

Notes from the StARs Forum - Tuesday 10th March 2015

13:15-14:45 (EEG162)

Topic: Learning Services

Present:

39 StARs

Dr Marie Stowell – **MS** (Director of Quality and Educational Development)

Judith Keene – **JK** (University Librarian and Assistant Director of Information and Learning Services)

Libby Symonds – **LS** (Leader of the Learning and Teaching Technology Unit)

Tom Clarke – **TC** (Vice President Education)

Ruth Christie - **RC** (Membership Services Manager (taking notes))

Welcome and Introductions: TC welcomed everyone to the Forum and he and the panel members introduced themselves. TC then invited JK, MS and LS to update StARs on the latest developments in their area of work. StARs were then invited to ask students' questions and put students' comments about learning resources to the panel.

JK	<p>A new delivery service has been introduced from the Hive to St Johns for students with mobility issues. This is a result of discussions with SU President, Wes Hudson and Student Disability Officer, Connor Allen. Students with temporary mobility problems are welcome to use the service too.</p> <p>There has been a considerable investment in journals in recent years, but it's acknowledged that books are more difficult to provide in a way that meets students' needs.</p> <p>Core reading lists are more accessible now, with a successful drive to acquire more lists from academic staff.</p> <p>The University has also invested in more e-books and there are now around 80,000 available. The "e-books on demand" trial proved very popular, with £50k being spent in just over three weeks. This included both purchased and rented titles. It was anticipated that these would support independent studies and provide students with resources outside reading lists.</p>
ISE StAR	<p>We are given the reading lists on Blackboard, with links to the library pages but progress is then blocked due to security features. There is a similar problem with downloads.</p> <p>Other StARs agreed that this is a common issue.</p>
JK	<p>This will be investigated further, but this should not be a problem with anything on the resource list.</p>
MS	<p>In terms of learning and teaching, feedback from the staff/student conference in November showed that it was very helpful in sharing good practice across the University. StARs are encouraged to continue to ask, through course management committees, what developments course teams are planning in relation to the three key areas on which the conference focused: assessment and feedback, the academic tutor system and communications.</p>

	<p>All students will have received communications in recent weeks about the National Student Survey (NSS) (final year undergraduate students) and the University's student survey (first and second years and postgraduate). It is very important that as many students as possible complete these surveys as the University needs feedback on the steps taken to bring about improvements in the student experience. We have also invested in software which will enable the University to monitor more clearly student satisfaction at modules level and undertake analysis on a course-by-course basis.</p>
LS	<p>The "Changing the Learning Landscape" initiative has focused on technology enhanced learning. Two SAP (Students as Academic Partners) project were funded, in the Institutes of Education and Science and the Environment, which revealed that consistency was a recurring theme raised by students.</p> <p>Based on student feedback, a number of improvements have been made. Baseline standards have been produced, comprising a set of core pieces of information to make it easier to navigate through the course. These standards were agreed by the University's Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee in December 2014 and a new menu structure on Blackboard will be introduced in September 2015. Courses which don't use Blackboard are being recommended to use similar guidelines.</p> <p>There are improved "personalisation" facilities on Blackboard, enabling students to upload their own photos and a mobile app has also been introduced. This is freely available to all students and provides instant alerts when there are new uploads. In response to requests from students for more information on how to use Blackboard, there are FAQs and "Getting Started" guidance which can be accessed via the "My institution" section of the homepage. Further feedback from students is welcome.</p>
Institute Rep, Education	<p>Most students in the Institute of Education are currently out on placement, so there are a number of issues to raise on their behalf:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student teachers love the Blackboard app – it's particularly useful when they're on placement. • Some lecturers are failing to upload material sufficiently in advance for students to read in before lectures (an example is one hour before the lecture) • Feedback from the staff/student conference: most courses in the Institute of Education were not represented as the number of StARs attending was limited (this concern was also raised in ISES, which has many diverse courses) • Student have reported that computers are not always available in the Hive
JK	<p>Students can reserve computers and it's unlikely that there's ever a time when there are no computers available at the Hive</p>
WBS StAR	<p>There may be computers available, but not in locations that are conducive to study – students find it very difficult to work when they are in close proximity to noisy children, for instance. Would it be possible for students to book computers in particular areas within the Hive that would suit their needs?</p>
JK	<p>It would be helpful to know which locations students would prefer to work in</p>

