

Ovid Universal Search™ Frequently Asked Questions

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Q: *What is Ovid Universal Search?*

A: Ovid Universal Search (OUS) is Ovid's multi-platform, integrated search engine. It allows users to search across multiple data sources with a single search query.

Q: *What is a source? What is a connector?*

A: A source is essentially a software platform. A connector is a software module that will connect Ovid Universal Search to the content from a source that you subscribe to outside of OvidSP. It is important to note that connectors can be specific groupings of content on platforms external to OvidSP, or they may be the entirety of a source. For example, EBSCOHost® is a source; CINAHL® on EBSCOHost is a connector. Alternatively, PubMed is a single connector on Ovid Universal Search.

Contact your sales representative to find out more about how connectors are configured. A standard Ovid Universal Search subscription will come with 10 connectors, but additional connectors may be purchased as well.

Q: *How do I use Ovid Universal Search?*

A: To use Ovid Universal Search, simply select the "Universal Search" button under the search input box. Ovid Universal Search will automatically search all content available on enabled connectors, along with the databases currently selected in your OvidSP session.

Q: *When I select Ovid Universal Search, can I limit which Connector(s) are searched?*

A: No. Currently when Ovid Universal Search is selected, all connected content is searched. The user cannot limit searching to particular connectors.

Q: *With which OvidSP search modes does Ovid Universal Search work?*

A: Ovid Universal Search works both in Advanced Ovid Search as well as Basic Search. When using Basic Search, Ovid Universal Search will expand the terms as it does with Basic Search, but will not apply relevance ranking.

Q: *How is Ovid Universal Search different from federated search?*

A: Ovid Universal Search delineates results so that users may browse each resource independently. Often, federated search engines will, by default, display a single list of all results and attempt to rank them as a group. In contrast, Ovid Universal Search returns the results independently, in the order that the source sends them.

More importantly, since Ovid Universal Search is integrated into OvidSP, users will be able to take advantage of some of OvidSP's workflow tools, which we will continue to develop and incorporate into Ovid Universal Search going forward. Most federated search engines are simply interfaces to external platforms which send out queries to external resources with no additional research tools.

Q: How is the search conducted?

A: Searches are conducted differently depending on the capabilities of the source platform, as well as what kind of search you perform in Ovid. Below are some examples of what could be sent to a connector.

- **Advanced Ovid Search, “Keyword” and “Map Term to Subject Heading” Selected**
When using Advanced Ovid Search with “Keyword” and “Map Term to Subject Heading” selected, Ovid Universal Search will send the search query as a subject to sources that can handle controlled vocabulary. PubMed is a good example. If performing a keyword search with mapping on, sending the search query “Pregnancy Complications”, Ovid Universal Search will return results that have the MeSH heading of pregnancy complications (MH- Pregnancy Complications). This differs from how PubMed itself does searching, as they are sending the query to a larger number of fields as a keyword search. In some regards, this can be perceived as a more specific search than what PubMed itself would do under the same circumstances. Exploded terms are not searched.
- **Advanced Ovid Search, “Keyword” Selected but “Map Term to Subject Heading” Not Selected**
When using Advanced Ovid Search with “Keyword” selected but “Map Term to Subject Heading” not selected, Ovid Universal Search will treat the search query as a simple keyword search, which will be handled by the source platform in whichever regard they would normally handle a keyword search. Results will be returned in the default order as sent by the source platform.
- **Advanced Ovid Search, “Author”, “Title”, or “Journal” Selected**
When searching in Advanced Ovid Search with “Author”, “Title”, or “Journal” selected, Ovid Universal Search will send the search query to all external sources as a fielded search for whichever field is selected. It is important to note that many sources will not have the capability to handle this request, and in those situations, we will be sending the query as a keyword. In this regard, Ovid Universal Search will utilize the capabilities of each source.
- **Basic Search, “Include Related Terms” Selected**
When searching using Basic Search with “Include Related Terms” selected, Ovid Universal Search will be sending the search query, as well as expanded terms from our own lexicon along to the target source. We will be combining like terms as with an OR operator, and sending the sets along with an “AND” operator. For example:
 - Search: “Evaluation of prostate cancer treatments” ,
 - Sent: (evaluation or evaluate or investigate or ...) and (prostate cancer or prostate neoplasm or ...) and (treatment or treat or ...)It is important to note that it is not possible to apply all aspects of OvidSP's Natural Language Processing (NLP) algorithm to Ovid Universal Search content.
- **Basic Search, “Include Related Terms” Not Selected**
When using Basic Search with “Include Related Terms” not selected, the entire query will be sent to the external source. It is important to note that we will not be able to apply all aspects of the Natural Language Processing (NLP) algorithm that exists in Basic Search on OvidSP to the external sources' content.

Q: Why are results displayed in tabs?

A: Throughout our user interviews and focus groups, our users indicated that they were most interested in searching through the entire breadth of their content, regardless of which platform that data resides on. Additionally, users felt it was important that we present them with all the results from each platform. We chose to give users the ability to browse through the results of each platform independently in a tabular fashion in order to provide access to all results and clearly delineate which platform and sources the results are from.

Q: Can I de-duplicate results across all connectors?

A: It is not possible to de-duplicate results across connectors at this time. While we are looking at both de-duplication as well as assembling results in a single list for the future, our research indicated a need to display all results to the end user.

Q: Why are my results different between PubMed and Ovid Universal Search with a PubMed connector? Why are results different when shown on an Ovid Search connector than when shown on the native site?

A: There are several reasons why results may differ between an Ovid Universal Connector search and a search performed on the native site. Using PubMed as an example, PubMed searches will contain e-pub ahead of print and nonMEDLINE journals and content that is included in PubMed but is not released to any licensee of the PubMed data.

Additionally, some fields may search differently. For example, if you perform a keyword search in Ovid with "Mapping" turned on, and choose a particular MeSH term, we will search PubMed for that Subject Heading (SH). By contrast, PubMed natively searches in not just the Subject Heading field, but also in multiple fields, many time yielding less precise search results.

If searching in Basic Search with "Include Related Terms" selected, Ovid Universal Search will expand upon your query with related terms and send them to the external platform, allowing for a larger breadth of content.

Occasionally, there are discrepancies in data due to scheduled updates that could result in content being available on one platform and not the other.