

Stakeholder communication, consultation and engagement strategy 2014-2017

Purpose

The Directorate of Library and Learning Services understands that communication, consultation and engagement with its users are essential to the provision of a high quality and customer focussed service. This strategy is a demonstration of our commitment to undertaking this activity. We provide customers with information on the services and facilities available to them, and keep them informed of changes and developments. Customers are consulted and involved and their feedback encouraged, listened to and acted upon. Outcomes are incorporated into our planning and improvement processes and also fed back to customers.

In particular, the views of students, individually and collectively, should inform service operations and planning with the purpose of improving the student experience both for current and future cohorts. Student involvement in quality assurance and enhancement has a positive influence on the delivery and development of the LLS user experience,

This strategy will be subject to review every three years, or sooner should circumstances dictate, and the schedule updated annually. This work will be undertaken by the Head of User Experience on behalf of the department's Senior Management Team, and with input from departmental service improvement groups, particularly the Marketing and Communications and Service Quality groups.

The strategy has been equality impact assessed as part of the directorate's EIA rolling programme.

Scope

The strategy encompasses all our customer stakeholders and relates to all areas of LLS activity. Our customers comprise the undergraduate and postgraduate student population, researchers, university staff, collaborative partners and external library members. We seek to provide services which are inclusive while recognising that individuals or groups may have specific characteristics and needs, for example those who are disabled or part time.

Principles

Our approach is underpinned by the following principles:

- provision of accurate and appropriate information
- use of a variety of mechanisms for communication and customer consultation and involvement
- receptive listening and a willingness to respond
- an understanding of the value of engagement to continuous improvement
- recognition of user diversity
- adherence to accessibility principles
- regular review of our strategy and the effectiveness of the methods used for communication, consultation and engagement

Methods

A variety of mechanisms for informing and involving customers are currently used, appropriate to the needs of differing user groups and with consideration given to the continuing effectiveness and reliability of each method. These are reviewed regularly to ensure they remain fit for purpose. The University is alert to the dangers of survey fatigue amongst students and the department is mindful of the need not to overburden this customer group in particular. A summary of the methods used is given overleaf and further detail is provided in the schedule (Appendix A).

Surveys, originating within and outside of the department, are an opportunity for the formal gathering of feedback and comment on satisfaction with services. These usually cover the full range of service provision but may be used on a smaller scale to consult on specific issues. Survey data from the NSS, LibQUAL, PTES and PRES are used to benchmark our services against the sector as a whole and/or comparator institutions, and the recurrent nature of these surveys facilitates analysis over time.

Themed or focussed surveys are seen as a way of gaining user feedback on particular issues and topics, either via **web surveys** (e.g. SurveyMonkey, Padlet, LibGuides), **face to face feedback events** (e.g. Feedback Friday and Meet The Managers), or via the **CRT Viewpoint kiosk**.

Focus groups and techniques such as **customer journey mapping** involve relatively small numbers but provide an opportunity for in-depth conversations with users. They are valuable in targeting particular customer groups (for example international or disabled students), for following up or consulting on specific issues and for discussion of proposed service developments. When establishing a focus group appropriate representation is sought. Focus groups were used with mixed success during our previous strategy cycle but remain part of our future strategy due to their value.

University and faculty liaison and representation comprises both formal mechanisms and the informal and constitutes the primary channel for communication and engagement with academic and senior university staff and with Course Reps. The Directorate is extensively represented on all university academic committees, including programme boards and validation panels.

The department has an established mechanism for capturing **feedback** from individual customers using print and online feedback forms. This was reviewed and enhanced for the start of the 2013-14 academic year. The relevant member of the department's senior management team will respond in writing to comments and complaints made and the issues raised are summarised regularly on our website and on physical notice boards.

The Directorates ongoing relationship with the **De Montfort Students' Union (DSU)** provides an opportunity for engagement with representatives of the student body and offers up channels of communication (e.g. student rep newsletter and conference).

Up to date and comprehensive information on our services and facilities is provided via the department's **website**, associated **LibGuides** and **printed publications**. The 'library news' and 'customer comments' sections of the website are used, respectively, to inform users of service changes or developments and to respond to feedback received. Extensive use is made of social media, particularly **Twitter** and **Facebook**, to communicate with customers and to involve them. While these channels point to our '**Just ask**' enquiry service and **feedback mechanisms** for

fuller and more formal responses, our Twitter feed in particular is a useful vehicle for short and immediate communication.

