

UK Libraries Plus User Survey 2003

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Introduction

UK Libraries Plus (UKLP) is a reciprocal borrowing and access scheme, started in the summer of 1999. At the time of this survey, 123 higher education institution libraries in Great Britain were members. The scheme allows part-time students, distance learners and full-time students on placement limited borrowing rights at up to three libraries in addition to their home institution. Staff and other full-time students can apply for reference only access and are given a card valid at any of the libraries. Further details are available from the web site (<http://www.uklibrariesplus.ac.uk/>).

A user survey was first conducted in 2000, when the scheme was estimated to have 1,300 members. This is the second such survey, supported by funding from the JISC, and was carried out in July and August 2003, by the Library and Information Statistics Unit at Loughborough University (LISU). Membership has grown to around 5,000, and all borrowing members were surveyed, via the UKLP representatives in each member library. The questionnaire used was similar to that in the first survey; the main differences were made in order to simplify the data input process due to the larger number of returns expected.

The survey process

The survey was conducted entirely as a paper based exercise. UKLP representatives posted forms to all their registered borrowing members, with a reply paid envelope for direct return of the completed forms to LISU. The closing date was set as 31st August 2003. A copy of the questionnaire is attached as Appendix A.

A total of 5,000 forms were printed initially with 4,981 distributed to libraries according to the list supplied by UKLP. Several libraries requested further supplies and another 309 copies were made. Twelve libraries returned a total of 165 surplus forms to LISU, some of which could be re-used. By the end of the distribution period, a total of 5,235 forms had been sent to libraries for distribution to their members. We do not know how many of these were subsequently distributed to users.

A total of 1,591 forms had been returned to LISU by 5th September 2003, representing a minimum response rate of 30%. During the data entry process, three duplicates were identified; it appeared that some users had been sent forms by two different libraries. This was confirmed by one respondent, returning a second form uncompleted. A visual check was made of the spreadsheet, and records with the same home library, age and most used library were examined. A further 16 duplicates were found; in each case the second return received was deleted. One form was unusable. The analysis is therefore based on a total of 1,573 responses. A further 33 forms were received too late for inclusion – indeed they were still trickling in as this report was being finalised.

The random number generator in Excel was used to identify the winner of the £50 cash incentive. Record 475 was selected; Mihaela Novac, studying at University of Surrey, Roehampton.

Quantitative analysis

Data editing

Respondents were given the option of an 'other' category when supplying details of subject, qualification, mode of study and how they heard about the scheme. Such 'other' responses were examined before analysis, to ascertain whether any of the pre-set codes could be used, or whether new coding could be applied. In two questions, the 'other' category was used by a significant proportion of respondents, subject area and qualification.

Subject area

Over a quarter of respondents (404, 26%) gave their subject area as 'other'. On examination it was possible to allocate the majority of these to one of the pre-coded categories. Examples of popular courses which were recoded in this way are theology (into arts & humanities); management (into business & finance); criminal justice (into law); nursing (into medicine); computing, engineering and information science (into science) and social work (into social science). For future surveys, we recommend that some subject areas be described more inclusively – for example 'medicine (including nursing)'; 'science and engineering (including computing)'.

Qualifications

A similar number of respondents (382, 24% of the total) reported studying other qualifications to the degree courses listed on the questionnaire. There were a number of broad areas which were post-coded into new categories – diplomas/certificates; other undergraduate courses (e.g. BEd, LLB, Foundation degrees); other postgraduate courses (including PGCE, postgraduate certificates/diplomas, LLM, DEd, MEd); and professional qualifications.

Overall analysis

Institutions represented

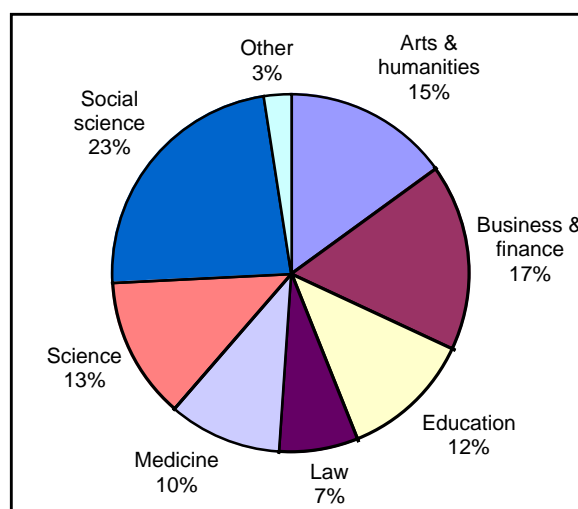
Responses were received from students studying at 105 of the 123 member institutions, 85% of the total. The number from each ranged from one to 79 (from the University of Portsmouth). 4.9% of respondents did not indicate their home institution.

Respondents used a total of 104 of the 123 libraries, 85% of the total. 129 respondents (8.2%) did not specify which library they used most, or entered more than one. These have been omitted from the count. Kingston University, with 58 users, was the most popular, followed by Northumbria with 49 users. At the other end of the scale, seven libraries had a single user responding.

Course details

Fig 1 shows the breakdown of users by subject area, based on 1,569 responses. The majority of those responding 'other' (and which could not be re-assigned as described above) had not provided details, or were undertaking joint programmes of study covering two or more areas.

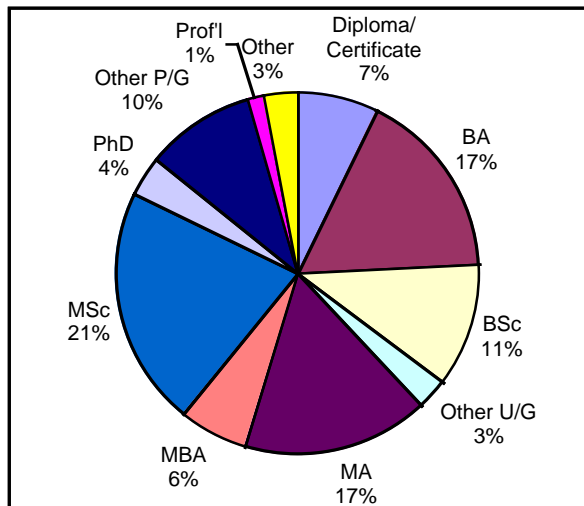
Fig 1 Subject area



Based on data from 1,569 respondents

Fig 2 shows the breakdown of qualifications being studied for, based on 1,564 respondents. Overall, 58% of users are studying for postgraduate qualifications and 38% for undergraduate qualifications.

Fig 2 Qualification



Based on data from 1,564 respondents

More than half the respondents were studying part time (54.7%). Just over one-third, 34.3%, were distance learning students, and 8.3% full-time students on placement. 2.6% (41 respondents) gave an 'other' response to this question, of these the most common description was 'full time'.

Also included were a small number of modular courses, and students with extensions for writing up.

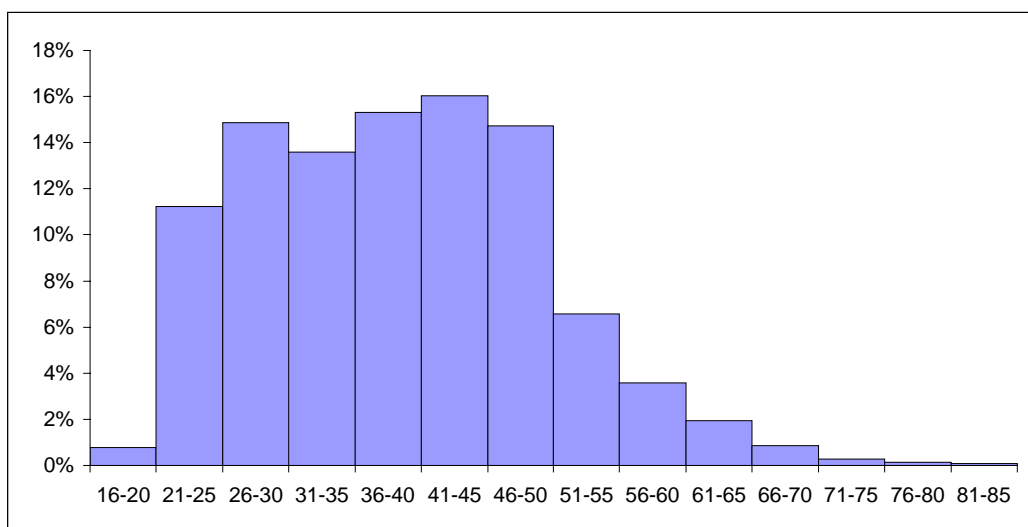
Age

There was a wide age range among respondents, from 16 to 82 years. 175 users (11% of the total) declined to give their age. The vast majority of UKLP users are mature students, with 95% aged between 21 and 58 years. The most common age reported was 44 years; the average age was 39 years. Fig 3 shows the distribution in five-year bands.

