

## SCONUL Access report

### The service in 2014-15

The SCONUL Access scheme continues to be incredibly valued by the academic community in the UK and Ireland. Nearly all SCONUL libraries participate in the scheme on some level. Together, our libraries welcomed 45,732 new SCONUL visitors into their institutions, and loaned 340,036 books – and this data only refers to Bands A, B, and C. We know that countless more undergraduates also benefit from the additional the reference access the scheme provides.

Hurrah for  
#SCONULaccess!  
I now have dual  
library identities.

– Tweet from a  
SCONUL user

This figure for loans of 340, 036 represent a 13% decrease on what was reported last year. We've seen a similar change in the overall SCONUL statistics<sup>1</sup>, and yet the demand for library space remains as high as ever, demonstrating the value in the unique and diverse spaces libraries provide in support of learning, teaching and research

An essential service for our students and researchers' and generally highly regarded as a scheme providing access to research resources across the UK.

- Written in response to a survey of library directors

### Supporting the scheme

Over the past year, Maria Hiscoe provided the scheme with excellent administrative support as an external consultant, handling over 1,400 emails. She reports that 6% of the queries from non-eligible users came from Oxbridge and another 7% from students and staff from overseas universities. Queries from partner colleges have dropped but we now have another significant group of students querying access relating to Band A only institutions.

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<sup>1</sup> The SCONUL statistics look at overall usage in the library, not just SCONUL Access usage. A report comparing loans, eBook downloads, and library traffic is available on our website: <http://www.sconul.ac.uk/sites/default/files/documents/Analysis%20Loans%20ebooks%20visits%20June%202015.pdf>

The SCONUL office, too, continues to receive queries directly on the phone and email from students and contacts. In the first half of the year, we saw an increasing number of applicants phoning the office directly with questions about the status of their applications, having been referred to the office by staff at the institution. These queries have decreased since Contacts were requested to provide new front-line staff with training.

In the autumn, we will see a change in the way the scheme is supported. There will be a new position based in the SCONUL office which will support the scheme as well as the organisation's communications. The consequence of this decision is that Maria will no longer act as a consultant supporting the SCONUL Access scheme. She has been an asset to SCONUL for many years, and it is no exaggeration to say that her efforts and dedication to the scheme have made it a success. Though we believe bringing the work in-house is the right decision for the organisation, it is not without sadness as it is at the loss of someone we value a great deal.

### New members

In spring of 2015, SCONUL warmly welcomed three new members to the organisation, and each of these three institutions will participate in the Access scheme, broadening the offer available for scholars across the country.

**The Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine** now operates independently from the University of Liverpool. It has thus become a member of SCONUL in its own right. When a part of University of Liverpool, the LSTM participated in the scheme, allowing SCONUL visitors to its unique collection, and it will continue to do so. (Bands A, B, C and R <http://www.lstmed.ac.uk/learning-teaching/studying-at-lstm/learning-support-tools/library/>)

**Leo Baeck College** is a designated charity and has become a member of SCONUL as a collection of national significance. It will offer its unique Judaica collection to Bands A, C, and R (<http://www.lbc.ac.uk/20031124653/Library/overview-library.html>)

**Royal College of Surgeons in Glasgow** is also a charity and has become a member of SCONUL as a collection of national significance. It offers to the scheme its specialist material in travel and podiatric medicines. It will participate in Bands A, B, C, and R. (<https://www.rcpsg.ac.uk/library.aspx>)

We look forward to working with these new members.

## Changes to membership criteria

The Steering Group is aware that the scheme, whilst incredibly value to researchers and students, also faces significant challenges. Last year, 15% of member libraries felt the need to restrict access during peak periods. Though many of these closures are for short periods, others are longer and cause some disruption to the services provided.

In addition, we've seen an increase in the number of institutions expanding their operations, opening additional campuses particularly in London. Whilst most provide a robust and complete library service to their students, there is a danger that institutions place additional pressure on the limited space available at long-established university libraries.

As a first step in addressing these challenges, the Executive Board has agreed to formal membership criteria for the scheme.

<http://www.sconul.ac.uk/sites/default/files/Approved%20Apr15%20SCONUL%20Access%20membership%20criteria.pdf>

These criteria apply to all institutions participating in the scheme, though we are not asking each institution to formally demonstrate their ability to meet these criteria. We do not anticipate the policy radically changing levels of participation, as it was written to reflect the current practice and expectations of the majority of SCONUL institutions. It reflects, too, the change in the SCONUL membership rules which were approved at the 2014 AGM in Glasgow.

