

National University of Ireland, Galway

James Hardiman Library, 2009/10 Annual Report

Objectives Set for 2009/10

- Provide an excellent, high value-added customer experience
- Maximize the value of the staff asset
- Ensure that all library services and activities demonstrably and effectively contribute to University objectives
- Develop an integrated marketing strategy
- Support national and regional strategies and initiatives
- Maximise exploitation of collections
- Promote a fully flexible approach and culture
- Manage space effectively

Note: annual planning was introduced for the calendar year 2010 to which these objectives refer; an operational plan, spanning the period September 2010-August 2011 was developed in May, transitioning annual planning to the academic year.

Many of the objectives above are at a high level and, while specific actions for each were defined this year, it is envisaged that many of the same objectives will feature, with evolving associated actions, in the coming years. The overarching theme of the annual plan was customer focus and it is probably more meaningful to note here the key deliverables identified in the plan from a customer perspective and to use these as the basis for assessing achievements:

- Easier access to collections and staff help
- Maximum staff capability and knowledge
- Clearly marketed services
- Targeted course and research support
- Fully-functional physical and online environment
- Influence in service performance measurement and improvement

Achievements

Progress was made to varying extents across all objectives and deliverables as well as in some other areas. Some highlights follow:

Easier access to collections and staff help

- ❖ Faster book shelving process and de-selection of 8000 volumes to improve access to collections
- ❖ Development of new website emphasising direct searching of collections and access to staff help
- ❖ Longest summer opening hours in Irish university libraries
- ❖ Implementation of new University policy to ensure return of books pre-graduation, improving ongoing access to course books (and yielding an additional €14K in fines income)

Maximum staff capability and knowledge

- ❖ Researching of staff competency frameworks and presentation of findings and proposed university-wide implementation to members of UMT and Human Resources.

Clearly marketed services

- ❖ Annual service marketing plan, identifying specific projects, events and campaigns and including more structured Library participation in University events such as Open Day, Graduate Studies Fair

Targeted course and research support

- ❖ Over 400 hours of information skills training to 6000 students
- ❖ Open access to 700 university research publications via ARAN service
- ❖ Benchmarking of archives and special collections service
- ❖ Acquisition and processing of archives of Thomas Kilroy, Brendan Duddy and Huston family

Fully-functional physical and online environment

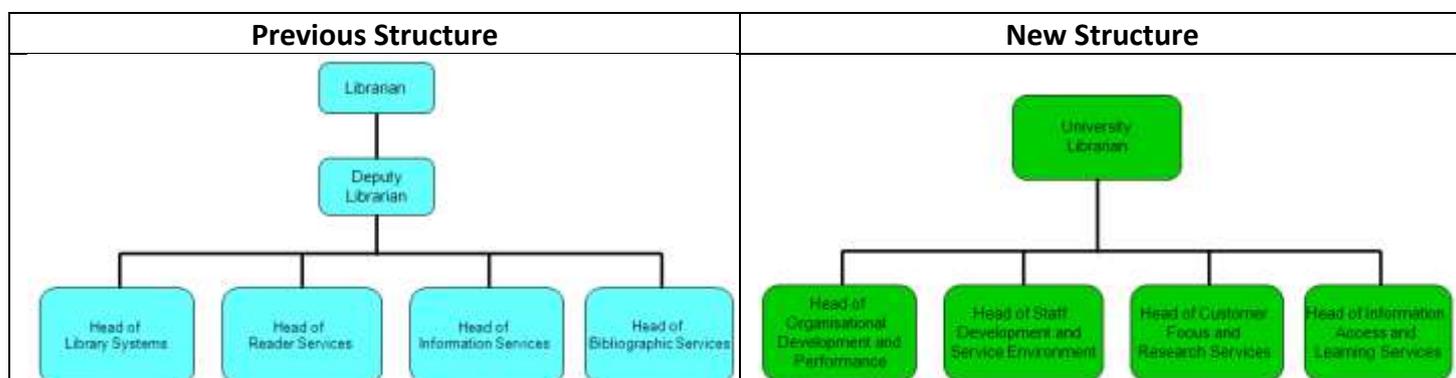
- ❖ Opening of Nursing and Midwifery Library and key role in development of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences Research Building (AHSSRB) whose construction has commenced
- ❖ Upgrade of wireless access and provision of 500 additional power sockets for users of laptops and other devices
- ❖ Implementation of Primo search system, enhancing ease of use and information resource discovery