Scheme information

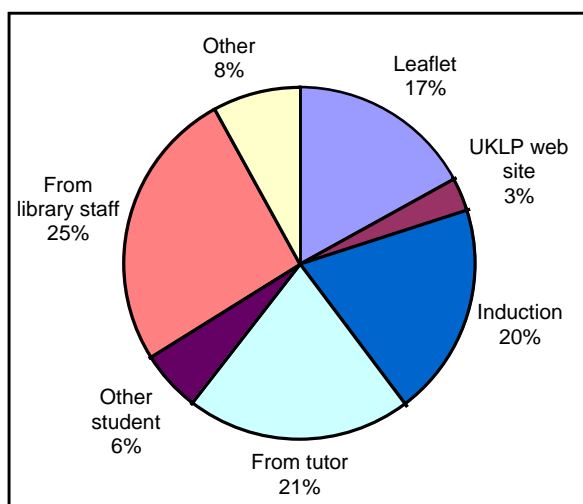
Fig 4 (*overleaf*) shows how respondents heard about the scheme, based on 1,569 responses. Only 3% had first heard about the scheme from the web site. Of those citing 'other' sources of information, the most common response was that they had heard about the scheme from their home institution, including receiving details sent out with course and registration packs. A few had prior knowledge of the scheme; some had made specific enquiries; one 'guessed it must exist'. Several respondents commented on the publicity given to the scheme – mostly negatively.

Fig 3 Age



Based on data from 1,398 respondents

Fig 4 Source of UKLP information



Based on data from 1,569 respondents

A number of respondents asked for libraries to join the scheme which were already members (see below), further suggesting that better publicity and information about the scheme would be desirable. While better publicity for a scheme of this sort can be counter productive, given limited resources to provide services, perceived poor dissemination of information is seen by some users as an area for improvement:

Should be advertised more e.g. in student hand books at start of studies. (88)⁽¹⁾

Better publicity to be included in all distance learning material provided by universities. (317)

Promote it better! I have had to tell several colleagues about it – they knew nothing until then! (361)

Tutor didn't really know much about it. Librarian at my home library much more helpful. Maybe tutors need more information. The scheme is great, & more people will use it as the word spreads. (456)

⁽¹⁾ NB – Number in brackets is the identity of the respondent.

This is an excellent scheme and deserves to be better publicised – I only discovered it after being registered for a year! (1308)

Suggested new libraries

305 respondents made suggestions for libraries to include in the scheme. In all, 95 libraries were mentioned, including some which were not in institutions of higher education, and 29 which were already members. This suggests a need for more effective dissemination of scheme details, particularly when new members join the scheme, a point reinforced by the number of respondents who made comments on the publicity given to the scheme (see above).

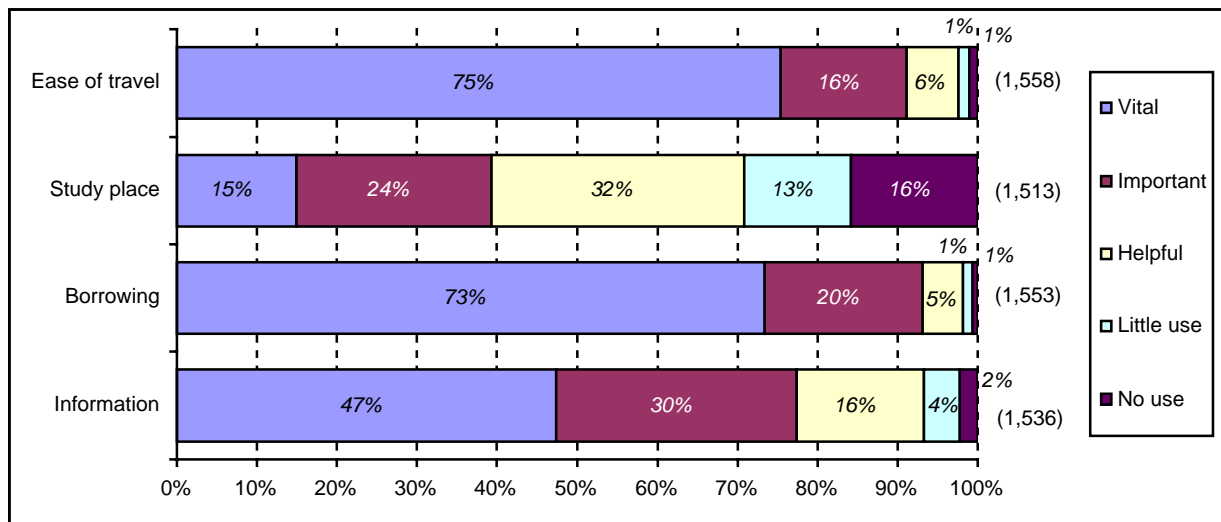
Appendix B lists all the potential new members suggested, with the number of students requesting each. Names in italics are already members of the scheme. The most sought-after new member was Oxford, followed by Sussex, Warwick and Newcastle. (Some libraries have joined the scheme since the survey; these are marked with an asterisk in Appendix B.) As well as indicating new members they would like, a total of 41 respondents made more detailed comments, generally encouraging more libraries to join, with one respondent seeking access to libraries in Cyprus when studying there!

It would be helpful if all universities could get involved in the scheme. (434)

Include more libraries – all in UK. (616)

Just keep adding libraries! (1587)

Fig 5 Importance of various aspects of the scheme



Numbers of respondents given in brackets

Scheme ratings

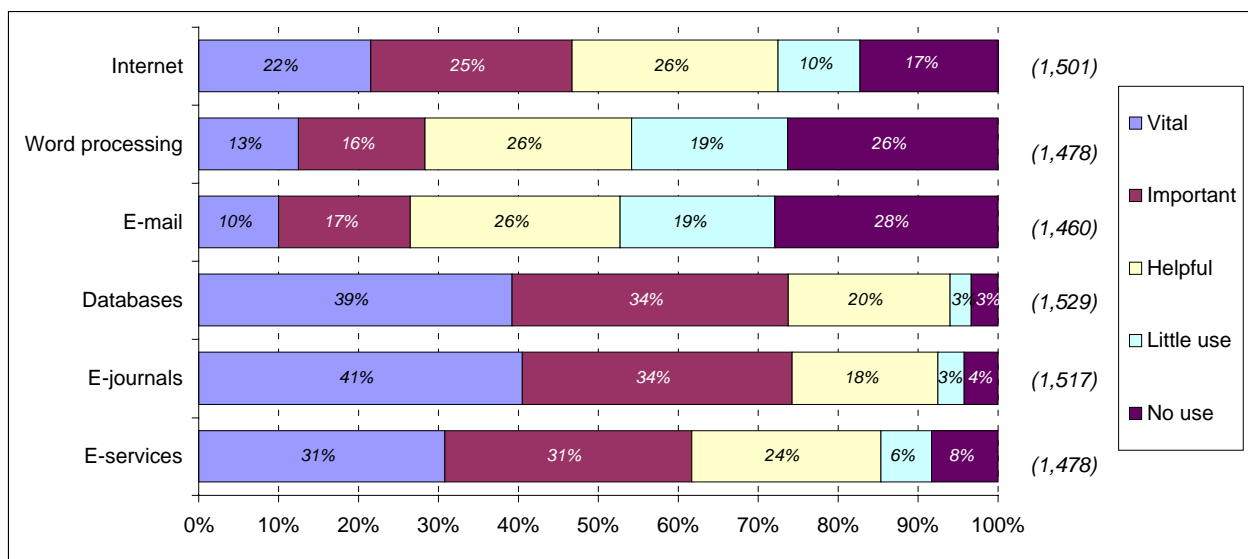
Unsurprisingly, the most important aspect of the scheme was ease of travel. 75% of users rated this as 'vital', with a further 16% 'important'. Almost as important was borrowing books, with 73% regarding this as 'vital', and 20% as 'important'. 47% rated access to additional information sources as 'vital', with 30% regarding it as 'important'. The least useful aspect was seen as provision of study places – just 15% found this 'vital' with 24% rating it 'important'. Full details are given in Fig 5.

