

Searching & Review Clinics: Frequently Asked Questions

(Click on each question to jump to the answer)

- Who can help with my query?
- I'd like some advice on searching, but I'm not doing a systematic review. May I book an appointment?
- Can I book more than one appointment at a time?
- The clinic dates displayed on the website are not convenient for me. Can I book an appointment outside these times?
- Why isn't there a Teams link on the Eventbrite booking page?
- The time of the Calendar appointment I've been sent doesn't match the advertised clinic time.
- Help - I've made an appointment that I can't now attend. What do I do?
- Can I record my clinic appointment for future reference?
- I'm not based in the South West Peninsula. May I book an appointment anyway?
- Who can I contact with any other questions about the clinics?

Who can help with my query?

When you book an appointment, you will need to tell us whether you want to speak to an Information Specialist or a Systematic Reviewer. In order to help you make that decision, here are some general areas that we can help with:

- Information Specialist: informing search strategies, using Endnote as your reference library, managing your references, searching databases effectively, using local resources.
- Systematic Reviewer: developing your protocol, describing the systematic review process, guidance on screening, data extraction and quality assessment (critical appraisal) and synthesis.

I'd like some advice on searching, but I'm not doing a systematic review. May I book an appointment?

These clinics are specifically aimed at addressing systematic review-related queries. If you're not planning to do a systematic review then a clinic appointment is unlikely to be the best use of your time, especially as there may be a significant wait for an available appointment. Here are some alternative resources that may be helpful to explore:

- General searching advice from the University libraries ([Plymouth](#), [Exeter](#))
- [Literature Searching Primer](#)
- The Universities' Systematic Review pages ([Plymouth](#), [Exeter](#))
- University of Exeter Evidence Synthesis & Modelling for Health Improvement's [Information Specialist Team](#) page
- There are answers to many of the common questions we help with in the clinics on our [blog](#), together with links to other useful resources such as the [Cochrane Handbook](#) (chapters 5-12) and [Centre for Reviews and Dissemination](#).
- University of Exeter staff and students can book an appointment with their Subject Area Academic Liaison Librarian [here](#); University of Plymouth staff and students can contact their Subject Area Information Specialist [here](#) (please search for the relevant person by subject on both sites).

Can I book more than one appointment at a time?

Yes, you may book a maximum of 2 appointments per clinic date, but please **only** book a double appointment if you think you need to speak to both an Information Specialist and a Systematic Reviewer at the same time. We ask this in order to allow the team to address the many advice requests they receive as promptly as possible. More than two appointments booked by, or on behalf of, the same person on any one day will be declined. If you have a double appointment booked and we think we can address your enquiry in half an hour, we may reduce this to a single appointment.

You can book follow-up appointments at future clinics as you progress with your systematic review: please check with the member of staff you see at your initial clinic appointment whether they would advise this.

The clinic dates displayed on the website are not convenient for me. Can I book an appointment outside these times?

Unfortunately not, as the team have so many other commitments. Depending on the nature of your enquiry, a member of staff may be able to provide you with advice by email during the time allocated for a clinic, although this will not be a suitable solution in every case: please email penarc@exeter.ac.uk to ask about this.

An interactive appointment is always recommended where possible. Please note also that all appointments are now offered online via MS Teams, so you can join from your usual location.

Why isn't there a Teams link on the Eventbrite booking page?

We will send you a separate Calendar appointment for your booked time with an individual Teams link, usually a couple of days prior to the clinic date. If you have not received a Calendar invitation by 15:00 on the afternoon before the clinic is due to take place, please [contact us](#).

The time of the Calendar appointment I've been sent doesn't match the advertised clinic time.

The time displayed on Eventbrite and on the PenARC web page – usually 11:30 – 14:30 - is for the overall clinic as a whole. Your booking will be for either one or two half-hour appointments within that time. The actual time(s) you have actually booked for will be shown on your booking confirmation from Eventbrite under the Order Summary section (example below):

Order Summary

Order #11515799713 - 18 January 2025

Free order

1 x Session 2: 12:00 - 12:30

£0.00

[View and manage your order online](#)

[Contact the organiser](#) for any questions related to this purchase.

This order is subject to Eventbrite [Terms of Service](#) and [Privacy Policy](#), and [Cookie Policy](#).

Eventbrite will often send you a number of automated reminders prior to the clinic showing the start and finish times overall, which can be misleading! **Therefore, we recommend that you save a copy of your booking confirmation, and ideally diarise the actual time of your appointment as soon as you receive this.**

Help - I've made an appointment that I can't now attend. What do I do?

We do understand that conflicting emergencies and diary errors crop up from time to time! If you make an appointment and subsequently find you can't attend, it would be helpful if you could let us know in advance if at all possible, in order to free up the space for others or allow the time to be used for other purposes. There are a few ways to do this:

- Send an email to penarc@exeter.ac.uk, stating your name and the date and time of the appointment you want to cancel.
- If you have an [Eventbrite](#) account, you can cancel your appointment yourself by logging in, clicking on the order you want to cancel on the Tickets page, and then clicking "Cancel Order" (please note that this option is not always available on a mobile device).
- If you have already been sent a meeting link for the clinic, please click on "reply all" from the calendar appointment to let the staff who will be running the clinic know directly.
- If circumstances prevent your letting us know you can't attend before the appointment time, dropping us a brief line of explanation afterwards to penarc@exeter.ac.uk when you can would be much appreciated.

We do keep a record of no-shows, and colleagues who fail to attend on three separate occasions with no contact **either before or after** the missed appointment will, regrettably, be barred from booking on to future clinics.

Can I record my clinic appointment for future reference?

Sorry, we can't permit clinic appointments to be recorded for reasons of data security. However, short pre-recorded teaching videos can be made available to you on request following your appointment.

I'm not based in the South West Peninsula. May I book an appointment anyway?

Due to the limited number of available appointments, we can only accept bookings from people based within the PenARC catchment area (Cornwall, Devon, South Somerset) who work in and around health and social care services and related research areas. If you are based in another area of England, we would recommend that you contact the [Applied Research Collaboration for your region](#) in the first instance. While they may not offer similar advice clinics themselves, they should be able to signpost you to relevant local libraries and resources.

Who can I contact with any other questions about the clinics?

Please email [PenARC](#) in the first instance.