

The University of Manchester Library Reading List Strategy

Context

There is a perennial issue of providing our students with access to the books that they need in order to be successful in their studies. In line with the University's 2020 vision for achieving an outstanding teaching and learning experience for our students, the University of Manchester library has taken a strategic approach to solving this issue.

This reading list strategy is the final output of a three year library project (Books Right Here Right Now) which involved extensive research and consultations with academic colleagues and students to ensure that library provision of reading list material is achieved more effectively and more consistently, in order to meet and exceed the needs of our customers

Reading lists are a fundamental part of any programme and it is essential that the Library and academic colleagues work in partnership to ensure that the University is able to provide students with ready access to key information resources. Whilst the Library tends to score very well each year in the NSS, analysis of the open comments showed that 95% of negative remarks about the library related to the lack of available core texts.

As a result of paying fees, students now have higher expectations that the Library should guarantee them access to all of the books on their reading lists, with 91% of 1,446 students consulted as part of an independent library survey believing that the library should have all of the books on their reading lists (Know Your Customer 2015). Equality of access is also important to our students and they view e-resources and e-books as a way of addressing problems with the provision of sufficient reading list books in the library. Improving library provision of core text books in electronic format is the only practical solution to satisfying demand from large numbers of students.

The University of Manchester [‘Policy on additional costs incurred by students on undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes’](#) refers directly to library provision of core texts:

‘Core readings should be made accessible to students via the Library, either digitally or for loan. In order to achieve this, Schools should ensure that purchase and digitisation requests are sent to the Library in a timely fashion’

This strategy seeks to ensure that this is an achievable goal and to manage and satisfy students' expectations with regards to accessing library resources. It should be considered in conjunction with the new [‘Library purchasing policy for reading lists books’](#) and the University's [‘Policy on Inclusive Teaching and Learning Materials’](#). The strategy also refers to the need for students to develop research skills in order to benefit from the broader set of resources available to them beyond the confines of a reading list.

Purpose

The purpose of this strategy is to ensure a coherent institutional approach to the provision of reading list materials and improve the student experience with regards to accessing and using items on their reading lists.

Goals

The Reading Strategy has 3 core goals which are each supported by a series of enabling actions:

1. To ensure that library provision of reading list resources meets the teaching and learning needs of our students and academic colleagues

Enabling actions:

- Negotiate and implement new, sustainable, value-for-money pricing models for core text books by establishing the Library as the central negotiator for e-textbook deals, drawing on its ability to take a holistic view of textbook purchases across the University
- Implement the new '[Library purchasing policy for reading list books](#)' to enable the Library to make informed decisions on appropriate levels of provision, in particular by:
 - Introducing four categories for reading list books **requiring Library purchase** ([Core, Essential, Recommended and Further](#)) in order to inform purchasing decisions.
 - Providing access to core e-textbooks to specific cohorts of students via the VLE where possible
 - Implementing a usage triggered approach to providing access to further reading on longer reading lists via the Library's E-Books on Demand scheme
- Streamline the ordering processes for academic colleagues by using the Library reading list system to integrate the ordering of reading list books and digitised chapters
- Ensure all reading lists are added to the Library reading list system in order to guarantee that the library is aware of which items it is required to purchase
- Provide academic colleagues with access to analytics, from the Library reading list system and core e-textbook's platform/s, to enable them to evaluate student engagement with reading list content.

2. To improve the student experience with regards to accessing and engaging with content on their reading lists

Enabling actions:

- Improve student access to core textbooks by rolling out the Books Right Here Right Now e-textbook programme across the University. This will ensure improved equality of access within student cohorts.
- Improve the learning experience by-delivering e-textbooks with enriched functionality and facilitating greater levels of student engagement
- Embed the library reading list system more effectively into all course units in the VLE allowing students to seamlessly access all library content on their reading list
- Establish the library reading list system as the central point of truth for reading lists at the University, so that every student knows how and where to access reading lists.

3. To ensure students' make the best use of library resources and equip them with the capacity to find and evaluate information

Enabling actions:

- Maximise opportunities for students to develop independent research skills by promoting the online resources and workshops which are openly available throughout the academic year via the Library's My Learning Essentials skills programme.
Provide more opportunities for students to receive the My Learning Essentials' skills programme within their course by delivering embedded skills training at appropriate times of year.

Roles and responsibilities

It is essential that academic colleagues and the Library work in partnership to achieve the goals of the Reading Strategy:

Role of programme/course unit leads

Programme and course unit leads should work with the Library to ensure that the resources recommended on reading lists can be obtained by the Library in a timely and effective manner (in line with the guidelines laid out in the inclusive teaching policy)¹

- All orders for reading list books and digitised chapters should be submitted via the reading list system
- All items on reading lists which require purchasing for the Library should use the four categories referred to above (Core, Essential, Recommended and Further) to ensure the effective application of the Library's purchasing policy
- All course unit reading lists should be compiled and published in the Library's reading list management system in time for semester one and two teaching

Role of the Library

The Library will:

- Ensure that reading list material is purchased in appropriate quantities and made available in a timely and effective manner where lists are submitted via the reading list system as outlined above
- Identify and purchase electronic resources wherever possible
- Work closely with suppliers and publishers to drive for better deals in the provision of core e-textbooks.
- Ensure that we continue to explore and exploit technological innovations in the provision of e-textbooks and the learning analytics derived therefrom
- Promote the importance of reading beyond the reading list and becoming independent learners by providing opportunities to engage with the My Learning Essentials' skills programme

Monitoring and evaluation

Progress on the implementation of the strategy will be monitored, evaluated and reported to TLG

¹ 4.5 Reading Lists. Course unit reading lists should be supplied to the Library at least 8 weeks before the unit is due to begin, along with an indication of the expected student numbers for the unit. This will ensure the Library has sufficient time to identify, purchase or make core materials available in the most appropriate format

Version amendment history		
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