Loughborough University

University Library

Annual Report 2020-21

www.lboro.ac.uk/library

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Introduction

I think it would be fair to say that in writing this introduction to the Library Annual Report 2020-21 I did not expect to be writing it still under the shadow of the Coronavirus pandemic. Of course, 18 months on and having managed through it, the shadow feels somewhat less dark and foreboding but a longer shadow than perhaps I had envisaged. The impact of the pandemic has been, is and will be considerable. It has changed the way we work, the technology we use, it has amplified changes and disruptors that were already in train and accelerated others that for many of us remained on the horizon. It has and will inform activity, decision making and priority setting.

The impact of the pandemic has played out for us in the Library in several ways. In terms of the way we delivered our services, the new services we introduced and the changes we needed to make to our physical environments to name a few. We are keeping a close eye on how our users use our services following their experience of the pandemic to see if further changes will need to be made. It has also had an impact on our planning. Prior to the pandemic we had started looking at our strategic direction for the future but this work was paused whilst we took an appropriately pragmatic approach to changing our services to meet need. We had identified some clear areas of focus - digital content, digital access, open content and on an inclusive user experience and these were confirmed as key when we picked this work back up in January 2021. The events of 2020-21 however, have meant that we need to place an even greater significance on engagement and connections with others. Our direction and focus is outlined in the Library Blueprint – a plan for the future which is included in this report.

This report also provides an opportunity to reflect on and report the achievements made by the Library more generally but also by individuals in the last year. Some of these achievements have been as a result of the pandemic and others are related to key initiatives and areas of focus for the University and the sector more generally.

It has been a challenging time for all of us but I am immensely proud of all my colleagues in the Library service both here and in London in all that they have done to continue to provide online and in-person services to our users. I am also incredibly appreciative of colleagues across the University and wider external sector organisations and groupings too for additional expertise, support and in sharing experience.

Thank you.

Emma Walton

Director of Library Services and University Librarian

The Library Blueprint – a plan for the future

The development of a Library blueprint in late 2019 early 2020 started the process of critical review of our Library service to ensure that the services and support we delivered were able to adapt to meet emerging themes and that the way we provide those services and support could be agile in our approach to change. However, the situation that developed in early 2020 and continued through 2020 and 2021 meant that work on the Blueprint across the Library was necessarily paused but it also allowed us to look at the changes and impact the pandemic has had on our services and support. It has been the cause of significant change in the way we work, what we need to prioritise and indeed the nature of our unit within that context. In picking this project back up we were able to create a new iteration that reflected not only the immediate changes wrought by the pandemic but gave us time to look at the broader environment, at new and emerging trends and institutional changes such as the developing new University strategy, to make sure that the Blueprint remained a workable plan and one fit for a changed future.

The result of that work, The Library Blueprint was created, a dynamic plan able to meet the needs of an agile environment whilst at the same time providing a framework to enable delivery, development and prioritisation and which contains several elements.
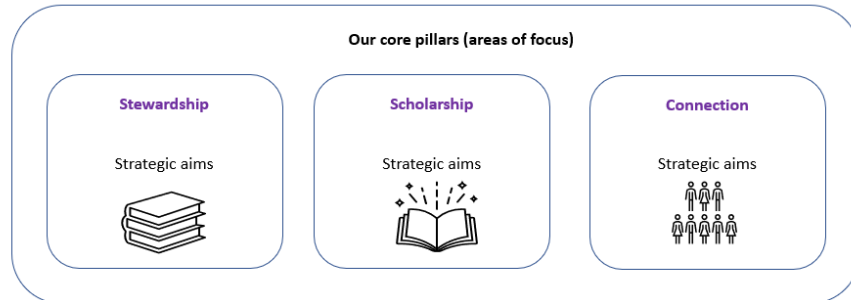
In the annual report for last year I outlined some of the areas we were looking to concentrate on- the notion of *digital first* as it related to both content and services and support, *partnership working*, *accessibility, inclusivity and the user experience* and the need for our service to be *adaptable and agile*. In developing the Library Blueprint we have taken those ideas along with other emerging issues and factors, and created a framework through which to state our intentions and priorities but also one that allows us to deliver them positively.

