

Department of
Library Services



Annual Report 2008-2009

www.library.dmu.ac.uk



Overview of the year

After a period of consolidation in 2007/8, this year has once again seen a number of new developments in the Library. January 2009 saw the opening of a second Learning Zone, adjacent to the main Kimberlin Library, which has been greatly welcomed by students and has provided the opportunity to expand the range of technologies and software we offer, as well as allowing access to study facilities during university “closed” periods. We have also, for the first time, been able to make provision for research postgraduate students to have their own study area in the Library, something that has been requested for some time. Opportunities for further enhancements continue, as plans proceed for a new Law Library – double the size of the old one – in the Hugh Aston building.

Research support has featured prominently on our agenda, with some high profile activity in raising awareness of bibliometrics, and we have contributed to the University’s preparation for the Research Excellence Framework in a number of ways. The De Montfort Open Research Archive is now well-established, and the University has mandated electronic deposit in DORA of all doctoral theses. Research students are benefitting from the new Writing Support Service, along with undergraduates from all faculties. All study support services have seen an increase in demand as a result of their more obvious physical presence in the new Learning Support Suite.

There have been a number of staffing changes this year, mainly as a result of retirements. Whilst we were sorry to say goodbye to longstanding colleagues and friends, we were pleased to welcome new staff and new ideas into the team. We have acquired a whole new area of responsibility, in the form of records management, including data protection and freedom of information, which sits well with our responsibility for copyright. Meanwhile, activity in our existing areas of work has continued to increase, with number of books loans and number of user visits up once again on previous years. It is very gratifying that our students wish to take maximum advantage of the services and facilities we provide, and that this is recognised through high ratings in local and national satisfaction surveys. This positive performance is very much a result of the hard work and commitment of the Department’s staff and, once again, I should like to thank them for their continued efforts.

Kathryn Arnold
Director of Library Services

Arrivals and departures

This year has seen a significant number of changes amongst the Library's senior staff, triggered by the retirements of Margaret Oldroyd, Quality and Staff Development Manager, and Barbara Freeman, Library Team Manager at Charles Frears Campus.

Margaret retired in October 2008 after more than 20 years service within the Department, first as Academic Librarian (IT), but soon moving into a wider role as Staff Resources Manager. In 1994, she was given a partial secondment as "Staff Development Administrator" for the whole university – effectively the first designated person with academic staff development responsibilities.



Margaret Oldroyd retired in October 2008 after 20 years service

Jane Mortimer was appointed to replace Margaret Oldroyd as Head of Staffing and Quality Enhancement in January 2009, following 11 years working for the Department in a variety of management roles. Jane has also worked in public libraries and in the FE sector. Jane's replacement in her vacated post of Academic Team

Manager: Resources and Services is Alison McNab. Alison joined DMU on 1st June 2009 from the Higher Education Academy Information and Computing Science subject centre at Loughborough. She brings with her extensive library experience gained from working at the universities of Nottingham, Loughborough and Hull.

Barbara retired as Campus Librarian at Charles Frears in September 2008, having been a member of the Library's management team since the School of Nursing and Midwifery joined the University in 1995. Prior to that, Barbara had managed the library under the auspices of the Leicestershire Health Authority. An active professional, Barbara was secretary of the Leicestershire Health Librarians' Association, and a committee member of Trent Region Association of Health Care Librarians and Information Specialists. Barbara was succeeded at Charles Frears by Dave Thompson, previously Senior Assistant Librarian.

In June 2009, Fraser Marshall joined the Department as University Records Manager, transferring from Information Services and Systems, where he had been based since joining the University in July 2008. Previously Information Governance Officer with the London Borough of Tower Hamlets, Fraser also has responsibility for Data Protection and Freedom of Information.

Staff successes and achievements

In January 2009, Jo Webb was appointed External Examiner to the Chartership Board of CILIP, the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals. External Examiners oversee CILIP's qualifications

framework and Jo's involvement is testament to her standing within the profession.

Shortly before her retirement, Margaret Oldroyd was awarded Honorary Fellowship of CILIP for her distinguished service to the library and information profession. The award was given in recognition of Margaret's role in the professionalisation of staff development and human resource management in academic libraries, as well as her longstanding contribution to CILIP, most recently as Chair of the Chartership Board.

Jan Robertson of the Maths Learning Centre won the sigma prize for outstanding contributions in the field of mathematics and statistics support in July 2009. Sponsored by the sigma Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, this is a national

competitive award and an indication of the high quality of work undertaken by Jan and her colleagues.

In December 2008 'Fundamental Aspects of Finding Information' by Barbara Freeman and Dave Thompson from Charles Frears Library was published. Aimed at nursing students, this is a desk-top companion enabling students to tackle all manner of assignments with confidence and success.

April 2009 saw the publication of the "Handbook of Library Training Practice and Development: volume three". Edited by Alan Brine, Head of Technical Services, it includes essential readings by leading experts in the sector to advise on the best way to achieve results through internal and external training mechanisms.



