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Library Services Customer Services Policy

Introduction

Our services inspire and inform teaching, learning and research at UAL. In addition to enquires and support we offer access to our collections and staff expertise, all of which builds and creates a customer experience.

The face-to-face interactions with our staff, in our spaces and with our collections are highly valued in an art and design environment and are balanced by responsive online provision for support. We also provide a vital link to other support both in LSS and beyond. This support and access to services represent a significant cornerstone of the University's academic environment and contribute to consistently high satisfaction scores in NSS.

Customer services is at the heart of all engagement LS has with our stakeholders and customers and includes everything that happens in our services and frontline interactions. These interactions are multi-channel and complex, reflecting developments in the university's academic portfolio, changing mode of delivery of our services in a hybrid model, and recognising that student experience is holistic and often oblivious to the organisational boundaries we ourselves operate in across teams, departments and colleges.

The University's intention, expressed in the UAL Strategy 2022-32, is to place social justice, inclusion and diversity at the heart of creative education. Library Services play a key role in meeting that ambition, and in enhancing the student experience more broadly, supporting the UAL Student experience framework 2022-25.

While our primary users are the students and staff of the university, by nature of the position and history of UAL and our strategic pillar around social purpose, our collections and services are of value to many other students, researchers and practitioners outside of UAL and attract a broad range of users.

This policy covers customer services for all Library Services teams, in the six College libraries and learning zones, two library hubs and in the Archives and Special Collections Centre (ASCC) and LCF Archive. This policy draws together individual policy and rules such as those which are governed by circulation and access, enquiries provision, and quality monitoring, as well aligning with the LS customer engagement strategy.

A Values Based Approach

Our approach to customer services is informed by the Library and Student Support values:

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- Putting students' needs at the heart of everything we do.
- Committing to Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility in all our interactions and practices.
- Treating everyone with respect, kindness and compassion.
- Developing through professional enquiry, critical reflection, and continuous improvement.
- Collaborating to achieve our full potential.

Guiding Principles

These principles guide the overall ethos of our customer service strategy. We will:

- Develop one service which reflects needs across our Colleges, and supports parity of student experience
- Develop inclusive and diverse services, to foster a sense of belonging at UAL for all our library users
- Develop appropriate access and support models for all customers in partnership with academic staff and other stakeholders
- Make our services and spaces accessible
- Advocate the ethos of good customer service by prioritising the student experience and developing staff to provide empathetic and responsive services.
- Seek and respond to feedback from the UAL community
- Manage our services and spaces in a sustainable way
- Review the Customer Service Policy annually

Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to provide guidance to the library staff who support our customers in person, online, directly and indirectly though the services and systems they manage and provide. The Policy also enables us to respond in an agile way to changes in the university's portfolio of courses.

The members of the UAL community who use our libraries, learning zones and archives are:

- All students enrolled on validated courses
- UAL staff
- Students enrolled on pre-sessional courses and those attending WP pre-enrolment programmes
- SCONUL members

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- Visitors to the libraries and archives
- Alumni (past staff and students)
- Affiliate and partner institutions

Responsibilities

Staff across Library Services have responsibilities related to customer services and circulation. These responsibilities are indicated following each policy statement, along with the relevant workflows.

Key:

- LAs - Library assistants
- ASL – Academic Support Librarian (includes Assistant Academic Support Librarian in this context)
- ASM – Acquisitions, Subscriptions and Metadata
- SMT – Senior Management Team
- CSG – Customer Services Group
- LRM – Learning Resources Manager
- ASK - Operational Group
- R&S – Resources and Systems

Key Documents

- UAL Strategy 2022-2032
- UAL Student Experience Framework 2022-25
- Library Futures Vision

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Circulation Policy

1. Circulation management

1.1 Borrowing

Library Services borrowing web pages

Our priority is for our users to access the library resources they need, ensuring that materials are available for reference and/or loan, and that loaned materials are returned to circulation on request.

