AK3515: Literature review search strategy examples
Databases, resources, example keywords and search strategies.

This document contains advice on creating a research plan and best practices for systematically searching your databases, a list of recommended databases by topic, example search strategies with results for each recommended database, and other resources worth searching.

Example topic: What does Māori success look like at in tertiary education? (What is success from a Māori perspective? What are the characteristics of successful Māori tertiary students? What are the characteristics of tertiary institutions that produce successful Māori graduates?)

Create a research plan
Create a research plan before beginning your literature search. What are you looking for and where will you find it?

1. Identify the keywords that describe your topic. Identify alternative keywords that may be used in non-New Zealand educational literature.

Example keywords with alternatives:
- Māori - indigenous, "ethnic minority", native people, culture, cultural group
- Tertiary - university, "higher education", college, wananga, institution, "higher learning", postsecondary education, postcompulsory education
- Success - achievement, completion, graduation, attainment, outcomes, "education outcomes", gateways, barriers

2. Create search strategies using the keywords you have identified. For example:
- Māori tertiary success
- Māori higher education
- Māori university success

3. Identify the databases containing research in your subject areas (see page 1 of this document)

4. Systematically search each database

Best practices for systematically searching your databases:
- Start with a broad search to identify the breadth of literature on your main topic. Search across all fields to ensure you retrieve every record containing your keyword.
- Refine your search results by adding extra keywords.
- Scan through your search results. Identify useful results and save the article record or full text article.
- Change your keywords and re-run your searches again.

5. Write it down! Keep a record of your search strategies for the methods section of your review.
6. Evaluate the articles you found. Are they ROAR?
   - Relevant? Do they focus on your topic?
   - Objective? Are the arguments well balanced and make sense?
   - Accurate? Does the information seem correct? Are the key facts and statistics referenced? Are the references from academic or credible sources?
   - Reliable? Are the articles from peer-reviewed journals? Are the articles written by reliable, respected or authoritative authors?

7. Not happy with your search results? Check your search strategies and try another database.

**Databases**
Go to: [https://library.aut.ac.nz/home > Databases > Find by Title](https://library.aut.ac.nz/home > Databases > Find by Title)

**Education**
Use these databases to find research on Māori in tertiary education (statistics, success, policy and outcomes). These databases mostly contain journal articles.
   - *A+ Education*
   - *ERIC*
   - *Scopus*
   - *VOCED*
   - *Web of Science*

**Postgraduate theses and dissertations**
Use these databases to search for research on Māori in tertiary education. Use these databases to double check that no one else has written a thesis or dissertation on your topic.
   - *ProQuest Dissertations and Theses*
   - *NZResearch.org.nz*
   - Individual university research repositories

**New Zealand focus**
Use these databases to research Māori success at university and AUT’s policy initiative around improving Māori recruitment, retention and course completion. These databases contain newspaper and magazine articles published in New Zealand. These articles are unlikely to be included in the large international databases.
   - *Australia New Zealand Research Centre*
   - *NewzText*
   - *Hansard*

**General research**
Use these databases to identify other research not included in the databases listed above.
   - *Google Scholar*
   - *New Zealand Parliamentary Debates (Hansard)*
   - *AUT Library Search* (A catalogue of print resources owned by AUT and a selection of journal articles from subscriber databases)
**Databases with search examples**

**A+ Education**
A+ Education is an Australian database. Use this database to search for journal articles on Australian and New Zealand education.

1. Identify the breadth of literature on your topic within a particular database. Example: Māori

Use *Advanced search*
Maori (All fields, all terms)
= 524 search results

2. Refine your search results using additional keywords
Examples: Māori with alternative keywords for tertiary education. Use *All fields* to search across all fields within the article records. Use the *exact phrase* option to search phrases containing two or more keywords.

Maori (All fields)
AND tertiary (All fields)
= 64 search results

Maori (All fields)
AND higher education (All fields, *exact phrase*)
= 118 search results

Maori (All fields)
AND university (All fields)
= 324 search results

Maori (All fields)
AND postsecondary education (All fields, *exact phrase*)
= 44 search results

Maori (All fields)
AND wananga (All fields)
= 40 search results

Maori (All fields)
AND "postsecondary education" OR university OR tertiary OR "higher education" OR wananga (All fields)
= 350 search results

Maori (All fields)
AND higher education (All fields, *exact phrase*)
AND success* (All fields)
= 35 search results
AND higher education (All fields, exact phrase)
AND success* OR achievement (All fields)
= 40 search results

Maori (All fields)
AND tertiary (All fields, exact phrase)
AND outcome* OR achievement (All fields)
= 7 search results

3. Did your searches retrieve too many results? Refine your search further using different fields.
   - Subject searches the subject field for your keywords.
   - Abstract searches the abstract field for your keywords.
   - Title searches the title field for your keywords.

