

News

Lisa McLaren moves to University of Westminster

Many congratulations are due to SCONUL's current Deputy Director, Lisa McLaren, who will be taking up a new post at the University of Westminster as Head of Library and Archive Services from July. SCONUL is inviting applications for the vacant post. The Deputy Director works closely with the Executive Director and the Board on all aspects of SCONUL's work, helping to deliver the SCONUL strategy and liaising closely with our members to ensure that all we do is informed by their needs and aspirations. The role would provide the successful candidate with a fantastic opportunity to help shape the future of academic and research libraries, operating on the national stage to advocate for the values and needs of member libraries and working closely with our member at a senior level. For further information see the job advert https://www.sconul.ac.uk/media/uhpjvf5t/deputy_director_post_april_2025.pdf. For a confidential discussion, please contact Ann Rossiter at ann.rossiter@sconul.ac.uk or Libby Homer, SCONUL Co-chair, at libby.homer@aru.ac.uk.

SCONUL AGM and members meeting, 14 July, 11am

SCONUL will be holding its AGM and members meeting on Monday 14 July, 11am – 1pm, via Zoom. The meeting will include our AGM which is an occasion to review SCONUL's work from 2024-2025 and engage with plans for next year. For registration details, please email sconul@sconul.ac.uk.

Sector support for "Big 5" negotiations

SCONUL is delighted to announce that Chris Banks, former Director of Library Services at Imperial College London, will be working with colleagues at SCONUL, Jisc and RLUK to support the community on the negotiations for the "big five" publisher deals taking place this year. She will be advising on messaging, information flows and communications within and beyond the sector. She is well known as a champion of sector collaboration and of the development of models of content provision which are equitable and sustainable long-term and will be working with members and stakeholders to help deliver the best possible outcome for all parts of the sector. Chris will be employed via SCONUL with support from Jisc over the course of the next year.

Town Hall meeting on "Big Five" negotiations

SCONUL will be holding a Town Hall meeting for members on 1 May at 11am to discuss the Jisc negotiations with Elsevier, Springer Nature, Taylor & Francis, Wiley and Sage which are all taking place in 2025. The negotiations are being framed as next generation open access which has the core aims of cost savings and long-term financial sustainability and broadening participation in research by promoting equity and inclusivity in research dissemination. The meeting will provide an opportunity to hear an update on progress from Jisc and to discuss positioning and communications around the deal. For registration details, please email sconul@sconul.ac.uk.

AI coffee morning, Friday 25 April

SCONUL's regular AI coffee morning brings together those with an interest in AI developments within libraries on the last Friday of every month from 10am to 11.30am. The theme of the next meeting on Friday 25 April will be on frameworks for the evaluation of AI tools. At these meetings library colleagues come together, share experiences and ask questions as a community. These are not expert forums but are for sharing information and experiences as practitioners and they are open to all, whatever your role or level of expertise. Please bring your own coffee and biscuits! For registration details, please email sconul@sconul.ac.uk.

Small and Specialist Institutions Forum, 30 April

On Wednesday 30 April, 2pm - 3.30pm, SCONUL's Small and Specialist Institutions will come together to discuss a range of issues linked to SCONUL services, including the recently published Technology survey results and our upcoming Organisational Development Knowledge Base. We are keen to discuss and understand the implications of each on our smaller institutions. The SSI Forum provides an opportunity for institutions which define themselves as small or specialist (or both) to come together to share knowledge and experience. For registration details, please email sconul@sconul.ac.uk.

SCONUL needs your 'Future of the Systems Librarian' Job Descriptions!

SCONUL is building an Organisational Development Knowledge Base which will act as repository allowing our member institutions to share and compare information about organisational structures and roles. This will be helpful for libraries when creating new posts or refreshing job descriptions and when looking for good practice in specific areas, for example, making JDs more inclusive. The Knowledge Base will be open to staff from across the institution who will also be able to review how their own role compares with others doing similar jobs. We have begun the process of building the database and are seeking some test data to populate it which will allow us to test its functionality including search functionality. Thanks to the work of the Future of the systems librarian CIG and the project group, we have a detailed understanding of variations in the role, including titles and scope, which will make this the ideal test case for development of the knowledge base. Please do share this request across your colleagues and send your Job Descriptions to Noura.mokhtar@sconul.ac.uk. We are seeking responses by 9 April if possible.