Institute Rep, Education	Lecturers are advising journals which are available which turn out not to be available. The merging of Summon and the online catalogues means that it's more difficult to find sources
JK	<p>Every effort has been made to get up-to-date reading lists from lecturers, but on some occasions, this has not happened.</p> <p>In relation to finding sources, it's often easier to use LibGuides to find individual databases</p>
MS	In terms of the staff/student conference, it is acknowledged that restricting attendance to 7 StARs from particular courses from each Institute meant that not all courses were represented. We will consider this for the future - it might be better to hold a staff/student conference in each of the six institutes.
Mental Health StAR	Some tutors are having problems uploading material to Blackboard and students are having difficulty accessing them
LS	It may be that file sizes are so large that uploading is being timed-out. Firefox or Chrome are the recommended web browsers
MS	StARs should ask tutors experiencing this kind of problem to contact Libby e.symonds@worc.ac.uk
Mental Health StAR	It can be difficult to find feedback on SOLE as there's so much information there
MS	<p>This is likely to be more of a problem for some courses than for others. It might be appropriate for the StAR(s) and module leader to meet with Libby's team.</p> <p>In the longer term, it may be that Blackboard and SOLE will be merged</p>
ISES StAR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are discrepancies between the ways in which students receive their exam results and their assignment results – some modules send out receipts whereas others do not. • In library options, Worcester Harvard is not an option provided (the closest is APA)
Update from MS	I have asked the Quality Lead in the ISES to talk to StARs about the differences in how students get results, because we cannot work out what this relates to. On the matter of receipts, if a student sits a formal examination at the end of the semester, then attendance at the exam is registered on SOLE and the students will receive a receipt confirming attendance. Class tests or practicals will not be recorded in this way.
Update from JK	<p>Unfortunately, Library Search does not currently have the capacity to embed institutional versions of Harvard – it is something a number of institutions are asking about. Students can either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use standard Harvard in Library Search and tweak to fit our institutional style - Use Word on campus that has UW Harvard in the campus student image. We will look to add the ability to upload this onto students' own machines from LibGuides

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use the Harvard reference generator available on LibGuides <p>We are still trying to get UW Harvard into the service that feeds styles into Mendeley and Zotero. There are some problems converting the file type to make this happen but we will keep working on it.</p>
ISES StAR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have compulsory modules which don't include research methods • Students like all of the additional online resources, books and journals • Students also like the online tutorial booking system
LS	There is a variety of practice across the University when it comes to booking tutorials
ISES StAR	ISES uses Check Appointments
IHS StAR	Psychology uses Doodle Polls
ISES StAR	Students like the online module evaluations. Is it possible for the mid-module evaluations to be online too?
MS	Online end of module evaluations have been piloted in a number of areas. The problem is that the response rates tend to be quite a bit lower. The University may investigate a hybrid system but meanwhile, we are continuing with pilots in semester 2. Our policy is to encourage all staff to seek mid-module feedback, but we do not prescribe how this is done.
ISES StAR	<p>Perhaps the quality of the online feedback is better, even if the quantity of responses is low.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a problem with Pebblepad as you can't install Flash on Peirson computers
Update from Chris Garratt (CG), Team Leader, IT Service Support	The Learning and Teaching Technology Unit are looking into this issue, any recommendations they make will be incorporated into the student PC image.
LS	It may be worth trying an alternative web browser
WBS StAR	All third-year business management students have to use a particular book which is not available as an e-book. This costs £60 and the University only has two copies.
JK	There is probably not an online version available from the publisher. We will investigate this further if you provide details of the publication.
Update from JK	The academic liaison librarian for WBS, Stephanie Allen, has sent the StARS who raised this issue a comprehensive response to this issue. One of the books is available as an e-book and Stephanie will be working with WBS to explore better ways to support access to popular texts.
ISE StAR	We are required to buy a brand-new textbook for one exam, which is written by a lecturer and costs £33.
Update from JK	The relevant academic liaison librarian is aware of this issue. Additional copies of this book were bought in January and a couple more will be bought. The lecturer will also be contacted to suggest the digitisation of the key parts.
IHCA StAR	There should be a feature on the Blackboard app to hide old courses.
LS	There is – go to the cog in the corner of “My Courses”. This is also addressed in the FAQs.
IHCA StAR	Some e-books can only be read by one person at a time, which is very frustrating
JK	<p>The new system will allow us to collect much better stats, which will show up this kind of issue. In the meantime, students should contact their Academic Liaison Librarian to flag up these problems. Ali Taylor's email address is alison.taylor@worc.ac.uk</p>
IHCA StAR	How should we complete the NSS? We would like to answer honestly, but do not

