Introduction to Literature Search for the Students of Economic Science

Handout

Where do you start with your search?

To start with your search, go to the homepage of the Göttingen State and University Library: www.sub.uni-goettingen.de/en/. From this page, you can access licensed electronic journals, e-books, and databases on and off campus.

Göttinger University Catalogue (GUK): here you will find literature available in the libraries of the University of Göttingen. Please note that here you can only search for books and journals. Journal articles and book chapters are not listed in the catalogue.

GBV Union Catalogue (GVK): this catalogue allows you to search for and order books available outside of the University of Göttingen.

You will find online periodicals in the Electronic Journals Library (EZB). The availability of texts in the EZB is shown with the so-called “traffic light box”.

Databases (DBIS): here you will find a wide range of databases. Select your subject from the list “Fachübersicht” („Subject areas“) and check the top suggestions. The following databases are among the top recommendations for the subject of economic science: EconBiz

1) EconBiz
2) Business Source Complete (via EBSCO Host)
3) ABI/INFORM
4) WISO

Tip: Always access databases through the system DBIS. This way, you will have access to full texts licenced by the Göttingen State and University Library.
Searching for titles from a bibliography

It is important to distinguish between different publication forms (book, article in an edited volume, journal article, grey literature etc.). Based on the publication type, you can select relevant search tools, e.g. Göttingen University Catalogue (GUK), subject-specific databases, Google Scholar etc.

Unlike Google, most scholarly databases require correct input of search terms. They do not browse for similar or related terms automatically. They also do not automatically complete applicable search terms.

Searching for titles from a bibliography: publication types

This way you can distinguish different types of publication:

**Journal article**: you can recognise a journal article when you see the preposition „in“ in the citation information. This indicates that the given title is included in another publication. In some citation styles, the preposition “in” is omitted. In this case, you can recognise a journal article by the journal title and number of the issue. Only individual articles are cited, never only journal titles. You will often see figures such as, for example, “67(2005)”. Those indicate the volume, the issue number, and the publication year, sometimes referred to as “vol.” and “no.” or „Jg.“ and „H.“ in German.

**Article in an edited volume**: you can also recognise an article from an edited volume when you see the preposition „in“. If the preposition is omitted, you should notice that the author and the title are followed by one more title (of the edited volume), the name of the editor, place of publication, publisher. Abbreviations such as “ed.”, “eds.”, or “Hg.” and „Hrsg.“ in German). Usually page numbers are mentioned (e.g. pp. 28-37).

**Book**: a citation corresponds to a book if there is no “in”, no volume, or issue number provided. There should also be a reference to an author or an editor, edition, place of publication, and the publisher. Page numbers are not mentioned.

**Grey literature (reports, discussion papers, working papers)**: these are more difficult to recognise. You will not find the preposition “in”, since working papers usually appear as individual publications. There is no information about the publisher. Instead, you will find information about the editor (or the institution) and the series number. You can often tell that the citation corresponds to grey literature if you see “working paper” or “report” in the series title. If you have doubts, consult the information desk at the Göttingen State and University Library.
Search Tools for Different Publication Types

We recommend using the Göttingen University Catalogue (GUK) to search for books (monographs, edited volumes, but not articles published in edited volumes). If you cannot find the book in this catalogue, you can submit a purchase suggestions or order the book via inter-library loan.

You can use Google Scholar to search for specific journal articles. If you cannot find a full-text (PDF) online, look for the journal title in the Göttingen University Catalogue (GUK) to see if a print version is available.

You can search for articles on specific topics in subject-specific databases. Publications in so-called A-journals are especially important in your discipline. * und was mag das wohl sein, so ein A-journal??? Klärung erfolgt später, hier verwirrend, zudem nicht aktuell?

Articles from edited collections are also listed in subject-specific databases.

Reports / working papers / dissertations (so-called grey literature) are often freely available on the Web or can be found and accessed via databases. [sind die nicht oft auf den Seiten irgendeines Institutes...??]

