Project 3

Advice Desks
Benchmarking Project
2000 and 2001

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Our thanks to all staff involved in this project.
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Introduction

The record of benchmarking activity on comparing the performance of advice desks in Library Services in the UK is a relatively long one, and goes back to 1995 when a British Library funded project (Garrod and Kinnell, 1997) including Loughborough University undertook action research and acted as a demonstrator Project. Identifying Critical Success Factors (CSFs) and process mapping were techniques adopted to help focus on the enquiry and inter-library loan services. From this project the need for appropriate methodologies for Higher Education and for staff to be trained in benchmarking techniques was identified. There were several other projects that approached the issue as a means to identify best practice amongst different organisations, some included those from a commercial environment. In some cases these involved a strategic service wide view, such as the Cranfield University RMCS Library Review (1998); others were more practical, for example the Surrey Institute of Art and Design (1997). There were others too, including the 94 Group Libraries (Paterson, 1998) who collected measurements on a voluntary basis for collation and feedback.

A Project group was formed to initiate work on this area, made up of staff from each university, involved with different aspects of Advice Desk activity from a management and operational perspective. The work benefited from the continuity of involvement from a number of staff engaged in the original pilot project which was part of the SCONUL Benchmarking initiative in 1997/1998.

Project aims

The Advice Desk group agreed that the overall aim was to perform a quantitative and qualitative study of the respective Advice Desk services with the specific aim to develop these through a series of local action plans (see page 80-82).

Project objectives

1. To identify the context of the Advice Desk Service within each University LIS, by the establishment of a matrix of environmental information reflective of each service.
2. To identify a set of metrics to measure the quantity and quality of the services provided.
3. To coordinate these measurements within an agreed time period.
4. To compare the results and identify centres of “good practice” by identifying “best in class” from the results.
5. To encourage improvements to services by the adoption of this practice through the dissemination to peers within each partner university LIS by the formulation of local action plans.

Timescales

Over the period of two years benchmarking activities were repeated once per year in the first week of November. This was agreed to be the earliest practical time to engage in the process after undergraduates and postgraduate students commencing their studies in September, would have had sufficient time to receive a measure of induction to Library services.

Initial focus

The initial focus in the first cycle of work in November 2000 was on the quality of interaction at the Advice Desk itself and included:

• The approachability of staff
• The perceived understanding of the question by staff
• The level of explanation given by staff
• And finally the amount of time given to the enquiry

Other aspects included the length of time a user waited at the desk, the perceived reason for the delay, the type of enquiry that was received and the physical environment of the Service provided, and any suggestions from users for improvement.

**Subsequent focus**

The initial focus was based on the work of the SCONUL Advice Desks North which gave an opportunity to focus on refining data collection, measurement and build on the skills of the staff involved. With the planning for the second cycle in hand, there came an increased focus upon the need to look at alternative forms of advice desk service namely the electronic advice desk. The need also to measure the frequency of usage of electronic resources began to be a major concern and this was reflected in the questions asked in the Exit Interview. These areas were therefore added to those from the first cycle and formed part of the results reported later in this document.

**Methodologies**

**Tools & techniques**

The following tools and techniques were identified from the earlier pilot activity during 1998-99 and were adopted into the work carried out from 1999 to 2001. Their refinement was owed to a continuity of staff willing to continually improve these processes in the quest to find a more accurate reflection of the service provided both for their own university and to discover best practice elsewhere within the Group.

**An Environmental matrix**

(See Appendix 3.5 page 104)

You might like to think of this as mapping the territory by describing the background to the service provided. The importance of understanding the results in context has already been noted (Barton and Blagden, 1998). So the Project Team agreed to collect specific categories of information in advance and compare these across the range of services involved. Thus differences in performance could be identified against the numbers of staff, the opening times, the location of the desk itself (with diagrams), the range of services available, and the skills and training given to staff to support the activity.

**Enquiry logging forms**

(See Appendix 3.4, page 102)

At their basic level these were aimed at reflecting the level and type of transactions performed during set periods during each day of the study. Each form was colour coded and dated so that from opening until 11.00 am, from 11.00 am to 15.45 pm and from 15.45 pm to closing, each activity from Quick Reference enquiries to passwords for remote access was detailed. Each enquiry was numbered for further reference, and coded to indicate if the question came from a Telephone or Email source. The form was suitably adapted for the IT Advice Desk services at Universities B & C, included during the second cycle of benchmarking in November 2001. Each logging form was accompanied by a guide to help staff enter specific enquiries. Entering the results of composite enquiries, i.e. made up of a variety of questions within an interaction, was left to the staff concerned to assess the predominant area.

**Exit interviews**

(See Appendix 3.4, page 98)

Aimed at measuring the extent of “customer delight” immediately after receiving help from an Advice Desk this became the principal tool in our research. In most cases
these were administered by student employees, although some were allocated to non-frontline library staff, who might not be normally recognised by students using the service. The aim of doing so was to engender a feeling of neutrality and encourage an unbiased response that would yield broader issues relating to the Service. Local conditions dictated the location of this interaction and this might have influenced the number of forms collected by a specific university. Some interviews were conducted literally at the exit to the Library, while others took place within sight of the desk, but out of earshot as this was a helpful way of linking the potential candidate with the process.

Some tools and techniques used by the pilot project, were not taken up by the subsequent project group and these included the following.

“Smiley face” questionnaires
Another tool aimed at gaining a “quick fire” reaction to assistance provided. Commonly used by retail and service providers in the commercial sector, it encourages a swift response by using graphical images to reflect the images of feelings the user may have after departing from the Service Point. The main reason why this tool was not used was that staff at the desk administered the form themselves and therefore had to make a judgement about when it was appropriate to give out the form. This allowed a natural bias to creep in as to when was the enquiry of a sufficient level or the response given of perceived value to the recipient? All libraries involved received positive feedback during the pilot, but had reservations about the validity of the results. This method did not enable us to gain enough specific information about the transaction involved.

“Mystery shoppers”
Another technique employed in the commercial sector and one that was tested during the pilot between 1998-1999. The positive benefits were assessed to be that it gave a good overall picture of levels of customer care, although it could not be easily used to test whether staff had provided the right answer consistently. The technique demands a clear understanding of the criteria involved, a shared commitment to the value of the process from staff and is very time consuming. The “Mystery Shopper” technique was discounted because it is limited in its objectivity, and there is difficulty in recording the results. Some staff who were offered the opportunity to be involved at another university during the trial declined, because of its novelty value.

“Behavioural studies”
A form of “unobtrusive testing” that can observe the “people flows” in relation to enquiry transactions. Experience during the pilot demonstrated that should staff be aware of its practice they are liable to modify their behaviour patterns, particularly should an internal observer be involved. As a measure it proved difficult to compare across a range of universities. An alternative might have been an “unobtrusive”(!) video camera.

Interviews with LIS staff
A technique adopted by the Southern Group of the Advice Desk Pilot as a way of comparing the perceptions of the staff involved with specific enquiries with those of selected student recipients. Such a practice was considered to be impractical on the basis of the time required and the cost involved.

Marketing, training and project management
In addition to the tools and techniques of benchmarking these were significant aspects of the work. The “human factors” involved in securing support through building awareness of staff and developing a consistent approach to developing the skills required was a key part of the process.
Having been involved at least at “arms length” with the pilot projects, it was easier to convince the Heads of Service of the value of the quality improvement techniques involved with benchmarking activities. The resources employed in benchmarking can be far from minimal so clear reporting at frequent intervals helps to overcome resistance. Consequently the Advice Desk Project in common with similar groups, found its way onto the agenda of management meetings with feedback in terms of local action plans (see page 80) to direct energy towards improving processes. A variety of methods were used to publicise the project at all levels through staff newsletters and briefing sessions. This encouraged a general interest in the results and increased the motivation of staff to participate. Training was essential to ensure a common approach across disparate staff groups whether by e-mail instructions or face to face contact. This was no less important for the students engaged in the process as exit interviewers who received an initial briefing followed by a daily de-brief and in one case, a short questionnaire at the end of the week to evaluate their response to the activity.

Marketing to students took the form of a common approach using a set of standard publicity posters that emphasised the research methods employed. As they were phrased in this way they encouraged students to value the process as akin to the research methods they are encouraged to use for their own independent studies. Academic staff recognised the value of a service department like the Library employing a contemporary business practice.

Managing the project across the four consortium members has demonstrated the importance of timely coordination, ensuring that communication is maintained throughout the project lifecycle by regular meetings, telephone and e-mail conversations. This has led to the development of mutual respect for each team member’s role over the course of the Project. There was a recognition that we as individuals would regularly face the challenge of managing personal work deadlines whilst seeking to effectively contribute to the advancement of the Group. The continuity of those involved engendered a supportive environment in which to work.

