

UNIVERSITY OF EXETER

BOARD OF THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE RESEARCH, 24 October 2013

Improving the provision for PGRs in the Library – Progress Update

This paper is an update to the paper '[Improving the provision for PGRs in the Library](#)', received by Faculty Board at its [meeting of 6th June 2013](#).

Section 1: Enhancements for PGRs

Website

Following consultation with a focus group of PGRs and representatives from the Guild, the Library has now launched a PGR-focussed 'mini' website. This has enabled us to bring together and more effectively promote a wide range of our Research-focussed services, across Exeter and Cornwall campuses. We plan to expand this further over time, relating it to other key University PGR pages where appropriate. Please see:

<http://as.exeter.ac.uk/library/usingthelibrary/informationforyou/supportingresearch/>

Borrowing

As described in our previous paper, we increased PGR borrowing limits from 25 to 40 items from the start of May 2013. This can increase to 50 items if they are given a teaching contract as a GTA. They have full access to our electronic resources, both on and off campus. For PGR students in Cornwall, their existing limit of 25 has been extended to match the Exeter campus offer. Inter-Library Loan allocations are usually available via the student's College: the number available to each student is entirely at the discretion of the College – for example, Humanities give up to 20 ILLs to all its PGRs, whilst other Colleges offer other arrangements.

'Pick-up anywhere'

To complement our existing 'Drop Anywhere' service (enabling customers to return items at any Exeter Campus library), we have now implemented a new 'Pick Up Anywhere' service which will enable customers to request books from any Exeter Campus library and collect them from another. This has been implemented initially on a trial basis, and its impact, use and benefit will be reviewed at intervals throughout the year.

Personalised Subject Support

Every PGR has their own Subject Librarian, who can advise and support on all library and information related needs. 1:1s are available through the Deskside Training Service for in-depth and specialised advice. Contact details for the Subject Librarian team may be found at: <http://as.exeter.ac.uk/library/subjectguides/>

Engagement

The Library staff now regularly attend the Academic Affairs Committee', and will be arranging a focus group with interested PGRs and representatives from the Guild / FXU to take place in Spring 2014. This will then take place on an annual basis.

Section 2: Proposals for improving PGR-focussed library study space

As previously illustrated, a recent £2 million investment in the Old Library building enabled us to create a stunning world-class research library space on the Streatham Campus, with a new special collections suite and an additional 10 kilometres of shelving for research collections. Now called the Research Commons – a place the research community holds in common – the refurbishment carefully maintained the more traditional look and feel that the PGR community tell us they prefer, whilst providing a large, light WIFI-enabled new reading room, multi-media seminar space, and high quality reader seats with dedicated data and power.

Research Commons provides a natural home for research activities, and we feel that the further improvements we are planning, strongly based on detailed feedback from PGR students, will only help to enhance this sense of ownership for the research community.

PGR-Bookable desks in the RC Reading Room

Over the summer, we created a range of some 17 centrally-bookable desks in the Research Commons Reading Room, dedicated for use by PGR students. Initially implemented on a trial basis, its impact, use and benefit will be reviewed at intervals throughout the year. If the trial proves successful, we will arrange for the balance of the Reading Room would be converted for similar use.

These are large desks (effectively the size of 2 standard spaces), accompanied by a dedicated locker. We hope shortly to make Wi-Fi enabled Netbooks available also as part of this package. Bookings are handled through the central 'Room Bookings' system, thus providing a much-needed sense of 'certainty' for students based off campus.

Desks are available for one-day bookings, with an allowance of up to 5 consecutive bookings at a time (i.e. people could effectively book a desk for a week). These Day bookings would be for the full span of normal RC opening hours. Bookable days would include weekdays and weekends, but only within normal Research Commons (RC) opening times. For details of the opening hours, please see <http://as.exeter.ac.uk/library/usingthelibrary/opening/researchcommons/>

Whilst aimed predominantly at the current PGR community, we recognise that PGR-alumni would also benefit greatly from the ability to book these study seats for a period following their award. Whilst it is doubtful that PGR-alumni would be able to use the central Room Bookings system, the Library would be happy to arrange bookings for them. Bookings would need to be made in advance via email or telephone.

Section 3: Enhancements for PGR-alumni

Library Access

All library sites are accessible to PGR-alumni during staffed opening hours. Out of hours access is only available to registered staff and students, e.g. Forum 24/7 access.

Borrowing

On completion, PGRs become alumni of the University and are entitled to apply for alumni access. PGR-Alumni access is now free of charge, and entitles them to borrow up to 4 items. ILLs can be requested, and are charged at cost (£10.50 per request).

E-resources access

On site 'walk-in' access to many of the University's electronic resources is available at the Forum, St Luke's, Tremough and Woodlane Libraries on a drop-in basis. Walk-in access is also available in the Knowledge Spa at Treliiske hospital, and reciprocal agreements provide reference access throughout the Combined Universities of Cornwall libraries.

Off-site or remote access is not permitted for most resources (see below for exceptions) to anyone who is not a registered student or member of staff (this is a legal requirement of our site licences). These licenses are typically negotiated at national level, so all Universities are bound by these terms. There are, however, two 2 alumni-accessible databases that the Library subscribes to: Business Source Alumni (from EBSCO) and JSTOR. These are accessible via Exonline (the alumni online networking service). There is also limited access to SAGE Journals and SAGE Research Methods for alumni now too – all available via Exonline

E-mail access

PhD students' email accounts are retained for a period of 330 days post completion. This is standard for all student groups, based on current infrastructure capacity plans (file store allocation, email space, backups, etc.). Online access to e-resources is deactivated on completion – it cannot be extended for 330 days because of licensing restrictions.

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