

# Information Literacy learning outcomes and generic activities

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## Version control

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v1.0	24/01/2017	Information Literacy learning outcomes matrix	First published version.
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## Introduction

WUR Library provides education in Information Literacy: an academic skill which is all about knowing when and why you need information, where you can find it, and how to evaluate, use and communicate it in an ethical manner ([CILIP, 2017](#)). In this document, we describe the intended learning outcomes of Information Literacy (IL) for students at Wageningen University. The learning outcomes and generic activities provide a basis for a dialogue with teachers, programme directors and study advisors about the IL learning trajectory in study programmes.

The learning outcomes are grouped in six competency areas, adapted from the SCONUL Seven Pillars of Information Literacy for higher education ([SCONUL, 2011](#)):

1. Orientate: The information literate student is able to identify an information need, and knows where and how to gather information for orientation on a topic.
2. Prepare: The information literate student is able to formulate a focused research question, and a strategy to prepare a systematic search.
3. Search: The information literate student can construct a systematic search for various databases and platforms, and knows how to use relevant articles to find additional information and search terms.
4. Evaluate: The information literate student can evaluate the search results, revise the search if necessary, and knows when to stop searching.
5. Manage: The information literate student can store and organise information systematically and transparently, and knows how to keep track of the search process and how to stay up-to-date.
6. Communicate: The information literate student is able to cite and reference correctly, avoiding plagiarism and copyright infringement, and knows how the publication process works.

Each competency area has 2 to 3 topics with learning outcomes. Learning outcomes are divided into four levels (A, B, C and D). If there is no higher level provided the learning outcome is at the same level as the previous one.

A student can develop within several competency areas simultaneously and independently, although in practice they are often closely linked.

Next, the learning outcomes of three levels (A, B and C) are linked to generic learning activities (which can be used in courses), and to the Library's e-learning modules for self-study ([Wageningen University & Research Library, 2018](#)) (see Tables 1.1 to 6.3). Specific parts of the modules or complete modules are aligned with the learning outcomes and activities. If a cell is left blank, there is no module (or specific part) available for self-study.

The learning outcomes and generic activities can be used to discuss which learning outcomes should be mastered at the end of a course or at the end of the bachelor, and to choose suitable learning activities.

## References

CILIP, 2017. Definition Information Literacy. Available at: <https://archive.cilip.org.uk/research/topics/definition-information-literacy> [Retrieved: 3 October 2018]

SCONUL, 2011. The SCONUL Seven Pillars of Information Literacy: Core Model for Higher Education. London. Available at: <http://www.sconul.ac.uk/sites/default/files/documents/coremodel.pdf> [Retrieved: 16 January 2017]

Wageningen University & Research Library, 2018. E-learning modules. Available at: <https://www.wur.nl/en/Library/Students/e-learning-modules.htm> [Retrieved: 3 October 2018]





