

# Introduction to Systematic Reviews

## COURSE OUTLINE



Week 0				Thursday 16 <sup>th</sup> April	
UK time				Day 0	
9.30 to 10am					
10 to 10.30					
10.30 to 11				<b>Live session:</b> Module 0: Introduction and Orientation Recorded	
11 to 11.30					
11.30 to 12					

Please note that some live sessions are mainly exercises and will **not** be recorded

\* discussions will be edited out of these recordings to leave only the presentation sections

\*\* The OnlineMeta exercise is recommended if you do not have any prior experience with R.

Please aim to complete the practical exercise ahead of the optional live session on Monday where any technical questions will be addressed.

\*\*\* The optional live session is a drop-in session to answer any technical questions you may have about the practical exercises.

NB All sections in blue can be completed at any time before the next live session

Week 1	Monday 20 <sup>th</sup> April	Tuesday 21 <sup>st</sup> April	Wednesday 22 <sup>nd</sup> April	Thursday 23 <sup>rd</sup> April	Friday 24 <sup>th</sup> April
UK time	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
9.30 to 10am	<b>Live session:</b> Module 1: Review Question and Protocols Recorded*	<b>Live session:</b> Module 2: Literature searching Recorded*	<b>Live session:</b> Module 4: Data extraction Recorded*	<b>Live session:</b> Module 5: Critical appraisal	
10 to 10.30					
10.30 to 11					
11 to 11.30				<b>Live session:</b> Module 6: Treatment effects	
11.30 to 12					
12 to 12.30					
12.30 to 1pm					

## Homework

30 minutes	Homework Module 2: Watch videos 1 to 5	Homework Module 4: Watch Videos 1 and 2 Read exercise instructions; Latkin (2009); Metsch (2012); and Tobin (2011)	Homework Module 5: Watch videos 1 to 5 Read exercise instructions; and Anotoni (2005)	Homework Module 7 Watch videos 1 to 4 Attempt the exercise**	
+30 minutes (1 hour total)					
+30 minutes (1.5 hours)	Homework Module 3: Watch videos 1 and 2 Read Lakin (2009) and Copenhaver (2011)				
+30 minutes (2 hours)			Homework Module 6: Watch the video		

<b>Week 2</b>	<b>Monday 27<sup>th</sup> April</b>	<b>Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> April</b>	<b>Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> April</b>	<b>Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> April</b>	<b>Friday 1<sup>st</sup> May</b>
<b>UK time</b>	Day 6	Day 7	Day 8	Day 9	Day 10
9.30 to 10am		Live session: Module 7: Meta-analysis	Live session: Module 8: Appraising the evidence		Live session: Module 11: Introduction to health economics Recorded*
10 to 10.30					
10.30 to 11					
11 to 11.30	Optional live session: Module 7: Meta-analysis drop-in technical clinic***				
11.30 to 12					Live session: Module 12: Knowledge mobilisation
12 to 12.30					
12.30 to 1pm					

### Homework

30 minutes		Homework Module 8: Watch videos 1 and 2 Brainstorming exercise	Post Module 8: Watch videos 4 and 5	Homework Module 12: Watch videos 1 to 3	
+30 minutes (1 hour total)			Module 9: Reporting Watch videos 1 to 3		
+30 minutes (1.5 hours)			Homework Module 10: Read Chen (2020)		

## Pre-module 0

Video: Introducing the course

Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> April, 2026

## Module 0: Introduction and orientation

### Live workshop

10.00 – 12.00 [UK time]

- Welcome and introduction
- Orientation to the platforms and technology we will be using
- Socialisation: meet your tutors and other learners
- Sharing exercises: what would you like to get out of the course
- Information about support
- Introduction to course homework

Discussion board:

- What are your research questions?
- Any questions, feedback or technical support?

