

FIRST AND SECOND STAGE DATABASES

No matter the field of study, there are **1-3 first stage databases** that are considered essential to your field. However, as a literature review requires a comprehensive review of the existing knowledge, it is also necessary to search in **1-3 second stage databases**.

First Stage Databases

- Are **narrowly focused** on your field of study.
- Frequently use a **controlled vocabulary**, an index of exact terminology for commonly studied ideas in the field.
- Can be identified by selecting Research guides by subject and clicking on the Find articles tab.

Second Stage Databases

- Have a **general focus** or are first stage databases from closely related fields of study.
 - Frequently use **whole language searching**, an approach where the database identifies the frequency of words searched in an abstract or article.
 - Include examples like Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar.
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Example Research Question

How effective are road-side cannabis tests for gauging impairment in drivers?

First Stage Database

- This research question falls into the field of Health Studies.
- The Public Health Research guide identifies PubMed as "the most popular journal database for health and medicine research".
- PubMed is an essential database for focused research in Health Studies.
- PubMed uses MeSH terms as a controlled vocabulary.
- **PubMed is a first stage database for this research question.**

Second Stage Database

- Understanding all the elements of this research question requires more extensive searching than just PubMed.
- The Public Health Research guide identifies Scopus as containing "topics such as psychology, social sciences, science and engineering".
- Scopus has a general focus on topics related to this research question.
- **Scopus is a second stage database for this research question.**