

LOUGHBOROUGH UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

Service level agreement, 2008-2009

Parties to the Agreement

The following is an Agreement for the delivery of services by the University Library (the Service Provider) to members of the University.

Duration of the Agreement

The Agreement operates for the financial year 1 August 2008 to 31 July 2009

Key stakeholders and their expectations

All members of the University, as potential users of the Library services, are stakeholders. For students, and for academic and research staff, the Library is an essential resource, directly supporting their research, learning and teaching. The Library building also constitutes a study and social space, and the service has a significant cultural role.

University management requires the Library to demonstrate effective and efficient deployment of resources. Library staff expectations include appropriate training and development, acceptable working conditions, and high standards of management and organisation. External members of the Library expect service provision as advertised to them; and the Library has an important co-operative and collaborative rôle in the academic library community and information profession, at a local and national level.

Strategic factors and pressures

Supporting research

A major strategic issue for the Library is to provide adequate information and literature support to researchers working to maintain and strengthen the University's position as a research-intensive institution. The Library's ability to provide appropriate support is heavily constrained by its past and present funding levels, and is widely judged unsatisfactory by Loughborough researchers – a judgement borne out by benchmarking data. While some of the data collected from Library services of HEIs with similar-scale services demonstrate that the Library service at Loughborough is highly cost-effective, indicators such as the expenditure on information per fte student show evidence of under-funding in comparison with competitors: Loughborough spent 14 per cent less

than other members of the 1994 Group in 2006-2007. For most researchers easy access to the information disseminated in academic journals is an essential element of institutional support for their work, and yet in 2006-2007 the Library subscribed to 38 per cent fewer academic journals per fte than the sector mean. Unless there is a significant uplift in funding, this will continue - price inflation of serial subscriptions runs at a rate well above the RPI: it is currently estimated that volumes published in 2009 will cost at least 10 per cent more than 2008 titles, whether in print or electronic format.

Additional funding for information resources, particularly to provide access to electronic journals and databases whose unavailability hinders research progress, is therefore the priority identified by the Library Users Committee for 2008-2009. The allocation of the Library budget reflects that, with funding for information provision increased by 15 per cent over the previous year.

Electronic access

Access to electronic products through the Library is increasing rapidly, and is currently provided to nearly 10,000 electronic journals and 300 databases, with many titles now only available electronically. Unlike printed journals, usage statistics are available for electronic resources. These provide evidence of the popularity of such products: in 2007-2008 Loughborough students and staff downloaded 1,056,118 articles from electronic journals – a daily average of nearly 3,000. Electronic access to serial literature is not, however, a cheaper alternative: for example, the 2009 cost of the ScienceDirect service is £380,000. A significant factor is that VAT is payable on electronic information resources. The Library continues to evaluate the many electronic products and deals available, and, as financial resources allow, it takes advantage of those offering an appropriate mix of titles, realistic terms of agreement, and suitable pricing. Financial constraints mean that a significant number of subscriptions is paid by academic departments, and there is an extensive list of electronic resources required by academic staff and researchers that the Library would purchase if funds were available.

Electronic resources also alleviate, to some extent, the serious space constraints under which the Library operates and which restrict its ability to retain and extend print collections supporting research.

Alternatives to commercial journals

The Library is leading the development of the University's open-access institutional repository of research output and learning objects. It is also a member of SPARC (Scholarly Publishing & Academic Resources Coalition), and will continue to monitor the development of this and other open access publishing initiatives, participating as appropriate. However, these are long-term initiatives which will do little to alleviate financial pressure on the Library in the near future.

Co-operation and collaboration

Co-operative purchasing by the 22-member regional consortium of academic libraries, NEYAL, to which the Library belongs, mitigates some of the effects of serials price inflation, and enables the Library to benefit from higher discounts on books and serials than it could negotiate alone. The Librarian and Support Services Manager serve on the NEYAL Steering Committee and Books Group respectively.