Influence in service performance measurement and improvement

- ❖ Survey of taught postgraduate students, adding to longitudinal survey data from annual survey programme initiated in 2003

Beyond these objectives, the following achievements are of note:

- ❖ Implementation of a new senior management and divisional structure, focused on increased cross-functional teamwork, spreading of expertise and achievement of priorities



- ❖ Securing additional funding from Registrar's Office and Foundation Office for IT and archives projects
- ❖ Maintaining staff morale and commitment in challenging times

Setbacks and Issues

Reductions in staffing and budget levels have stretched service provision and slowed progress during the year. A particular management issue has been the need to invest considerable time in restructuring different teams, particularly at the end of 2009, when five posts were vacated in the space of two months. This occurred just after the new management team and divisional structure had been introduced and added to the learning curve for senior managers especially. Retirements in the subject librarian team at that time halved the professional staff support to the College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences, while depleting levels of support to the College of Engineering and Informatics.

While some functions can be reduced or discontinued, the majority are essential, are expected by academic staff and students and need to be sustained and indeed intensified as student numbers grow. A general consequence of staffing losses is that there is less scope to pass on work to other staff and senior managers find themselves engaged in operational matters at the expense of their strategic role. Engagement with the operational and support services strategy planning exercises initiated by the University in the past year has challenged the senior management team to find the optimal balance between immediate-term service management and longer-term planning.

In general, with Library staffing losses standing at just over 12% of the FTE returned to the HEA at the end of 2008, there is a limit to how far service can be sustained at acceptable levels. A series of redeployments, a new roster in the Library Steward team to maintain existing opening hours, and changed working practices have sought to mitigate the impact of staffing reductions. The goodwill of staff has been a major asset but this has been severely tested in the face of reduced pay and extra workload.

A particular issue is the importance of retaining four contract posts at Assistant Librarian grade, all in the area of research support. These posts were created between 2006 and 2008 and each post holder has developed specialist skills in areas of strategic importance, notably research impact measurement, digitisation, archives and open access publication of NUI Galway research output. Current contracts for three of these posts will expire in 2010/11 and discussions on their longer term future continue with the Executive Director of Operations. The contribution of this group of posts to the University's research effort is significant but curtailed by the inability to plan beyond the immediate timeline of each contract expiry.

An unanticipated difficulty in the non-pay area concerned threats to the future funding at national level to the IReL (Irish Research eLibrary) service. This created major uncertainty regarding access to over 20000 research journals and called for ongoing local discussions with researchers and national lobbying with funders and negotiations with suppliers. Support from the IUA Council proved vital in maintaining all but 12% by cost of the IReL service but experience of this funding crisis exposed the extent of NUI Galway's dependence on this particular shared service. The need to sustain journal subscriptions has also reduced funds available for books, with negative consequences for students, and for special collections and archives to support research.

The emphasis in the Support Services Strategy on stronger partnerships locally and nationally is welcome and has been fully embraced by the Library senior management team in framing proposals via the Library Strategic Planning Group. The team is also particularly committed to maximising the opportunities offered by online content and service delivery with positive implications for the physical Library experience.

The Year Ahead

Service Delivery Objectives

1. Systematically improve access to course reading list material
2. Increase access to the University's published research output
3. Systematically extend access to archival collections
4. Maximise existing space deployment, functionality and upgrade path
5. Ensure awareness by customers of full service offering

Service Development Objectives

1. Progress the development of a competency framework, at University level in the first instance
2. Broaden and deepen collaborations locally and externally to improve service and resource sharing
3. Plan for full exploitation of research support opportunities in the AHSSRB
4. Analyse the cost and value of Library processes
5. Measure service effectiveness through [LibQual](#) and [Sconul](#) benchmarking initiatives

Service Improvement

The initiatives in the previous section will be the focus of service improvement efforts in 2010/11. In particular, the first two service development objectives aim to improve capability and capacity, while the last two will inform decisions on resource deployment and deliver data to target improvement priorities.

