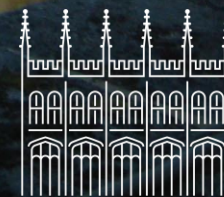
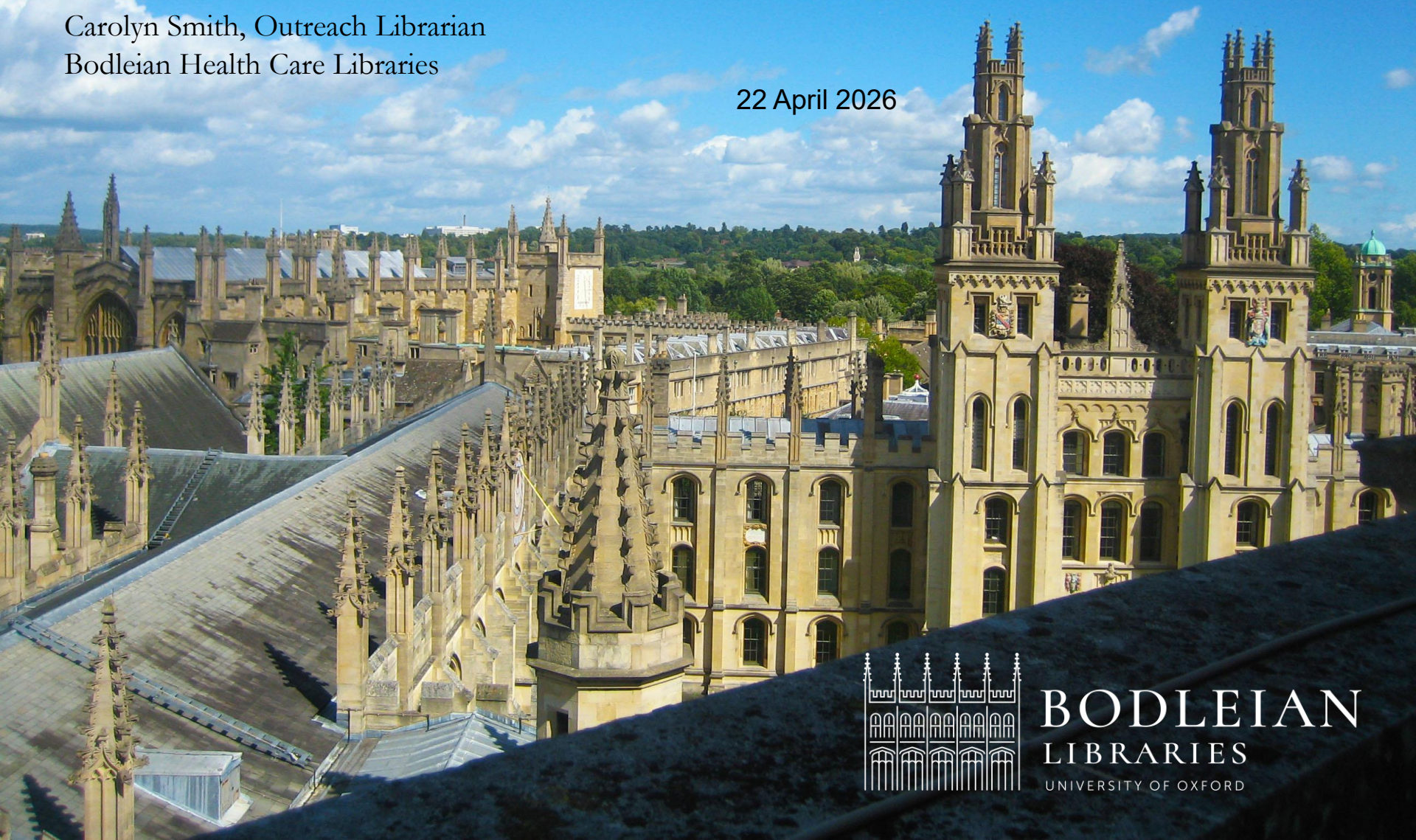


Systematic review searching

What to expect as a co-author of a systematic review

Carolyn Smith, Outreach Librarian
Bodleian Health Care Libraries

22 April 2026

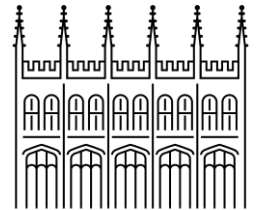


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Where are you starting from?

In the Chat, let me know what kind of experience you have with systematic reviews.

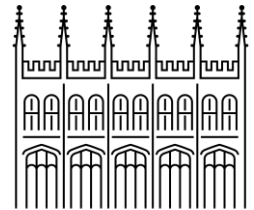
'None' is an acceptable answer!



