University of Salford Information Literacy Strategy

1. Introduction

1.1 Context
There is an increasing need for our students to acquire appropriate skills to be able to successfully manage information in their studies, become independent life-long learners and operate effectively in the knowledge society. Traditional and new types of learning resources including, books, journals, wikis, blogs, podcasts, etc. require skills in finding, evaluating and using information.

This Strategy has been produced by Information and Learning Services (ILS) as an outcome of a discussion at the Learning, Teaching and Enhancement Committee (LTEC) and in consultation with programme leaders and other academic managers. The Strategy aims to formalise the development opportunities currently delivered to students by ILS and school staff and ensure that all students benefit.

The Strategy supports the aims of the Learning, Teaching and Enhancement and Research and Innovation Strategies. It is a key component of the Information and Learning Services Strategy and an enabler of the ILS strategic aim to:

“Enable effective learning and decision making by delivering information literacy, information management and skills development.” (University of Salford, Information & Learning Services 2008)

The Strategy supports the University’s Widening Participation Strategy and Retention and Progression Policy.

1.2 Definition
Information literacy is a broad term encompassing both information skills and ICT skills.

“Information literacy is knowing when and why you need information, where to find it, and how to evaluate, use and communicate it in an ethical manner.”
(Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals 2009)

The Society for College, National and University Libraries (SCONUL) defines information literacy under seven headings known as the “Seven Pillars of Information Literacy.” The ILS Framework for Information literacy (Appendix 1) has been developed using the SCONUL principles

i. Ability to recognise and articulate a need for information
ii. Ability to distinguish ways in which the information need may be addressed.
iii. Ability to construct strategies for locating information
iv. Ability to locate and access information
v. Ability to compare and evaluate information available from different sources
vi. Ability to organise, apply, communicate information to others in ways appropriate to the situation
vii. Ability to synthesise and build upon existing information contributing to the creation of new knowledge. (Society of College, National and University Libraries 1999)

1.3 Information literacy in the curriculum
Information literacy is important in all disciplines and at all levels of study. It is best developed within a generic framework to ensure consistency but also within the academic curriculum in the context of the discipline rather than as an add-on removed from the subject context.

1.4 Key drivers
Issues raised by internal University audits such as the Academic Audit Committee Report on Academic Good Conduct in Assessed Work (University of Salford 2008) highlighted areas of good practice but also some inconsistency in students’ access to appropriate teaching and guidance in avoidance of plagiarism and effective referencing. QAA Subject Benchmarking Statements for most disciplines refer to the need for students to acquire information handling and presentation skills.

Nationally a number of external reports e.g. the Leitch Report (2006), the NHS Knowledge & Skills Framework (2004) and the more recent JISC research: Thriving in the 21st century: Learning Literacies for the Digital Age (Beetham, McGill et al 2009), etc. have highlighted the need for graduates to have appropriate skills to help them manage and use information effectively.

Internationally, information literacy has matured sufficiently to have become a national and international policy issue as evidenced by President Obama’s proclamation (2009) statement and the Prague Declaration of 2003 (UNESCO)

2. Vision

Our vision is for an information literate university where information literacy learning opportunities are integrated into the academic curricula in a timely, appropriate relevant manner and where librarians and academic staff are partners in ensuring that all students gain these critical lifelong independent learning skills.

3. Aims of the Information Literacy Strategy

The Strategy aims to:

- ensure that all University of Salford students are enabled to become information literate by the provision of effective information literacy learning and teaching opportunities
- integrate the development of information literacy skills into all programmes
- ensure that ILS staff, academic staff, students and others work as partners in developing information literacy skills
• ensure strategic support for the concept of information literacy and recognition by senior managers of the role that the acquisition of such skills can have in students’ retention and progression

• raise the profile of the good practice that already exists in the University and to build on the current provision to ensure that all students benefit

• enable the development of the knowledge and skills of ILS staff, including support for professional development of skills and the acquisition of appropriate qualifications

• develop an awareness in all staff and students of information literacy and the contribution of this to wider retention and progression initiatives.

