FINANCE AND INFORMATION SERVICES DIRECTORATE

Ulster Library Services Strategy 2012/13 - 2015/16
September 2012

Introduction
Service to all Library users is at the core of the Library Strategy.
The strategy will provide a framework to shape the development of the Library service in support of Ulster's Corporate Plan 2011/12 to 2015/16.

This strategy has at its heart a clear focus on, and commitment to, the provision of high quality information resources and excellence in the delivery of highly valued services in our physical and virtual spaces, and their continuous improvement; all of which is underpinned by the Library's values (as listed on page 3).

Context
The strategy aims to:-
- Reinforce the Library's lead role in the provision and development of information resources and services to the academic community;
- Maintain and develop the Library's significant role in contributing to the reputation of the University;
- Emphasise the enduring value of the Library to the University, its mission, its corporate life and the student experience.

External Environment
The strategy is informed by the changes currently underway in Higher Education and the rapidly evolving information environment, the drivers of which include:
- The increasing emphasis on electronic capability in the delivery of services to users at a time and place, and to a device of their choosing;
- Raised user expectations generally but especially as a result of the increase in student fees;
- The current economic climate with the prospect of prolonged pressure on budgets driving the need to implement efficiencies;
- A greater offering of self-service as an option for users;
- The widening participation and access agenda, sharing services and future collaboration with partners in Further Education and others emerging as key drivers;
- The impact of government policy, funding, allocation of student numbers and changes to subject areas;
- The emphasis on efficiency and effectiveness in Higher Education, focusing attention on shared services and outsourcing;
- The implication of the Research Excellence Framework (REF) on research activities and priorities;
- Impact of the increase in VAT on the cost of electronic information resources;
- Rapid development in e-book technology and increasing availability of e-book content;
- Uncertain economic climate for academic publishing companies;
- New business models providing opportunity for more flexible purchase and leasing options, including patron-driven acquisition;

- An increase in open access publishing;
- Increasing use of mobile technology for delivery of information
- More affordable large-scale resource discovery platforms coming on-stream making it easier for the user to identify and access scholarly content from a diverse range of information products and services;
- Development of cloud computing providing a flexible platform for the development and hosting of new services;
- Increasing user expectation leading to a greater demand for the personalisation of services;
- Developments in pedagogy, with recognition of different learning styles impacting on the provision and use of learning spaces and learner support.

Internal Environment
Developments within the University which will guide the direction of the Library and its services during the planning period include the following:-
- Implementation of the University's Corporate Plan 2011/12 - 2015/16;
- Implementation of the Teaching and Learning, Widening Participation, Equality Scheme, Research and Innovation and Internationalisation Strategies;
- Implementation of the Estates, Finance, Organisational Development and Information Technology Strategies;
- Planning for the Library in the Greater Belfast Development;
- The increasing need to manage down print collections to ensure a vibrant and current library stock;
- Reviewing the use of physical space within the campus libraries to ensure it best serves user needs including universal design features relating to accessibility;
- Financial resource allocations and the influence of cost drivers such as exchange rate fluctuations in the case of Library materials;
- Increasing internationalisation and the development of collaborative arrangements and partnerships, in particular for ulster students studying offshore, for example, QA Business School, SAAD and Further Education;
- Commitment to the development of information skills to enhance employability as part of the wider student experience;
- Requirement to improve National Student Survey (NSS) results with Library Services featuring as a high profile component of the Key Information Sets (KIS) and Wider Information Sets (WIS);
- Preparation for the Research Excellence Framework (REF) in 2014;
- Developing opportunities to engage with the Alumni community;
- Increased engagement with the Centre for Higher Education (CHEP).

The Library's Vision
Library Vision: 'Transform the experience of our library users through excellence in the provision and development of sustainable library services and resources.'

The Library's Mission
Library Mission: 'Develop, deliver and sustain library services and resources to support the University in achieving its aims.'

