

ISSUE 6 • JULY 2023

FSP MONTHLY DIGEST

Welcome to the Faculty and Student Partnerships (FSP) Monthly Digest

This is a platform to share news and updates from across the Directorate. Each issue is published on the first Friday of every month. We welcome and encourage submissions. If you have any items to submit, please send these by the last Friday of every month to:

uml.engagement@manchester.ac.uk

Message from Katy, Associate Director (FSP)

Well we've got another bumper issue this month, despite agreeing at DMT that we'd go light over the summer period in recognition of our need for some well-earned down-time! So big thanks to everyone that has contributed this month. I've really enjoyed reading all your news and I know everyone else will too.

This month has flown by for me.

It started off with a trip to the University of Toronto with Chris to explore the potential for partnerships with the Library there in the future. It was particularly pleasing for me to learn that not only had they heard of My Learning Essentials, they were extremely complimentary about it and had even reused it to support their own students.

They were also very impressed by our strategy and our service ethos which they saw demonstrated quite clearly through two of our promotional videos:

- [Welcome to The University of Manchester Library - YouTube](#)
- [Imagine 2030](#)

Back at base I was involved in the interviews for the new Library & Archive Studies MA Lecturer posts, which was a fascinating insight into how the Academic Interview process works and resulted in two great appointments.

Of course, a highlight of the month for me was the Together23 conference which was so beautifully organised and memorably compered by some of our fabulous FSP colleagues. I hope you enjoyed the day as much as I did!

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[Watch the video message](#)



I've also been to the [SCONUL AGM and members meeting](#), which focused on the Impact of Artificial Intelligence on teaching & learning and the PS Leaders Conference which focused in on Wellbeing. Speaking of Wellbeing, I am just about to go off on leave for my well-earned rest on one of my favourite Greek islands. I hope you all have some leave booked in at some point soon too. In the meantime, I hope you all have a good couple of weeks ahead and I'll see you all when I get back.

Katy

News and updates

In support of Refugee Week 2023

Refugee week was held from 19 to 25 June 2023. FSP team members attended two events across the University. These events prompted them to reflect on what support the Library can do for refugees and asylum-seekers.

On 21 June, Raul Gutierrez-Loya (Customer Services Advisor), Tabita Juravle (Student Team) and Ria Sunga (Engagement Officer) represented the Library at the Sanctuary Scholars University Uncovered event held at the Manchester Museum. Sanctuary Scholars are students from a refugee or asylum seeker background; the attendees were from secondary and college levels. The event centred on different speakers who talked about the [support available to Sanctuary Scholars](#) at the University and services offered by Manchester-based organisations working with refugees and asylum-seekers.



Raul and Tabita at the Sanctuary Scholars University Uncovered event at the Manchester Museum.

Raul and Tabita promoted the Library's services, specifically highlighting our Widening Participation membership scheme and training and development workshops. They both share some reflections:

Tabita said: *The Sanctuary Seekers event was a great opportunity for students with refugee or asylum seeker backgrounds to find out more about the support available for them at the Library and University. Some of them had no idea that they can access the Main Library and our online resources. I am glad that through this event they became aware of the support we offer. Also, the presence of the Student Ambassadors and members of the Library Student Team proved to be extremely valuable, as students were more open to asking questions and discussing the University.*

Raul said: *It was very enlightening to learn about the needs of students in refugee situations or seeking asylum. The stories I heard from them will definitely enrich my service to this group of students. They responded very well to our presentation, and I think they got a better idea of the services that they can access as non-University of Manchester students or high school students.*

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Meanwhile, Adam Cooke (Widening Participation Coordinator) attended an event at the RACE Centre as they launched their 'Beyond Refugee Week' strategy. Adam writes:

The 'Beyond Refugee Week' strategy is a move away from intense but fleeting commemorative events, and instead moved towards a year-long centring of global majority voices and experiences. The theme for 2023 was around 'Creating compassion and critical thinking around refugeeism'. This brought together colleagues from across the University, and community partners and educators from both formal and informal settings.

It was an afternoon of discussion, reflection and inspirations as we sought to collectively explore the questions: *How, given the increasingly hostile environment for refugees, can we cultivate a compassionate and empathetic approach towards refugees and asylum seekers? How can we encourage young people to think critically about the narratives around refugeeism they encounter? As a Library, there is much we can contribute to these efforts both in terms of our unique collections, teaching expertise and social responsibility priorities.*

Find out more about the RACE Centre's new approach:

- [Beyond Refugee Week... our new approach to Refugee Week, Black History Month, International Women's Day etc](#)

Customer Services

University Open Days 2023

The University Open days ran on Saturday, 17 and Saturday, 24 June. Both days were noticeably better attended than in 2022. The Library had a staffed presence in Whitworth Hall, Main Library and the AGLC. This would not have been possible without the Library staff and members of the Student Team who volunteered to help out on the day.

During Open Days, the AGLC and Library gates are held open to make access easy for our visitors, so we don't know exactly how many people attended. To give you an idea of how busy it was, we handed out over 900 self-guided tours over the course of both days, and these were usually handed to groups.

