



Aspiring for Excellence

Library Annual Report 2015-16

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The 2015-2016 academic year was a year of significant change and service innovation in the Library at Ulster. The final year of operationalising the 2012-2016 Library Services Strategy was marked with an holistic upgrade of the Library's circulation, stock management and security system with the introduction of RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) technology across all campus libraries. The implementation of this technology, whilst an advancement in its own right, has the potential to enable significant change to service delivery models in the context of delivering immersive, personal support for users at point of need and providing much needed support for high-demand business areas. It will also underpin much of the planning for service delivery at the Greater Belfast Development.

User satisfaction with the Library Service remain high, for the second consecutive year the Library scored 90% in the NSS survey. The Library Service is fortunate to have a dedicated staff team who are committed to delivering a high quality service and user experience. Each member of staff has embraced and owned the Library Services Strategy through successful delivery of the strategic priorities and objectives and for this, I wholeheartedly thank them.

Communication and engagement with stakeholders is essential to ensure that service delivery meets institutional need and user expectation. To this end, the Library has developed a section of the Library Home Page with a view to Keeping Library Users Informed. This outlines the various channels that the Library uses to communicate with users and includes easy navigation to Library surveys, user feedback and the associated responses.

This report outlines the wide range of service initiatives and improvements that the Library has introduced during the course of the year, it is a reflection of a significant amount of work, all initiated with the user experience at the heart of service delivery.

Janet Peden

University Librarian

The Digital Library

In keeping with the Library's strategic priority to develop the range of information resources available in electronic format, the Faculty Sub Librarians continue to work in partnership with academic colleagues to identify additional electronic content to add to the existing portfolio of information resources. Users now have access to an enhanced range of subject-specific resources to include:

- Birkhäuser Building Types Online
- British National Formulary & British National Formulary for Children (to facilitate searching)
- eLexicons
- Foreign Broadcast Information Service Daily reports (previously free from JISC)
- IBIS World
- Knowledge Unlatched eBooks Round 2 Collection
- Routledge Encyclopedia of Modernism
- Westlaw UK eBooks

The user preference to access material in e format continues, this year, over 1,655,000 e Book section downloads have been recorded. A 203% increase in eBook section requests has been recorded in the period 2012-2016.

Special Collections

During the year, the Library curated a range of exhibitions to highlight the unique cultural assets that are held across the campus libraries. The 150th anniversary of the foundation of Magee College was celebrated through a number of exhibitions starting with an exhibition entitled "*In the Beginning*" which told the story of how Magee College came into existence.

A virtual version of this exhibition using Prezi software is also available from the Special Collections and Rare Books Libguide.

The exhibitions coincided with the publication of a booklet entitled *The Irish Collection in the Magee Library of Ulster University* to mark the 150th anniversary of Magee College. The booklet was published with financial support from the Garfield Weston Foundation and copies are available in all campus libraries.

In addition, the Library exhibited a number of items in the main campus building from 15 to 17 October 2015 as part of a series of public events organised by the Development and Alumni Office. Significant documents relating to the history of the College were displayed such as the 1850 Magee College report recording the agreement to build the College, along with the engraved commemorative trowel used to lay the keystone.

In the context of civic engagement, members of the public were also given the opportunity

to visit the Library at Magee to gain an insight into the richness of the cultural and historical resources held in the Library.

In February 2016 an exhibition of natural history materials was curated in the Library at Coleraine, this was entitled “*Botanical Treasures of Ulster’s Special Collections*”.

This exhibition focused on the content of several Special Collections bequeathed to the Library at Ulster by eminent scholars such as Robert Lloyd Praeger, Arthur Wilson Stelfox and Edward Norman Carruthers, whose work on discovering, classifying and cataloguing Ulster’s plant and wildlife, forms an integral part of our understanding of local natural history.

The 400th anniversary of the death of Shakespeare was also acknowledged with an exhibition in the Library at the Coleraine campus. Three items from the Henry Davis Collection of early printed books were included in this exhibition:

- The Shakespeare 4th Folio (1685)
- The Essayes by Montaigne (translated by John Florio.(1603)
- Homer’s Odysseys (1614)

All of the exhibitions attracted significant interest and raised the profile of the unique and significant cultural assets held by the Library.

Library space

The importance of the Library as a learning environment and the contribution this makes to the overall student learning experience cannot be overestimated. It is essential that library space keeps pace with institutional pedagogic approaches to learning and teaching and delivers student-centred, informal, collaborative learning spaces.

As a step-change in this direction, a number of changes has been initiated. The former café space in the Library at Magee has been repurposed into an informal learning space for students with hot and cold vending machines available alongside comfortable seating. This represents a positive response to a request for informal library space that emerged during the Library-Student Union consultations. Feedback from students has been very positive.

