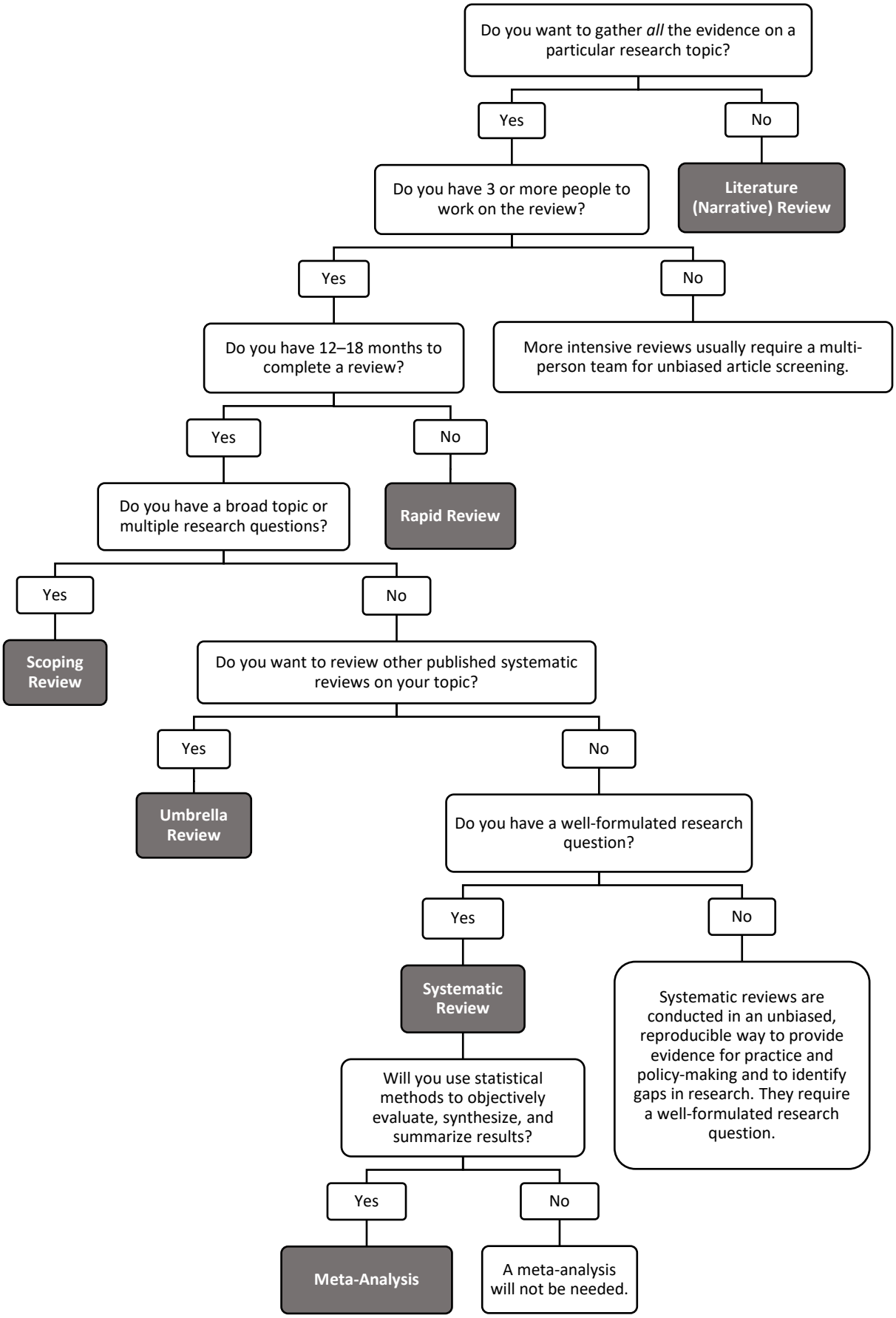
What Type of Review Is Right for You?

Cornell University Library



What Type of Review Is Right for You?

Cornell University Library

Literature (Narrative) Review

A broad term referring to reviews with a wide scope and non-standardized methodology.

- Search strategies, comprehensiveness, and time range covered vary and do not follow an established protocol.

Rapid Review

Applies systematic review methodology within a time-constrained setting.

- Employs methodological "shortcuts" (limiting search terms for example) at the risk of introducing bias.
- Useful for addressing issues needing quick decisions.
- See Evidence summaries: the evolution of a rapid review approach for methodological guidance.

Scoping Review or Systematic Map

Systematically and transparently collects and categorizes existing evidence on a broad topic or set of research questions.

- Seeks to identify research gaps and opportunities for evidence synthesis.
- May critically evaluate existing evidence, but does not attempt to synthesize the results in the way a systematic review would.
- May take longer than a systematic review.
- See Scoping studies: towards a methodological framework for methodological guidance.
- See Environmental Evidence Journal Systematic Maps and Guidance on Systematic Maps—CIFOR.

Umbrella Review

Reviews other systematic reviews on a topic.

- Often defines a broader question than is typical of a traditional systematic review.
- Most useful when there are competing interventions to consider.

Systematic Review

A methodical and comprehensive literature synthesis focused on a well-formulated research question.

- Aims to identify and synthesize *all* of the scholarly research on a particular topic, including both published and unpublished studies.
- Conducted in an unbiased, reproducible way to provide evidence for practice and policy-making and to identify gaps in research.
- May involve a meta-analysis.
- Much more time-intensive than traditional literature reviews.

Meta-Analysis

A statistical technique for combining the findings from disparate quantitative studies.

- Uses statistical methods to objectively evaluate, synthesize, and summarize results.
- May be conducted independently or as part of a systematic review.