Comments on other aspects of the scheme were made by 149 users. Five broad areas of comment could be identified. The most common was issues related to resource provision, mentioned by 61 users, and rated as vital by 62% of them. Details are given in Table 1; other areas mentioned by more than one person were networking with other students (three users, all rating this 'helpful') and inter-library loan facilities (two users, 'important').

Table 1 Other aspects mentioned (percentage of respondents)

	Vital	Important	Helpful	Little use	Not needed/used	Total respondents
Resource related	62.3%	23.0%	13.1%	-	1.6%	61
IT related	57.9%	26.3%	10.5%	5.3%	-	19
Access related	50.0%	31.3%	18.8%	-	-	16
Photocopying	50.0%	41.7%	8.3%	-	-	12
Staff related	33.3%	66.7%	-	-	-	12

Fig 6 Usefulness of services



Numbers of respondents given in brackets

The most useful services available were electronic journals and bibliographic databases, each regarded as ‘vital’ or ‘important’ by almost three quarters of users. Email and word processing were seen as least useful. Note that 95.5% of respondents reported having access to the internet at home or at work; almost half still felt that the internet was a ‘vital’ or ‘important’ service from the scheme. Details are given in Fig 6.

Only 51 respondents listed other services in response to this question, some of which overlapped with responses to question 7.

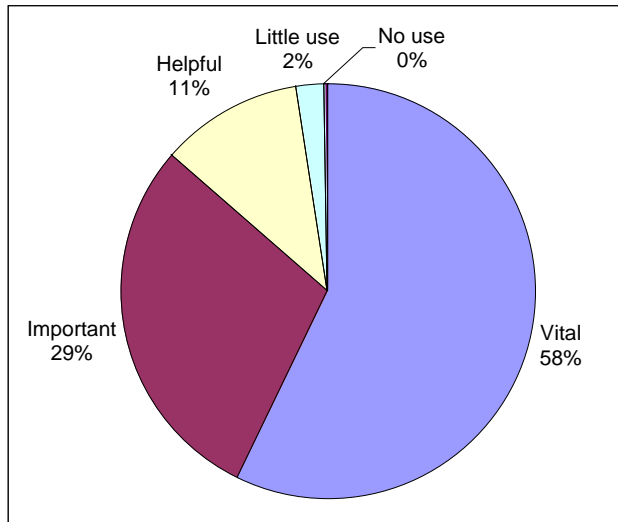
From the phrasing of this question, it is impossible to determine to what extent these are services which the respondents were using, or which were on their ‘wish list’. Table 2 summarises responses mentioned by more than one user; other areas described as ‘vital’ were SPSS and other computer programs; dyslexic support; access to electronic journals; study area; access to other university databases; externally available searchable catalogue; journals; and borrowing & returning by post of books.

Table 2 Other services (number of respondents)

	Vital	Important	Helpful	Little use	Not needed/used	Total respondents
Photocopying	5	-	-	1	-	6
More books	1	2	1	-	-	4
Home access	2	2	-	-	-	4
ILL	2	1	-	-	-	3
Printing	3	-	-	-	-	3
Staff issues	-	3	-	-	-	3
Laptop use	-	1	1	-	-	2
Videos	1	-	1	-	-	2

Overall, 57.3% of respondents regarded UK Libraries Plus as ‘vital’ to their studies. Just six respondents (0.4% of the total 1,562 responses) claimed to have no use for it – but since this was a survey of users, that is to be expected (Fig 7).

Fig 7 Overall importance of the scheme



Based on data from 1,562 respondents.

Two-way analyses

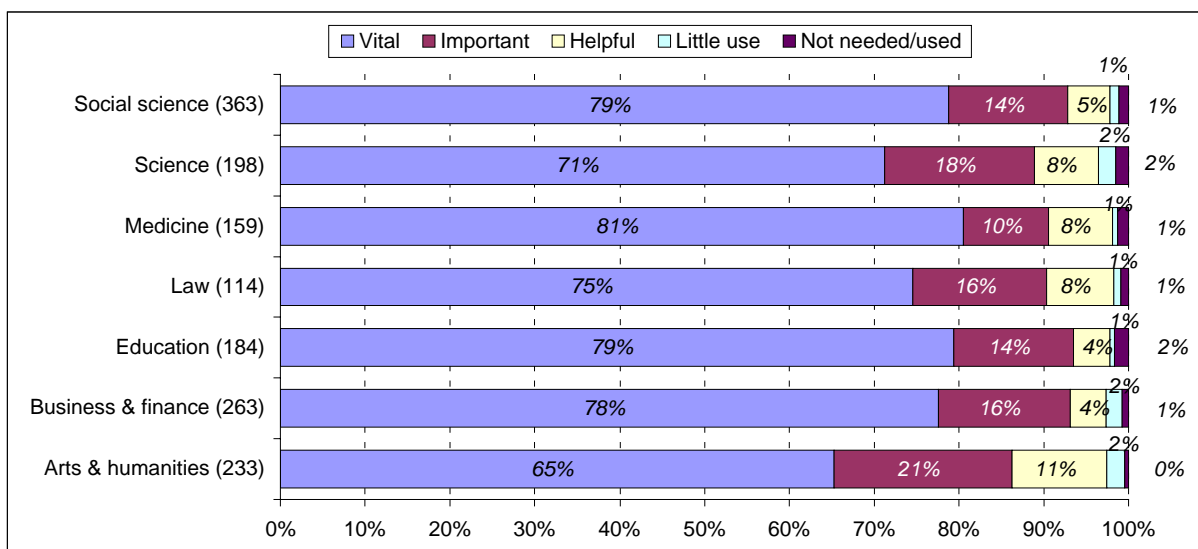
Questions 7, 9 and 10, on the usefulness and importance of various aspects of the scheme and overall, were analysed to discover any differences in opinion between students in different subject areas, levels of study (in two broad areas, undergraduate and postgraduate), and modes of study.

Subject area

While 75% of students overall rated ease of travel as a ‘vital’ component of the scheme, there were statistically significant differences between students in different disciplines, with only 65% of arts & humanities students, but 81% of medicine students doing so. There were also statistically significant differences in opinion between students in different subject areas regarding the importance of borrowing (80% of education students but only 69% of law students rated this ‘vital’) and access to electronic journals (29% of arts & humanities students but 51% of medicine students rated this ‘vital’). Fig 8 illustrates these areas. No other items showed statistically significant differences between the subject areas at the 5% level.

