James Hardiman Library
Annual Report 2013/14

Part 1: Overview

The first **quality review** of the Library since 2005 was a key focus throughout the first half of the year in terms of assessing current service status and a catalyst for future planning in the latter half. All staff engaged very actively and enthusiastically in both phases. A concise self-assessment report included a SWOT analysis, benchmarks, individual service reviews and potential improvements. The review group brought expertise, commitment and perspective to the process and its conclusions and recommendations were soundly based on discussions with many stakeholders. The outcomes were highly positive. In its summary of strengths the report noted that the Library "provides services that are held in uniformly and exceptionally high esteem by all stakeholders" and "makes an essential contribution to the Research, Teaching and Learning missions of the University". Its recommendations emphasised transformation of the Library building, development of collections, promotion of archives, effective communications strategies and staff development.

A continuing **strategic focus** was also emphasised in the quality review report and fully embraced. Library staff participated in a series of consultations to create *A Vision for the Library in 2020*, a document outlining agreed values, vision, priorities and key themes. A campus-wide consultation provided helpful opportunities for wider discussion and delivered valuable feedback as well as an endorsement of the vision which, alongside the University's strategic plan for 2015-2020, will inform the development of the Library's plan for the period to 2020. There was a strong engagement throughout the year with the consultation process surrounding the University plan through membership of a range of groups including that charged with documenting the plan. Maintaining and enhancing strategic influence on campus and beyond is vital and another recommendation to review the Library Policy Committee and Archives Group in this context is being pursued, recognising the importance of strong advocacy as well as good governance.

Advocacy is key to achieving a transformation of the **Library building** to a modern and dynamic learning environment, promoting engaged learning as well as University competitiveness in attracting and retaining students. A study into the feasibility, costs and phasing of such a transformation, referencing a range of benchmarked universities and reflecting the views of stakeholders, was close to conclusion at the end of the year. Its publication will be timely as the University's strategy intends to focus on improving existing buildings and prioritisation will be needed. The case for transforming the James Hardiman Library building is strong as there is ample evidence to show that investment elsewhere has delivered major increases in use and new library functions which our users would value. Dissatisfaction with the building continues to be strongly expressed and for the fourth year running it failed to meet the minimum expectations of users according to the LibQual survey. The opening of the adjoining Hardiman Research Building (HRB) resulted in some improvement in the overall *Library as Place* rating but in other ways exacerbated frustration among undergraduates who had expected to enjoy access to it. The HRB has, however, from a Library perspective been a real success in its initial year of occupation, delivering excellent facilities for storing, using and exhibiting archives and special collections. Lastly, on buildings, there has been early engagement with the College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences on upgrading the Medical Library as part of the planned Clinical Sciences Institute refurbishment project.

Service **quality** is an ongoing priority and this year's LibQual survey showed a welcome increase in the overall score for perceived service, up from 6.56 to 6.67, the second highest annual increase since this survey commenced four years ago. The main improvement was in *Library as Place* whose perceived score increased from 5.93 to 6.16. This is in line with experience elsewhere, notably Maynooth University, in that improvements in physical infrastructure tend to boost the perception of the library as a whole. A notable increase, from 6.66 to 6.75, in the score for perceived service in the area of Information Control, focusing on user access to information, was also a key factor in increased user satisfaction. This increase reflected focused development of collections as well as improvements in off-campus access and search facilities, including the Library website. LibQual continues to be an important driver towards service improvement and an in-depth analysis of the latest findings by four Task and Finish Groups resulted in a number of recommendations which informed the drafting of the Library's operational plan for 2014/15.

Although its perceived score in LibQual remained stable, *Affect of Service*, broadly concerned with staff mediation of service, continued to be the highest rated area in the survey and reflects the commitment shown by all staff to providing the highest possible standard of service. In this regard, reductions in staff and budgets have been a major ongoing challenge, to which was added the integration of the Library and ISS **service desks** in September 2013. The new service, which handled an average of 1117 enquires weekly in term time, demanded a massive effort from all concerned and introduced not only a new remit but also new methods of delivery and approaches to organising and managing operations. The way in which staff adjusted to the changes involved reflects great credit on their willingness to adapt and this was recognised by the University President during a launch event in February at which the Student Union Education Officer also expressed appreciation at the extra convenience for students of having a wider range of services available at a central location with generous opening hours. Students placed a similarly high value on another relatively new service based in the Library, the Academic Writing Centre, which delivered more than 700 hours of support during the year.