The Library's Values

The Library aims to:

- Be enthusiastic and responsive to all users in the provision of high-quality personalised services;
- Be committed to the support of teaching, learning, research and the wider student experience;
- Be innovative in responding to and shaping the changing information environment that users face;
- Be self-aware and reflective, seeking continually to improve performance and sustainability;
- Commit to the promotion of equality and diversity, supporting internationalisation;
- Be enthusiastic in promoting and sustaining the wider interests of the University;
- Demonstrate professional leadership and creativity in all our work;
- Work in partnership with colleagues.

Guiding Principles

There are a number of guiding principles which embody our values and which will help us drive change and guide our future work. These are:-

- Embracing change and creating opportunities;
- Commitment to excellence;
- Working collaboratively, internally and externally;
- Understanding, meeting and exceeding the expectations of users in all our service delivery;
- Empowering our staff and developing their talents;
- Recognising the importance of excellent communication and encouraging others to do likewise;
- Celebrating success.

Building on all of the above, 6 Strategic Priorities have been identified and these will form the Key Performance Areas in which the Library will seek to deliver against in the current planning timeframe of 2012/13 – 2015/16.

The Library's Strategic Priorities

The Library's strategic priorities for 2012/13 - 2015/16 are focused on the following:-

SP1 To enhance the user experience;
SP2 To accelerate the development of the digital library;
SP3 To support teaching, learning, research, innovation and administration;
SP4 To collaborate in widening participation and access initiatives;
SP5 To manage library information resources effectively;
SP6 To fully exploit the University's cultural assets through development of the Rare Books and Special Collections.

Underlying the Library's Strategic Priorities (SP) are the Supporting Objectives (SO) and a number of Cross-Cutting Enabling Objectives (EO).
The Supporting Objectives and Enabling Objectives all have specific tasks associated with their implementation.

LIBRARY STRATEGIC PRIORITIES (SP)

SP1 To enhance the user experience

SP2 To accelerate the development of the digital library

SP3 To support teaching, learning, research, innovation and administration

SP4 To collaborate in widening participation and access initiatives

SP5 To manage library information resources effectively

SP6 To fully exploit the University's cultural assets through development of the Rare Books and Special Collections

KEY OVERARCHING RISKS

Failure to support the University Corporate Plan 2011/12 - 2015/16

Failure to enhance the user experience

Failure to provide access to quality print and electronic resources

SUPPORTING OBJECTIVES (SO)

SO 1

To provide an excellent user service through continuous improvement and exploitation of new and emerging technologies

SO 2

To improve access to high quality resources and services both on and off campus

SO 3

To engage proactively with faculties and departments in supporting users to discover, access and use information effectively

SO 4

To support the University's relationships with external partners, in a regional, national and international context

SO 5

To effectively manage and exploit the Library's information resources

SO 6

To develop and promote the Library's Rare Books and Special Collections to highlight their value to the academic community

CROSS-CUTTING ENABLING OBJECTIVES (EO)

EO 1

To provide evidence that all Library services effectively contribute to the University's Corporate Plan 2011/12 to 2015/16

EO 2

To develop and optimise staff

EO 3

To develop and optimise financial and physical resources

Achieving Objective SO1 – to provide an excellent user service through continuous improvement and exploitation of new and emerging technologies

• Work with partners in the University to ensure the effective integration of library services with other e-technology developments
• Integrate the library catalogue and reading lists services with other resources by employing a new discovery tool to provide a single-search user experience
• Develop roving support services to improve access to personal support for users
• Introduce applications for mobile devices, including service information, catalogue access and other services
• Develop virtual information/enquiry services to improve access and support for individual users
• Enhance the service delivery of electronic material from the library to the user's desktop/device
• Introduce a range of self-service options for users

Key Success Indicators

• Effective integration of a range of discovery tools and mobile applications
• Increased user satisfaction levels as measured by a range of survey and analysis tools
• Improved library web presence which provides seamless access to library services and resources both from its website and from other services such as the Portal
• To have provided enhanced support for users through the development of personal and online delivery mechanisms
• To have implemented a range of self-service solutions

