

## Library services: Have your say!

We'd like to say a big THANK YOU for your responses to our Have your say! Campaign ...please keep the suggestions coming as your feedback can only help us improve upon and develop the library services we provide...

Here are all the suggestions which we have received so far, together with the responses.

**Suggestion: 'Make printing cumulatively cheaper...the more you print, the cheaper it becomes'**

Response: The cost of 5p per page is a standard set across the entire University and one that we cannot alter.

However, from Monday 30th March 2009 students adding between £5-£9 printing credit in one transaction will automatically receive an additional £1. For students adding £10 or more an additional £2 will be added.

**Suggestion: 'Some sort of monitoring system to reduce chatting in the library' 'Perhaps librarians could be stricter in maintaining the quietness of the library...Librarians should be more observant or should be less ignorant as to the noises made' 'Some way of reducing the level of noise generated by use of stairs' 'That people should not be able to talk in the library! I know the idea is that people must be silent on the top floor and talk quietly at the ground floor, but it just doesn't work out.' 'Be far more strict on noise levels and in particular designated quiet areas' 'More emphasis to be placed on the 'quiet' rule. It can get very noisy at times'**

Response: The issue of high levels of noise in the library has been raised by a number of students and whilst every effort is made to ensure the library provides a quiet and safe working environment for students it has been noted that in allowing minimal conversation on the lower ground and people talking as they move from one level of the library to the next, we are failing to adequately maintain control.

We may not be able to enforce total silence throughout the library but in an effort to significantly reduce the levels of noise we will be increasing the number of patrols carried out by library staff throughout the day as well as providing a visible staff presence on the ground floor of the library during the busy lunch period.

In the meantime, we would encourage students to come and speak to us, in confidence, if noise levels are such that it is impacting on their ability to concentrate on their studies. We are always prepared to approach those students who are causing a disruption.

**Suggestion: 'Extend the library opening hours, perhaps opening till at least 11pm at least once a week'. '24 hour library times during assessments or exam periods – we had these during my undergraduate years....At the very least, longer hours during those periods' 'The library should be open for longer during exam periods, you would not even need a librarian present during late hours, all you need is a security guard...Also Sunday openings for just a short and limited time would be good, say 11-3pm'**

Response: CLS library consistently reviews its opening hours. We've responded by extending our term time hours on Wednesdays and Thursdays as well as offering more Sunday openings throughout the academic year.

At present, reduced student presence after 5.30 pm on weekday evenings and at weekends, does not bear out the need for the additional cost involved in staffing an 'out of hours' service.

Students are encouraged to take full advantage of the extended opening hours offered at the main university site in Northampton Square. Visit the Lawborepro Support pages > Starting Out, for Library Services weekend and opening hours.

**Suggestion: 'More books if possible. Could you move some of the short loan books to shelves?'**

Response: We maintain at least the ratio of books to students required by the University, and in the case of key textbooks (e.g. Chitty, Clerk & Lindsell) we exceed this ratio. Regrettably, there will always be times when a particular title is in heavy demand, and we try to manage this using the shortloan collection and the holds system.

Items in the shortloan collection are restricted to two hour, non-renewable loans. While this may seem restrictive, it allows high-demand reference items to circulate more quickly, giving more users access to the titles and preventing a few users from hoarding them.

**Suggestion: 'Supplements count as a book for checkout purposes - most impractical - especially the 3 day practitioner texts. One book should count as one book...better for students with book check out quotas'**

Response: In the summer, we will be moving to the library software system used at City, and as part of the process we shall certainly be reviewing the existing loan entitlements for our students.

**Suggestion: Develop a proper online system for students to renew and reserve books**

Response: It is already possible to renew books and to place holds online, as well as in person. Holds may be placed when all loan copies of an item are out – when you place a hold, it means that when a copy is returned it will be kept for you in the library. You may renew your loans in person, by telephone, or via the library catalogue online. See Library Guide No. 3 on the Lawborepro Support page.

From next academic year, we will be using the automated telephone hold and renewal system in place at City University's main site, and we hope that this will be an effective addition to the means by which our users can renew and order materials.

**Suggestion: 'An upgrade in the capacity (speed) of the computers within the university, including the servers. The system is way too slow in terms of logon and fluidity when logged on. Sometimes when scrolling down a page the system freezes. This is unacceptable for a first class institution such as City Law School...Upgrade should not be limited to speed, but should include more RAM and upgrades to servers as well' 'The library's computers could do with some reformatting to increase the speed' 'Need more speed on PCs'**

Response: As you might not be aware, all student and teaching room PCs were replaced in summer 08 and the servers have been replaced very recently, so there should be no problem with the hardware. The network infrastructure was also due to be replaced by the end of September, but the implementation of this project has proved more difficult than expected. As it has been recognised that the performance of the PCs is poor, a new build (all the software and configuration settings) for the PCs is being worked on to allow plenty of time for testing prior to the next academic year. This means that from September 09 the performance of the

PCs should be much improved; sadly this is not much use for students who will have finished by then.

**Suggestion: 'More printers – though there are quite a number, but I notice that during peak hours, one has to wait a fair bit to get materials printed'**

Response: We are in compliance with the Bar Standards Board quota of 1 printer per every 10 PCs. In fact we argued against a suggestion by the university to replace the relatively large number of printers with a small number of photocopiers as a breakdown of one of those on a busy day could be catastrophic. As it is very rare that there are print queues, it would not be cost effective to install extra printers for these rare occasions. When the library is busy, it would be advisable to print materials in Princeton Street, where the use of computers and printers tends to be much lower.