### Information literacy learning outcomes matrix

Stage	Topic	Level A	Level B	Level C	Level D
		The information literate student:	The information literate student:	The information literate student:	The information literate student:
Orientate	Information need	Recognizes a need for information.	Identifies and documents the information need for a <b>defined task</b> .	Identifies and documents the information need for a <b>scientific project</b> .	Identifies and documents the information need for a <b>systematic review</b> .
	Information sources	Recognizes and describes characteristics of information sources.	Identifies appropriate information sources for a <b>defined task</b> .	Identifies appropriate information sources for a <b>scientific project</b> .	Identifies appropriate information sources for a <b>systematic review</b> .
	Finding aids	Names the finding aids Google, Google Scholar, Scopus, WUR Library Search and describes their pros and cons.	Names available finding aids, such as <b>multidisciplinary and subject-specific databases</b> .	Compares the usefulness of different finding aids <b>in the discipline</b> .	Names all relevant finding aids for a <b>systematic review</b> .
Prepare	Research question	Formulates the topic clearly and identifies the main themes (concepts).	Formulates a <b>research question</b> and identifies for each concept correct <b>search terms</b> .	Formulates a <b>well-focused</b> research question and identifies for each concept correct search terms.	Formulates a well-focused research question and identifies for each concept correct search terms. Defines <b>inclusion and exclusion criteria</b> .
	Information sources	Recognizes the type of information source from a reference.	Selects appropriate types of information sources for a <b>defined task</b> .	Selects appropriate types of information sources for a <b>scientific project</b> .	Selects appropriate types of information sources for a <b>systematic review</b> .
	Finding aids	Locates and accesses library sources and full texts.	Selects a <b>few</b> appropriate (multidisciplinary and subject-specific) finding aids.	Selects <b>and substantiates several</b> appropriate (multidisciplinary and subject-specific) finding aids.	Selects and substantiates <b>most</b> relevant (general and subject specific) finding aids.
Search	Topic search	Performs basic searches using Boolean operators, field searching, phrase searching and wildcards.	Constructs a search query in a systematic way with <b>key concepts and search terms</b> using Boolean operators, field searching, phrase searching and wildcards. Performs this search correctly in <b>various databases and platforms</b> .	Constructs a search query in a systematic way with key concepts and search terms using Boolean operators, field searching, phrase searching and wildcards and if appropriate <b>proximity operators or a thesaurus</b> . Performs this search correctly in various databases and platforms.	Level C
	Following a thread	Uses reference lists to find additional information sources and search terms.	Uses reference lists, " <b>cited by</b> " and <b>related documents</b> to find additional information sources and search terms.	Level B	Level B
Evaluate	Search results	Evaluates the search results critically.	Relates the search results to the original research question and <b>revises</b> the search if necessary.	Relates the search results to the original research question and revises the search if necessary. Estimates <b>precision and recall</b> to determine when to stop searching.	Relates the search results to the original research question and predefined <b>inclusion and exclusion criteria</b> . Revises the search if necessary. Estimates precision and recall to determine when to stop searching.
	Information sources	Evaluates information sources using various criteria (e.g. suitability, authority, purpose, currency, and accuracy) and selects the most appropriate ones.	Level A	Evaluates information sources using various criteria (e.g. suitability, authority, purpose, currency, and accuracy). Uses <b>citation metrics</b> as an evaluative technique. Selects the most appropriate sources.	Evaluates and selects information sources systematically using predefined <b>inclusion and exclusion criteria</b> .
Manage	Information sources	Stores and organizes information sources systematically using basic techniques.	Stores and organizes information sources systematically using <b>citation management software</b> such as EndNote or Mendeley.	Stores and organizes information sources systematically using citation management software. Develops and uses a transparent <b>system for managing data and files</b> .	Level C
	Search strategies	Keeps track of the search process to be able to repeat and improve the search.	Keeps track of the search process, <b>including search queries</b> , to be able to repeat and improve the search.	Keeps track of the search process, including search queries, to be able to repeat and improve the search. Knows how to <b>save searches</b> and to <b>set up alerts</b> in various search systems.	Level C
Communicate	Citing and referencing	Indicates when and where to cite a source and identifies which publication details are required in a reference list.	Cites and refers to information sources using a self-chosen or required <b>citation style</b> .	Cites and refers to information sources in a self-chosen or required citation style using <b>citation management software</b> .	Level C
	Plagiarism and copyright	Avoids plagiarism by citing correctly (e.g. quoting, paraphrasing, summarizing).	Avoids plagiarism by citing correctly (e.g. quoting, paraphrasing, summarizing). Explains the difference between <b>plagiarism and copyright infringement</b> .	<b>Acquires, stores, modifies, and distributes text, data, images, and sounds, legally</b> .	Level C
	Publishing	Describes in which information sources people publish for a specific purpose.	Describes the process of <b>academic publishing</b> .	Level B	Selects the <b>most appropriate journal</b> to publish using tools like citation metrics. Uses <b>scholarly social media</b> such as ResearchGate, Academia and LinkedIn to present oneself.



## Information Literacy learning outcomes and generic activities

Note: The generic activities are listed with dashes, letters or numbers. Dashes indicate points of interest; letters indicate parts/steps of the same activity; and numbers indicate separate activities.

