Planning your literature search

Name:

Faculty:

Course option selected (tick): Online plus workshop ☐ **Online only** ☐

a) Key concepts (Complete after Unit 2)

What is your research question/hypotheses? What are the key concepts?

b) Selecting Keywords (Complete after Unit 2)

Consider the different concepts involved in the topic. Highlight or underline the keywords. (Remember a keyword is simply a significant word that identifies the key concepts of your question.) Make a list of the keyword you have identified and then consider alternative terms, synonyms, spelling variations and abbreviations.

Keywords	Alternative words/terms

c) Putting together a search (Complete after Unit 3)

We can now use combinations of these keywords and the alternative keywords in combination in a database or search engine to retrieve resources.

	(delete as appropriate) AND/OR		(delete as appropriate) AND/OR	
	(delete as appropriate) AND/OR		(delete as appropriate) AND/OR	
	(delete as appropriate) AND/OR		(delete as appropriate) AND/OR	
	(delete as appropriate) AND/OR		(delete as appropriate) AND/OR	
	(delete as appropriate) AND/OR		(delete as appropriate) AND/OR	

d) Targeting your search (Complete after Unit 3)
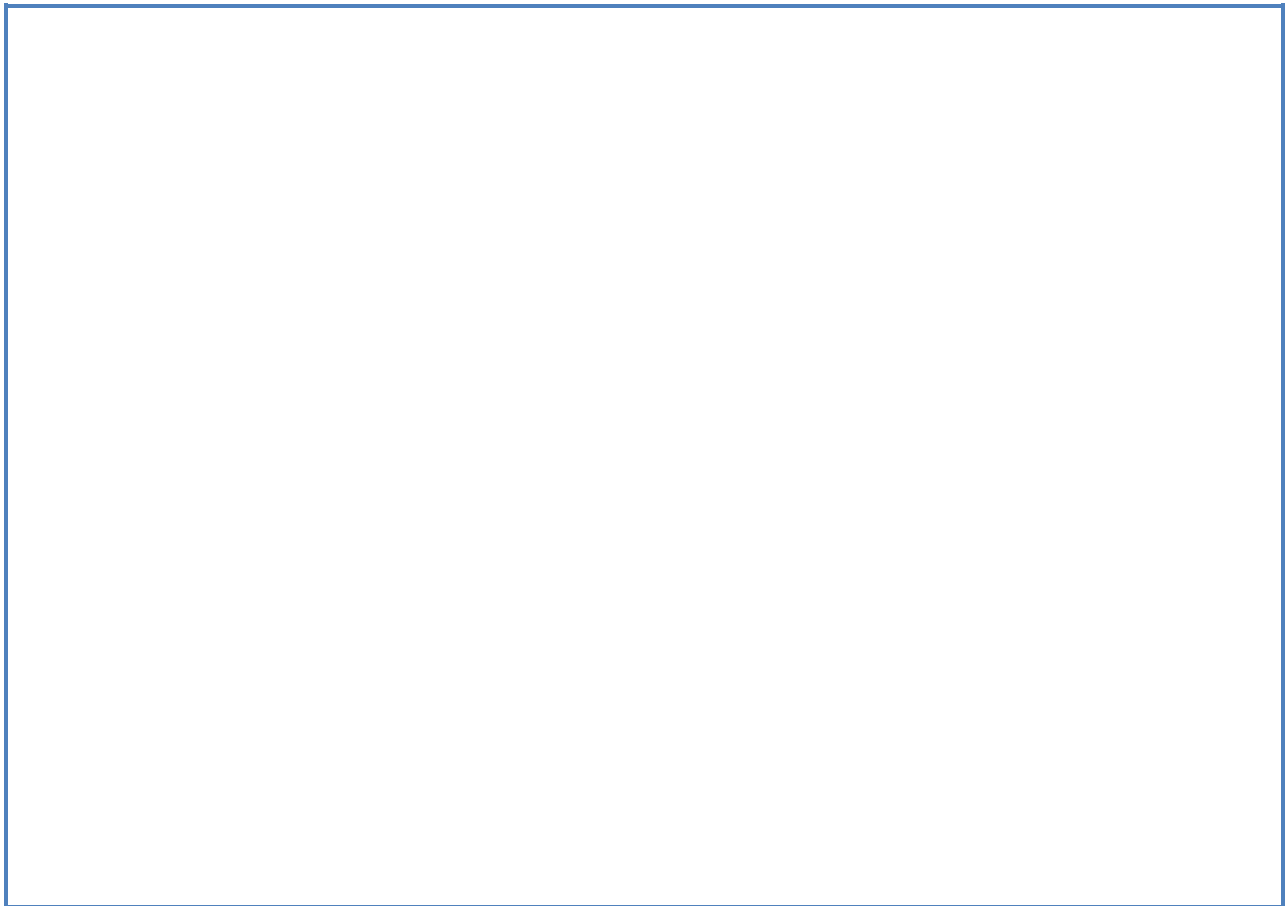
What type of resources are you looking for (journal article, legislation, news articles, books, etc …)?