Fig 3a Example of publicity material

![HELP DESK QUESTIONNAIRE](image)

During the week 5th - 9th November, we will be conducting a survey relating to our Information Desk service.

Staff in the Learning Centre may approach you with a questionnaire, after you have used our services.

We value your comments, so if you have time, please help us by answering their questions.

Thank you
Results

Quantitative survey: commentary: Results for November 2001

Aim
To develop a profile of the type of enquiries received at advice desks and where possible compare the results with data from previous years. The quantitative survey was run alongside the qualitative survey and included all operational hours of the Advice Desk Services during the week 5th - 9th November 2001. All four universities in the benchmarking group participated in this survey.

Methodology
Prior to the commencement of the survey all advice desk staff were briefed on the objectives of the survey, the location of the survey sheet and an explanation of each of the enquiry categories summarized on the survey sheet. The survey period included weekend and evening services where advice desks were available. At the end of each session, sheets were collected, and the results were collated at the end of the survey week.

Survey sheet
Each university in the survey agreed on the profile of the survey sheet. The sheet was placed on the advice desk. Using the five-bar gate counting technique, enquiries were recorded throughout the time the advice desk service point was available to users. The categories on the survey sheet fell into three broad areas, technical, information and procedural. This follows the categories of enquiries required by the annual SCONUL survey. In this survey there were seventeen categories of enquiry. The types of enquiry logged included catalogue queries, referrals and directional help.

Collection of data
Each university included the main advice desks in the library or learning centre. Some of the group also included site libraries in the survey, where the advice desks were staffed service points. Enquiries at the advice desks were recorded by time of day (either morning, afternoon, evening, or in time periods to match the period covered by the qualitative survey for cross-referencing later). The survey included telephone enquiries where they were received and answered at an advice desk. Telephone calls taken by staff in offices and other service points were not counted in this survey. It was decided not to include e-mail enquiries in this survey as each institution has different procedures for responding to e-mail enquiries.

Cross referencing with the qualitative survey
The group found that there were too many local variations in service and the environment of the advice desk to make very detailed service comparisons. However the detailed data could be used locally in service reviews and especially reviews of advice desk services. For the purpose of the advice desk benchmarking group the results for each university are cumulated to give a summary of the enquiry profile of the four university libraries participating in this project.

Combined results
For the purpose of this survey the results for each institution were cumulated for the survey week. The results are summarized in the Table 3b below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University A</th>
<th>University B</th>
<th>University C</th>
<th>University D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>720</td>
<td>1,517</td>
<td>2,312</td>
<td>834</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3b Number of enquiries received at the advice desks person-to-person and by telephone
Quantitative survey of advice desks

Profile of enquiries

Fig 3c and 3d below, give a profile of enquiries received during core hours and non-core hours. Core hours for this survey week were the hours of the exit interviews conducted as part of the qualitative survey i.e. 11am – 3.45pm, Monday to Friday. Non-core hours were from advice desk opening time until 11am and from 3.45pm until the close of the advice desk service.

The total results for all four library services are cumulated and ranked in Fig 3e.
The chart reflects a clear trend in the sector with enquiries relating to passwords, hardware and software outnumbering enquiries relating to printed resources and quick reference books. Demand for support in the use and administration of CD-ROMs is showing a decline compared to earlier years while there is a continuing demand for advice on electronic resources and password access to databases.

**Results for individual advice desk services**

The five largest categories of enquiry for each university advice desk service have been summarized in Pie charts in Fig 3f. Each Pie chart has an ‘Other’ category of enquiry. ‘Other’ is a total of all the other enquiries received at the advice desks of a university that are not in the top five categories. The ‘Other’ category was included to make the profile display more balanced by showing that all the advice desks received a substantial number of enquiries outside their five main categories.

The enquiry profiles for each of the four university library advice desk services differed and this could be due to the different service offered by each university. A profile of environmental information for each University is in Appendix 3.5 Environmental Information for Advice Desk Services (page 104). Key differences to note are the advice desks at University B and University C offer combined library and IT help, University A and University D offer a separate IT help desk service.

Each site library and university library service now has data that can be used locally to review advice desk services in terms of enquiries, staff training and staff profile at advice desks. The breakdown of enquiries by time of day and number and type of enquiries can be used to inform staffing levels at advice desks. The data may also be used with the qualitative survey results to examine user profile, user satisfaction and waiting times in conjunction with reviews of advice desk services within individual institutions.
Fig 3f  Quantitative survey November 2001 – top five enquiry categories

Summary of enquiries

Technical Enquiries
Universities B and C offer combined IT and library advice and this is reflected in the high number of hardware (printer, floppy disc) problems dealt with at the advice desks, and software enquiries relating to products such as Microsoft Office. The advice desks at University B and University C had a greater number of enquiries which is possibly due to the number of IT related queries at the advice desks of these two universities.

Password enquiries
Each advice desk service has a high proportion of password enquiries; this category includes requests for passwords as well as problems relating to passwords. Local environments may be reflected here, because desks offering IT help receive queries relating to logging on to student PCs and networks as well as requests for passwords to e-journal services and on-line databases. The difference between passwords for database access and network access is not broken down in this survey.
Directional enquiries
Each service has a high proportion of internal directional enquiries and although this issue has been addressed in action plans made after the last quantitative survey of February 2001, the results are disappointing. University C in particular has reviewed signing and made significant changes since February 2001. There is informal evidence that users will ask if they see a staffed service point rather than follow signs. In addition there are issues about the size of the buildings, the number of floors, the location of other service points such as Inter-Library Loans, AV equipment, printed stock and subject librarians.

Referrals
Each service also has a substantial number of referrals to other staff or desks. In the case of University A this accounts for 25% of all enquiries. This may reflect local procedures where the advice desk at University A is a first enquiry point, with referral to subject librarians or IT advisors from the advice desk. No work has been done yet by this group on what happens to ‘Referrals’ i.e. whether users are referred to the most appropriate service point and whether appropriate staff are available at the referral point.

The enquiry transaction
This survey provides a snapshot of the enquiry profile at advice desks; however the survey does not take into account the length of time spent on each enquiry and the additional information imparted in each enquiry transaction. This aspect of the service can be cross-referenced with the Qualitative survey, particularly Question 4 on waiting at the advice desk and Question 5 on customer satisfaction with the enquiry transaction.

The survey is strictly numerical and does not reflect the quality of help desk advice. For example a request for an Athens username and password may lead to a discussion on the databases that Athens allows the user to access, and other appropriate databases in a subject area that are available. Users may also be offered suggestions on search strategies and information on resources that are available on- and off-campus.

Requests for advice relating to the catalogue could result in advice on printed and electronic resources, search strategies and access to the stock of other libraries. This additional information enhances the service offered at the advice desks and local guidelines on additional advice may vary depending on staff training, the knowledge of staff and the pressure on staff at advice desks due to queues and other work undertaken while on duty at the advice desk.

Comparison with earlier quantitative surveys
The advice desk-benchmarking group would have liked to compare the results of this survey, November 2001, with the results of an earlier survey carried out by the group in February 2001. However direct comparisons were not possible because the methodology of the quantitative survey 2000/01 differed significantly with the methodology of the quantitative survey 2001/02.

In November 2000 University D piloted the enquiry survey form and reported back to the group. The group hoped that all four libraries would use the form to expand the SCONUL enquiry survey required of university libraries during February 2001. In fact each library had different local statistical priorities relating to the survey week and unfortunately for the benchmarking group the forms used by each university service were different and the comparisons between services could only be made at a general level.

Timing
The group also thought the timing of the quantitative surveys within the academic calendar was significant. The group thought the knowledge and experience of many users
in February 2001 would be different to users in November 2001. In November there are a significant number of first time users, or more experienced users who have to adapt to changes in layout and service points that often occur over the summer. For example University C opened a new building in 2000 and University D changed the location of the main library Help Desk. By February students are more familiar with the layout of buildings, location of PCs and service points. Therefore the group did not feel the profile of user enquiries near the beginning of the academic year in November could be fairly compared with a survey around the mid-point of the academic year in February.

The results of the February 2001 survey are summarized in Fig 3g.

The results of this survey contributed to the action plans of each of the library services, all were concerned about the high number of directional enquiries. University B had a high number of technical enquiries that could be attributed to I.T. problems with student PCs at that time. The action plans are summarized in the section on local action plans for 2002 (page 80).

Learning process
The group aimed to produce data from which year on year comparisons could be made. This proved very difficult due to two main factors; the speed and degree of change in advice desk service operations and the priority of surveys and statistics required locally by each advice desk’s home institution over the surveys of the benchmarking group.