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Questions you may have

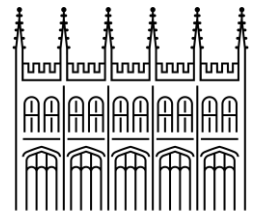
- How do I know I'm doing enough to be a co-author?
- What does the role entail?
- How do I get involved in SRs?
- What makes a good information specialist?
- How do I manage expectations?
- How do I know when I have finished?



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What does an Information Specialist do?

- Question formulation
- Publishing advice, including protocols
- Databases
- Software
- Search strategy
- Search translations
- Downloading results
- Uploading results
- Writing search methodology
- Organising and storing files

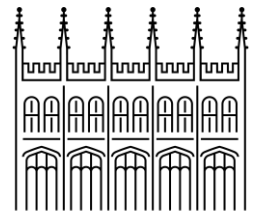


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What does it take to be a co-author?

The International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) recommends that authorship be based on the following 4 criteria:

- Substantial contributions to the conception or **design** of the work; or the **acquisition**, analysis, or interpretation of **data** for the work; AND
- **Drafting** the work or reviewing it critically for important intellectual content; AND
- **Final approval** of the version to be published; AND
- **Agreement to be accountable** for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.



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How do you get involved

Get yourself ready

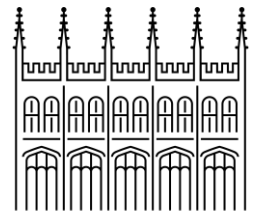
- Ask colleagues to train you - look externally if there is no current provision.
- Read, watch videos, practice with existing SRs.

Get your team ready

- Write a policy
- Train staff to promote your services

Get your researchers ready

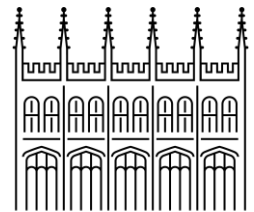
- Offer at every opportunity
- Show the evidence that a librarian on board is useful



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You have a request - what to do now?

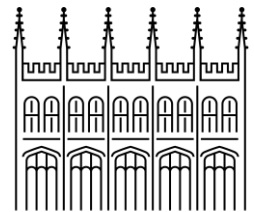
- Ask what they want your role to be
- Ask them to send you their plan or protocol
- Send them some useful links or documents on SR methodology
- Set up your initial meeting



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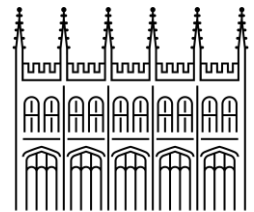
How do you run your initial meeting?

- Ask them to talk about their project
- Bring up your role
- Outline what you will do for them
 - Databases
 - Search
 - Downloading
 - File organising
 - Software
 - Deduplication
 - Write up
 - Re-run
- Draft an initial search with them



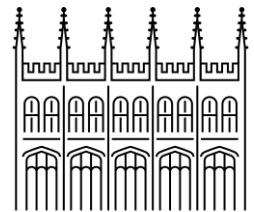
The initial draft search

- Draft the search with the researcher to understand the topic
- Test the search with key papers
- Translate the search to a new database
- Check if any new terms added can be included in first search
- Check with researcher that the search captures the topic
- Continue carefully constructing the search for each database
- Continue communicating with the researcher and getting approval



Keeping records

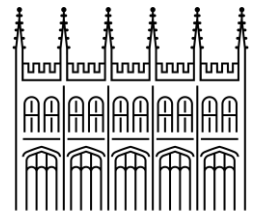
- Save the searches
- Save the data files
- Note the numbers - duplicates, the numbers screened at each stage
- Be ready to re-run the searches after 6-12 months
- PRISMA write up of methodology
- Keep communicating



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HELP!

- Ask for help when you need it
- Colleagues
 - FutureNHS: Literature Search- Expert Peer Review group
- Mailing lists
 - LIS-Medical
 - LIS-ExpertSearching
- YouTube videos
 - Eg Carrie Price
- Social Media
 - BlueSky
- Official sources - Cochrane Handbook, JBI Manual



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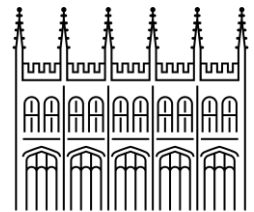
Any questions?

References

Pawliuk C, Cheng S, Zheng A, Siden HH. Librarian involvement in systematic reviews was associated with higher quality of reported search methods: a cross-sectional survey. *J Clin Epidemiol* 2024; 166: 111237.

Fees, F., Recommendations for the Conduct, Reporting, Editing, and Publication of Scholarly Work in Medical Journals. International Committee of Medical Journal Editors. <https://www.icmje.org/recommendations/> Updated 2026

Rethlefsen ML, Kirtley S, Waffenschmidt S, Ayala AP, Moher D, Page MJ, Koffel JB; PRISMA-S Group. PRISMA-S: an extension to the PRISMA Statement for Reporting Literature Searches in Systematic Reviews. *Syst Rev.* 2021;10(1):39. doi: 10.1186/s13643-020-01542-z



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