1.1.1 Borrowing entitlements

- Further Education (Foundation and Pre-sessional) - 10 items
- Undergraduate students – 15 items
- Postgraduate and research students – 30 items
- Staff (temporary, permanent, Emeritus/Visiting Professors) – 30 items
- SCONUL users (Band A, B and C) - 3 x 3 week loan items [SCONUL users must borrow and return at the information desk].

1.1.1.1 Borrowing terms

- Users borrow books and DVDs from any UAL library site using the self-issue kiosks in the libraries (except SCONUL users).
- Loan periods are either 1 week (short loans) or 3 weeks (long loans).
- Items can be returned at any site (except ILLs and IT equipment).
- Books and DVDs that have not been reserved will be automatically renewed for a maximum period of 10 weeks (1 week loans) or 12 weeks (3 week loans).
- Library IT equipment (laptops, headphones, memory sticks etc.) must be borrowed and returned at the information desk.
- Student users can borrow 1 laptop and students, and most staff can also borrow 5 IT accessories at a time (which will be included in their maximum overall loan allowance). More information can be found on Customer Service SharePoint site.
- IT equipment is 5 hour loan and does not automatically renew. Students can also borrow laptops from self-issue kiosks in some libraries and Learning Zones.
- IT equipment and accessories and ILLs must be returned to site they were first borrowed from.

1.1.1.2 Restrictions blocking user accounts:

- An item on loan which has been requested by another borrower, not returned within the 7 days after the due date. The restriction is lifted as soon as the overdue item/s are returned.

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- Items that have reached their maximum number of automatic renewals. The restriction is lifted as soon as the overdue item/s are returned. If they are not reserved by another users there is not restriction on borrowing items again.
- Charges over £10.00 or above.

1.1.2 Borrower rights withdrawal:

Borrowing rights will be withdrawn for the following reasons:

- Student being suspended from course.
- Student taking time out e.g. year out/partial year out. We offer unlimited reference access if they have a valid University ID. If they do not have an ID they need to book a visitor appointment.
- Student leaving Institution mid-course.
- Course completion.
- Item 28 days overdue.
- Other applied restriction/block/exception.
- SCONUL users may have their borrowing rights withdrawn if they break UAL rules, or if we are informed by their home institution that they no longer are members/have borrowing rights there.

1.1.2.1 Leaver expiry:

Determined by course level, set by SITs course expiry date, and Koha.

- Postgraduate - 0 - same as course expiry.
- Undergraduates - 14 days before course expiry.
- Further Education and all other courses - 21 days before course expiry.

1.1.3 Fines/Penalties/Charges

- We do not charge fines except on laptops and ILLs, but if a reserved item is not returned within 28 days of being requested the borrower's account will be blocked.
- Laptops fines - £1 per hour of late return, up to maximum £10.
- ILL fines - £1 per day of late return, up to maximum £10.
- Standard Cost of replacement price are automatically added to users' accounts after 28 days. Users are e-mailed advising to return item/s or pay for their cost. The restriction are lifted as soon as the overdue item/s are returned/paid for.

Responsibility: CSG

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1.2 Missing and Lost items

UAL Library users are responsible for items they borrow from UAL Libraries and any lost items will need to be replaced or paid for. Lost library items should be reported to the library Customer Services teams at any UAL site.

1.2.1 Missing on loan

- If a library user reports that that they are unable to find an item on their account it is regarded as lost.
- The library user will be contacted, once the item is established as lost by the Customer Services Team. Users are informed of the cost of replacement and how to pay.
- Items can be reported as lost at any UAL library, regardless of the home site of the user or item.
- Lost items are paid for through the user's Library account.

1.2.2 Missing items

Missing items are searched for and found, withdrawn or replaced as necessary, informing users of the outcome as required.