The Advice desk Benchmarking Group has found that making comparisons year on year in anything but the most general terms is both difficult and potentially inaccurate. This is because of factors such as:

- Changing environments such as the location of advice desks
- Opening hours of libraries and learning centres
- Changing profile of services within the library or learning centre such as student PC, AV equipment loans
- Local policies on telephone enquiries
- Local policies on e-mail enquiries
- Local policies on the administration of Athens and other passwords
- Operation of an electronic help desk service

**Fig 3g** Summary of benchmarking results for February 2001
• Phasing out of CD ROM databases
• Alternatives to printed reference resources
• Less definition between IT help and library help
• Changes in skills and profile of staff to deal with the range and type of enquiries at advice desks
• Impact of staffing budgets
• Impact of resource budgets
• Referral procedures
• Extended opening hours with minimum/no staffing
• Development of weekend services and the role of weekend staff
• Development of services to distance and off-campus students
• Widening participation initiatives
• Changing profile of users

Exit interview for benchmarking advice desks

As already discussed in the methodology section this was the most important data collection tool adopted in that it gave an opportunity for students to accurately portray their response to the service received. Please see Appendix 3.4 (page 98) for the details.

Perhaps unsurprisingly as the Survey was conducted during core daytime hours, the majority of students surveyed came from the full time undergraduate and postgraduate segments of the universities involved. It was also reassuring to note that in response to Question 2, *Was a member of staff immediately available to answer your enquiry?* 83% answered positively, a further 14% (Table 3h and Fig 3i) answered “within less than 5 minutes” and less than 3% “more than 5 minutes”.

Table 3h  Question 3 - *How long did you have to wait for a member of library staff to help you?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Univ A</th>
<th>Univ B</th>
<th>Univ C</th>
<th>Univ D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No wait or less than 1 minute</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 5 mins</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 5 mins</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig 3i  Question 3 - *How long did you have to wait for a member of library staff to help you?*
**Fig 3j** Question 4 - *If you had to wait what do think this was because of?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Univ. A</th>
<th>Univ. B</th>
<th>Univ. C</th>
<th>Univ. D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You were not noticed</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff occupied with phone/work</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There was no-one at the desk</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff busy with another user</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 4, *If you had to wait what do think this was because of?* was intended to find out about the actual time that users spent waiting at the Enquiry desks with the options being less or more than 5 minutes. It relies on users’ own judgement about how long they actually waited which can easily be mistimed, particularly if they are waiting in a queue. If they did have to wait the question explored the reasons why they felt they were having to wait.

Waiting times varied between the institutions, and obviously have implications on the way the desks are staffed. However, the results need to be seen within the context of the survey and the total number of responses given, therefore they will not necessarily extrapolate to give a true picture of waiting times for all users. The survey only gives us a “snapshot” in time and there may have been specific “one-off” circumstances at a particular time which caused the desk to be unstaffed.

Given that the desks are all supposed to be staffed at least during core hours, it was a concern that in 10% of cases, users reported that “there was no one on the desk”. The main reason for having to wait was that the staff were “busy with another user”, followed by “The staff were occupied with phone work”. It was heartening to see that the number of users who felt that they “were not noticed or ignored” was very small.

**Comparison with 2000 data**

In the section on the length of time for waiting, the number of categories for the 2001 survey was reduced to two since extra categories such as “waited for less than one minute” were felt to be of limited value. The section on the reasons for the wait used the same categories and the 2001 results mirrored the rank order of those for 2000.

**The enquiry transaction**

Question 5 sought to gauge the quality of the enquiry transaction as experienced by users. It dealt with four specific areas.

- How approachable was the member of staff?
- Did you think your enquiry was understood?
- How well did the member of staff explain the answer to the enquiry?
• Do you think the member of staff gave you as much time and attention as was necessary?

Below are the results from each University which correspond with the four sub sections of the question. Users were asked to grade their replies from 1-4 with 1 being poor and 4 being good.

These results would seem to suggest that the general level of satisfaction with services is high and that the enquiry transactions of users at all institutions are broadly similar. When the results were compared with those for the same question in the previous year, the same pattern was again detectable. This leads to the conclusion that there are certain factors (environment, expectations, human interactions) that mean that there will always be some users who are not satisfied with their experience.

**Question 6 - Enquiry referrals**

This question attempted to find out if and to whom users were referred during the course of the enquiry transaction. It was not asked in the previous questionnaires, but it was felt that the data would be useful in terms of examining how often the enquiries were actually completed at the Enquiry Desk or whether the user had to be referred on to a third party for whatever reason.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>University A</th>
<th>1 (poor)</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4 (good)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5a</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>84</td>
<td></td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5b</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>86</td>
<td></td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5c</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>73</td>
<td></td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5d</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>82</td>
<td></td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>University B</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5a</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>114</td>
<td></td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5b</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>137</td>
<td></td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5c</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>118</td>
<td></td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5d</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>129</td>
<td></td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>University C</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5a</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5b</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>103</td>
<td></td>
<td>143</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>96</td>
<td></td>
<td>143</td>
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<td>5d</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>102</td>
<td></td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>University D</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5a</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>167</td>
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<td>171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5b</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td></td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5c</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>160</td>
<td></td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5d</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>165</td>
<td></td>
<td>171</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Table 3.1 Enquiry referrals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Referred to</th>
<th>University A</th>
<th>University B</th>
<th>University C</th>
<th>University D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Counter</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inter library loans</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AV Loans</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Advisers / Subject Libs</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty / School</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT Help</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information / Enquiry Desk</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the results shown it becomes apparent that there are variations in the number and type of referrals at these two institutions. For example, University A made 11 referrals to Learning/Subject advisers as opposed to three at University C. This may have a training implication for A, or mean that C has more enquiries at a more basic level that can be answered with no recourse to the specialist subject staff.

There is also a contrast between 17 IT help referrals at B and seven at C. This may be explained by the fact that C has a combined IT/Enquiries desk whereas at B they are separate.

It is possible that many of the variations in referrals procedures can be explained by the diverse environmental factors that are evident at each of the institutions. However, it is worth examining the results closely for local use, since the referral can play a substantial part in the user’s overall perception of the quality of service received.

Electronic resources

In the first cycle of the Group’s work a question relating to the content of the answer given in response to the enquirer was included. This was based on the work of the in depth survey by the Southern Advice Desk Pilot which asked users, had they been referred to Databases, Books or Journals? In the first cycle of work the Group attempted to elaborate this idea by including CD-ROMS, Electronic Journals and Web based databases. The results of this additional detail proved inconclusive and the Group debated the merits of introducing what could be interpreted as LIS jargon. With this in mind and the conscious need to gauge the take up of our increasing web based portfolios of resources, the Group included Question 7 relating to the use made of electronic resources.

Table 3m Electronic resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Electronic resources</th>
<th>Univ A</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Univ B</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Univ C</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Univ D</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Library web pages on-campus</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OPAC on-campus</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-journals on-campus</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library web pages off-campus</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OPAC off-campus</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-journals off-campus</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Fig 3n  Q7a and 7b – How often do you use library web pages on-campus and off-campus?

Student comments
“didn’t know about them”; “internet illiterate”; “no spare time”; “I never needed to use them”; “free on campus”

Fig 3o  Q7c and 7d – How often do you use the library catalogue via the internet on-campus and off-campus?

Student comments
“too much hassle to learn”; “don’t use books”; “has no card yet”; “not studying here”; “not on internet”
Conclusions regarding the use of electronic resources

Clearly from the results of this survey there remains much work to be done to educate students in the use of these resources amongst the universities surveyed. Although all universities conduct induction processes, it may be that these require further reinforcement through specific training sessions and improved signage and publicity. Expenditure on electronic resources represents a significant part of University LIS expenditure and so this requires greater attention in the future.

These relatively cursory results seem to support earlier studies like that of the Justeis Project (Armstrong, C.J. et al, 2000) that students’ use of e-journals and web databases is comparatively low. These results proved to be the stimulus for the creation of further benchmarking work (see Benefits of involvement on page 83).

Overview of electronic help desk questions

The Exit Interview contained two questions relating to Electronic Help Desk services. At the time of the benchmarking activities during November 2001 only two of the institutions involved had electronic help desk services available and thus asked both questions. These included University D who had an established Electronic Help Desk from October 2000 and University C, who had just introduced their Electronic Help Desk prior to the benchmarking week in November 2001. Although this was the case, all the institutions involved felt that the questions relating to this area of service provision would provide useful results for everyone about how users viewed or would use such a service. Hence, only the results to question 8 were used for the overall benchmarking comparisons as this question was asked at all the institutions involved.

Fig 3p Q7e and 7f – How often do you use electronic journals/abstracts or CD-ROMs on-campus and off-campus?

