a red box. To the right, a filter panel is highlighted with a red box, containing 'Material Type: All items', 'Language: Any language', and 'Start Date' and 'End Date' fields. At the bottom, a summary box is highlighted with a red box, showing the search query: 'Any field contains avoid\* AND plagiaris\* AND Any field contains referenc\* AND Any field contains "academic writing"'. A yellow 'Search' button is located to the right of the summary box. At the very bottom, the interface shows 'Refine your results', '0 selected', 'PAGE 1 785 Results', 'Save query', and 'Personalize'.

- We recommend you begin searching across **All Collections** to see how many records Primo retrieves, then refine your search
- It is possible to focus your search on **Material Type, Language** and **Publication Date** from the drop-down menus located to the right of the search lines

0 selected **PAGE 1 785 Results** Save query Personalize

**Refine your results**

Expand My Results

Sort by Relevance ▾

Availability ▲

Available online

Peer-reviewed Journals

Open Access

Held by library

Resource Type ▲

Articles (613)

Books (68)

Reviews (42)

Book Chapters (40)

Conference Proceedings (10)

Newspaper Articles (6)

Government Documents (2)

Text Resources (1)

Library ▾

CLEAR APPLY FILTERS

1 **ARTICLE / multiple sources exist. see all**  
**An Investigation of the Effects of Citation Instruction to Avoid Plagiarism in EFL Academic Writing Assignments**  
 Fazilatfar, Ali M ; Elhambakhsh, S. E ; Allami, Hamid  
 SAGE Open, April 2018, Vol.8(2)  
 [2014] Combating Student Plagiarism: An Academic... academic plagiarism is and poor level of knowledge...  
 PEER REVIEWED OPEN ACCESS  
 Available Online >

2 **BOOK**  
**Writing skills for education students**  
 Barrow, Charlotte.; Westrup, Rebecca.  
 2019  
 Available at Sir Duncan Rice Library Floor 4 (808.06637 BAR) >

3 **BOOK / multiple sources exist. see all**  
**Academic writing for international studies of business**  
 Bailey, Stephen  
 2010  
 Available Online >

4 **BOOK**  
**Study skills for foundation degrees**  
 Bedford, Dorothy.; Wilson, Elizabeth, Dr.  
 2013  
 Available at Sir Duncan Rice Library Floor 6 (371.30281 BED) >  
 Available Online >

- On the **Search Results** screen you can reduce the number of records retrieved by your search by applying **Filters** available from the **Refine Your Results** options located to the left hand side of the results list

0 selected **PAGE 1 40 Results** Save query Personalize

**Active filters**

Available online ×

Book Chapters ×

Reset filters

**Refine your results**

Expand My Results

Sort by Relevance ▾

Collection ▾

Creation Date ▾

1 **BOOK CHAPTER**  
**Academic writing: incorporating evidence and avoiding plagiarism**  
 Magdalinski, Tara  
 2013  
 Study Skills for Sports Studies  
 ACADEMIC WRITING Incorporating evidence and avoiding... referencing its origin. Plagiarism is academic theft and  
 Available Online >

2 **BOOK CHAPTER**  
**How to make quotations, citations and a bibliography and avoid plagiarism**  
 Bedford, Dorothy.; Wilson, Elizabeth  
 2013  
 Study Skills for Foundation Degrees  
 Available Online >

## Where to go for help

### Questions?

For IT- related enquiries contact the IT Service Desk: Tel: 01224 273636; Email: [servicedesk@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:servicedesk@abdn.ac.uk)

Library staff are here to help with any questions you may have on Primo or any of our other resources. For subject-related enquiries please contact the Information Consultant for your subject. Details can be found at <https://bit.ly/InfoConsultants>. Tel: 01224-273330; Email: [library@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:library@abdn.ac.uk)