4. Implementation

In implementing this Strategy the library will work in partnership with University colleagues to:

• work with programme leaders to conduct an audit of current provision across all programmes, identifying and addressing gaps

• produce an implementation plan which addresses any gaps in provision and highlights any resourcing issues

• develop awareness sessions for staff to encourage and support the integration of information literacy into all programmes of study

• create a range of on-line modules and learning objects to support, enhance and replace face-to-face teaching as appropriate

• develop and deliver information literacy sessions in partnership with all relevant stakeholders e.g. programme teams, research institutes, Student Life, etc.

• create a standard information literacy module which is assessed and credit bearing and which could be embedded into any taught programme.

• contribute to the review of the programme approval process ensuring that information literacy is fully reflected in the learning outcomes of all new programmes

5. Integration with other University priorities and developments

The Strategy and framework supports all elements of learning and will support the integration of tools and techniques to benefit and enhance student skills and experience, e.g. plagiarism avoidance, reading list strategies, referencing guidelines; e-submission and e-assessment implementation, Web 2.0, etc.
6. Monitoring

The Project team will report regularly to School Learning, Teaching and Enhancement Committees on local provision, achievements and issues.

The Steering Group will monitor, evaluate and report to the Learning Teaching and Enhancement Committee progress in the creation of an information literate University annually.

References


University of Salford (2008). Academic Audit Committee Report: audit of the implementation of measures to promote best practice in academic good conduct for assessed work. Salford, University of Salford.

Information Literacy Strategy - Appendix 1

University of Salford Framework for Information Literacy

SCONUL Seven Pillars Model for Information Literacy
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P1 The ability to recognise a need for information

P2 The ability to distinguish ways in which the information ‘gap’ may be addressed

P3 The ability to construct strategies for locating information

P4 The ability to locate and access information

P5 The ability to compare and evaluate information obtained from different sources

P6 The ability to organise, apply and communicate information to others in ways appropriate to the situation

P7 The ability to synthesise and build upon existing information, contributing to the creation of new knowledge
P. Level - Pre-entry skills

These skills are pre-entry skills, i.e. those which we anticipate most undergraduate students would enter the University with. However, not all do and for students who do not have these skills we will offer some summer schools and some mop-up training during the academic year. Online provision will also be available but we acknowledge that for students with very low level skills they will need training first.

Level - Pre-entry skills:
Students should be able to:

P.1 Use a computer to a basic level
P.1.1 Switch a PC on and off correctly
P.1.2 Identify the main parts of a computer, eg monitor, base-unit, printer, keyboard, mouse
P.1.3 Use a mouse to double and left click and to move the pointer around the screen
P.1.4 Identify different parts of a keyboard: shift, control, alt and delete, Caps Lock, Insert, letters, the numeric keypad
P.1.5 Minimise, maximise, close, switch windows
P.1.6 Identify elements of the Windows interface: toolbar, menus, status bar, scroll bar, dialog box

P.2 Use a standard applications (Word, Excel, PowerPoint) to a basic level
P.2.1 Load standard applications
P.2.2 Enter and delete text/characters, move the cursor to enter text at different places in a file
P.2.3 Create, edit basic formulae
P.2.4 Format text/documents, e.g. align, highlight, shade, add page numbers
P.2.5 Proof read a document and use Spell Checker
P.2.6 Save and open files (including text and images) to/from various devices eg c:, pen, CD/DVD drive
P.2.7 Change page orientation, to preview and print a document

P.3 Manage files and folders
P.3.1 Create, rename, move and delete folders and sub-folders
P.3.2 Save files to these folders
P.3.3 Open files from various folders