Directors and Deputies group for neurodivergent library leaders

Across the SCONUL community a number of those leading libraries are neurodivergent and SCONUL is setting up a directors' group and deputies' group for those in this group who would find it helpful to come together to share experiences and approaches. This will operate in the same way as other SCONUL directors' and deputies' groups which provide a source of informal support and advice virtually and through face-to-face meetings. The directors group is aimed at those who are responsible for those leading their library service (irrespective of job title) and the deputies group is aimed at those in senior leadership teams in libraries. This group supplements the excellent work being carried out by the [Neurodivergent Library and Information Staff Network](#). If you are interested in joining a group or would like to find out more, please email Ann Rossiter ann.rossiter@sconul.ac.uk. Conversations will be assumed to be confidential unless otherwise agreed.

Case studies for advocacy for library services

SCONUL are seeking expressions of interest from member libraries to share their successes (or not) of advocacy for their library or services. The aim is to share experiences with other colleagues who may be

navigating similar issues. The themes are: Writing a bid for external funding; Making the case for institution prioritisation of funding for a library initiative over others within the organisation; Enterprising ideas; Catalysing stakeholder awareness of the open access and content procurement landscape; and Launching a new or innovative service in constrained financial times. To express your interest, please send Regina Everitt (r.everitt@uel.ac.uk) a brief outline of your story aligned to one of the above themes. Deadline 1 May 2025. If you have any queries or questions, please contact Regina or the SCONUL office sconul@sconul.ac.uk. [Read more](#)

Response from Clarivate CEO to SCONUL and its partners letter of 27 February

SCONUL and its partners received a response from the Clarivate CEO to our [letter of 27 February](#). This apologises for the lack of community consultation and extends the option for perpetual purchases for both print and ebooks on its platforms to 30 June 2026. SCONUL and colleagues from across the sector have held meetings with the CEO of Clarivate to discuss the sector's requirements. [Read more](#)

New member: Science Museum Group

SCONUL is pleased to announce and welcome the Science Museum Group as a new member. We look forward to working with Katie Flanagan, Group Head of Archives and Libraries, and colleagues from the Science Museum Group.

AI March coffee morning takeover

The AI and Information Literacy CIG staged a takeover of the March meeting to talk about sharing guidance and good practice supporting AI and information literacy and a recording of the event including excellent presentations is available to SCONUL members [here](#):

Walking away: what happens next?

With negotiations with five of the largest academic publishers coming up in 2025 and continuing concern about the value for money and ethics of the "big deals", many SCONUL member institutions will be considering their options and strategic approach. If the publishers do not recognise the need for reform and the challenging financial situation facing UK HE, many institutions will of course consider walking away. What happens within an institution in the run-up to making this decision, and what happens next? On 7 March SCONUL held a webinar, under Chatham House Rules, exploring these questions. SCONUL members can access the recording and other resources [here](#).

Increasing access to OERs: Sylla demo and briefing

SCONUL hosted a webinar on 18 March to showcase the service being offered by a relatively new start-up, [Sylla](#), which helps libraries to identify and surface relevant and appropriate open educational resources quickly and easily, thereby saving libraries time and money. Attendees heard from Tom Mosterd and colleagues from Sylla, who set out the genesis of the initiative, and from three institutions working with Sylla: Coventry University, University of Leeds, and Jisc. SCONUL members can access the recording and other resources [here](#).

Building a UK OER movement

On 24 March over 200 members joined our webinar on building an OER movement in the UK. Led by Dominic Broadhurst from Salford and David Beales from Brunel, and joined by colleagues from the Open Education Network, this event looked at how we can work together to build on the strong commitment of

UK libraries through the development of an active community of practice. SCONUL members can access the recording and other resources [here](#).

Building effective partnerships webinar

This webinar, held on 27 March, looked at building key relationships across institutions to the benefit of the library. This may be around redeveloping or commissioning a new library space; collaborating with research office colleagues on the development of open access or rights retention policies; with civic partners on local initiatives or simply on delivering on the core research and teaching and learning missions of the institution. SCONUL members can access the recording and other resources [here](#).

