

LTC16D083

Title: University response to Reading List policy
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Issue

In June 2016 LTC considered and approved a policy which requires all reading lists, regardless of format, to be submitted to the Library. A preference was noted for reading lists to be provided in an online format and ideally using the Talis Aspire software¹.

Prior to the requested update in June 2017, this paper provides LTC with an interim alert that reading list supply remains lower than hoped, despite the LTC mandate.

More positively, the vast majority of the lists that have been submitted have been through the Talis interface. This provides further evidence that Talis is the most effective way of providing regularly updated reading lists.

Recommendation

LTC is asked to review the actions taken and provide further advice on how to improve compliance with its mandate for reading list provision. This feedback will then help to inform the final paper in June where the Library will present options for the Committee to consider on how to keep the service sustainable going forward.

Resource Implications

None at this stage. Subsequent proposals will look at the resourcing required to maintain the University's online reading list service.

Risk Implications

There is a risk that modules that do not provide appropriate reading lists in a timely manner to students and this may not be perceived positively by students.

Reading lists are used by the library to ensure the adequate provision of books, ebooks and articles to support teaching. If academics do not provide reading lists there is a risk that the student experience will be undermined and there will be inconsistency in resource provision between disciplines.

Equality and Diversity

Equality and diversity issues are considered for all aspects of Library services. Online Reading Lists are covered by an Equality Impact Assessment.

¹ LTC15M006 LTC-M3 22.06.2016 Min.150

Discussion

The following data show the rates of compliance with the reading list mandate for 2016/17. A total of taught modules (UG & PG) per school for is included for comparative purposes along with an indicative percentage indicator of compliance with the mandate.

The percentage figure in particular should be read with caution as **there is not a direct 1-1 list to module correlation**. To explain further, some modules make use of multiple reading lists and sometimes a single reading list will be shared across multiple modules. Furthermore, many modules listed in SITS are not likely to have a reading list (e.g. those for field work, year abroad, long form essay, etc.).

		2015/16	2016/17			2016/17 Summary	
Faculty	School	Talis lists published by end of July 2016	Modules taught 2016/17	Talis lists published as of end of Feb 2017	Print lists as of end of Feb 2017	Total lists received by library 2016/17	Indicative % compliance with LTC mandate
FMH	HSC	51	112	31	3	34	30%
FMH	MED	19	44	13	5	18	41%
FMH	Total	70	156	44	8	52	33%
HUM	AMA	72	170	21	20	41	24%
HUM	HIS	28	93	9	10	19	20%
HUM	LDC	24	200	7	11	18	9%
HUM	PPL	106	266	47	172	219	82%
HUM	IIH		14	6	0	6	43%
HUM	Total	230	743	90	213	303	41%
SCI	BIO	53	103	19	0	19	18%
SCI	CHE	47	54	21	0	21	39%
SCI	CMP	78	70	17	0	17	24%
SCI	ENV	71	78	44	1	45	58%
SCI	MTH	33	58	17	0	17	29%
SCI	PHA	22	36	18	0	18	50%
SCI	Total	304	399	136	1	137	34%
SSF	DEV	75	91	50	3	53	58%
SSF	ECO	37	50	17	1	18	36%
SSF	EDU	87	96	51	5	56	58%
SSF	LAW	9	92	22	1	23	25%
SSF	NBS	109	147	61	4	65	44%
SSF	PSY	29	35	21	2	23	66%
SSF	SWK	24	45	11	0	11	24%
SSF	Total	370	556	233	16	249	45%
<i>Lists published with no school / module code</i>				17			
Grand Totals		974	1854	520	238	758	41%

Figure 1 – lists made available to the library in academic year 2016/17 to date

The number of Talis lists available fell heavily at the start of 2016/17 from 974 in 2015/16 to 248 in September 2016 following the move to an academic-led model.

Since then the project to encourage adoption, which is now in its final year, has been partially successful in redressing this balance with 520 lists now being acquired as of the end of February 2017. However this has only been achievable with targeted actions by a full-time Grade 5 Library-based project officer and is still 454 lists adrift of last year. (See Appendix 2 for summary of all actions taken).