We have entered a period where there are several disruptive forces at play. We are seeing the rapid adoption of technology and changing expectations in an increasingly competitive landscape. The pandemic has accelerated shifts in behaviour and library provision and we need to meet these changing expectations to remain relevant and of value to our user communities. As a result of what has happened it is unlikely that we will ever go back to how we were before as higher education organisations. Wider external considerations such as changing education models, research priorities and methodologies together with the ever-evolving user expectations and behaviours will also have an impact on the environment we work within. Similarly, the impact of the pandemic particularly in relation to international students and related financial implications is still to be seen. Our response to these challenges will inform our strategic aims and intent.

Our Library Blueprint is designed to align with the new University strategy and enable the Library service across both campuses to participate in and respond to its aims and objectives. Our Library service also needs to be able to respond to change, the environment in which we work and the needs and expectations of our user communities. We are a small, valuable unit and to continue to be so we need to look at what we do and how we do it. The Blueprint is our plan for how we do this.

Our Purpose:
To support and develop our users to realise their ambitions by creating opportunities for scholarship

Our Principles (how we will work):
Working digitally, ethically, in partnership and with agility
Being user focused and informed by data and evidence

Our core pillars (areas of focus)

Stewardship	Scholarship	Connection
Strategic aims	Strategic aims	Strategic aims

Our Values:

Open to new ideas   Curious & thoughtful   Collaborative   Respectful of each other   Taking ownership   Professional

Our Foundations:

Sustainability	Library staff	Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity

Our Purpose – Why we are here

To support and develop our user communities to realise their ambitions by creating opportunities for scholarship

As a Library Service, our mission or our purpose relates to our user communities and how we can empower them to achieve their ambitions through scholarship. Through our services and support we can and will create opportunities for scholarship to help individuals or groups of individuals succeed.

Our Principles – how we will work

- **Working digitally, ethically, in partnership and with agility**
- **Being user focused and informed by data and evidence**

Our principles will inform how we will deliver our services and support.

We recognise that **working digitally** is not just about content and services but about people and culture; the ways in which we embed digital fluency throughout and how we make this inclusive. The original missions of libraries were not only about repositories of books, but about communities of scholars. We need to consider how we continue to position the Library as being a service for all of our diverse communities.

The only way to achieve our aims is through **partnership** because we can't do it all ourselves. We need to prioritise and look at delivering new, and innovative services in partnership with others. We need to be **flexible** and **agile**, in an ever-changing landscape to be able to respond to the changing needs, expectations and behaviours of our user communities.

Being **user focused** will also enable us to achieve this. It is likely that education will become more personalised and where and how an individual engages will be based on their choices and preferences. A personalised approach along with a government agenda focusing on skills and the blurring of sectors (FE/HE/professional education) will open up scholarship to a wider group of users than before, different and varied user communities who will require different modes of delivery. We will need to understand how all our users experience our services to ensure that how we operate and what we deliver is successful. **Evidence and data** will help inform priority decisions about our services and support, whether that be quantitative numbers or qualitative discussions. This will be a key guiding principle for us in challenging economic times.

Our strategic pillars – what guides us
Stewardship, Scholarship and Connection

Our core pillars (Stewardship, Scholarship and Connection) show our areas of strategic focus and for each pillar we have developed a set of statements of intent. These statements indicate our priorities, they are not necessarily where we are now but where we want to be.

The provision of scholarly content is core to our DNA as a Library service and the concept of **stewardship**, of careful and responsible management helps us to focus on how we achieve that in a considered, ethical and sustainable way. Our purpose makes it very clear that we are here to support and develop our user communities to meet their ambitions by providing opportunities for **scholarship** and we need to remain focused on how our services support the outcome and process of academic study. A strategic core pillar therefore helps us to focus on delivering the support and services we will provide. **Connection** relates to our appreciation of and the importance of people in all that we do. We want to ensure that we are connected to our user communities in a way that enables us to support and develop them. These may be existing connections or, as yet, unknown connections. The connections may be internal to Loughborough, such as our students or our Library staff. They may be external to Loughborough in respect of how we work in partnership to solve sector issues or develop our support for user communities based locally or farther afield. Either way, we want to consider engagement and interaction in all that we do. Our connection to our user communities also enables us to participate in the University's aspirations to have a positive impact on the world – local, regional, national or international- helping provide an inspiring and transformative educational experience.

