



QUICK INTRO: Locating and Using Dissertations in Research

DKS, WMU Educ. Lib. 6/24/13

dis·ser·ta·tion  [dis-er-tey-shuh n]  [Show IPA](#)

noun

1. a written essay, treatise, or thesis, especially one written by a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Searching for dissertations is fairly straight forward; the primary database is called Proquest Dissertations and Theses. The University libraries have paid for access to thousands of dissertations in the PDF file format.

The Database: Dissertations and Theses (ProQuest) Indexes virtually all doctoral dissertations and many masters theses produced in the U.S. since 1860 and many from foreign schools as well. Abstracts available from 1980. Full text for most dissertations available from 1997. Some authors choose to not make their dissertations available. Print and microfilm copies are offered for a fee, but check out Interlibrary Loan before paying for a copy.

The Search: When retrieving records from a database keywords are used to describe a topic. By using logic to tell the computer what to retrieve you can create a specific search strategy. To improve a search you should use combinations of words to locate and retrieve more specific information.

Searching Logic

When searching, two main types of logic are used: AND logic and OR logic. The AND and OR commands are called logical operators. (NOT logic very is rarely used).

Using AND Logic – AND logic will always narrow a search result

When using AND logic, all words in the search statement must be present in the same record for the record to be retrieved as a search result. AND logic is used to build a strategy using combinations of topic words.

Let's say that we want to find any dissertation database records that meet the following topic statement:

Locate dissertations that are about drug abuse and the prescription drug Adderall

Remember that every word in the search statement must in the database record in order for the record to be retrieved.

For example: drug abuse and adderall

Using OR Logic – OR logic will always increase a search result

In the search example below, OR logic tells the system that "word 1 or word 2" must be present anyplace in the same record. OR logic is used to expand a search result, and search for terms that are alike in meaning: For example: **teenager or adolescent**

Preparing to search – Setting up a search strategy

It is best to plan your search before sitting down to execute it. This is a two-step process, Step 1: Write a short statement of your topic. Step 2: Use your topic statement to determine your keywords and the logic you will use to conduct the search.

- Putting search words into the database, see example below.

drug abuse	in	Anywhere except full text – ALL
AND (adderall	OR	Anywhere except full text – ALL
AND (OR	Anywhere except full text – ALL

Reviewing the search result and acquiring the dissertation

Below is the result of the sample search for drug abuse and Adderall.

ProQuest ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Full Text
Basic Search | Advanced | Browse | About

You are searching all fields except full text ⓘ

all(drug abuse) AND all(adderall)

☐ Full text


Suggested subjects Hide ▲

- Drug abuse
- Drug abuse AND Public health
- Drug abuse AND Psychotherapy
- Drug abuse AND Nursing
- Drug abuse AND Teenagers
- Drug abuse AND Health care

2 Results * Search within [Create alert](#)

0 Selected items [Clear] [Save to My Research](#) [Email](#)






☐ Select 1-2 [Brief view](#) | [Detailed view](#)


☐ 1  [Nonmedical use of prescription stimulant drugs by students attending a rural southwestern university](#) [Preview](#)

Diss.Lubick, Nancy. Northern Arizona University, ProQuest UMI 1518029.

... Abuse of prescription stimulant drugs has become more common than ...
...unlike other types of drugs commonly used by college students ...
...medications, such as Adderall and Ritalin, are prescribed to ...

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☐ 2  [Academic Performance Enhancement Drugs in Higher Education](#) [Preview](#)

Diss.Aikins, Ross Douglas. University of California, Los Angeles, ProQuest UMI 3532414.

...such as Ritalin and Adderall, new drugs with purported cognitive ...
...academically motivated drug use problematizes ...
...students who use drugs both licitly and illicitly

[References \(180\)](#)

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