Examples: Māori

Maori (All fields, all terms)
= 524 search results

Maori (Subject)
= 447 search results

Maori (Subject)
AND tertiary (Subject)
= 2 search results

Maori (Subject)
AND tertiary (Abstract)
= 44 search results

A sample of alternative keywords found during searching. Use the exact phrase option to search phrases containing two or more keywords:
   - Postsecondary education
   - Indigenous education
   - Participation
   - Student characteristics
   - University graduates
   - Cultural relevance
   - Success
   - Educational policy
   - Educational quality
   - Academic staff attitudes
   - Student engagement
   - Barriers to participation
   - Academic achievement
   - Learning environment
   - Ethnicity
**ERIC (via OVID)**
ERIC is the world’s biggest education research database. It has great coverage of New Zealand and Australian materials. ERIC is managed by the US Department of Education. Use the ERIC thesaurus to identify the correct US terms for New Zealand terminology.

**Search examples:**
Use the *Multi-field* search

- **Maori (All fields)**
  = 632 search results

- **Maori (Abstract)**
  = 596 search results

- **Maori (ERIC subject heading)**
  = 0 search results

**ERIC thesaurus (guide to keywords used by ERIC)**
**Search tools > Map terms**
- *Postsecondary education* is used for tertiary education.
- *Māori* are categorised under Indigenous populations, ethnic groups and Pacific Islanders.
- *College Graduates* is used for university graduates.
- *Achievement* is used for success.

**Maori (All fields)**
**AND** **postsecondary education (ERIC subject heading)**
= 21 search results

**Maori (All fields)**
**AND** "postsecondary education" (All fields)
= 46 search results

**indigenous populations (ERIC subject heading)**
**AND** New Zealand (Identifier)
= 271 search results

**indigenous populations (ERIC subject heading)**
**AND** New Zealand (Identifier)
**AND** postsecondary education (ERIC subject heading)
= 5 search results

**success (All fields)**
**AND** Maori (All fields)
= 45 search results

**success (All fields)**
**AND** Maori (All fields)
AND tertiary OR university OR postsecondary (All fields)
= 19 search results

wananga (All fields)
AND New Zealand (Identifier)
= 9 search results

success (ERIC subject heading)
AND Maori (All fields)
= 3 search results

success (ERIC subject heading)
AND indigenous populations (ERIC subject heading)
AND New Zealand (Identifier)
= 2 search results

**Scopus**
Scopus is one of the largest international databases of peer reviewed scientific and social sciences research.

Search examples:
Maori (Title, abstract, keyword)
AND "tertiary education" OR university OR "postsecondary" OR "higher education" (Title, abstract, keyword)
AND success* OR achievement OR completion OR graduation (Title, abstract, keyword)
= 73 search results
Search within results: AUT
= 1 search result

Maori (Title, abstract, keyword)
AND "tertiary education" OR university OR "postsecondary" OR "higher education" (Title, abstract, keyword)
AND success* OR achievement OR completion OR graduation (Title, abstract, keyword)
= 73 search results
Search within results: "Auckland University of Technology"
= 3 search results

Maori (Title, abstract, keyword)
AND "tertiary education" OR university OR "postsecondary" OR "higher education" (Title, abstract, keyword)
AND policy OR policies (Title, abstract, keyword)
AND success* OR achievement OR completion OR graduation (Title, abstract, keyword)
= 8 search results

Maori (Title, abstract, keyword)
AND "tertiary education" OR university OR "postsecondary" OR "higher education" (Title, abstract, keyword)
AND policy OR policies (Title, abstract, keyword)  
= 47 search results

Maori (Title, abstract, keyword)  
AND "Auckland University of Technology" OR "AUT" (Title, abstract, keyword)  
= 13 search results

**VOCEDplus**  
VOCED is an Australian database of international tertiary education research. It has great coverage of New Zealand materials.

VOCED subject headings and keywords:  
- University  
- Postsecondary education  
- Postcompulsory education  
- Academic achievement  
- Completion  
- Graduates  
- Cultural factor  
- Barrier

Search examples:  
Use the *advanced search* option

Maori (All fields)  
AND tertiary education (All fields, As a phrase)  
= 537 search results  
Use the *Filter by* options on the left side to refine your search to a specific subject, country, type of publication or by date.

Maori (All fields)  
AND university (Subject / keyword)  
= 40 search results  
Maori (Abstract)  
AND academic achievement (Subject / keyword)  
= 9 search results

Maori (All fields)  
AND university (All fields)  
*Add one more*  
AND achievement (All fields)  
= 472 search results

Maori (Abstract)  
AND university (Abstract)  
*Add one more*
AND achievement (Abstract)
= 11 search results

Maori (All fields)
AND university (All fields)

Add one more
AND barrier (All fields)
= 166 search results
AUT (All fields)
OR Auckland University of Technology (All fields, As a phrase)
= 666 search results

Add one more
Maori (All fields)
= 71 search results

Web of Science
Web of Science is the largest international databases of peer reviewed scientific research. It contains a small collection of social sciences and education material.