How to get ahead in libraries case studies

SCONUL has published its first set of case studies for 2025, under the banner of the Organisational Development Strategy sub-group: How to get ahead in libraries. Members may have attended one of our webinars that looked at getting into a senior management role from a more unconventional beginning, but our case studies are designed to showcase some staff development opportunities in these financially trying times and give some practical advice on how to do so. The case study authors were interviewed by Jo Walley who also provided the write-up for SCONUL. [Read more](#)

Support for those managing change

At the start of the year, SCONUL set up a series of directors' groups on managing change named after Italian cities. We are now establishing a further group for those who would like to take advantage of this opportunity for mutual support. The groups provide an opportunity for those leading libraries which are undertaking significant challenges in response to current financial challenges to share intelligence, experiences, and strategic responses to those challenges including advocacy. They operate along the lines of existing SCONUL new directors and deputy directors groups which are confidential and self-organising. If you are interested in getting involved please contact Ann Rossiter at ann.rossiter@sconul.ac.uk.

Jisc learning content expert group: expressions of interest

Jisc are recruiting for three HE representative members to join their learning content expert group. This group supports the learning, teaching and assessment portfolio and will set and validate high-level strategies, provide tactical insights (including financial context) and advise on vendor offers and consultations. If you would like further information or to express your interest, then please contact the governance manager for the group wendy.jupp@jisc.ac.uk by 5pm on Monday 14 April. [Read more](#)

Controlled Digital Lending survey – closes 4 April

Chris Morrison and Jane Secker are running a survey as part of a Jisc research project to understand the extent to which UK higher education institutions are adopting Controlled Digital Lending (CDL) based services. The findings will be published in a report to be made available to SCONUL members in summer 2025. The survey closes at 23:59 on Friday 4 April 2025. You can access the question set and the previous report undertaken on CDL from [our website](#).

British Library development confirmed

The British Library and its partner, SBL, have confirmed a groundbreaking new development of the Library's St Pancras site. The plans will create transformational new public spaces for the British

Library alongside new, globally significant capacity for commercial science, innovation and knowledge industry. [Read more](#)

Reclaiming Academic Publishing: The Launch of the Open Journals Collective

The Open Journals Collective (OJC), an equitable, sustainable, community-led alternative to the big deals and transformative agreements offered by corporate academic publishers, was launched on 31 March. The OJC is a collective of libraries and university-based publishers working to change the way academic research is supported and disseminated. Drawing on more than a decade of digital publishing innovation, the OJC confronts the crisis in academic journal publishing with a viable path toward bringing publishing back in-house at universities. They will launch a large collection of hundreds of diamond open access journals in the humanities and social sciences in January 2026. The [OJC Library Board](#) includes library directors, intellectual property specialists, and open research leaders. Publishers that have already joined the OJC include the Open Library of Humanities, LSE Press, UCL Press, the University of Michigan Press, the California Digital Library, and Edinburgh Diamond at the University of Edinburgh – with more publishers joining soon. [Read more](#)

Dialogues on AI: Opportunities, Challenges, and Innovations in tertiary education

Jisc are running a series of in person roundtables to bring together individuals with either a role in or strong area of interest in key issues in AI. The aim is to have a lively discussion and gain an understanding of the concerns, challenges, opportunities, and the innovations that are happening across institutions. Jisc aims to publish a position statement that encapsulates the collective insights and agreements on the topics discussed. Roundtable topics are AI and Sustainability; AI and Inclusion and Accessibility and the Government's new AI Opportunities Action Plan. Due to limited capacity of 20 attendees per event, participants are only able to register for one session. [Read more](#)

AHRC-RLUK Third Research Catalyst Cohort Programme Launch - 3 April 2025

RLUK and AHRC have announced the launch of the third round of the [Research Catalyst Cohort Programme](#) for colleagues from academic libraries. Delivered by the Association of Research Managers and Administrators (ARMA), this training programme (Sept 2025 – June 2026) will support colleagues working in academic libraries to make competitive applications to academic funders as research partners and leaders and is open to all SCONUL member institutions. The programme welcomes applications from individuals of all backgrounds and career stages. [Read more.](#)

HLCE Library and Archives research grant

The Royal College of Surgeons of England Library and Archives are inviting applications for the Henry Lumley Collections Engagement Grant. This provides UK-based researchers with an opportunity to visit to conduct research on a topic centred on the College's library and archives collections. Successful candidates will spend around six weeks between the summer of 2025 and the end of February 2026 at the College's Research Room in central London, researching the collections. The visiting researchers will receive a grant of £3000 to cover subsistence and travel costs. Deadline for applications is 7 April. Enquiries about the grant should be sent to library@rcseng.ac.uk. [Read more](#)

