LibQual 2010 Survey Comments

What you liked about the library.
We were very pleased to have many very positive comments from you:

You’ve really done a great job in improving the library over the past few years. It is inviting, has fantastic study spaces to suit any preference, excellent collection of books, helpful staff, and the online access to journals is excellent.

The library is first class. The automated check in/out systems are genius. The layout is very welcoming and it’s generally a nice place to be.

I’ve really enjoyed my time in the library, and without it would have found my time at university impossible. Thank you very much :)

Electronic Resources, provision and access.

Some of the online resources; search mechanisms etc could be more user-friendly –

Sometimes hard to find ejournals using the electronic materials section of the online catalogue search engine

The e-journals can be very tortuous to access with multiple windows to open and sometimes you need to do another search to look for a paper. I sometimes have trouble accessing these, I then request them (pay 2 quid) and then am told that they are on line but don’t get the money back even though I have spent hours trying to find these papers.

I cannot find electronic resources at all easily, in fact the ability to search for electronic item or hard copy has recently got much more difficult and not easier with a change in the searching facility, even items I know are available I cannot locate. The database search facility is particularly frustrating to use.

I feel that the online library search engine could be made simpler- it can be difficult to conduct a search if you are not sure exactly which item (particularly journals) you need.

It would be helpful if there was a section to read about making the best use of the e-resources e.g. using the vet-related search engines. It takes forever to find journals that I need.

New WebPages are less convenient for me that old ones - takes two clicks to get from Uni home page to library and then another one or two to get to the catalogue (the only reliable way to get to journals outside uni network).

Access to online resources needs updating and revamping as the Library pushes for online access to Journals... The library web page and the library catalogue page can be meshed together so that resources between the 2 pages can be easily accessed.

Library website is difficult to use, quite confusing to navigate.
Terry Bucknell, Electronic Resources Manager responds to your comments:

We are conscious that we need to create and provide interfaces that allow ‘novice’ users to perform simple searches whilst allowing ‘expert’ users to perform precise searches. Starting in the summer of 2010 we are planning the following changes:

- Implementing a ‘discovery service’ so search a large number of databases quickly and simultaneously (to replace Metalib) and to provide more reliable access to full-text
- Implementing a complete redesign of the library catalogue to give it a modern look and feel and to introduce additional features
- Implementing a new set of pages to give simple, informative subject-based access to resources
- Adding help and guidance to existing e-resources pages, including more use of video clips
- Streamlined support for off-campus access

We have already implemented enhancements to SFX / find it @ Liverpool to offer:

- Article recommendations: “people who read this article also read these articles”
- Links to Scopus and Pubmed abstracts where full-text is not available
- Links to Impact Factors for (articles in) journals covered in Journal Citation Reports

There are some areas where we would prefer things to be simpler but this just isn’t yet presently possible:

- E-journals from small publishers are sometimes on platforms which do not offer IP authentication, but require us to login with a username and password that they provide us
- Our SFX / find it @ liverpool link resolver cannot link directly to articles on some smaller e-journal sites because these sites do not offer a way of generating links from an article’s year, volume, issue and page number.
- Some databases do not co-operate with federated search services or discovery services, so have to be searched separately.
- Many journals provide free access to selected articles or for short periods of time so we cannot always say definitively whether we will be able to access a particular article (but in general, as a research-driven institution, we think it is better to offer an article that you may not be able to access immediately online, rather than to suppress records from results lists unless we are certain that it is available online).
Library environment and services: Sydney Jones Library.
Laura Dunn Deputy Head of User Services responds to your comments:

The big issues that were raised from this year’s Libqual survey concerning the library environment and services were mirrored in both the Sydney Jones and the Harold Cohen Library. The top issues you raised concerned the environment of the libraries including space, temperature and toilets. You also wanted to see quiet zones within the libraries kept quiet. Other concerns included the need for more computers in the library and dissatisfaction with the helpfulness of some of our staff.

*Majority of staff are extremely helpful and friendly but a few seem unwilling to help and frustrated when asked for assistance.*

*Staff could be more enthusiastic about working in the library. More smiles and happy faces please*

We are obviously concerned that some of our customers have not received the help and support they expect from Library staff and to refocus our efforts on customer service, library staff have been taking part in a University wide training programme on customer experience. These initial sessions will be followed up by further sessions facilitated by the library senior managers. In October we will be following up this training with a customer evaluation exercise carried out by University of Liverpool students.

In addition we have reviewed some of our procedures and given consideration to staffing levels at service points.

*The library services are generally very good, but more thought should be given to providing more workspaces in the short loan section and Grove Wing.*

Whilst we want to create as much working space as possible we need to maintain a balance between number of PCs available and traditional study space which there is high demand for. As such we have over the summer period created additional study spaces in a variety of environments. We have created 8 more quiet working space in the Short Loan area and 12 further silent study spaces in the Law Library on the second floor of the Abercromby Wing. For group work we have created a brand new area for student on the ground floor of the Link, with seating for 26 students.