### 1.2 Orientate – Information need

	Level A	Level B	Level C
<b>Learning outcome</b>	Recognizes a need for information.	Identifies and documents the information need for a <b>defined task</b> .	Identifies and documents the information need for a <b>scientific project</b> .
<b>Generic activity</b>	Students indicate what exactly they are looking for in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– purpose (e.g. orientation, complete overview, some documents),</li> <li>– research topic (short description),</li> <li>– type of information (e.g. background information, statistics, scientific research, news).</li> </ul>	Students orientate themselves on their topic. They: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. give a short description of their topic.</li> <li>b. gather background information from various sources (e.g. Wikipedia articles, news articles and textbooks) to get a better overview of the topic and the vocabulary.</li> <li>c. identify the most important issues and their relations, e.g. by drawing a mind map.</li> </ol>	See level B
<b>Self-study</b>	Module 2: Getting started (information need)	Module 2: Getting started Module 2: Orientation on topic	See level B

### 1.2 Orientate – Information sources

	Level A	Level B	Level C
<b>Learning outcome</b>	Recognizes and describes characteristics of information sources.	Identifies appropriate information sources for a <b>defined task</b> .	Identifies appropriate information sources for a <b>scientific project</b> .
<b>Generic activity</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students open links to various online sources and indicate the source type (book, research report, dissertation, scientific article, professional article, website). They describe how they recognized each source type.</li> <li>2. Students match source types (book, research report, dissertation, scientific article and professional article) with characteristics (e.g. written for scientists).</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students match different source types with various purposes such as orientation for literature search, gathering (statistical) data, finding scientific information. They explain their choice.</li> <li>2. Students find examples of various source types relevant for their discipline/topic.</li> </ol>	See level B
<b>Self-study</b>	Module 1: Document type	Module 2: Choose your resources (information types)	See level B

### 1.3 Orientate – Finding aids

	Level A	Level B	Level C
<b>Learning outcome</b>	Names the finding aids Google, Google Scholar, Scopus, WUR Library Search and describes their pros and cons.	Names available finding aids, such as <b>multidisciplinary and subject-specific databases</b> .	Compares the usefulness of different finding aids <b>in the discipline</b> .
<b>Generic activity</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students name the finding aids they generally use and indicate when and why they use them.</li> <li>2. Students identify the source types that can be found with Google, Google Scholar, WUR Library Search and Scopus.</li> <li>3. Students match finding aids and their specific features.</li> </ol>	Students compare characteristics of multidisciplinary finding aids (e.g. Google Scholar, Scopus) with those of subject-specific finding aids (e.g. CAB Abstracts, PubMed, PsycINFO).	Students compare the search results from 2-4 finding aids, retrieved with similar search queries. They describe the pros and cons of these finding aids with regard to the discipline/topic.
<b>Self-study</b>	Module 1: Finding aids Module 2: Choose your resources (databases)	Module 1: Finding aids Module 2: Choose your resources (databases, bibliographic database, choosing a database)	Module 2: Choose your resources (Databases, Bibliographic database, Choosing a database)



## 2.1 Prepare – Research question

	Level A	Level B	Level C
<b>Learning outcome</b>	Formulates the topic clearly and identifies the main themes (concepts).	Formulates a <b>research question</b> and identifies for each concept correct <b>search terms</b> .	Formulates a <b>well-focused</b> research question and identifies for each concept correct search terms.
<b>Generic activity</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students formulate a research topic and indicate if it is too broad, too narrow or just right for a literature search. They adjust the topic if necessary.</li> <li>Students identify the concepts of their research topic.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students formulate a focused research question on their topic that is not too broad nor too narrow for a literature search.</li> <li>Students use various sources (e.g. Wikipedia, synonym finders, review articles) and tools (e.g. mind maps, quick searches) to collect several relevant search terms for each concept.</li> <li>Students create a scheme or table to present the relevant search terms for each of the concepts, and how they relate to each other.</li> </ol>	Students use a database thesaurus (e.g. MeSH or CAB-thesaurus) to find additional search terms: synonyms, broader, narrower and related terms.
<b>Self-study</b>	Module 2: Getting started Module 2: Systematic search (main concepts)	Module 2: Focus your topic Module 2: Orientation on topic, Systematic search (main concepts, (finding) search terms)	Module PubMed -

