

2007 LibQUAL+™ Survey @ Queen's: Findings and Actions

To continue developing and delivering high quality services, the Library must be able to assess the changing needs and expectations of our user communities and the effectiveness of existing programs in meeting these needs and expectations. To help realize this goal and identify opportunities in the development and delivery of high quality services, the Library chose to participate in the **LibQUAL+™** survey in 2004 and again in 2007.

LibQUAL+™ is a web-based survey developed by the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) offering a standardized, reliable instrument to measure quality of library services. More than 500 academic and research institutions around the world have participated in LibQUAL+™ since it began in 2000. In 2007, Queen's participated as part of a Canada-wide consortium of 60 libraries.

The results of the 2004 and 2007 surveys have provided the Library with a rich and interesting source of information about user perceptions of the Library's strengths and have helped to identify opportunities to further enhance service delivery to the Queen's community. The 2007 survey has also helped assess the effectiveness of changes introduced since the 2004 survey to improve and expand our resources, services and facilities.

Overall

Performance: Queen's 2007 results showed improvements across all service dimensions in comparison to the 2004 survey. Our overall 2007 results are well above the ARL mean scores, as well as those of 2007 Canadian LibQUAL Consortium. The Information Control service area (i.e., collections and access to resources) continues to be the area with greatest opportunity for improvement, receiving the highest value rankings (what users want) but the lowest performance scores – a very common pattern among academic LibQUAL participants.

Frequency of use: While the internet remains the overwhelming choice for information resources for 90+% of all user groups, the Library web site continues to be heavily used with 80% of respondents consulting the site daily or weekly. On-site use remains strong with more than half of the respondents visiting the Library at least once a week, particularly in the humanities and social sciences.

Affect of Service (client services)

The Library maintained its strong overall ratings in this area despite higher user expectations in 2007, particularly among graduate students and faculty. Queen's overall 2007 gap scores in this dimension are among the best within its peer group of Canadian universities. The strong performance scores are supported by the many laudatory comments praising customer service throughout the system. However, lower value ratings in this area and respondent comments continue to reflect the desire among users for unmediated electronic services. The relatively low value ratings for client services, particularly among undergraduates, present an ongoing challenge in terms of increasing user awareness of the benefits offered by the Library's instructional and research services in helping them work more effectively.

Action Plans: Continued emphasis on curricular integration of instructional services at points of need. Ongoing development of outreach initiatives tailored to student interest, coupled with marketing efforts to increase user awareness of the benefits of instructional and research services.

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Information Control (collections & access to resources)

While the Library has shown marked overall improvement in this service area between 2004 and 2007, this continues to be the area of greatest opportunity for enhanced service to our users (particularly among graduate students and faculty). The 2007 scores and respondent comments reflect rising expectations for more access to full-text electronic resources that are easy to locate/use, identifying the Library's catalogue, web site and proxy service as areas where significant gains can be made in user satisfaction. Graduate students and faculty in the humanities, social sciences and health sciences generated the lowest scores in this service area, correlating with a number of comments about collection deficiencies in particular disciplines.

Although much remains to be done in these areas, Queen's gap scores (how close we come to meeting user expectations) in this category place the Library among the top ten in our Canadian university library peer group – a very respectable showing, especially considering that Queen's user expectations are the highest within our peer group of Canadian universities.

Action Plans: Ongoing effort by departmental liaison librarians to work with departments, faculty and graduate students to identify collection deficiencies, combined with implementation of a budget strategy to address identified gaps in the collection. Develop communication strategies to build awareness of existing resources and to manage user expectations for collection development. Develop consistent measures for assessing collections across disciplines, and guidelines for using assessment tools in proposals for new courses and programs.

Several steps have already been taken or are ongoing to enhance access to collections. A new proxy service went into production in September 2007. A search for a replacement to the QCAT search interface is currently underway; in the meantime, the existing interface has been revised and streamlined, with new features implemented over the summer. A number of improvements to the Library website have also been made in response to LibQUAL feedback, with a review of website navigation and organization currently in progress.

Library as Place

Ongoing development of the campus library facilities, notably CHEER in Bracken and the Queen's Learning Commons in Stauffer, contributed to maintaining Library as Place as Queen's highest rated service dimension in 2007. The Library improved on its very high overall 2004 gap scores, ranking highest among the 40 Canadian University LibQUAL participants. These rankings reflect in part the Library's continual responsiveness to potentially problematic areas.

The Library as Place dimension receives higher value scores from undergraduates, who are the heaviest users of campus libraries, but remains relatively lower in importance than the other two service dimensions for other user groups. Students lauded extended library hours and services, particularly access to 24-hour facilities during exam periods, as well as availability and access to group study space. Graduate students and some faculty, however, commented on the lack of quiet, clean spaces dedicated to individual research and study. Stauffer library patrons, in particular, expressed some concern about the study environment in this heavily used space, citing excessive noise, cell phone use, untidy washrooms and inadequate maintenance. Students across the Library system continue to express a desire for increased study space and workstations during busy periods.

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Action Plans: Campus libraries continue to monitor use of library collections and spaces to establish optimal opening hours. Work with Physical Plant Services to ensure cleanliness standards are maintained. Develop a promotional campaign to engage students in observing food and drink policies and helping to keep library spaces clean and tidy. Promote awareness of underutilised study spaces; ongoing space planning to address areas of high demand for additional quiet and/or group space. Work with Physical Plant Services and Campus Planning & Development to consider acoustics issues and potential solutions in various locations in Stauffer Library.

Space and budget restrictions mitigate against increasing the number of library computers above the current number of approximately 400 units across the library system. Active Directory NetID login has been implemented to facilitate better use and sharing of workstations, restricting full functionality access to members of the Queen's community. Review of current laptop loan policy is ongoing, with plans to increase the number available.