What age of material is acceptable for your research?

What other constraints do you anticipate?

e) What resources and databases do you need to search? (Complete after Unit 3)

List the resources and databases you plan to search to find books, journal articles and other materials. Explain why you have selected each of these (you will need to reflect upon the particular needs of your discipline and PhD project).
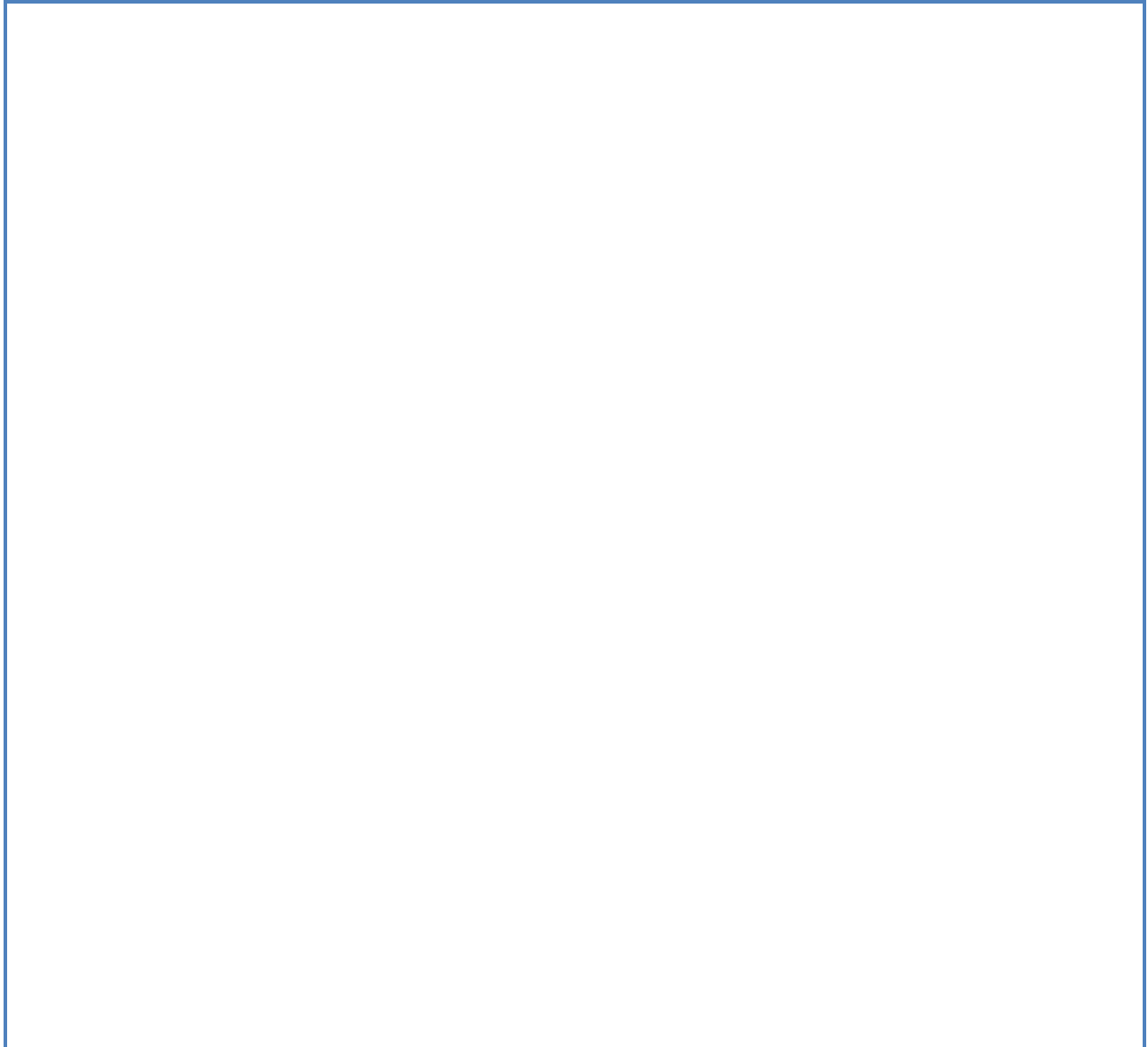
By completing this plan you should now be prepared to conduct a good quality literature search. The plan has considered how you are going to search and where, as well as some of the limitations of the search.

f) Reflection (Complete after Unit 3)

Finally, try some preliminary searches using the keywords and some of the sources selected.

Which combination of keyword(s) and source was the most/least successful? Why do you think this was?

Which resource worked best for you? Why do you think this was?