## 2.2 Prepare – Information sources

	Level A	Level B	Level C
<b>Learning outcome</b>	Recognizes the type of information source from a reference.	Selects appropriate types of information sources for a <b>defined task</b> .	Selects appropriate types of information sources for a <b>scientific project</b> .
<b>Generic activity</b>	Students identify the source type of publications from a reference list (e.g. their course reading lists).	Students match the source types (e.g. scientific articles, books, data sets, government information) with their information need and substantiate their choice.	See level B
<b>Self-study</b>	Module 1: Document type	Module 2: Choose your resources (information types)	See level B

## 2.3 Prepare – Finding aids

	Level A	Level B	Level C
<b>Learning outcome</b>	Locates and accesses library sources and full texts.	Selects a <b>few</b> appropriate (multidisciplinary and subject-specific) finding aids.	Selects <b>and substantiates several</b> appropriate (multidisciplinary and subject-specific) finding aids.
<b>Generic activity</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students locate and access the full text of various source types (e.g. books, textbooks, reports, professional journals, scientific journals) in their discipline.</li> <li>Students describe how to access subscription-based resources off-campus.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students select appropriate finding aids to get the source types that they need.</li> <li>Students select a multidisciplinary database and the best subject-specific database on their topic. They explain their choice.</li> <li>Students identify data repositories on their topic in re3data.org and explain their choice.</li> </ol>	See level B
<b>Self-study</b>	Module 1: Finding aids	1. and 2. Module 2: Choose your resources 3. Module under construction	See level B



### 3.1 Search – Topic search

	Level A	Level B	Level C
<b>Learning outcome</b>	Performs basic searches using Boolean operators, field searching, phrase searching and wildcards.	Constructs a search query in a systematic way with <b>key concepts and search terms</b> using Boolean operators, field searching, phrase searching and wildcards. Performs this search correctly in <b>various databases and platforms</b> .	Constructs a search query in a systematic way with key concepts and search terms using Boolean operators, field searching, phrase searching and wildcards and if appropriate <b>proximity operators or a thesaurus</b> . Performs this search correctly in various databases and platforms.
<b>Generic activity</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students perform a series of given searches on the same topic in a database (e.g. Scopus), compare the results, and explain the differences in number and/or relevance</li> <li>Students improve common errors in given queries.</li> <li>Students perform a basic search on their topic in a few databases (e.g. Scopus, Google Scholar) in a correct way.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students search (scientific) articles on their topic or research question in a systematic way following the steps outlined in the module. They search in one or two databases.</li> <li>Students get a research question and a list of search terms. They construct a systematic search query in at least two databases.</li> <li>Students search data sets in a systematic way in a given repository.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students use a database thesaurus ( e.g. MeSH or CAB-thesaurus) for search term selection and query expansion. They search in at least two different databases, and use the “explode” option if appropriate.</li> <li>Students look up the proximity operators of the databases used. They identify for which terms in their query proximity operators could be appropriate. They review the results when using proximity operators instead of Boolean operators and phrase searching.</li> </ol>
<b>Self-study</b>	Module Scopus Module 2: Systematic search Module 2: Improving a search (search errors)	1. and 2. Module 2: Systematic search 3. Module under construction	1. Module PubMed 2. -

### 3.2 Search – Following a thread

	Level A	Level B	Level C
<b>Learning outcome</b>	Uses reference lists to find additional information sources and search terms.	Uses reference lists, <b>“cited by” and related documents</b> to find additional information sources and search terms.	See level B
<b>Generic activity</b>	Students start with one or more relevant publications on their topic. They: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Select additional and relevant sources from the reference lists.</li> <li>Use a database to find out if the authors of these sources have published more on the topic.</li> <li>Check the found sources for new search terms.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students look up one or more relevant publications in Scopus, Web of Science, PubMed or Google Scholar. They use the reference lists, “cited by” and related records to select additional and relevant sources for their topic.</li> <li>They check the found sources for new search terms.</li> </ol>	
<b>Self-study</b>	Module 2: Following a thread	Module 2: Following a thread	See level B

