



# Delivering Service Excellence

## Library Annual Report 2016-17

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# Aspiring for Excellence

## Welcome

This has been another busy year for the Library Service at Ulster. We have worked in partnership across the Institution to develop and implement new services alongside driving a continuous improvement process for existing services and facilities. All of this was carried out in the context of making a positive contribution to a rapidly changing and transformational Higher Education environment at Ulster.

The formal adoption by Senate of the new Library Services Strategy, 2016-2021, ratified the Library's plans to continue to build on the work of the previous Strategy to deliver a quality enhanced, user-focused Library Service at Ulster. The Library Strategy is aligned to SP5&50 and underpins the Institution's strategic ambitions in relation to its global vision, academic excellence, operational excellence and civic contribution.

This annual report captures the headlines from a number of work streams, which were ongoing during the year in parallel with business as usual activities. None of the deliverables as outlined in this report could have been achieved without the support of a dedicated and committed team of staff who regularly go the extra mile to make things happen. Leadership is evident across the Library Service at all levels; this report is a reflection of what can be achieved by working together as a team to realise a common goal and doing it very effectively, I hope you agree.

**Janet Peden**  
University Librarian



# Learning and Teaching

In a highly sophisticated knowledge economy, the ability to identify, synthesise and ethically reuse information is of critical importance. The Library's Digital and Information Literacy training programme dovetails with the Academic Excellence mission of SP5&50 and is delivered in collaboration with academic colleagues. The programme of skills training supports all library users to navigate complex digital content to enhance the learning and research experience at Ulster and at the same time acquire key employability and lifelong learning skills. This is a bespoke service, tailored to meet the subject-specific and individual needs of all library users from induction to research level and beyond.

Demand for these sessions continues to rise and this year, **1941 Information skills sessions** were delivered with **18,809 users** in attendance. A satisfaction rate of 95% was indicated by users.

The Digital and Information Literacy skills programme is all-inclusive, and where possible, face-to-face delivery of skills sessions is extended to Ulster students located in out centres and partner institutions. During the year, members of the Faculty Support Team travelled to external locations and delivered nine subject-specific information skills training sessions, which were attended by 114 Ulster students.

A tailored range of Information skills sessions is also prepared and delivered to International Students as part of the broader Digital and Information Literacy skills programme. This year, 11 sessions were offered across all Faculties and 316 students attended.

Given the Library's focus on adopting and integrating technology to enhance service delivery, we were delighted that Sarah Smyth, Assistant Librarian, was awarded Nearpod Certified Educator status. Sarah participated in an Institutional Nearpod pilot and is now integrating the technology into many of her Information Skills training sessions to engage users through interactivity. The availability of real-time feedback and assessment of learning has proved valuable to inform future planning of training sessions. Nearpod presentations are also made available to class attendees following the face-to-face training session to support personal learning. The technology is now being adopted across the wider Faculty Support team.

The Library Service is grateful for the positive and encouraging feedback it receives from University colleagues and the Senior Leadership Team in respect of the service it provides. The provision of support for the evaluation of new courses and the revalidation of existing courses is an integral element of service provision. It was particularly gratifying to receive formal feedback from Professor Paul Bartholomew, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) regarding the high quality of library support provided by Mary Rose Holman for the MSc Sport and Exercise Psychology programme. This reflected comments in an External Examiner's report during a revalidation exercise where both the students and the Course Director commented on the value and importance of the Library's role in supporting the course.

# The Digital Library

The development of the Digital Library proceeds apace as the Library continues to work in partnership with academic colleagues in support of academic excellence at Ulster. The process of delivering a digital library involves gradual transition from the maintenance and curation of print collections towards the provision of access to quality sources of information in electronic format where it is appropriate and possible to do so. The following electronic information resources were acquired in 2016-2017:

- New Oxford Shakespeare
- Handbook of Child Psychology and Developmental Science
- Nutrition and Food Sciences database
- Art and Architecture Archive
- The Vogue Italia Archive

Furthermore, the Library's existing collection of eBooks and eJournals was enhanced with the addition of over **54,000 eBooks** and almost **4,500 electronic journals** to the Library's portfolio of electronic resources. Overall, a substantial increase in electronic content to accelerate the development of the Digital Library.

