University Library Assessment Program
(updated 2024)

Overview

The University Library assessment program is divided into four major components:

1) Library Data and Statistics
2) Library Surveys
3) KPIs and Benchmarking
4) Other Assessment Related Activities

These four components provide a wealth of information to help understand client needs and the overall effectiveness of the library, track progress over time, determine trends and benchmark versus our peers, and demonstrate library value to the University community.

Purpose

The assessment program has three broad purposes: *quality improvement* to bring performance and goals into closer alignment; *quality assurance* to periodically test performance against expectations; and *accountability* to ensure regular communication of outcomes, desired outcomes, successes, and failures.

Organizational Structure

The Assessment Analyst is responsible for designing and implementing a comprehensive University Library assessment program with oversight provided by the Dean.

1) Library Data and Statistics

The first major component of the assessment program includes *Library Statistics Submissions* and *Library Data and Systems*. The former requires annual coordination and systematic reporting of library statistics for professional associations including ARL and CARL (where all data submitted by member institutions is made available in the public domain through published reports). The latter involves various systems that track library data including circulation of physical library materials, visitors to each library location, instructional and consultation sessions, and reference transactions.

Library Statistics Submissions

Association of Research Libraries (ARL)

- Annual stats reported: collections; expenditures; fringe benefits; expenditures from external sources; personnel; instruction; reference; circulation; use of electronic resources; interlibrary loans; annual gate count; doctoral degrees and faculty; enrollment; and University Archives and Special Collections data for expenditures, personnel, and instruction.
- Salary stats reported for professional library employees: salary; job title; managerial/supervisory role; sex; years of professional experience.

Canadian Association of Research Libraries (CARL)

- Annual stats reported: expenditures, establishment and collections (titles held; expenditures for library materials, salaries and wages, other; personnel; local characteristics); use, facilities and services (electronic resources; collections use; library instruction and facilities; document delivery traffic); emerging trends (archives and special collections; digital collections; e-publishing).
- Salary stats reported for professional library employees: salary; professional category; years of professional experience; years of professional experience in reporting institution (University Library).

Library Data and Systems

Circulation Statistics

- The University Library captures data on checkouts of physical library materials (including patron type, item type, college of affiliation, and terminal location).
- Fiscal year/longitudinal summaries are prepared annually for internal purposes.

People Counting Statistics

- The University Library captures traffic and occupancy counts for all visitors to each library location. Several internal customized dashboards have been created.
- Fiscal year/longitudinal summaries are prepared annually for internal purposes.

Instructional and Consultation Statistics

- The University Library captures information about the services it provides for its clients through instructional and consultation sessions including total number of sessions and participants.
- All sessions (in-person and online) - made as part of formal bibliographic instruction programs and through other planned class presentations, orientation sessions, and tours - are tracked.
- This includes asynchronous learning modules and objects, learning communities, multi-session/credit courses, one-off sessions/workshops, orientations/tours, structured study sessions, combinations of two or more sessions, and group training sessions for synthesis reviews.
- Fiscal year/longitudinal summaries are prepared annually for internal purposes.

Reference Statistics

- The University Library captures data about reference transactions (defined as an information contact that involves the knowledge, use, recommendations, interpretation, or instruction in the use [or creation of] one or more information sources by a member of the library staff).
- This includes all reference transactions, one-to-one instruction, and preliminary consults/consults/ individual training for synthesis reviews whether in-person or online.
- Fiscal year/longitudinal summaries are prepared annually for internal purposes.

2) Library Surveys

The second major component of the assessment program involves library feedback from students, faculty, and staff through *Major Library Surveys* and *Custom Library Surveys* for quality improvement purposes.

Feedback collected through these library surveys varies significantly. Questions can cover a variety of topics including use, importance, satisfaction, and overall effectiveness of library services, spaces, and collections. Survey results are essential in helping to understand the experiences of library clients (locally and compared to peer institutions) and play a key role in evidence-based decisions.

Major Library Surveys

- Major library surveys are established surveys in the library domain provided by third-party vendors (e.g., LibQUAL+, Insync). These surveys gather feedback from students, faculty, and staff to help determine overall library performance including areas of strength and areas requiring improvement.
- An important benefit of participating in these surveys is the benchmarking opportunities available.
- The University Library conducted LibQUAL+ in 2007, 2010, and 2013 and the Insync Library Client Survey in 2024.

Custom Library Surveys

- Custom library surveys are conducted to gather feedback at the local level. These surveys are often planned as part of local library projects or programs to assess specific services, spaces, or collections where gaps in information exist and/or to meet pressing needs.
- The University Library has and will continue to plan custom library surveys of varying size and scope including designing survey questions, creating online surveys, administering surveys to respondents, analyzing data, interpreting results, identifying recommendations, and reporting on key findings.

University Library Assessment Program
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3) Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and Benchmarking

The third major component of the assessment program consists of *Analysis of Library Data* and *University Rankings* for key performance indicators to track progress over time and benchmark against our peers.

Through our membership with ARL and CARL, the University Library has access to annual statistics for all member institutions including the U15 group of Canadian research universities. Through independent public reports such as *Maclean's* annual rankings of Canadian universities, data is also available for our medical doctoral peers.

