
Research support at the University of Glasgow library



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At the University of Glasgow library we have been developing our research support profile through participation in the research assessment exercise (RAE) and, more recently, as a pilot institution in the research excellence framework (REF), the proposed successor to the RAE. One of the central metrics for the REF is citation analysis and, not unexpectedly, university staff look to the library for the expertise they require to support their engagement with bibliometric measures and the REF. The close involvement of the library in the RAE and REF has changed the relationship between the library and the academic community.

The library was asked to administer the RA2 element of the RAE for the university and did so successfully, in the process further developing and cementing the relationships we have formed with academic departments through our subject librarians, in particular with the RAE champions appointed for each unit of assessment. The library's contribution to the RAE has increased confidence across academic departments in the university that the library can deliver in areas of importance to them. It has also led to very close working relationships with staff in the university's department of research and enterprise.

In response to the Higher Education Funding Councils' (HEFCE's) announcement that a metrics-based exercise would replace the RAE, the university set up a bibliometrics working party as a sub-committee of its research planning and strategy committee. The membership of this committee comprises a member of staff from research and enterprise, myself from the library and a senior academic from each of the three academic subject territories. The library has created web

pages with information about the main bibliometric measures, to raise awareness of bibliometrics across the university. This working party decided to put the university forward as a REF pilot institution, which meant the library was centrally involved in that decision.

The library is now joint lead on the REF with research and enterprise. The university does not have a central publications database and collection of publications data across the university is patchy. The library has been able to use the relationships we have developed through our participation in the administration of the RAE to collect and put together the publications database that HEFCE required for the REF.

As result of our participation in the RAE and the REF the library is now well integrated into the university's research strategy and we have been instrumental in the university's Senate agreeing an institutional publications policy,¹ which includes:

- an institutional protocol for citing addresses for publication
- the requirement for staff to deposit the bibliographic details and full text of peer-reviewed journal articles and conference proceedings into the university's institutional repository, Enlighten (<http://www.lib.gla.ac.uk/enlighten/>).

A recent presentation by the university's vice-principal (research and enterprise) at Senate on the research strategy for the university featured the library's provision of electronic journals and the institutional repository as key performance indicators.

The library has now been tasked with creating, managing and maintaining a central publications database for the university. This is a significant project, but is an important strategic aim for the university and the library is having to examine its priorities in order to be able to deliver the outcomes required by the university, including how subject librarians can support and contribute to the project. At Glasgow we have a subject-based liaison-led organisational structure for our subject librarians which, especially on the science side, is a model we are slowly revising. The demand for traditional subject librarian support in many science subjects has been diminishing as desk-top access to information provision has dramatically improved. Very few academic staff in science subjects use the physical library or seek mediation

with regard to searching for information (with the exception of medicine), but there is increasing demand for support for other services such as bibliographic software packages; institutional repository services; plagiarism-detection software; bibliometrics; the management of publications data; and curation and preservation of research outputs, potentially including research data. These are all areas where subject librarians are taking a lead at the University of Glasgow.

There are staff-development issues associated with this changing activity. Library staff are expected to have expertise in areas such as bibliometrics, and it has been a steep learning curve for them to develop this expertise. However, proactive engagement with this activity is rewarding in a number of ways: it has strengthened the library's relationships with other university departments, both central and academic, and subject librarians are able to expand their remit into new areas of activity, with impressive results.

REFERENCE

- 1 See <http://www.lib.gla.ac.uk/enlighten/publicationspolicy/index.html>