OLH Open Access Award 2025

The Open Library of Humanities (OLH) have announced the launch of the OLH Open Access Award 2025, a fund dedicated to promoting the benefits and impact of open access to humanities scholars and

disciplines and to knowledge worldwide. Applications for OLH funding of up to £500 are welcomed from individuals or organisations in any location, and may be used to help fund events, projects or activities on open access or with an open access component, or other related costs that will be considered on a case-by-case basis in accordance with need and feasibility. Deadline for applications is 30 June. [Read more](#)

Academic Libraries North Conference 2025: registration open and sponsored places

Registration is now open for the ALN Conference 2025 (#ALN25), online on 18 June and in-person at the Manchester Metropolitan University Business School on 11 July. The conference will delve into the issues raised by the financially restrained times the sector faces such as impact, wellbeing, sustaining resources, innovation, and how we get the best value we can. You can register at [here](#). ALN are offering ten sponsored places for both presenters and delegates at ALN25. Further details on how to apply can be found at: <https://www.academiclibrariesnorth.ac.uk/aln-conference-2025>.

M25 Annual Conference - Shaping the future

For the first time in five years, M25's annual conference will be held in person at the Old Royal Naval College Campus, University of Greenwich, London, on 24 June. The conference will be a day of inspiring presentations, sessions full of ideas, networking and opportunities for learning in the setting of Greenwich, London. Registration to attend the conference is open to members and non-members. Group booking and early bird discounts are available. [Read more](#)

Bursary opportunity: Ian Ledsham Bursary for IAML International Congress, 6-11 July

The Music Libraries Trust has opened applications for the Ian Ledsham Bursary for 2025. The fund offers financial support to [IAML \(UK & Irl\) branch members](#) who wish to attend IAML's international conferences. This year, [IAML 2025](#) will be held in Salzburg, Austria, from 6-11 July. The award will be £400, covering registration and some travel expenses up to the maximum amount. The deadline for submitting applications is Sunday 11 May. [Read more](#)

Behind the scenes at SCONUL

This month the SCONUL Board has met for its annual strategy awayday and took the opportunity to review progress in delivering the SCONUL strategy at the half-way point of its three-year term, and to consider whether the sector's needs have changed in light of the changing financial climate.

The SCONUL team have been finalising a set of case studies looking at technology-enabled library spaces which will be published soon. We've also been looking at the outputs from the review of the sector's CPD needs and will be sharing the outputs with the community shortly.

Making the most of your SCONUL membership

- [Sign up to lis-sconul](#) to participate in discussions with your peers as well as hear about news and events.
- [Join](#) the SCONUL community on [LinkedIn](#).
- [Register](#) to access all the resources on the SCONUL website.
- [SCONUL mentoring scheme](#) supporting emerging and newly appointed leaders.

Updates from our peer organisations:

1. Academic Libraries North <https://www.academiclibrariesnorth.ac.uk/>
2. CONUL <https://conul.ie/news/>
3. LIBER <https://libereurope.eu/news/>
4. M25 Consortium of Academic Libraries <https://www.m25lib.org.uk/about-the-consortium/newsletter-archive/>
5. Mercian Collaboration <https://merciancollaboration.org.uk/news>
6. RLUK <https://www.rluk.ac.uk/rluk-bulletin/>
7. SCURL <https://www.scurl.ac.uk/news>
8. ucisa <https://www.ucisa.ac.uk/News-and-Views>
9. WHELF <https://whelf.ac.uk/>

Appointments and job opportunities

If you have moved to a new role or institution or have any senior job opportunities that you would like us to include, please e-mail SitMui.Ng@sconul.ac.uk. These vacancies can also be found on our website at: <https://www.sconul.ac.uk/jobs-bank/current-roles/>

Vacancy: Open Research Manager, University of Exeter

University of Exeter are looking for an Open Research Manager to manage their open research work. The post holder will play a key role in how to get a sustainable open access future, including responding to changes in funder and REF open access policies and helping researchers do the right thing. Open research is just one part of their wider research culture, and the library works in partnership with researchers and professional services colleagues. The post holder will combine knowledge of how open research fits into research cultures with an ability to work with and influence academic and professional services colleagues at every level of the university and beyond. **Closing date 3 April** [Read more](#)