Strategic areas of focus – statements of intent

Stewardship
Responsibly managing and caring for our University's content 'assets' for the benefit of all our user communities.

- **Increasing our digital content provision**
  We will maximise our digital presence by taking a digital first approach to scholarly content provision.
- **Building evidence around scholarly content, to create insights and inform our decision-making**
  We will capture and use quantitative and qualitative evidence to help us assess our existing content and to inform current and future investment decisions.
- **Caring for & protecting our university's heritage**
  We will curate and preserve the intellectual heritage and history of our university in order to highlight the institution's identity, past and present.

Scholarship
Supporting the outcome and process of academic study

- **Opening up research**
  We will embrace the full potential of open research by embedding open practices and developing infrastructure to support our University's open research strategies and priorities.
- **Enhancing interaction with scholarly content**
  We will facilitate the use of tools and techniques to assist our user communities to discover and interact with scholarly content, supporting emerging research methods and expectations.
- **Supporting pedagogy**
  We will seek to make significant contributions to the pedagogical approach at our university.

Connection
Encouraging engagement and interaction with our user communities

- **Developing a human-centred approach to our library environment**
  We will take a human-centred approach to our digital and physical environments
- **Facilitating interaction and partnerships**
  We will build upon existing interaction models to engage with our communities; to inform our service offerings and make contributions to wider university life.
- **Contributing towards knowledge exchange**
  We will make opportunities to connect to diverse communities to knowledge to support transforming lives and building ambition.

Our values – how we will be

Our values are key to how we as individuals will support this plan now and for the future. They utilise the University's values and also include values or attributes that will enable us all to work together to deliver on our purpose, our principles , our strategic priorities through the core pillars, and our foundations.

Our Foundations – underpinning all we do and are

The last element of the Library Blueprint is **Our foundations**. These are areas that are of great significance for us – our building blocks if you will, underpinning all that we do. In terms of sustainability and Equality, Inclusivity and Diversity they reflect our wider institutional focus and the wider world. Our commitment to them runs through the entire Blueprint and all of its elements. With regard to Library staff they are included as without my colleagues and their efforts the Blueprint would simply be an image and a set of statements of what we want to achieve not a reality. It also highlights that in this constantly moving landscape with a number of disruptive elements we need to support colleagues through development and be aware of their wellbeing.

Next steps

We are now looking at how we implement our Blueprint and at the actions we need to take, the projects we need to start, the priorities we decide upon and the development we need to do to deliver successful services for all our user communities. Some of those priorities for the next year are outlined below but others will take longer and will require more thought, conversation and change. I am positive about our ability to make these changes and deliver to this Blueprint.

Key achievements, August 2020- September 2021

It is important to acknowledge the efforts, developments and achievements of colleagues and the service in general in supporting our University, below are some highlights from the past academic year.

Learning and Teaching

- The Academic Librarians at both campuses were swift to adapt to changes in remote live and dual delivery for in-curricular and extra-curricular lectures and workshops in 2020-21, delivering sessions in-person when required and possible. 365 sessions were delivered, of which 139 were on-demand resources to supplement learning or replace lectures. Whilst the number of live sessions was reduced compared to previous years due to the pandemic, the standard of the delivery and content was highly praised by academic staff across the schools.
- Personal Best: (Partnership with Careers)
  Working with colleagues in the Careers Network and in the schools, sessions for the Veritate dimension of Personal Best were delivered flexibly by the Academic Librarians, with an on-demand resource created and live Teams or in-person question and answer workshops also provided to support Part A students.
- Doctoral researchers: (Partnership with Doctoral College)
  All of the lectures and workshops for the Library's doctoral researcher programme were transformed into on-demand resources with reflective assessments to ensure consistency with the look, feel and format of the Doctoral College's learning opportunities. 324 assessments were assessed and completed. [Chart provided below] Library staff have also continued to look to the future with a thorough review of the Library's doctoral researcher training programme. This has included activities identifying best practice across the sector and collaborating with the Doctoral College to explore LU doctoral researcher training preferences and needs via an online survey and focus group. The results of this work will be taken forward into 2021-22. The Library welcomed being part of the Training and Development Stakeholder Group which oversees the portfolio of provision of Learning and development opportunities for staff and PGRs.
- Study Skills (Partnership with ALSS)
  The Library's close working relationship with the Academic Language Support Service continued in the area of Study Skills, with the launch in September 2020 of a jointly authored Study Skills module within [Learn](#). A small team of Library and ALSS colleagues delivered workshops on critical thinking and use of supporting evidence in Spring 2021, as well as Dissertation workshops for PGTs in the Summer.
- Academic Research Kit (ARK) (Partnership with CAP)
  A full suite of online tutorials within [Learn](#) were completed during 2020-21, taking a student from discovering information for their particular discipline area to evaluating, referencing, managing and using information ethically, with the Manage tutorial also exploring managing and organising files. The Careers and Enterprise tutorial takes research skills and methods beyond the academic environment to those needed for becoming an entrepreneur and looking for a job and was created in partnership with colleagues in the Careers Network.
- London Campus (in partnership with colleagues incl. Director of Studies)
  Work continues to further develop support for Academic Integrity and to deliver support for learning and teaching.

