Suggested Field Tags:

One of the ways that key word searches can be narrowed in databases when running a comprehensive and systematic search is through the use of field tags – most commonly those associated with title, abstract, and key words. The specific field tags that can/should be used differ by database. In Scopus, we recommend TI-ABS-KEY, which searches the title, abstract, and keywords.

Proximity Operators:

Proximity operators in databases allow you to search for one word/phrase within a certain proximity to another word. For example, you could use a proximity operator to find the word systematic within two words of the word protocol. Proximity operators are best used to create relationships or associations between words that cannot be accomplished through phrase searching and other search functions. In Scopus, the proximity operator is W# for ‘within # words of’ or PRE/# for ‘precedes by’.

Updating a Search:

When you need to update a search that you have previously performed, best practice is to use database commands that capture the records entered into the database after the date of the last search run where such commands are available. Due to a lag between an items publication and its inclusion in the database, entry date is not always the same as publication date, making it a less precise search option that should only be used in cases where the database is not able to distinguish between the two. In Scopus, the command is PUBYEAR AFT YYYY.

Database Quirks:

- Phrase searching is done using these types of brackets {phrase} instead of “phrase” – and this is for exact phrase. You can still use quotations for close phrases