INTRODUCTION
As a member of academic staff, getting to know your subject librarian is one of the best ways you can make the most of your university library. Subject Librarians (also called Liaison Librarians or Academic Librarians) are employed to work with academic departments to identify and address the library and information needs of staff and students in particular discipline areas; providing information literacy and study skills sessions, managing collections to keep them relevant and up to date, and helping all users to make best use of library resources. Effective communication between academic staff and librarians helps to ensure relevant resources are available and that user information sessions can be tailored to your modules and courses in order to meet the needs of your students.

The aim of this guide is to provide a better understanding of library services and to help academic staff consider how they can make effective use of the knowledge and expertise of library staff to support and enhance the students learning experience and their development of information handling skills.

We would encourage you to –

- Find out who your subject librarian is. This information can often be found on your library’s website, or by asking at the library enquiry desk
- Contact your subject librarian, especially if you are a new member of staff and ask for a tour of the library and an introduction to the online facilities.
- Keep your subject librarian informed of your plans relating to teaching resources for your students.

Teaching and Learning
The QAA Subject Benchmark Statements for both Computing (2007) and Librarianship and Information Management (2000) require courses to develop students’ critical evaluation, reflection and effective information retrieval skills. Though arguably more central to those studying information management, these skills are essential for students to study both disciplines effectively, to avoid plagiarism, undertake independent research, and develop life
long learning skills. Your library can help to equip your students with these skills through a
variety of sessions which can be tailored to your particular courses.

Teaching information skills
A significant amount of learning takes place outside of the classroom environment and
whatever the discipline students need to develop study and reading habits, and conduct
research in their discipline. As you may be aware students over rely on the internet for
information. Students have become very good at searching for information using Google, but
struggle to evaluate and select good quality academic resources. Your academic librarian can
teach your students effective information handling skills that are transferable across their
course and into their working life. Information handling skills include:-

- Problem solving
- Mind mapping
- Formulating literature searches
- Selecting and searching resources, including subject specific databases such as
  Computer and Information Systems Abstracts (CSA Illumina) or Library and
  Information Science Abstracts (LISA)
- Evaluating websites and other resources
- Referencing and citation
- Avoiding plagiarism
- Presenting information back to others in bibliographies, and using bibliographic
  software such as Endnote and Refworks.

Most libraries offer a range of courses that can be embedded into your degree programme.
These include inductions to the library which are usually delivered at the very start of a course,
how to use the library catalogue, how to use electronic resources, how to find journal articles
on specific topics and referencing and citation skills. Research shows that embedding
information literacy into the subject curriculum encourages students to value information skills,
improves their study skills and also supports the development of life-long learning (Bruce,
and Mogg note from their experience at Cardiff University,
‘...tailoring IL training to specific subjects and levels of student by embedding it into curriculum helps ensure that students recognise the relevance of the skills they are learning and can apply them to their studies.’ (2005)

We would advise you to speak to your subject librarian about how information literacy can be embedded throughout your courses / modules from first to final year, including possible assessment options.

**Plagiarism**

Many libraries play an active role in the prevention of plagiarism. Studies show that plagiarism is caused through:-

- Lack of understanding and experience regarding academic culture and academic integrity;
- Poor study skills including poor time management skills, citation and referencing skills, not understanding the question or knowing how to find and use information effectively;
- Pressure to achieve good grades.

Prevention techniques include:-

- Regularly talking to students about what constitutes plagiarism and the consequences of plagiarising;
- Teaching students how to find and use information ethically and cite and reference sources correctly;
- Designing assessments to reduce plagiarism e.g. not reusing the same assessment each year.

**How can the library help?**

Your subject librarian can provide an additional / alternative voice, changing the pace and tone of the discussion with your students. They have the skills to teach students to find and use information ethically, including the mechanics of citation. If you do feel that a student has plagiarised the library may be able to help you track down the original work. Please note that library policies across different institutions may differ, so speak to your subject librarian to find out exactly how they can help with detecting plagiarism. Ensure that you are aware of your institutional policies and tools when dealing with suspected plagiarism.
There are a number of valuable resources available regarding detecting plagiarism and designing plagiarism out of the curriculum for example:-

Deterring plagiarism in higher education
http://www.brookes.ac.uk/services/ocsd/4_resource/plagiarism.html
This website is the continually updated companion site to Jude Carroll's *Handbook for deterring plagiarism in higher education*.

JISC Plagiarism detection service.
http://online.northumbria.ac.uk/faculties/art/information_studies/Imri/Jiscpas/site/jiscpas.asp
The Plagiarism Advisory Service provides generic advice and guidance on all aspects of plagiarism prevention and detection to institutions, academics and students.

Plagiarism.Org.
http://www.plagiarism.org/
This site provides access to latest information, resources and tools such as Turnitin, for those concerned with the problems of internet plagiarism. It also includes a useful 'Research resources' section with information, tips and guidelines for both students and educators.

**Further Reading**
http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources.asp?process=full_record&section=generic&id=426
http://www.jisc.ac.uk/uploaded_documents/brookes.pdf
http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources.asp?process=full_record&section=generic&id=428
Your Reading list

- How do you want students to use your reading list?
- How will this inform the teaching, encourage them to make value judgements and evaluate material?
- How can this be used to reinforce what you are trying to achieve in your teaching?

Students, especially first years, may not have come across a reading list before and may see this as directed reading. It is essential for academics to stress that there are alternative materials available and in so doing, give the student permission to look elsewhere. This is particularly important as no library will have a copy of a book for each student and depending on class size the students may not get round to reading a particular text you have set.

We would encourage you to inform the library / your subject librarian of your assignments, share your reading list with them and ensure students understand how you expect them to use this. This will not only put the library staff in the best position to help your students, but also help to ensure the material you require is available, with sufficient copies – as far as library budgets allow. This will also mean that your subject librarian will be prepared for the questions / enquiries they may receive and where appropriate tailor information skills sessions to your assessment.

Your subject librarian can provide advice and help regarding the appropriate number of copies, loan periods for the number of students, the purchasing of books and other resources, extra copies, journal subscriptions etc. However, as policies differ across different institutions, we would recommend that you speak to your subject librarian and get to know them well!

If you are bored with the same old references, consider including guidance on research and resources with your reading lists. Make students aware that they are likely to do better if they have read widely and can evidence this in their assignments, and tell them that they will get marks for correctly cited references and bibliographies. Research skills are essential and greater emphasis on skills such as key word searching will help your students to value information handling / literacy skills.
Increasingly electronic resources are available – full text journals, e-books, online material. However, the quality of these resources will vary and students need to be aware that not everything on the web is reliable or useful to their academic work / study. Emphasising this and using your reading lists to direct students to appropriate online material will help reinforce evaluation and information literacy skills. Remember the library catalogue will tell you the format of the resource and if appropriate provide links to online / electronic material.

References


Subject Benchmark Statements – Computing (2007)

Quality Assurance Agency
http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/benchmark/honours/computing.asp

Subject Benchmark Statements – Librarianship & Information Management (2000)

Quality Assurance Agency
http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/benchmark/honours/librarianship.asp

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