Resource constraints continued, with a higher target of 7.5%, up from 5%, for headcount and pay budget reduction by the end of 2017, alongside a 5% cut in non-pay budgets. Despite a range of adaptations, reconfigurations and difficult choices, headcount losses continue to compromise existing services, most recently in Special Collections and the Medical Library, while the lack of recruitment opportunities limits both new services and staff promotions. Staff development is all the more important in this context and a major feature of the year was the implementation of the University's revised **PMDS** system. Over fifty reviews were conducted and the opportunity was taken to align individual objectives with operational planning and to identify developmental opportunities. The establishment of a competency framework for support service staff would complement PMDS and the Library is part of University plans in this direction.

The 5% cut in non-pay was the highest in any single year to date and reduced purchasing power for books, journals and other **collections**. This was exacerbated by unfavourable currency rates and a reduction in the accrual fund to a level below the total for books on order which meant that new orders had to be curtailed from December onwards. A couple of subventions at either end of the year helped matters but could not prevent a significant cancellation of journal and databases whose total value was over €120K. That reduction, while sizeable, will be matched quickly by ongoing price increases for journals, the extra costs of e-books which attract VAT and adjustment to a higher contribution to the Irish universities' collective payment for the Elsevier *Science Direct* journals service. Journal cuts impact research in particular but there are also negative consequences in terms of support for course books and research monographs. Our figure of 32 books per FTE student already lags UCC's 57 significantly. Growth in archival and special collections was maintained, however, with the Tim Robinson collection representing a particularly notable addition, alongside others including the archive and book collection of the late Dr. Ros Dixon and the Flynn and Lehany coal mining company archive.

Establishing a longer-term infrastructure for **digital publishing** initiatives was a particular focus during the year. This was stimulated by increased demand for online archives, including research data, and greater opportunities for collaboration on digital scholarship projects, especially within the new Hardiman Research Building. The Library organised a well-attended seminar on Creating and Exploiting Digital Collections in July, bringing together many key players on and beyond the campus and initiating a consultation around a draft Digital Scholarship Enablement Strategy. Digitisation of the Abbey Theatre archive continued, the main development being that the digital archive became available for use in the Reading Room. After a slow start, uptake increased and users included visitors from a number of prestigious universities in addition to local academics and students.

Technology underpins much of the Library's activity. An access control system was implemented in the early part of the year in collaboration with ISS and went live in January. The system has proven effective in enabling access for authorised users only, thereby prioritising the use of limited space for University staff and students. It also generates valuable data on usage for a number of purposes, including decision making and insights into student learning engagement across disciplines. Other IT initiatives included a decision regarding a preferred reading list management system, pending the outcome of a funding bid, and further implementation of the CALM archives management system. A project to tender for a replacement library management system was

deferred when a collaborative national procurement emerged as a possibility. This did not materialise, however, and a local procurement is expected to proceed in the first half of 2015.

While IT enables a range of services, **personal engagement and communication** by Library staff with users remains a priority. Apart from high levels of interaction at the Library and IT Services Desk, already noted, the provision of information skills training sessions is a major activity which has grown appreciably in recent years, with many of these sessions now embedded in academic programmes. A funded study into academic staff and student perceptions of core skill needs commenced and its findings are likely to be influential. Two-way engagement with our range of audiences has been given a new prioritisation in the past year. This has been reflected in the development of a complaints system, the publication of a communication plan and the formation of a Communications Group. The Group has issued a regular stream of information through different channels, including social media, an e-zine and a new video wall installed in the atrium of the Hardiman Research Building.

The same venue hosted its first major **exhibition**, "Performing Ireland, 1904-2014", foregrounding the Abbey Theatre archive as well as the University's strengths in theatre and drama generally. Complementing exhibitions in engaging audiences on and beyond the campus with archives and special collections was a series of public events which included the official opening of the Hardiman Research Building, Culture Night and occasions to mark the bequest and cataloguing of the Henry Library and the collections of Dr. Ros Dixon and Henry Ringling North. Distinguished visitors included the President of Ireland, the Tánaiste and the Minister for Education.

External engagement is vital and staff continue to play important roles in CONUL and the IUA Librarians Group and their associated committees and other groups, as well as presenting at or attending conferences and visiting other universities in the UK and US for benchmarking and networking purposes. Closer to home there has been very significant input to a complex national book procurement tender for the higher education sector, in addition to increasing engagement with Shannon College of Hotel Management ahead of its incorporation into the University. Balancing external and internal initiatives will remain essential in the coming year as the University strives for global impact alongside an excellent on-campus experience.