Search examples:
Maori (Topic)
AND education (Topic)
= 324 search results
Search within results for: university OR tertiary
= 52 search results

Maori (Topic)
AND education (topic)
AND Maori (Topic)
AND success OR achievement OR outcomes (Topic)
= 88 search results

Maori (Topic)
AND university (topic)
= 29 search results

Proquest Dissertations and Theses Global
Use this database to find theses and dissertations on your topic written by students at non-New Zealand universities. For New Zealand theses and dissertations see NZResearch.org.nz

Thesaurus subject headings:
- Use Higher education for postsecondary education. Tertiary is not used as a subject heading.
- Use University students for university students.
- Use Success or Academic achievement for success.
- Use Native peoples for indigenous peoples.
Search examples:
Maori (Anywhere except fulltext)  
= 227 search results

Maori (Abstract)  
= 172 search results

Maori (Abstract)  
AND university OR postsecondary OR tertiary (Abstract)  
= 6 search results

Maori (Anywhere except fulltext)  
AND university OR college (Anywhere except fulltext)  
AND achievement OR success (Anywhere except fulltext)  
= 8 search results

Maori (Anywhere)  
AND university OR college (Anywhere)  
AND achievement OR success (Anywhere)  
= 8,000+ search results

**NZResearch.org.nz**
Use this database to find theses, dissertations and articles on your topic written by staff and students at New Zealand universities. Use quotation marks “ ” to search for phrases.

Search examples:  
Maori “tertiary education”  
= 55 search results

Maori university  
= 3000+ search results

Maori university success  
= 210 search results

Maori university achievement  
= 156 search results

Maori “Auckland University of Technology”  
= 245 search results

Note: Double check your search results by searching the individual university research repositories. See the links below.
Institutional repositories

- University of Auckland https://researchspace.auckland.ac.nz/
- Massey University http://mro.massey.ac.nz/
- AUT https://tuwhera.aut.ac.nz/
- Victoria University of Wellington http://researcharchive.vuw.ac.nz/
- University of Canterbury https://ir.canterbury.ac.nz/
- University of Otago https://ourarchive.otago.ac.nz/

Australia / New Zealand Research Centre

This is a database of Australian and New Zealand newspaper and magazine articles. Some journals are included. Newspaper and magazine articles are not peer-reviewed.

Search examples:
Maori (TX All text)
AND university OR "tertiary education" (TX All text)
= 27,000+ search results
Refine your search results by using extra keywords or selecting options under Refine Results (left side of screen). Tick Source Types > Academic Journals for articles published in journals.

Maori (TX All text)
AND university OR "tertiary education" (TX All text)
AND success OR achievement (TX All text)
= 6,400+ search results

Maori (TX All text)
AND "Auckland University of Technology" (TX All text)
= 510 search results

Maori (TX All text)
AND "Auckland University of Technology" (TX All text)
AND policy (TX All text)
= 186 search results

Maori (TX All text)
AND "Auckland University of Technology" (TX All text)
AND success OR achievement (TX All text)
= 140 search results

Maori (Subject)
= 2,044 search results

Maori (Subject)
AND postsecondary (Subject)
= 4 search results
Indigenous peoples (Subject) AND education (Subject) AND New Zealand (Geographic terms) = 18 search results

Indigenous peoples (Subject) AND university (Abstract) AND New Zealand (Geographic terms) = 5 search results

Maori (Abstract) AND university (Abstract) AND New Zealand (Geographic terms) = 68 search results

Maori (Abstract) AND university (Abstract) AND New Zealand (Geographic terms) AND success OR achievement (TX All text) = 21 search results

**NewzText**

Use this database to find news reports and press releases around improving the recruitment, retention and outcomes for Māori students.

- Go to: [https://library.aut.ac.nz/home > Databases > Find by Title](https://library.aut.ac.nz/home > Databases > Find by Title)
- Select Combined search
- Deselect Classifieds, Index New Zealand, The Independent, National Business Review

Search examples:
Maori
AUT
= 1400+ search results
Scroll to the end of the screen. *Restrict current search by: Outcomes*
= 148 search results

Maori
AUT
= 1400+ search results
Scroll to the end of the screen. *Restrict current search by: Success*
= 226 search results

Maori
AUT
= 1400+ search results
Scroll to the end of the screen. *Restrict current search by: Policy*
= 354 search results
New Zealand Parliamentary Debates (Hansard)
This database contains the transcripts of New Zealand Parliamentary debates. Check Hansard to see what is being said about Maori success at university or AUT’s policies around Maori recruitment, retention and course completion.
Go to: https://www.parliament.nz/en/pb/hansard-debates/rhr/search

Maori university success
Limit to Subject: Education
= 2000+ search results

Ulrichsweb
Are your articles from peer-reviewed or refereed journals? Check the journal homepage on the web. If the information isn’t clear, search your journal title in Ulrichsweb.
In the Basic Description section, look for Refereed.

Google Scholar
Google Scholar is useful for discovering articles, research papers, conference papers, presentations and theses you may have missed in the other databases.
Repeat the search strategies you used in the other databases. Sort by relevance is the default option for sorting your search results. The search results on the first two pages should contain research you have seen in the other library databases. Skim read the next few pages to see if there is anything else new.

Example searches:
• Maori university success
• Maori "tertiary education" success
• Maori "AUT" success

AUT Library Search
This is the AUT Library catalogue. Re-run the search strategies you used in the other databases to identify any research you have missed.
• Go to: https://library.aut.ac.nz/home

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