P.4 Use the Internet to a basic level
P.4.1 Load a browser
P.4.2 Navigate websites, using the back button, hyperlinked text and pictures
P.4.3 Understand basic Internet terminology, e.g. www, browser, URL, internet
P.4.4 Undertake simple searches
P.4.5 Locate a website with a URL
P.4.6 Use favourites/bookmarks to access stored websites and to store websites
P.4.7 Complete a basic on-line form
P.4.8 Open a pdf file from the Internet
P.4.9 Save and print web pages

P.5 Use email to a basic level
P.5.1 Load an email application
P.5.2 Create, send, read and reply to received messages
P.5.3 Open received attachments
P.5.4 Send attachments
P.5.5 Use appropriate language
P.5.6 Log out of an email application

P.6 Undertake health, safety and environmental care
P.6.1 Understand what create a good working environment such as: appropriate positioning of monitors, keyboards and adjustable chairs, use of a mouse mat, provision of adequate lighting and ventilation, frequent breaks away from the computer
P.6.2 Understand what actions can be taken to avoid risks to others, such as ensuring there are no trailing cables, drinks near electrical equipment
P.6.3 Describe the common health problems associated with computers, RSI, eye strain, back problems
P.6.4 Understand ways to reduce environmental emissions, eg proof read on screen, use print preview, switch off computers when not in use

P.7 Work securely and privately
P.7.1 Identify threats to security and privacy
P.7.2 Describe ways to keep username and passwords secure
P.7.3 Identify threats to and guidelines for protecting computers
P.7.4 Identify measures to secure online communications, eg email, instant messaging, social networking sites
P.7.5 Explain computer security settings
I  Level I Induction

Aim:  To welcome new students to Information & Learning Services (ILS) and introduce them to library and computing facilities and resources.

Learning Outcomes
By the end of this session students should be able to:

I.1 Locate library and computing facilities
   I.1.1 Locate library sites with subject coverage relevant to them
   I.1.2 Locate PC suites
   I.1.3 Locate zoned areas within libraries

I.2 Locate and make use of library resources
   0.1.1. Use an understanding of the library classification system to locate specific books on the library shelves
   0.1.2. Locate journals at their main site
   0.1.3. Locate specific separate collections relevant to them
   0.1.4. Borrow, renew, return & reserve library items

I.3 Log on to the University network and access key ILS resources and services, including e-Library, Blackboard, Webmail and F-drive, on and off campus
   0.1.5. Locate links on the Student Channel
   0.1.6. Access their reading lists and the “Being A Good Scholar” guide on Blackboard
   0.1.7. Know why they need to check Webmail
   0.1.8. Save to their F drive
   0.1.9. Print to an appropriate printer and re-credit their account

I.4 Identify the library catalogue and e-Library as the key tools for finding information in ILS
   0.1.10. Identify which resources can be found using e-Library / the library catalogue
   0.1.11. Find a specific book and journal from a reading list
   0.1.12. Perform a keyword search on the library catalogue
   0.1.13. Find e-books in the library catalogue

I.5 Identify appropriate contacts for help with ILS services
   0.1.14. Contact Service Desk by phone and at library sites
   0.1.15. Contact the Information Specialist for their subject
   0.1.16. Be aware of the training and support available from ILS
4. Level 4

Aim: To use reading lists to introduce students to e-Library and basic search skills

Learning Outcomes
By the end of this session students should be able to:

4.1 Locate resources relevant to the student’s need P1-3
   4.1.1 Identify different levels (primary, secondary and tertiary) of information
   4.1.2 Locate information about subject resources available in ILS, such as the list in Find Database
   4.1.3 Locate links to newspapers, e-book collections and reference material from the opening screen in e-Library

4.2 Perform a search for a given reference P4
   4.2.1 Identify the various parts of book and journal references
   4.2.2 Perform a journal reference search in library catalogue
   4.2.3 Perform a journal reference search in e-Library