Monday 20<sup>th</sup> April, 2026

## Module 1: Developing the review question and protocols

### Live workshop

9.30 – 11.30 [UK time]

- Presentation: PICOS and review questions
- Group exercises: PICOS and analysing a review question
- Presentation: Review protocols; registering a review protocol
- Opportunity to discuss your review questions with our experts
- Question and answer session

Resource: Information on registering a review on PROSPERO

## Pre-modules 2 and 3

Videos 1 to 5: Introduction to and importance of literature searching

Videos 1 and 2: Introducing study selection and group exercise

- Download and read two papers

Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> April, 2026

## Module 2: Literature searching

### Live workshop

9.30 – 10.30 [UK time]

- Group exercise: search strategy quiz
- Presentation: Beyond MEDLINE – why search extensively?
- Presentation: Take home messages
- Question and answer session

Resource: MeSH terms, term harvesting; databases; search strategies

## Module 3: Study selection

### Live workshop

11.00 – 1.00 [UK time]

- Group exercises: screening based on titles and abstracts
- Presentation: common issues and tips
- Question and answer session

### Pre-module 4

Videos: Introducing data extraction; & Designing and testing a data extraction form

- Download and read three papers to prepare for data extraction exercise
- Download and read example data extraction form

Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> April, 2026

## Module 4: Data extraction

### Live workshop

9.30 – 11.00 [UK time]

- Group exercise: data extraction
- Follow-up discussion and summary
- Presentation: Common issues
- Question and answer session

### Pre-modules 5 and 6

Videos 1 to 6: Internal validity, external validity and critical appraisal issues

- Read instructions and paper for critical appraisal exercise

Video: Introducing treatment effects

Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> April, 2026

## Module 5: Critical appraisal

### Live workshop

9.30 – 10.30 [UK time]

- Group exercise: appraise a set of provided vignettes and identify bias
- Follow-up discussion and feedback
- Question and answer session

## Module 6: Calculating treatment effects

### Live workshop

11.00 – 12.00 [UK time]

- Group exercise: calculating effects estimate
- Discussion and feedback
- Question and answer session

### Pre-module 7

Videos:

- Introduction to meta-analysis
- Issues in meta-analysis – heterogeneity
- Problems for meta-analysis – missing studies, publication bias
- Why not always do a meta-analysis – narrative synthesis

Practical Exercise (*Optional*):

- Exercise: Conduct a meta-analysis

Monday 27<sup>th</sup> April, 2026

11.30 – 12.30 [UK time]

- Optional 'Ask the expert' clinic for questions about the exercise software

Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> April, 2026

## Module 7: Meta-analysis

### Live workshop

9.30 – 11.00 [UK time]

- Group exercise: Interpreting meta-analysis results
- Question and answer session

Resource: Narrative synthesis

### Pre-module 8

Videos:

- Estimate vs. uncertainty of an outcome
- About GRADE and summary-of-findings tables

Complete the brainstorming exercise

Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> April, 2026

## Module 8: Appraising the evidence

### Live workshop

9.30 – 11.30 [UK time]

- Group exercise: GRADEing of a Zinc supplementation review
- Group exercise: Conclusions based on GRADE assessment
- Presentation: Completing GRADE assessment
- Follow-up questions from exercise
- Other questions about GRADE assessment

### Post-module 8

Videos:

- Communicating findings
- Relative vs. absolute risk

## Module 9: Reporting your review

No live session

### In your own time learning

Videos:

- Reporting review findings
- Writing the discussion
- Checklists and guidance for reporting your review

Resources:

- Resources for reporting and writing the discussion
- Resources on reporting guidelines

Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> April, 2026

## Module 10: Critical appraisal of a systematic review

### Live workshop

10.00 – 11.30 [UK time]

- Group exercise: What makes a good systematic review
- Group exercise: Using critical appraisal checklists

### Pre-module 12

Videos:

- The what, why and who of knowledge mobilisation
- When knowledge mobilisation happens
- How knowledge mobilisation happens

Friday 1<sup>st</sup> May, 2026

## Module 11: Introduction to health economics

### Live workshop

9.30 – 10.30 [UK time]

- Live presentation: Key concepts, challenges and relevance to systematic reviews
- 'Ask the expert' Q&A and discussion

## Module 12: Knowledge mobilisation

### Live workshop

11.00 – 12.00 [UK time]

- Group exercise: stakeholder mapping
- Group exercise: Reviewing types of knowledge mobilisation outputs; what does it mean to 'use evidence'?

## Course Close