

SCONUL Guidelines on Library Services to International Students

Key Concepts Checklist

- KC1:** While emphasis should be placed on positive aspects of the library service, it is important to manage student expectations by presenting clear information about library resources and services. Ensure this information is included in all recruitment publicity produced by the University.
- KC2** Engage with academic staff over reading list provision for international students to manage their expectations.
- KC3** International students are not an homogenous group; even students from the same country don't necessarily have the same cultural background.
- KC4** Use plain English and avoid jargon, not only in publications but in guiding and general library use.
- KC5** Provide glossaries of specialist terminology.
- KC6** Design information literacy sessions to cater for all levels of IT ability by building in self paced elements and providing back up resources whenever possible.
- KC7** Provide regular staff development for library staff in cross cultural awareness and diversity training.
- KC8** An awareness of varying teaching and learning styles should underpin information literacy teaching.
- KC9** Establish mechanisms for obtaining the views of international students, in order to inform future plans.
- KC10** The library should encourage the development of links with other sections of the university which support international students.
- KC11** Design information literacy programmes which challenge students to think about their information literacy ability, rather than just learning technical search skills.

KC12 Ensure that all students, but especially international students, have easy access to information about plagiarism and how to retain their academic integrity.

KC13 Providing information on study skills support in the library can benefit all students.

KC14 Library web pages specifically for international students can help create a welcoming impression and manage expectations, even if many of the links point straight back to the main library web pages.

KC15 Consider providing material in different languages, thinking about how much, which languages and whether students be involved in production.

KC16 Where possible involve international students in staff development activities.

KC17 Identify a named individual member of staff to be a contact point for international students and to bring together library activities.

Good ideas or “Special Touches”

The good ideas or “special touches” listed below have been garnered from a variety of sources: visits to libraries, reading the literature, suggestions sent to the task group. They are presented in no particular order:

- A set of wall clocks displaying the time around the world can be displayed in the library entrance/ reception area
- A “Watching Wall” of TVs showing international news stations with headphones and comfortable seating allows students to sit together and watch different programmes
- Printed newspapers from India, China and the Middle East, daily or weekly editions, can enhance an international or general newspaper area
- Compass signs around the library to allow students to determine direction of prayer are appreciated

- Recognition of international holidays and festivals on the library plasma screens or notices is welcoming
- “Welcome to the library messages” can be displayed in multiple languages on signs/ plasma screens/ web pages
- Information on local services for families of international students is easy to keep at information points
- Information on local English language courses and activities outside the university can be kept at information points and linked to on web pages
- A library multi-cultural event may bring together home and international students
- A list of multi-lingual library staff and how to contact them can be helpful to both staff and students
- A collection of books from around the world, recommended or even donated by international students makes the library seem more friendly
- A comprehensive range of multi lingual dictionaries and links to online dictionaries and translating services is helpful
- Make use of international symbols and images on Library posters and signage where appropriate instead of words.
- Promote and display international materials for home students, for example, collections of world film and literature.
- Where possible use pictures of people from different nationalities in library publications and posters.
- Encourage librarians to purchase books and other materials with an international, or non UK-centric perspective, where possible and appropriate.
- Hold extra information skills sessions aimed at international students during the vacations when they are frequently still on campus.
- Subtitle library induction videos to help international students whose English reading skills may be better than their listening skills.
- The library can employ international student buddies, current students who help new international students get used to the library

- Offer to run information sessions for academic staff to explain what the library is doing to help international students
- Links to websites on academic writing skills can be a useful addition to web pages

References

A full reference list is included in the SCONUL Guidelines and an updated database of relevant references and useful links is available at <http://blogs.ncl.ac.uk/moira.bent> under the Databases of References link.

A few key references are included below:

Senior, K, Bent, M. et al Guidelines for supporting international students in the Library. SCONUL 2008.

http://www.sconul.ac.uk/groups/access/papers/international_students.pdf

Bent, M. & Senior K. Discrete Library Services For International Students - How Can Exclusivity Lead To Inclusivity?, Libraries without Walls 7, International Conference Lesbos, Greece, Sept 2007

Carroll, J. and Ryan, J. (2005a) 'Canaries in the coalmine: international students in Western universities', in Carroll, J. and Ryan, J.(eds.) *Teaching international students: improving learning for all*. London & New York: Routledge, pp. 3.

Carroll, J. and Ryan, J. (eds.) (2005b) *Teaching international students: improving learning for all*. London: Routledge.

Gale, C. (2006) 'Serving them right? How can libraries enhance the learning experience of international students: a case study from the University of Exeter', *Sconul Focus*, 39 (Winter 2006), pp. 36-39.

UK Council for International Student Affairs (2008) Mobility matters. Forty years of international students. Forty years of UKCISA <http://www.ukcisa.org.uk>