4.3 Perform a search for information on a subject in e-Library P3-4
   4.3.1 Find their Athens username & password
   4.3.2 Select appropriate keywords
   4.3.3 Combine keywords to perform a search
   4.3.4 Set search limits such as date of publication
   4.3.5 Identify which results lead to full text and which to reference only
   4.3.6 Retrieve search results into an appropriate format (print/email)
   4.3.7 Obtain material not held by the University using e.g. SCONUL access or Document Delivery

4.4 Use appropriate methods to search for information on the internet P5
   4.4.1 Distinguish between web search engines and databases in e-Library
   4.4.2 Use recommended subject gateways and sites
   4.4.3 Use the advanced search option in at least one search engine
   4.4.4 Locate Google Scholar
   4.4.5 Recognise the need to critically appraise the information found

4.5 Avoid plagiarism and Referencing P6
   4.5.1 Locate information about plagiarism and referencing, such as the “Being A Good Scholar” and the PLATO tutorial
   4.5.2 Observe copyright
   4.5.3 Keep records of searches and of sources used
   4.5.4 Compile references in the required bibliographic style.
5. **Level 5**

**Aim:** To develop students’ skills in searching electronic information sources for up-to-date information

**Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this session students should be able to:

5.1 **Carry out an organised literature search for a given topic**  \( \text{P1-3} \)
   - 5.1.1 Perform background research where necessary to inform a search
   - 5.1.2 Select the type of resources that best suit their information need
   - 5.1.3 Identify several databases relevant to their subject area or topic

5.2 **Begin to demonstrate independence in accessing and searching electronic resources.**  \( \text{P3} \)
   - 5.2.1 Define the methods and approaches chosen to locate material, and be able to explain and justify the process

5.3 **Access and search several databases**  \( \text{P4} \)
   - 5.3.1 Search in more than one database for references using techniques such as linking terms
   - 5.3.2 Access ILS user guides and locate in-built help functions when using databases
   - 5.3.3 Define and adapt appropriate search terms
   - 5.3.4 Understand the impact of issues over American-English spellings and synonyms/alternative terms on the success of a search term
   - 5.3.5 Limit searches where necessary using criteria such as date, language etc

5.4 **Manage search results**  \( \text{P5} \)
   - 5.4.1 Select and retrieve the most appropriate results from a search
   - 5.4.2 Set up and re-use search histories
   - 5.4.3 Understand the benefit of using bibliographic software such as Endnote Web and know how to access training
6. **Level 6**

**Aim:** To extend students’ knowledge of the principles and processes of systematically searching for information

**Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this session students should be able to:

6.1 **Apply a systematic approach to locating information on a given topic P2-3**
   6.1.1 Construct a strategy for locating information on a topic
   6.1.2 Define and locate a range of potential resources for information including print, electronic and web sources
   6.1.3 Reflect on the search process, assess whether the information need has been met and redefine/revisit if necessary to locate more relevant material

6.2 **Define search terms and strategies based on broad information, such as a case study P4**
   6.2.1 Apply a systematic approach to a given topic or case study in order to establish a clear search strategy and define keywords
   6.2.2 Redefine and apply search terms where necessary across a range of databases

6.3 **Independently select several databases to search for relevant information using advanced techniques P4**
   6.3.1 Carry out a search in several databases using techniques such as truncation/wild cards, linking terms (via Boolean logic) and applying limits where appropriate
   6.3.2 Sift information to locate the key findings for a topic or project

6.4 **Access and evaluate information from the internet P5**
   6.4.1 Display an understanding of peer review
   6.4.2 Access material from a range of appropriate web sources
   6.4.3 Using guidelines such as the Intute framework, evaluate information found on the web
   6.4.4 Compare and evaluate the information from a range of web and journal sources

6.5 **Construct a major bibliography and reference a range of information sources in an appropriate and correct manner P6**
   6.5.1 Maintain systematic and clear search histories
   6.5.2 Keep systematic records of material selected
   6.5.3 Extend referencing skills to a wide range of sources
7. **Level 7**

**Aim:** To increase the breadth and depth of the information accessed and develop the students' critical appraisal skills

Students accessing the level M training may need an initial library induction, and/or a preparatory session on accessing the electronic resources in order to proceed to this level, especially if they have not studied at Salford University prior to a postgraduate course. Such sessions can be tailored to meet their specific needs and will incorporate elements from levels 1-3 as well as those below.