- Supporting copyright (Partnerships with Doctoral College, Legal Services and CAP)
In April 2021 the University's Copyright Advisors launched a new-look [Copyright website](#) organised around frequently asked questions from staff and students. The internal only website has already been greatly appreciated by colleagues across the campuses. [Screenshot provided below]. The Copyright Advisors have been involved in a number of cross-campus initiatives, including the development of the alternative format theses route to PhD and guidance about preventing, discouraging and redressing the uploading of lecture materials on to external websites.
- During 2020 and 2021 several members of the Academic Services Team have gained Higher Education Fellowship and Associate status and we congratulate them on their achievement.

Research

- As part of the implementation of our Library Blueprint, which aims to supports our new priorities we have been looking at Library roles to ensure we can support emerging needs, initiatives and developments. As a result we appointed to a newly created post, Open Research Development Lead, who will offer leadership for developing open research services within the Library. As part of his role, Dr Gareth Cole will also help drive the implementation of the institution's Open Research Action Plan in support of Loughborough's Position Statement on Open Research.
https://www.lboro.ac.uk/research/support/publishing/openresearch/. To start this work colleagues in the Library played a significant role in the recruiting and advertising of Academic Open Research Leads.
- We continue to negotiate transitional agreements with the aim to make it as easy as possible for academic colleagues to publish open access in the journal of their choice. This year we announced new agreements with the American Institute of Physics (AIP), American Physiological Society (APS), Cambridge University Press (CUP), IWA Publishing, Oxford University Press (OUP), the Royal Society and Taylor & Francis to add to existing deals with the IOP, Royal Society of Chemistry, Sage, Springer (excluding Nature titles) and Wiley. Further details on these arrangements can be found on the university's 'Deals & Discounts' page - https://internal.lboro.ac.uk/info/research-support/publishing/open-access/oa-publisher-discounts/
- Ben Veasey, our Assistant Director is a member of the Jisc/UUK Transitional Agreements Oversight Group (https://www.jisc.ac.uk/get-involved/jisc-collections-strategic-groups#transitional), a national group responsible for working across publishers to scrutinise the cost, trajectory and efficacy of transitional agreements. The group will provide recommendations to the UUK/Jisc content negotiation strategy group on the mechanisms required to support a transition to OA that supports the strategic objectives of the sector in a manner that is achievable and sustainable at the local institutional level. Having representation on this group is excellent for us as a research intensive institution and we are delighted that Ben has gained this strategically important role.
- Our Research Repository Team worked to support our university's REF Submission, particularly in the area of open access compliance with the REF Open Access Policy.

- In seeking to utilise the University's Research Repository we worked with academic colleagues in different departments on pilot projects for different types of material to be deposited in the Repository (Masters' Theses and Lboro hosted Conference Proceedings)
- In 2019 we became successful partners in a new Research England funded project to help universities, researchers, libraries and publishers to make more, and better, use of open access book publishing. It will enable greater access to world-leading research and increase its impact. As part of this project *Community-led Open Publication Infrastructures for Monographs (COPIM),* Gareth Cole from the Library and colleagues in the School of Design and Creative Arts are working are looking at the challenges facing the preservation and archiving of digitally born and complex research monographs and how an integrated collection of content in different formats could be created both technically and legally. Work on this project continues and is now using our test repository as a test bed for identifying processes and workflows for archiving OA monographs in an institutional repository.
- We have made a financial commitment to help fund MIT Press with their Direct to Open initiative, this is an innovative publishing model starting in 2022 that will make MIT Press monographs open access on publication. The expectation is that with the help of the library community around 90 MIT monographs will be made open access throughout 2022.