Part 2: Metrics (2013/14)

Metrics	2013/14 Level	Unit of Measure	Period	Data source	Notes
Inputs					
Unit headcount (total):♦	**72.34**				
Headcount by service / function:					
Organisational Development & Performance	3	FTE	1st October, 2013	2013/14 budget	
Staff Development and Service Environment	20.45				
Research Services	9.06				
Customer Services Desk	9.18				
Information Access and Learning Services	23.65				
Management and Overheads (Senior Management Team + Administrator)	7				
Pay costs (total):♦	**3,927,230**				
Pay costs by service / function:					
Organisational Development & Performance	193,930	Euro	1st October, 2013	2013/14 budget	
Staff Development and Service Environment	854,916				
Research Services	487,660				
Customer Services Desk	439,497				
Information Access and Learning Services	1,257,498				
Academic Writing Centre	28,800				
Management and Overheads (Senior Management Team + Administrator)	664,929				
Non-pay recurrent budget (total):♦	**2,248,009**				

♦ The pay, non-pay, and headcount data required are those that relate to 2013/14 budget allocations, as of 1st October 2013. Directors are asked to **subdivide the totals** by function / service / service groups within their Unit, where appropriate.

Non-pay recurrent budget service / function:					
Organisational Development & Performance	218,800	Euro	1st October, 2013	2013/14 budget	
Staff Development and Service Environment	74,000				
Research Services and Customer Focus	14,000				
Information Access and Learning Services	96,500				
Information Resources	1,751,636				
General Operations	93,073				

Metrics

Total catalogued book stock	517,638	No. of books	For AY 2013/14	Cataloguing statistics + discard statistics	
Total books loaned / renewed	268104	No. of books		Aleph system	
Books loaned by volume in stock	52%	Percent		Derived from above data	
Online journal article downloads (total)	1,661,549	No. of journals			
Cost per journal article download	0.32	Euro			
Main Library Hours Open	3,600.5	Hrs per year		Locally compiled	1% decrease on A...
Medical Library Hours Open	3,370	Hrs per year		Locally compiled	2% Increase on AY...
Study places	1,977	No. of places		Locally compiled	1975 in AY 12/13
Stock utilisation (books reshelved)	309,893	No. of books		Returned by shelving staff	10% reduction on ... 12/13
Information skills: user training hours received	9,230	No. of hours		Training statistics	
Research papers published on ARAN	662	No. of papers		ARAN system	
LibQual Overall Perceived	6.67	Standardised score		LibQual survey 2014	Up from 6.56 in 20... improvement of 0...
LibQual Overall Desired	7.79	Standardised score		LibQual survey 2014	Up from 7.67 in 20... reflecting rising expectations

Further metrics [If appropriate, please suggest other relevant metrics].

LIT Desk Closed Tickets	17,811		For AY 2013/14	WebHelpDesk ticketing system	Opened tickets hig... desk staff create t... and escalate to re... Library or ISS staff... appropriate; close... relates to tickets ... desk staff only
LIT Opened Tickets	19,966				
LIT Aleph transactions	27,390				

| Information Skills: No of students attending training | 9,018 | | For AY 2013/14 | Training statistics | |

Part 3: Self-assessment against Operational Plan 2013/14

2013/14 Goals	Targets @ September 2014	Please comment on the extent to which 2013/14 operational planning targets were achieved.
Achieve a successful quality review	Good, well conducted review completed. Recommendations well targeted. Action Plan agreed and being implemented .	Fully achieved, and 2014/15 operational plan is based on agreed action plan arising from quality review recommendations.
Contribute to development of University Strategic Plan, 2014-2019	Library strategic plan drafted and fully aligned to University strategy.	Target was premature in that NUIG strategic plan was not published in 2013/14; however, a Library vision to 2020 has been developed through extensive consultation and will inform, alongside published NUIG strategic plan, the Library's plan.
	Progress against 2009-2014 plan reported.	Mid-plan report from early 2012 has not been updated but quality review self-assessment covered similar ground for period to end of 2013.
Support teaching and learning	Completed review of academic staff & student perceptions of core skill needs	Achieved. Final report completed, circulation and promotion of report to key stakeholders will commence shortly.
	Course reading strategy implemented and new procedures in place	Reading list project paused pending go-live of Module Manager software. Funding bid submitted to Student Project fund.
Manage collections	IReL HSS funding secured.	Fully achieved, IRel HSS funding secured for 2014
	Subscription commitment 2014/15 €1.2m	Subscription review project yielded cancellations to the value of €120k, exceeding target of €100k. However, unfavourable currency changes mean that estimated cost of reduced subscription list for 2014/15 remains at €1.3m
	Floor 1 Journals only available in print	Long term print journal archive policy defined; discarding of journals available online and not destined for long term archive can now proceed. 1,989 books discarded over the last year which is an increase of 11% from previous year
	Two months from book request to arrival	Fully achieved, turnaround time for acquisition of new books is now 2 months from request to on shelf.
Develop customer services excellence	LibQual customer service ratings above 6.91	LibQual score of 6.91, the same as in the previous year, was achieved for *Affect of Service*

