



Library Services Strategy

Assurance rating:



University College London

Internal Audit 2019-20

—

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Distribution

Executive Sponsor	David Price – Vice Provost (Research)
Key officers (for action)	Paul Ayris – Pro-Vice Provost (Library Services) Martin Moyle – Director of Services

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Executive summary

Conclusion

We have reviewed the processes around Library Services Strategy at University College London (“UCL”) and have reached an overall assessment of ‘significant assurance’ (**green**), which exceeds management’s expectation of ‘significant assurance with minor improvement opportunities’ (**amber-green**).

We concluded that the Library Strategy 2019-22 is well aligned to UCL 2034. The Pro-Vice-Provost of Library Services reports to UCL Council on key library-related enablers against UCL 2034, around student experience & global engagement, and each action in key performance areas is aligned to one of the principal themes. Part of the strategy’s focus is on the future student experience, including digitising resources, maximising the benefit of mobile technologies, and increasing accessibility. The Strategy has been reviewed by senior management involved in the creation and monitoring of UCL 2034 – the Vice Provosts of Education, Research & Pro-Vice Provost Library Services – and was ultimately approved at Library Committee.

The design of the governance structure in place to monitor the delivery of the Strategy within Library Services is robust. Senior management within the department sit on University-wide boards (Academic Board (ex officio), SMT (by invitation and ex officio when it meets as the Information Systems Steering Group and the Human Resources Policy Committee) and Council), which allows for effective escalation of issues (such as challenges regarding sufficient study space for UCL’s increasing student population) and high-level oversight of Library Services. There is appropriate frequency of meetings for each committee and working group convening within Library Services. This ranges from monthly to termly, meaning that each group is meeting at least three times per academic year.

There is sufficient review and challenge of the Library Strategy and its progress across the various committees within Library Services. Each Key Performance Area of the Strategy is assigned an owner from within the Library Services team, which supports clear accountability for each area of the Strategy. Actions are spread evenly across all six Key Performance Areas and are clearly measurable, with set targets in place for completion by the end of the Strategy term.

The data used in monitoring progress against these targets is robust. For example, when measuring progress against targets around student satisfaction, UCL uses data compiled from external independent surveys and for targets around environmental sustainability targets, data is monitored through annual Green Impact scheme submissions, which are audited by trained student volunteers.

Library Services maintains a risk register, which is reviewed and updated twice per year within Library Committee and submitted to Planning, who collate UCL’s risk registers centrally. The risk register is discussed at Library Committee and is also held centrally, meaning risks can be escalated as required. Our testing found that both submissions took place during the 2018/19 academic year. However, increases in UCL student numbers over recent years have posed a persistent challenge to achieving the industry-accepted study space ratio of one available space per eight students. Upon reviewing the risk register, we note that study space difficulties have been included as a risk for a significant length of time. It appears that this ratio has been reducing, however projected growth in student numbers presents a risk of reputational damage among the student community which could negatively impact student experience. This could be mitigated by increasing learning spaces in line with student growth. There is an opportunity for Library staff to be represented on University-wide estates committees to enable them to have a greater involvement in space planning, which may help to reduce the pressure on learning space.

Background

Effective library services are vital to the student experience as they contain resources that students are dependent upon and a lot of student’s time is spent in the library, meaning it is important there are appropriate facilities in place to support the learning environment. It also has a key role to play in supporting academic staff with their research by ensuring there is sufficient and appropriate services and materials to support teaching, learning and research. Demands on library services are also evolving with technology, meaning Libraries are no longer just places for storing books, they are increasingly responsible for maintaining a wealth of digital content and storing data that is used by researchers.

In 2019 UCL launched its Library Strategy which underpins the wider Education and Research (and other UCL) Strategies. The strategy is designed to ensure the Library is equipped to deliver high quality user experience across UCL’s family of libraries. Library Services support 17 libraries and learning spaces across London and in Qatar, with varying specialities that support the research and teaching that takes place in UCL’s eleven faculties. UCL’s Library Services continue to evolve with emerging technology, providing research data management services, bibliometrics and supporting UCL Press with the launch of UCL’s new mega-journal, UCL Open.

Section one

Executive summary (cont.)

The Strategy outlines six key performance areas: user experience; staff, equality, diversity and inclusion; finance and management information; systems, collections and processes; sustainable estate and communication, outreach and open science. Each areas is underpinned by actions agreed to achieve intended outcomes that are defined in the Strategy. The implementation of the Strategy is monitored by the Library Strategy Steering Group which is chaired by the Pro-Vice Provost (Library Services).