**Learning Outcomes**

**By the end of this session students should be able to:**

7.1 **Recognise the need for information and determine the nature and extent of the information needed** \( \text{P1-2} \)
   - 7.1.1 Identify and define the information needs of a given project or topic in order to carry out effective information gathering or literature search
   - 7.1.2 Identify different levels (primary, secondary, tertiary) of information and how they combine to give full coverage of a topic

7.2 **Find needed information effectively and efficiently** \( \text{P4} \)
   - 7.2.1 Construct a systematic strategy for locating information on a topic
   - 7.2.2 Save and re-run searches within databases to gather information over time
   - 7.2.3 Identify and use resources to find past theses
   - 7.2.4 Identify web-based current awareness resources to help keep up-to-date in their chosen field
   - 7.2.5 Redefine and modify information collected for major research project

7.3 **Critically evaluate information and the information seeking process** \( \text{P4} \)
   - 7.3.1 Critically appraise material found based on criteria of authenticity, bias, validity and currency
   - 7.3.2 Evaluate and sift information found for an extended piece of writing (e.g. dissertation or thesis)

7.4 **Manage information collected or generated** \( \text{P5} \)
   - 7.4.1 Construct a major bibliography and reference a range of information sources in an appropriate and correct manner
   - 7.4.2 Be aware of the availability of bibliographic management software, e.g. EndNote

7.5 **Apply prior and new information to construct new concepts or create new understandings** \( \text{P4, P6} \)
   - 7.5.1 Use mailing lists, social networking and other online collaborative tools to obtain and exchange information
   - 7.5.2 Create new knowledge in a major project through the synthesis or development of existing information
Level 8

Aim: To provide the skills necessary to undertake an extensive piece of original academic research that is worthy of publication in a peer-reviewed context.

Students accessing the Doctoral Level training may need an initial library induction, and/or a preparatory session on accessing the electronic resources in order to proceed to this level, especially if they have not studied at Salford University before. This session may contain elements from Levels 1-M as necessary. It is understood that the information skills necessary to complete research degrees are acquired throughout the duration of the degree.

Learning Outcomes
By the end of the degree students should be able to:

- **Determine the nature and extent of the information needed** P1-2
  - Identify the information needs of a major research project and identify various investigative methods (literature search, interviews, fieldwork, etc.) appropriate to obtain that information.

- **Find needed information effectively and efficiently** P2-4
  - Use appropriate resources and services to retrieve information needed, such as e-resources, datasets, archives, document delivery, professional bodies, experts and practitioners.
  - Use alerts/current awareness services to stay up-to-date in field of research.
  - Understand the information cycle and its impact on research literature; know which resources to use to find literature from various stages of the cycle, such as citation searching tools, repositories and EDTs.
  - Reflect on the information seeking process and revise investigative strategies as necessary.

- **Use academic networks** P4, P6
  - Understand the peer-review process.
  - Use mailing lists, social networking and other online collaborative tools to obtain and exchange information; communicate in an appropriate manner.
  - Demonstrate awareness of the ethical issues relating to research, for example, confidentiality, attribution, copyright, malpractice, ownership of data and the requirements of the Data Protection Act.
  - Be aware of the Institutional Repository and understand how to deposit research.

- **Critically appraise information** P5
  - Critically appraise material found based on criteria of usefulness, authenticity, bias, validity and currency.

- **Organise and manage information effectively** P6
  - Construct a major bibliography and reference a range of information sources correctly in a style appropriate for the academic discipline.
  - Understand the benefit of using bibliographic and research management software, such as EndNote and NVivo, and know how to access training.