## Special Collections

Several exhibitions were curated during the year, which highlighted the rich content of a number of the Special Collections managed by the Library Service.

The 75th anniversary of the establishment of a US Naval operating base in Derry~Londonderry was marked with an exhibition entitled **Europe Base One**. The exhibition was displayed in the Main Building at the Magee campus and reflected on the strategic importance of the city as the most important European naval escort base for the 'War of the Atlantic' during World War 2. The impact of the American personnel on local society, the defence of the City and the loss of life incurred were all addressed through the material that was displayed.

It is gratifying to see unique material from Special Collections being integrated with the curriculum. The exhibition **Shakespeare in his Times** was curated to align with teaching on a module on Renaissance Drama. This year the exhibition featured a 1910 edition of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* illustrated by a native of Coleraine, Hugh Thomson (1860-1920). Having moved to London, Thomson's career as a book illustrator saw him gain success illustrating editions of Elizabeth Gaskell, Jane Austen, Charles Dickens and several books in the *Highways and Byways* series.

The Sub Librarian for the Faculty of Arts delivered an exhibition and accompanying talk on the theme of 'War and Peace' to MA History students. This featured material from a range of Special Collections including the Magee Manuscript Collection, John Hume Collection, Denis Johnston Collection, Francis Stuart Collection, George Shiels Collection and the Frank Gilliland Scrapbooks.

The **International Literature Festival at Coleraine** was also celebrated with an exhibition, which focused on writers who were featured at the event – Charlie Gillen, Liz Lochhead, Damian Smyth and Damian Gordon. A manuscript letter from Damian Smyth to John Hewitt written in 1980 was presented along with a poem in manuscript form. Three of the John Hewitt's notebooks were also featured to display poems on the theme of travel.

The value in promoting Unique and Special Collections lies with the opportunities afforded to maximize the potential and impact of these collections both internally and externally and enhance the role and reputation of the Library at Ulster with researchers locally, nationally and internationally.

## Services for users

Following the implementation of a user-driven circulation service based on RFID technology, the Library Service was able to begin to introduce new service delivery models and redirect some staff resource to support high value business areas. Roving support using mobile devices was introduced to deliver a personalised service to users at point of need. This was supplemented with a pilot of LibChat, a real-time support service that compliments and is delivered in tandem with the LibHelp online enquiry and FAQ service. The pilot will be evaluated with a view to producing a business case for full implementation of the service.

The Library Service also took the opportunity to reduce the number of loan categories and provide a simplified overview of borrowing entitlements for each category of library user. The library fines process is also clearly articulated along with distinct pathways to renewing books and fines payment. See <http://library.ulster.ac.uk/info/borrowing.php>

The much valued laptop lending pilot was extended to the Coleraine campus in April 2017 with the purchase of a further 12 laptops and a charging cart. This service enhancement was part-funded by a generous donation from the Ulster University Student Fund and we are grateful for their continued support. The service is in high demand with requests to extend the pilot service to the remaining campus libraries as soon as possible.

Institutional lecture capture solutions have also been implemented in the Library Service to provide a supplementary route to the provision of Digital and Information literacy support. This has been particularly useful to assist with delivery of Information skills to Distance Learners and as an addition to face-to-face user support.



# Space

During the year, the Library Service engaged in two major initiatives in relation to repurposing library learning space to meet the expectations of users and deliver new spaces to facilitate active and collaborative learning.

A major capital investment at the Magee campus saw work commence to construct a new teaching block, which will connect to the Library space. To facilitate this, a major project was initiated to relocate one of the Library's Special Collections, the Irish Collection, to a more secure and appropriate space on the ground floor of the Library footprint. The staff in the Library at Magee competently and carefully moved the collection of around 5,400 books and 800 pamphlets to its new location. The collection is now easily accessible by library staff and the addition of a consulting area in the designated space has delivered a significant improvement for researchers.

As the impact of stock rationalisation and acceleration of the digital library begins to take effect, opportunities are arising to begin the process of aligning library space to meet the pedagogical requirements of the revised curriculum and facilitate interactive pedagogic approaches to learning.