Key risks

• Failure to provide services using innovative and emerging technologies
• Increased level of user dissatisfaction
• Library web presence not attracting and engaging users
• Failure to provide a high quality user experience
• Risk of negative impact on University reputation in relation to learning resources (NSS)
• Failure to provide financial and staff resource

Achieving Objective SO2 – to improve access to high quality resources and services both on and off campus

- Increase availability and range of e-book and e-resource content

- Migrate systematically from print to electronic provision of high-demand texts when appropriate and where the opportunity presents itself

- Evaluate and implement demand-led subscription based e-book services

- Provide archival coverage of the scholarly literature where appropriate by, for example, subscribing to services such as JSTOR Arts 1-10 Collections and Life Sciences

Key Success Indicators

- Increased usage of a wide range of appropriate information resources

- To have provided an increased number of high-demand texts electronically

- To have implemented a user-driven acquisition service for e-books

- To have subscribed to electronic archives e.g. JSTOR collections

Key risks

- Risk of decreased usage of quality information resources

- Failure to meet user demand and needs

- Failure to provide access to high-quality resources

- Failure to provide financial and staff resource

- Failure to undertake reasonable adjustments for physical access and in providing information resources in alternative formats

Achieving Objective SO3 – to engage proactively with faculties and departments in supporting users to discover, access and use information effectively

- Contribute to graduate quality and employability through the provision of information literacy programmes
- Exploit online training and re-useable learning objects to enhance provision on campus and to support students at a distance
- Review the impact and effectiveness of current information literacy activities and look to develop new approaches to delivery which ensure sustainable levels of staff input
- Seek to embed more information literacy development and support into academic programmes
- Continue to engage with Research Institutes, and further embed library services in research activity where appropriate
- Contribute to research training programmes, and develop information support for researchers
- Engage effectively with Faculties to contribute to new methods of curriculum delivery, particularly with regard to information skills
- Engage with the student body to identify and review services

Key Success Indicators

- Library Information Literacy sub-group established to work closely with Faculties in delivering appropriate information literacy programmes
- To have provided opportunities for students to develop transferable skills
- Increased availability of subject-specialised resources tailored to users
- Library services embedded in research activity support
- Increased engagement with the student body to identify new services or improve existing ones
- Increased numbers of users availing of subject-specialised and generic training such as RefWorks

Key risks

- Failure to contribute to teaching and learning outcomes
- Failure to support research and the needs of researchers including non-academic users
- Failure to engage with the student body

Achieving Objective SO4 – to support the University's relationships with external partners, in a regional, national and international context

- Respond to increased numbers of international students, liaising closely with Faculties offering high demand courses, to ensure that expectations are managed and met
- Support the wider community through civic engagement opportunities and collaborate with other areas of the University in assisting entrepreneurs
- Collaborate with Faculties and central departments to identify and pursue projects supporting transition from school to university, contributing particularly to widening participation programmes where possible
- Review and develop services to the University's partners within, for example, the models of collaboration in place for QA Business School (QABS) and the Associate Colleges

Key Success Indicators

- To have supported the University models of collaborative provision in liaison with Faculties and educational partners
- To have developed opportunities to increase engagement with Alumni and external bodies
- To have liaised with central departments to identify opportunities for supporting school leavers intending to come to the University
- To have developed protocols to provide services to external partners and the community

Key risks

- Failure to adequately support University strategies and other initiatives in this area

- Missing opportunities to engage with Alumni and external bodies

Achieving Objective SO5 – to effectively manage and exploit the Library's information resources

- Promote collections, to ensure awareness of the wealth of resources available

- Provide timely management information to support collection management through further developing and improving the techniques and procedures used

- Accelerate migration from print to electronic holdings where possible, while ensuring key subscriptions are maintained

