

Constructing Your Search

Developing a Search

Each search form on LexisNexis AU has a 'Search Terms' box that requires you to enter words which define the results you are seeking. This Quick Tips page describes how to construct such a definition. To begin your search, you need to choose the words you wish to appear in your results, e.g., you might start with *contributory negligence accident* when searching for cases that mention those terms.

When entering these words into your search, you must use connectors, such as or and *and*, in the appropriate space between the words in your search. Without these, LexisNexis AU will assume that you want to find each word in consecutive order, with no gaps between the words. Inserting a connector brings our example to *contributory negligence and accident*, and this will retrieve relevant cases that deal with these issues.

You may also wish to employ other types of connectors. Using *w/p*, for example, will specify that the words on either side of it must occur within the same paragraph in order to be included in the results. This brings our example to the following: *contributory negligence w/p accident*, which results in cases that mention *contributory negligence* within the same paragraph as the word *accident*. A list of connectors is found below. These may be used not only in the 'Search Terms' fields, but anywhere in LexisNexis AU where you are required to enter text to define the results you wish to obtain.

Frequently used connectors

- and** Specifies that both words must be found in your results.
Example: professional **and** misconduct finds documents that contain both the words professional and misconduct.
- w/n** Finds both terms within n words of each other. n can be any number between 1 and 255.
Example: professional **w/5** misconduct finds professional within five words of misconduct with either word occurring first.
- w/s** Specifies that both words must be within the same sentence.
Example: corporations act **w/s** 588g finds corporations act in the same sentence as 588G
- w/p** Finds the two terms within the same paragraph.
Example: professional **w/p** misconduct finds professional within the same paragraph as misconduct.
NOTE: The **w/p** connector cannot be combined with the **w/n** connector.
- pre/n** This connector is similar to the w/n connector in that it specifies that the terms must be within n words of each other. Unlike w/n however, the search terms must be in the order you specify. Use this connector when the word order is important.
Example: opinion **pre/2** evidence means opinion must precede evidence by no more than 2 words.
- or** Links synonyms, alternative forms of expression, acronyms and so on.
Example: doctor **or** physician will find either word variant.
- and not** Excludes documents that contain specified words or phrases.

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Use this connector with caution, because it might exclude relevant documents. Always try to use this connector at the end of your search.

Example: murder **and not** manslaughter finds the word murder anywhere in the document, but does not retrieve any documents that contain the word manslaughter anywhere in the same document.

Truncation (!) and wildcard (*) searches

Truncation The truncation symbol ! replaces any number of characters at the end of the word.

Example: neglig! finds negligent, negligently, negligence and negligible.

Wildcard The wildcard * replaces a single character at any point in a word.

Example: maximi*e finds both maximise and maximize. The wildcard is particularly useful if you are unsure of the spelling of a particular word or name. You can also use multiple wildcards in a single word.

Bear in mind:

- Lowercase letters will also find uppercase letters, and vice versa, unless you instruct the system to do otherwise, see below.
- LexisNexis AU automatically finds singular, most plural, and possessive endings for search terms, e.g., searching for *city* will also find *cities*, *city's* and *cities'*.
- LexisNexis AU will not automatically find the plural form of words that end in "is" and "us", or other irregular plural forms, e.g., *bonus* will not find *bonuses*, *child* will not find *children*. Use the OR connector (*child OR children*) or use the truncation (*child!*).
- In some instances you might wish to use a connector as a search term, as in *Occupational Health and Safety*. In order to tell the system to treat the word and as a search term and not a connector, you will need to put the phrase in inverted commas: "*Occupational Health and Safety*".
- Connectors operate in the following order: OR – W/n, Pre/n, NOT W/n – W/p – AND – AND NOT. If you use two or more of the same connectors they operate left to right.

More advanced operators

plural(), singular()	Specifies you only want the plural or singular version of a word.
Example: <i>singular(job) w/3 discrimination</i> will find <i>job</i> within three words of <i>discrimination</i> . It will only find the singular (<i>job</i>) and not the plural as well (<i>jobs</i>).	
caps(), allcaps(), nocaps()	Specifies the case of your search results. Allcaps() will only find words entirely in upper case. Nocaps() will only find words in lower case. Caps() will only find words with a mixture of upper and lower case.
Example: allcaps(act) will only find the <i>ACT</i> and not the word <i>act</i> .	
atleastn()	Specifies that the word must appear at least <i>n</i> times.
Example: atleast5(duty of care) will find documents that mention duty of care at least 5 times.	

Finding a list of connectors on LexisNexis AU

For convenience, the **Search Tips** link is located on every search screen under the **Search Terms** box.

This will provide a list of connectors and operators available to you.