Content provision

- As above, in looking at strategically important areas for the Library we saw the need to look at our staffing capacity in respect of content provision. In the summer we appointed to a newly created post, Content Provision & Access Lead, who will offer leadership for our content provision activity and will oversee decisions to acquire or license and subsequently enable access to published academic content in support of teaching, learning & research - for example, monographs, textbooks, serials, databases. Jane Bramley's remit will also extend to the provision of legal extracts of content in support of reading lists and our inter-library loan (and short-term loan) service in support of research. This role and the Open Research role will also work together on open content as indicated by the MIT initiative.
- In support of the Library's 'digital-first' approach, we continue to work with suppliers to provision material in digital form, including digital textbooks. A number of challenges remain in provisioning ebooks and we are using a number of suppliers and business models to help us assess the best route to market in being able to offer digital textbooks to support our learning and teaching. Information on our ebook provision can be found on our website
  - https://www.lboro.ac.uk/services/library/students/usingthelibrary/onlineresources/ebooks/
- We continue to provide our academic colleagues support in managing their reading lists and our aim is to provision a copy of all reading that is highlighted on these lists. We also offer best practice guidance for colleagues in constructing their lists, which can be found on our website
  - https://www.lboro.ac.uk/services/library/students/usingthelibrary/onlineresources/creatingandupdatingreadinglists/bestpracticeguidelinesforreadinglists/

Library physical space, front line services and student experience

- We have dealt with approx. 22,000 enquiries within the building and a further 12,000 enquiries via library@lboro.ac.uk in the past academic year – a threefold increase of online enquiries compared with the year before as we were dealing with many users working remotely – with a first line resolution rate of 99%. Staff now answer email enquiries throughout opening hours, including evenings and weekends.
- We collected over 10,000 books for 3,500 users when our book stacks were closed from Jan-March this year with 44,000 books issued in the year overall.
- We introduced a new Library booking system, LibCal, which has proven successful in enabling our students to manage the type of space that they wish to work in within the Library. Bookings can be made at https://libcal.lboro.ac.uk/
- With reduced capacity and other mitigating measures the physical Library building has remained open since July 2020 with usual term time opening hours including 24/7 for both assessment periods during 2020/21.
- National Surveys – we performed well overall in the National Student Survey, The Post Graduate Taught Experience Survey and the Post Graduate Research Experience Survey – details below.
- Space developments for Pilkington Library – over the summer we made some small changes to the space on Level 3 of Pilkington Library. We removed a wall (that previously housed short stay pcs) which has had the result of opening up the space and providing more light. We also created a larger social learning space by moving furniture and removing the "High Demand" area. This new area with an additional study room and soft furnishing, is already proving popular.
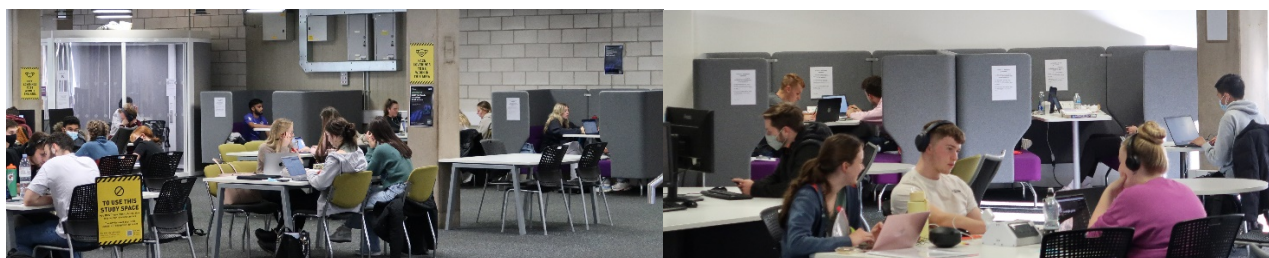
The National Student Survey (NSS)

Question 19. of the NSS relates to Library services and resources - *the library resources (e.g. books, online services and learning spaces) have supported my learning well* and is in the Learning Resources section.