Analysis of Library Data

Association of Research Libraries (ARL) Data

- All library data submitted to ARL is compiled into annual statistics publications and the raw data is shared with member institutions. The University Library analyzes the raw data and prepares a report illustrating University of Saskatchewan (USask) results compared to our U15 peers (for all ARL indicators, percentages, ratios, and the library investment index).

- This summary report includes USask comparisons to the U15 average over the last few years and our ranking among individual U15 institutions over the most recently published couple of years.

Canadian Association of Research Libraries (CARL) Data

- All library data submitted to CARL is compiled into annual statistics publications and the raw data is shared with member institutions. The University Library analyzes the raw data and prepares a reporting illustrating USask results compared to our U15 peers for all CARL indicators and ratios.

- This summary report includes USask comparisons to the U15 average over the last few years and our ranking among individual U15 institutions over the most recently published last couple of years.

University Rankings

Maclean's Annual University Rankings

- *Maclean's* magazine releases its annual rankings of Canadian universities where USask is ranked in a group of 15 medical doctoral institutions defined as offering a broad range of PhD programs and research with all having medical schools (similar to the U15 group). Maclean's data is drawn from publicly available information and collated by the magazine.

- The rankings include 2 library indicators: library expenses measuring the percentage of the university's budget dedicated to library funding overall and library acquisitions measuring the proportion of the library's budget allocated to the acquisition of new material. The results for these library indicators are tracked annually for USask and compared to our medical doctoral peers.

Times Higher Education (THE) Rankings

- The Times Higher Education Rankings has an indicator on public access to libraries including books and publications (with evidence provided through library website links).

- The University Library provides written content, responses to criteria questions, and website links for this ranking on an annual basis.

4) Other Assessment Related Activities

A range of other assessment related activities that the University Library undertakes makes up the fourth major component of the assessment program. These activities include supporting academic program review through the provision of supplemental library reports, providing library data to colleges to meet accreditation requirements, peer/student evaluation of teaching, sharing library evidence with the University to help inform decisions, and periodic reviews of branches, units, and functional areas.

Academic Program Review

- All undergraduate and graduate programs at USask undergo systematic 10-year reviews. As part of this process, the library provides supporting documentation outlining the library's facilities, services, and collections strengths in the areas of each program under review.

Accreditation Processes

- Several of the professional colleges on campus are accredited by external professional bodies and/or accrediting agencies. As required, the University Library supports accreditation processes by providing library data and statistics to colleges for inclusion in their accreditation documentation.

Evaluation of Teaching

- A systematic program of peer/student evaluation of librarian teaching forms an essential component of tenure and promotion considerations for librarians for whom teaching is assigned.

Library Evidence for the University

- The wide range of data/statistics, survey results, and key performance indicators and benchmarking information collected through the assessment program provides the University Library with a large amount of evidence to share with the University to help inform decisions that affect the library.

Periodic Reviews

- Periodically, the University Library undertakes reviews of branches, units, and functional areas. These reviews help to gauge quality and ensure alignment with University Library strategic commitments.

Summary

The assessment program is necessary to assess quality and overall effectiveness of the University Library's services, spaces, and collections tied to quality improvement, quality assurance, and accountability. The assessment program is under ongoing development, and it will continue to develop and evolve over time. A chart illustrating the University Library assessment program is included in Appendix A.

APPENDIX A: University Library Assessment Program Chart

University Library Assessment Program Chart
(3 purposes: quality improvement, quality assurance, accountability)

Quality Improvement
(aligning goals and performance)

Quality Assurance
(testing performance against expectations)

Accountability
(communicating outcomes, successes and failures)

Quality Improvement — Activities

Library Surveys
- *Major Library Surveys*
  - Insync Library Client Survey
  - CARL Diversity and Inclusion Study
  - CRKN Journal Usage Project
  - LibQUAL+ Survey
- *Custom Library Surveys*
  - Library Journal Survey
  - Library Spaces Survey
  - Low Sensory Room Furniture Survey

Key Performance Indicators and Benchmarking
- *Analysis of Library Data*
  - USask vs U15 peers using ARL/CARL data including the ARL library investment index
- *University Rankings*
  - Maclean's Annual University Rankings (library expenses/acquisitions)

Other Assessment Related Activities
- *Evaluation of Teaching*
  - Student and peer evaluation of teaching
- *Periodic Reviews*
  - Branch, unit, and functional area reviews

Quality Assurance — Activities

Other Assessment Related Activities
- *Academic Program Review*
  - Library summary reports (supporting documentation) for all undergrad and grad programs
- *Accreditation Processes*
  - Library data and statistics provided to professional colleges for inclusion in accreditation documentation
- *Periodic Reviews*
  - Branch, unit, and functional area reviews

Accountability — Activities

Library Data and Statistics
- *Library Statistics Submissions*
  - ARL/CARL annual and salary statistics submissions and publications
- *Library Data and Systems*
  - Instructional and consultation statistics and reference statistics summaries posted on library Intranet

Library Surveys
- *Major and Custom Library Surveys*
  - Summary results/reports posted on library website and/or library Intranet

Key Performance Indicators and Benchmarking
- *Analysis of Library Data*
  - USask vs U15 peers using ARL/CARL data including the ARL library investment index (posted on library website)
- *University Rankings*
  - Maclean's Annual University Rankings publication (library expenses/acquisitions)

Other Assessment Related Activities
- *Library Evidence for the University*
  - Share library evidence from assessment program with the University to help inform decisions that affect the library

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