AMC University College Library – Research Guide

1. Introduction

Research is the systematic investigation of materials and sources to establish facts, reach new conclusions, and support learning. This guide will help you conduct effective academic research.

2. Planning Your Research

1. Define your topic clearly – Make sure you understand the assignment or research question.
2. Identify keywords – Break your topic into main concepts and use keywords to search databases.
3. Create a research plan – Outline which sources to use and a timeline for research tasks.

3. Finding Sources

A. Library Catalogue (OPAC)

Use the library catalogue to locate books, journals, and e-books.
Tips:
- Use Boolean operators: AND, OR, NOT
- Use quotation marks for exact phrases

B. Academic Databases

Licensed databases: EBSCO, JSTOR, ProQuest
Open access resources: DOAJ, Open Library, Project Gutenberg

C. Google Scholar

Use Google Scholar to find scholarly articles.
Check citations and links to full-text versions.

4. Evaluating Sources

Ask these questions when assessing sources:
1. Authority: Who is the author? Are they credible?
2. Accuracy: Are the facts supported by evidence?
3. Currency: Is the information up-to-date?

4. Relevance: Does it directly relate to your topic?
5. Purpose: Is the content objective or biased?

5. Note-Taking and Organization

Keep track of all sources.
Summarize key points.
Use reference management tools (e.g., Zotero, Mendeley).

6. Referencing

Always cite sources to avoid plagiarism.
Common citation styles:
- APA – Social sciences
- MLA – Humanities
- Chicago – History & Arts
Check library guides for style-specific examples.

7. Writing and Reviewing

1. Draft an outline for your paper.
2. Write clearly and concisely.
3. Revise and proofread.
4. Ensure proper citations and bibliography.

8. Additional Tips

Start research early to allow time for revisions.
Ask a librarian for help if needed.
Use academic resources rather than unverified websites.