University of Sussex Library Survey:
Summary of results 2013

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Introduction

During November 2013 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 981 respondents completed the survey, representing 7% of the University community. We received a lower response than in previous years, primarily because the survey was initially mailed to staff and student inboxes via the Bulletin newsletter rather than by using a direct email to staff and students.

We will be running our next full survey of Library users in November 2014. During 2013/2014 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

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
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<th>Count</th>
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<tr>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
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<td>654</td>
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<tr>
<td>Postgraduate (taught)</td>
<td>18%</td>
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<td>Postgraduate (research)</td>
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<td>Professional services</td>
<td>3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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</tbody>
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1.2 Full-time or part-time

96% of the taught course students (UG and PGT) who responded were studying full-time, with 30% of undergraduate students in their first year, 33% in their second, 31% in their third and 6% in their fourth or fifth year.

1.3 Academic department representation

All academic departments were represented.

2. Use of the Library

2.1 Study spaces

42% preferred to work in silent study space, 38% in quiet study space and 20% preferred to work in the social study spaces. The overwhelming reason not using the Library was the level of noise and the overcrowding.

Although I don’t spend nearly as much time at the library as I did at my previous university, simply because it is constantly full

Although I have clicked ‘silent study’, of late I have tended to avoid the library because the quiet and
silent areas are over-crowed and noisy.

Because there is no genuine silence anywhere. Even when I try the silent study, there is a continuous amount of talking and it is very close to the social study where kids are shouting and laughing. Very frustrating.

An additional question asked respondents if we were to reduce the number of seats allocated to a particular type of study space which should it be?

- 52% said Social Study Space
- 25% said Quiet Study Space and
- 23% said we should reduce the Silent Study Space

2.2 Ebooks

Our users have a preference for accessing books in print. Amongst taught course students, 65% prefer to access a book in print with 35% preferring ebooks or having no preference at all. Amongst researchers (PGRs and academic staff), 59% prefer print with 41% preferring ebooks or having no preference at all.

We also asked our users how they preferred to access the e-content

- 72% said on a PC
- 1% on a mobile
- 11% on a tablet
- 4% on an e-reader
- 11% expressed no preference

2.3 Access to Library material

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

234 said that a reading list was not available (in print or online)
717 said not enough copies of a book were available in the Library
106 said that they didn’t understand how to use the catalogue
250 couldn’t find the material on the shelf

and 75 gave other reasons which included:

- Bad wifi connection when I bring in my own laptop to access reading
- Ebooks are presented in an annoying format that requires refreshing all the time.
- I know that for some of our PGR students, opening hours during the summer time prevent them accessing materials - they have raised this again and again in their annual reviews.
- Many times an electronic text is promised which, a few clicks later, turns out to be unavailable.
- More computers to use to check the correct author of a book. Sometimes you know the name of the book but you just need to double check you have the correct name and author of the book you need
- Not enough computers to look things up/do research.
- Not enough latest editions of textbooks available - especially important in Law which is constantly changing
Outdated versions of key course textbooks in the library, forcing individual purchase of the most recent version.

Since the library is so big, it becomes very difficult to find the book even if it is there in the library. There should be a map at the entrance depicting which genre of books are kept where?

SO MANY times I have not been able to find a book I was looking for, it says it is available online but it is never on the shelves and the staff is not really helpful to claiming it is missing or trying to find it - simply asking me to come back the next day (everytime)

Some materials are not available, also, short loan books can be a bit inconvenient. More ebooks for key texts will be helpful

Some texts not in the online library, only the review is available rather than the actual text which is disappointing when it happens.

Struggling to get into the library (the majority of my time I am away from Uni on placement).

The book does not appear in the search at first even if the full title and author is correct, only after filtering the search down it will come up.

The internet is awful so it makes it incredibly difficult to even access the online library.

There is a lack of adequate direction to find shelved books in the library and the online catalogue is extremely confusing.

There seems to be an increasing over-reliance on online resources.

You can only read some of the e-books by opening a separate PDF window per page. This becomes very annoying and unpractical both for printing the material and reading it.