We tried to emphasise the parts of the Library offer which may not be immediately obvious when looking around the building: the scale of our electronic and physical collection, the full range of support available through the Specialist Library Support service, and our amazing eTextbook programme.

Needless to say, a lot of people went away both surprised and impressed with what the Library has to offer.



Textbook Rescue

Ross Chatterton

Over the years, we have asked students for feedback on what type of service they would like to see in the Library and the initial idea for the Textbook Rescue service came from this feedback. The service has run for just over 10 years and has helped put textbooks into hundreds of students' hands without them having to spend a penny.



Students look at Textbook Rescue books at the event in 2022

Throughout the year we take book donations from students, staff and members of the public. We store the books in Red Basement, where they are kept until early September when we have a big giveaway during Welcome Week. Students can browse the books and take however many they can carry.

My role is to manage all the book donations that we receive. I take all book donations down to the basement and sort them into subjects and make sure that the textbooks are of a relevant date regarding their respective subjects. Some older textbooks are still valid for certain subjects, while others will need to have more recent publication dates. We always let students know that the books we are giving away may not be the most recent edition needed for their course.

In the days leading up to the Textbook giveaway, a few colleagues and I will sort the books onto trolleys and order them by subject. We signpost each trolley by their subject and display them on the Main Library ground floor. While the textbook rescue service is on-going, Customer Services team members supervise the books, and ensure they are on hand to answer any questions the students might have.

During our last run in 2022, we had a collection of about 1800-2000 books. I am very proud and happy to say that about 75-80% of these books were all taken by students. Any leftover books will feed into the next academic year.

We receive a lot of wonderful feedback from the students about the Textbook Rescue programme. They are grateful that we run this service and suggest what could be improved for the next year. What we find is that students take the donated books and then return these books when their course is done – and so giving back to a future student in need.

Textbook Rescue is a service that is very important to new students - it's a wonderful service to offer. I am very proud of having a part in shaping its current format and look forward to our next donation day in September 2023!





Spotlight on the LibAnswers specialism

Trac Mulrenan

The aim of the LibAnswers specialism is to monitor, maintain and develop the system for the benefit of our customers.

Our first task is to make sure all members of the specialism team have the correct training to enable them to do the tasks and processes well. We then review our existing processes in LibAnswers and look for ways to enhance them, so that when students get in touch with us, they have as smooth an experience as possible.

We also record data from the system each month and ensure that all old tickets and transcripts are deleted from the system to comply with GDPR.

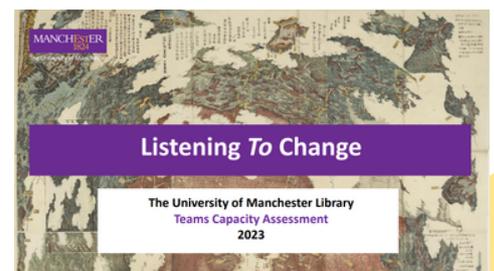
When the Customer Services Team stop staffing the chat function after hours, staff from other institutions in different parts of the world take over and respond on our behalf. We look at their chats and check customer feedback to ensure that those making queries have the information that they need, and that any responses meet our standards.

We are always looking for ways to try and improve the system and make things more seamless for both customers and staff using the LibAnswers system.

Engagement

Listening To Change

In April, six members of the [Engagement Team](#) were the first to meet with Library Exec as part of [Listening To Change](#).



The conversation focused on the work of Faculty Engagement Librarians (FELs) and how their work varies depending on School allocation and the specialisms they each have within the team, e.g., Research Services link, line management of FECs or language specialisms.

We spoke about the FEL relationship with Collection Strategies and how all FELs work on collection development to some extent (depending on School allocation), with several of them also working extensively on collection engagement. There was a real sense during the meeting that the collections link could be formalised and strengthened.

An FEL vacancy in the team (Reetu Child had just secured a role elsewhere in the University) provided the perfect opportunity to introduce a new 'collection' specialism to the FEL job description. Since we were making this change, we decided to also review the overall purpose of the role and added a new paragraph to emphasise the part that FELs play in developing services in response to needs:

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"To take lead responsibility within the Engagement Team for a Library priority or professional issue and build relationships with relevant Library teams, services or projects in order to determine the best ways in which the Library can develop its services to respond to stakeholder needs and take account of likely future directions".

We also changed the name of the role to Engagement Librarian.

During June, the 'collection' specialism was offered to the Engagement Librarians in the team, with Janette Watson, Ian Fishwick and Tristan Hooper putting themselves forward. This has led to a redistribution of some of the other specialisms within the team which we will introduce and embed over the summer.

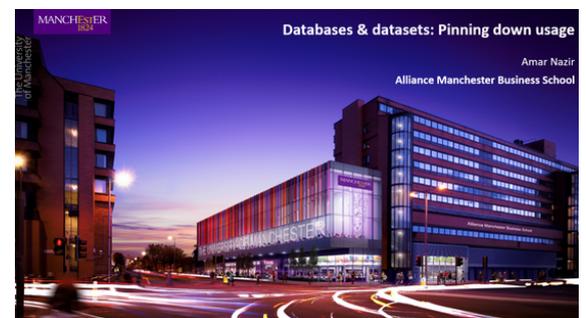
The Engagement Librarian vacancy will be advertised soon with a Research Services specialism.