In the 2021 survey we received 85.49% satisfaction, which put us 2nd in England behind Imperial College and Bath who both received 86% and 4th in the UK with Edinburgh Napier also achieving 86%. It is important to note that other institutions gained higher scores than 86% but these are small and/or specialist institutions.

In 2020 we received 91.75% so our 2021 score is clearly a drop in percentage points but looking at benchmarks our 2020 rate was 4.7 points above a benchmark of 87.05. In 2021 our score of 85.49 was 10.48 points above a benchmark of 75.01.

Of the 13 categorised positive comments we received, 5 referenced good access to resources, 6 were general comments referencing "the Library", 1 concerned support and 1 our COVID management.

However, despite this high score for overall satisfaction with Library resources there is some dissatisfaction at School and programme level which we will be investigating further. There are also some comments about Library resources and where these could be improved.

Of the 22 negative comments received, 5 were about lack of space, 5 about restrictions and access as a result of the pandemic and 12 concerned access to books particularly ebooks.

The NSS survey also asks students to comment on a change that would have improved their Loughborough experience. The Library is featured 11 times with 5 comments referencing more resources and 6 more space or a bigger library.

Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES)

In this survey the Library question is- *the Library resources are good enough for my needs (including physical and online)* and is part of the Resources section of the PTES. In this category Loughborough scored highly gaining top position out of 88 participating institutions. We are pleased that this is the case, as I am sure are my colleagues in IT Services. Looking at this section by school, all results were in the top ten but with some results being that of 8th we see if there are actions to take to improve satisfaction levels.

In terms of comments, positive comments relate to the Library service as a whole, resources and support; negative comments tend to concern lack of space and lack of online resources. This is true for comments relating to both the East Midlands and London campuses.

Postgraduate Research student Experience Survey

The Library also received good scores in this survey with our results in the Library physical and online resources questions achieving 5th in the country.

We have a good working relationship with our colleagues in the Doctoral College and we hope this will allow us to gain more insight into the needs of our research student community.

The Library's response to Covid
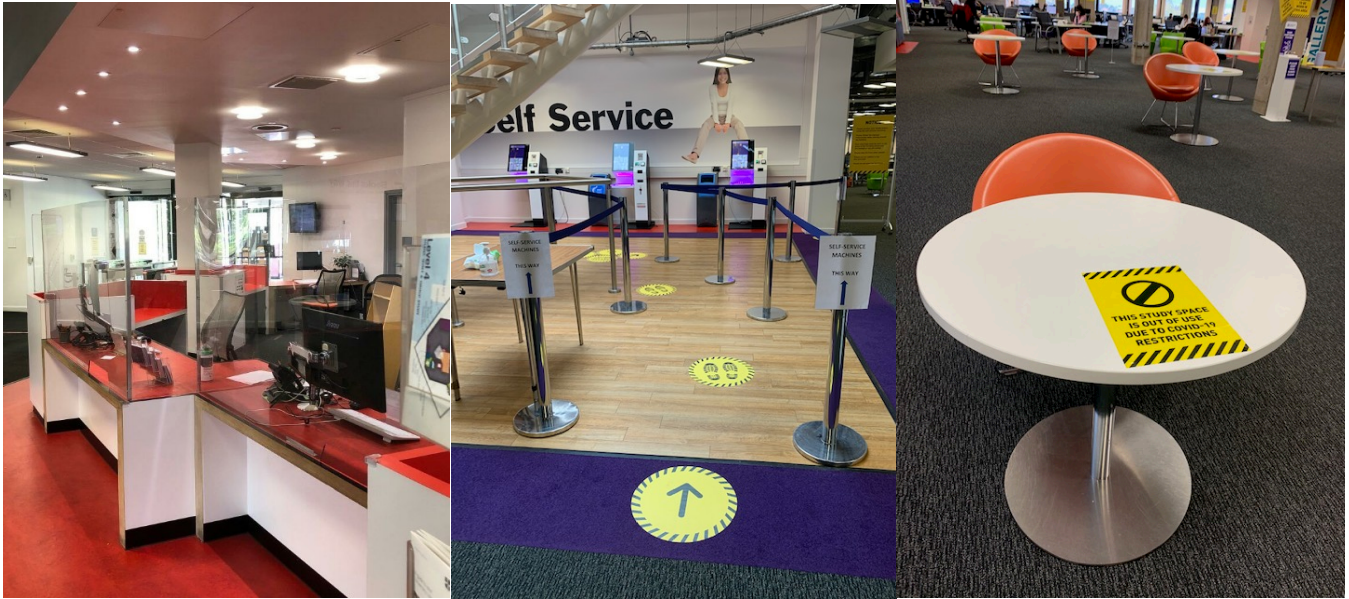
Perspex screens at the help desk
one