Student comments

“didn’t know existed”; “don’t like the computers”; “haven’t been told to yet by lecturers”; “I don’t have access to the passwords”
during the benchmarking week of November 2001. An overview of the operation of the Electronic Help Desk Service at University D is available in Appendix 3.1 (page 85). This was not part of the benchmarking activities, but provides an overview of an electronic Help Desk Service.

**Question 8 - How useful would you find an electronic Help Desk that had its own link from the library homepage?**

The responses to this question from all four benchmarking institutions were divided into positive and negative comments. These can be seen in Figs 3q and 3r. The results indicate that a higher percentage of those surveyed would find an electronic help desk service useful. Many gave reasons for this, which are included following the graphs.

For example, one user commented that it would provide “direct access for help and assistance”. In contrast, there were a number of negative responses to how useful users would find an electronic Help Desk Service. These can be seen in the Negative Comments Graph to question 8 (Fig 3r). Many users indicated in the negative comments that they would still prefer personal contact opposed to an electronic means of support.

![Fig 3q Positive comments](image)

**Examples of comments**

“wouldn’t have to get up”; “could e-mail from department if no time to visit library”; “direct access for help and assistance”; “wouldn’t have to bother library staff, quicker”
Project 3: Benchmarking Advice Desks

![Negative comments](image)

**Examples of comments**

“would be more impersonal and have to do more explaining”; “save time, but prefer to see someone face to face”; “may take time to get onto the computer”; “would only be good if got answers immediately”

**Signs and handouts**

**Question 9 - How would you rate the following aspects of the service?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3s</th>
<th>Good or excellent % of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Univ A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signs</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handouts</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Signs**  
**1999/2000**

The results of this survey enabled us to identify that signage was a matter of some concern. It is not possible to give a direct comparison of data between the two surveys as initially comments about signage were included with those about the desks and environment in general – in total 71% of comments. However comments such as “more signs” and “a bigger sign, maybe in neon” were made. Using the statistics on type of enquiry received Universities C and D recorded in excess of 20% for directional questions.

Following the benchmarking survey University A installed larger and clearer signs – partly as a result of the survey comments but also to accommodate building changes and reflect the functions of the different desks. University D had new signage to reflect the re-location of the desk. University C highlighted the different functions of the desk but also had new signage throughout one building as a result of previous comments. University B installed new signs to reflect new subject areas and to form a “narrative” of directions.
As Others See Us: Benchmarking in Practice

**November 2001**

Students were asked, in a separate question, to rate Signage as Excellent, Good, Adequate or Poor. This was an attempt to assess any improvements perceived by students following the changes to signage during the previous year.

Comments in November 2001 showed a 70% satisfaction rate at University C and 80% satisfaction at universities A, B and D. Although these are all positive ratings perhaps they also show a need for further review as internal directions featured in the top five queries at each university (University A 12% of queries, University B 7%, University C 12% and University D 8%).

**Handouts**

**1999/2000**

In this first survey comments on Handouts were included with those asking for more help and information – an average of 11% of comments across the universities.

As a result of the survey University D produced an Action Plan following up their use of Web-based guides to subject and generic information and University B reviewed the location of handouts.

**2001/2002**

The results from this second survey showed Handouts from Universities B and C rated as Good or Excellent by 57% of respondents and those from universities A and D by 74%.

This result caused some concern as University D has a policy of using only web-based information and in fact has no paper handouts. It was also noted that two sites at University C had a differing response in spite of having the same handouts available.

**Question 10 - How do you suggest the subject advice/Information desk service could be improved?**

**General comment**

Although this question specified improvements to the Advice desk services all comments were examined. Of the completed surveys the response rate for this question was very varied:

- University A 90%
- University B 79%
- University C 70%
- University D 49%
Interpretation

Staff/staffing
Not unexpectedly the staffing of the Desks provoked the most comments. We divided these comments into three categories – Staffing, Staff Attitudes and Staff Knowledge.

At University B 35%, University C 23%, University A 15% and University D 14% of all the completed forms had demands for more staffing – from the general “more staff” to “more staff during busy periods”, “staff on the desk all the time” and “desk should be open until library shuts”. This would suggest that all of the participating libraries should look again at their policies of staffing the Advice desks and optimize their use of staff over busy periods.

Staff attitude
The positive comments about staff far outweigh the negative – University A had 6% of negative comments, University B 11%, C 2% and D 5%. This compares with the figures from the previous survey of University A 5%; B 9%; C 6% and D 6%.

Staff were seen as “friendly” and “helpful” but there was also “be more helpful and realise we’re not all computer literate”. Identification badges were requested.

Staff knowledge
The comments made about staff knowledge were more varied and perhaps should lead us more into managing the expectations of students. However they formed between 0 and 8% of overall responses.

There are staff training implications to follow up – from “education for specific staff on specific issues” “get more staff with technical knowledge” and “staff not able to provide all the information required”. These are very similar to those received in the previous survey.

Services
There was a greater difference of response on how General services could be improved - from 1% at University A to 15% at University D. Two of the concerns raised were longer opening hours, and the availability of journals and books but there were also issues outside the control of the libraries concerned such as “inter-library loan time-scale is too long” and “access to other libraries using the same card”. This is information that could be more widely addressed in publicity and inductions - managing the expectations of students using the libraries.

IT
Comments on IT were again very similar to the first survey with “PCs unreliable” and “printers don’t work, computers disappointing” and with particular mention of “outside hours help” and “more computers needed – lots of queues”.

However perhaps the most noticeable result is that in all four universities Password problems are amongst the top 5 enquiries at the Advice desks - comprising 15% at University A; 20% at B; 12% at C and 27% at D. In addition to this 23% at University B, and 13% at University C are problems concerning IT Hardware, floppy disks or printers. (This was not measurable at Universities A and D).

Publicity
Taking the comments together with the survey as a whole, there would appear to be a need for greater publicity of the services offered. This is particularly relevant to the relatively new services at some of the universities of Electronic Information Desks and Telephone Enquiry Services.
There were also requests for “more publicity about web pages” and “more eye-catching leaflets”.

**General satisfaction**
Overall there was a positive response to the service. Although the question posed “How do you suggest the Advice desk service could be improved? it showed that 42% of the comments received at Universities A and D, 26% at University C and 12% at University B, expressed general satisfaction or better, with the services. “Very good don’t need to improve”, “always had questions well answered”, “it was very helpful having a one-to-one demonstration on what to do, I don’t think you could improve on that”, “has improved greatly” were amongst comments made.

**Problems encountered**
- The comments section of Q10 highlighted a number of problems of interpreting the data received.
- Different desk services at the participating libraries made the data difficult to compare.
- The number of non responses to this question were high – 30.5% of forms were not completed – making any interpretation of results is based on a very low actual figure. Total comments received were University A 88; B 142; C 169 and D 78.
- Comparisons with the previous survey were not always based on identical data – for example the IT section.

**Fig 3u Q10 Comments – percentage expressing general satisfaction**

![Graph showing percentage expressing general satisfaction by university](image)

**Examples:**
“has improved greatly”; “always had questions well answered”; “very helpful”

**Fig 3v Q10 Comments relating to general services**

![Graph showing comments relating to general services by university](image)

**Examples:**
“Journal availability is poor. Inter-library loan time-scale is too long”; “longer opening hours”; “access to other libraries using the same card”

Total number of comments received: Univ A – 88, Univ B – 142, Univ C – 169 and Univ D – 78
Fig 3w  Q10 Comments relating to staffing

Examples:
“More people as sometimes you have to queue”; “second person available when more than one person waiting for help, if busy, can we have more than one staff on enquiry desk”; “more staff, librarians for advice and hands on demonstrations”.

Total number of comments received: Univ A – 88, Univ B – 142, Univ C – 169 and Univ D – 78

Local action plans for 2002

Oakland (1993) discusses the methods by which quality management can be incorporated into the strategy of the business. He develops the idea of “a self-reinforcing cycle of commitment, communication and culture change”, and divides this up into six main steps. The Advice Desk Project could not claim to have slavishly followed this theory, but looking back we have taken on many of Oakland’s views. The results of the benchmarking work have enabled each university LIS to focus on the Critical Success Factors of an Advice Desk Service, to share these ideas with our peers within services and identify steps to move these forward. To provide a flavour of these ideas generated from the project, please see two examples of these plans relevant to two universities. These are presented in chronological order to identify the impact of changes.