Supporting students' learning

The central role of the Department in developing students' academic skills and confidence continues to expand. As well as the consolidation of a number of previously fixed-term posts, this year saw the establishment of a new post in the Centre for Learning and Study Support (CLaSS) to support the development of English language and academic writing skills across the university. Primarily targeted at undergraduate students, this new provision has been enthusiastically received across all faculties and levels of study, with particularly strong interest shown by research students. Academic writing has been supported by the development of a Writing Quiz available through the ASK Gateway. It is hoped that this virtual approach will extend academic support to groups of students who may be reluctant to identify other kinds of development opportunities.

CLaSS staff have this year played a leading role in co-ordinating a pilot project in student peer mentoring, working with colleagues in the faculties of Business & Law and Humanities and using a number of different approaches. The results of the project were disseminated at a half-day conference in June 2009, drawing delegates from across DMU as well as from a wide range of other universities. Following a report on the pilot to the University Learning and Teaching Committee in May, the scheme is now being embedded in faculties.

The CLaSS team have been funded by Leicestershire Lifelong Learning Network to run a £19,000 project to develop an 'academic literacy toolkit', in conjunction with neighbouring Regent College. Initially aimed at supporting Regent College students in their transition to higher education study at

De Montfort University, the project will also support events for FE and HE staff, to engender a shared understanding of issues facing students during this transition period. If successful, the resources developed during the project will be made available to other Leicestershire schools and colleges.

An article in *SCONUL Focus* on 'Librarians and learning developers working together at De Montfort University Library' by Kaye Towlson and Mary Pillai has encapsulated our approach to academic support, which continues to elicit interest across the sector, with team members hosting visits from colleagues at other universities and running seminars elsewhere.

In September 2008, the Maths Learning Centre finally moved into its new home in the Kimberlin Library, when, as part of other developments, we were able to create a "Learning Support Suite" on the second floor. The new suite provides office accommodation for the CLaSS, MLC and IT Training Teams, as well as an adjacent IT Training Room, Maths study room, and general teaching space. The higher visibility afforded by this new location has led to a significant increase in student use of these services.

Support for research

The Library's role in supporting research has expanded significantly over the last twelve months. A new departmental research support strategy was completed in summer 2008, and an accompanying action plan drawn up.

The Department purchased its first JSTOR module (Arts & Sciences III) in 2008, complemented later by Arts & Sciences IV. Increasing amounts of primary source material are now available through the JISC including 19th Century British Newspapers and 19th Century Periodicals Online.

Library staff have been involved in providing advice on bibliometrics, in anticipation of its expected significant role in the Research Excellence Framework. A lunchtime briefing for senior academic staff on the likely impact of bibliometrics, led by Professor Charles Oppenheim of Loughborough University in October 2008, elicited an excellent turnout and provoked considerable discussion. A series of lunchtime workshops ("Who cites you?"), providing a briefing on the key citation databases, Scopus and Web of Science, was also well-supported.

The institutional repository, DORA (De Montfort Open Research Archive), is now recognised as playing a key role in capturing the details of scholarly activity across the University to support submissions for the REF, as well as facilitating access to research. The appointment of a full-time Repository Officer in September 2008 has enabled the project to gain momentum, supported by the establishment of a DORA Steering Group chaired by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for research, Professor Vivien Lowndes. The priority this year has been to add the metadata for all the university's RAE

2008 entries and the Repository Officer is now working with key faculty colleagues to develop robust approaches to adding new content. In January 2009, Academic Board mandated the electronic submission of all doctoral theses; this decision, combined with the University's participation in the EThOS digitisation project, means that, in time, much of the work of our postgraduate research students will also be available via DORA.

We have also been undertaking more work with research students. Two new courses were offered as part of the Department's contribution to the Research Training Programme, one on the use of EndNote and a library refresher, complementing our long-standing Literature Searching and Reference Management sessions. Research students also received training in Data Protection and Freedom of Information legislation. All formal courses continue to receive excellent feedback. Both CLaSS and the Maths Learning Centre have started to work with research students more informally, providing specialist writing and statistics support respectively.

Opened in March 2009, a collaborative work space and a small IT lab have been provided on the lower ground floor of the Kimberlin Library for the exclusive use of research students. This forms part of the Library's ongoing accommodation strategy, and was in direct response to student feedback. In line with the Department's Research Support Strategy, focus groups with research staff and students have been conducted to consider, in particular, any issues arising from the PRES (Postgraduate Research Student) survey.

Quality counts

We were once again delighted to perform well in the Learning Resource aspects of the National Student Survey in 2008. Responses to the questions on library provision and access to IT both reached their highest ever ratings at 4.3 and 4.4 respectively, with a score of 4.3 for learning resources overall, placing De Montfort University in the top twenty institutions nationally.

