LIBRARY SERVICES
Annual Report 2019 / 2020
Library Services Annual Report 2019/2020

By Kate Price and Paula Funnell

With grateful thanks to all Library Services staff members for their input

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Queen Mary University of London, Library Services, August 2020
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Message from the University Librarian

Academic Year 2019/2020 has been a most unusual year. For many readers, this sentence will seem both unnecessary and highly understated, since we are currently living through a global pandemic - with all of the massive distress, upheaval and uncertainty that this is bringing to every aspect of our lives. Nevertheless, creating this report has allowed us to reflect on many positive developments, as well as to consider how Library Services has been able to support our University community through these challenging days, weeks and months. Hopefully we have provided a balanced perspective on this “year of two halves”.

As you will see in the following pages, we have invested heavily in improving our study spaces in line with the goal of making them “comfortable, accessible, attractive and well equipped to support the latest technology” (Library Services Goals 2018-21). It was therefore hugely distressing to have to close our physical doors in March 2020 as a consequence of Covid-19. It was a tribute to the resilience and sheer hard work of Library Services staff and Estates and Facilities colleagues that we were then able to re-open them, some four months later, in the new world of social distancing and enhanced hygiene measures.

Although the physical libraries and study spaces had to be dramatically transformed in response to Covid-19, we were pleased to be able to draw upon our existing expertise in using technology and managing electronic information, so here there was evolution rather than revolution. Once again, Library Services colleagues rose to the challenge, identifying the information and support needs of our university community and using the technology at their disposal to fulfil them. There will be some useful and long-lasting developments that come out of this experience: only time will tell what these will be, and I am sure we will be looking back at them in next year’s Library Services Annual Report.

Kate Price, MA FCLIP
University Librarian
Strengthening the Library Teaching and Learning Support Team

The Academic Skills Team, formerly part of Learning Development, have been brought into Library Services, joining the Teaching and Learning Support (TLS) Team. The new service will continue to be student facing, with more focus on student transition, peer learning and collaboration. Combining these services has presented a number of opportunities to develop the skills support provided by Library Services, and to further integrate academic skills with the information literacy teaching and support already provided by the team. A new Liaison Librarian post has also been created within the TLS team, supporting the schools of Geography and Politics & International Relations.

**Information literacy sessions 2018/19**

- **Number of group sessions**
  - HSS 82
  - SMD 132
  - S&E 124

**Student satisfaction**
- % agree or strongly agree
  - Session addressed needs
  - Presentation was clear
  - Experience was positive

**Confidence levels**
- Confident before session
- Confident after session

Average confidence increase = 34%
Introduction to our Academic Skills Coordinator

Olumide (Olu) Popoola worked for four years as a Teaching Fellow in Learning Development at Aston University in Birmingham before coming to Queen Mary in the role of Academic Skills Coordinator. In his portfolio career he has worked as an advertising planner, English language teacher, academic researcher (of disinformation), and studied Law, Linguistics and Education. This is why he loves working in the trans-disciplinary environment of academic literacy and learning development.

Olu’s role within Queen Mary Library Services is focused on the development, in undergraduate and taught postgraduates, of academic skills such as critical reading and writing, feedback literacy, metacognitive awareness and time management. He is introducing weekly workshops in these areas in addition to the tutorials already conducted, and is also keen to develop initiatives designed to stimulate the student peer learning that already happens formally and informally at Queen Mary.

Olu says “I had been keeping an eye out for posts at Queen Mary because the diversity of the student body is really unique for a Russell Group university. It presents an opportunity to build the kind of student-facing academic development that is rare in research-intensive universities, certainly in London. I’ve also long had a soft spot for the University because I am a canal boater and the Mile End campus location on Regent’s canal is priceless!”

Extended vacation opening

Mile End Library opened every day during last year’s summer vacation, including weekends and the bank holiday. This was in response to the needs of postgraduate students working on their dissertations.