There are now 520 lists “owned” in the Talis system by 413 UEA academics users (i.e. lists that have been published in the 2016/17 year and can be considered up to date). Not all of those academics have committed to on-going maintenance of those lists.

A further 238 physical reading lists were sent to the library by schools through the academic year to date which is lower than expected following the LTC mandate.

Owing to the demand from students, the library is still having to make some of the 2015/16 lists available to students where up to date 2016/17 material has not been provided by the academic, which is far from ideal because some of those may now be out of date.

Why have the number of online reading lists dropped in 2016/17 compared to 2015/16?

- UEA initially ran with a library-led mode of list creation making use of temporary staff to populate lists. In this library-led model, coverage grew quickly to 900+ lists by June 2015.
- As trailed well in advance, after one year the project switched to a fully academic-led mode of operation in 2016/17 with the library still supporting the system, offering training and running stock ordering (aka list review) and digitisation services around the system.
- Academic staff were required to republish their list for the new academic year after making any desired changes. Many did not initially, or were unaware of the need to do so, despite regular reminders from library representatives.

What are the perceived barriers to academic adoption of online reading lists?

Through academic feedback, the project has identified the following potential barriers:

- The supply of reading lists has previously been on an ad-hoc, good will basis so this request for systematic provision of reading lists is a cultural change for many Schools.
- List creation work is perceived to be too time consuming – academics have reported that they do not have time for what is often perceived as a high level administrative task. Some schools have made use of local support, others have requested the library enter lists on their behalf (the Library already has a much increased workload in reviewing the reading lists for purchase, so unfortunately, without additional permanent staff, the Library cannot also absorb list creation). To quote an ENV lecturer: *“the initial lists need to be uploaded on behalf of the academics, then academics should be asked to maintain and update the lists themselves”*.
- Work is seasonal, lists need to be updated perhaps once or twice a year, so not all academics feel a proficient in updating lists in Talis compared to a tool such as Blackboard where edits and updates often occur on a weekly basis.
- When linking to digital library resources, the work can become complex. EDU Faculty member - *“We simply do not have the time nor the necessary skills to do this”*.

Library staff have attempted to address these concerns through the Reading Online project, in so far as this is within their control. The project itself will end in October 2017 when staffing for the Reading List project officer ends.

Conclusion and next steps

At this point in the academic year, LTC is asked to provide further advice on how to improve compliance with its mandate for reading list provision.

ISD strongly believes that Talis Aspire remains the best option for this in terms of student experience and in terms of meeting the University's strategic objective of embedding digital content into teaching in a cost effective fashion. It also allows the library to check stock efficiently and order new print material.

Some concerns around 'spoon-feeding' remain as a reason for non-compliance, but the Library continues to argue that, as a minimum, the provision of core reading in no way undermines the acquisition of wider academic skills, such as reading around a topic. Learning how to decode a print-based reading list, and then locate that material in the library, is not, in our view, a high level academic skill; more often than not it is just an unnecessary barrier to getting the reading done. How much better to ensure that all students can access the core readings, ideally online.

Following this meeting, and any further advice received, the Library will provide a final project update on the take-up of the Talis Aspire software at the June LTC, along with proposals for the Committee to consider on how to keep the service sustainable going forward.

Appendix 1 – Reading List Policy approved in June 2016

UEA aims to provide a Blackboard (VLE) course and access to reading lists for all UEA taught modules. Talis Aspire is UEA's preferred tool for providing reading lists via Blackboard. Blackboard and Talis Aspire work together to provide online access to digital reading and scanned content derived from library collections. **The policy requires all reading lists, regardless of format, to be submitted to the Library.** Additionally it is preferable for reading lists to be provided in an online format and ideally using the Talis Aspire software.

1.1 All reading lists, regardless of the format in which they are held, should be submitted to the Library

- To ensure adequate print and digital materials to support students, all undergraduate and taught postgraduate reading lists, regardless of the format in which the reading lists are held, should be submitted to the Library.
- Updated lists should be submitted to the Library each time the module is taught.