In its internal user survey, carried out in November 2008, the service received an overall satisfaction rating of 89.2%. This was a little down on the results in 2006 (an all time high at 94.2%) when the same survey tool, Priority Research, was last used. Whilst this was slightly disappointing, the response rate was considerably lower, and the timing of the survey coincided with a temporary

reduction in IT and study spaces whilst building work was being carried out. The highest levels of satisfaction were for opening hours (91.6%), helpfulness of staff (88%) and the library catalogue (83.9%), the first two showing a significant increase on 2006. The biggest single improvement (up 9%) was in training and support in the use of the library. Satisfaction with the provision of computers and with photocopying and printing had fallen, but it is anticipated that this trend will be reversed with the opening of new facilities.

In October 2008, the British Computing Society conducted its annual audit of the Library's ECDL test centre. The IT Training Team was awarded a well-deserved 'A' grade, the highest possible outcome.

Developing our learning environment

Eric Wood Learning Zone

This year's major development was the new Eric Wood Learning Zone which opened in January 2009. Adjacent to the main library, this new facility builds on the success of the Kimberlin Learning Zone which opened in 2007. Its welcoming entrance echoes that of the Kimberlin "sail", and it provides a similarly integrated, flexible and welcoming workspace where students can learn in a collaborative environment, but has a stronger emphasis on IT provision. With approximately 200 study places in total, Eric Wood provides 80 computers, including dedicated Autocad facilities as well as a number of high specification Apple Macintosh

machines. These deliver additional software, including "parallel" Mac and Windows desktops, and are especially welcomed by our Art and Design and Media Studies students. Macs have also been introduced in the Kimberlin Library for the first time, to ensure that access is available for the majority of hours throughout the year. Like the main library, the EW zone is wireless-enabled so that students can access the Internet and all online facilities via their own laptops and mobile devices.

Attracting over 75,000 visits in the first five months of opening, the facility proved instantly popular, in particular with undergraduate students, with peak usage

Developing our learning environment

between 11.00 and 17.00, and a typical occupancy of 120 users. With its ground floor location, easy access, and wheelchair-friendly "speedstyle" security gates, Eric Wood is also very popular with our disabled students. Although not open overnight, the new discrete space has provided an opportunity to offer a service to our users on days when the campus is otherwise closed, for example, at Easter and Christmas. The popularity of this initiative is reflected in peak

occupancy of 189 users on Easter Tuesday, and it is of particular value to part-time and overseas students.

We were pleased to welcome visits to the Learning Zone from the University's Board of Governors and from HEFCE during May 2009, and to receive very positive feedback from both groups on the facilities and environment provided in the new space.



The Eric Wood Learning Zone opened in January 2009

Hugh Aston Law Library

Working in partnership with Estates and the project group, considerable planning has taken place during the 2008/9 session for the Law Library in the new Hugh Aston Building, which will house the Faculty of Business and Law from September 2009. The new library will be housed over two floors and will offer a significant improvement over the current Elfed Thomas Library in terms of capacity and quality of environment.

Archive developments

This year, the Library has benefitted from funding for a dedicated half-time post to carry out work on the University Archive. The initial focus has been on sorting and classifying the collection, which has grown in an unstructured way over many years, and to establish protocols for ensuring that key University documents and publications are deposited with the Archive in the future. CALM software, developed specifically for the management of archives, has been acquired, and cataloguing is now well underway. The profile of the collection has been raised during the year, and it now has a brief entry on the National Archive's Online Register of Archives. The Archivist, Linda Butt, has worked with the Alumni and Development Office to provide information for anniversaries, reunions, and publications, and has also hosted visits from significant alumni. The Archive has been used to provide information to researchers putting together a major exhibition at Leicester's New Walk Museum on Ernest Gimson, a major figure of the Arts and Crafts movement, and an alumnus of the Leicester School of Art in the 1880s. This work led to the rediscovery and welcome return of a Gimson sample piece which had been on loan from the University's collections for some time.



Sample piece by Ernest Gimson returned to the University after display at the local museum.

National Art Slide Library

It was with some reluctance that the Department took the decision to close the National Art Slide Library service in June 2009. Operated on behalf of the V&A Museum since 1992, usage had diminished significantly in recent years, to the extent where the service was no longer viable. Former users of the service can still access most of the images in the collection via the V&A website.

Promotional events and activities

During the 2008 induction period, the Library hosted a stand from Leicester City Public Libraries, who were keen to introduce their services to our students, as well as to promote the city of Leicester to those new to the area. The initiative was a great success, with over 100 students registering with the Public Library, and we plan to repeat it in 2009.

Black History Month and National Poetry Day were both celebrated with exhibitions and promotional materials, and the Library staged its first "Electronic Resources Roadshow" in November. Over 100 academic staff benefitted from this excellent opportunity to meet informally with representatives from some of the Library's major electronic resource vendors.





www.library.dmu.ac.uk