Fig 3x  Q10 Percentage of comments
University C - November 2000
Staff Training - Induction for New Information Desk Staff

Current situation:
- University has IIP status
- Existing University staff induction programme
- Existing “generic” Library induction programme
- Existing University staff development programme
- Existing LIS staff development programme
- LSS “Training hours”
- All LSS staff expected to attend Customer care course (1 day)
- Staff Development Group monitoring programmes/plans

Procedures:
- Assess collected comments from benchmarking surveys
- Look at partner universities methods of implementing staff training and induction
- Use “X” College’s “Core competencies for Helpdesk” document as a guide.
- Use existing work on “generic” induction as starting point
- Look at recently completed Audit of staff IT training needs
- Look at Information Desk Staff Questionnaire to see if specific needs are highlighted
- Evaluate all sources of information
- Draw up plan based on these documented staff needs for Induction
- Draw up plan based on these needs for continuing staff development and recording of training undertaken

- Decisions on which Information is essential and which is desirable to include
- Decisions on whether training/recording online, paper or both
- Draw up guidelines/distinguish different training needs of different groups of staff e.g. IT Help Assistants/ Learning Advisors

Projected outcomes:
- To develop a clear straightforward induction programme for all new staff working on a Joint Information Desk
- To identify a list of essential knowledge for Information Desk staff
- To identify a list of desirable knowledge for Information Desk staff
- To produce an ongoing staff development checklist
- Evaluate and monitor training given

Actual outcomes:
An Information Desk Training Group was established as a subgroup of the Staff Development Working Group.

The objectives of the Group were established
- To confirm the training needs of specific groups working on the Information desk
- To audit the skills and competencies of current staff to determine training required
- To investigate and recommend appropriate training delivery methods
- To arrange and implement the training recommendations
- To involve a range of appropriate staff in the project
By August 2001 the group had:
- Audited current staff and evaluated results
- Developed an Induction pack with guidelines for staff organizing the Inductions
- Arranged a series of on-going training sessions on changes in Subject resources to be delivered by the relevant Subject Librarian
- Developed an Intranet version of the Staff Handbook (to be implemented July 2002)

Second Benchmarking November 2001
The results and comments of the second Benchmarking were analysed, and a further programme identifying issues that could be examined was agreed. There was a consensus that all of the participating universities needed to:

1. Promote and publicise existing services – in particular those relating to the use of Electronic resources both on and off campus.
2. Publicise new services – such as a Telephone answering service – more widely
3. Take a further look at Handouts – their usage and subject coverage
4. Assess the Induction needs of students

Each university will draw up its own action plans to address these issues. In addition it has been recommended that the Benchmarking group should regroup to consider Information Skills Teaching next year.

University B - May 2002

*Training*
- Plan further training as appropriate to improve enquiry handling, referral techniques to develop a shared approach
- Revisit FAQ lists subsequently

*Display of printed guides*
- Allocate responsibilities for updating notice boards on each floor
- Display printed guides at new locations – PUBLICATIONS
- Display study skills on Upper Ground Floor

*Publicity*
- Publicise more effectively to academic staff and students the purpose of the Subject Advice Desk and IT Advice Desk Services via publications and web pages – PUBLICATIONS & WEB teams

*Documentation*
- Retain a master copy of each up to date handout lists by subject, in a file at the Desk – All relevant staff

*Procedures for Referral*
- Develop a collection of contact cards at the Subject Advice Desk
- Investigate the practical issues involved with a system for subject referrals
- Review ways of making the Subject Advisors’ Office more welcoming to visitors referred to it.

*Handling enquiries via an electronic reference desk*
- Progress procedures for 2002/3 Academic year

*Signage*
- OPAC signs for other Sites will be treated as separate issue and followed up
- pursue the purchase of OPAC signs for Main Site Library
Benefits of Involvement in Benchmarking

These can be identified at two levels from an organisational view and an individual one.

Advice Desk services are an important deliverable of a University LIS. They provide a valuable interface between staff and students. The work of the Advice Desk project has helped stress the need for the organisations involved to focus on service quality in terms of the level of customer satisfaction and the take up of the services provided.

The involvement of a wide range of staff within and without each LIS has engendered an internal review of existing work patterns with the potential to embrace change and innovation. It has developed cooperation between different universities involved in many other ways by providing a multi-layered forum for discussion engaging those staff from an operational and strategic viewpoint. Involvement in benchmarking advice desk work has led to new opportunities for staff development to take place, creating space for the growth of personal skills like project management and team working in addition to a range of IT skills. Each team member has gained through their practical participation in regular meetings, visits and communication that have enabled the interaction of new ideas. The work of the project could not have been achieved without the commitment and competence of each team member and we hope our labours will help engender fresh benchmarking activity in the future.

As a result of this work a new group has been formed to look benchmarking the teaching of information skills and it is planned for pilot work to commence during the latter part of 2002.
Bibliography


Appendix 3.1 Overview of E-Help Desk Service at University D

Introduction

The Electronic Help Desk was introduced as a new LLRS service at University D in September 2000. The service was introduced to enhance the existing physical Help Desk and telephone enquiry service already operated across the library service. It was also felt an important device to support distance learners and those with little time to visit the library.

Format of the E-Help Desk

The E-Help Desk at University D offers an electronic Help Desk query service that allows students, staff and members of the public to email enquiries direct to the Help Desk team in the library for support. The service operates by using the existing University email service, prefaced by a web form where the user inputs their personal details and enquiry. This form was felt important by staff as it organised the information received from the user into a readable format and guaranteed the input of certain elements of data. In addition, users of the E-Desk can also email the service direct using the standard email address, without completing the web-form.

Marketing the E-Help Desk

At present the E-desk Service is only marketed by the logo on the library WebPages and by bookmarks available at the library Help Desks. It is also often publicised by word of mouth by librarians in tutorials or library seminars. The creation of the E-Desk logo was an important aspect of the development of the service. Help Desk staff felt that a logo could be easily added to any library web page, directing users to the service and thus also promoting the E-Desk Service at the same time.

Operation of the E-Help Desk service

The E-Help Desk service was created using University’s D’s current email service. It has a separate “In-box” where the emails received from the E-Desk web form are delivered. This was intentionally created to separate received queries from the web form from everyday enquiries. Folders have also been created within the email service to store information relating to the E-Help Desk service and to assist its operation. These include an “Answered” queries folder, which is used to store all answered queries, including the user’s question and a response. These are then used for information management purposes and to create draft response documents to frequently asked questions. A “Forwarded” folder was also created at the implementation of the service. This folder enables staff checking the E-Help Desk service to trace where queries have been sent to and to ensure that forwarded queries are responded to promptly. Finally, a “Drafts” folder was created, which contains draft responses to the most frequently asked questions. This includes responses for requests for Athens usernames and passwords and how to log on to the University email service externally via the Internet. Staff operating the E-Help Desk service felt that this was important as it saves time in responding to frequently asked questions and adds consistency to replies sent out to users.
During the first year if the operation of the E-Help Desk Service it was maintained primarily by two members of the Help Desk team. This was felt appropriate at the time as there was little indication as to how busy the service would be and to what impact it would have. The email system of the service was checked at least twice a day, Monday to Friday. Weekends and evenings were checked on a more ad-hoc basis. These two members of staff, who were well experienced in relation to the library services, answered most enquiries. Enquiries that were, and still are, subject or service specific are forwarded to relevant members of staff for a reply to the enquirer and back to the E-Help Desk for maintenance purposes of this aspect of the service. A Report written that investigated the operation of the first six months of the E-Help Desk Service from October 2000 to March 2001 indicated that 86% of the enquiries received were answered within a 24-hour period. This was possibly due to the experience of the staff answering most enquiries at the point of receipt.

In October 2001 it was decided to increase the amount of staff maintaining the E-Help Desk service due to increasing enquiries. As a result, the present service is now checked on a rota basis, Monday to Sunday and involves at least eight members of staff. The majority of these staff are experienced members of the Help Desk Team (some of these staff also have some subject responsibilities), the Help Desk Manager and three members of the Weekend/Evening Team. This re-organisation has ensured the quick response to enquiries and alleviated the ad-hoc method of operating the service during the weekends and evenings.

