

1 Preparation

- **Assemble your review and support teams**
 - Map out all responsibilities and contributions.
- **Develop a draft protocol**
 - Decide on the research question and approach (PRISMA-P or other guideline).

2 Planning

- **Draft a protocol synopsis**
 - Refine and define your approach.
- **Get your team's feedback on these steps:**
 - Formulate a precise research question and hypothesis to be tested.
 - Define your eligibility criteria.
 - Decide on your study search strategy.
 - Decide on the outcomes of interest and key variables to record.
 - Choose methods to evaluate study quality and risk of bias.
 - Choose methods to analyze and interpret data in context.
 - Choose reporting guidelines.

3 Preliminary/ pilot work

- **Look for related reviews**
 - Do a preliminary review. Has your research question been answered already?
 - Find a related review? Change your approach (angle, criteria, etc.)
- **Perform pilot searches of the literature**
 - Test keywords, possible search strings, and code for any automated search programs.

4 Protocol

- **Develop the full advance protocol**
 - Follow a guideline such as PRISMA-P.
 - Develop the protocol from your synopsis and any pilot search results.
 - Include specific details such as data management plans, any program coding, and any software used.

5 Protocol checklist

- **Ensure your protocol is complete**
 - Use a protocol checklist, such as PRISMA-P.

6 Peer review

- **Are funding and/or ethics approval needed?**
 - (YES): The protocol will be peer reviewed by experts during a formal peer-review step.
 - There may be a specific form or format for the advance protocol.
 - (NO): Get the protocol peer reviewed by colleagues or by a trusted peer-review service.
- **Submitting to online platforms (Cochrane, etc?)**
 - (YES): the platform (Cochrane, Campbell Collaboration, Joanna Briggs Institute, etc.) will require peer review as part of proposing your protocol to the review team.
 - Amend and finalize your protocol according to the peer reviewers' feedback.



7 Public archive

- **Do you want your protocol in public archives?**
 - (YES): Convert the protocol into a protocol manuscript and publish it in a peer-reviewed journal that publishes protocol articles.
- **Does the target journal/organization require public archiving?**
 - (YES): Archive the review protocol and/or the completed protocol checklist in a public or institutional online repository.

8 Preregistration

- **Publicly register the protocol in an online registry**
 - Revise it, as needed, according to any feedback from the registry administrators, before the review is performed.
 - You might need to reformat the protocol for a specific online form (PROSPERO, etc.)
- **Consider submitting a protocol manuscript**
 - Publishing your protocol manuscript in the format of a "registered report" helps to avoid publication bias.

9 Performing the review

- **Perform the search**
 - Follow the preset sources and search terms described in your protocol.
- **Screen studies**
 - Follow the preset eligibility criteria.
- **Extract and record data on a preset form**
 - Exclude further studies if needed.
 - Decide on the final synthesis approach from the quality and risk of bias of each study.
 - Describe, summarize, combine, and analyze data.
 - Identify key concepts/findings.
 - Draw conclusions.
 - Assess review quality.
- **If you change or refine the reviewing methods, you also MUST:**
 - Amend the archived protocol or registry record.
 - Give reasons.
 - Archive previous versions online.
 - Make formal corrections to any published protocol article or accepted Stage 1 registered report.
 - Describe any deviations from the protocol in the final review report.

10 Publication

- **Write the review report and prepare illustrations (forest plot, etc.)**
- **Follow structured guidelines and complete the associated checklist (PRISMA, MOOSE, etc.)**
- **Submit the manuscript to a suitable peer-reviewed journal**
- **Update online registry (eg, PROSPERO) records to show study progress**

11 Posting of dataset online

- **Check journal policy**
 - Does the journal allow sharing of datasets?
- **Upload the dataset to a public repository if needed**

12 Publicity

- **Promote your published systematic review to the public**
 - Post on social media and other channels.