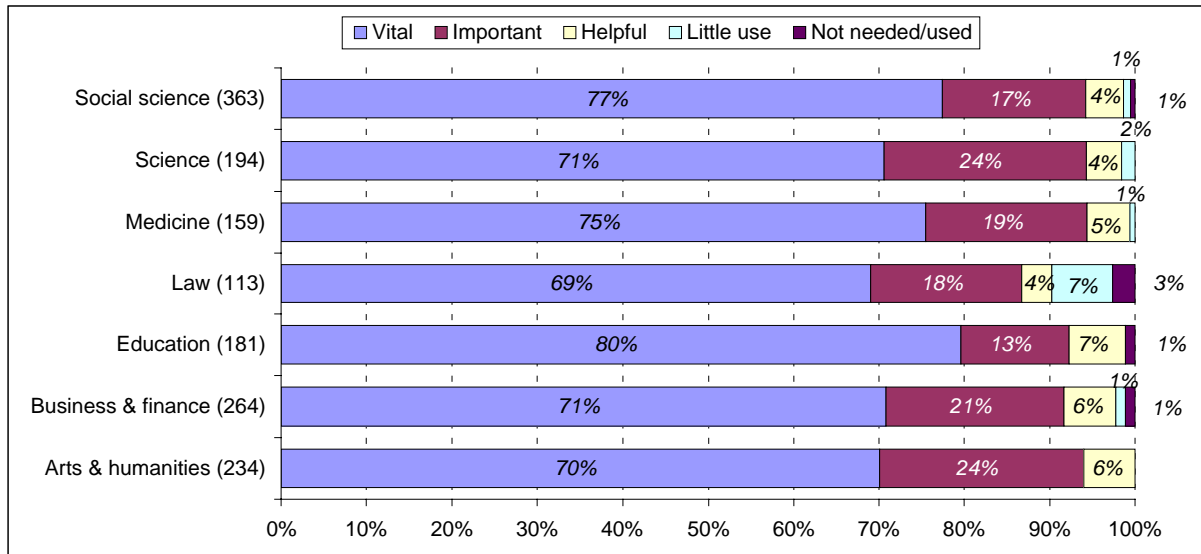
Fig 8 Attitudes by subject area

a) *Ease of travel*



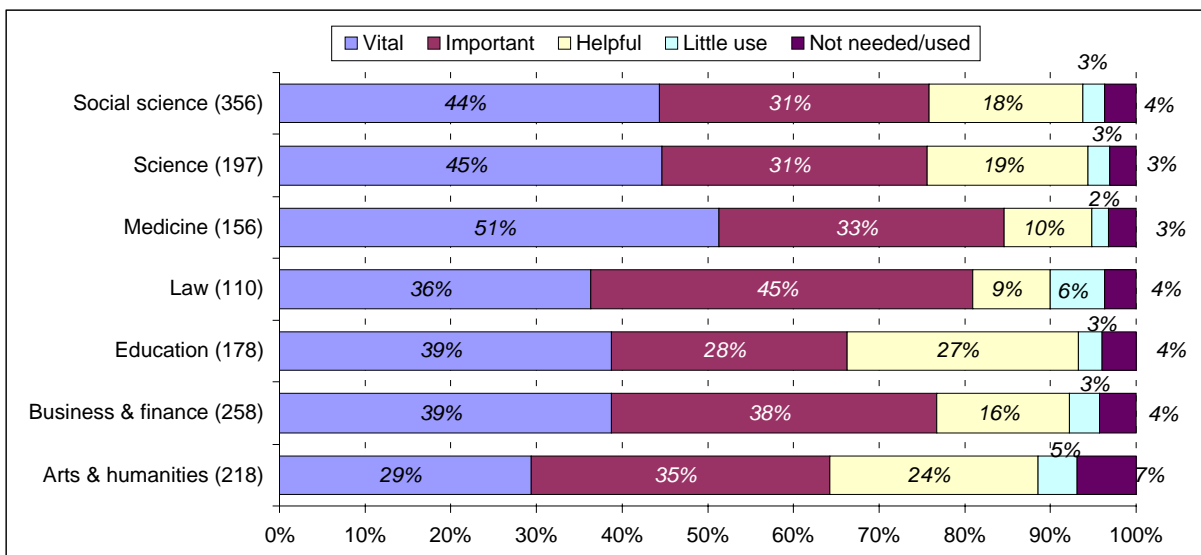
Numbers of respondents in brackets

b) Borrowing books



Numbers of respondents in brackets

c) Electronic journals



Numbers of respondents in brackets

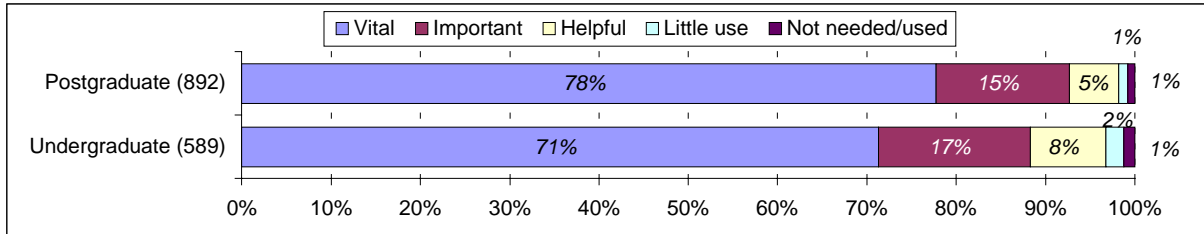
Level of study

Fig 9 (overleaf) shows differences by level of study. Undergraduates placed significantly higher levels of importance on study places and word processing facilities than did postgraduates. Ease of travel was

rated more highly by postgraduates, as were the provision of access to electronic journals and to other information sources. No other areas showed statistically significant differences between postgraduates and undergraduates at the 5% level.