In addition we have improved the provision of power points on the first floor of the Grove Wing to facilitate the use of laptops.

*My only issue is with the noise that sometimes occurs in quiet study areas. I understand this is difficult to control, but I would feel better if Library Staff gently told people who are talking loudly or listening to audible music to be a little quieter.*

*The only major problem I have with the library is noise levels, and I know that this is an issue for a lot of students. Many students pay no attention to the designated quiet and silent study areas. It can be very noisy and distracting in all areas of the library, especially at exam time*
when it’s busy. The rules about talking and mobile phones need to be enforced much more strictly - most students don’t feel comfortable asking their peers to be quiet, so there needs to be more effective supervision by library staff.

Students liked the idea of having zoned areas to the library but wanted the quiet and silent areas to be just that.

Our roving staff supervise the various zones within the library but to reinforce the message for students who may not have noticed or understood the zoning policy we have improved the signage to the first and second floors of the Grove Wing to emphasise the quiet and silent zones.

It is part of the role of our Roving Support staff to monitor levels of noise within quiet and silent areas, but realistically we do not have enough staff to provide a constant presence and the most effective way to deal with this problem would be for students to respect the need for quiet and use the various zones appropriately. We would like to find positive ways of reinforcing this message to the student body and certainly welcome ideas on how best to achieve this. In addition we are considering organising focus group sessions on this issue.

It is often either too hot or too cold, the new part of the building is hot and the old part is cold.

Would appreciate better ventilation in the computer rooms, sometimes the heat is unbearable. The temperature is very inconsistent, as it is hot in the main computer areas, but very cold where the books are kept; both are difficult to work in.

We are working closely with our colleagues within Facilities Management to gain better control of the temperatures within the building and are optimistic that work will be completed by the end of October to repair the dampers to the heating system in the Grove Wing of the Sydney Jones Library.
Library environment and services: Harold Cohen Library

Lesley Butler User Services Manager Harold Cohen Library responds to your comments about the Harold Cohen Library.

Ladies toilets are appalling.

Please upgrade the toilets as it was still a very old fashioned type and should be remodelled. Additionally it’s not always clean.

We have been concerned about the condition of the toilets in the Harold Cohen Library for some time and actively looking at ways to raise sufficient funds to effect a complete refurbishment. The good news is we were successful and during summer 2010 all the toilets have had a face lift. We have also taken the opportunity to increase the number of female toilets in the building. An important change to note is the toilets on stack 5 are now designated male and those on stack 6 are the female toilets.

We hope you will agree the work has resulted in toilet provision much more in keeping with our status as a major university research library and it will greatly improve the library experience for our users.

In addition the following work has taken place over the summer period to provide further study space for students.

- Current Journal Room becomes an additional study space

The last few years have seen a steep decline in the number of print journal subscriptions. We have therefore taken the decision to move the remaining issues to a separate location on stack 5 and in their place create an additional multi use study area. The room, which is WiFi enabled, will house a combination of the original desks and chairs but will also have new casual seating in the form of comfortable sofas and low tables for a more relaxed study environment.

Current journals on stack 5 will be integrated as far as possible with the back run of journals pending a large scale move next summer which will result in full integration.

- LearnHigher Room: change of use

From September 2010 the LearnHigher Room will be designated as an area giving priority for both Postgraduate study and also for those who require PCs with assisted software.

12 new PCs with adjustable desks have been installed and these will give access to several types of assisted software.
Support for subject and learning.

Responses from David Clay Deputy Head of Academic Liaison.

The services are great only that there are few copies available that are key text books advised by the lecturers.

The library has increased spending on book acquisitions in recent years. This in itself is not enough and we are committed to continuing to improve the availability of key textbooks. The action we are taking includes developing new and more effective ways of obtaining and managing reading lists. This should provide us with more accurate information about the demand for specific books and the number of copies we need to buy before a module runs. We’ve also made a commitment to purchasing ebook versions of as many key textbooks as possible as these can be used by multiple users simultaneously, both on and off campus and are available at all times. We are already monitoring the usage of books and purchasing additional copies where they are in high demand.

However, it is not possible for us to buy a copy of every textbook for every student, there will always be occasions where you may not be able to access a book immediately and will need to reserve a copy and wait until one becomes available.

Books that are in high demand should be identified and the number available should be increased.

