

Library Services response to student consultation:

Library Services vision and strategy

The student consultation ran online during October 2015 for two weeks. The aim of the consultation was to gather student feedback on six key areas and encourage input into the future vision and strategy for Library Services. This was part of a wider appraisal into the future strategic direction of the service.

We would like to express our gratitude to all of the students who engaged with the consultation, your feedback has been invaluable. Below is a summary of the key learning points from the consultation and the recommendations/next steps in addressing these areas, along with feedback on some of the suggestions we've already taken forward.

Key learning	Library feedback and next steps
<p>Students found being able to access the wealth of online content 24/7 valuable and convenient but some found the quantity/variety of resources overwhelming.</p>	<p>We are pleased to hear that students feel the Library resources are valuable and convenient. We recognise that the volume of resources can be overwhelming. In order to improve this we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support students to navigate and find resources using effective searching and information evaluation techniques (as below). • Highlight the 'Selected resources for your studies', which is our collection of resources recommended by Librarians, as a starting point for finding information. • Continue to work with Faculties to ensure you're introduced to library resources gradually through your module materials in an effective and supportive way. • Continue to provide support when you need help through our 24/7 webchat service.
<p>A general introduction to the online library is seen as beneficial.</p>	<p>We agree! We think all students would appreciate this. We do already offer some general introduction materials and training sessions however we intend to review these based on the consultation feedback to see where improvements can be made.</p>

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	<p>We will work with a broader group of students to explore this in greater detail and to define the type of support or services that would meet this need.</p> <p>We will work with the OU Students Association to highlight and promote the benefits of the online 'Introduction to Library Services' training sessions and our other introductory materials prior to formal module start.</p> <p>We will continue to collaborate with the OU Students Association and the Student Hub Live team to deliver introductions to new students as part of the freshers fair events.</p>
<p>The navigation of the library website is not always intuitive (plus you can't search the site) and the volume of content can be daunting.</p>	<p>A number of detailed specific comments were made about the library website. The web team are looking at these in detail along with feedback from other customer groups. We will then test improvements and explore further changes to design, information architecture and layout with a broader group of students. These improvements will be incorporated into plans to work with students to update the site with the new OU website brand.</p> <p>We will discuss with relevant University colleagues whether the Library website could be permitted an exception to the cross-university policy which prevents individual site search features.</p>
<p>There were mixed reviews for Library Search, some found it easy to use while others did not. Exploring the discussions further it appears as though students who were previously used to using the old 'One Stop Search' tool were finding the new Library Search challenging. Students would like to know why the tool was changed.</p>	<p>We are sorry to hear that some students have found Library Search challenging to use. The old search tool (One Stop Search) did work in a different way to the new one. The new search is closer to a google-type search. One Stop Search provided a basic journal title search only, Library Search allows you to deep search the library collections, for example articles. It's the equivalent of previously searching by book title only, and now being able to search for words on the pages of every book. The key reasons we changed the search tool was because we had received consistent and extensive feedback from students that they wanted a tool that could deep search our collections. Electronic information provision</p>

Key learning	Library feedback and next steps
	<p>has expanded so much since One Stop Search was introduced that our search tool needed to keep up with changing technologies and student expectations. We have been working to improve Library Search based on your feedback. In order to improve this we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop key hints, tips and guidance focussed on effective search techniques to help support students using the new search tool to transition from previous tools. • Increase communications around search techniques and the rationale for changing search tools to be published in student-facing communication channels. • Based on your feedback and our research with a wider group of students we redesigned Library Search at the end of January to improve navigation and access. We will continue to work with students and academic staff to develop and improve Library Search going forward.
<p>Some students would prefer not to have to search for information and be taken directly to module relevant content, however other students did identify this as a useful skill.</p>	<p>We need to understand this further with a broader group of students to unpick the reasons/drivers behind this. We will carry out some research with the Library's 'student panel' to explore how issues such as skills, time, workload or confidence affect this issue.</p>
<p>Students generally see the value in embedded skills, however some feel that they are being assessed unnecessarily in skills they already have.</p>	<p>Thank you for this valuable feedback. We have a continued working relationship with module teams to ensure the Library activities embedded into modules are appropriate, effective and provide you with the skills you need for success in your studies. We will take into consideration this feedback with module teams when creating skills materials for modules.</p>
<p>Students would like continued access to the OU Library after they have completed their studies, some are willing to pay an annual subscription fee for this.</p>	<p>It was very interesting to see your differing views on this topic. As outlined during the consultation there are legal, technological and financial barriers to providing access to Library resources for our Alumni: http://learn1.open.ac.uk/mod/forumng/discuss.php?d=68577#p850662</p> <p>Based on your feedback we will improve our 'Access to resources after study' page to highlight the 'Access to Research' initiative which provides</p>

Key learning	Library feedback and next steps
	access to academic articles at your local public library free of charge, and CORE, the database of open access publications.

A number of specific suggestions raised in the consultation forum are being taken forward, including:

Suggestion	Progress
Provide a video explaining what the Library has to offer.	Done! Our introduction to the Library video can be viewed here: https://youtu.be/DpvXkT870x0 We've also developed a video tour of the Library: https://youtu.be/y8Bt8TJfL9c
Add a link to 'advanced search' directly from the homepage.	We're working with students to test what should and should not be on the homepage. We will also be providing some clearer guidance to students about effective searching approaches for Library Search.
Enable filtering by 'peer reviewed' and 'full text available'.	Done! Hopefully this is clearer now the new Library Search design has been implemented.
Create a Library Champions network of students to promote Library Services enthusiastically.	We love this idea – thank you! We're working on a proposal now to recruit Library Champions in September.

Again, we would like to thank all of the students for their support with this consultation. We will continue to improve and develop our services based on your needs and expectations. Should you wish to suggest any further opportunities for improvements we are always listening, you can access our feedback form here: <http://www.open.ac.uk/library/library-information/feedback-form>.