Types of enquiries received via the E-Help Desk

During the first six months operation of the service from October 2000 to March 2001, 88 enquiries were received. The top five enquiries included:

1) Requests for Athens Usernames and Passwords
2) Where to look for information on a subject
3) How to access an Electronic Database
4) Requests for Mintel Usernames and Passwords
5) Joint 5th place = Journal information (e.g. how to find articles, what the library stocks etc) & Library card information (e.g. PINs/Barcode numbers, entitlements)

The enquiries received though the E-Help Desk were also included in the Advice Desk Benchmarking activities which took place for a week each in February and November 2001. The enquiries received increased by 70% from February to November highlighting the increased usage of this service. The enquiries received were as follows:

E-Help Desk Enquiries Received Monday 26th February to Friday 2nd March 2001
1) Password problems = 6
2) Subject help: printed resources = 1
3) Subject help: electronic resources = 2
4) Referrals to other staff/other desks = 1

E-Help Desk Enquiries Received Monday 5th to Sunday 11th November 2001
1) Password enquiries = 18
2) Catalogue enquiry = 1
3) Subject help: electronic resources = 7
4) Referrals to other staff/other desks = 1
User comments about the service
During the operation of the E-Help Desk Service it has received a number of positive comments from users in response to enquiries. These include the following:

“Many thanks and very grateful”
“Thank you so much for your help. That is tremendous”
“Wow that was a quick response! Thanks a lot”
“Many thanks for this information; most helpful”
“Thank you so much for your prompt reply. Kind regards”
“Thanks very much for getting back to me so soon”

Do users find Electronic Help Desk services useful?
During the Advice Desk Group Benchmarking activities of November 2001, users were asked as a part of the User Satisfaction Survey as to whether they would find an Electronic Help Desk Service to be a useful addition to library services. The Survey indicated a number of positive responses as six users indicated that they would find it “very” useful and a further 26 felt it would be “quite” useful. Feedback from these responses also indicated a number of reasons to support the use of an Electronic Help Desk Service, from a user’s point of view. These included the following:

“Direct access for help and assistance”
“Quite handy”
“Straightforward to use”
“Saves time”

Future of the E-Help Desk service
At present, it is hoped that the E-Help Desk Service will continue to be used alongside the more traditional aspects of the Help Desk service in the Library. A number of improvements have been suggested for the future to enhance the service. These include marketing, the creation of more standard response documents to aid time and consistency and further staff training. The need for investigation and use of real-time enquiry management systems has also arisen since the creation of the E-Help Desk service. These could add to existing Help Desk Services and potentially provide real-time remote access 24/7 in the future.
Appendix 3.2 Costed Models for Advice Desk Service
Based on figures from 2001 from one University

The Advice Desk Group have been reluctant to include costed models because it was felt that a generic costed model based on costings, from each of the four services would be misleading to the reader. However based on the costings supplied to us by one university we have developed the model above.

Model A

Service hours
Continuously staffed by a single subject librarian 08.30 - 20.00 hrs.

Costing
\[ 11.5 \times £12.40 = £142.60. \]
Assuming open Mon-Thurs 46 hrs, Fri 8.30-17.00 = 8.5 hrs, Sat 10.00-13.00 = 3.0 hrs,
\[ \text{Total 57.5 hrs} \times £12.40 = £713 \text{ per wk} \]

Dependencies
Regular rota of appropriately qualified staff. Combining customer care and IT skills with a background knowledge of sources of information and of at least one specialist area. User gains from continuous access to face to face help throughout staffed hours.

Model B

Service hours
Staffed by a single subject librarian. Core hours 10.00 – 16.00 hrs. Outside core hours counter staff refer to three subject librarians handling referrals

Costing
\[ 6 \times £12.40 = £74.40, 5.5 \times £6.30 = £34.65, 2 \times £12.40 = £24.80. \]
Cost Mon -Thursday = £133.85 x 4 = £535.40.
Fri 8.30 - 17.00, \[ 6 \times £12.40 = £74.40, 2.5 \times £6.30 = £15.75, 2 \times £12.40 = £24.80. \]
Total = £114.95.
Sat. 10.00 -13.00, \[ 3 \times £12.40 = £37.20. \]
Total = £687.55

Dependencies
As above for core hours. Outside core hours counter staff need to have time to receive and refer enquiries whilst combine with normal duties. Clear understanding of who to refer to and when these will be available. Subject librarians need to plan for surgeries in advance at set times, thus reducing their flexibility. Users may have to wait up to 24 hrs to have an in depth enquiry answered.

Model C

Service hours
Staffed by a single counter staff 08.30 - 20.00 hrs. Supervised by existing counter supervisor referring enquiries to subject librarians throughout week.
Costing
Mon-Thurs 46 hrs, Fri 8.5 hrs, Sat 3 hrs - total 57.5 hrs x £6.30 = £362.25.
Subject librarians 4 hrs per day x 5 days = 20 x £12.40 = £248.
Total = £610.25.

Dependencies
Clear understanding of who to refer to and when these will be available. Need to refer to existing
counter supervisor too. Subject librarians need to plan for surgeries in advance at set times, thus
reducing their flexibility. Users may have to wait up to 48 hrs (over weekends) to have an in
depth enquiry answered.

Model D

Service hours
No Advice Desk Service. Referral from the counter to subject librarians on a continual basis.

Costing
Costs absorbed through existing counter services and subject librarian overheads.

Dependencies
Clear understanding of who to refer to and when these will be available. Need to refer to existing
counter supervisor too. Subject librarians need to be available for enquiries at any moment, thus
restricting their availability for academic liaison, planning user education etc. There will need to
be a strong referral between subject librarians. Users may have to wait a substantial period to
have an in depth enquiry answered. Quality of the loans service may be diminished during busy
periods.

Model E

Service hours
Electronic Advice Desk available via Library Web page 24 hrs x 7 days a week. No Advice
Desk.

Costing
Subject librarians handle enquiries on a rota basis am & pm two hours per day. Forward to three
peers who take on average total 3 hrs per each day to answer. Thus 10 hours @ £12.40 10 x
£12.40 =£124.00, 3 hours @ £12.40, £37.20 x 5 = £186.00 - total £310.00. Costs absorbed
through existing counter services and subject librarian overheads.

Dependencies
Clear understanding of who to refer to and when they will be available. This will clearly need
well publicised standards of service so as to temper user’s expectations. There will be a need for
counter staff to refer to existing counter supervisor. Subject librarians need to be available to
answer enquiries at regular periods during the day, thus restricting their availability for academic
liaison, planning user education etc. There will need to be a strong referral between subject
librarians. Users may have to wait a substantial period to have any face to face enquiries
answered.
Conclusions on Advice Desk model

You will notice that the model includes dependencies in terms of human resources and the implications for the users the Service. The lowest cost model is clearly the electronic advice desk. However this relies on changing the culture of the user in asking enquiries, their access to IT, their preference for IT as opposed to face to face enquiries. It relies on Subject Librarians not only being on a rota to receive e-mails, but their peers being available to answer them. There is very little difference between Models A & B in terms of costs. Model C is not practical from a user perspective and severely compromises the Service available.

Changes in LIS provision in the future may mean that Model E becomes increasingly adopted.
Appendix 3.3 Help Desk Service Models

These models are the results of research conducted by a member of the Advice Desk Team looking at established UK and Overseas alternative provision.

Model A: High-Level Primary Service Desk. (Florida Institute of Technology). Page 92.

Model B: Helpdesk and Loans and Returns merge to form the Inquiry desk. (The University of Western Australia, Perth, Australia). Page 92.


Model D: 2 Desk Solution: Inquiry Desk and an Information Desk (Deakin University Library). Page 93.

Model E: Responses from 15 HE Institutions on How They Staff Their Issue and Enquiry Desks. (Thames Valley University). Page 94.


Overview

A Help Desk Review and Advice Desk Benchmarking activities at University D, prompted Help Desk Team staff at this institution to investigate models of Help Desk Services. As a result, two members of the Library Help Desk team used a number of databases and search engines including LISA, EBSCO and Google to obtain the models highlighted in this document. These models provide a range of Help Desk Service Models including combined Library and IT services Desks to purely electronic solutions. Each model provides a reference and bulleted pointed synopsis of the main aspects and considerations of the service.
Appendix 3.3: Help Desk Service Models

Model A - High-level primary service desk
1997 ALA San Francisco poster session (Florida Institute of Technology, Melbourne, FL 32901) http://www.lib.fit.edu/pubs/poster/abstract.html (date accessed: 13/02/02)

Key elements of model:
• Eliminated traditional reference desk
• Restructured Circulation Desk to create “high-level Primary Service Desk”
• The new Service Desk operated primarily with a “partnering program” with new Service Desk staff partnered to existing Research and Instruction Librarians on the desk to assist technique and source learning
• Research and Instruction Librarians would progressively spend less time on the Service Desk and would be on call to answer complex reference and research enquiries.