Objectives

The objectives of our review were:

Objective	Description of work undertaken
Objective One Governance of the Library Strategy	We assessed the governance processes in place to monitor the implementation of the Library Services Strategy. This included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessing whether the Strategy is aligned to UCL 2034 and the wider Education Strategy; Reviewing which committee(s) are responsible for monitoring the strategy, how often they meet, who attends and what information they receive; How actions that support the Strategy are monitored through to implementation; and Assessing how progress against each element of the strategy is monitored and reported.
Objective Two Operating effectiveness	We tested the operating effectiveness of the controls identified in Objective One.

Areas of good practice

- ✓ UCL has strong governance in place within Library Services. Senior Library management sit on University boards, which allows for escalation of issues and for oversight of Library Services within the context of the whole University.
- ✓ The Library Strategy is clearly aligned to UCL 2034 as the Pro-Vice-Provost reports to UCL council on key library-related enablers against UCL 2034 and the Strategy has been reviewed by senior management involved in the creation and monitoring of UCL 2034.
- ✓ There is regular, sufficient review and challenge of the Library Strategy and its progress from appropriate individuals and committees.
- ✓ Each Key Performance Area of the Library Strategy is assigned an 'owner' from within the Library Services team. These are experienced individuals and this facilitates clear accountability for each area of the Strategy.
- ✓ Actions are spread evenly across all six Key Performance Areas and are clearly measurable, with set targets in place for completion by the end of the Strategy term.

Areas for improvement

- Rising student numbers has caused UCL to struggle in achieving the industry-accepted study space ratio of one available space per eight students, despite this being included in the risk register for a considerable length of time, and this ratio is reducing, however projected growth in student numbers presents a risk of reputational damage among the student community which could negatively impact student experience (**see recommendation one**).

Recommendations

We summarise below the recommendations raised as a result of our review:

	High	Medium	Low	Total
Made	-	-	1	1
Accepted	-	-	1	1

Acknowledgement

We thank the staff involved in this review who helped us complete our work.

Recommendations

This section summarises the recommendations that we have identified as a result of this review. We have attached a risk rating to these recommendations as per the following table:

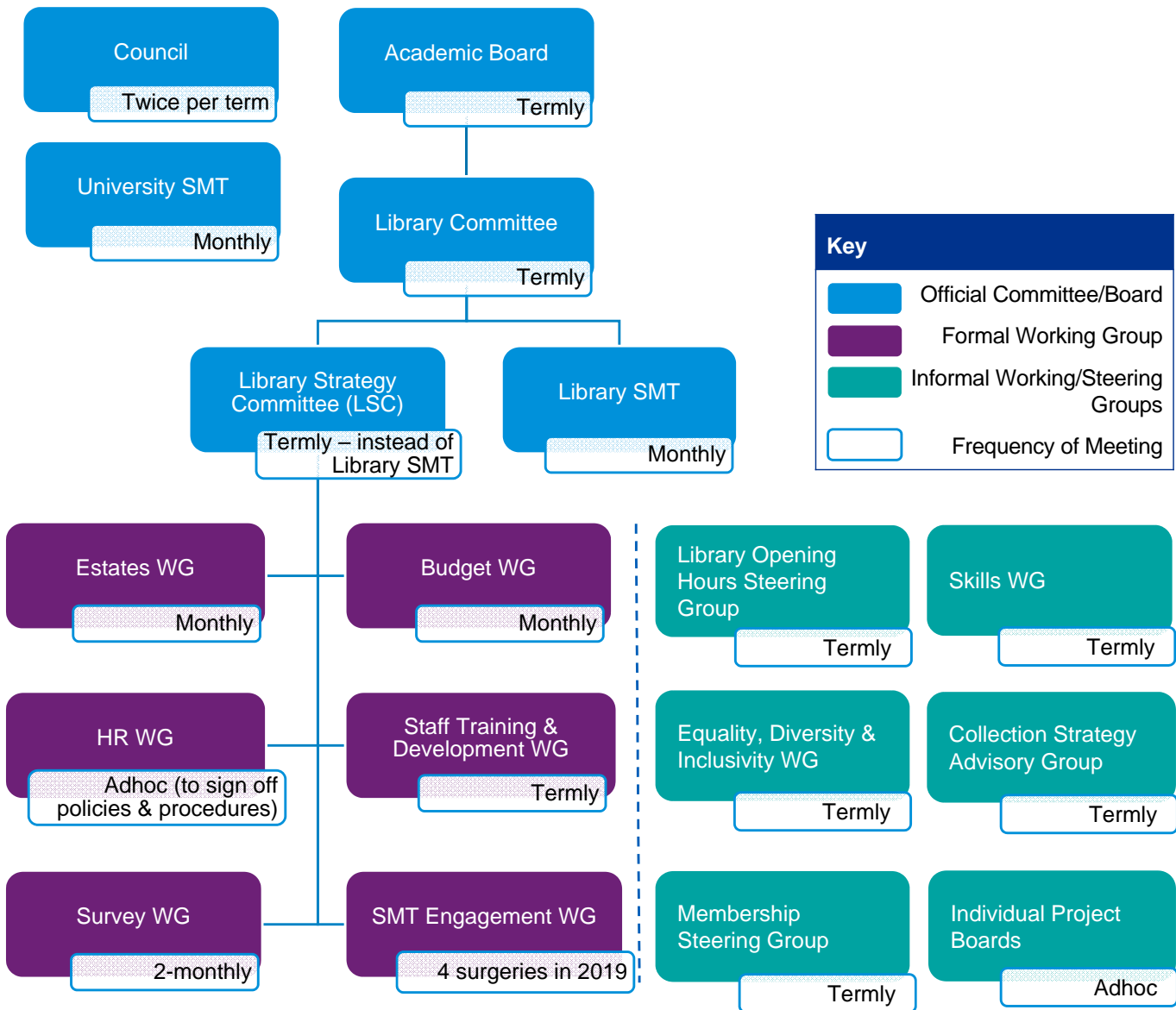
Risk rating for recommendations raised		
<p>1 High priority (one): A significant weakness in the system or process which is putting you at serious risk of not achieving your strategic aims and objectives. In particular: significant adverse impact on reputation; non-compliance with key statutory requirements; or substantially raising the likelihood that any of the University's strategic risks will occur. Any recommendations in this category would require immediate attention.</p>	<p>2 Medium priority (two): A potentially significant or medium level weakness in the system or process which could put you at risk of not achieving your strategic aims and objectives. In particular, having the potential for adverse impact on the University's reputation or for raising the likelihood of the University's strategic risks occurring.</p>	<p>3 Low priority (three): Recommendations which could improve the efficiency and/or effectiveness of the system or process but which are not vital to achieving the University's strategic aims and objectives. These are generally issues of good practice that the auditors consider would achieve better outcomes.</p>