### 2.4 Access to training and support

81% of respondents felt that the Library offered enough training and help for finding the Library’s print and online resources, 19% wanted more help. There were many comments on this question, these include:

- Attending a library tour during Fresher’s Week was very helpful in providing me with all the information I needed to know to find resources.
- but more should be done on a group basis depending on the different schools and departments of the university
- But the library catalogue is a little bit complicated.
- Could do with more training in using the internet resources and archives
- Definitely, amazing staff
- Good training is available, but students have to be proactive in finding it themselves. The training courses could be promoted more.
- Great Efforts made for First Years in Fresher’s Week, but many miss out on the chance, or don’t realise how useful it can be - maybe repeat the library tours and guides etc., in January, once everyone has had a chance to feel a bit lost and realise they need help.
- I didn’t know about eBooks. What is available? How do we get them?
I feel the library staff are always more than happy to help

I got a hang of the photocopier and the double-sided tutorial was useful, but maybe some basic instructions on how to use it would be nice?

I got help with this through a study skills module on my course but I’m not sure how applicable this is across different subjects. Was definitely a useful workshop!

I have not had any of these trainings but anytime I needed helped, I found help with the really welcoming Library staff

I have not heard of the library’s print or online resources until doing this quiz. I would not know how to access these services at all!

I really appreciate that there are always available staff at the main counter but I had some troubles using the online catalogues the first times.

I still find it difficult and complicated to find online journals

I think there should be a ‘training day’ or course of some kind available to undergraduates (1st years in particular), or just generally new students at Sussex so that they know exactly where to go and what to do if they want to use the Library’s print or online resources.

I think we had a brief session during induction in first year, but can’t remember.

I’m sure there is, but I haven’t heard of it, so perhaps it’s not that well advertised.

I’ve never been given any training on how to find or use ebooks (this questionnaire has highlighted to me that from your point of view they are a major part of the service you provide - I’ve never really known about that).

I’ve never heard of any but I expect if I asked this would be available

It would be good to have more guides to finding journal articles.

It would have been helpful to have had a tour of the specialist area for my course as I am still not clear where all the law reports are kept

It’s not that hard, but the website contains limited guidance.

It’s very easy to do on your own.

Library tour at beginning of year was extremely helpful with this (but not advertised enough)

Make a clear step by step guide that can be referred to

Many people do not know how to access the online journal’s facility on the library website. Some people do not even know that the class mark of the book they are looking for comes up in their search in the library catalogue. I think more training should be given in the first and second years of study, such as maybe two sessions as opposed to one in the first year and then another refresher session in the second year.

Marvellous help

more detailed info on line re how the collections work for certain publications. EG the store- times of collections from the library. It is difficult to work out when to turn up if you need things urgently & you don’t know there are restrictions on when you can access them.

Most of my students are PGRs - it’s great that they can have one to one sessions. I think the Int EdD would benefit from being able to do this via Skype.

Not being brilliant with online stuff, it has always been difficult and time consuming to obtain things.
I have never used resources from other libraries as the process was difficult.

Not sure where to get help.

Obtaining primary sources, particularly online is not easy unless you have been given good instructions, which I was only given as a third year!

Shelf locations could be more clearly indicated by the consistent use of user-friendly floor maps around the library. More could be done to make the various online resources more unified and user-friendly. Online help and training could also be expanded to include more videos and interactive guides.

The initial sessions on using the library were not that in depth but the staff in the library are so helpful and knowledgeable that any gaps in my knowledge have been remedied by them.

The library staff are always attentive. They are also friendly and approachable and willing to help and show you how to do things yourself to save your trouble of having to go to them again next time. Of which is very considerate.

There is a welter of information at the start of the year. It might be helpful for specific groups of students to be given more individualised orientation separately. Such as disabled students who may find the initial information overwhelming, or need specific advice on accessing materials or using the library.

We did have a very useful session, but as a mature student I could probably have done with a bit more.

Would like compulsory training for accessing journals and how to search for desired journals.

### 3. Satisfaction with current provision

#### 3.1 Service

91% of respondents either agree or tend to agree that the Library provides a good service overall. This rises to 92% when the data is filtered for undergraduates alone.