Model B - Helpdesk and loans and returns merge to form the Inquiry desk
The University of Western Australia, Perth, Australia http://educate.lib.chalmers.se/IATUL/proceedcontents/chanpap/garner.html

Key elements of model:
• The objective was to enable the reference staff to respond to changing client demand for reference services in the electronic environment
• One service point to act as an initial inquiry point for all users. Staffed by Library Officers
• An Inquiry Desk Help File was compiled to assist with FAQ, and guides were developed to assist users access of electronic resources and reduce the number of questions on how to locate the online databases
• A training programme was devised for inquiry desk staff on questioning techniques as their role was to enhance the services they provided by having the skills and experience to know what questions they could answer and what to refer to reference staff
• Self issue machines were introduced to reduce the workload that had transferred from the reference librarian to the library officers
• Improved services for clients, many queries resolved at first point of inquiry
• Increased confidence by library officers in their ability to answer more advanced questions
• Reference librarians able to spend more uninterrupted time with clients in need of advance reference assistance, web authoring and teaching

Model C - New models of reference service
Appendix 3.3: Help Desk Service Models

Key elements of model:
• Texas Woman’s University reported that all full time staff rotates on the reference desk and training is focused on new electronic products
• Washington University reported a combined Reference and Information Desk staffed by a librarian, a paraprofessional and a student. Although this model extends staff and addresses the referral problem, they feel it impedes experienced librarians learning from colleagues
• Sonoma State had some hours when Reference Librarians were only on call but they have now changed this pattern to provide service with one librarian and one paraprofessional. Training is integrated into Reference meetings
• George Washington University are interested in combining Information and Reference Desks, but this creates the training problem of different staffing levels
• SUNY Albany and others reported using ‘roving assistance’
• NYU Medical Centre cross train reference and circulation staff. They also report a possible future trend - Reference by Beeper

Model D - 2 Desk: Inquiry desk and an Information desk

Key elements of model:
• Replaced traditional Information Desk (which previously dealt with all enquiries) with an Inquiry Desk handling all initial enquiries and an Information Desk, providing assistance with in-depth reference, training and research consultation
• Change of service due to changes in enquiries from in-depth to more general i.e. directional
• Questions are filtered before they are passed to a faculty librarian
• Inquiry Desk staffed by Loans staff during defined hours (9.30 to 3.30) answering referrals, circulation, lending and catalogue enquiries
• Information Desk staffed by a Librarian dealing with all reference enquiries
• Intensive training schedule was needed for Inquiry Desk staff and concentrated on operations, resources and customer service
• Inquiry Desk dealt with new service related questions i.e. the introduction of a web-based catalogue, self-serve checkout facilities and PINs for all library users
• Enquiries at the two desks were seasonal. At the start of the academic year, enquiries were predominantly service and directional related and answered at the Inquiry Service Point. As the year progressed enquiries became more topical around assignment topics increasing activity at the Information Desk
• After the introduction of the Inquiry Desk, Librarians felt that enquiries at the Help Desk became more in-depth reference type enquiries
Appendix 3.3: Help Desk Service Models

Model E - Responses from 15 HE institutions on how they staff their issue and enquiry desks

From: Wilson, Clive (1998) Thames Valley University
Issue and Enquiry Desk Staffing

Key elements of model:
• One respondent had a combined issue/enquiry desk staffed by everyone but professional staff do less counter duty than non-professional. Library Assistants are expected to answer or refer enquiries
• Six respondents used exclusively professional staff on the enquiry desk, 2 included management/team managers and 2 included technical services people. One desk was only staffed half-time
• Three had mainly professional staff with SLIA’s helping to cover weekends/evenings/shortages
• One had assistant librarians only with a mixture of qualified and unqualified
• One had information assistants taking 1st line enquiries and referring upwards through an SLIA to a senior information officer
• Five respondents thought continuous training for enquiry work essential, and specialisation of teams and individuals should be known to all staff
• Three had no problem with a referral system
• Two stated the maximum duty slot was 2 hours

Model F - Converged reference and I.T. services

From: Pilarski, Carla and Picasso, Vicki (2001) (University of Newcastle Library)
Morphing the technician: moving the line in the sand
11th National Library Technicians Conference (ALIA Groups),

Key elements of model:
• Previously separate desks which had been in place for many years
• Library technicians had no opportunity for progression. Librarians carried out all higher level work
• Merger of Reference Services and I.T. to become known as Information Services. The team consists of 18 staff across 3 campuses. Staff rotate to work across all three sites
• Information support officers and support assistants have worked to develop an understanding of all disciplines and fostering a mutual support culture. There is a non-hierarchical atmosphere within the team
• A series of skills advancement workshops and regular meetings to share information and discuss areas of mutual concern have helped build a team which is multiskilled, self-directed and self-supporting
Appendix 3.3: Help Desk Service Models

- As the information desks now provide both reference and I.T. services the Information Officer ensures that reference staff continue to maintain and develop their I.T. skills in support of services offered

Model G - Virtual reference

From: GATEWAYS, National Library of Australia (2001)
Virtual Reference: online questions and answers

Key elements of model:
- The E-mail Reference Service is the basis for most collaborative projects. Key development in this area is a call-centre type approach with a fast turn around on questions
- Online/chat to the Librarian reference requests has been found to work well for short questions and as an initial access point
- Fully automated solutions based on answers from a knowledge base faces challenges in terms of quality and relevance of response
- Collaborative Digital Reference Service brings together Libraries from around the world to share reference enquiries working towards a 24/7 service

Model H - Information kiosk and reference and research service

Task Force on Information and Reference Services within Doe and Moffit
http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/Staff/DoeMoff/refinfinrpt.html

Key elements of model:
- Information kiosk staffed by student employees to provide directional assistance, troubleshoot and report PC problems and assist with basic catalogue enquiries, referring more complex enquiries to the Reference and Research Service
- Reference and Research Service provides in person and remote reference and research service at all levels
- Located in the centre of library activity. Staffed by a dedicated core staff for a minimum 136 hours over two sites per week
- Service provided at the desk is supplemented by a co-ordinated, well publicised system through which users can meet individually, during office hours or by appointment with a subject librarian

Model I - Company service desk - Scottish Hydro-Electric: privatised utility company

A report for the British Library Research and Development Department
Appendix 3.3: Help Desk Service Models

Key elements of model:
• Enquiries were mostly received via telephone and fax
• The Service Desk is staffed with a “Supervisor”, 3 FT and 1 PT and 1 temporary placement student. Usually there are 4 staff available at anyone time to take a call
• Has 3,500 users in 100 locations who make enquiries by phone, fax or email and receives up to 200 calls a day
• The service uses an Appointment Management System (AMS) to schedule customer visits
• Have a single in-house Help. Staffed cover is provided Monday to Friday 8am to 5pm - cover is provided outside these hours by a Computer Operations team, giving 24 hour availability
• Although the service has a physical Help Desk, most enquiries are received by telephone, fax and email
• Four staff are available at any one time to receive calls
• Calls are answered at the Service Desk. The enquiry is then logged onto the IDS Help Desk Package. 5 minute enquiries are answered at the point of contact; longer/problematic enquiries are forwarded to further support networks. Ownership of enquiries is passed on via the software
• Agencies are used to recruit staff. In-depth computer skills are not deemed essential and most staff are chosen for their customer service skills. A Skills Specification tool is used to employ Service Desk Staff
• The Help Desk staff do not generally have any other duties
• Help Desk service problems include ownership of forwarded calls, lack of staff training and staff due to a “no-hire” policy at this point
• Staff highlighted that there were few and limited documented policies in relation to the service. This often causes inconsistencies in practice
• Limitations were highlighted in relation to the telephone and electronic query system at the time of the case study

Model J - Help desk operated by Customer Services Unit - Welsh Health Common Services Authority: NHS IT service providers

Key Factors in Help Desk Success. An Analysis of Areas Critical to Help Desk Development and Functionality. BLR+DD Report no. 6247
A report for the British Library Research and Development Department

Key elements of model:
• This service has a Help Desk Manager, 2 full-time and 6 part-time staff. The Help Desk Manager organises daily routines and cover
• Service has 1,500 users in 200 locations and supports all IT for hospital administration and patient critical systems
• Provides a call desk service. At least 70% of calls received are forwarded to specialist support groups
- Relies on call logging software to track calls and refer calls (CallServer)
- All outstanding calls are collected in an evening and chased the next day by Help Desk staff
- Support is available 8 am to 6 pm
- The service uses no performance measurement tactics
- SLA’s are available, but not acted upon
- Staff training is ad-hoc with new recruits sitting with experienced staff. However, all staff attend telephone skills courses and working on a Help Desk training
- Motivation is maintained by varied task loads and “management by discussion”
- A Help Desk Bulletin is regularly produced indicating current issues and commending individual performance
- Problems include: High percentage of calls are referred opposed to answered at first point of contact
- Lack of feedback to Help Desk leaves the status of many queries a mystery
- Lack of communication about the organisation and software changes causes frustration for staff
Appendix 3.4: Examples of Schedules Used

Exit Interview for Benchmarking Advice Desks

NOVEMBER 2001

Your response to our enquiry service.

Date of Interview __________  Time of Interview __________

Customer Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part-time undergraduate</th>
<th>Part-time postgraduate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full-time undergraduate</td>
<td>Full-time postgraduates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access student</td>
<td>Academic staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support staff</td>
<td>Registered Dist. Learner</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Course of study? Or what Academic School do you belong to?