Mile End Library also opened from 8am to 8pm throughout the Christmas closure period, bar public holidays, to support students studying for the first run of January exams. This was enabled by support from colleagues in IT, Security and Estates & Facilities. There was excellent take up of Library Services, with particularly high footfall in the period directly after Christmas. There were 300% more visits to Mile End Library from 16 December to 3 January than for the equivalent period in 2018-19.
Introduction to our Library Manager (Circulation)

Andy Ekins was appointed to the role of Library Manager (Circulation) back in March. This is a new role within Library Services, managing two teams who look after the circulation of the physical library collections of books, journals and multimedia; provide access to the collections of other institutions via the inter-library loan service; and ensure the collections are as orderly and accessible as possible. Andy was only in post for a few days before lockdown, so it has been a steep learning curve getting to grips with a new job whilst working from home. Andy spent ten years working as the Senior Library Systems Officer at Canterbury Christ Church University, and a further two years working at the University of Kent, managing a portfolio of change projects for the library. Since then he has worked in a number of data management roles and spent some time teaching in the fields of computing and business. Andy says “I have always held an ambition to work within a London university library, so I am incredibly pleased and proud to be working within Library Services at Queen Mary.”
Mile End Library infrastructure works

As an increasing number of users of our spaces bring their own devices, it was necessary to increase the supply of power in order to meet current demand and provide for increased demand in the future. Works have been carried out to redistribute power supplies on the ground floor. Power outlets have been fitted to existing desks on the upper floors, as well as increasing the number of desks on the first floor, all with integrated power outlets.

The largest portion of the works related to providing more consistent heating and cooling. A system of new condensing boilers was implemented alongside new air handling units. This has resulted in a more comfortable temperature being maintained across the building. Overdoor heaters have been installed over the main entrance to the Library in order to maintain a more comfortable temperature in the lobby area and improve the working environment for staff on the Welcome Desk, as well as improve energy efficiency.

During the works the opportunity was taken to improve air and water quality, and to make enhancements to emergency lighting and protections around water supplies. Improvements have also been delivered with energy efficiency in mind by allowing warmth to be recycled back into the system, and saving energy by removing the need for electrical powered oil radiators and opening of windows. Heated air is estimated to be 75% more energy efficient than the previous system and the new boilers 15% more efficient.

We thank staff and students for their patience whilst the works took place, especially at times of significant disruption due to increased noise and reduced access to spaces. These enhancements have resulted in a greatly improved environment for those studying in the building and we hope these outweigh the negative impacts during the works.
Improvements to security at Whitechapel Library

A number of changes have been made to access procedures at Whitechapel Library, including installing an access control system on the gate into the Library grounds. Students studying on the Whitechapel campus have appreciated these steps being taken to make them feel more safe and secure when using the Library.

Laptop lockers and charging points

Laptop safety lockers have been installed at Mile End Library to allow students to store their laptops safely for up to two hours whilst they leave their desk to take a break from studying. Mile End and Whitechapel libraries also now have device charging points available, which enable secure charging of mobile phones and tablets.
Our services during lockdown

Although our physical spaces had to close, Library Services were able to continue to provide a wide range of support and services to students and staff as everything moved online, by building on our strong existing digital profile.

Our focus has been to support learning and research by providing online resources, with additional e-book purchasing and signposting to freely available e-resources. We have provided virtual enquiry services and information literacy and academic skills support to our students in the shape of online workshops, tutorials and 1:1 sessions. Our busy research community have been supported by Library Services in updating research outputs and processing items added to the institutional repository.

Despite a digital first focus there has still been some need for print materials, and from the beginning of lockdown until the end of June we offered a service where we ordered books from Amazon to be delivered directly to students’ or staff members’ homes. From July we started a click and collect service, enabling students to request items from our print collections, fetched and collected in a safe manner.
Library Services began reopening some of our physical libraries and library-managed spaces on a limited basis in July, with pre-bookable study spaces available. Further reopening is continuing into the new semester.