The SCONUL (Society of College, National and University Libraries) Access scheme gives academic and research staff, and research students, access and borrowing rights at all participating libraries, on similar terms to those enjoyed by external members of those libraries. The scheme also benefits part-time students and distance learners, as students registered at Loughborough may use and borrow material from other academic libraries convenient to where they live or work.

External funding and income generation

The Library actively seeks advertising and sponsorship opportunities. It sells advertising space on its public PC desktops and screen savers; has installed poster sites on its staircases; and receives rental income from the space occupied by the shop and a share of the trading surplus from the café. None of these initiatives, however, generates very significant funds.

Supporting learning

As the student community grows and becomes more diverse, as teaching methods and modes of study change, and in the era of top-up fees, student expectations of Library services become increasingly challenging. Diversity brings a need for more training in information literacy and study skills, and demand for service availability up to 24/7; larger class sizes and more group assignments exert pressure on the book stock and on study space; students paying higher fees expect comparable institutional investment in student facilities – and in addition to its academic support role, the Library is an increasingly important community hub. In response, the Library provides a variety of learning spaces and environments, including the very popular Open3 group study area and Café 641. It is intended that 24/7 opening, at least before and during examination periods, will continue.

The age of the Pilkington Library (1980) means that further refurbishment of the building is an issue, as are utilities costs. Savings in energy costs will continue to be sought, in partnership with Facilities Management. The timely replacement and upgrade of IT facilities also presents a constant challenge. Shelf space is at a premium, with extensive use of top and bottom shelves of ranges, against best health and safety practice. The development plan for the Library includes the acquisition of significant external storage if Level 4 of the building does not become available.

Teaching study skills

In response to demand, the Library has developed and delivers a range of study skills sessions within its information literacy programme. These are very well received, and will be extended in 2008-2009.

Developing the book stock

Greater investment in the Library service is required not only to support research aspirations but also to maintain learning support at a satisfactory level. This is especially important at a time when new subject and programme developments are planned. The effects of under-investment in the book stock (whether in print or electronic format) may not be felt immediately, but they become apparent over time – and can rarely be retrospectively rectified. Student and academic staff perceptions of the Library service, the Library's position in league tables, and quality audit outcomes will all suffer.

Developing e-learning

The Library is leading the development of e-learning across the University, in a partnership including the Faculties, the Teaching Centre, IT Services, the CETLs and other stakeholders. A Head of E-learning has been appointed with effect from November 2008, with a remit to build and lead a network of all those supporting e-learning; develop strategy in consultation with relevant committees and groups; and be responsible for its implementation. Library colleagues – especially Academic Librarians – provide considerable support to staff and students in their use of Learn and other e-learning technologies.

Provision of IT facilities

As it moves towards becoming a comprehensive, user-focused research and learning support centre, the Library experiences heavy and increasing demand for IT facilities and support. Among its other functions, the Library is an open-access, staffed, 120-seat PC lab, with ubiquitous wireless networking, and it is essential that its IT facilities are updated on a regular basis.

Provision of study space

Pressure on study space, and the demand for group learning space in particular, is evident from occupancy statistics. Benchmarks underline this: the Library's provision of one study seat per 16 fte students is just over half the sector mean of one seat for every 9 students. There is little prospect of providing further study space unless Level 4 of the building becomes available to the Library.

Key performance indicators and benchmarks

Quarterly data on activity are studied by the Library's Management Group and are used to monitor performance and plan service development. Thus, for example, trends in footfall, loan traffic and the number of enquiries handled influence the staffing of front-line services; the use of charged services affects decisions about their promotion or future; the use of electronic information resources is a factor in subscription renewal; and attendance at (and demand for) information literacy and study skills training help drive the ILSS programme. Feedback received via any route, including *Ask a librarian*¹ and annual customer satisfaction surveys, is also used to monitor performance and trigger enhancement.

Performance is measured annually against benchmarks, and reported in the *Annual report of the Librarian*², the *Service level agreement* and the *SCONUL statistics*³. Among other indicators are books added per fte student, expenditure breakdowns, enquiries and training sessions per student and per Library staff member, loans per volume in stock, and seat occupancy.

