

Imperial College  
London

# Library Services Strategic Plan 2023–2024



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OUR MISSION

To inspire Imperial's communities of learners, educators and researchers by connecting them to information and expertise.

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OUR VISION

We will provide first-class, user-focused services, expertise and spaces. We will enable learners and researchers to navigate the changing information landscape, working collaboratively and in an innovative, proactive and agile way.

## Our values

Our values underpin how we deliver our mission. We will:

- strive for integrity and transparency, respecting our colleagues and users
- listen to our users and endeavour to understand their requirements, putting our diverse communities at the centre of our services
- aim for innovation using proactive work practices to deliver creative and robust services
- strive for excellence, seeking to always be professional with our colleagues and users
- collaborate and form partnerships within Imperial and with other organisations to bring benefit to our users and enhance our services
- remain committed to our staff's growth to optimise their talent and to learn new skills that will underpin our evolving service
- remain committed to enabling the learning opportunities of our users and staff

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### STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- 1 We will develop services to support all of Imperial's communities
- 2 We will support Imperial's education strategy by working with learners and educators to develop timely and relevant information literacy and scholarly communications teaching programmes
- 3 We will enhance the impact of Imperial's research through the development of researcher-focused services
- 4 We will ensure that our physical spaces are inspiring and remain appropriately located and relevant
- 5 We will meet the changing needs of our users through our collections and digital spaces
- 6 We will develop our people by creating an enabling culture and we will embrace innovative ways of working
- 7 We will seek to contribute sector leadership, being bold, courageous and innovative

## Introduction

We take pride in the fact that our delivery of customer-focused services is recognised by our users. That the Library remains central to students is evidenced by the continuing rise in the use of Imperial's physical library spaces ahead of the overall rise in student numbers and despite the fact that over 80% of our resources are available online. Building on the achievements undertaken during the period of this rolling strategy, first developed in 2014, we will continue to be a valued partner contributing to Imperial's learning, education and research activities and aligning services to our users' needs. The changing higher education policy environment for both teaching and research, the renewed evidence-driven patient care emphasis of our NHS partners, combined with other new opportunities presented by cross-campus developments has resulted in a transformation of service needs. In delivering the strategy, we wish to seize the opportunity to create an environment which fosters exploration and innovation.

Our strategic plan is underpinned by an operational plan and both are reviewed annually. This version reflects revisions undertaken during 2023. It should be noted that the development of a new high-level university-wide strategy is underway and expected to be published in the autumn of 2023.



## We will develop services to support all of Imperial's communities

### CONTEXT

- The Government's focus on teaching excellence and its implications on the skills required for effective learning, and for evidencing learning gains
- Our communities of users are diverse, ranging from prospective students through to alumni and including our NHS and Crick partners, and our services need to support their various needs
- The increase in student numbers, in particular through the growth in online education and partnerships with other institutions
- Our methods of delivery are diversifying, including online
- Our evolving relationships with our NHS partners as reflected in our parallel strategy for our NHS partner libraries
- The opening of the new Imperial College London Mathematics School in September 2023

### KEY DELIVERABLES

- 1 We will work with Imperial's partners to develop and deliver services to enrich the university's distinctive education and student experience
- 2 In collaboration with our partners across the university we will develop services and resources which are personalised, relevant and welcoming for our prospective and pre-sessional students
- 3 We will work with our healthcare partners to develop and deliver high quality evidence services to inform decision making at all levels and to support clinical practice, education, research, and organisational development
- 4 We will proactively respond to the changing local and national health landscape and economy, engaging with the North West London Integrated Care System
- 5 We will develop services to enhance the experience of taught students and will seek ways of evidencing outcomes

- 6 We will seek to actively support outreach and widening participation activity by working in partnership with Student Recruitment, outreach and academic departments

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## STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2

# **We will support Imperial's education strategy by working with learners and educators to deliver timely and relevant information literacy and scholarly communications teaching programmes**

### CONTEXT

- The information landscape has always been complex, and that is ever increasing, especially with new and changing formats for academic outputs, and the influence of social media and online communication. Navigating, understanding and being able to confidently synthesise information sources in what is now primarily an online environment is an essential life skill
- Information literacy describes the skills and competencies all individuals should have, to be able to develop a critical and reflective approach to their interactions with information, and which can be used in both academic and non-academic contexts, and enable lifelong learning
- The refresh of Imperial's Learning and Teaching Strategy and development of the College's Academic Strategy, including the emphasis on providing in person and online learning
- Library Services has developed a Library Learning and Teaching Strategy in consultation with library staff who design and deliver teaching content. This strategy will be aligned with other relevant university strategies, including Imperial stakeholder involvement, when launched
- Following the pandemic, there is increased focus on the significance of student belonging and wellbeing. Library Services is a contributor to study support for students, such as our engagement with the Centre for Higher Education Research and Scholarship (CHERS) Wellness and Happiness Project and Imperial Study Guides