Planning and Reporting

Operational Planning: The Library submitted an operational plan for the period September 2010-August 2011 at the request of the Registrar and Deputy President. This focused on the goals in the NUIG Strategic Plan for which he is responsible and was approved by the Operational Planning Group.

Workload Planning: There is no formal system in place; however, leadership of specific sections in the 2010 annual plan and the 2010/11 operation plan is assigned to individual members of the senior management team. Progress is discussed regularly at team meetings and at 1:1 meetings with the Librarian.

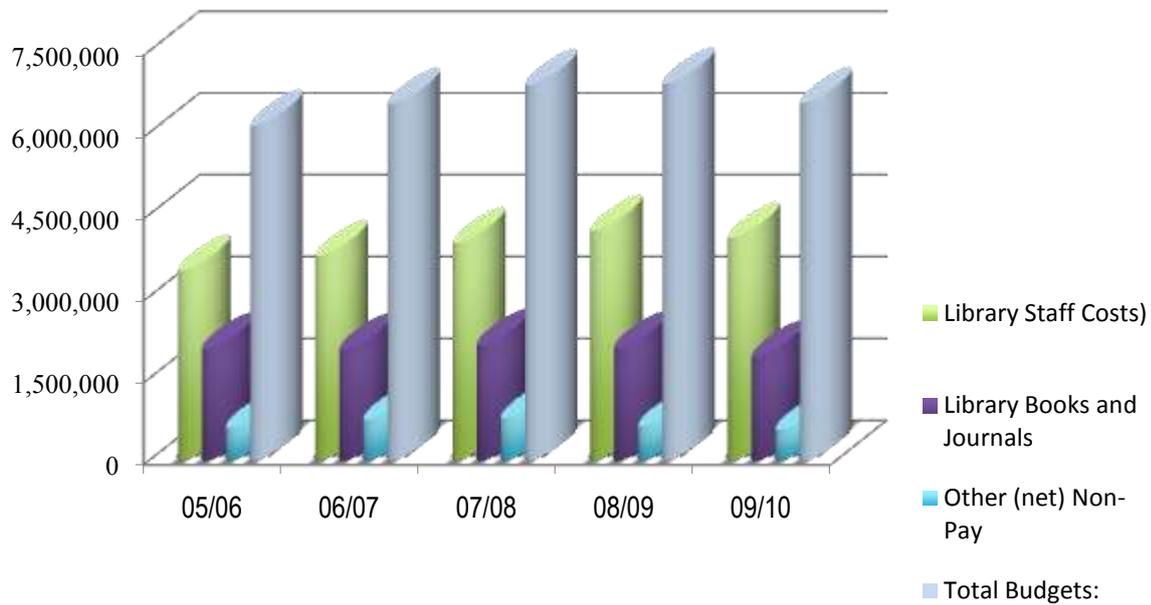
Customer Experience: Separate surveys of students and researchers have been conducted in alternate years since 2003; the LibQual survey scheduled for November 2010 will cover all customers.

Service Outputs and Outcomes: A range of statistical reports is generated, eg number of loans and books catalogued, and participation in the Sconul database will support a more systematic approach. Service outcomes are harder to quantify, although survey data provide evidence. This is an area for further development and one in which the Support Services Strategy can provide valuable leadership.

Benchmarking: LibQual and Sconul will enable benchmarking with other universities primarily. A recent archives benchmarking visit to Edinburgh and Glasgow Universities is driving service development.

