

Guidelines for the composition of Module Reading Lists

Context

The current global pandemic has precipitated an urgent need to re-evaluate our approach to maintaining our excellence in delivering a quality learning and teaching experience for students.

One factor that will impact on how we design and deliver modules is how they are supported and resourced by the Library. Module reading lists have a key role in directing students to essential and recommended readings as well as inspiring further independent exploration of key research literature by students.

The best student experience is closely allied to their being able to readily access library resources linked to their modules, and their gaining confidence in using information services to become skilled independent learners.

Our flexible digital education ambitions require us to optimise the array of academic sources (subscribed journals, e-books, open access and digitised content) already available from the Library in electronic format. Student access to both libraries will be controlled and more limited than previously. Many students may not be able to routinely use the libraries to consult or borrow print items as it is likely that a return to full opening hours and physical operation will not happen for some time.

Students will increasingly rely on virtual resources for lectures, tutorials, assessments and examinations. However, in 2019-20, overall only 40% of reading lists references listed on the Talis Aspire system cited readings available in electronic format, so this proportion has to increase as a matter of urgency in the current environment.

However, this needs to be done against a back drop of unprecedented financial uncertainty. It is therefore likely that there will be very limited if any funds available for the purchase of additional digital resources.

For all these reasons, we advise module leads re-evaluate the size and balance of their reading lists in order to shift the balance decisively towards online resources, but to gear them towards existing resources to which the Library has access.

Key Recommendations

To help facilitate this transition, when reviewing existing reading lists and developing new lists module leaders should seek to:

- **Maximise the use of information already in digital formats** - essential readings should be from electronic collections, journals and e-books to which the Library already subscribes or has access.
- **Use material already digitised by the Library** for your module (within the CLA copying licence limits). The Library may lack the capacity to undertake much

additional digitisation, both in terms of volume and turnaround time. We therefore advise that new material to be digitised from print sources should be kept to a minimum.

- **Use Open Access Materials** - more academic content and research is being published open access, freely accessible to access and re-use. Consult the Directory of Open Access journals (doaj.org) to find papers, or the corresponding directory for open access books (doab.org) to find content in your discipline that may be used to provide quality learning and teaching resources. Please seek help and advice from your school's Liaison Librarian.
- **Use the functionality of the reading list system** to include content (exercises, interactivity, and signposting information) to promote student led discovery, review and evaluation of the research literature pertinent to the module. This could include guidelines on what resources to search, what keywords to use when searching an online library database, reviewing and interpreting results, and using resources in academic writing. Again, this can be informed and complemented by input from your Liaison Librarian, either in the form of related online content, resources or tutorials.
- **Limit the total number of references on a reading list.** Whilst there are significant disciplinary differences in terms of the amount of material normally cited, it is in the best interests of students to focus their attention and encourage effective engagement by not setting unrealistic expectations about what has to be read. In terms of length, lists should always be restricted to under 100 items (?), and preferably far fewer, with only a small sub-set of essential readings.
- **Limit references to material that is only available in print in the Library,** and seek to cite these only as supplementary sources rather than as essential reading.
- **Follow best practice with regards to copyright.** If you undertake any electronic copying for your module, it must be within the acceptable limits as outlined in UK copyright law. Copying for education and teaching under UK law is restricted to brief, minimal and so-called fair extracts, i.e. no more than is needed to illustrate the teaching point, and only one extract per source. The university's advice on copyright can be found here <https://www.keele.ac.uk/library/academicstafftoolkit/copyright/>
- **Provide the Library with reading lists by 31 August for semester one and 31 December for semester two.** These deadlines have been in place for some years but the need to adhere to them is even more pressing than normal, given the changes that will need to be made on the reading list system and the limited Library capacity, for example to undertake digitisation, especially in the run up to semester one.

We are very aware that this may well require significant revisions to reading lists at a time when there are so many other important changes taking place in how the University organises and delivers its teaching and learning commitments.

However, Liaison Librarians are happy to advise on how best to approach this work and we will also be incorporating guidance on how to make optimum use of the reading list system into the KIITE online workshops series. During 20/21, Library staff will continue to create lists for you on Talis Aspire if you require it, but we are aware that a small but growing number of colleagues are using the system for themselves and would hope that this becomes the norm in the future.

Although many of these changes are being driven by the circumstances in which we find ourselves, they do give us the opportunity to help deliver a much more consistent online learning experience for students, enable us to develop their digital and information literacy capabilities and move towards creating a genuine online community.

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