A one-way system for issue of books

socially distanced spaces for

The pandemic saw us all change the way we deliver our services and support and activity. Whilst this annual report looks at the past academic year for this section of the report going back to the start of the pandemic is useful in order to show the Library's full response.

March 2020 – July 2020

The first lockdown and closure of the physical Library building on our Loughborough and London Campuses saw the pivot to an online-only service with inevitable restrictions to space and print content. In support of Learning and Teaching colleagues moved to online teaching and support for all students echoing the academy and similar action was taken to support colleagues with their research. Our Research Repository team were able to continue to support the submission of research, open access and the REF online.

During the first lockdown we answered 166 re-routed calls and 1095 emails sent to the general library@lboro email account.

With the access to the physical collection removed we needed to work at speed and with agility to respond to challenges with the supply and access to print materials by focussing on digital access to items on reading lists. We directed budget to eBook licences and worked with a number of publishers to provide access to additional digital content. Most notably we partnered with the digital books platform Koretext to support access to a range of digital textbooks as part of a free programme offered by publishers at this stage of the pandemic. We also

worked with outside agencies such as the CLA on extending support for online material via our online e-reserves service.

However, with a number of students still on campus and in the local area and with assessments approaching we were keen to begin to offer some of the services we had necessarily needed to suspend and to enable staff to work from the building.

In early May we worked with colleagues in Health and Safety and Facilities Management to make our spaces safe for colleagues to come back to the Library building and as a consequence we launched a "click and collect" service for print items.This was then launched in similar way from our London campus in July. Over 685 requests were received resulting in the loan of 4080 books.

As we were unable to open our building until libraries came off the Governments "mandatory closure list" we supported an initiative to provide study spaces for students on campus and in the local area. Library staff managed a socially distanced study space in James France from May 27th-June 19th 2020, which, whilst limited in terms of opening times and number of spaces did offer a change of scene and an opportunity to access the University wifi for quiet study.

During this time, we also introduced a free postal returns service to allow all students to return books free of charge via Royal Mail. When we went into the first lockdown there were 27,000 items out on loan with 6,700 items on loan to finalists. We have retained this service as an appropriate addition to our circulation services. We also collected books from halls and made return boxes available at the Students' Union.

We then planned for the time when we could re-open for our users.

July 2020 – December 2020

In July 2020 we were able to reopen for users and since then we have remained open throughout all of the restrictions. The first additional service we offered was a limited "stay and study" service for University members of all kinds to work in a socially distanced study space on Level 3 of the Library. Our collections and other floors remained closed, but it was great to be able to reopen our doors.

We were also able to prepare for the start of the new academic year, working closely with colleagues across the institution on plans for our physical spaces on both campuses, dependent on government guidance.

From October 2020 to December 2020, we re-opened all of the floors of the Library including access to the shelves. 450 spaces were reconfigured as individual, socially distanced spaces only, with face coverings mandatory, one way systems in place and Perspex screens at the help desk.

The need to move into the new academic year with a flexible approach to learning and teaching delivery saw a range of adaptations to the support we provide in this area. Including, adjustments to copyright guidance and moving all workshops online. Continued development of the Library offer for learning and teaching continues to ensure we provide a valuable offer for our users which aligns to our University's approach.

We also continued to develop our provision of digital resources following the removal of free access to digital textbooks by with publishers, looking carefully at what we are able to provide. E-text book licenses are expensive, often prohibitively so and we had to look at usage data to make decisions on purchase.