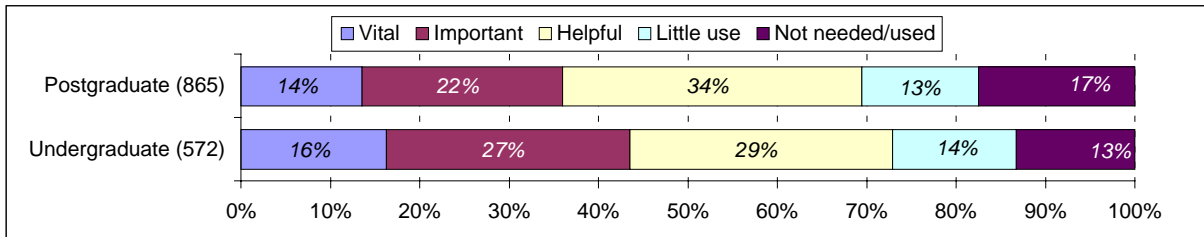
Fig 9 Attitudes by level of study

a) Ease of travel



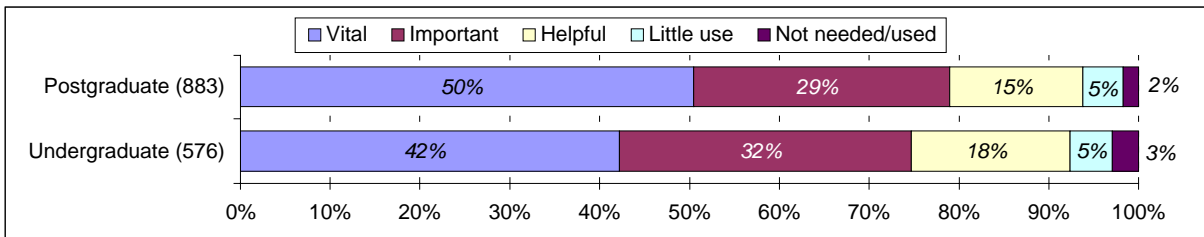
Numbers of respondents in brackets

b) Study places



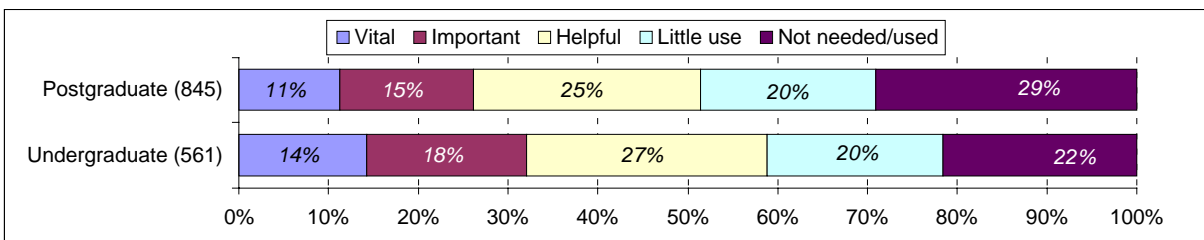
Numbers of respondents in brackets

c) Access to additional information sources



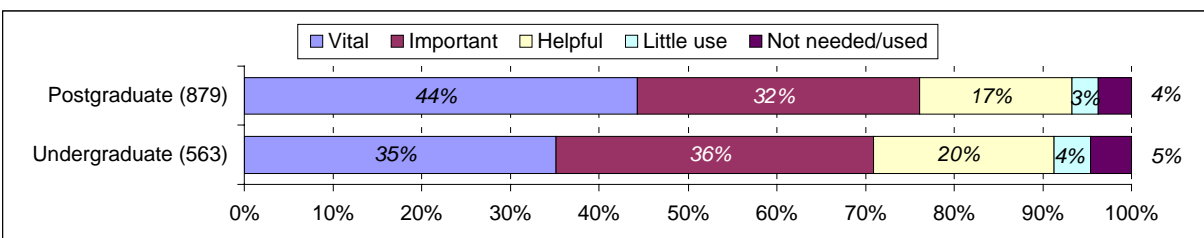
Numbers of respondents in brackets

d) Word processing facilities



Numbers of respondents in brackets

e) Electronic journals



Numbers of respondents in brackets

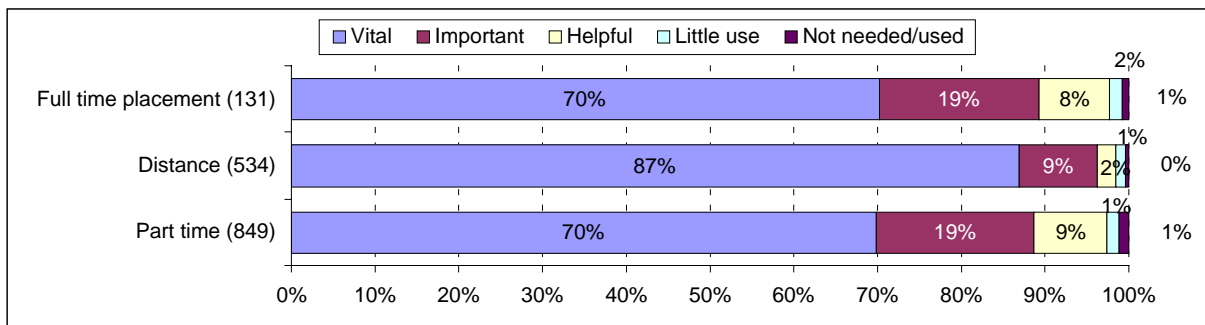
Mode of study

There were also some statistically significant differences at the 5% level by mode of study (Fig 10). 87% of distance learners rated ease of travel as 'vital', compared to just 70% of part-time and placement students. The opposite was the case for study places, with 12% of distance learners rating this

provision as 'vital', compared to 17% of part-time and placement students. Placement students were significantly more likely to rate internet provision, email, electronic services and word processing facilities as vital. No other factors showed statistically significant differences between modes of study at the 5% level.