The overall appearance of the Library at Jordanstown has received a welcome boost with the introduction of colourful flooring; this includes the area newly designated for collaborative learning. The removal of the linear arrangement of study desks in a discrete area of the library alongside the introduction of a number of group study pods has initiated the process to create a flexible, informal, collaborative study space. In addition, a small number of individual study pods was introduced, these are very popular and in high demand by users. The silent study area in the Library at Jordanstown was also repurposed to deliver a more informal study environment.

The Library also carried out a review of its Group Study Rooms with a view to enhancing the student experience. Where possible and within budget, outdated technology was replaced with LCD panels to enable the BYOD agenda and facilitate the use of portable electronic devices.

Learning and Teaching

Support for Learning and Teaching is a critical element of library service delivery, the availability of a comprehensive **Information Literacy training programme** is an integral element of this. The Faculty Support Team work in partnership with academic colleagues to encourage early and sustained engagement with the range of quality sources of information provided by the Library and to begin the process of developing the lifelong learning and employability skills required for professional life. A comprehensive **Induction programme** was delivered to help new students to familiarise themselves with the services and facilities that the Library has to offer, **222 sessions were delivered and 5730 students attended**. These Induction sessions were further supplemented with the presence of a **roaming staff support service** in the Library space.

Considerable time and expertise was dedicated to the delivery of post-induction, subject specific support for campus-based and distance-learning students. **1,694 information skills sessions** were delivered on a face-to-face basis with **13,774 users attending**. In addition, a wide range of digital learning objects was developed to reinforce learning and provide equality of access to information skills training for distance learners. Based on their experience in the classroom, users recorded an **overall satisfaction rate of 96%** with this service.

The Library's Information Literacy Sub-Group (ILSG) has also developed an activity, for inclusion in the **University's EDGE Award** to support students to develop employability skills. The activity is called *Developing Lifelong Information Literacy Skills* and is open to all undergraduate students; a number of students has taken advantage of this option to contribute to the Edge Award.

Research Support

The Library is currently reviewing its portfolio of services for research active staff and students, particularly in the context of developing an enhanced service delivery model as an enabler for research activity at Ulster. This review will include **the development of new work streams** to utilise the skills of the professional Librarians in support of REF requirements. As a first step, the Library has carried out an online survey to gather feedback on how best to **support doctoral students in their research**. This initiative will influence the content of the Library's contribution to the Researcher Development Programme and inform the review process.

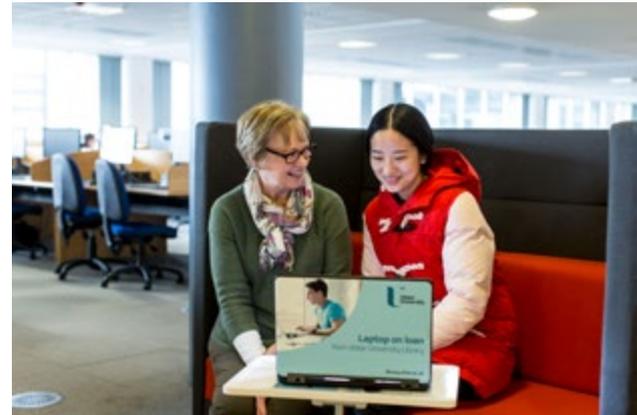
Several initiatives are underway to accelerate the process of embedding the Library Service and the skillset associated with the Library staff more holistically within the research lifecycle. The Library has undertaken the **management of payments to support article-processing charges funded by RCUK**, alongside managing Open Access APC discount schemes and agreements with a range of publishers. In support of this, the **LibGuide to support Open access** has been updated and revised.

Representatives from the Library Faculty Support Team have also joined a Working Group with colleagues from Research and Impact to look at business process associated with **Research Data Management** and consider how the Library can best support this function. In addition, Faculty Sub Librarians have taken the lead in extracting data from complex databases such as

SciVal and Scopus to deliver reports tailored to the needs of each Research institute and inform benchmarking and measurement of research performance at Ulster.

Infrastructure and Services

Much of this academic year was devoted to realising a strategic objective to improve the user experience and enhance service excellence through the replacement of the Library's ageing circulation and security infrastructure with a modern, innovative approach based on RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) technology. Following a successful bid for funding, Bibliotheca was identified as the preferred supplier via a tender process. Project implementation commenced in March 2016 and by the end of July, the circulation and security of library stock was RFID enabled. The project management process was supported internally by a member of staff who was seconded to the role of Project Manager on a part-time basis. This service enhancement has significantly updated the library environment and delivered a step-change to presenting a modern, 21st century learning space.



