



Bodleian Libraries
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

LibQUAL+ 2012 Survey

Summary

The Bodleian Libraries survey readers and staff to seek feedback that helps us assess service performance, build on our strengths and identify improvements that can be made across the Libraries.

Our latest major reader survey ran from 29 October to 16 November 2012 and was open to all members of the Bodleian Libraries. The survey tool used was LibQUAL+ (Lite) - a standardized web-based survey used extensively in academic libraries internationally and across the UK. Readers were asked to answer a subset of twenty-two core questions about library services, spaces and resources and also to complete five local questions chosen by the Bodleian Libraries. Scores ranged from 1 to 9 with 9 being the highest level of satisfaction.

Respondents were asked to base their assessment of our services on the Bodleian Libraries' library or site that they use most frequently and to use the survey comments box for feedback on other Bodleian sites or on the Bodleian Libraries generally.

In total 3,611 valid responses were received along with 1,653 comments. The overall response rate for academics and students was 9.43%, which compares favorably with other participating institutions. A total of 79% of responses came from the University with, 40% from the Humanities, 26% from Social Sciences, 9% from the Medical Sciences Division, 21% from Mathematics, Physical, and Life Sciences, and 4% "Other". The remaining 21% responses were received from external Readers, that is, people who are not current staff or students in the University.

As LibQUAL+ is an internationally-used standardised tool we are able to compare our results against the averages of other participating libraries, particularly with the average results for members of the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) in North America and SCOUNL (Society of College, National and University Libraries) whose members have the greatest similarities to the Bodleian Libraries. We have also made comparisons against results from when we last ran the LibQUAL+ survey in 2003.

The survey results are seen against a background of major change in libraries in general and at Oxford in particular. In the last two years the Bodleian has introduced a new Integrated Library System; closed the New Bodleian for renovation and relocated collections, reading rooms, and staff; transferred the History, Philosophy, and Theology Libraries to new locations; and added large numbers of e-resources for reader use. Many of the areas where Readers seek improvement are slated to be addressed in the next two years. For example, the reopening of the New Bodleian as the Weston Library will reduce overcrowding and provide well-lit quiet spaces for Readers of special collections. Work is already underway to improve the Libraries' catalogue.

The survey results have been reviewed and a top-line summary of the results is provided below, noting both the positive headlines from the survey and the key concerns raised by Readers. Given the multi-site nature of the Bodleian Libraries, there are significant variations in the results when they are examined more granularly (by site, academic discipline or academic status) and there are variations between the results for University and external Readers. However this summary highlights the main issues shared by Readers.

Positive outcomes

The LibQUAL+ 2012 survey results show a higher than average level of reader satisfaction with the Bodleian Libraries. In general, Readers are satisfied with the service provided with particularly positive responses in provision of information literacy, and around library spaces and staff.

- **Overall satisfaction:** Overall satisfaction rates compare favorably against the other UK Libraries who participated in the survey. Readers were asked a number of questions to gauge their overall satisfaction. The question, *'How would you rate the overall quality of the service provided by the library?'* earned an overall score of 7.47 out of 9 which is higher than the average scores for participating members of SCONUL and ARL (7.07 and 7.43 respectively) and which exceeds our 2003 score of 6.95. Satisfaction varies amongst type of readers with Undergraduates showing a satisfaction score higher than Postgraduates.
- **Overall service adequacy:** Readers were asked to consider the overall adequacy of the service, a measure of how much a service falls above or below minimally acceptable levels. This demonstrates the extent to which current perceived levels of service are meeting or exceeding the minimum requirements of our Readers. Bodleian Libraries' scores for all reader types *combined* for the 22 core questions are higher than the 2011 SCONUL average in all areas of the survey and are above or equal to the ARL average in all but three areas.
- **Information Literacy:** The survey asked about information literacy such as reader's perception of how the Libraries keep them abreast of developments in their fields, enable Readers to be more efficient in academic work and provide the information skills needed. Bodleian Libraries' scores show a significant improvement since 2003. Scores for the question *'The library aids my advance in my academic discipline or work'* jumped from 7.19 in 2003 to 7.66 in 2012. Bodleian Libraries scores around information literacy were higher than SCONUL averages when looking at all Readers and all sites but with some variation to this when results are broken down by reader type.
- **Libraries' staff:** The highest Service Adequacy scores amongst University respondents, with the exception of academic respondents, are in regard to Bodleian staff and their satisfaction in the staffing.
- **Library spaces:** All Reader types in Oxford report higher Service Adequacy scores for almost all aspects of library space than the SCONUL average - the exception being academics' score for the group study facilities.

Readers' concerns and priorities

The responses to the survey have given a revealing insight into the key concerns of our Readers. The findings have been reviewed and the five most prevalent concerns shared amongst reader types are summarized below:

- **Opening hours:** The adequacy of Bodleian opening hours was identified as a major issue across the Bodleian Libraries. It is of critical importance to Postgraduates and Undergraduates with Academics being generally more satisfied with opening hours than Undergraduates or Postgraduates. Comments recognize the variation in opening hours across our Libraries and express the need for opening hours with greater flexibility that better reflect their working patterns and requirements. The survey indicates that the smaller libraries with a relatively specialized Postgraduate readership are found to be most inadequate. Users of Special Collections also highlighted the hours of service as being less than optimal.
- **Online catalogues:** The adequacy of the online catalogue was also identified as a major issue across respondents. This is especially so for Academics, but for Postgraduates and Undergraduates it was the

second most critical issue. Concerns covered a wide range of issues including the accessibility of journals (considered to be too complex to find, not organized intuitively and inaccessible outside the library) and periodical runs, which present a challenge when requesting retrievals. Misleading availability information and lack of clarity on what material can be borrowed was also flagged up. Mobile/iPad access was requested.

- **Quiet Spaces:** Overall satisfaction rates for all Library spaces were strong. However the availability of quiet space for study was rated as the third least adequate element of library service from the Humanities. The central Bodleian and the Sackler were the sites that were considered least adequate among Humanities respondents. Here again, the responses varied within the Humanities community: Academics and Postgraduates were the most dissatisfied with this element of service, whereas Undergraduates did not rate this as being of such concern. The smaller sites fared better than the larger ones (with the exception of the Taylor Institution Library which was considered adequate on this measure). The issue of quiet in reading rooms was also raised in the context of special collections.
- **Access to collections:** Academics' response to the statement '*The electronic information resources I need and Print and/or electronic journal collections I require for my work*' resulted in scores higher than the average SCONUL scores. But for Postgraduates, access to journals is a major issue, the third most critical area for this class of user while open access to materials is also of great concern, less so for academics and Undergraduates. Not only is access to electronic resources key but there is a desire for remote access to these resources. By far the lowest Service Adequacy score in the survey is the score given by external Readers in response to '*Making electronic resources accessible from my home or office*'. However, because of licensing and contractual obligations, access to the bulk of the Bodleian's purchased electronic collections is currently available to external readers by walk-in only.
- **Staff expertise:** Although the survey results and comments relating to staff expertise are generally very positive, there were signs of unevenness among the provision. This has been identified by Humanities, Science and Medicine, and Special Collections staff. This unevenness is reflected in the ratings from Academics, which are lower than for other classes of user, especially when compared with the 2003 figures, but these users also have higher levels of expectation since then.

Next steps

The LibQUAL+ survey is informing Libraries' planning, including the Strategic Plan and Implementation Plan. Library staff are also identifying issues which are specific to particular sites and services and which can be addressed locally. In the coming months and years, you should see changes in Bodleian services which take into account the information you have provided us. I want to thank all those who participated in the survey and who have helped us understand your needs better.