Acting on and publicising outcomes

Feedback received from customers through the various channels described is considered by the appropriate member of library staff, team or forum. Significant issues or proposals for major service changes or developments are subject to consideration at Library Managers' Group (LMG) and approval by Senior Management Team (SMT).

Customers are advised of the outcomes of comments and contributions made. This may be directly to individuals or groups, formal responses to university committees, by postings on physical notice boards in our libraries and learning zones, through newsletter articles (Student Reps newsletter, faculty/staff newsletters) or via a range of electronic means – library website, staff and student portals, social media, direct communication with DSU Executive members. Where it has not been possible to take action or implement suggestions we will explain why this is the case and/or what other action has been taken in response.

Key actions 2014-2017

A review of our approaches to user communication, consultation and engagement, has identified strengths in seeking and responding to feedback (particularly following our review) but an ongoing need for more proactive consultation and genuine engagement.

Efforts to engage with our user body during the last period of this strategy document met with mixed success (and it should be noted that engagement with the student body continues to be an issue institutionally, as recognised by DSU and the Student Engagement Committee)

| The following key actions are proposed for this three year cycle:

- Review the deployment of surveys as a means of assessing customer satisfaction with service provision, particularly in the light of falling response rates (e.g. LibQual) and the rising cost or loss of access to currently used tools
- Initiate continuous quick response user satisfaction gauging – “*How did we do today?*” – using CRT Viewpoint kiosk and provide a monthly summary of this feedback to service users
- Develop Viewpoint kiosk as a means of conducting additional user surveys and interactions on particular themes and as a follow-up to indications of dissatisfaction from quick response users. This development is of interest to other parts of the university as a groundbreaking pilot and there may be opportunities for wider engagement exercises within the three year timeframe of this paper
- Extend the level of consultation undertaken prior to the development or introduction of services, using focus groups and other appropriate methodologies
- Review and ensure that the channels used to communicate with, and feedback to users, remain fit for purpose and harness available technologies appropriately. This activity to be undertaken by the Marketing Communications Group, LMG and others
- Alongside our Marketing Strategy and the establishment of a Marketing Group, review the future and scope of the present Displays Group to ensure that library displays, posters, etc. work actively to engage with library users in promoting all areas of our services and resources

- Undertake a mini-review of the success of the changes made to our review of formal feedback mechanisms made during 2013/14 to ensure this remains effective and that our loop back to customers shows what changes are made as a result of feedback. Responsibility for taking forward rests with a subgroup of the Service Quality group.

Richard Partridge
Head of User Experience
July 2014

Appendix A: Schedule for communication, consultation and gathering feedback

Mechanism/method	Segment/dimension	Purpose	Commentary
National Student Survey (NSS)	Final year students – UG, disabled, international, all modes of study (f/t, p/t, distance)	Gathering feedback	National (all HEIs), annual (since 2005) survey gathering student feedback on the quality of course provision from final year students. 3 questions on learning resources, one of which directly relates to library resources and services, plus free text comments. Regarded as an important barometer within the institution and nationally. Response rate is high (71.3% for DMU in 2014)
Course Level Feedback (CLF)	Non-final year students – UG, disabled, international, all modes of study (f/t, p/t, distance)	Gathering feedback	The CLF is an institutionally run survey of non-finalist undergraduates that mirrors the questions and style of the National Student Survey. The survey is administered by the faculties and coordinated by the Department of Academic Quality. Each faculty has a designated CLF lead who liaises with DAQ regarding CLF. The 2014 survey received more than 3500 responses.
Library Survey	DMU users – students, researchers, teaching and support staff, collaborative partners, all modes of study or employment, disabled and international users	Gathering feedback	Internal, annual (but with one fallow year in 4) user satisfaction survey. Takes place in November, this being the agreed slot in the institution's calendar of surveys. It is timed to allow feedback to those students completing the survey and for any recommendations with resource implications to be fed into the annual budget cycle. Methodologies used are provided by LibQUAL (1 year out of 4) Pre-defined questions plus free text comments. Online survey, with option for hard copy completion. At around 5% of our total potential user population the response rate remains low (less than 300 for 2013 survey).
Non-library surveys	DMU users	Gathering	The department responds to surveys of both students and university