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

#### 3.2 Range of books

84% of respondents either agree or tend to agree that the Library provides a good range of books. This rises to 85% when the data is filtered for undergraduates and taught postgraduates alone. The response falls to 80% for postgraduate researchers and academics.

This is a slightly improved result from last year when 83% of respondents overall agreed or tended to agree that the Library provides a good range of books.

#### 3.3 Range of online resources

76% of respondents either agree or tend to agree that the Library provides a good range of online resources. In 2011 the satisfaction rate was 82% among all respondents.
3.4 Ease of use of the website

66% of respondents either agree or tend to agree that the information on the Library website is easy to find, this is a significant drop on the result in the 2012 survey of 74%. This may be because of a higher students response rate to the Library survey this year – as opposed to staff and researchers.

3.5 Selection of study areas

73% of respondents either agree or tend to agree that the Library has a good selection of study areas; this rises to 77% when UG responses only are taken into account. In the 2011 student survey the satisfaction rate for study areas was 77% overall and 78% for undergraduates.

4. Value of the Library

We asked respondents to tell us one thing that they valued about the Library. We received 573 wide-ranging comments about the Library’s services and facilities, including the ILR and book purchase suggestions, self-service, availability of sockets, proximity of café and online chat.

239 positive comments were about the study environment offered by the Library. Users particularly valued the quiet and silent areas, and the comfortable nature of the Library and the range of study spaces:

| Quiet corners, a variety of seating options and a space that isn’t full of computers |
| Social, quiet and silent areas are generally well spaced so that each group are not disturbed by the others |
| New silent section at the top of the library |
| Lots of space and comfortable study rooms are really good |

78 positive comments were on our opening hours:

| The 24-hour opening times, especially when they are extended during exam/dissertation periods |
| Its commitment to being open all hours and ease of access/use is fantastic. |
| Since I am on a professional placement most days, I value the flexibility of hours since that gives me the best opportunity for further study and collecting resources. |

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

| All the books! I was in there today and realised that the library is what I will miss most about Sussex when I graduate next year |
| The online resources are excellent. Access to all those vast collections of journals etc. is incredible. It’s like entering the matrix, only without the guns and bullet time, and instead with lots and lots of books. |
| I have recently used the ebook facility for the first time this year - I was initially dubious, but having used it I was impressed by the “remote” accessibility benefits, and even more by the utility of the format for note taking – fantastic service. (+ the ILL service has been great - as usual |
| Range of journals and books and the fact that I can access so much from home. |

63 comments were about the value of our staff:
I always find the staff helpful and friendly which the makes the library a good place to go.
The friendly, helpful staff and excellent customer service provided
The staff, they love their jobs and there friendly nature is awesome, they care about their job
Constantly available and helpful library assistants
The service provided by the staff is exceptional. Very friendly, very professional
I value the staff who support researchers - they provide fun and informative workshops as well as their valuable 1:2:1 sessions.

and 27 comments were on computers:

It is useful to have large screens in the library which enable me to have more than one document open at a time
Modern Computers

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 538 suggestions with the largest number of comments being made in relation to improved space, more computers, better selection and range of books and journals, improved Wi-Fi, too much noise, wanting to eat and drink, the variable temperature and the standard (and number) of toilet facilities.

Space review and re-branding
We will be conducting a strategic level space review in consultation with students and others in order to identify any short or long-term space solutions

Improved range of books and journals
We are targeting a number of departments, ensuring we have information about reading lists and new research areas. This targeting is based on NSS feedback, student forum discussions, levels of requests for new materials as well as feedback from the Academic Schools.

Visibility of training and support sessions?
We are exploring opportunities to improve the promotion and visibility of our teaching and support sessions both within the building itself and also on our website

Laptop loans?
We are working with ITS to offer a laptop loan facility for 2014/15

Noise and behaviour
We will be evaluating our new Library Ambassadors scheme to ascertain whether this scheme has had any impact on the behaviour and noise levels within the Library.

Another water fountain?
We are investigating with the catering company, Chartwells, whether an additional water fountain can be made available within the café area.

Toilet facilities
We have conducted a deep-clean of the toilets during the xmas vacation and will be augmenting the ladies toilet facilities in summer 2014