1.2 The preferred route for reading list submission is via the Talis Aspire reading list and digital content software

- To ensure a consistency of approach in terms of presenting student readings, helping to ensure a high standard of reading list presentation for all modules where reading lists are relevant
- To minimise the barriers to students accessing their core readings
- To create a context for students to engage more deeply with their core readings and encourage further breadth of reading
- To ensure that the Library has the information to purchase adequate copies of books in time to support academic teaching and student learning
- To ensure copyright compliance for any articles and scanned chapters embedded in Blackboard courses
- To provide a 'one stop shop' for academic reading list submission²

1.3 The alternative route for reading list submission is to send lists in Word or PDF format³ to

lib.reading@uea.ac.uk

- To ensure that the Library has an opportunity to assess, and where relevant purchase, all reading list materials to ensure a consistent student experience across all modules
- To ensure that library provision for all modules is kept up-to-date and adequate copies purchased

² Each year, academics are required to submit an initial reading list (Required Key Reading) as Section 6 of the UEA Module Outline template. If academics choose to use the Talis Aspire software to create or update these reading lists, this will act as a 'one stop shop' for reading list submission. In such cases, in Section 6 academics may simply provide a link to the online list. Any subsequent updates to the reading list, as long as they are carried out using the Talis Aspire software, will automatically be flagged with the Library so they can swiftly purchase any additional readings.

³ If this manual route is chosen, this will not provide a 'one stop shop' and it will still be necessary for academics to complete Section 6 of the UEA Module Outline template as well as sending their lists to the Library. Also, any subsequent updates will also need to be sent in to the Library as they occur. This manual process inevitably takes longer for the Library to process and for any additional readings to be purchased providing a less consistent experience for students.

Appendix 2- summary of library engagement activity 2016/17

This appendix summarises library activity to drive up engagement with Talis. It does not document specifically activity within schools to increase the number of lists.

1. Summary of academic engagement activity to date

Project objective	Summary of academic engagement activity to date
Report on uptake of mandate to Head of schools.	For Semester 1 - Emails sent to all Heads of school asking for verification of data and support in addressing the issue. Seven responses (out of 22) as of 08/12/16 providing follow up contacts in schools (Directors and managers) to assist with uptake work. Follow up emails for Semester 2 will be sent in early March.
Target courses taught by School Directors Learning & Teaching Quality and request meeting with relevant Academic Engagement Librarian (AEL) to ask for their assistance in driving up usage by adopting Talis in their teaching	12 have been contacted directly this academic year. Academic Engagement Librarians are currently in the process of contacting others. Out of this 12, seven are currently using Talis and a further three are heavily involved in promotion.
Target top 5-10 modules in each school in terms of student numbers	Initial push on 2016/17 Semester 2 lists with high numbers of enrolled students <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FMH - 6 contacted - 3 lists published • HUM - 17 contacted - 7 lists published • SCI -25 contacted - 11 published • SSF - 31 contacted - 10 published Will target Semester 1 modules later in year ahead of start of academic year 2017/18.
Assign owners to 'orphan lists' still in draft using e-vision data to assign owners and contact all directly with details on relinking and republishing (RF/ EdC)	295 emails sent to all schools between November and February. Total of 189 lists published or republished in this period.
Demonstrate positive impact on teaching through written case studies in time for LTC in March 2017. These should look to demonstrate the kinds of 'value add' benefits which may be	Library in process of assembling these for publication closer to June LTC.

secured after any initial time investment in list creation.	
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2. Project activity and list growth

This chart denotes activity since a project officer took post in October 2016

Year	Month	Direct emails to academics	General Publicity emails	Queries and Support	Support emails / calls	1-1 and group training sessions	Total published lists	Total academic users
2016	December	125	2	53	0	5	354	368
2017	January	65	7	49	20	13	448	389
2017	February (to date)	128	2	20	31	7	520	413