### 4.1 Evaluate – Search results

	Level A	Level B	Level C
<b>Learning outcome</b>	Evaluates the search results critically.	Relates the search results to the original research question and <b>revises</b> the search if necessary.	Relates the search results to the original research question and revises the search if necessary. Estimates <b>precision and recall</b> to determine when to stop searching.
<b>Generic activity</b>	Students start with a given list or the results of a search on their topic. They determine which publications are relevant to the topic and why.	Students evaluate the search results on their topic. They: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>determine which publications might be relevant and why</li> <li>select additional and relevant terms for their search and revise the search if necessary</li> <li>identify the search terms which retrieve the most irrelevant results.</li> </ol> They improve the initial search query.	Students: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>estimate the number of relevant documents and calculate precision of a search on their topic.</li> <li>use following a thread to check if they found all relevant publications.</li> <li>improve the search query to get an optimal precision and recall.</li> </ol>
<b>Self-study</b>	Module 3: Evaluating information	Module 2: Improving a search	Module 2: Improving a search, Following a thread



#### 4.2 Evaluate – Information sources

	Level A	Level B	Level C
<b>Learning outcome</b>	Evaluates information sources using various criteria (e.g. suitability, authority, purpose, currency, and accuracy) and selects the most appropriate ones.	See level A	Evaluates information sources using various criteria (e.g. suitability, authority, purpose, currency, and accuracy). Uses <b>citation metrics</b> as an evaluative technique. Selects the most appropriate ones.
<b>Generic activity</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students write down for each source (from a list of different source types) the author, main purpose, intended audience, if the source is trustworthy, and whether it reflects primary or secondary research. They indicate for which stage(s) of an essay the sources might be useful.</li> <li>For two given publications on the same topic, students write down the main difference between author(s) in expertise (background), the main purpose, accuracy, scientific support etc.</li> </ol>	Students select a number of references (e.g. 10-15 references) from the search results on their topic and give the selection criteria used.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students sort their results from Scopus or Web of Science by citation count. They compare the citation rates of older articles to those of newer ones, and of review articles to those of primary articles.</li> <li>Students analyse their search results in Scopus or Web of Science and determine which authors have the most publications on the topic.</li> <li>Students look up the h-index of one or more authors in two databases (Scopus, WoS or Google Scholar). They explain why the h-index of an author varies among databases.</li> <li>Students look up some journals in the WUR Journal Browser and compare their metrics (e.g. impact factors and quartile scores).</li> </ol>
<b>Self-study</b>	Module 3: Evaluating information	Module 3: Evaluating information	

#### 5.1 Manage – Information sources

	Level A	Level B	Level C
<b>Learning outcome</b>	Stores and organizes information sources systematically using basic techniques.	Stores and organizes information sources systematically using <b>citation management software</b> such as EndNote or Mendeley.	Stores and organizes information sources systematically using citation management software. Develops and uses a transparent <b>system for managing data and files</b> .
<b>Generic activity</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students indicate which publication details of different source types (scientific article, book, research report etc.) and data should be stored.</li> <li>Students compare several options to store references (e.g. in Word, Excel, My Library) and pdf's. They decide which technique suits them best.</li> </ol>	Students make a library in EndNote or Mendeley, and add references (of various source types) manually, and by export or download. They add links and full texts, remove duplicates, and share their library.	Students indicate how they store publications of various source types (e.g. the link, doi or complete pdf) and why. They organize their sources in groups or folders and add metadata to retrieve sources easily.
<b>Self-study</b>	Module 3: Citing and referencing		

