"Library shock" – addressing the expectations & realities of the library for international students at Sheffield Hallam University

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International students at Sheffield Hallam University

• 4,000+ from 120 different countries

• Intake of new international students up 11% (1,385)

• Sheffield Business School has the most international students, followed by engineering
LIS Internationalisation Group (2009 onwards...)

1. SCONUL 2008 Support for International Students Report recommendations

2. Student feedback - focus groups, online surveys, coffee mornings, International Student Barometer

3. Literature review

Focussed LIS priorities on international student orientation & library staff development
“Library shock?”

“culture shock”
“personal disorientation a person may feel when experiencing an unfamiliar way of life” (Macionis, 2010, p60)

“language shock” and “academic shock” (Ryan, 2012)

“library shock” may now be viewed as part culture shock in terms of an unfamiliar physical library environment, and part academic shock in terms of the information literacy skills required within UK HE learning and teaching systems.” (Bullingham & Lahlafi, 2012, p2)
Library shock

- Diversity of students' previous library experience
- Closed access
- Classmark system
- Library jargon
Student difficulties in the library are largely due to communication problems, language problems, adjusting to a new educational or library system and general cultural problems.

(Mannion and Thornley, 2011, p21)
What are international students expecting from the library?

What do they want to know first?
"no possibility to take books on your own"
"no computers"
"no internet access"
"not always the newest books"
"smaller than this library"
"it had ebooks and wifi sources also"
"the librarians difficult to get to them at times"
"antiquated"
"underdeveloped"
"sunny"
Top library misconceptions

1. Can I borrow the books?

2. Do I have to pay to borrow books / use the internet?

3. The library is a quiet place.
Online survey results

Which of the following services or resources do international students rate highest / lowest?

- opening hours
- shuspace (VLE)
- printed guides
- noise levels
- helpdesk
- e-resources
- PC availability
- self-service checkout/in
- number of copies of books
- group work areas
Library orientation activities

Help students get their bearing before their course library induction

1. Stall at international student marketplace
2. Detailed library tours, part of orientation week programme … but optional
3. International student Blackboard site
4. Summer semester international students, tour of the library incorporates range of activities

“It is fun to have a tour in the library and I get to know that is a book return machine here, that was so great and fantastic” (TARC student)
The Learning Centre Staff welcome all our students to Sheffield Hallam University.

Is your language here?
If not, please tell us how we can say welcome to new students from your country, thank you!

TERE -> ESTONIA
MALTA -> MERHBA
INDIA -> NAMASTE
EKABO

Thank you!
Library staff development activities

- Cultural awareness workshops
- Plain English workshops
- 跟天书一样 - It’s all Chinese to me: understanding and supporting Chinese students
- Supporting Iraqi students workshops
- International students language & communication issues workshop - 2 more planned (10 top tips communication / teaching)
- New to international – online modules for new staff + Bridging our worlds DVD
- June 2013 LIS internationalisation seminar planned
Top tip

Collaborate with colleagues in the university (and other library colleagues…)

• International Student Support Services, Faculty International Leads, Faculty International Student Support Officers, Directorate of International Development
• Training developed by university “experts”
• Attendance at Faculty & University events

• Yorkshire and Humberside University Library International Student Support Group
• Business Librarians Association
BLA conference 2012 – Going global: the challenges of internationalisation

Survey - replies from 65 universities
Does your institution / library have an international policy, strategy or plan?

**Institution**
- Yes
- No

**Library**
- Yes
- No
Current focus at Sheffield Hallam University

1. Transnational student library support and library resource license / access issues

2. Developing a library internationalisation strategy, refocus LIS internationalisation group?

3. Information literacy – reading lists, referencing, research skills
May never have referenced before

Lack of understanding of terms such as "surname", "volume", "issue"

RefWorks may be too much for some international pgrad students

"I am so happy for this morning's seminar. and I think these skills are really very useful (...) What I want to say is that if I learn this class much earlier, my other papers would get higher marks. Now I can imagine the professor's face when she read my reference list"

"I am new to the referencing world, the lesson made it easy for me"

"help me save time and energy"

"happy :)"
References


• Carroll, J.(2002). *Suggestions for teaching international students more effectively*. [online] Last accessed 15th May 2013 at: [http://www.brookes.ac.uk/services/ocsld/resources/briefing_papers/international_students.pdf](http://www.brookes.ac.uk/services/ocsld/resources/briefing_papers/international_students.pdf)


