

### The Aim

The aim of this research was to **align the liaison librarian teaching offer to Newcastle University's Education Strategy and new Graduate Framework**. The library team also hoped to encourage a **collaborative and consistent approach to the planning of embedded information and digital literacy skills** across all Faculties to provide greater parity of access for students across faculties. In doing so, this project aimed to help explore ways of ensuring that **students develop a broad range of relevant information and digital literacy skills** at a pace suited to their stage and course of study.

### Opening a dialogue

According to Peters., Jones and Matthews (2007), **students receive the greatest benefit in their studies when academics and librarians work together** to develop appropriate training. This is likely due to the fact that such collaborations increase perceived relevance of information literacy skills (i.e. the ability to find and evaluate information successfully) amongst students. Such collaborations can also necessarily be more tailored towards the specific requirements of individual disciplines and subjects, since the academic's subject expertise enables them to provide direct insight into particular challenges of research within their field. Based on these findings, our first step was to engage academic colleagues in a productive dialogue around both our offer and the skills students could be expected to gain at each stage of their degree course.

To help facilitate this, we developed a **Working in Partnership dialogue**, which **consists of two key documents** that have been made available on the Newcastle University staff intranet and Library website. The first document consists of an outline, an outline of our teaching offers and **how we can collaborate with academics and students**. The second document is a student Development and Progression document, based on Information Literacy curriculums from SCOUNL (2015) and ANCIL (2011). This provides **an outline of the information literacy skills and competencies** students can be expected to have at each stage of their undergraduate degree.

These documents were initially shared with School Library Representatives to gain provisional feedback. Once this feedback had been received and evaluated these documents were revised as deemed appropriate. Afterwards the documents were distributed more widely at various inter-departmental meetings such as Faculty Education Committees to gain a broader range of input.

**"I think this will help raise awareness amongst academics of how you can help us – not just to deliver a library session for the first years in induction but throughout the whole student journey."**

- Senior Lecturer, Newcastle University Business School

**"The Library team were happy to extensively consult at all stages, particularly with regard to how their resources could complement our new emphasis on skills-based training for our students."**

- Senior Lecturer, History, Classics & Archaeology

### Partnership in Practice

Following their introduction, our Working in Partnership documents have helped us to initiate **positive conversations with academic colleagues** across several Faculties. Consequently, we have been able to strategically implement learning interventions that lead to more positive outcomes for a large number of students.

For example, Biosciences used our Student Development and Progression document to help them **successfully embed Information Literacy skills within their wider Academic and Professional Skills module for all first-year students** in semester one. Our Working in Partnership materials are similarly being used by Engineering and Chemistry to help them map out key skills across their new first-year skills programmes. By providing these skills within the first year of study, these embedded materials can help students access a wider range of relevant resources from the outset of their study. This can in turn lead to establishing more in-depth knowledge, which can act as a foundation for further critical evaluation and comprehension.

Likewise, Architecture and Urban Planning (AUP) used our Student Development and Progression document to **map out learning outcomes at each level against the AUP programme**. Modules were selected at each stage where embedded Information Literacy workshops would be best placed. History and Law are taking a similar approach to embedding key skills.. By staggering information literacy workshops across the stages of study, we have been able to more gradually introduce ideas to avoid feelings of being overwhelmed by information (a common experience during the pandemic) and slowly build on existing knowledge in a measured, scaffolded way.. Much pedagogical research has shown that

In Speech and Language Science and Natural and Environmental Sciences' skills programmes took a slightly different approach and **we collaborated with programme leaders to restructure our embedded teaching to ensure appropriate progression of skills**. For example, we revised the order of teaching so that students now develop key referencing skills *before* being introduced to reference management tools.

We were also able to **adapt our documents to respond to the challenge of online learning** in 2020, **producing a Supporting Flexible Learning webpage** as a guide to our approach.

#### References

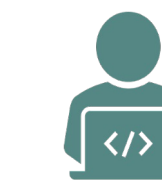
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### Developing Graduate Skills

As mentioned before, Our Student Development and Progression document links to the **Graduate Framework strands**. The strands that we chose to focus on are outlined below:

#### Critical Thinkers

We **engage students in critical thinking** around the resources they choose for their work;. Students are prompted to justify their decisions for selecting resources and develop a deeper understanding of where that information comes from by asking and answering key questions that enables them to evaluate both the strengths and weaknesses of their sources.. In doing so, students develop a greater ability to **identify and select appropriate academic knowledge and express informed views**.

#### Digitally Capable

In line with JISC's (2019) Digital Capability framework we focus on developing information literacies. This is achieved by **improving students' capacity to Find, Evaluate and Manage digital information**, therefore addressing all of the core aspects that define digital capability. Where possible, we have done this by making use of active and blended digital learning opportunities. In these instances, students are encouraged to interact with ideas and information and try out the skills we discuss to gain a fuller understanding of them. By supplementing asynchronous digital resources that can be done at home with synchronous workshops, we aim to provide flexibility in how this digital capability can be both learned and put into practice.

#### Curious

Our teaching sessions and online guides embedded in the VLE **promote independent exploration of the resources and tools** available to our students. By facilitating this kind of independent learning, our provision encourages students to take ownership of their learning journey and tailor their experiences accordingly

#### Skills Audits

**Digital self-assessment tools aimed at undergraduate and postgraduate levels** were created and embedded in Canvas modules and on the ASK website to **encourage student engagement with their own information and digital skills** development.



### Next Steps

The next step in the library's Working in Partnership project is to develop a booking system that **encourages a collaborative dialogue with academics** at the point of request. This will help the project achieve its initial vision of co-produced learning more efficiently and make it less likely to fall into traditional patterns of parallel provision. We also aim to collaborate with academic staff in **reviewing lessons learned from a year of online teaching**, with the aim of developing a mix of non-synchronous, synchronous and Present in Person (PIP) options for 21/22. This will help ensure that blended learning continues to be informed by best practice as the Higher Education sector adapts to a pandemic (and post-pandemic) learning environment..