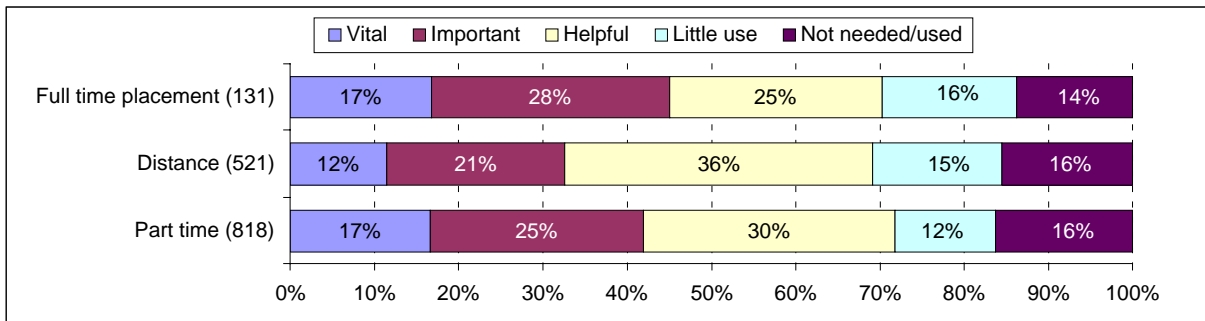
Fig 10 Attitudes by mode of study

a) Ease of travel



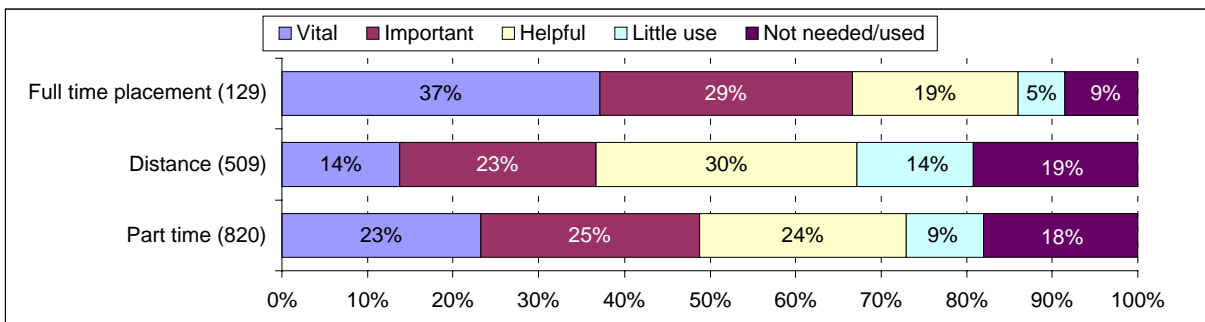
Numbers of respondents in brackets

b) Study places



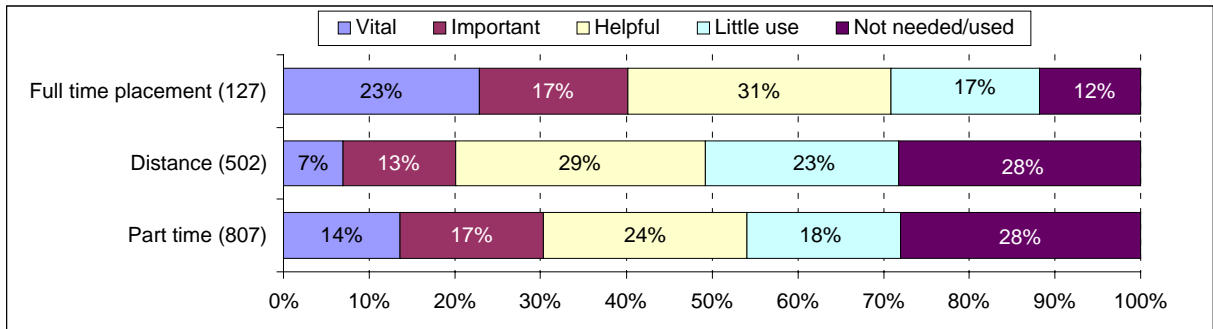
Numbers of respondents in brackets

c) Internet access



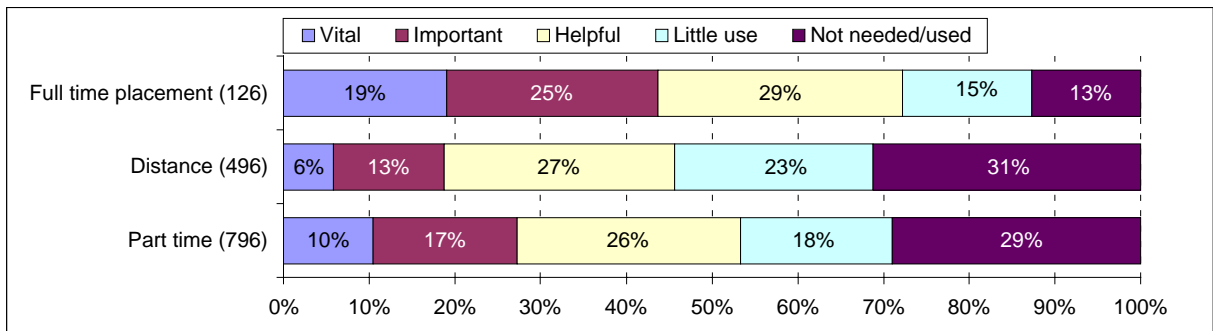
Numbers of respondents in brackets

d) Word processing facilities



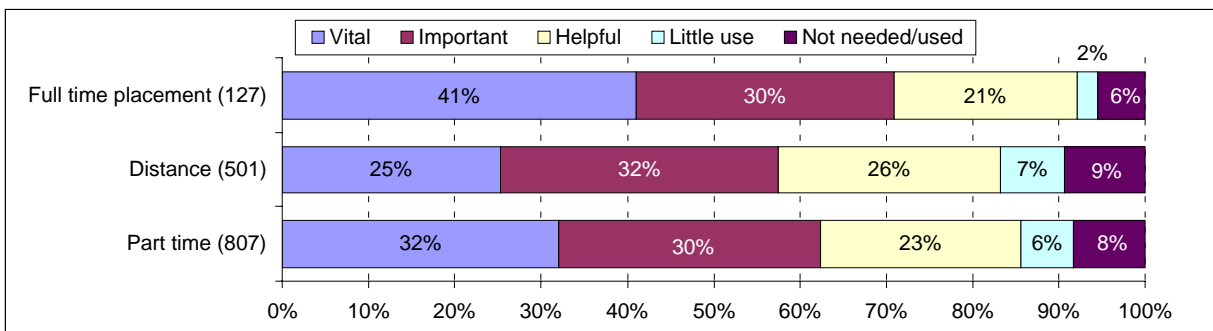
Numbers of respondents in brackets

e) Email facilities



Numbers of respondents in brackets

f) Electronic services from home library



Numbers of respondents in brackets

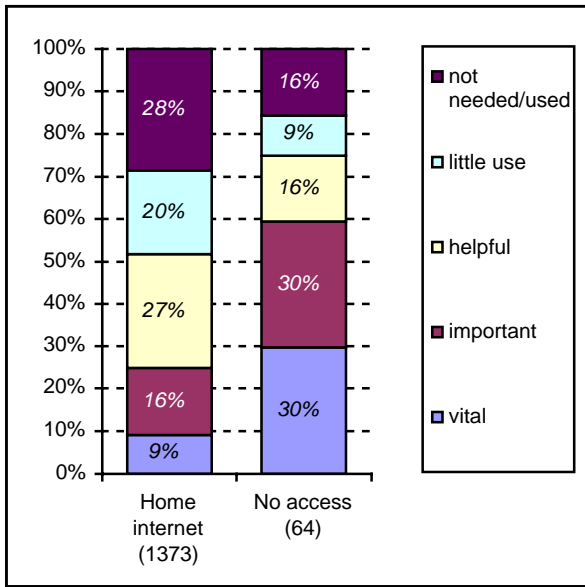
Internet access

Unsurprisingly, those who did not have access to the internet at home or at work were more likely to rate internet and email

facilities as ‘vital’ (Fig 11). There was no difference between any of the groups in their overall opinion of the scheme’s importance.

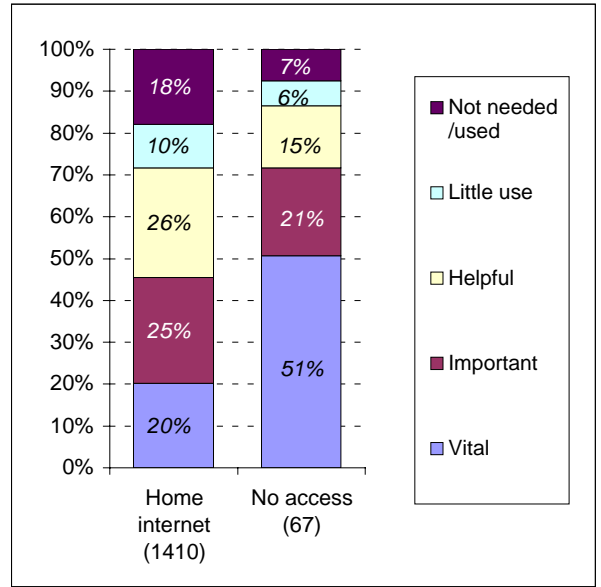
Fig 11 Usefulness of facilities by whether have internet access

a) Internet



Numbers of respondents in brackets

b) Email



Numbers of respondents in brackets

Analysis of comments

A total 861 users made comments on the scheme, 55% of the total. Their comments can be divided into a number of broad areas – borrowing restrictions and access to resources, including electronic resources; the way in which the scheme is administered and restrictions on ticket validity; physical provision, including the use of computers; convenience factors such as the location of member libraries and the collections available; staff issues and general comments on the value of the scheme overall. Some of the issues raised have been discussed above; a summary of these key themes is given below, with extracts from a selection of the comments made to illustrate the various points.

Borrowing restrictions

This broad area attracted the greatest number of comments, and most of them were asking for more. In particular, 30% of all comments received concerned the number of books which could be borrowed, and the length of loan period. Twenty percent mentioned the range of printed resources available for loan, with just 8% specifically mentioning electronic information resources.

In total, 191 respondents (22% of all comments) asked to be allowed to borrow more books. The range of allowances appears to be between two and seven, and there was little uniformity among respondents concerning an optimum level. Some appreciated the reasons for the restrictions, whilst others noted the apparent unfairness and discrimination:

I am so grateful for the use of X University Library in borrowing books to aid with my assignments. The only negative point is only being allowed 4 books at a time – but this is better than none at all. (260)

As a UKLP user, I could borrow only 4 books at a time. I really appreciated this access, though it

would be a real benefit if the number could be increased. I can understand that UKLP users have a relatively low priority in terms of access to the book stock, but hope the reciprocal nature of the scheme might lead to change. (778)

It would be helpful if I wasn't restricted to borrowing 4 items although I realise Y are trying to ensure priority is given to their students. (1440)

The scheme does not fully address issues of equality of access to books or inclusive learning. I was only able to take out 4 books and was not allowed to access (take home) 1 week loan books. This is not fair! (1284)

I am only allowed to borrow 3 books at Z Uni library under this scheme. It would be of immense help if it could be increased – or it matched normal student borrowing allowances. (1362)

It would be useful if you could borrow more books like the main stream students. (1523)

A significant number of comments were related to other issues of access to printed resources, most commonly from collections with shorter loan periods, including 7-day and 2-week loans in some institutions (88 respondents, 10%). Respondents seemed particularly concerned that these were either the most relevant books to their studies (e.g. on reading lists) or were more current editions than those available under standard loan terms.

I was not able to borrow short-term borrowing books. Could not see why as I worked within walking distance of the library, so could easily have returned the books within the required timescale. (3)

I can only borrow those that no one else wants! i.e. those on long loan, even if others sit on the shelves for weeks on end. (510)

X does not allow UK Library Plus students the up to date text books! Despite there being over 10 on the shelves. The books I could borrow were two editions out of date but still better than nothing. (224)

Unable to borrow much of the books as not allowed to borrow "seven day" items. Much of Y books are seven day (the most up to date ones were anyway). (937)

I have not used it as much as intended because the only books permitted for me to borrow are long loan which tend to be the older, less up to date & less relevant books – I have ended up buying the books I need! (1072)

Other issues raised relating to access to printed materials included the ability to reserve material (26 respondents, 3%), inter-library loans (11 respondents 1%), and a few comments on access to dissertations, journals, photocopying and other facilities:

It would be helpful if books could be reserved – not being able to do this means wasted journeys to the library – to find that the desired book has been extended/borrowed. (615)

Reservation of books is not allowed by home institutions. While I understand their reasoning that preference should be given to their own students, it would be useful if we could reserve one book/journal per month. Very often the book I need is also required reading for one of the university's courses, so is never available in the library. As I cannot reserve it, I have to wait a long time before it appears on the shelves. (690)

The only problem has been not being able to borrow 1 week loan copies and not being able to reserve books. I can only have access to whatever is physically in library when I call in. it is also frustrating when I take out a 3-week loan I receive a recall notice (for another student) after 1 week & have to return the book ASAP. (1495)

I cannot access inter-library loan materials from my home site. If my nearest site could be allowed

to act as a proxy manager for ILL books this would help tremendously as often books cannot be removed from the library (1326)

A number of general comments in this area included some positive as well as negative attitudes, and suggestions for change. Practice varies between participating libraries, and a small number of students with experience of more than one service found this particularly frustrating.

Libraries Plus would be more useful if individual universities stopped you from borrowing books which are in the library (e.g. Z will only let you take out three week loan books) in case their own students wanted to borrow them. Why not introduce a recall system in this eventuality? (71)

X could only offer very limited services – 3 books ("3 week" only) could be borrowed. No access to computers/internet. No journals etc or other books could be taken out of library – I was very disappointed! But even the little they could offer was helpful. (309)

However I have been unable to take out many books as they are short term loan & membership is restricted. Even weekend or overnight use of these books would be helpful (340)

It would be useful if Y would let me borrow more than four books at a time. It would also help if I could borrow one week loans. Overall though as I live quite a distance from my home institute I have found the UK Plus Libraries scheme extremely useful to complete assignments, as I have been able to get access to resources that I would not have been able to get access to otherwise. (411)

It would help if all institutions provide same service. Some libraries allow reservation of stock, use of electronic equipment etc, others only book lending facilities. (1032)

There are limitations on the type of books we are able to borrow, once proved trustworthy couldn't this be changed. (1143)

In the area of electronic resources, specific requests for access to e-journals, databases and e-books were made by 73 respondents (8% of those making comments). More than half of these sought access to electronic journals, with 21 commenting on databases and 15 making general comments relating to electronic resources (comments on access to computers more generally are discussed below). Such issues are less easy for libraries to address, as they involve external licensing agreements which may need to be negotiated on a wider basis.