- Acquire additional digital back-runs of journals to improve access and release space occupied by legacy print holdings

- Seek opportunities to benefit from new business models in publishing

- Pursue opportunities for collaborative collection development such as that proposed by a National Digital Library

Key Success Indicators

- To have benefited from the availability of new business models in publishing, such as patron-driven acquisition

- To have supported collection development and management by implementing timely procedures

- Increased provision of e-resources in line with the library Collections & Information Access Policy

- To have contributed to national initiatives for collection development

Key risks

- Failure to effectively manage library collections

- Failure to explore, and potentially benefit from, new initiatives in collection development and management

Achieving Objective SO6 – to develop and promote the Library's Rare Books and Special Collections to highlight their value to the academic community

• Develop a digitisation policy to preserve and make accessible existing and new collections
• Refine cataloguing and preservation priorities to reflect the needs and interests of the University's teaching and research communities and those of the wider academic world
• Work with partner groups and organisations to develop awareness and promote the use of Rare Books and Special Collections
• Active lobbying to ensure the long term preservation of Rare Books and Special Collections
• Provide exhibition space for the Library's Rare Books and Special Collections

Key Success Indicators

• To have provided digital access to elements of the collections
• To have held annual exhibitions to promote Rare Books and Special Collections
• To have collaborated with partner groups and organisations in facilitating research within unique collections

Key risks

• Failure to capitalise on a unique University resource of great value to the academic community, both internally and externally

Achieving Objective EO1 - To provide evidence that all Library services effectively contribute to the University's Corporate Plan 2011/12 to 2015/16

- Align with the University's Corporate Plan 2011/12 - 2015/16 and other strategies including: Teaching and Learning; Widening Participation; Research and Innovation; Internationalisation and Information Technology
- Review the Library's project management framework and practices
- Improve the collection and exploitation of management information for core services and processes, and review key performance indicators (KPIs) for fitness-for-purpose
- Develop and refine metrics on the cost and use of digital resources, particularly e-books to ensure Value For Money (VFM) on subscriptions and purchases;
- Benchmark the library with other libraries in UK, Ireland and beyond by participating in the annual SCONUL statistics report and in the LibQUAL service evaluation framework
- Improve communication and marketing of services by developing a communication framework

Key Success Indicators

- To have aligned and reviewed library activities to reflect priorities within the University Corporate Plan and strategies
- To have reviewed and enhanced methods and technologies for effective internal communications
- To have produced suite of high-level business reports using strategic mapping and balanced scorecard methodology
- To have developed and implemented a library communication framework

Key risks

- Failure to show the value of the Library to the University

- Failure to effectively manage library business

Achieving Objective EO2 - To develop and optimise staff

- Enhance the capability of staff at all levels to contribute to service development through decision making and the generation of ideas
- Continue to develop a framework of skills for staff, with a supporting programme of activities, led by the Library Continuing Personal and Professional (CPPD) Sub-Group
- Ensure effective business continuity including talent management and planning transition arrangements for key roles

Key Success Indicators

- Enhanced staff capabilities through the implementation of Developmental Appraisal Review, working across teams and providing developmental opportunities
- To have implemented a training and development framework and associated activities for all library staff

Key risks

- Failure to develop staff capabilities

- Failure to meet and manage change

Achieving Objective EO3 - To develop and optimise financial and physical resources

- To endeavour to obtain and manage funding appropriate to the demands placed on the Library in view of restricted budget settlements

- Review recurrent cost commitments and seek greater flexibility in journal 'big deal' arrangements

- Further develop financial forecasting provision to aid decision-making

- Continually review Library space to ensure the optimum use of services and resources

Key Success Indicators

- Embedded financial forecasting and strategic planning into library business

- Financial commitments reviewed in the context of value-for-money and need

- Library space reviewed to meet changing user demand for improved delivery of services and resources

Key risks

- Failure to effectively manage library budgets

- Failure to utilise physical space to meet changing demand