Responsibility: ASM; CSG; ASLs; CMG

1.2.3 Lost items exceptions

In exceptional circumstances a user would not be expected to pay the cost of a lost item:

- Crime incident where the item is stolen. In the instance of an item being stolen the borrower of the item would need to provide a crime reference number from the police. If the item was stolen from University buildings the incident number would need to be provided from estates.
- An accident e.g., a fire where the item is destroyed. In this circumstance it would be necessary to for the borrower of the item to provide written confirmation by letter or email of the incident from their course leader.

A refund can be offered if a lost item is found and returned to the Library (minus a £5 administration fee).

ASLs decide when replacements are necessary and purchase as needed, in liaison with CMG reps.

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1.3 Click and Borrow

1.3.1 Reservations

All library users are allowed to reserve up to 5 items at any one time, except for SCONUL users who may reserve up to 3 items. This includes items at other UAL libraries and items on loan.

All users can reserve borrowable items from any UAL library, for collection at any UAL library.

We offer a 24 hour hold service for library users for 6 items.

Reserved items not yet picked and satisfied by library staff will be manually issued to another user brought to the info desk and requested for loan.

1.3.2 SCONUL reservations

SCONUL users cannot place reservations on 1 week-loan items (e.g. DVDs).

SCONUL users can reserve up to 3 items (although they need to be made aware that they can borrow a maximum of 3 items at any one time), requested via the library info desk, or ASK.

1.4 Inter-Library Loans/ILLs

This service is available to access material from outside UAL to support teaching, research and learning. ILLs are available for books, sections of books or periodical articles, where material requested is out of scope for our collections or unavailable for purchase. British Library Document Supply is used for print or online resources. To meet course needs, online texts are made available through the VLE, Moodle, in line with CLA licence requirements via the British Library Higher Education Scanning Service (eHESS).

The ILL team works closely with Librarians to check whether requested items would be suitable for purchase. When in scope of our collections, and available for purchase at a reasonable cost this is the preferred way for us to access material, so it is available for others within our own collections in the future.

Guidelines:

- Undergraduate: 10 ILLs for undergraduate degree students for the duration of their course. Further loans can be agreed if required.
- Postgraduate: 15 ILLs. Further loans can be agreed if required.
- Staff and Research students: All ILLs related to college research and teaching. ILLs to support external courses/teaching/research should be requested through the external institution.
- Items from international libraries may be requested (with IFLA voucher) and for PGs, researchers and staff.

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- UAL 3 week items may be lent to international libraries with the agreement of the local Collections Academic Support Librarian.

Rights and responsibilities:

- Requests are made through the library catalogue by logging in and selecting "your inter-library loans".
- The library aims to process requests within 3 working days of receipt.
- The host library will supply the item as soon as possible.
- Requests will not be processed if students or staff have any blocks on their account. Users will be informed of this by college ILL staff.
- ILLs should be collected or downloaded. If the requestor does not they may be suspended from using the service and charged a fee to cover the cost of obtaining the ILL issued.
- ILLs should be returned by their due date. Overdue items incur fines of £1 per day (up to a £10 limit).
- ILLs may be renewed once, requested by email to the library. Renewal is not guaranteed and depends on the lender.
- ILLs should be returned to site collected from.
- ILLs are subject to Copyright. A copyright declaration must be made before placing a request for an ILL via the library catalogue.
- Users will be charged replacement cost for lost or damaged ILL items.
- If borrowing institutions lose or damage UAL items we prefer to request a replacement copy, but can charge the replacement cost if necessary. If debts are not settled we may block institutions.

Responsibility: ASL, LRMs, ALG (refer to Lib Guide for ASLs), Discovery Managers

1.5 Managing Koha accounts

Library System staff (part of the Resource and Systems team) manage user accounts in Koha.

1.5.1 Membership

- Koha has 29 staff and student membership user categories. Categories include ISA for both staff and students.
- Initial loan periods are doubled for users with an ISA user category.
- Terms/Duration: Most STAFF accounts are configured to have a 3 year default membership. Temporary staff have a 1 year default membership. SCONUL users' end dates match their home institution's library membership end date.