I did not have access to electronic journals that the libraries had access to as I was not part of their university directly. It would be helpful to relax this and allow access via a password that is issued temporarily daily. (682)

Z does not allow access to the internet or electronic sources for students from other universities. Some journals e.g. Legal Action, it only subscribes to electronically & therefore access to the most up to date info is denied. (1346)

It would have been very useful indeed if I could have used any of Q.9 above. ... Access to databases is the most important. (138)

I have been able to access electronic databases via X College Library from my home computer which has been a great help. (1489)

I know it's a big job, but the electronic conversion of texts. (1075)

Despite having an Athens personal account, I cannot access any networked computer as I have no user name & password. This is massively frustrating (1573)

Scheme administration

This area covers comments on publicity about the scheme (43 respondents, 5% – discussed above), and the joining procedure (also 43 respondents), the length of ticket validity (9%) and costs associated with the

scheme. (2%). Fifteen respondents sought more information about the different libraries in the scheme including collection strengths and facilities available, or induction sessions to help them make the most of their membership.

Comments on the joining procedure were generally negative, with respondents noting that it was cumbersome and lengthy. Some staff did not appear to be aware of the procedures, and the necessity to re-register annually, or at different times for different libraries, was found frustrating by some.

Term times run differently for each university and so I am having to re-register for UK Libraries Plus three times in one year but the scheme is fantastic. (394)

It would be helpful if it was easier to extend membership rather than have to reapply to home university with a second downloaded form. (My course ran from September 02 to Sept 03 but my Library Plus card expired in June.) (452)

Initially cumbersome to join but great once you have jumped through the hoops. (585)

Having one card that you can use at all of the libraries in the scheme, instead of having to re-register at separate libraries.(644)

It would be helpful if there was just one UK Libraries + card that could be used at all participating institutions, instead of having to join (& get a photo for) each. (1276)

A great service if it wasn't for the bureaucracy ... Joining was complicated, stressful and lengthy – Why? Various pieces of info had to go back & forth. (1330)

Sixteen respondents made suggestions for improving the information supplied about the scheme, including requests for induction sessions at individual libraries, and advance information on the collections held and facilities available.

Providing a list of local participating universities & HE libraries would be helpful. (409)

Provide the student with an induction session on the services available in the library or provide a leaflet/booklet explaining this. (447)

It would be helpful to have the opening times and facility's details, such as parking, disabled facilities before you visit another site. (736)

Update info sheets/email alerts of services, extra universities involved in scheme. (885)

It might be useful to list the participating libraries under a subject listing. (1320)

Ticket validity was mentioned by 67 students – split between those who wanted access over the summer vacation, and those who desired a ticket valid for the full length of their course.

Good scheme but book borrowing period should include holidays. (136)

The restriction borrowing books during term time inhibits the usefulness of the UK library system greatly. (182)

X University will not allow the scheme during the summer hols, which is when I personally do most of my reading. (279)

As I am on a PhD and study the year round, I would like a UK Plus card that works outside regular semester time periods. (373)

Take away the need to annually renew membership of UK+ libraries – membership to last as long as student's course. (616)

UK Library Plus card valid from Aug-Jul. My course runs March – March – it would be easier if cards could match course dates. (1422)

My course runs continuously for 2 yrs so for my UK libraries plus card to be invalid between June

& Sept has been a problem as I still have assignments to do during that period. (1527)

Comments on library opening hours, from 18 respondents, were generally positive, although some asked for longer hours, especially during vacations. These aspects of the service are beyond the remit of the UK Libraries Plus scheme, and such comments will probably not come as a surprise to individual university librarians:

Opening hours are excellent (229)

I would like to spend more time in the library i.e. 24 hours opening as we can only stay till 9 pm. (283)

Trying to fit in study with full time 9-5 pm employment – enhanced opening hours in member libraries during vacation times would be useful.(305)

The facilities at Y are generally excellent now (especially the new opening hours – although the lack of any weekend opening during the summer is annoying for those of us who still wish to study but still have to go to work during the week) (515)

Restricted summer hours have been a problem (522)

Physical provision

Computer access was the greatest concern here, mentioned by 10% of respondents who commented. Other aspects relating to the library environment and physical aspects such as access to parking drew comments from a further 2%.

Forty respondents specifically mentioned Internet access as being important, and 16 would have liked access to particular software – mostly word processing, although some more specialist applications were on the wish list. Some of the more general

comments on computer access are also given below.

It would be very, very helpful if use of computers was available, even if this did not include internet, the word processing facility would be advantageous. (806)

Despite having access to a computer/internet at home and at work, study in a UK Libraries Plus participating institution would be improved with access to a PC. ...I could not do any word processing which is needed for a large part of university study today. UK Libraries Plus students need not have access to all E-services (e.g. subscription services) but to basic office applications at least. (876)

Am unable to use computer facilities at X because of Data Protection Act restrictions: could this be addressed? (946)

Internet access is perhaps the single most important missing resource in the scheme. (1158)

I go there every weekend to study, borrow books, and they have even allowed me to be a guest user of their computer facilities. I can't praise the facilities and staff at Y College enough. (1317)

I had to buy a new computer and set up a better internet connection at home to be able to complete any work. No such facilities are available to UK library students other than at home institute! (1439)

Not very useful as students do not have access to MS Word Office packages and can only use MS Works which is of no use at all. (1552)

Other aspects of physical provision mentioned included parking – eight negative comments, but one positive – and appreciation of a place to study:

I have use of MA suite and IT facilities and I can't thank you enough. (664)

Car parking for short visits seems not to be easy. Visitor access seems not to apply on adjacent university car parks and parking fees are disproportionate to duration of visit (1462)

Room to spread large dictionaries (I use the MED) on tables, so that consultation is eased. (1352)

Only 18 respondents mentioned financial considerations, with some students who would not object to charges for extra services:

The fact that this became available in my 2nd year and was a free service was vital to my studies and much appreciated. (720)

It wasn't immediately clear that the service was free of charge. (734)

The use of inter-library loan facilities would be a welcome addition to the scheme, to allow access to a wider range of resources than the 'visited' library is able to provide; for example, accessing a text from my home institution through arrangements at my 'local' library. I appreciate that such arrangements may be expensive to run – although most libraries do seem to have the scheme for their own students – and would not object to paying a small fee for the privilege. (1116)

I feel the availability of bibliographic databases would be useful to students to allow part time or distant learners to access data quickly and effectively. Even if students from other universities had to pay a small fee to use this system. (1519)

Convenience

Seventy-one comments, 8% of the total, related to the convenient location of member libraries with 41 (5%) making specific comments on library membership of the scheme (reported above). Another 6% commented on the collections at the libraries they used. Typical comments on location are given below:

It is an absolutely vital service for someone who lives and works 300 miles from “home” institution (152)

Very useful to have a library near to where you live. (477)

My studies would have suffered greatly if I hadn’t had access to a local library (501)

Without Libraries Plus, I doubt that I could continue my studies due to travel difficulties. (1311)

Comments on book availability in general and the quality of the collections were evenly divided into positive and negative remarks.

