



Medical Library - jargon buster

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UG MED002 [<https://www.abdn.ac.uk/library/documents/guides/ugmed002.pdf>]

This document explains some of the commonly used terminology you will encounter in the library or during information skills teaching. If there are any other terms you would like to see included, please contact a member of staff or e-mail medlib@abdn.ac.uk.

IF YOU NEED MORE INFORMATION ON A TOPIC, PLEASE CONSULT THE APPROPRIATE LIBRARY GUIDE OR ASK A MEMBER OF STAFF.

Library Term	Definition (Words in UPPER CASE are explained elsewhere in the list)
24 HOUR LOAN	Any item, usually a JOURNAL part, which is loaned for 24 hours from the time of issue.
ABSTRACT	A brief summary of a JOURNAL article or other work.
AVAILABLE SOON	A term you may see on PRIMO indicating that the book is in the process of being prepared for the shelves. This process can take several days.
BIBLIOGRAPHY	i. The list of REFERENCES required at the end of an essay or article. ii. A list of books, articles, websites or other sources on a particular subject. Bibliographies may be found at the end of books or articles or may be separate publications.
BOOLEAN SEARCHING	A system used in information retrieval. It employs linking words such as "AND", "NOT" and "OR" to limit or expand the search.
BORROWER NUMBER	This is the number on your Aberdeen University ID card, including the issue number.
CITATION	Brief details of a resource e.g. author, title, source, date, etc. The citation should be detailed and accurate enough to allow other people to locate the source of the information.
COCHRANE	A collection of DATABASES which brings together reports on evidence-based medicine, e.g. systematic reviews of treatments.
COPYRIGHT	The legal right to reproduce the content of a work created by another person in print or electronically. This is governed by copyright legislation. See the library guide QG GEN008: Introduction to copyright – quick guide for details.
DATABASE	An electronic collection of records from a large number of JOURNALS or other resources related to one subject or area, e.g. medicine or humanities. Some databases give only CITATIONS or ABSTRACTS of their records (bibliographic databases), others are FULL-TEXT. Databases have powerful search tools and their content is constantly updated.
DEWEY	The classification system used in this library in order to group books on similar topics together, e.g. 611 for anatomy, 616 for clinical medicine.
ELECTRONIC BOOK (E-BOOK)	A complete book which is available online.
ELECTRONIC JOURNAL (E-JOURNAL)	A JOURNAL which can be accessed online.

EBOOK CENTRAL	An online library of over 30,000 titles on all subjects available to University of Aberdeen students and staff.
EMBASE	A major biomedical and pharmaceutical DATABASE with strong coverage of European material.
EXPLODE	A term used in OVID DATABASES (MEDLINE, EMBASE, etc.). It is a function used to expand a search to include all articles which refer to your topic even if it is not the main subject of the article.
FOCUS	A term used in OVID DATABASES (MEDLINE, EMBASE, etc.). It is a function used to narrow a search to include only those articles where your topic is the main subject of the article.
FOUR WEEK LOAN	An item which will be issued for four weeks. Items issued on four week loan may be RECALLED if required by another user and must then be returned to the library (including during vacation periods). It will initially be due for return or renewal before the library closes on the due date (including Sundays and holidays when the library is open), although if it hasn't been requested and you have no fines it will automatically renew up to nine times.
FULL TEXT	A complete article found online through an electronic source. You may read the full article on screen or print it.
GATEWAY	A searchable website with links to others dealing with similar topics. The web sites are selected by trained staff and meet strict criteria for quality and reliability.
HARVARD	A system for giving a REFERENCE to resources such as books and journals with a strictly defined order of information such as author, title, publication place and year.
HEAVY DEMAND	A collection of textbooks and reading list books shelved on the first floor of the Medical Library. Heavy Demand books are available for overnight or over-weekend loan and are due back at 10:30am at the library from which they were borrowed. Heavy Demand books can be reserved in advance for specific days.
HOLD	A reservation put on an item which is currently on loan. The item will be retained for the requester when it is returned to the library (c.f. RECALL).
INFORMATION LITERACY	The ability to recognise when information is required and to have the ability to locate, evaluate and use the information correctly and effectively.
INTER-BRANCH REQUEST	A request for an item which is held at a different campus of the University in order to have it delivered to the local library e.g. from The Sir Duncan Rice Library to the Medical Library.
INTER-LIBRARY LOAN (ILL)	A means of requesting an item from another library outwith the University of Aberdeen. ILLs are only intended for items which are not available to the University of Aberdeen either physically or electronically. Inter-library loans must be approved by the appropriate University department.
ISBN	International Standard Book Number - a unique number which is specific to an edition of a book and can be used to identify it.
ISSN	International Standard Serial Number - a unique number which is specific to a SERIAL title and can be used to identify it.
JOURNALS	Publications which are produced on a regular basis, usually publishing the latest research on one particular subject or group of subjects.
KEYWORD	A significant word from the title, abstract or subject matter of a document used as an index to the content.