1.5.2 Account management - SITS import

Student records are imported via a data feed from the IT Services identity vault (IdMS). The IdMS is built from data in various systems, including SITS. A change in IdMS should update Koha within a few minutes.

Students' expiry dates are managed by the IdMS to Koha data feed and should not be changed on Koha. Any issue with an individual's or course end date should be reported to the local CSG rep.

1.5.3 Staff account set up

Records for UAL staff, folio students (CSM, Artscom) and external borrowers are not currently imported to Koha and need to be created manually. This includes staff on short temporary contracts.

Staff may submit their details via the online [Staff Library Account form](#).

1.5.4 SCONUL account set up

Students and staff approved for SCONUL Access will be allocated to a Band which determines their borrowing rights:
A – Staff and research students (PhD, MPhil)
B – Part time, distance learning and placement students
C – Full time postgraduates
R - Reference access to full-time undergraduates and some other users not covered by the banding agreement.

SCONUL Band A B and C

- Borrow up to three 3 week items.
- Can request up to 3, 3 week items, at the library info desk or via email to ASK.
- Items on loan renew 3 times automatically.

Staff create a Koha record for SCONUL users via the online [SCONUL Access library membership application form](#). SCONUL users do not have a library card. Library staff issue and return items at the library info desk.

1.5.5. ID cards

ID cards are issued by college teams to students and are used for library borrowing.

Users can borrow with a UAL paper day pass, at library information desks.

1.5.6 Record management
- Retention policy: 6 years.
- Duplicate records: Staff who are also students will have duplicate records in Koha. Active borrowing is only on one account – which has the higher borrowing entitlement e.g. staff rather than undergraduate student.

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1.5.7 Overdue notices

Users will receive a series of overdue notices via e-mail following the failure to return an item on time if requested by another user or when the user account expires, as part of the leavers' process.

- The first overdue is the auto-renewal failure email which are sent out at 7am the day after the item was due.
- The second overdue is sent on the morning of the 14th day - this will inform the borrower that their account is now blocked.
- The third and final overdue is sent on the morning of the 28th day - this is in effect an invoice asking the borrower to pay the replacement cost of the item(s). Items priced up in response to report listing items 28 days or more overdue.

1.6 Visitors
 Alumni and visitors | UAL (arts.ac.uk) web pages

1.6.1 Principles

- Visitors agree to abide by the UAL Library Code of Conduct at the point of booking.
- Visitors are: alumni, SCONUL users, industry visitors, other.
- All Library bookings for any site must be requested via LibCal booking at least 24 hours in advance. Questions may be received via ASK.
- ASCC (Archives and Special Collection Centre) manage their own requests, and has its own booking system.
- At CSM and CCW special collections material should be requested on arrival and is subject to availability Library Search details and periodical volume/issue information is required
- At LCC and LCF visitors are invited to submit requests prior to their visit through the booking confirmation e-mail.

1.6.2 Access to resources
- Visitors must make sure they bring in a copy of their booking, or have it ready to show on their device.
- Visitors wishing to view closed access material will be directed to a specified study table on site. You may be required to provide photo ID in order to view closed access items.
- All study space is unassigned.

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- Alumni with working credentials will have access to library computers until their account expiries. However, our hardware is not bookable and there is no guarantee of access to this equipment.
- There is no UAL computer access for other visitors, although they can use open access library catalogue terminals to check stock, where available.
- External visitors with access to eduroam may access this on their own device. All visitors can use UAL-Guest-Wifi or Sky's 'The Cloud' connection.
- Visitor copying/printing is available. Visitors can create a guest account to print and copy from their own device by visiting Papercut.
- Alumni can access free resources.

