Librarian Assistance with Conducting Systematic Reviews

Librarians at the OSU Health Sciences Library (HSL) have comprehensive searching, database indexing and functionality, and citation management expertise, all competencies recommended by various standards about systematic reviews. However, the extent to which we can help is dependent on our availability and competing priorities. Most HSL librarians are tenure-track faculty librarians who conduct research and participate in professional service just like any other faculty member at OSU. Because of this, we cannot guarantee we will always be able to assist at the highest level for OSU health sciences faculty, staff, or students conducting a systematic review (or other comprehensive review). Our policies for participating at any level are as follows.

1. Librarian assistance from HSL librarians is currently limited to faculty, staff, and students conducting research projects in the following colleges/schools/units: Colleges of Medicine, Nursing, Dentistry, Public Health and Optometry, School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences, OSU Wexner Medical Center, and the James Cancer Hospital. Librarians will only provide level 1 or 2 assistance for students completing assignments for courses they are enrolled in regardless of whether they are also faculty or staff.

2. There are three tiers of librarian assistance with systematic reviews.

   **Level 1**: Training on comprehensive search techniques, and selecting appropriate databases for the scope and topic of the search, using citation managers (RefWorks or EndNote) to manage citations, and/or determining whether a systematic review is the right method for the topic.

   **Level 2**: Level 1 plus collaborating with the systematic review team to construct and review search strategies for rigor with team members (not librarian) actually conducting searches and possibly setting up automated search alerts for topic.

   **Level 3**: Levels 1 and 2 plus extensive assistance with systematic review protocol development and design of search strategies, conducting searches, gathering citations into citation management software, and removing duplicates, and contributing to manuscript production by writing the methods section and approving final manuscript prior to submission. This can also include guidance on appropriate journals to select for publishing.

Please refer to the following table for guidance about timing, acknowledgments, and co-authorship requirements for the various levels.

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<th>Level 1</th>
<th>Level 2</th>
<th>Level 3</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amount of time needed to schedule consultation</td>
<td>1 to 2 weeks</td>
<td>1 to 2 weeks</td>
<td>1 to 4 weeks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amount of time needed to complete assessment and finalization of search</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2 to 4 weeks</td>
<td>2 to 4 weeks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amount of time to complete search, gather results, and</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>1 to 3 months</td>
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Approved by HSL Research and Education Services Department July 19, 2018
The total time to complete a systematic review can range between 6 to 18 months or longer, depending on the topic, the number of results that must be screened, and the size and consensus of the team. This does not include manuscript preparation, which may add another 3 to 6 months. At a minimum, you should plan 12 months as a judicious starting point for estimating the total time from start of searching to submission of manuscript.

Other Considerations

3. Systematic review research team leads are expected to include the librarian in team discussions about the review and provide periodic updates on status of review. If you are not sure you will complete the systematic review and follow through to publishing a manuscript, guideline, or policy, we recommend level 1 or 2 librarian assistance only. Systematic review research team members who receive level 3 librarian assistance must a) allow librarian to write up methods to be included in the manuscript, guideline, or policy; b) review full manuscript prior to its submission to a journal; and 3) review all comments from peer reviewers prior to submission of final manuscript.

4. Librarians reserve the right to withdraw from a research team if their professional expertise is not heeded or if they feel the integrity of the project is in question. Librarians are not simply your searchers. Their expertise with terminologies, database functionality, and citation management is a specialty, and directly affects the data collected in a systematic review methodology as well as their professional reputations and evaluations by external reviewers in cases of promotion and tenure.

5. This service is currently free of charge. If you wish to write a grant application that includes funding a systematic review and you would like a librarian to assist at Level 3 with this review, you must consult with a librarian prior to submitting the grant. Mutual agreement on participation in the review and percentage of salary covered by the grant is required.