Topic Search: Search Terms

It is advisable to refer to subject-specific reference books and dictionaries when starting your topic search.

Tip: You can use Gabler Wirtschaftslexikon – a dictionary of economics (in German; available online: http://wirtschaftslexikon.gabler.de/) to help you come up with search terms. Consider which terms describe your topic. Think of translations or other ways of spelling. Avoid abbreviations. You can combine singular and plural forms and compound terms with wildcard operators (*, ?).
### Topic: “France / Great Britain: Minimum Wage Experience”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspects of the topic</th>
<th>Minimum wage</th>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>France / Great Britain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Synonyms</td>
<td>Minimum hourly pay, minimum pay</td>
<td>Effects, practice, findings, outcomes</td>
<td>United Kingdom and neighbouring countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translated terms</td>
<td>SMIC (French)</td>
<td>impact, effects, evidence, conditions</td>
<td>France, United Kingdom, Europe, French, British, European</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Related terms</td>
<td>Wage dumping, low pay</td>
<td>Regulations, propositions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generic terms (= broader terms)</td>
<td>Wage policy, job market, wage concepts, labour agreement, wage-setting</td>
<td></td>
<td>Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific terms (= narrower terms)</td>
<td>Statutory minimum wage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tip: to find synonyms, generic terms, specific terms, and terms related to your topic, it is recommended to use dictionaries of your subject area. For examples, the STW Thesaurus for Economics [http://zbw.eu/stw/version/latest/about.en.html](http://zbw.eu/stw/version/latest/about.en.html) or thesauri of selected databases.

During your research, you will come across more terms. You can continually complete your list with new search terms.

### Searching for literature of a specific topic: search strategies

1) **Snowballing**
   - Use available literature for further research by exploring **footnotes and references** for other relevant sources. This way, you can discover other thematically relevant literature.
   - This strategy also applies to databases and library catalogues. In the description of the document (book, article), you will find **keywords and subject tags**. By clicking on them, you can obtain thematically relevant results.
• Books in Departmental or Divisional Libraries and in the reading rooms of the Central Library are arranged and shelved according to subjects and topics. If you find an interesting book, it is worthwhile having a look right and left – you might discover more books relevant to your research.

2) Advanced search

In the Göttingen University Catalogue (GUK) and in every database, you can choose between simple and advanced search. Advanced search is especially helpful if you wish to combine several search terms or limit your search to certain aspects.

3) Truncation / Wildcard searching

This implies providing only a word stem in your query. Replace one or more characters at the end of your search term with an asterisk (*) or a question mark (?). This will considerably increase the number of search results. Truncation is especially relevant to topic search.

4) Phrase search

Put a phrase into quotation marks to ensure the exact word/character sequence of your search terms in the search results. E.g. „minimum wage“.

5) Combine different search queries with the help of Boolean operators:

**AND**: used to reduce the number of search results: All search terms must appear in the results. This is a default setting in many catalogues and databases. In our example, the terms „minimum wage“ and „Great Britain“ must appear together.

**OR**: used to increase the number of search results. At least one of the search terms must appear in the results. In this example, „minimum wage“, „Great Britain“, or both terms must appear in the results.

**NOT**: used to reduce the number of results. The engine will search for the first term, but not for the second one. With NOT you can exclude words from the search results.

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**Searching for literature on a specific topic: search tools**

**Bibliographical databases** are databases related to a specific subject area or topic. They contain bibliographic information about the author, title, publication year of a work, sometimes a brief abstract and table of contents. **Full-text databases** also include the text of the work.
Vorschlag: weglassen!!!

A search engine is a tool for searching documents stored on a computer or in a certain network, e.g. on the World Wide Web. As a rule, data acquisition is conducted automatically; in WWW it is carried out via Webcrawler.

Database system (DBIS): here you will find a wide range of databases. Choose your subject from the list “Fachübersicht” (“Subject areas”). Check the top suggestions. Select a database of your choice and research your topic. To check the availability of a full text, click the SFX/SUB-button (usually located next to the article).