Vacancy: Metadata Specialist, University of Birmingham

University of Birmingham Libraries and Learning Resources are recruiting for a Metadata Specialist. The post holder will have a key role to play in the creation, editing and management of metadata in order to facilitate discovery and access to information resources. They will undertake cataloguing and classification duties and create and assign subject headings for library acquired resources, using internationally recognised standards. They may have specific responsibility for a specialist area requiring particular subject or language skills, but will be expected to apply their cataloguing skills to the full range of resources acquired by Library Services. The post holder will provide support and guidance to colleagues in Libraries and Learning Resources in relation to metadata and their specialist areas, and will also deal with queries from university staff, students and other library users in respect to metadata issues. **Closing date 9 April** [Read more](#)

Vacancy: Open Research Librarian, University of Kent

University of Kent are seeking to appoint an Open Research Librarian. The post holder will work as a specialist as part of a wider library matrix team, and with teams across the University to develop and enhance the repositories to maximise the reach and longevity of Kent's research outputs. In this role as

an Open Research Librarian, the post holder will inform policy, planning, development and processes that promote openness and transparency in line with sector standards and best practice. **Closing date 13**

April [Read more](#)

Vacancy: Academic Librarian, University of Northampton

University of Northampton Library, Learning and Student Services are looking to appoint an academic librarian. The post is responsible for supporting education, social sciences and psychology programmes. The post holder will undertake collection development, faculty liaison, and integrated information and digital literacy teaching, including delivering a high volume of tutorials and workshops. **Closing date 27**

April [Read more](#)

Vacancy: Deputy Director, SCONUL

SCONUL is inviting applications for the post of Deputy Director. The Deputy Director works closely with the Executive Director and the Board on all aspects of SCONUL's work, helping to deliver the SCONUL strategy and liaising closely with our members to ensure that all we do is informed by their needs and aspirations. The role would provide the successful candidate with a fantastic opportunity to help shape the future of academic and research libraries, operating on the national stage to advocate for the values and needs of member libraries and working closely with our member at a senior level. For a confidential discussion, please contact Ann Rossiter at ann.rossiter@sconul.ac.uk or Libby Homer, SCONUL Co-chair, at libby.homer@aru.ac.uk. **Closing date 6 May** [Read more](#)

Events

If you would like SCONUL to include any events that may be of interest to directors, please e-mail sconul@sconul.ac.uk.

AI in Research Libraries: Supporting Research in the Age of AI, 8 April

The Library Association of Ireland and CILIP Ireland annual Joint Conference, Cork 10-11 April

LILAC 2025, Cardiff, 14-16 April

UKSG Licensing Skills for Librarians Online Seminar 2025, 29-30 April

UKSG Open Educational Resources online seminar 2025, 7 May

CENL Books and Audiences Network Group (BANG!) conference 'New Directions in Library Exhibitions', Riga, 8-9 May

Call for papers: NAG 15th Collection Development Seminar and Public Library Forum, Leeds, 15 May

Beyond the Horizon 2025 - CILIP North East Conference, 19 May

DARTS9 'Opening Doors: Empowering Librarians to conduct and support research', Swindon, 21-22 May

CONUL Conference 2025, Tullamore, 28-29 May

International Image Interoperability Framework (IIIF) annual conference, Leeds, 2-5 June

16th International Conference on Performance Measurement in Libraries, Liverpool, 3-4 June

50th Annual Conference of IASSIST, Bristol, 3-6 June

User Experience in Libraries 9: 'Trust the Process', Liverpool, 10-12 June

Academic Libraries North Conference 2025 Sustainable innovation: moving forward in challenging times , 18 June online and, Manchester, 11 July

SCURL Annual Conference, Aberdeen, 19 June

ARLIS UK & Ireland annual conference 2025, Limerick, 1-3 July

CILIP Annual Conference, Birmingham, 2-3 July

Fedora Camp, Vienna, 10-12 September

OASPA Conference on Open Access Scholarly Publishing 2025, Leuven, 22-24 September

Open Science Conference 2025, Hamburg, 8-9 October