No.	Risk	Recommendation	Management response, officer responsible and deadline
1	3	<p>Representation of Library Services on Estates Committees</p> <p>In recent years there has been a gradual rise UCL's student numbers, which has presented increasing pressure on learning space availability. UCL's student numbers are increasing, meaning the space available in UCL's Bloomsbury estate is more and more in demand.</p> <p>The Library's Director of Operations currently sits on the UCL Central Estates Strategy Board and SLMS Estates Board, which are two of nine UCL Estates Committees. The Pro-Vice-Provost also sits on the UCL Estates Management Committee. We recommend that the Pro-Vice-Provost (Library Services) and the Director of Estates considers whether this is an appropriate level of representation to ensure the library's needs are met.</p>	<p>Agreed</p> <p>The Pro-Vice Provost (Library Services) discuss the issue with the Director of Estates as a member of Estates Management Committee.</p> <p>Responsible officer: Pro-Vice Provost (Library Services)</p> <p>Due date: 31 July 2020</p>

Library Services governance

Governance and reporting structure of UCL Library Services

We have reviewed the governance structure in place within the Library Services department. We have set out the structure below along with our commentary on the structure:



KPMG commentary on governance structure

- ✓ Library Senior Management Team (SMT) meets monthly, with one meeting per term being held under the guise of the LSC to oversee the Library Strategy. SMT suggests focus areas for the Strategy. These are then discussed at individual sub-committees where input is obtained from a variety of library staff and reported back up to the SMT.
- ✓ The Pro-Vice-Provost for Library Services sits on two University level boards (Academic Board and SMT) and reports to Council periodically. This allows him to cascade any issues relating to Library Services as needed.
- ✓ Alongside the required committees the department has also formed both formal working groups and more informal working groups and steering committees to facilitate the effective running of the department.
- ✓ Individual project boards meet on an adhoc basis, as and when library-related projects arise and comprise members of Library staff and other relevant operational personnel from different areas of the University, depending on project topic.

Library Strategy process

UCL Library Strategy process

We have assessed the design of the processes in place regarding the establishment and monitoring of the Library Strategy below:

Process	Control	KPMG Commentary
<p>The Library Strategy is compiled by senior individuals from the Library Services department in line with UCL 2034.</p>	<p>1. The Library Strategy is approved by Library Committee (LC).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Library Strategy is clearly aligned to UCL 2034 as the Library reports to UCL Council on key library-related enablers against UCL 2034, around student experience & global engagement. ✓ Additionally, the Strategy has been reviewed by the Vice Provosts of Education and Research, who are all involved in the creation and monitoring of UCL 2034 from within Council and SMT ✓ Library Committee is an appropriate level of committee to sign off the Strategy. ✓ Appropriate consultation has taken place with members of library staff as well as input from other departments.
<p>Six Key Performance Areas (KPA) are separated out within the Strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - User Experience - Staff, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion - Finance and Management Information - Systems, Collections and Processes - Sustainable Estate - Communication, Outreach & Open Science 	<p><i>No control identified.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Each KPA is assigned an 'owner' from within the Library Services team, which allows clearer accountability for each area of the strategy. ✓ One of the KPAs relates to Open Science, which Library Services provide training to faculties. Library Services monitors faculty engagement with Research Publications Service on a monthly basis. ✓ JISC noted that the average e-resource subscriptions and purchases increased by 6% between 2013 and 2015. The Budget Working Group monitors the Library Services budget, with updates provided to SMT, and UCL's ability to respond to these increases is limited as these prices are negotiated nationally and for bulk services. This provides a baseline for modelling financial requirements and needs throughout the Library budget. ✓ KPA 4 relates to the digitising of resources, which is important given the direction of travel for the sector.

Library Strategy process

Process	Control	KPMG Commentary
<p>Each KPA is assigned approximately 10 actions.</p>	<p><i>No control identified.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Actions for all six KPAs are clearly measurable with set targets in place for completion by the end of the Strategy term. ✓ The data used in monitoring progress against Strategy targets is robust. For measuring Strategy targets around student satisfaction, UCL uses data compiled from external independent surveys, such as NSS for undergraduate and PTES and PRES for postgraduate student experience. ✓ For Environmental sustainability targets, data is monitored through annual Green Impact scheme submissions, which are audited by trained student volunteers. ✓ Special collections data is fully catalogued with barcode documentation for each item and key bibliographic information contained within a spreadsheet held by the Head of Retrospective Cataloguing. Each item is scanned and tracked each time it moves to enhance the integrity of the information.
<p>KPA owners report to the Library Strategy Committee (LSC) on the department's progress of against each of their actions and targets.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Progress is reported to LSC on a termly basis. 3. Pro-Vice Provost for Library Services reports termly on the Strategy to Library Committee. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ LSC monitors and challenges progress of the strategy. This is an appropriate level of scrutiny as its members comprise all senior Library staff and KPA owners. ✓ Reporting periodically to Library Committee allows for high-level oversight of the Strategy and, in particular, provides insight into the strengths and weaknesses of the Strategy for when it is renewed every four years.
<p>A Library Services risk register is held by the department and is included in the annual Strategic Operating Plan for the University. This is an operating report looking at the next 3 years of activity and is managed by the UCL planning team.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Risk register is reviewed and updated twice per year and submitted to UCL's central Planning Team, who collate the University's risk registers centrally. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The risk register is discussed within Library Committee and is also held centrally, meaning discussion, if necessary, at University level. • However, increases in student numbers over recent years have presented a continuous challenge in achieving the industry-accepted study space ratio of one available space per eight students. (See recommendation one).

Operating effectiveness of controls

Test of Operating Effectiveness: Controls Testing

From our identification of controls in Appendix One, we conducted testing to gain assurance over the operating effectiveness of these controls in practice. Below we summarise our findings.

Controls Testing: Summary

Control 1

The Library Strategy is approved by Library Committee.

- ✓ We have reviewed that approval for the 2019-22 Library Strategy was obtained from Library Committee in October 2018.

Control 2

Progress is reported to LSC on a termly basis.

- ✓ We confirmed that LSC met termly in 2018/19 (November 2018, February 2019 and July 2019) and, upon reviewing the minutes of each meeting, confirmed that Library Strategy progress was reported at all three meetings.

Control 3

Pro-Vice Provost for Library Services reports termly on the Strategy to Library Committee.

- ✓ We reviewed the Pro-Vice Provost for Library Services' reports to the Library Committee in October 2018, February 2019 and May 2019, thus confirming that reports were made termly in the 2018/19 academic year.

Control 4

Risk register is reviewed and updated twice per year and submitted to UCL's central Planning Team, who collate the University's risk registers centrally.

- ✓ We have reviewed that the Library Services risk register was submitted to UCL's central Planning Team in August 2018 and February 2019 during the 2018/19 academic year.

Staff involvement and documents reviewed

We held discussions with the following staff as part of the review:

Name	Job title
Paul Ayris	Pro-Vice-Provost Library Services
Martin Moyle	Director of Services
Ben Meunier	Director of Operations
June Hedges	Head of Liaison and Support Services
Andy Pow	Head of Finance, Library Services

During our testing, we reviewed the following documents:

- Library Services Strategy 2019-22 ;
- Strategy KPA implementation plans;
- Library Services Risk Register;
- Library Committee papers;
- Library Strategy Committee papers;
- Library SMT papers.



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