

Library Quality Framework

May 2006

Library Quality Framework

1 Quality Assurance

- 1.1 Quality Assurance as an activity seeks to answer fundamental questions, such as how the Library can be sure of (a) the standards of its services and (b) the quality of its learning support for staff and students of the University. The processes of assurance and review enable the Library to have a clearer idea of its strengths and weaknesses so it may celebrate the former and address the latter.
- 1.2 Library Services take place in an ever-changing environment. The Library Quality Framework (LQF) allows the Library to orient its services in relation to its overall objectives. The role of the LQF is to ensure that there are systems in place, and the ability to enhance those systems or develop new ones, which will serve those objectives. It is an important aspect of quality assurance. The purpose of the LQF is therefore to maintain and improve the standards and quality of Library Services.

2 Library Quality Framework

- 2.1 There are five strands to the LQF. Some features of the LQF more obviously seek management information, which may be evaluated and acted upon; others are less transparent but they are nonetheless part of the quality-loop. The framework includes: the Library Strategy; benchmarking; integrated planning and periodic reviews; approved surveys and stakeholder comments; and staff development and appraisal.
- 2.2 *The Library Strategy*
- a) A strategy document - allowing for variations on a theme - typically encompasses four fundamental features:
- a statement of intent - a summary of what the specific aims are, and these are related to broad institutional aims;
 - a list of activities - identification of key activities which will be required of services and staff so that those aims may be achieved;
 - a list of objectives - broad processes which relate to the activities; and
 - a list of performance indicators - the evaluative part of the document by which to gauge achievement of objectives.
- b) The Performance Plan is designed to do that. It has key objectives, and indicators of measurement of success.
- c) The Library's Client Service Charter, a code of practice, includes the Library Mission Statement, which is:
- AUT Library works as an integral, creative and responsive partner with staff and students in teaching, learning and research by:*
- *acquiring, organising and enabling access to recorded knowledge*
 - *conserving and communicating existing knowledge for the development of new knowledge*
 - *empowering the AUT community to be independent lifelong learners.*
- d) The work of the Library, the conduct of all of its business is an integral part of the Mission. The LQF guides the Library in achieving its corporate goal.

2.3 *Benchmarking*

- a) Benchmarking typically refers to a measurement of best practice. This is most often signified by kite marking, or an industry-based threshold or standard. However, in quality assurance it is also deployed in another way - as generic description, for example what a BSc in a particular subject area should look like.
- b) For our purposes, benchmarking is used in the sense of 'best practice', specifically in a context of national and international operability standards. Libraries in the ATN (LATN) are also an important network for sharing information and practices. Such externality is important as a matter of principle, as it might provide critical examples of standards or practices which the Library may usefully adopt or adapt.

2.4 *Integrated Information Management, Planning and Reviews*

- a) The Planning and Quality Co-ordinator (PQC) attends meetings of the Library Management Team, the five Library Teams, and the Library Executive as appropriate.
- b) This ensures that there is joined-up thinking in the processes at all levels of business within the Library.
- c) Periodic reviews of work processes of individual teams for the express purpose of strengthening the administrative resources and support systems within which staff carry out their duties and responsibilities, are conducted.
- d) The task of such events is to address what we do, but specifically:
 - what we do well;
 - what we do less well;
 - what we could improve upon.

The evaluative nature of this agenda serves to formalise and embed quality in the culture of the Library. Additionally this facilitates a quality-loop on the basis of Plan-Implement-Review-Improve (PIRI).

- e) The PQC is responsible for maintaining the Library information environment (i-Drive). This ensures that all teams' documentary output is well structured and well managed, and that information is in an appropriate place in the i-Drive, and that teams may access the 'right information at the right time', available for use and re-use. The PQC maintains a register of Library projects, which is used to track their development and implementation.

2.5 *Surveys and Comments*

- a) The Library wishes to seek feedback from, and to respond to, its community: approved surveys or focus groups, and specific comments about its services are an important part of dialogue with the Library. Surveys are useful tools in the gathering of evidence about performance.
- b) The results are taken very seriously and form an important piece of evidence in managing the standards and quality of the Library's provision of services.
- c) However, the Library is careful to treat students' views, whether positive or negative, with both respect and circumspection and to contextualise or triangulate them against other forms of evidence, where it is available.
- d) Approved surveys of staff satisfaction are conducted periodically. Evidence from the surveys is used to develop integrated staff development.

2.6 *Staff Development and Appraisal*

AUT University Library

- a) The aim of staff development is to exercise and extend professional competence of staff. Staff appraisal aims to gauge performance against criteria. Together they contribute to qualitatively improving the provision of Library services.
- b) Appropriate staff development is provided to facilitate: an awareness of issues; equality of opportunity; motivation; and the sharing of successful practices.
- c) All Library staff are appraised; staff development is identified and undertaken.
- d) Periodic Staff Forums are held at which staff report-back on staff development. This further embeds quality in the culture of the Library.

EW
9 May 2006