**Suggestion: 'Maybe the library could open a printing shop somewhere; where students can send in bits from some books they would like to get photocopied for a fee and provide binding services, etc. as well'**

Response: We do not have the resources to start a reprographic unit. Also, it is against copyright law to reproduce more than 5% or one chapter of a book. Students do not need, and are not expected, to spend hours photocopying. The most effective way to use the reference materials in the library is to identify keywords, search for them in the index, and find the relevant chapters and paragraphs, copying only the key information that you find.

**Suggestion: 'To allow students to discuss on the top floor of the library' 'An area set aside – maybe behind room 3 (alcove) for social intercourse – screened off to keep noise from escaping...It could be considered in light of the fact that the common room is sometimes unavailable and the library is where most students meet'**

Response: , To introduce an area within the library for any form of discussion, be it the top floor or the small IT area on the lower ground floor would have a negative impact on the majority of students wishing to study in the library.

Students currently have access to the Student Common Room at Atkin Building, Princeton Street reading rooms as well as class rooms (when they are not occupied), should they need to hold prolonged conversations or group discussions.

**Suggestion: 'Allow coffee and light snacks e.g. crisps and chocolate bars in the library when they are in suitable containers or people are using their own books' 'A terrace outside library, covered and serving food and drinks' 'Drinks allowed in the library'**

Response: Food and drink do not mix with PCs and books. Students are provided with a Common Room in the Atkin Building for the purpose of eating, drinking and socialising.

Whilst some larger universities are now relaxing the rules and setting aside designated areas the CLS library is too compact to comfortably make such a provision.

A further suggestion, that the courtyard immediately outside the library be turned into an area for the provision of food and drink, again, would not be feasible, because of the health and safety implications and the impact on the noise levels within the library itself.

**Suggestion: 'It's too dark. Skylights or sky tunnel for natural light. Alternatively lamps'**

Response: Light levels in a building are measured in terms of illuminance; the light falling on a surface (lumens or lux). The recommended level of illumination for a study library is 500

*lux/m<sup>2</sup>*. In the area closest to windows, we can expect the light level to be approximately 1,000 *lux*; away from the windows it may drop to 25-50 *lux/m<sup>2</sup>*. Additional lighting is recommended for areas with low illuminance, particularly for study work.

The amount of illuminance required also varies according to building materials used (reflective services), the individual (age, eyesight, personal preference) and the task performed (PC use, reading or precision tasks)

So how do we measure up? Illuminance levels were checked several years ago and found to be satisfactory though it was recognised that the middle floor of the library is dimmer due to the low ceiling and distance of the PC workstations from the windows. As skylights were mentioned we assumed this meant the top floor...! In fact lighting levels are probably highest on the top floor of the library due to a higher ceiling and more reflection.

What can we do to improve the lighting? There are a number of faulty lights in the library and we will ask Estates to fix these. We will also ask them to check the illuminance levels again. In the meantime a spare desk lamp is available on request; just ask at the enquiry desk.

**Suggestion: 'More space, more PCs'**

Response: The library has 217 reader spaces (including 79 PCs) with an additional 59 PCs and more reading spaces at Princeton Street. The study accommodation serves a cohort of 645 students. This is well within the 1:3 student to reader space and 1:5 student to PC ratio required to meet the Bar Standards Board validation for the BVC.

But how do these bland statistics square up to the reality of studying in our library? Headcounts on a typical day in the library, last week:

Date	09:00	09:30	11.30	13:30	15:30	17:30	19:30	20:45	21:15
26-03-09	0	5	20	40	52	48	25	5	2

The maximum number of students we've had in the library on any day this academic year was 93 (one lunchtime before a BVC assessment hand-in) and there were still spare PCs to be had at Princeton Street.

Fortunately we do not suffer the sort of congestion for facilities that most Universities in London endure but this doesn't get away from the fact that 93 students in a library can make the study accommodation seem congested...especially if noise levels were rising on a busy hand-in day. It may be the noise that's the problem rather than the space itself; please refer to our response concerning a comment on noise levels.

**Suggestion: 'The structure of the large group sessions should be modified to make the class more interactive'**

Response: This is a teaching matter and not one which library staff are in a position to respond to; we have passed your comment to a Deputy Course Director.

**Suggestion: 'Introduce one day loans'**

Response: An overnight loan was introduced at the library in Spring 2007 on a pilot basis but was withdrawn at the end of the academic year and replaced with a 3 day loan from Autumn 2008. Why? In short, it just didn't suit the way the collection was used by students.

An overnight loan successfully regulated the use of key texts and ensured a good distribution of texts amongst students...but feedback from the students was very negative. Most students

want to use a legal reference text for more than 1 day (in fact 3 days has proved the optimum) and resented having to return it so soon; they then accrued huge fines for not doing so.

In addition it proved impossible to operate an effective renewal scheme for such a short loan period on books in heavy demand and the loan period as a whole proved difficult to administer for library staff and students alike.

The Short (2 hour) loan is sufficient time to use a legal text for reference purposes or to identify parts of the book you need to photocopy. If a key text is required for a class then you may of course borrow a Short Loan copy where one is available. Loans for longer periods (3 days) are available too and can be reserved.