In consultation with the Centre for Higher Education Research and Practice and the Physical Resources Department, under the auspices of the Learning Landscapes Transition Project, the Library has drawn up plans to repurpose a discrete space in each campus Library. This will initiate a process of transformational change with a move away from the traditional layout of single silent study spaces towards the delivery of flexible, collaborative active study environments. Going forward, capital funding will be sought to implement the plans, which will provide proof of concept for future campus development plans.

# Research Support

This year the Library was able to achieve a strategic ambition to introduce a new role as Sub Librarian: Research Support. The role will be pivotal to growing and developing the Library's portfolio of services to support the research mission of SP5&50.

Following a recruitment and selection process, Mick Carragher was appointed to the role. Mick assumed his responsibilities from 1st May on a 50% basis with the post becoming full time from January 2018 onwards. Going forward, we will work closely with colleagues in Research and Impact to identify how best to utilise the professional skills and knowledge available within the Library Service as an enabler to underpin the research ambitions of the Strategic Plan.

# People

Once again, the value of the Library staff in supporting and delivering against Ulster's vision and mission has been publically acknowledged. Joan Atkinson, Sub-Librarian for Life and Health Sciences received an Ulster University Distinguished Service Individual Award in December 2016. Professor Neville McClenaghan, Head of School of Biomedical Sciences and Dr Julie McClelland, Lecturer in Optometry nominated Joan for this award, which was well deserved.



Library staff were also delighted to have their skills recognised at the Irish Education Awards in May 2017 through their contribution as practitioners on the team who deliver the Postgraduate Diploma and MSc in Library and Information Management offered by the School of Education. The Team came out tops in “Best use of Educational Technology” and “Overall Excellence in Category” for their work in transitioning the course from blended to wholly online provision. In addition, the Faculty Support Team for Life and Health Sciences Team were shortlisted in the category for Best Library Team.

The User Services team at Magee was also nominated for a team award in the UUSU Learning and Teaching Awards 2017. This nomination is testimony to the excellent service and positive impact of the Magee Library team on the student experience at Ulster.

Library staff continue to work alongside academic colleagues to support academic output. Mary Rose Holman, Subject Assistant Librarian, has received an acknowledgment in the following paper for the support she provided to the authors:

Woods, David, Breslin, Gavin and Hassan, David (2017) A systematic review of the impact of sport-based interventions on the psychological well-being of people in prison. *Mental Health and Physical Activity*, 12 (27). pp. 50-61.

This year, the Library said farewell to a number of long serving and dedicated members of staff. Frank Reynolds and Jane Starrs resigned from their respective roles in the Library's Faculty Support Team along with Alicia George and Moira Campbell from the User Services Team and Evelyn Logan from the Resource Management Team. We are indebted to these members of staff for their wisdom, expertise and support over a long number of years. We also said farewell to Emily Graham who made a positive contribution to the User Services Team in the Library at the Magee campus.

Along with change comes opportunities and we welcome Geraldine Delaney and Cheree McGill who joined the Faculty Support Team at Coleraine. Patricia Doyle and Virginia Aiken were also appointed to Senior Information Assistant roles within the User Services Team. We wish our colleagues well in their new roles.

# Keeping in Touch with the Library

For further information about the range of services and facilities provided by the Library Service at Ulster, please visit the Library website at <http://library.ulster.ac.uk/>

Alternatively, follow us on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/UlsterUniLib>

## Key Data

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Total catalogued print books	519,910	474,705	482,792
Electronic books in stock	725,995	724,311	778,588
Journal subscriptions – print	827	805	729
eJournals	86,341	113,135	117,622
Number of study spaces	2,641	2,487	2,482
Number of open access workstations	1,021	1,002	1,002
Laptops for loan		12	24
Total number of loans including renewals	199,155	154,444	130,437
Full text article requests	1,529,728	1,361,476*	1,376,418
Section requests for eBooks	1,601,142	1,655,006*	1,853,041
Number of sessions delivered	1,916	1,847	1,941
Library staff hours spent delivering Information Literacy training	1,599	1,768	1,825
Number of users attended	19,504	18,505	18,809
User hours received in training	20,215	20,168	19,6660
Information resource expenditure	£3,274,102	£3,594,841	£3,099,341
NSS Score	90	90	88

\*This figure is incomplete, not all suppliers produce usage figures, not all are comparable or standard