

Recommended sources for bibliometric data

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The [UCL bibliometrics policy](#) sets out some principles for the use of citation metrics in research assessment at UCL. As part of [the overall guidance](#), this paper sets out some recommendations for where to obtain data and metrics.

UCL has access to a number of tools for providing bibliometric and citation data. They all have their own strengths and weaknesses. We would recommend that:

- For publication lists, **use RPS/IRIS if practical**
- For simple citation counts, **use data from Scopus, Web of Science, or InCites**
- For more complex indicators, **use data from InCites**

Lists of publications

The most authoritative list for a researcher's publications is one that they can verify, edit, and maintain themselves. The majority of UCL researchers have an actively maintained profile in RPS for publications from at least 2016 onwards. As such, we would recommend that unless you know it to be out of date, use the list from **RPS/IRIS**.

RPS data is fed into InCites through the MyOrganisation tool, so the lists in **MyOrganisation** for a specific person (or department) should be equally reliable, though with some additional limitations.¹

If this is not possible, **Scopus** and **Web of Science** both offer ways to search for papers by a specific author.² This is generally not quite as reliable, especially for authors with common names or working in multidisciplinary fields, so take care with the results and look out for omissions or false positives.

Citation counts

The two standard databases are **Web of Science and Scopus**. These will give reasonably consistent numbers of citations – on average Scopus tends to be slightly higher as it includes a slightly broader range of publications and better coverage of non-English material, but for pre-2000 citations, Web of Science has better coverage.

Citation counts in **InCites** are drawn from Web of Science and will be consistent with that source (though as InCites is updated monthly, they may lag slightly). However, it is a little awkward to find the number of citations for a single paper in InCites, as it is mainly intended for aggregate data, so it will usually be simpler just to use Web of Science directly.

A third commonly-used source is **Google Scholar**, which tends to return much higher citation counts than either Web of Science or Scopus. We would not recommend using it if the others are available, as these numbers can be misleading. Google Scholar indexes a large amount of non-scholarly material, and often contains duplicate records, giving inflated citation counts.

It is always important with citation counts to mention the source you recovered them from, as all sources have slightly different numbers. Try to avoid combining citation counts from different sources as this will inevitably be confusing for the reader.

¹ At the time of writing, July 2020, MyOrganisation contains all RPS papers since January 2013, with the exception of those that are not indexed by Web of Science.

² For Scopus, see <https://library-guides.ucl.ac.uk/scopus/author-search> ; for Web of Science, see <https://library-guides.ucl.ac.uk/web-of-science/author-search>

Complex indicators

Web of Science, Scopus, and Google Scholar do not present any normalised or aggregated citation indicators beyond an h-index and total citation count per year, neither of which are very useful in most circumstances, and we would not recommend using these.

For all normalised metrics, use InCites. The key indicators we would recommend looking at for groups of papers are the category normalised citation index, share of papers in the top 10%/1%, and the average percentile, all of which are available through InCites but not other sources.

InCites can be accessed through a link in the top bar of Web of Science, or else by going to <https://incites.clarivate.com/>. It requires registration when you first use it – we recommend you use your UCL address here. You will need to be on the UCL network when you first register, so be sure to use a remote desktop or VPN if you are off-site.

Detailed guidance is available for using it in specific contexts – metrics [for individuals](#), metrics [for UCL departments](#), or metrics [for institutions as a whole](#).