We do a number of things to identify books and other items in high demand. Firstly, if a book is on a reading list we find out how many students are taking that module and whether the book is one everyone is expected to read. We use this information to work out how many copies to buy. Secondly, each week we produce a list of books that are reserved and where this shows high levels of demand we will, wherever possible, purchase additional copies. Thirdly, in many subject areas we review the usage of the books in that area over the previous 12 months and identify titles where additional copies might usefully be purchased. Finally, we encourage staff and students to bring any problems to our attention and where you do we take immediate action to resolve them.

I think the availability of books in digital format needs to be increased, especially for course required/ recommended texts.

We are committed to making more books available in digital format. Where we are asked to buy a book for the library we will usually purchase an e-book where one is available, either in addition to or instead of a printed copy.

Unfortunately, many of the books aren’t available for us to buy as an e-book. In particular, we struggle to acquire e-book versions of core textbooks as many publishers won’t sell them to libraries as they believe this will lead to fewer sales direct to students and lower profits. Another problem we find is that publishers insist on applying cumbersome Digital Rights Management (DRM) to their e-books which make them harder to copy but difficult to read, navigate and stop people from carrying out legitimate activities like saving a copy for reading offline or on a mobile device or even printing out a chapter. We are working with others to try to persuade publishers to change their
minds about DRM and selling e-versions of textbooks to libraries and hope we will see some improvements in future years.

There has been more than one occasion where I’ve searched for books that the library does not stock it seems to me that there is room for improvement in terms of purchasing new books.

Where we don’t have a book we encourage you to ask us to buy a copy for the library. You can do this by using the suggest a book form on the library catalogue, via the Online Enquiry Service, going to one of our Information Support Desks or by contacting your Liaison Librarian. While we can’t guarantee we will buy what you ask for, we give every request serious consideration and will always contact you to explain our decision. Where we decide not to purchase a book or where no copies are available to purchase you can use the Inter Library Loan Service to borrow a copy from another library.

We’re aware that Postgraduate Research Students in particular may need books we don’t stock and have tried to make it easier for you to get them. We have created a book fund solely for the use of PGR students and if you contact your Liaison Librarian and let them know what books you need we will usually able to buy them for you.

It would have been better to have discussions about the library at least twice per year so that students will raise their concerns.

There are a number of ways that you can raise your concerns with the library. You can tell us what you think through our Virtual Information Service, by using the Online Feedback form, by completing a comments card or by speaking to a member of library staff. Liaison Librarians represent the library on Staff Student Liaison Committees in most academic departments and you can raise concerns with them at these meetings through your student representatives.

It would be useful if there was electronic access to the entire history of a journal, rather than just the most recent years, which is the case with some electronic journals.

We agree. Over the last 5 years the library has actively pursued the purchase of journal archive which is why we have access to nearly all Elsevier, Springer, Wiley, Sage, IOP, ACS, AM, AIP, RSC, ACS, Nature journals, OUP, CUP and IEE journals back to issue one. We will continue to try to acquire relevant journal archives and are working with academic departments to establish priorities. If there is a specific journal archive you believe we should have please let your Liaison Librarian know and will see what we can do.

I could be better at Google searching, but have just learnt how to use key-word and filter, as I’ve gone along - often wonder whether there are better ways of searching - tend to use it every day for something or another. I’m also a bit lost on the whole status of electronic books, and would welcome more awareness-raising stuff about copyright issues/developments/updates.
The library runs a programme of events aimed at academic and support staff. We intend to add sessions on copyright and Making the most of Google to the programme for 2010/11. If you have any further suggestions for useful events please let your Liaison Librarian know. If you contact them they would also be happy to update you about what’s happening in the library, to answer any questions you may have and to discuss the status of e-books with you. You can get updates about the Library from our web site, by following @livunilibrary on Twitter and by checking the E-Resources News and Trials blog (http://liveresources.blogspot.com/).

The university apparently does not pay the open access fee to Springer to allow papers published by staff in their online journals to be viewed free from web pages. The example is Journal of High Energy Physics which was completely open access when run by IOP publishing. It means the work of university staff cannot be viewed globally. Though I very much appreciate the resourcing implications and decisions required concerning changing this.

The library is very supportive of open access, including publishing in open access journals and making papers available in repositories. The library has set up an open access repository for the University, called the University of Liverpool Research Archive, and are currently working to integrate it with other university systems. Once we have completed the work academic staff will be able to enter details of their publications in the Research Archive quickly and easily (using a doi, Pubmed ID, arXiv id or ISBN) and they will only have to do this once as the information will be shared with other systems for use in portfolio’s of assessment, web pages and the REF.

The library has also proposed setting up a fund to pay open access author fees but with less success. Our proposal has not been taken up by the University to date. However, we will continue to lobby the University and will continue to look into the possibility of our paying authors open access charges in the future. If you would like to discuss this in more detail please contact David Clay.

If you would like to leave feedback on the library you can connect to our Facebook page here.