Library Services audit

Library Services was audited by KPMG in January 2020 and received an assessment of “Significant assurance with minor improvement opportunities”. We will be taking forward a number of recommendations:

- A six-monthly summary of key performance indicators will be reported to the University from 2021-22.
- The Research Libraries UK pilot services standards will be adopted.
- The Library Services Annual Report will be received by the University in September before being circulated more widely.
- We will be discussing and agreeing ways to ensure that Library Services is more formally included in the governance structure for research at Queen Mary, mirroring our inclusion in governance for education.
Investment in Humanities & Social Sciences resources

The Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences invested heavily in library resources this year, with over £100,000 of additional funding. This was used to purchase a number of online ProQuest resources in line with suggestions from the Faculty, including the Guardian and Observer Archive. This followed on from an investment by the Faculty of £350,000 at the end of the last academic year which went towards online resources including SAGE Research Methods, and The Times Literary Supplement Historical Archive.
Introduction to our Online Reading Lists Coordinator

Chantal Tucker started in the new role of Online ReadingLists Coordinator at the end of April, and has been working on getting our reading list system, Talis Aspire, running as smoothly as possible. She primarily supports academics in creating their reading lists, thinking about ways they can make the most of the system to structure their lists and include a range of different resources. She helps to make sure that reading lists connect successfully with other systems, whether that’s the library catalogue, QMplus, e-book or e-journal platforms.

Chantal has had roles in several university libraries across London, primarily working with reading lists, acquisitions, e-resources and inter-library loans. She is really interested in using application programming interfaces (APIs) to automate processes and is excited to see what will be possible after the migration to the new Library Services Platform is completed. Chantal says “as I started at Queen Mary during lockdown I am looking forward to eventually coming to campus and meeting colleagues in the flesh!”

LGBTQ+ collection

Library Services launched a new LGBTQ+ collection in February 2020 to coincide with LGBTQ History Month. Resources and Collections staff worked closely with the Queen Mary LGBTQ Staff Network to build a broad and eclectic collection of self-help books, memoirs and works of fiction celebrating the achievements of LGBTQ+ communities the world over.
Evidence based and demand driven acquisition

Library Services has embarked on a major project to invest over £200,000 in growing its electronic book collections via evidence based and demand driven acquisition schemes.

Under the Evidence Based Acquisition scheme, staff and students have access to a collection of over 50,000 e-book titles from key publishers. The most popular titles over time are permanently acquired for the library collection, ensuring that the growth of the collection is evidence-based and tailored to the needs of our staff and students.

Demand Driven Acquisition is best understood as a sort of Pay As You Go for library e-books, with over 60,000 bibliographic records from leading academic publishers, made available to Queen Mary staff and students via the library catalogue. A purchase is triggered when a reader directly accesses the title, guaranteeing that only those titles with usage are purchased.

Both schemes place Queen Mary staff, research and student outcomes at the heart of the collection development process. They reflect Library Services’ continued emphasis on acquiring high-quality learning and teaching resources under the best possible financial and business terms, demonstrating value for money for the Library and University as a whole.
Supporting *Transnational Commercial Law Review*

This year the Centre for Commercial Law Studies has launched their own online, fully open, peer-reviewed journal, the *Transnational Commercial Law Review*. The Repository & Research Information Team, within Library Services, have provided advice and support on creating the author agreement, open access licence options, Digital Object Identifiers (DOIs) for the articles, and even about the structure of the website for the journal.

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**Open access statistics**

**Queen Mary Research Online Repository (QMRO)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Full text items</th>
<th>Downloads</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>6,000</td>
<td>600,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>8,000</td>
<td>1,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>1,200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>12,000</td>
<td>1,400,000</td>
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</table>

Number of full text items in QMRO

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**Open access funding**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Article Processing Charges administered by Library Services</th>
<th>Amount of COAF/UKRI Open Access grant spent on Open Access articles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>£233,833</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>£214,359</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>£392,946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>£540,066</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>£460,173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>459*</td>
<td>£456,749**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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COAF = Charity Open Access Fund, UKRI = UK Research and Innovation

* Part of increase due to non-funded articles approved via new Transitional Agreements

** Includes payments made for Transitional Publisher Agreements
The **mission of Library Services** is to **share information widely**. We:

- Enable students’ success by providing access to core information resources at the point of need, enhancing digital literacy skills and managing a range of welcoming study spaces
- Facilitate world-class research through curating unique and distinctive collections, supporting the production and dissemination of scholarly literature, and participating in the provision of the skills and spaces required for independent research
- Open minds to new possibilities, by creatively using our collections, spaces and people to engage individuals and groups with learning and research in new and unexpected ways

**Our underpinning values are:**

- Embracing diversity in everything that we do
- Working to a high standard of ethics and professionalism
- Working for the public good
- Caring for one another’s wellbeing
- Working to provide access for the whole Queen Mary community
- Working from a deep understanding of the individuals within the Queen Mary community
- Collaborating productively with University colleagues, the local community, and the world at large

**Currently, we support the success of Queen Mary University of London by providing:**

The understanding and skills to discover, access, and re-use information well: for learning, for teaching, for research and for life

- Helpful, knowledgeable and professional staff, available at the point of need
- A wide range of spaces for study and research, open for very long hours
- An integrated collection of physical and online information resources
- A point of access to a national and international network of libraries and archives, including Senate House Library, University of London
- Critical support for Queen Mary’s submission to the Research Excellence Framework

**Over the next three years, we will support the success of Queen Mary by focussing on the following Strategic Goals:**

1. **Student Experience**
   1.1 All Students will receive a library service which is both efficient and friendly, and which enhances their sense of Queen Mary as a caring community
   1.2 All students will be able to find a study space that suits their personal needs and therefore helps them to realise their academic potential

2. **Infrastructure**
   2.1 All library and managed study spaces will be comfortable, accessible, attractive and well equipped to support the latest technology
   2.2 Queen Mary’s digital information infrastructure will be robust, interoperable, and suitable for the full range of innovative activities carried out across the University
APPENDIX: LIBRARY SERVICES GOALS 2018-21

3. Teaching & Learning
   3.1 All students will have swift access to the academic information resources required to underpin their learning, facilitated by online reading lists appropriate to their programme and module
   3.2 All students will have the understanding and skills to discover, appraise and use information well in a highly networked world, enabling them to succeed in academia, in employment, and in life

4. Research & Innovation
   4.1 All researchers will have swift access to the world’s collective knowledge, including our own unique and distinctive collections
   4.2 The Queen Mary community will embrace open access as standard practice, sharing research outputs for the public good, whilst respecting intellectual property rights and privacy

5. International
   5.1 All international students studying in London, at sites overseas and via distance learning will have access to the library resources and services that they require for academic success
   5.2 All Library Services staff will have the opportunity to engage with professional colleagues overseas, enhancing global awareness and supporting innovations in library service development

6. Public Engagement
   6.1 A wide range of audiences will be engaged with Library and Archives collections through exhibitions and events, enhancing the research profile and local visibility of the University
   6.2 Library Services will play a key role promoting University arts and cultural events, enriching our community’s understanding of Queen Mary as a unique institution, and enhancing their wellbeing and sense of belonging

7. People & Culture
   7.1 All Library Services staff will enjoy performing their roles to the highest possible standard for the benefit of the University community and to fulfil their personal potential
   7.2 All Library Services staff will be working with colleagues across Queen Mary in a true spirit of collaboration, by leading and participating in relevant projects, activities and communities of practice

We will deliver practical results for Queen Mary through:

- Producing a Library Services Annual Plan which articulates SMART objectives (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound) related to the Strategic Goals mentioned above.
- Ensuring that the Annual Plan is produced in close communication with key stakeholders, including colleagues from academic schools, professional services departments and Queen Mary Students’ Union, so that it aligns with their current needs, activities and priorities.
- Ensuring that the Annual Plan is produced in close communication with colleagues within Library Services, so that the objectives are appropriately resourced and deliverable within the proposed timescales.
- Deploying best practice in decision-making, project management and staff management on an ongoing basis.
- Regularly reporting progress on the Strategic Goals and related objectives to the Queen Mary Education Quality & Standards Board, seeking the support of the Board where required, and responding positively to feedback.
- Adjusting the Strategic Goals as required, so that they are fully aligned with Queen Mary’s new institutional strategy.