1.6.3 Visitor limits
- Each site will specify the number of visitor slots per day.
- Bookings are set for a full day. Visitors must leave before night opening at CSM at 10pm.
- The number of visitor spaces can be changed to reflect capacity/demand. Limits may be amended during vacation periods.
- All categories of visitor are treated the same, except for SCONUL at LCC & CSM and LCF, which have their own limits.
- Bookings are first come first served. There is no wait list.
- Bookings can be made up to 3 months in advance.
- Space and visitor bookings are limited. At times of high demand, we reserve the right to limit the number of visits per person/institution to ensure fair access.

1.6.4 Alumni
- do not receive a card, as they cannot borrow.
- can access free or open access quality online resources.
- can join the alumni scheme and find out about graduate benefits.
- may be requested to return or pay for outstanding library material to gain/retain on site access.

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2: Customer engagement

2.1 Enquiry management

Enquiry management policy applies to all our channels and modes of communication with customers. These are defined by our customer engagement strategy. The primary channels are:

- ASK – online enquiry management system
- Emails to individual staff
- Phone calls
- In person
- Social media

We do not use generic inboxes as an external channel for communication with customers.

2.1.1 Triage and referral model

Finding ways to manage workflow and minimise congestion, and the delays it causes, is a common challenge in services. One of the most effective tools for dealing with congestion is triage.

The principle of triage is to make sure that the most critical enquiries are dealt with first, and either take longer or use alternative methods for dealing with less critical or more complex enquiries that need escalation to a specialist team or individual.

The crux of triage is sorting enquiries into categories and using different routings, strategies, or resources to deal with each category.

Typical sorting schemes include:

- Fast service times/medium service times/slow service times - prioritising responses and providing a first response within service standards to those that will take longer to resolve.
- Small/easy problems/serious problems/catastrophic problems; Library Assistants are well placed to respond to the majority of enquiries using their own experience, the knowledge base and the LS enquiry and referral guidelines to escalate or refer to the appropriate team/person.

Response schemes for our teams:

- Focusing all staff on the high-priority tasks. During non-core hours all members of the team will respond to enquiries as the priority. On site enquiries take priority over ASK. As long as there is one point of contact staffed on site then ASK becomes the next priority (e.g. before staffing a second information desk on site)

- Dividing work between different staff. During staffed library opening hours Library Assistants will pick up the majority of enquiries and answer or refer as appropriate. Outside of staffed library hours a chat bot will be in use.

2.1.2 Enquiry and Referral

Staff are timetabled to answer queries based on a triage approach as above.

Depending on the nature and complexity of an enquiry, we will provide:

- a full response
- a partial response and a referral to another member of staff or source of information
- a referral to another member of staff e.g. for a one-to-one session or source of information

Any member of staff can respond to enquiries. Responses will depend on the specific question, and the expertise and role of the member of staff dealing with it. Many of the queries are procedural / directional and it is desirable to respond at the first point of contact, however there is no minimum knowledge staff are expected to hold. If the enquiry cannot be resolved at the first point of contact staff should refer on to a colleague.

Enquiries are referred when:

- Staff member is unsure of the answer
- Staff member lacks access to relevant information
- Staff member can give a partial answer but there is scope for further input if more time is given to the enquiry.
- There is a complaint or unresolved issue, when a question is open-ended or requires a lengthier/more complex answer, expertise needed.

It's best practice to include the customer in the referral and to explain the handover with an indication of when their enquiry will be answered or resolved.

Library Services customer service standards state:

- We will acknowledge and respond to all forms of written enquiries and feedback within 24 hours.
- 90% of face-to-face enquiries will be resolved at the first point of contact

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2.2 Communicating with our Customers

2.2.1 Communications channels

In addition to enquiry and feedback channels we communication with our customers in a variety of ways including:

- UAL Library Service website pages
- Moodle
- Canvas
- Via Student Union
- College and University meetings
- Social media accounts
- UAL App

Our staff are the key element of our approach to engagement.