- There are increased concerns about the impact of artificial intelligence (AI) on knowledge development, academic writing and behaviours, as well as potential opportunities for AI to improve engagement with, and understanding of, academic content

### KEY DELIVERABLES

- 1 We will continue to work closely with academic departments to develop a strategic and holistic information literacy offer, underpinned by an information and digital literacy curriculum
- 2 We will work with academic departments to develop and refine appropriate online, blended and hybrid learning with clear learning outcomes as a key part of our Information Literacy programme
- 3 We will participate in Student Shapers to formally engage with students as partners to review and re-implement our lunchtime training workshops programme
- 4 We will continue to work with academic departments to ensure that formal plagiarism awareness teaching is available to students across every taught course and to all PGR students, in alignment with university-wide and Education Office policy
- 5 We will expand and formalise our copyright literacy and open research teaching offers, in collaboration with the Graduate School and other relevant partners
- 6 We will complete work on a suite of e-learning tutorials covering medical literature searching from introductory to advanced post-graduate level, to be available to all Imperial communities



## We will enhance the impact of the College's research through the development of researcher-focused services

### CONTEXT

- Funders are taking an increasing interest in research culture and open research practices and are asking those who benefit from public funds to support research to publish their findings open access and to make their research data available with liberal re-use licences
- Open access to outputs and research data gives the opportunity to maximise access to and the impact of university research
- International and national research funders are moving towards creating a global transition to immediate Open Access, whether through deposit or version of record. cOAlition S signatories in Europe, such as UKRI, the Wellcome Trust, and the Office of Science and Technology Policy in the US, want to see major change from the mid-2020s, and there are strong open access movements elsewhere, such as in South America. The implications for Imperial, a research-intensive university, are significant both from the perspective of academic choice of publication venue and potential cost to the institution and funders
- The complex funder and publisher policy landscape and emerging publishing business models are creating complexity during the transition to open science. Opportunities exist to minimise the administrative burden during that transition

### KEY DELIVERABLES

- 1 We will continue to work in partnership with the research community and other Imperial stakeholders to develop and deliver services to support and enable a transition to open science
- 2 We will develop and adopt a new Research Publications Open Access Policy which will enable Imperial's researchers to make their peer reviewed journal articles and conference proceedings available on an open access basis without embargo
- 3 We will continue to contribute to the development of policies which support open science amongst the wider HE community in a way that maximises the retention of re-use rights



- 4 We will evaluate opportunities to develop our services and build our expertise in order to maximise the visibility and impact of the Imperial's research outputs
- 5 Through engaging with our researchers, we will continue to enhance our understanding of their needs
- 6 We will promote and support good data stewardship
- 7 We will promote and support responsible and appropriate use of metrics





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#### STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4

## We will ensure that our physical spaces are inspiring and remain appropriately located and relevant

### CONTEXT

- We continue to see increased use of physical library spaces, often over and above what might be expected as a result of student growth and the increased availability of online content
- Imperial continues to develop facilities at White City and is concluding the sale of St Mary's Medical School Building. This will result in a re-profiled student body across all campuses
- Students require a variety of working environments, from the silent to the technologically rich collaborative spaces. The provision of such spaces in a safe and accessible environment, alongside relevant services, remains important to them

## KEY DELIVERABLES

- 1 As the Business School and the Faculty of Medicine visions develop, coupled with White City developments, we will propose an appropriate model for learning spaces and library services to support research and teaching on all campuses at which students and researchers are based
- 2 We will continue to advocate for library facilities at the White City campus to support the growing student population there
- 3 We will continue to advocate for the development of the Abdus Salam Library basement where a feasibility study has demonstrated that we could incorporate up to 200 additional study spaces. This project is currently on the College Capital Plan but is unfunded
- 4 We will regularly evaluate the user experience of all library spaces and act on user feedback
- 5 We will review library research and learning space provision across all campuses to ensure that it remains relevant to evolving teaching, learning and service requirements
- 6 We will use our successful bid to the President's Community Fund to refurbish Hammersmith Campus Library in line with findings from the recently completed UX project

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## STRATEGIC PRIORITY 5

# We will meet the changing needs of our users through our collections and digital spaces

## CONTEXT

- At the heart of the Learning and Teaching Strategy<sup>1</sup> is a renewed focus on digital learning recognising that online learning and digitally-enhanced teaching create opportunities for the delivery of innovative education
- Imperial's education and digital strategies are being developed to be at the forefront of e-learning
- Imperial continues to invest in new online courses which require innovative support and resourcing

