



University of Sussex Library Survey: Summary of results 2016

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Introduction

During December 2016 the Library conducted a short online survey inviting responses from students and all University staff. The purpose of this consultation was to measure current use and levels of satisfaction with the Library and to identify priorities for the future. The survey was made available online via the University and Library websites and all staff and students were sent an email inviting them to participate in the survey.

A total of 1271 respondents completed the survey, representing 6% of the University community, roughly the same proportion as previous years.

We will be running our next full survey of Library users in November 2017. During 2016/2017 we will continue to engage and consult using the variety of methods agreed in our Customer Consultation and Feedback Policy.

Summary of main findings

1. Demographic information

1.1 Division of respondents

Foundation year	1%	(14)
Undergraduate:	43%	(505)
Postgraduate (taught):	16%	(180)
Postgraduate (research):	6%	(76)
Academic staff:	14%	(161)
Professional services staff:	19%	(227)
Other:	1%	(12)

1.2 Academic department representation

All academic departments were represented.

2. Use of the Library

2.1 Access to Library material

A number of comments on previous surveys have mentioned difficulties in using ebooks.

We asked our users how easy they found it to use ebooks on a range of devices

- 18% said they had experienced difficulties on a PC or laptop
- 54% on a mobile
- 36% on a tablet
- 30% on a Kindle

<i>The mobile version just lags and crashes my phone</i>

<i>The e books don't work on the ipads and can hold up and waste valuable time in lectures/workshops</i>

Many found problems with downloading:

Sometimes there are restrictions on the number of pages that you are allowed to access which is frustrating when you need resources for seminars or coursework.

Would find it helpful if you could download book and be able to annotate /highlight parts online to save printing out and doing on paper.

We asked what prevented our users from obtaining Library material that they wished to read

- 294 said that there were not enough copies of books in the Library
- 192 were not able to find the material they were looking for using Library Search
- 127 were not able to find the material on the shelf
- 185 were not able to access online material in the catalogue
- 129 said the Library did not provide online access
- 61 said that a reading list was not available

The remainder listed other obstacles such as:

The frequent crashing of the IT systems; the inability of it to connect on a consistent basis with the Library's systems

I can never find a free computer to work on in the quiet study areas. i often bring my own laptop to work on, but once again I struggle to find either space to work in quiet or a plug socket to use near my working space

2.2 Making use of Library resources

We asked how confident our users feel in accessing and using Library resources:

- 92% said they felt *very confident* or *quite confident* in using Library search (a decrease of 1% on 2015)
- 87% in finding resources for research (an decrease of 4% on 2015)
- 76% in downloading ebooks (an increase of 4% on 2015)
- 83% in referencing and citing works (a decrease of 1% on 2015)

2.3 Study Space

We asked our users what type of study space our users preferred.

- 42% preferred silent study space (36% in 2015)
- 41% preferred quiet study space (42% in 2015)
- 17% preferred group study space (22% in 2015)

Additionally we asked why our users didn't visit the Library and the majority of responses pointed to the lack of study space and computers.

2.4 Food and Drink

We asked our users whether they agreed with the current policy on food and drink

- 55% said they agreed
- 45% said that they disagreed

3. Satisfaction with current provision

3.1 Service

90% of respondents either *agree* or *tend to agree* that the Library provides a good service overall.

This result is slightly lower than last year when 91% of respondents overall *agreed* or *tended to agree* that the Library provides a good service overall.

87% of undergraduate students either *agree* or *tend to agree* that the Library provides a good service overall and 91% of taught postgraduates either *agree* or *tend to agree* that the Library provides a good service overall

3.2 Range of books

86% of respondents either *agree* or *tend to agree* that the Library provides a good range of books. This rises to 89% when the data is filtered for undergraduates and taught postgraduates alone.

The overall figures is a fall from last year when 88% of respondents overall *agreed* or *tended to agree* that the Library provides a good range of books.

3.3 Range of online resources

87% of respondents either *agree* or *tend to agree* that the Library provides a good range of online resources. This shows a rise on 2015 when the satisfaction rate was 86% among all respondents.

3.4 Access to Library resources

63% of respondents either *agree* or *tend to agree* that they can always access the Library resources they require, this shows a fall from 68% last year.

3.4 Ease of use of the website

67% of respondents either *agree* or *tend to agree* that the information on the Library website is easy to find, a 6% decrease on the 2015 result of 73%.