LIBRARY STAFF	All-knowing yet approachable and friendly humans who are very keen to answer questions and help users to get the most from the library's physical and electronic resources.
LONG LOAN	An item which under normal circumstances will be issued for the whole academic year, i.e. until the following May. Items issued on long loan may be RECALLED if required by another user and must then be returned to the library (including during vacation periods).
MAPPED TERM	A term used in OVID databases (MEDLINE, EMBASE, etc.) to describe a word or phrase which means the same as your search term but is part of the special vocabulary used to index records in MEDLINE. It is likely to produce more results for your search. Mapped terms also allow the searcher to choose particular aspects of the subject, e.g. classification of M.I. rather than diagnosis.
MEDLINE	A DATABASE widely recognised as the premier source for coverage of biomedical literature, particularly clinical medicine and biomedical sciences.
NHS KNOWLEDGE NETWORK	A nationwide electronic resource which gives access to ELECTRONIC JOURNALS, DATABASES and knowledge networks. It is managed by the NHS but may be accessed by University of Aberdeen medical students and staff with clinical responsibilities.
ON ORDER	A term which you may see on PRIMO indicating that copies of the book in question have been ordered from our suppliers. This process can take some time.
OPAC	Online Public Access Catalogue - a library catalogue available online. In addition to searching for items in the libraries, users can login to view their personal record, RENEW books and place HOLDS and RECALLS.
OVID	An information resource supplier who provides access to various medical DATABASES including MEDLINE and EMBASE.
PDF	Portable Document Format – a method of display which allows you to view and print documents exactly as they were published. PDF files are read by Acrobat Reader.
PERIODICALS	An alternative term for JOURNALS.
PRIMO	A University of Aberdeen software package which allows users to search for resources within the whole of Library, Special Collections and Museums. You can find printed and electronic resources from the Library, rare books and manuscripts from Special Collections and objects from the Museums. University of Aberdeen users login using their computer user name and password.
RECALL	A reservation put on an item which is currently on loan. The item will be requested from the holder and they must return it to the library within five days (c.f. HOLD). Recalls can only be applied to LONG LOAN and FOUR WEEK LOAN items. To reserve THREE DAY LOAN or 24 HOUR LOAN items you must place a HOLD.
REFERENCE COLLECTION	A collection of medical and general reference books including dictionaries, encyclopaedias, almanacs, and compendiums shelved on the first floor, near the issue desk. They may not be borrowed or taken away from the library.
REFERENCING	A means of acknowledging works which have been consulted and quoted in an essay, article, etc. The references should be detailed and accurate enough to allow other people to locate the source of the information.
REFWORKS	Online software for the management of REFERENCES obtained by searching DATABASES, and for producing BIBLIOGRAPHIES associated with written work.

RENEWAL	A method of extending the loan period of a 24 HOUR, THREE DAY, FOUR WEEK or other restricted loan item. Renewal can be done at the issue desk, by telephone or online using PRIMO. Note: HEAVY DEMAND items can only be renewed in person with the item present at the library from which they were borrowed.
SERIALS	An alternative term for JOURNALS.
SHELF MARK	The number given to a book or other item in the library to indicate where it may be found on the shelves (same as DEWEY number).
SHIBBOLETH/ UK FEDERATION	A method of providing password-controlled access to electronic resources. University of Aberdeen staff and students use their computer username and password to access electronic databases.
SUBJECT INDEX	An alphabetical list of SUBJECT TERMS – together with the DEWEY number allocated to that topic.
SUBJECT TERM	A word or phrase describing the topic you are researching.
THREE DAY LOAN	An item which will be issued for 3 days - it is identified by yellow tape on the spine. It will initially be due for return or renewal before the library closes on the third day (including Sundays and holidays when the library is open), although if it hasn't been requested and you have no fines it will automatically renew up to nine times. If another user places a HOLD on a three-day loan item it cannot be renewed and must be returned.
TRUNCATION	Using a special character at the end of a word to retrieve all possible endings of that word, e.g. child* will search for child , children , and childhood . Consult help screens to find truncation symbols for each DATABASE.
URL	Universal Resource Locator – the address of a web page on the internet, e.g. http://www.abdn.ac.uk/library/med .
VANCOUVER	A system of giving a REFERENCE to resources such as books and JOURNALS with a strictly defined order of information such as author, title, publication place and year.
WILD CARD	Using a special character to represent one or more letters within a search term in order to retrieve all possible spellings, e.g. lab*r will search for labour and labor . Consult help screens to find wild card symbols for each DATABASE.