Screenshot of the page http://sfx.gbv.de

Note: If the next is not available in electronic form, as in the second example, you can check the holdings of the Göttingen University Catalogue (GUK), Electronic Journals Library (EZB), or the GBV Union Catalogue (GVK).

You can also access licenced databases, e-journals, and e-books off campus (e.g. from home):

- Select the database, journal, or an e-book of your choice via DBIS, EZB or GUK.
- Sign in with your user number that you find on the back of your student ID and your library password on the login-page of the authentication server HAN.

This video takes you through the basic steps: https://youtu.be/H2qnb8t2sng
Search engines and databases: [m.E. zu Bibliothekarisch – ggf. ändern / weglassen / auch Assessing the results: ohne Textvorlage schwer nachzu vollziehen, Vorschlag: kleines Online Quiz mit Beispiel o.ä.]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Search engine</th>
<th>Databases</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Indexation</strong></td>
<td>Automatic (Crawling), does not browse through „Deep Web“, which encompasses library catalogues and databases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of results</strong></td>
<td>high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relevance / Academic quality</strong></td>
<td>low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Availability</strong></td>
<td>Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accessibility</strong></td>
<td>Direct access</td>
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**What did you find? – Assessing the results**

**Too few results?**
- Check the terms you use in your search: try synonyms, generic terms, or translations
- Leave out less important aspects of your topic
- Check the relevance of the database you are browsing for your topic and, if necessary, select another database

**Too many results?**
- Use specific search terms
- Add another aspect to your search strategy
- Apply formal filters of databases → e.g. limit the publication years of your search results to the last 5 years only, set the language, publication form etc.
Are your sources scholarly? Possible criteria (formal and content-related):

- The author’s name and credentials are provided.
- The text is based on existing knowledge. The source of information is traceable, i.e. provided in the reference list or in footnotes. Direct and indirect quotations are indicated in the text.
- The text is well structured and written in a consistent academic style.
- The author applies appropriate methods to the research question.
- The results of research are well-explained, objective, and comprehensible.
- The ideas the text delivers are coherent.

Have a look at these tips for evaluating your information resources prepared by the University Library of Georgia State University:
http://research.library.gsu.edu/c.php?g=115862&p=754393

Tip: In scholarly databases or library catalogues you will find quality academic literature.

Contacts and Tips

You will find various tools and techniques for academic research in the section „Learning and teaching“ on the website of the Göttingen State and University Library: www.sub.uni-goettingen.de/-DIZHh Further self-study materials (in German and English) are available here: www.sub.uni-goettingen.de/-KYCSA

Reference management programmes such as Citavi and Zotero help to collect, organise, and cite literature. The Göttingen State and University Library offers courses and study materials on these programmes: www.sub.uni-goettingen.de/-Aa7VJ

The international Writing Centre of the University of Göttingen offers courses and consultations on writing process and text composition: www.uni-goettingen.de/en/512913.html

The library of the University of Konstanz created a comprehensive online-tutorial on research strategies (in German): https://ilias.uni-konstanz.de/illias/goto_ilias_uni_pg_1235_263.html

The University of Göttingen has prepared information (including a quiz) on the topic of plagiarism: www.uni-goettingen.de/en/519762.html

Subject-specific tips for research and specific search tools can be found on the subject-information pages of the Göttingen State and University Library (in German): www.sub.uni-goettingen.de/en/law-economics-and-social-sciences/economics/

You will find the list of A-journals in the following article:
www.uni-gottingen.de/de/document/download/ffde141f23756a7be9f5cc825b937395.pdf/GEA-Ranking.pdf

You will also find the list of subject-specific journals with sub-ratings here: http://vhbonline.org/vhb4you/jourqual/vhb-jourqual-3/gesamtliste/

Time management: keep in mind that you need to obtain, cite, read, and assess the literature you find.

A template for your literature search: enter your search terms:

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Should you have further questions, please contact our colleagues at the circulation desk: information@sub.uni-goettingen.de or give us a call: +49 551 39-5231.

We wish you the best of luck with your projects!