Some key points to note about the policy:

- Simply being a member of SCONUL is not enough to qualify for participation in the scheme. New institutions will be required to demonstrate how they meet the other criteria.
- Restrictions placed on Access visitors during peak times should be limited to 6-week instances. This consistency will help manage the expectations of users and participating institutions. There may be times when more than six weeks is necessary (for instance, during building works). If this may apply to your institution, do please be in touch with the Steering Group to discuss.
- Institutions which have multiple sites are expected to support their students with library resources and space, and in the spirit of the scheme, welcome SCONUL visitors into those library spaces. As a counter example, if an institution has a campus in London which does not have a library, those students and staff are not eligible to use the SCONUL Access scheme.

The Steering Group and SCONUL Office are happy to answer questions about the Membership Criteria and how it may impact your institution.

## The website

Nearly all applications for participation in the scheme were completed on the website, and we aim that by the end of 2015, all institutions will have stopped using paper applications and cards.

Recently, there have been some changes to the content on the website. The detailed information for implementing and supporting the scheme locally has been collected into a single Handbook for Institutions and is available online as a pdf. It includes step-by-step instructions for carrying out key tasks on the website, as well as guidance and advice around important issues such as closures and good standing.

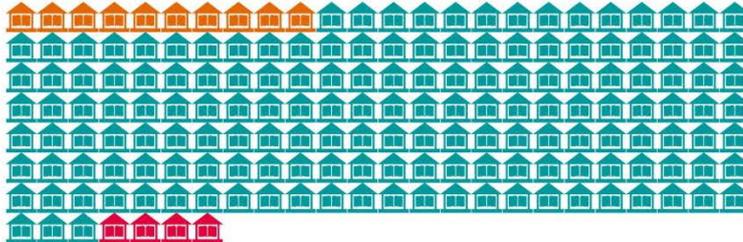
[http://www.sconul.ac.uk/sites/default/files/HandBook\\_Final\\_June2015.pdf](http://www.sconul.ac.uk/sites/default/files/HandBook_Final_June2015.pdf)

In addition, the online FAQs for users has been updated to better reflect the kinds of queries we regularly receive from users. <http://www.sconul.ac.uk/page/access-faq>

## SCONUL at a glance

In 2014 SCONUL had 175 members.

4 are national libraries and 10 are small and specialist institutions



26%

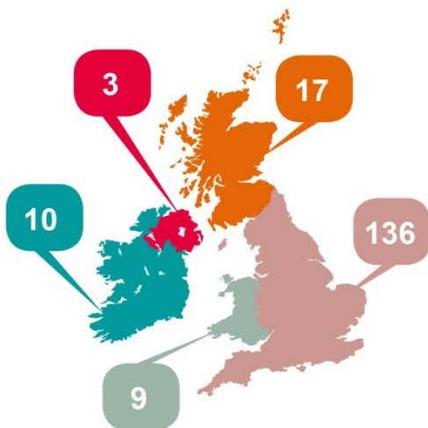
of members are directly involved with SCONUL – as a member of the Board, on a strategy group, or representing the community on external working groups or committees.

89%

of members contribute their data to the SCONUL statistics, making it a model for benchmarking in the HE sector.

97%

of members contribute to the SCONUL access scheme, allowing staff, research students, post-graduates, part-time and distance learning students to use other libraries.



SCONUL represents all university libraries in the UK and Ireland, irrespective of mission group, as well as national libraries and many of the UK's colleges of higher education.

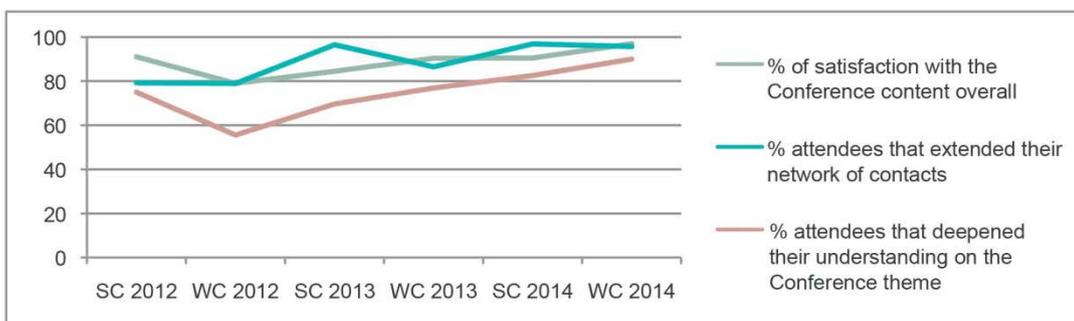


Members are represented through SCONUL on 36 external working groups, committees or boards. These are listed at page 14.

SCONUL collects a set of statistical measures on library activity, which members use to benchmark their services. The data series has been running for 33 years.



169 libraries were a part of the SCONUL Access scheme in 2014. They welcomed 45,732 new SCONUL visitors into their institutions, and loaned 340,036 books.



Levels of satisfaction with SCONUL events are increasing (SC – summer conference and WC – winter conference).