The benchmarks in the table below are taken from the *SCONUL annual library statistics, 2006-2007*. Examples of Loughborough data are compared with the mean for pre-1992 higher education institutions (excluding RLUK members⁴), and with the mean for the 1994 Group of universities (excluding Loughborough). The other members of the 1994 Group are Bath, Birkbeck, Durham, East Anglia, Essex, Exeter, Goldsmiths, Lancaster, Leicester, Queen Mary, Reading, Royal Holloway, SOAS, St Andrews, Surrey, Sussex and York.

¹ See email comment/request form at <http://www.lboro.ac.uk/library/contact/askALibrarian.html>

² <http://www.lboro.ac.uk/library/about/PDFs/annrep07-08.pdf>

³ *SCONUL annual library statistics* and *UK higher education library management statistics*, both published annually by SCONUL, are available in the Library at Serials 310.

⁴ RLUK (Research Libraries UK) has 30 members, including the major university research libraries of the UK. For details see <http://www.rluk.ac.uk/members>

Loughborough data (2006/2007)		Benchmarks (2006/2007)	
		1994 Group mean excluding LU	sector mean (pre-92 HEIs excluding RLUK)
Library space in sq mtrs per FTE student	0.57	1.01	0.90
fte Univ staff and students ('users') per Library seat	19	12	11
fte students per Library seat	16	9	9
annual 'study hours' in Library per fte student	374	511	499
total Library expenditure per fte student	£291	£373	£342
expenditure on elec and print information per fte student	£128	£150	£140
electronic articles downloaded per fte user	50	80	60
cost per article downloaded	£1.29	£0.73	£1.00
serial titles stocked\available per 100 fte students	50	85	81
books added per fte student	0.92	1.72	1.40
book loans per fte student	23	62	53
no. of enquiries per week per 100 fte students	8	20	16
staff hours instruction per FTE professional Library staff	29	23	32

The Library's objectives

- To support and facilitate the research, learning, teaching and administrative activities of the University, by organising, maintaining and providing access to appropriate literature and information resources in such a way as to provide optimum benefit for Library users.
- To supply services and expertise designed actively to promote the effective exploitation of Library and information resources, including the teaching of transferable study and information handling skills.
- To provide an appropriate and comfortable environment, accommodation and facilities for the use of Library resources, and for individual and group study.

The Library's core activities

- A Provision of information and literature support for the University's research, learning and teaching activity.
- B Provision of study space and facilities.
- C Teaching of information literacy and study skills.

Mary Morley
University Librarian

The Agreement

All members of the University who wish to use the Library and its services have undertaken to abide by the *Library regulations*. These are available at <http://www.lboro.ac.uk/admin/ar/calendar/regulations/current/1/index.htm>

A. The provision of information and literature support for the University's research, learning and teaching activity

1 The Library liaises closely with academic departments on all aspects of Library service provision, including collection development. The principal point of contact is through the Academic Librarians and the Library Liaison Officer in each department.

2 ***Budget allocation and management***

- The Support Services Manager allocates funds for the purchase of literature and information resources to support the research, learning and teaching activities of the members of academic departments. This is done in line with a methodology agreed with the Library Users Committee, modified through consultation with Academic Librarians and academic staff as appropriate.
- Funds for purchasing library material to support departments are managed by Academic Librarians in partnership with Library Liaison Officers.
- The expected ratio of expenditure on print:electronic resources, and on books:serials, is decided for each department on the basis of consultation between the Academic Librarian and the Library Liaison Officer.