- Academic Support Librarians act as a point of contact for particular courses and attend course and programme committees, validation meetings and meetings for courses working within the Academic Enhancement Model.
- Learning Resources Managers attend College Management Committees, College LTAC and Research Committees
- Director LSS attends LTAC, URC and other university committees
- Feedback is received from Deans Forums, termly meetings which are held in each College with student representatives and cover feedback on all aspects of student life.
- Leadership team meets with the Students Union termly.
- We engage with specific groups of external customers through representation on a number of professional groups and forums (e.g. M25, SCONUL)

2.2.2 Managing feedback

Library Services is a customer focused department, and we recognise that to be effective we need to understand the needs and views of our service users.

LS uses the following feedback channels and methodologies:

- Surveys (UAL wide, local spot surveys, themed questions)
- College and University committees and meetings
- Social media channels
- User experience studies
- Feedback boards and feedback forms for on-site feedback

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Key Principles

Library Services is unable to conduct its own surveys due to UAL decision to survey only at Institutional level. We do have a library specific question in these and are committed to analysing the UAL surveys and to creating action plans and a local and strategic level to respond to feedback. We will benchmark customer satisfaction against our NSS score (Question 19 - Library question).

We take a shared approach to feedback and engagement, where possible and appropriate, across the Library & Student Services Directorate. We have embedded other feedback channels and survey techniques to support the ongoing engagement with our customers, and where specific groups are not being surveyed (academic staff) we will implement other methods (UX).

We are committed to analysing all feedback. We will create action plans at local and strategic level to respond to feedback. Where actions are taken they should be recorded in the LS departmental Responsiveness action plan.

We will always close the feedback loop by updating our customers about our responses. This means publishing and sharing with Colleges and reporting to College/university meetings, including those with the student body.

All feedback is measured against relevant KPIs and service standards.

We will acknowledge and respond to all forms of written enquiries and feedback within 24 hours

Responsibility: SMT

2.3 Library Service Complaints policy

2.3.1 Making a complaint
Customers can make a complaint to any member of Library Services staff by phone, email, letter, in person or online via our ASK a librarian service.

2.3.2 Referring a complaint
If they are unhappy with the initial response they can request the complaint is referred to another member of staff, or a manager. They can make this request by phone, email, letter, in person or via our contact page.

Customer Service Standards apply in responding to complaints in a timely manner. All complaints should be dealt with respecting confidentiality and GDPR rules.

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2.3.3 Appealing the complaint

If the complainant is not satisfied they can request that it is escalated to a member of the Library Services Service Management Team. If still dissatisfied with the Department's response, they can submit a formal complaint using the [UAL Student complaints policy](#).

Library Services complies with the:

- [University Student Charter](#)
- [Disciplinary Code for Students](#)
- [IT Network and Acceptable Code of Use Policy](#)
- [UAL Health and Safety Policies](#)

3: Customer service standards

[Library Service Commitments and Service Standards](#)

3.1 Our customer service commitments

- To be approachable, friendly and willing to help all those who use our services.
- To have a positive professional attitude.
- To provide all library users with the help, guidance and assistance they require.
- To provide an expert and professional enquiry service.
- To provide a named contact and support for individual course requirements.
- To provide academic support through induction, library and information and digital skills sessions.
- To provide spaces which are inspirational and welcoming.
- To provide development to all Library Services staff to ensure that they are confident and equipped to provide a first class supportive and responsive service.

We use Customer Service standards to help us measure the quality of our services. The standards measure key areas to match customer expectations of library service quality. Performance against our standards is measured termly and reported publicly via the LS website and other communication channels (newsletters, Canvas, in course committees)

We review these every year to make sure they are both stretching yet achievable as part of our commitment to retaining our [Customer Service Excellence](#) standard.

Responsibility: R&S, SMT, CSG, SMWG

Abbreviations

ILL – inter-library loan (outside UAL)

ISA – Individual Support Agreement

SITs - UAL registry system

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Document Owner – Library Service Senior Managers Team
Last reviewed – May 2025