The quality of the social work collection at X is excellent. (85)

The use of a more convenient library with a better range of books/journals has helped enormously with my studies. (871)

I was able to find books which weren’t accessible at my home library. (1544)

Hardly any of my reading material was available. (280)

Books recommended by tutor not available at library. (1211)

Little use due to limited books available for my research subject areas. (1456)

Staff

Six percent of comments concerned staff. The majority of these – 60% – were positive, describing staff as helpful and friendly. Negative comments on staff generally commented on an apparent lack of awareness of the scheme or inadequate training. Very few noted any deliberate unfriendliness or unhelpfulness:

The library staff at the participating libraries are very helpful and go out of their way to help (1434)

As a student with a physical disability (wheelchair user) the library staff at Y University have been very helpful in trying to meet my requirements. (474)

Library staff did not know how to process forms etc. (827)

Staff at Z library seemed rather confused about the scheme when I was first enrolling. (1570)

The treatment given as an outside student at X University by library staff was very disappointing and unhelpful. (983)

General comments on the value of the scheme

Eighteen percent of comments related to the general value of the scheme, and one respondent made concrete suggestions which did not fit into any of the above categories:

This is an excellent resource. The Open University could make deposits/repositories of it’s resources at designated UKLP+ centres. Also what about a UKLP+ clinic and chat/research/query resource or a web site. (747).

Words which appeared again and again in the comments were “vital”, “important”, “fundamental”, “invaluable”, “excellent”. A selection is given below:

The ‘Libraries UK Plus’ scheme has been fundamental in my studies – I know this scheme has played a major role in enabling me to achieve my first class BSc (33)

Generally, great scheme, couldn't have done without it while I've been living away doing research (clapping sound!) (88)

An excellent scheme, makes accessing information for studies much easier. (125)

Without access to other libraries I don't believe I would have been anywhere as near as successful as I have been on my course. It's reduced the stress, cost, time and worry of learning. This scheme's importance is huge. (191)

I could not conduct my doctoral research without the UK Libraries Plus scheme (271)

Brilliant scheme that has worked smoothly for me (317)

It would have been completely impractical to do my course if I had not had access to a local library. (560)

Fantastic scheme. I could not have contemplated doing the courses I have done/am doing without it. (749)

Carry on, it's an important service. (759)

It has been a godsend – I don't know how I'd have coped. (947)

So in a nutshell – a vital service – thank you. (1371)

UK Libraries Plus - customer survey and £50 prize draw

Your name has been given to us by one of our member libraries as a registered borrowing user of UK Libraries Plus. (As a reminder, you joined UK Libraries Plus by completing a blue membership card.) We would greatly appreciate your help in our evaluation of the benefits of the scheme, if you would kindly take a few minutes to answer our questions.

If you add your name and contact details to the returned questionnaire it will be entered for our **prize draw** for £50, if returned by **Friday 29th August 2003**. Please be assured that your name and contact details will not be given to any third party nor used for any other purpose than to follow up interesting points you may have made in order to improve the scheme. Questionnaires should be returned in the pre-paid envelope provided.

About you

1 Home institution _____

2 Your course details: Subject area (*please tick one*)

- | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|------------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| Arts & Humanities | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 | Medicine | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 |
| Business & finance | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 | Science | <input type="checkbox"/> | 6 |
| Education..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 | Social Science..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | 7 |
| Law | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 | Other (please specify) _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | 8 |

2.1 Qualification (*please tick one*)

- | | | | | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|---|-----------|--------------------------|---|
| BA | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 | MBA | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 |
| BSc | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 | MSc..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 |
| MA..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 | PhD..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | 6 |
| Other (please specify) _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | <input type="checkbox"/> | 7 |

3 Your mode of study (*please tick one*)

- | | | | | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|---|------------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| Part time | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 | Full time on placement..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 |
| Distance Learning..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 | Other (please specify) _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 |

4 Your age (*in years*) _____

About UK Libraries Plus

5 How did you learn about the scheme? (*Please tick one*)

- | | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| Leaflet in library | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 | Advice from a tutor..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 |
| Our web site
(http://www.uklibrariesplus.ac.uk) | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 | Advice from another student | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 |
| Induction session by library staff | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 | Advice from library staff | <input type="checkbox"/> | 6 |
| Other (please specify) _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | <input type="checkbox"/> | 7 |

6 Which UK Libraries Plus library (other than your home institution library) have you used the most?

6.1 Is there a higher education library near to you which is not in the scheme which you would like us to encourage to join?

YES / NO

Please give the university or college name: _____

7 Please indicate the importance to you of the following aspects of the scheme:

	Vital	Impor- tant	Help- ful	Little use	Not needed/ used
Easier to travel to than my home institution's library.....	1	2	3	4	5
Place to study.....	1	2	3	4	5
Borrowing books	1	2	3	4	5
Access to additional information sources (e.g. journals)	1	2	3	4	5
Other (please specify).....	1	2	3	4	5

8 Do you have access to the Internet at home or work? YES / NO

9 The following services may be available in some libraries. Please indicate which if any you would you find useful?

	Vital	Impor- tant	Help- ful	Little use	Not needed/ used
Internet.....	1	2	3	4	5
Word processing	1	2	3	4	5
Email.....	1	2	3	4	5
Bibliographic databases (which you can use to find journal articles)	1	2	3	4	5
Electronic journals.....	1	2	3	4	5
Electronic services from your home library available at another library	1	2	3	4	5
Other (Please specify)	1	2	3	4	5

10 Overall, how important has UK Libraries Plus been to your studies?

Vital ₁	Impor- tant ₂	Help- ful ₃	Little use ₄	Not needed/ used ₅
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11 Please add any comments below which you think will help us improve the scheme in the future. Continue on a separate sheet if necessary.

To be entered for the optional prize draw, please complete the following details:

Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____ Phone _____

Email _____@_____

May we contact you to follow up particular issues you have raised in the questionnaire?

YES / NO

Please return in the envelope provided no later than Friday 29th August 2003

New members requested

Institution	Suggested by	Institution	Suggested by
Oxford	23	<i>Cheltenham</i>	1
Sussex*	19	<i>Huddersfield</i>	1
Warwick*	18	<i>Lincoln</i>	1
Newcastle *	16	<i>Roehampton</i>	1
<i>Manchester</i>	15	<i>Southampton College</i>	1
<i>Sheffield</i>	12	<i>Southampton University</i>	1
Bristol	12	<i>Shrewsbury or Telford (Wolverhampton)</i>	1
Cambridge	12	Addenbrookes Hospital, Cambridge	1
Cardiff	11	All London universities	1
Goldsmiths College	9	Any in Southampton	1
University College London	9	Bournemouth and Poole College of FE	1
Exeter	8	Bramshill Police Library	1
<i>Birmingham</i>	7	British Library	1
Edinburgh *	7	City College Norwich	1
Kent	7	East Riding College	1
Kings College London	7	Farnborough College	1
Liverpool *	7	Institute of Psychiatry	1
<i>Nottingham</i>	6	James Cook University Hospital	1
Bath *	5	Kings Fund Library	1
London Business School	6	Milton Keynes	1
<i>Aston</i>	4	More of the colleges of University of London	1
<i>Durham</i>	4	National Assembly of Wales Library	1
<i>Glasgow</i>	4	Nescot (NE Surrey College of Technology)	1
<i>London School of Economics</i>	4	North Birmingham College	1
<i>Portsmouth</i>	4	North Herts. College	1
City University	4	Norwich City College	1
Croydon College, Surrey	4	Queens College	1
Imperial College	4	Regents College Norwich	1
University of London	4	Royal College of Art	1
<i>Leeds</i>	3	South Downs College	1
<i>Strathclyde</i>	3	South East Essex College	1
Institute of Education	3	South Kent College	1
<i>Chester</i>	2	St Andrews	1
<i>Essex</i>	2	<i>St David's, University of Wales Lampeter</i>	1
<i>Leicester</i>	2	St Peters Hospital	1
<i>Liverpool Hope</i>	2	St. Georges Medical School	1
<i>London Institute</i>	2	Stoke on Trent College	1
Buckingham	2	Stonyhurst, Hurst Green	1
Queen Mary and Westfield	2	Suffolk	1
School of Oriental & African Studies	2	Swiss Cottage Library	1
<i>Bath Spa University College</i>	1	Thomas Rotherham College	1
<i>University of Wales Institute Cardiff</i>	1	Walton College	1
<i>University College, Chichester</i>	1	Warrington College	1
<i>Cranfield Management School</i>	1	West Notts College	1
<i>Derby</i>	1	Winchester Healthcare Library	1
<i>Dundee</i>	1	Worcester Technology College	1
<i>Falmouth College of Art</i>	1	York Hospital	1

Italics denotes scheme members included in survey already in scheme.

* new member since survey carried out.