The Library Service delivered another “first” for users with the introduction of a pilot laptop lending service. Supported by the generosity of the Ulster Fund, twelve laptops were purchased and made available to users at the Jordanstown campus via a lending facility. This pilot was launched in November 2015 with 123 loans in the first 25 days of the pilot service. The pilot will serve to inform future service development, address issues of parity of access to mobile technology and importantly, will address a strategic objective in the context of the development of digital literacies as a lifelong learning and employability skill.

Library users have been further empowered with the introduction of an electronic system for booking Group Study Rooms. The self-service facility was introduced to users in January 2016. Feedback to date has been extremely positive.

Staff

During the year, the Library said farewell to a number of staff through the implementation of a voluntary severance scheme, a number of resignations were also received.

Information assistants Patricia McAvoy, Linda Niblock, Roisin O'Brien, Geraldine O'Doherty, Paul Stewart, June Wright and Clerical Assistant, Alice McQuillan said farewell along with Senior Information Assistants Muriel McCarley, Monica Day and Norman Hodge. Together, this group of staff has given a significant number of years' service to the Institution and we wish them well for the future.

It was with great sadness that we learned of the deaths of former colleagues Miss Eileen Tyrell

and Mrs Mary McCullough. Eileen Tyrrell was one of the original staff appointments to the Library Service at the then New University of Ulster in 1967. Eileen retired from her role as Deputy Librarian in 1995 but retained strong links with both the Library and its staff. Mary McCullough retired from her role as Campus Library Manager in 2009. Mary played a significant role in developing services to users in the Library at Jordanstown, Mary's ability to see the bigger picture coupled with her strong focus on the user experience made her a terrific asset to the Library Service.

Library staff continue to be highly committed to personal and professional development. During the year, Assistant Librarians Sarah Smyth and Fionnuala Carlin were awarded **Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy** with Lorna Reid, Assistant Librarian, being awarded **Associate Fellowship** status.

The high quality of service and user support provided by Library staff was also recognised with Information Assistant Stephen Milligen being awarded an **Ulster University Student Union Award** in the category for **Excellence in Student Support**. Joan Atkinson and Sarah Smyth were also nominated and shortlisted for the award of Ulster Team of the Year for their contribution to the learning experience on the Postgraduate Certificate/Diploma in Stem Cell Biology distance learning course.

Library staff are also actively involved with academic colleagues and contribute to academic output. This year, Mary Rose Holman, Assistant Librarian for Life and Health Sciences co-authored an article in the journal Evidence Based Midwifery.

The Library Service has also participated in the University-wide **Green Impact** sustainability scheme. The creativity of library staff came to the fore as a number of environmental initiatives were introduced to help the Library to address its environmental impact. The hard work paid off with the campus libraries at Coleraine and Belfast joining the Library at Magee with the award of Bronze accreditation status.

Looking to the Future

Whilst it is important that the Library Service devotes a significant proportion of its resources to improving the current level of services and facilities, we must also prepare for the future.

Planning for the **Library space at Greater Belfast Development** is well advanced. The University Librarian is involved at a strategic level with the design and infrastructure elements of service delivery whilst the **Library GBD Working Group** has oversight of all operational matters to ensure timely and successful delivery of the Library transition to GBD. Library staff have carried out sterling work with the deselection of print stock as the Library's print collection is measured against the principles of the Collections and Information Access Policy with a view to delivering a vibrant, easily accessible library collection, which meets institutional need.

Communication during periods of change is vitally important. A **Library-wide electronic newsletter** has been developed as a communication tool to keep all staff up to date with Library matters relating to the campus development. David Crabtree and Stephen Milligen skilfully compile the newsletter with oversight from Marion Khorshidian.

Keeping in Touch with the Library

For further information about the range of services and facilities provided by the Library Service at Ulster, please visit the Library website at <http://library.ulster.ac.uk/>

Or follow us on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/UlsterUniLib>

Key Data

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Total catalogued print books	564,564	519,910	474,705
Electronic books in stock	721,568	725,995	724,311
Journal subscriptions - print	878	827	805
E journals	21,040	86,341	113,135
Number of study spaces	2,774	2,641	2,487
Number of open access workstations	988	1,021	1,002
Laptops for loan			12
Total number of loans including renewals	188,372	199,155	154,444
Full text article requests	1,331,819	1,529,728	1,361,476*
Section requests for eBooks	1,241,610	1,601,142	1,655,006*
Number of sessions delivered	2014	1916	1847
Library staff hours spent delivering Information Literacy training	1729	1599	1768
Number of users attended	20,324	19,504	18,505
User hours received in training	17,186	20,215	20,168
Information resource expenditure	£3,197,003	£3,274,102	£3,594,841
NSS Score	88	90	90