1) Please describe briefly the enquiry you made:

________________________________________________________________________

2.) Was a member of library staff immediately available to answer your enquiry?

Yes [ ]  No [ ]

3.) How long did you have to wait for a member of library staff to help you?

a) Less than 5 minutes [ ]
b) More than 5 minutes [ ]

4.) If you had to wait, what do you think this was because of?

a) There was no-one at the Desk? [ ]
b) The staff were busy with another user [ ]
c) The staff were occupied with phone/work [ ]
d) You were not noticed or ignored [ ]
e) Don’t know [ ]
f) Other [ ]

Please give a reason why you think this happened.
5.) The enquiry transaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>Good</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>How approachable was the member of staff?</strong></td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Did you think your enquiry was understood?</strong></td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How well did the member of staff explain the answer to the enquiry?</strong></td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Do you think the member of staff gave you as much time and attention as was necessary?</strong></td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.) During the enquiry were you referred to any of the following?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Loans Counter</th>
<th>Inter-Library Loans</th>
<th>Restricted Loans</th>
<th>A Subject Advisor</th>
<th>Subject Advice Desk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your School or Tutor</td>
<td>IT Helpdesk Desk</td>
<td>Reception</td>
<td>Other, please specify.</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.) The electronic resources.

a) How often do you use Library Web pages on campus, (including Hall of Residence & Departments.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Daily</th>
<th>More than once a week.</th>
<th>Less than once a week.</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>If so why not?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What do you use the web pages for?
Appendix 3.4: Examples of Schedules Used

b) How often do you use Library Web pages off campus, (including work and home.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Daily</th>
<th>More than once a week.</th>
<th>Less than once a week.</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>If so why not?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

What do you use the web pages for?

<p>| |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

(c) How often do you use the Library Catalogue (Web OPAC) via the internet on campus (including Hall of Residence and Departments)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Daily</th>
<th>More than once a week.</th>
<th>Less than once a week.</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>If so why not?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(d) How often do you use the Library Catalogue (Web OPAC) via the internet off campus, (including work and home)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Daily</th>
<th>More than once a week.</th>
<th>Less than once a week.</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>If so why not?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

d) How often do you use the Electronic Journals/Abstracts or CD-ROMS on campus, (including Hall of Residence and Departments)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Daily</th>
<th>More than once a week.</th>
<th>Less than once a week.</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>If not why not?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
e) **How often do you use the Electronic Journals/Abstracts or CD-ROMS off campus, (including work and home)?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Daily</th>
<th>More than once a week.</th>
<th>Less than once a week.</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>If not why not?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

g) **How often do you use the e-mail the Library/Learning Centre Advice Desk?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Daily</th>
<th>More than once a week.</th>
<th>Less than once a week.</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>If not why not?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

8). **How useful would you find an electronic Advice Desk that had it's own link from the Library homepage?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very</th>
<th>Quite</th>
<th>Not useful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Please give a reason for your comment?*

9). **How would you rate the following aspects of the Service?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Adequate</th>
<th>Poor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Signs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Handouts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10). **How do you suggest the Subject Advice/Enquiry Desk service could be improved?**
(Please do not lead the interviewee by making suggestions)
## Enquiry Logging Forms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date:</th>
<th>Timetable:</th>
<th>Issues and Returns</th>
<th>Group study</th>
<th>Procedural Rules, Regulations, Opening Hours, etc.</th>
<th>Directional Internal, External</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9 am to 11 am</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11 am to 15.45</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15.45 to 10.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Issues and Returns**
  - CD Roms
  - Exceptional Loans
- **Group study**
- **Procedural Rules, Regulations, Opening Hours, etc.**
- **Directional**
  - Internal
  - External
| Timeslot:          | Network access problems | Password problems | Applications Software etc. | Hardware Queries concerning printers, floppies, scanners, etc | Quick Reference | Catalogue Using the library catalogue, Eg Where do I find a book on my reading list | Subject More detailed enquiries eg Where do I look for information on? | Referrals/other staff/other desks | Access to other libraries UK Libraries Plus etc.
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<tr>
<td>9 am to 11 am</td>
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<td>Help printed</td>
<td>Help Electronic</td>
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<td>11 am to 15.45</td>
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<td>15.45 to 10.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Advice Desk Issue</td>
<td>University B</td>
<td>Univ. B &amp; C IT Help Desks</td>
<td>University A</td>
<td>University C Site 1</td>
<td>University C Site 2</td>
<td>University D Site 1</td>
<td>University D Site 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Opening hours: term time</td>
<td>Mon-Th 8.45-21.00 Fri 8.45-17.00 Sat 10.00-13.00</td>
<td>Univ. C 8.30-20.00 Univ. B 8.45-21.00</td>
<td>Mon-Th 8.45-21.00 Fri 8.45-17.00 Sat 9.30-17.00 Sun 13.00-17.00</td>
<td>8.30-20.00</td>
<td>8.30-20.00</td>
<td>Mon-Th 10.30-21.00 Fri 10.30-17.00 Sat 13.00-18.00 Sun 13.00-18.00</td>
<td>Mon-Th 9.00-22.00 Fri 9.00-19.00 Sat 13.00-18.00 Sun 13.00-18.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Opening hours: term time library / L Centre</td>
<td>Mon-Th 8.45-22.30 Fri 8.45-19.00 Sat 10.00-17.00 Sun 13.00-17.00</td>
<td>See Univ. C Site 1 and Univ. B</td>
<td>Mon-Th 8.45-21.00 Fri 8.45-17.00 Sat 9.30-17.00 Sun 13.00-17.00</td>
<td>Mon-Th 8.30-23.00 Fri 8.30-19.00 Sat 10.00-16.00 Sun 10.00-18.00</td>
<td>Mon-Th 8.30-23.00 Fri 8.30-19.00 Sat 10.00-16.00 Sun 10.00-18.00</td>
<td>Mon-Th 10.30-21.00 Fri 10.30-17.00 Sat 13.00-18.00 Sun 13.00-18.00</td>
<td>Mon-Th 10.30-21.00 Fri 10.30-17.00 Sat 13.00-18.00 Sun 13.00-18.00</td>
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<td>Location of Desks to Resources</td>
<td>Adjacent to IT help desk enabling referral but at a distance from print sources. Univ. C 2nd floor entrance area. Univ. B upper ground floor entrance area.</td>
<td>Adjacent to IT help desk on 4th floor. Supplemented by staff availability on each floor.</td>
<td>Adjacent to IT help desk at 4th floor next to Q. Ref entrance area, ground floor.</td>
<td>Adjacent to Q. Ref and IT lab. Next to main thoroughfare.</td>
<td>Adjacent to Q. Ref and IT lab. Next to main thoroughfare.</td>
<td>Has been relocated to the main Entrance floor (ground). All documents available only Online/printed on request.</td>
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<td>Staffing</td>
<td>1) Concurrently 2) Total 3) Skill range 4) Training given</td>
<td>1) Bth Univ. B &amp; C 2/3 2/3 14 12 20 17 12 15 4</td>
<td>1) 1 @ 8.45-11.00 &amp; 15.00-17.00 2 @ 11.00-15.00 &amp; 17.00-21.00 3) IT experienced Info Officers Not 4) On job training &amp; staff development</td>
<td>1) 1+1 backup 2) 15 Qualified Lib. 4) On job &amp; documents. Training hours and staff development</td>
<td>1) 1+1 backup 2) 17 3) Qualified Lib. 4) On job &amp; documents. Training hours and staff development</td>
<td>1) 1 2) 6 3) 4 Qualified &amp; 2 SLA’s 4) On the job training plan and coaching.</td>
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<td>Major groups of students or academic users</td>
<td>Mainly full-time undergraduates &amp; postgraduates</td>
<td>Undergraduates, postgraduates &amp; researchers</td>
<td>Mainly full-time undergraduates &amp; part-time undergraduates</td>
<td>Mainly full-time undergraduates</td>
<td>Mainly full-time undergraduates</td>
<td>Mainly full-time undergraduates</td>
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<td>Services provided</td>
<td>Passwords, room bookings, subject enquiries &amp; special loans.</td>
<td>MS software help, printing, hands on trouble shooting, photocopiers etc.</td>
<td>Passwords, room bookings, subject enquiries &amp; special loans.</td>
<td>Subject enquiries, sale of referencing booklet, audio tour, IT enquiries &amp; access other libs, book sales.</td>
<td>Subject enquiries, sale of referencing booklet, audio tour, IT enquiries &amp; access other libs.</td>
<td>Subject enquiries, access to databases CD-ROM bookings and IT enquiries.</td>
<td>Subject enquiries, access to databases, CD-ROM bookings &amp; room bookings.</td>
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