

SCONUL Access

Report to Steering Group November 2008

Background

SCONUL Access has now been running for a full academic year and is widely accepted as the largest higher education library access and borrowing scheme in the UK and Republic of Ireland. SCONUL Access has built on the successes of its founder schemes, UK Libraries Plus and SCONUL Research Extra. The last twelve months have seen an increased emphasis on the requirements of users with the launch of Phase 2 of the website and the research and planning of further enhancements.

Activity and progress

The key areas of work during 2007/8 were

- Providing administrative support for SCONUL Access contacts.
- Dealing with email enquiries from SCONUL access users, contacts and those not entitled to join.
- Developing statistics procedures for the contacts, liaising with experienced contacts to test those procedures prior to use.
- Developing a statistical tool for the collation of SCONUL Access statistics and comparison with figures from the foundation schemes.
- Maintaining and developing the membership list, providing updated information on membership of SCONUL Access Bands and institutional name changes (11 names changes this year)
- Collecting and collating the first year of SCONUL Access statistics
- Organising and running the SCONUL Access annual meeting for contacts hosted this year by Kingston University
- Reviewing and updating the contacts list for the new scheme, encouraging members to identify appropriate members of staff for this task.
- Liaising with LISU to provide SRX and SCONUL Access data for the RIN funded data access survey
- Updating the website to show members who provide "some access to e-resources"
- Revising the scheme's Operating Principles and Procedures to take account of revised policy on franchise staff and students.
- Maintaining and updating the website.

SCONUL Access Membership

Dublin Institute of Technology joined SCONUL Access this year, bringing the total number of members to 171. All these institutions now have legitimate membership of SCONUL as the anomaly of non-SCONUL ex-UKLP members has been resolved.

We are in discussion with a number of members who are considering extending their current offer and hope to show a more homogenous picture next year. Of the 171 current SCONUL Access members:

- 164 offer band A
- 149 offer band B
- 149 offer band C

Statistics Collection

Registration and loan statistics are key to monitoring the scheme. As always, obtaining the data requires patience and diplomatic skills. The provision of clear instructions, plus a relentless timetable of advance information, pre-deadline warnings, post deadline reminders followed up by individual telephone calls and emails resulted in a return of 98.2% by the end of October. This was considerably better than previous years and we are grateful for the cooperation and input of all our SCONUL Access contacts.

Full data from the 2008 statistics collection exercise is recorded on an Excel workbook which gives details of this year's results as well as a comparison with previous years' data under UKLP and SRX; our founder schemes.¹

The figures show that a total of 23,864 academic staff, researchers and students are currently members of SCONUL Access and that last year these users benefited from a total of 338,793 loans. The figures in brief show:

SCONUL Access	Registrations	Loans and Renewals
Band A	8984	131174
Band B	9247	121342
Band C	5633	86277
Total	23864	338793

Comparison with 2007/2008

- The SCONUL Access statistics record the number of users registered to each band and the number of loans (including renewals) generated by those users. It is therefore possible to make some direct comparisons with the data collected under UK Libraries Plus and SCONUL Access.
- Band A registrations have dropped by approximately 3000 on the previously declared SRX figures but Band C registrations are up by approximately 4000. It seems likely that the boundary between these two bands has previously been somewhat blurred and that the creation of the new scheme has led to a reconsideration of eligibility for access, as well as increased accuracy in recording and reporting the data.
- Band B registration has barely changed from those reported under UKLP last year, the total dropped 41 from 9268.
- SCONUL Access records loan figures for all three bands of users. Since loans and renewals were not recorded under UKLP, there are no figures available for comparison with bands B and C. Last year's SRX users generated 139,538 loans but this year's scheme total of 338,793 is nearly two and a half times larger than the SRX figure
- Interestingly the ratio of loans per user is very similar for each of the bands:
 - Band A 14.6
 - Band B 13.1
 - Band C 15.3
- Only 10 institutions reported no SCONUL Access activity this year. Last year 15 SRX members were in this position.
- Only 5 institutions were unable to give loans figures. Last year there were 19 members in this position.

¹ SCONUL Access stats summer 2008.xls

Website Developments

The first year of operation of the merged SCONUL Access scheme, also saw the first year of operation of the new website. The website was developed by the ILRT team at Bristol in consultation with the SCONUL Access web working group. The site was available for a few weeks before the launch of the scheme giving members of Steering group and the contacts time to review the site and to make comments which were incorporated into the site. This process of comment, suggestion and review has continued throughout the year.

The new website sets out the requirements of the scheme for users, library staff and contacts. It allows contacts to order SA stationery online and for the first time this year to make bookings for the SCONUL Access annual meeting, via online forms. After the annual meeting, the papers are made available on the site for those who were unable to attend.

Summer 2008 saw the successful launch of a new feature of the SCONUL Access scheme: a search tool on the website. Based on the M25 Visit-a-library site, it allows a student or researcher to identify the libraries they are eligible to visit quickly and easily and without the need to understand the detail of the scheme or the various offers supported by member institutions. It has been very well received and represents the completion of phase 2 of the plan for the website. We would like to record our thanks to the M25 Consortium for allowing access to the M25 Visit-a-library site.

Since then the Web Working group has been planning, phase 3, which would allow users to register for the scheme online via the website. They would be able to create an account (My SCONUL Access) and request authorisation into the scheme. Library staff would be notified automatically that application(s) have been made for membership of the scheme. They would then log on at a convenient time to check the accuracy of information given by the user (e.g. expiry date, type of user). Once the application had been checked the user would be notified of the decision by email. Web based registration would be more convenient for the user, and better for the libraries, because it would allow improved work flow. For example, staff would not be required to issue SCONUL Access cards during busy periods on the desk.

It is anticipated that the new system would be tested in a pilot using approximately 10 libraries before being rolled out to the full institutional membership. In response to a specification from the SCONUL Access Web Working Party, a detailed (task by task) estimate for on-line registration and associated procedures has been received from ILRT at Bristol and submitted to SCONUL Executive Board. The Executive Board decided not to proceed with Phase 3 for the present, as it was deemed possible that it would conflict with plans to redesign the SCONUL website.

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