The Listening To Change process came at just right time for the team; it encouraged us to rethink the way we work and will have a positive impact across the Library.

Attending the European Business School Librarians' Group Conference

Amar Nazir

In late June, I attended the European Business School Librarians' Group (EBSLG) Conference in Bergen, Norway. The EBSLG is a network of business librarians from across Europe who try to address issues and opportunities relevant to the libraries of higher profile business schools.



This ranges from problems with data vendors (of which there are many), to changing research interests, teaching portfolios and student demographics. Discussions take place at the annual conference, annual regional meeting and via two mailing lists – altogether, a very useful network that I've relied on in the past and will continue to do so.

The theme of this year's conference was 'Sustainability', a fairly malleable term under which I presented on some work I completed recently in collaboration with Alliance MBS on pinning down database usage. The presentation was well received, as was my request to learn from fellow business librarians who have or are intending to carry out similar work within their respective institutions.

Perhaps more importantly, the conference provided a great opportunity to further develop important working relationships with key data vendors, and to learn about important upcoming changes to data provision directly from the vendors themselves. Data provision to larger business schools can be quite a complex and challenging area, and it was reassuring to learn from conversations with fellow delegates that we seem to be fairing pretty well at Manchester, particularly in terms of the deals we're able to agree with vendors on behalf of the business school.



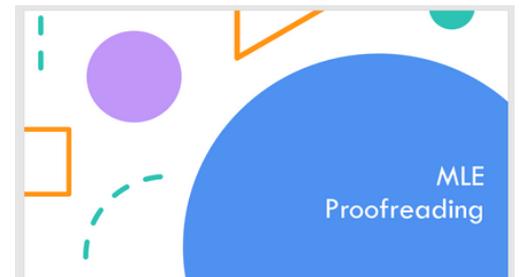
Oxford Brookes Teaching & Learning Conference

Iqra and Lily from the Student Team

On Wednesday, 14 June, we presented at the online Oxford Brookes Teaching & Learning Conference, with this year's theme being 'Pedagogies of Possibility: tales of transformation and HE hope'. Our session was titled 'Embedding student-staff collaboration: co-creating resources at The University of Manchester Library'.

Teaching,
Learning, and
Students

The focus of our workshop was the 'refresh' element of our materials using the 'Proofreading' workshop as an example. We were able to recreate the first stage of the refresh process in front of the audience, providing them with the opportunity to interject and offer suggestions, ask questions and even challenge our approach.



We also demonstrated what we would like students to get out of MLE workshops and how we go about ensuring these outcomes. Our presentation showed how collaboration in TLS works and explained the Student Team in more depth, including what we do and how we are involved in creation, delivery and support of the workshops we offer.

We had really positive feedback about the format of the session and how it allowed people to be a 'fly on the wall' in our collaboration process. A significant talking point from attendees was their interest in learning more about the Student Team, as nobody in the audience had anything similar at their institution. Discussions were had regarding how other institutions could achieve similar student engagement, co-creation and collaboration. It was great to be able to showcase how, as students, our inputs are recognised and appreciated and that we are seen as equal members of the team.

We are so grateful to Bonnie McGill and Nikki Tomlinson for asking us to be a part of this with them, and for all of their support throughout the process. This was also recognised by the audience. Now that the conference is done, our next steps will be to use our notes and reflections on the session to develop a new plan for the proofreading workshop, as our team will be carrying out the refresh process for this workshop.



Business Data Team delivers new workshops for Accounting and Finance MA students

At the end of June, the Business Data Team within TLS delivered a bumper week of new workshops.

The team got Accounting and Finance Masters students started on using a wide selection of company databases including Bloomberg and Datastream. This work was the result of six months of planning and is designed to reduce the number of enquiries and one-to-one requests on the Specialist Library Support service during the July peak times, when these 250 students are gathering data for their dissertations. The team have also successfully piloted the use of Microsoft Sway for accessible online workbooks, removing the need for paper handouts.

Welcome to a new team member

We're really happy to welcome Chris Sumner (he/him) to the Customer Services Team! Chris has been working extremely hard and making a great impression with both colleagues and students. Chris had this to say about joining our team:



Chris Sumner with his cat.

Hello everyone, it's been fantastic getting to know you over the last few weeks. The conference was a great way to jump into the deep end and see just how dedicated you all are. So don't be shy, please say hello if you see me (I'll be the one dressed in purple!).

Working as a Customer Service Assistant is a perfect fit for me. I've had lots of fun jobs over the years, stocking teddies at the Disney store, looking after guests for BBC Breakfast, and occasionally tidying the Crystal Maze, but none of that compares to the last month working with the University. You really care about your staff and your students and that's something I really enjoy being a part of.

Thank you for reading the FSP Monthly Digest.

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