3 ***Resource selection and processing***

- The Library collection policy document, *Collection management and collection development*, is at http://www.lboro.ac.uk/library/about/Collection_Development.html
- The selection of library material for purchase is undertaken by Academic Librarians and academic staff. Purchases requested by academic staff are normally made if they fall within the collection development policy, unless the cost of an individual item cannot be justified by its likely use.
- The teaching staff ensure that, as soon as possible before modules commence, all reading lists to be issued to students each semester are entered in the online reading list system, and subsequently kept up to date.
- Academic Departments keep their serials lists under review, to ensure that the titles purchased are those best supporting current research, learning and teaching.
- Policy relating to stock revision and disposal is at http://www.lboro.ac.uk/library/about/Collection_Development.html

- The inter-library loans service is available to all members of the University, subject to conditions set by individual departments for the use of the service by their staff and students. Further information is at <http://www.lboro.ac.uk/library/services/ill-home.html>
- The Library collects, catalogues and maintains written, photographic and other material relating to the University and its predecessor institutions. See <http://www.lboro.ac.uk/library/services/Archives.html>

4 Enquiry services

- Information and enquiry points are located on all floors of the Library.
- An email-based enquiry service, Ask a Librarian, is available at all times; a response will be made within one working day.
- Enquiries involving significant research or specialist knowledge are referred to the appropriate Academic Librarian, and dealt with at the earliest opportunity.

5 Circulation services

- Circulation services are available throughout Library opening hours via self-service units. See http://www.lboro.ac.uk/library/about/opening_hours.html
- Borrowing entitlements, loan periods and fines payable are as set out in *Library regulations* at <http://www.lboro.ac.uk/admin/ar/calendar/regulations/current/1/index.htm>
- Correspondence with borrowers is via email, unless individuals request otherwise.
- Registered Library users inform the Library promptly if they change their addresses for correspondence.
- Items returned from loan, or consulted in the Library, are returned to the correct position on the shelves, normally within 24 hours.
- Items returned to the Short Loan Collection are re-shelved, normally within two hours.
- The order of all books on the shelves is checked for accuracy at least annually.

6 Photocopying and printing facilities

- Details of photocopying services provided by the Library are at <http://www.lboro.ac.uk/library/services/AV.html>
- Library users with Active Directory authentication are able to print files via self-service networked printers in the Library, or via networked printers elsewhere on campus.
- Printer credits may be purchased from enquiry points and from a self-service machine on Level 3 of the Library.

B. The provision of study space and facilities

- The University Librarian allocates financial resources to ensure the maintenance of a comfortable and safe environment, and the purchase and maintenance of equipment and facilities, to support the research, learning and teaching of members of the University.
- The Library, through the Facilities Manager and in liaison with Facilities Management and the Health, Safety & Environment Section, takes care to ensure the safety and security of the building and equipment, and of Library staff and users.
- The Library actively observes current legislation and recommended good practice in respect of Library users with disabilities or additional needs.
- A variety of study space is provided, for individual and group study purposes. See http://www.lboro.ac.uk/library/services/study_spaces.html
- Library users undertake to maintain Levels 1 and 2 of the building as silent environments for individual study, except in the group study rooms.
- IT workstations are provided and maintained as resources allow, offering access to networked services and standard office PC packages for Library users with Active Directory authentication.
- Appropriate equipment for viewing and printing from audiovisual and microform material is provided and maintained.

C. The teaching of information literacy and study skills

- Information literacy (IL) teaching by Library staff is available to all members of the University. See <http://www.lboro.ac.uk/library/skills/index.html>
- IL encompasses library induction; lectures and packages tailored to departmental needs; programmes for non-departmental groups; and programmes open to all.
- Workshops on enhancing study skills are offered to all students. See <http://www.lboro.ac.uk/library/skills/studySkills.html>
- The Library provides a range of publications, in printed and electronic form, describing Library services and facilities.

D. Library management and support

- In consultation with academic staff, Library staff develop policy and strategy to guide the development of Library services in support of the research, learning, teaching and administrative activity of the University.
- The Library maintains and develops an important cultural and social role within the University.
- The Library seeks, collects and analyses feedback from users on the quality and effectiveness of its services, and ensures that such feedback informs and shapes service development.
- Emphasis is placed on the development and training of Library staff to facilitate the delivery of services of the highest possible standard.
- Within financial constraints, the Library provides optimum IT support for its services, to facilitate the research, learning, teaching and administrative activity of Library users.
- Library staff provide administrative support for the delivery of library services.