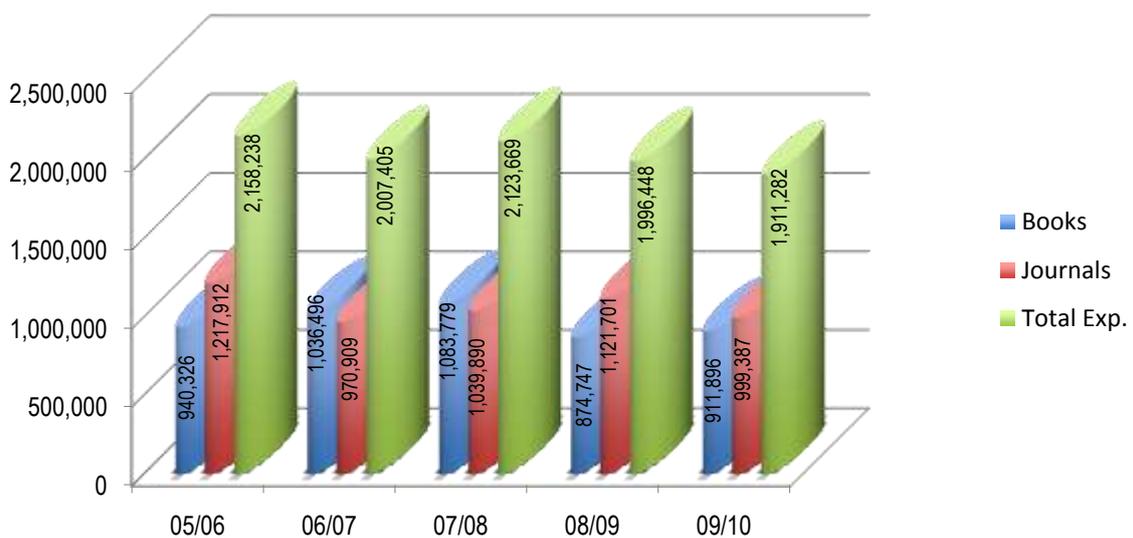
Library Statistics

Library Budget Deployment

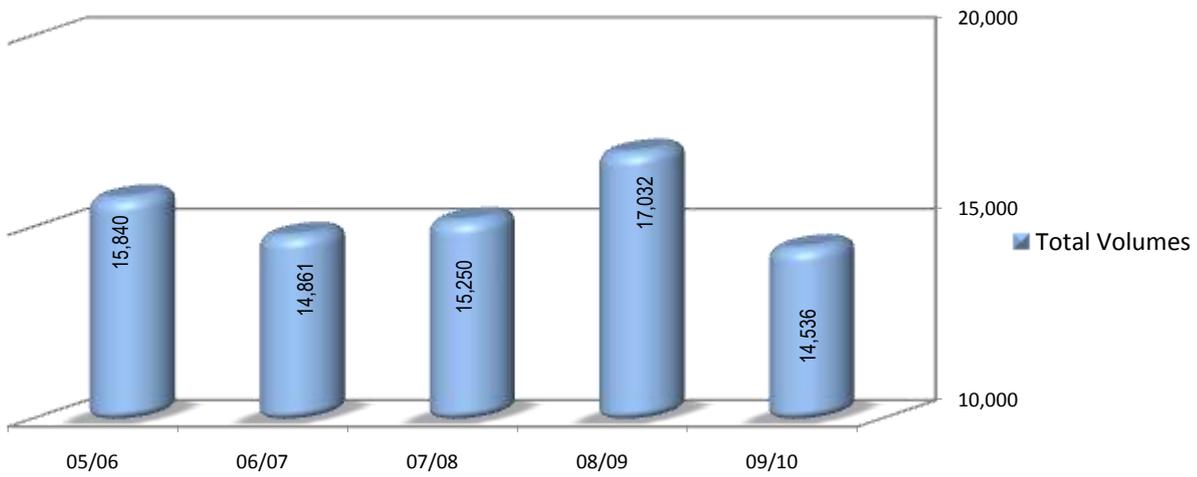


	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10
Library Staff Costs)	€3,486,674	€3,757,399	€3,989,660	€4,218,721	€4,089,641
Library Books and Journals	€2,045,000	€2,032,725	€2,115,000	€2,062,771	€1,898,625
Other (net) Non-Pay	€608,729	€753,690	€782,872	€632,249	€568,322
Total Budgets	€6,140,403	€6,543,814	€6,887,532	€6,913,741	€6,556,588