#### 5.2 Manage – Search strategies

	Level A	Level B	Level C
<b>Learning outcome</b>	Keeps track of the search process to be able to repeat and improve the search.	Keeps track of the search process, <b>including search queries</b> , to be able to repeat and improve the search.	Keeps track of the search process, including search queries, to be able to repeat and improve the search. Knows how to <b>save searches</b> and to <b>set up alerts</b> in various search systems.
<b>Generic activity</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students describe which details of the search process should be stored to repeat the search.</li> <li>Students repeat a search as described by a peer. They compare the results.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students list the search queries that preceded their final query (the one they are happy with) and explain the choices made.</li> <li>Students repeat a search as described by a peer. They compare their results.</li> </ol>	Students save their search query in the database searched in (e.g. Scopus) and create an alert.
<b>Self-study</b>			Module 2: Saving searches



### 6.1 Communicate – Citing and referencing

	Level A	Level B	Level C
<b>Learning outcome</b>	Indicates when and where to cite a source and identifies which publication details are required in a reference list.	Cites and refers to information sources using a self-chosen or required <b>citation style</b> .	Cites and refers to information sources in a self-chosen or required citation style using <b>citation management software</b> .
<b>Generic activity</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students identify the required publication details (e.g. title, author(s), publication year, journal name, volume, issue, pages, doi) to make a reference for publications of various source types (e.g. journal article, book, webpage).</li> <li>Students indicate which publication details are missing in a reference list with incomplete references.</li> <li>Students get a short text with in-text citations and a reference list. They indicate and explain which in-text citations are misplaced or incorrect.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students create references for various source types in a given style (e.g. APA 6<sup>th</sup>).</li> <li>Students change the citation style of a reference list with publications of various source types into another style.</li> <li>Students make a reference list of selected search results using a given citation style (e.g. APA 6<sup>th</sup>).</li> <li>Students get a short text with in-text links to various publication types. They add both the correct in-text citation when appropriate and make the associated reference list in a given citation style.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students create a reference list for various source types in a given citation style using EndNote or Mendeley.</li> <li>Students make a reference list of selected results in a specific style (e.g. APA 6<sup>th</sup>) using EndNote or Mendeley.</li> </ol>
<b>Self-study</b>	Module 3: Citing and referencing	Module 3: Citing and referencing	

### 6.2 Communicate – Plagiarism and copyright

	Level A	Level B	Level C
<b>Learning outcome</b>	Avoids plagiarism by citing correctly (e.g. quoting, paraphrasing, summarizing).	Avoids plagiarism by citing correctly (e.g. quoting, paraphrasing, summarizing). Explains the difference between <b>plagiarism and copyright infringement</b> .	<b>Acquires, stores, modifies, and distributes text, data, images, and sounds, legally.</b>
<b>Generic activity</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students assess for a series of situations if plagiarism took place.</li> <li>Students get a short text and its publication details. They correctly quote, paraphrase or summarize from this text.</li> </ol>	Students get examples of works with citations and different forms of copyright protection, including sources with CC licenses. They explain whether or not it is plagiarism and/or copyright infringement	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students find some open licensed images/videos on their topic using CC filters (e.g. via Google Images, YouTube), or sites which offer free sources (e.g. Wikimedia Commons).</li> <li>Students make an own image/video online available (e.g. on YouTube, Flickr) and choose the preferred cc license.</li> <li>Students use an image with a CC license and make a proper attribution.</li> </ol>
<b>Self-study</b>	Module 3: Citing and referencing	Module 3: Citing and referencing, Publishing	

### 6.3 Communicate – Publishing

	Level A	Level B	Level C
<b>Learning outcome</b>	Describes in which information sources people publish for a specific purpose.	Describes the process of <b>academic publishing</b> .	See level B
<b>Generic activity</b>	Students look up in Staff Publications in which source types Wageningen staff has published on their topic. For each source type, they indicate the purpose and intended audience.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students explain what peer review is and why it is important to scientific practice</li> <li>Students put the different steps of the publishing process of a scientific paper in the right order.</li> </ol>	Students look up journals on their topic in the WUR Journal Browser and select some journals to publish in, while considering the scope and metrics (e.g. journal impact and quartile score)
<b>Self-study</b>		Module 3: Publishing	