		feedback	staff which originate elsewhere within the institution. These include the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey(PRES), the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES), surveys by other departments such as ITMS surveys and any university wide staff surveys.
CRT Viewpoint	Potentially all visitors to Kimberlin library	Consultation, gathering feedback, communication	Introduction of new CRT Viewpoint kiosk for Autumn 2014 will allow the department to gauge user satisfaction levels on a daily basis and provide the means for surveys and engagement on particular topics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily “How did we do today?” instant customer feedback • Follow up surveys on area of concern where dissatisfaction has been indicated • Tailored/focussed survey topics on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Performance of service areas ○ Consultation on policy and service changes • Use of ‘slide’ feature to communicate with library users
Focus groups	Potentially all customers	Consultation, gathering feedback	Focus group work is undertaken as deemed necessary and appropriate and has included the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • international students in Autumn 2010 – 14 attendees • research students and staff in 2009 following a number of library issues raised in the PRES survey of 2008 • disabled students via the university wide Student Voice forum
Customer journey mapping	Potentially all customers but to date students - UG, PG, disabled, mature, international, all modes of study (f/t, p/t, distance) - and researchers	Consultation, gathering feedback	Undertaken for the first time in 2010 and used subsequently by other parts of the university under advice from LLS colleagues. This means of communication and feedback gathering is deemed to have been successful and will continue to be deployed as part of our strategy.
University and faculty liaison and consultation	Academic colleagues and University senior management	Communication, consultation, gathering feedback	LLS is represented on key University and Faculty committees, including Academic Board, Faculty Academic Committees, Research Committees, Learning and Teaching Committees, Programme Boards, some Staff-Student Consultative Committees, validation and review panels. There is formal student representation on all

			<p>academic committees (including validations and reviews) so this is a key channel for formal feedback and consultation.</p> <p>The Directorate reports as an academic service to the University Learning and Teaching Committee (ULTC) for oversight and governance. Reports on service provision, consultation and user engagement will be reviewed at this level.</p> <p>Executive responsibility for LLS lies with the University's Executive Board, which will review LLS strategy and performance.</p>
Feedback	All customer groups	Gathering feedback	<p>Process reviewed and revamped for start of 2013/14 academic year. Printed feedback forms with feedback boxes at service points. Online feedback form available on the library website and actively promoted via our social media feed (e.g. Twitter). Individual response provided in writing (letter or email) by a member of SMT within 10 days.</p> <p>Monitoring spreadsheet maintained by Admin Team. Themes raised through all feedback channels are considered annually by LMG (Library Managers' Group).</p> <p>250 forms submitted in 2013/14 academic year since revamp, compared with previous totals of 80- 100 in previous years.</p> <p>The feedback board is used to provide a selection of "You said, we said" type responses through the year and to house an annual summary of the collated feedback and to advise of actions being taken in response to feedback received.</p>
De Montfort Students' Union (DSU)	Students	Consultation, gathering feedback, communication	<p>Items included in the quarterly student reps newsletter.</p> <p>The Director (or representative) attends the annual (March) student rep conference. This is an opportunity to respond to feedback/issues in the Q&A session and serves as a forum to consult.</p> <p>The department's senior staff meet annually with the incoming DSU Executive to pick up any issues at an early stage in their time in office Regular contact with DSU Exec is maintained over their term of office and specific issues raised with them by students (e.g. feedback on 'desk hogging', opening hours at Easter) can be quickly</p>

			<p>addressed</p> <p>Establishment of dedicated Student Reps Officer and more formal communications channel during 2013/14 academic year has allowed the cascading of information via Course Reps network (e.g. extension of loan allocations, extension of Easter opening)</p>
Website, social media and print publications	All customer groups and stakeholders	Communication, gathering feedback, consultation	<p>Website, including 'library news' and 'customer comments' sections and a range of service and support guides.</p> <p>Use is made of social networking tools – the library is on Twitter and Facebook. Currently @LibraryDMU has over 1600 followers and a reach of 1400 Facebook followers across our two feeds, which includes Kimberlin Library as a formally adopted geographical location for "check-ins".</p> <p>Print publications have been provided by exception since 2010. Some service and support guides are made available in hard copy and the annual report is still a key tool for informing stakeholders 'what we are about'.</p>