2013/14 Goals	Targets @ September 2014	Please comment on the extent to which 2013/14 operational planning targets were achieved.
	Staff behaviours aligned to revised Customer Charter	Customer charter review completed; training programme to embed charter values to expected staff behaviour is in planning
	Charter values are mapped to expected behaviours	Training programme to kick-start process being currently finalised
	Current customer service standards are defined and published online for core services	Generic standards defined through charter, but service specific ones being finalised and will be published online shortly
	Customer complaints mechanism in operation; response times measured and reported	Complaints mechanism in place
	LibQual rating for IT Support above 6.49	Score of 6.47 achieved for IT Support in LibQual, slightly below target; further training & support given to Library staff and higher rating expected for 2015
	Monthly reporting and analysis of metrics on: #tickets closed; # tickets opened; weekly average # tickets outstanding; oldest ticket opened	Metrics in place for all category types
	Integrated Service Desk operational using standardised work documents	Integrated Service Desk fully functional
Support research	Service plan implemented	Service plan completed and implemented for Archives, Special Collections and Research services in the Hardiman Research Building
	Excellent customer ratings for services in AHSSRB	110 positive comments from customers on staff, service and room environment. No formal complaint. Content agreed for a user survey to be run in 2014-2015 and for a collections citation tracking project.
	700 items added to ARAN, supported by systematic advocacy programme	662 items added. Steady progress but perhaps more sustained advocacy for open access publishing could have enabled target to be reached
	Library digitisation strategy exists with clear prioritisations	Digital scholarship enablement strategy has been completed, providing basis for a Library digitisation strategy

2013/14 Goals	Targets @ September 2014	Please comment on the extent to which 2013/14 operational planning targets were achieved.
	Two thirds of Abbey archive digitised	Abbey archive digitization project on target
Implement service communication plan	Library service communication plan published	Library service communication plan published
	Service communication action plan in place	2013/14 Communication priorities defined and met
	Internal communication policy completed centred around principles, practices and agreed meetings structures	Internal communication policy development in progress
Execute IT projects	Existing technology landscape defined and documented for Library systems	Technology landscape documented, and under review
	Library technology strategy developed which defines a roadmap for interoperability between Library and University systems	Interoperability between Library and University systems not achieved but work is ongoing with service provider (ISS) to resolve these issues
	ICT work programme in place with ISS	ISS / Library meetings in place; progress gradual
	Library Management System procurement completed	LMS procurement project paused, will recommence in 2015
	Content discovery and integration strategy exists and aligned to Library strategy	Content discovery and integration strategy drafted
Develop staff capability for a changing environment	All staff have completed an initial PMDS review	PMDS reviews completed
	Targets and competency development plans of each individual match operational plan goals.	Targets and competency development aligned to PMDS reviews
	Staff are demonstrably achieving goals set and performance is monitored regularly.	Goals and performance managed by line managers
	Library has input to any HR skills and competencies strategy for support services, and has developed a skills plan	No progress made on HR skills and competencies strategy for support services; internal Library skills audit being finalised, will be circulated to staff shortly
Increase user satisfaction with the physical spaces provided within the Library	JHL building development study has created an agreed roadmap for future development.	JHL building development study nearing completion.
	Funding plan agreed for implementation of recommendations.	Funding plan to be considered following completion of the development study.

2013/14 Goals	Targets @ September 2014	Please comment on the extent to which 2013/14 operational planning targets were achieved.
	Library AV area repurposed.	Library AV area repurposed to accommodate new style of Group Study space – i.e. an open plan Group Study Area
	Library Reading Room opening hours extended/ seating capacity increased.	Library Reading Room opening hours extended to 19.5 hours daily (07.00-02.30) and 16 additional study table spaces added.
	Access control system operational and initial statistical data collected.	Access control system in place; first draft of statistics being gathered
	Health & Safety Audit recommendations in respect of additional back-up documentation implemented.	Recommendations from H&S audit nearing completion
Manage projects effectively	All projects delivered using PRINCE2.	Major new projects are being delivered using the Library's project management framework
	Staff will have received one day workshop training in PRINCE2.	15 Staff received project management training in 2014
	Project structure, monitoring and communication are well supported.	All live projects are being supported internally
	Central repository in place for all Library projects.	Central repository in place for key Library projects; continuous development of repository is ongoing