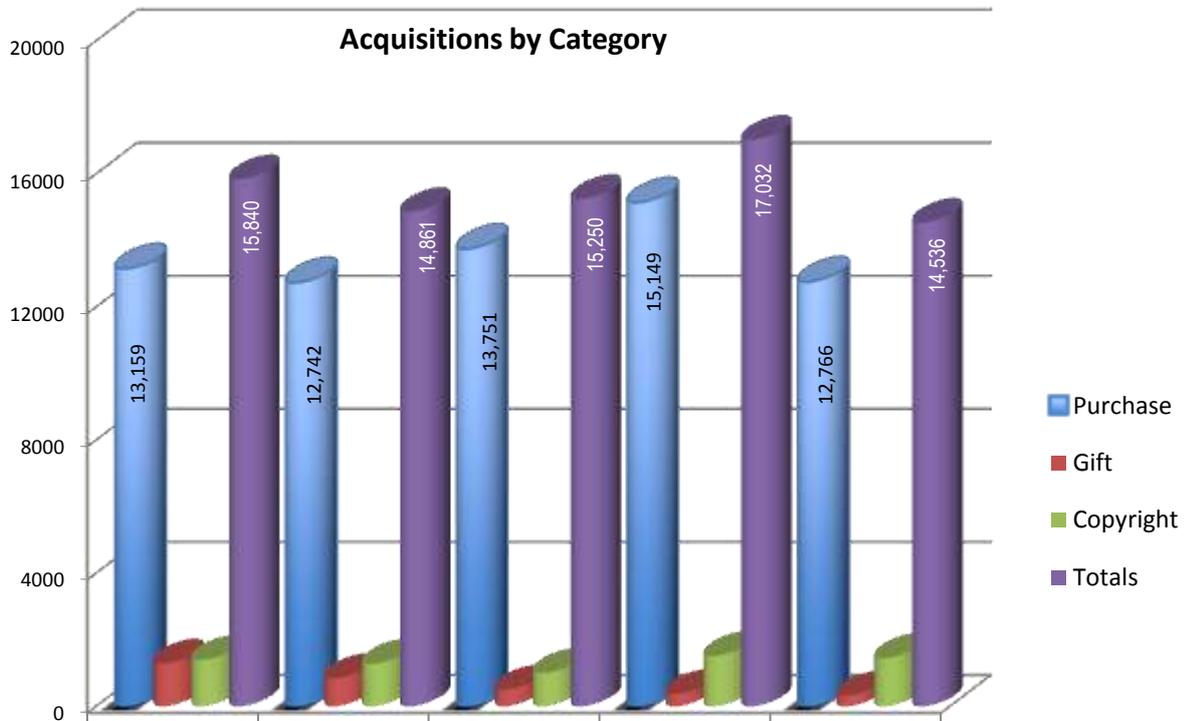
Expenditure Books & Journals



Annual Additions to Stock

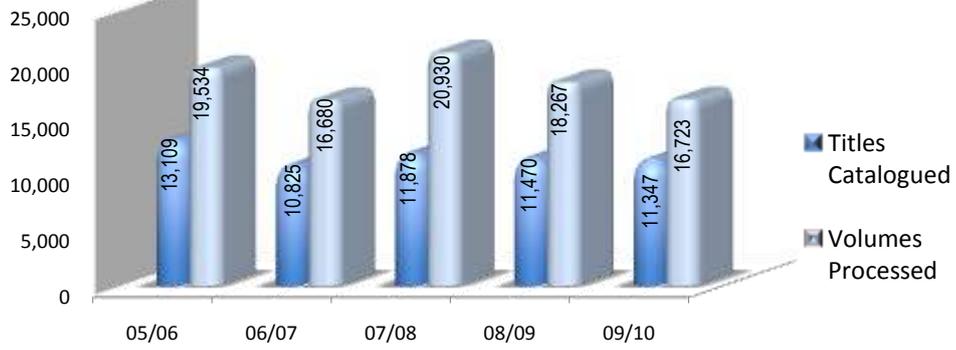


Acquisitions by Category



	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10
Purchase	13159	12742	13751	15149	12766
Gift	1289	842	499	372	319
Copyright	1392	1277	1000	1511	1451
Totals	15,840	14,861	15,250	17,032	14,536

Cataloguing and Processing



Circulation Statistics

