

Literature Reviews Training Module – Summary for Download

This training module introduces you to:

- the purpose of a literature review;
- the different types of literature reviews;
- how to conduct and organise a literature search;
- how to write a literature review.

A literature review is a text that provides an overview of the literature associated with a specific topic or research question. A literature review can form a section of a dissertation or research report, or it can stand alone as a journal article or book chapter.

A literature review:

- Presents themes, identifies patterns, locates gaps, and assesses material in texts directly related to your research question;
- Demonstrates your understanding of the literature and research associated with a particular topic or line of thought;
- Presents some of your rationale for developing and exploring a specific research question.

For you as the writer, the literature review provides a map of the theory and research related to your chosen subject of study. For the reader, the literature review can reveal your rationale for pursuing your line of inquiry.

Literature reviews can take different forms – they can contain a synthesis of texts, they may reflect your position within your field of study, they may identify gaps within the field, or they may present the explorations of an idea over time.

Writing a literature review involves the following steps:

1. Choosing a topic to explore
2. Planning your research strategy
3. Finding and evaluating texts, including books and journal articles
4. Selecting the texts you will include
5. Analysing, synthesising and interpreting your findings
6. Creating an outline for the literature review
7. Writing a draft
8. Conducting any additional research
9. Revising and finalising your literature review