January 2021 - July 2021

As the months leading up to Christmas and into the New Year saw the reintroduction of restrictions, we adjusted our in-building services and the physical space in the Pilkington Library. We re-opened this space in January with a further reduced capacity (to 235 from 450) and once again closed the lower levels of the building and consequently, access to the print collection. We took this decision as we knew we could reintroduce the "click and collect service" for our users, thus limiting movement around the building and mixing but not reducing access to print material. With more students on campus and in town we collected over 10,000 books for 3,500 users from January to April when we reopened the bookshelves and the lower floors.

In order to help with the reduced capacity in the Pilkington Library, we also introduced a new space booking system LibCal (see achievements section above) which has proved really valuable for space management and provided a simple way for our users to book a space in the Library. We worked with colleagues across the University to publicise the service and have retained this as an ongoing service for group study rooms and the silent study area.

With thanks to colleagues in Marketing and Advancement

From March to July 2021 we reviewed our space and made arrangements to adjust it according to the Government's Roadmap.

As a result, following a change of guidance at the end of March we reopened our lower levels on April 12th for the start of the summer term and increased our study space capacity back to 450 and the building capacity to 550.

We also worked with our colleagues in Campus Services to look at the café space and the reintroduction of café seating.

July 2021 -October 2021

During vacation we retained the measures from the previous term, running the space with reduced capacity and study space but for the start of the academic year we have been able to adjust the space and reduce some of the mitigating measures.

We have also been able to review the physical space as some of the changes we necessarily made to the Library space worked well. For example removing some furniture that had high sides allowed for open sight lines across Level 3 and placing individual café style tables adjacent to the café which extended that space for students. Over the years we had also reviewed loan periods and as a result had an area that could be repurposed into useful study space. The "High Demand" area on Level 3 had been utilised as a book quarantine area but with this no longer required we were able to progress changes.

As a consequence of this review we have:

- moved the short stay PCs to near the printer and removed the wall that housed them thus creating a barrier free area on Level 3 near to the PC Clinic,
- taken down the High Demand area and created a more useful space containing furniture appropriate for group study.
- moved a consultation pod into the new group area and made it available for student booking as Study Room 3c (For pictures see section Key Achievements)
- removed the help desks from the lower floors and replaced them with direct access phones for support calls
- maintained the removal of most of the restrictions on eating and drinking in the Library.

At the very start of the year we were delighted to host a pop-up vaccination clinic. Now that has finished, we have reintroduced the space to students, with the adjustments we made during the summer.

With the changes in guidance we have reintroduced group study at tables and in study rooms and have relaxed the need to wear face coverings even when seated. Face coverings are still required whilst moving about and in some areas of our space where distancing is more challenging we have reduced capacity. Our plan is to reflect the wider University measures and extend our capacity as cases reduce.

It has been great to welcome our students back into a space that allows for a range of studying needs.

Priority areas for 2021/22

Our Blueprint provides us with a framework upon which to plan for the future, we will need now to look at implementation - moving us from planning to tangible activity. It is likely that some of this work will look internally at our processes and services which will involve institutional-wide discussion and prioritisation.

However, there are other areas that we have already identified as requiring focussed time and energy during this next year.

- Being committed to taking action in relation to equality, diversity and inclusivity. We will
  - o review the Race Equality Charter action plan to see how the Library can support these actions.
  - o reach out to create connections from within student and staff networks.
  - o continue to work with colleagues in SWAI and IT Services on the accessibility of content and with other colleagues on the accessibility of our spaces
  - o raise awareness within our unit of issues and provide support, training and resources
- Continue to support Open Research through the working group and our services
- Work with colleagues on space utilisation to maximise our space, particularly within the Pilkington Library
- Move forward with a digital first approach to content provision, looking at data to inform our provision and is of best value.
- Continue to work with the University and within the sector on negotiations for scholarly content. This includes the transition from "pay to read" arrangements towards "pay to publish" agreements as well as provision for e-textbooks
- Support our staff to gain skills to support new ways of working.
- Review our offer in London to ensure parity and consistency across sites.

The above-mentioned activities are not exhaustive and do not show the full range of our work and services in a given academic year, but they are indicative of the reach of our offer to our university community. I am positive about our direction and our plans but mindful of the challenges that we all face, I know we remain committed to delivering value to our users.