3.5 Balance of study areas

69% of respondents either *agree* or *tend to agree* that the Library has a good selection of study areas; this falls to 67% when only undergraduate student responses only are taken into account. In the 2015 survey the satisfaction rate for study areas was 73% overall and 73% for ug students.

3.6 Finding a space in the Library

39% of respondents either *agree* or *tend to agree* that they could find a space in the Library when they wanted one. This is a large drop from a response rate of 48% in 2015 who either agreed or tended to agree that they could find a place in the Library when they wanted one.

4. Value of the Library

We asked respondents to tell us one thing that they valued about the Library. We received 604 responses.

139 positive comments were about the study environment offered by the Library. Users particularly valued the variety of spaces to work.

I use the library as a space to work away from my desk, especially when I need to focus and be away from distractions. I find that it is a wonderful location to allow me to do this and I find the atmosphere of the building helps me to relax and work effectively.

A different place to study, the opportunity to choose what kind of area you work in depending on your needs.

The variety of computers and places to sit (e.g. The wooden desks / the comfortable chairs by windows).

The physical space: to be surrounded by books and people working from them and online. It's a wonderful atmosphere, enhanced by the quality of the sensitive refurb a few years ago (furniture envy!). These intangible benefits are as vital as access to eBooks.

It is a very pleasant space that is highly valued by students and staff.

I like the different learning spaces (mixture of quiet areas, individual booths, group areas, computer areas etc.)

How there's somewhere for everybody

202 comments were on resources including the range of books, ebooks and journals available:

I still can't comprehend how much there is available! And even if something isn't on the shelf, the library staff can order it in, how wonderful!

There is a broad range of resources, both obscure and mainstream that is useful.

It is a tremendous resource, being able to follow my interests, simply by looking on library search and seeking out books, has been a highlight of my studies so far. It is a real treasure trove.

A lot of the reading I do for my course in Life Sciences involves articles - the abundance of journals that the Uni allow us access to is amazing and very helpful - otherwise we'd be spending a fortune in subscriptions. The journals we have access to are good ones too such as Nature and The Lancet

138 comments were about the value of our staff:

The enabling values of the excellently trained staff that will always listen to your concerns and do what they can to make you feel comfortable.

So many efforts to make the service user-friendly. Change seems to be in a good direction.

The staff who work there have always gone above and beyond to help me when I have needed it, they are supportive and listen to issues.

That you are more than a service, a group of experts. I love for example your advocacy of open access.

The staff are always ready to answer my questions and are easily approachable too.

Plans for improvement

We asked respondents to tell us about one thing that we don't currently offer which they felt would add some value to our service. We received a total of 651 suggestions with the largest number of comments requesting improvements in the Library's space and working environment, more computers and more reliable WiFi, better range and more copies of text books and journals, and spaces for eating and drinking and opening hours. Within this we have identified a number of areas that we will look at improving.

Space

As the University continues to grow, we are aware of the continuing pressure of available study space. We are working closely with senior University management to find ways to extend this provision.

- As a temporary solution during our busiest weeks, we are pleased to announce that we are aiming to introduce a new Pop-up Library service elsewhere on campus to offer additional study space
- We will explore the requirements for different types of space with more detailed interviews with our users

WiFi

We will work with ITS to investigate problems with our WiFi and put in extra capacity if necessary.

Building

- We will be investigating the feasibility of installing phone / laptop chargers around the Library. We continue to look for ways that we can increase the desk provision of sockets within the existing electrical infrastructure of the Library.
- A number of users raised concerns about the suitability of our access provision for wheelchair users. We will continue to pursue this through the Campus Accessibility Forum.
- We are delighted to say that there is now a water fountain available on each floor for public use. Please ask at the Info Hub for more information.
- We will look to install clocks around the study areas.

Library Search and website

We will take the feedback from the survey and use it as part of our development work on Library Search and the website.

Signage

We are working with our users to better understand how they navigate around the building and will ensure that we have adequate and appropriate signage to support this.

Opening Hours

We are aware of a growing requirement for increased opening hours and are considering ways that we may be able to achieve this.

Ebooks

As a community we continue to work with suppliers and publishers to highlight serious access issues to this type of material which have been reported in the survey.

Library Resources

We will target departments where there are large cohorts of students to look at alternative methods of resourcing course and to encourage digitisation of core material as much as is possible.

Room Booking

We will be undertaking a review of our Room Booking System during the course of the year to try and further enhance the provision.