

The University of Manchester Library Reading List Strategy

Context

Reading lists are a fundamental part of any taught course programme and it is essential that the Library and teaching staff work in partnership to ensure that the University is able to provide students with ready access to key information resources.

Our reading list strategy delivers on the Library's I2030 vision of 'world-leading depth of content' for our students and contributes to the enabling themes of Engaged Students and Valued Services. Implementation of the strategy ensures equity of access to reading list books to support the University's shift to blended learning where access to digital material is now considered essential to guaranteeing a good student experience.

The Library's eTextbook programme offer is now fundamental to supporting the full spectrum of teaching methods in the University's Flexible Learning Programme, and is crucial to underpin online pedagogy. Demand from teaching staff for provision has grown year on year, with a 60% increase in course units supported in 2021/22 and an 80% average student engagement rate in the use of those texts. In addition to this, teaching staff have made increasing use of the reading list service with a more than fivefold increase in reading lists submitted to the library via our reading list system in the first 3 years since service launch.

This engagement with the service, together with national evidence of an increase in student demand for ebooks in Higher Education, and recognition of their impact on the student experience¹, has led to this revised version of the strategy, which looks to further embed our streamlined reading list service within the University.

The University of Manchester [Policy on additional costs incurred by students on undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes](#) refers directly to Library provision of core texts:

'Core readings should be made accessible to students via the Library, either digitally or for loan. In order to achieve this, Schools should ensure that purchase and digitisation requests are sent to the Library in a timely fashion'

This strategy seeks to ensure that this is an achievable goal and to manage and satisfy students' expectations with regards to accessing library resources. It should be considered in conjunction with the new [Library purchasing policy for reading lists books](#). The strategy also refers to the need for

¹ Vital Source & Shift Learning (2018) eTextbooks and differential learning: reducing inequalities in UK higher education. Web. 7 Mar. 2019 <https://news.vitalsource.com/etextbooks-and-differential-learning?hsCtaTracking=b09e4eda-6266-4c07-b83e-8a0169db3aa2%7C5d4d1422-8dcf-4dee-a9b1-e036713a17a1>

students to develop research skills in order to benefit from the broader set of resources available to them beyond the confines of a reading list.

Purpose

The purpose of this strategy is to ensure a coherent institutional approach to the provision of reading list materials and improve the student experience with regards to accessing and using items on their reading lists.

Goals

The Reading List Strategy has 3 core goals which are each supported by a series of enabling actions:

1. To ensure that library provision of reading list resources meets the teaching and learning needs of our students and teaching staff

Enabling actions:

- Negotiate sustainable, value-for-money pricing models for core textbooks with the Library as the central negotiator for e-textbook deals, drawing on its ability to take a holistic view of textbook purchases across the University
- Implement the '[Library purchasing policy for reading list books](#)' to enable the Library to make informed decisions on appropriate levels of provision, in particular by:
 - Using four categories for reading list books **requiring Library purchase** ([Core](#), [Essential](#), [Recommended](#) and [Further](#)) to inform purchasing decisions.
 - Providing access to core e-textbooks to specific cohorts of students where possible via the Library's reading list system
 - Using demand driven, usage triggered purchasing models to provide access to further reading
- Provide streamlined processes for teaching staff by using the Library reading list system to integrate the ordering of reading list books and digitised chapters
- Ensure all reading lists are added to the Library reading list system to guarantee that the library is aware of which items it is required to purchase and/or provide access to
- Provide teaching staff with access to analytics from the Library reading list system and core e-textbook platform/s, to enable them to evaluate student engagement with reading list content.

2. To improve the student experience with regards to accessing and engaging with content on their reading lists

Enabling actions:

- Secure comprehensive access for students across the University to core textbooks through the Library's e-textbook programme, delivering equality of access within student cohorts.
- Improve the learning experience by-delivering e-textbooks with enriched functionality and facilitating greater levels of student engagement
- Embed the Library reading list system into all course units in the VLE allowing students to seamlessly access all library content on their reading list
- Maintain the Library reading list system as the central point of truth for reading lists at the University, so that every student knows how and where to access reading lists.

3. To ensure students make best use of library resources and expertise to equip them with the capacity to find, synthesise and evaluate information

Enabling actions:

- Maximise opportunities for students to develop and practice appropriate skills and strategies for learning by promoting the online resources and workshops which are openly available throughout the academic year via the Library's My Learning Essentials skills programme.
- Provide further opportunities for students to access Library expertise via embedded teaching sessions and access to open drop-ins and workshops.

Roles and responsibilities

It is essential that teaching staff and the Library work in partnership to achieve the goals of the Reading List Strategy:

Role of programme/course unit leads

Programme and course unit leads should submit reading lists to the Library's Teaching Collections team at least 8 weeks before the course unit is due to begin to ensure that the resources recommended can be obtained in a timely and effective manner.

- All orders for reading list books and digitised chapters should be submitted via the reading list system
- All items on reading lists which require purchasing for the Library should use the four categories referred to above (Core, Essential, Recommended and Further) to ensure the effective application of the Library's purchasing policy
- All course unit reading lists should be compiled and published in the Library's reading list management system in time for semester one and two teaching.

Role of the Library

The Library will:

- Ensure that reading list material is purchased in appropriate quantities and made available in a timely and effective manner where lists are submitted via the reading list system as outlined above
- Identify and purchase electronic resources wherever possible
- Work closely with suppliers and publishers to drive for better deals in the provision of core e-textbooks.
- Ensure that we continue to explore and exploit technological innovations in the provision of e-textbooks and the learning analytics derived therefrom
- Promote the importance of reading beyond the reading list and becoming independent learners by providing opportunities to engage with the My Learning Essentials' skills programme

Monitoring and evaluation

Progress on the implementation of the strategy will be monitored, evaluated, and reported to the Library Executive Team

Version amendment history		
Version	Date	Reason for change
2.0	Jan 2019	Updates to embedded links

3.0	May 2019	Updates to embedded links
4.0	May 2022	Full review and update, Inc. Update of approving body in Document Control Box

Document control box	
Policy / Procedure title:	The University of Manchester Library Reading List Strategy
Lead contact email	olivia.walsby@manchester.ac.uk
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Equality impact outcome:	N/A
Related Statutes, Ordinances, General Regulations:	N/A
Related policies/procedures/guidance etc.	<p>Library purchasing policy for reading lists books' http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=42306</p> <p>Policy on additional costs incurred by students on undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=19217</p>
Policy owner:	Head of Teaching Collections (Olivia Walsby)
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