<sup>1</sup> [www.imperial.ac.uk/learning-and-teaching-strategy](http://www.imperial.ac.uk/learning-and-teaching-strategy)

- In 2021/2022 98% of the Library's content budget was spent on online resources. It is essential that these resources are discoverable, accessible and usable by Imperial's communities
- COVID has changed the ways in which our users engage with our services and has given us opportunities to meet their changing expectations
- The introduction of the NHS Knowledge and Library Hub and new NHS-procured resource partnerships give us the opportunity to improve resource discovery for our NHS users
- We understand the importance and complexity of contributing to inclusive and diverse education through our collections and the design of our digital spaces

#### **KEY DELIVERABLES**

- 1 We will continue to work with publishers to ensure that their content is accessible and available in the most appropriate way for teaching and research use
- 3 We will carry out user experience (UX) research to ensure our online services meet the needs of Imperial's communities
- 4 We will endeavour to utilise the growing inter-operability between core university systems to optimise our systems and data
- 5 We will work with our communities to explore what inclusive and diverse collections and curricula mean to them
- 6 We will continue to support and develop the Geographic Bias in Curricula tool and embrace other opportunities to partner with academic colleagues
- 7 We will continue to keep abreast of developments in content licencing and to communicate those across the university as appropriate
- 8 We will explore how NHS resources can most effectively be made accessible and discoverable through NHS and university platforms



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## STRATEGIC PRIORITY 6

# We will develop our people by creating an enabling culture and we will embrace innovative ways of working

### CONTEXT

- We pride ourselves on the fact that our staff are committed and engaged, and we benefit from transparent and inclusive communication and that we work in an organisation that is committed to supporting their development
- The Work Location Framework and introduction of hybrid working has created opportunities for our staff, working environments and processes
- The opportunity to embed the recommendations of Imperial's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy<sup>2</sup> and the Imperial Values and Behaviours Framework<sup>3</sup> into our work
- The increasing availability of data and analysis tools allow us gather and use data in new and innovative ways to inform decisions and the development of our services

2 <https://www.imperial.ac.uk/media/imperial-college/administration-and-support-services/equality/public/2018-Imperial-EDI-Strategy---updated.pdf>

3 [www.imperial.ac.uk/about/values](https://www.imperial.ac.uk/about/values)

- Our profession is changing, with new areas of work emerging which require the development of new skills (e.g. analytics and bibliometrics, the advancement of AI)
- Our track record and successes using Operational Improvement and continuous improvement methodologies, and the opportunities to build on those skills to improve our day-to-day operations
- We strive to create an enabling culture that empowers non-hierarchical decision-making

### **KEY DELIVERABLES**

- 1 We will embed a culture of professional talent development, to ensure that we have the skills to support new areas of work and which reflect our service needs and the development needs of our staff
- 2 We will continue to re-engineer and refine our workflows across Library Services to improve efficiency, including seeking integration with university systems in order to enhance our processes and services
- 3 We will continue to make evidence-based decisions and we will develop our business intelligence and analytical capabilities to inform our work and to support others
- 4 We will continue to review the impact of any proposed process or service change from our users' perspectives including consulting or seeking feedback as appropriate
- 5 We will take advantage of the improved data available from the implementation of new university systems
- 6 We will maintain our commitment to staff development in the areas of teaching, learning and pedagogical best practice through providing support for Imperial's Educational Development Unit programmes and relevant professional associations offer
- 7 We will cultivate a staff organisation where all members are encouraged and supported to take ownership of and responsibility for their area of work
- 8 We will review our recruitment processes to ensure that they afford opportunities to a diverse candidate pool

## **We will seek to contribute sector leadership, being bold, courageous and innovative**

### **CONTEXT**

- The library sector survives and thrives through collaboration and innovation and we wish to continue to play an active part in this
- Imperial has had a leading role in key developments, including the highly successful UKRR programme, now provided as a service by the British Library
- Our staff possess recognised expertise in many areas and we wish to contribute this expertise to the wider community effort
- We hold leadership positions nationally, including in publisher negotiations, mission groups and professional networks

### **KEY DELIVERABLES**

- 1 We will continue to support the initiative to develop and implement a model rights retention policy for UK universities, including supporting those in other copyright jurisdictions to develop their own versions of the model
- 2 We will take a proactive approach to supporting and encouraging relevant colleagues to contribute their expertise with the wider community
- 3 We will continue to act as development partners with third party suppliers and to seek new partnership opportunities, where appropriate
- 4 We will continue to work with suppliers and publishers through collaborative dialogue and robust negotiation to achieve our shared aim of an open and affordable scholarly content ecosystem

## Library Services

-  Chat with Library Services
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