	want to be critical as this will devalue our degree.
MS	<p>It is important to answer honestly, remembering the NSS is about your whole experience and it is not the only means by which students can provide feedback – other ways include course management committees, module evaluation, StARs Forum etc. The NSS provides students with the opportunity not only to rate satisfaction but also to provide comments.</p> <p>Students ought to be able to give realistic assessment and explain their assessment in their comments. The University takes the NSS very seriously and has a target response rate of 90% this year. What we want is honest opinion. As an example, satisfaction rates on assessment and feedback are consistently lower across all Universities than on other aspects of the student experience.</p> <p>Part of the explanation for this is that many students will have mixed experiences of different modules, so tend to opt for a mid-point “3” satisfaction score, rather than a higher score that might better reflect the majority of their experience. We have put much effort into asking course teams to adopt a consistent approach to feedback. We want to know if this is working. Students are reminded that, if they complete the NSS online, £5 will be credited to their student card and £5 added to the Access to Learning Fund.</p>
StARs	A number of StARs reported that there are students who have completed the NSS online who have not received the promised £5 credit after more than a week.
Update from MS	Any student who finds themselves in this position can check by contacting c.nisbet@worc.ac.uk
WBS StARs	The “Enhancing Organisation” module will bring down satisfaction scores for WBS overall. Students have had a poor experience on this particular module and feel that they have “paid” for something they didn’t want. This module is due to be changed in the next academic year, but that’s too late for current students.
Update from MS	This was followed up with the Worcester Business School and I am satisfied as to the actions taken – including the offer to all students to discuss their results with tutors and discussions with StARs at the course management committee (which took place after the StARs Forum).
ISE StAR	Some students may be biased because of a negative experience on one module. On a course with a small cohort size, a single student’s responses may skew the overall results.
MS	<p>For NSS results to be published, a minimum of 23 students and 50% of those eligible are required to have responded.</p> <p>The University will also receive the results of any courses where a minimum of 10 have completed the NSS, but these are not published. We try to remind students it is an assessment of their whole experience, not just the final year or one module.</p>
Mental Health StAR	A number of students have reported problems with the Eduroam wireless going down.

Update from CG	We acknowledge there have recently been several recent incidents relating to the eduroam service and apologise for any inconvenience caused. There is no one single cause for these issues as each outage represented a different problem, ICT went to great lengths to ensure all students were informed of the problems, and were updated on a regular basis as we worked to resolve the issues as quickly as possible. To try to minimise further disruptions ICT are currently looking at further ways of increasing the resilience of the system.
IHS StAR	Students may not be aware of the availability of dongles and other assistive technology which can be borrowed or acquired from the University – this includes software which can be of help to students with visual impairment and conditions such as dyslexia – see http://www.worcester.ac.uk/student-services/disability-and-dyslexia.htm for further information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronic module feedback is really good – it means students can take their time and give a more considered response. • Some students have asked why there can't be separate opening hours or separate physical areas for students and the public in the Hive, although we realise this is not feasible
IHCA StARs	It can be very difficult to find history and English books
JK	Would it be helpful to keep back one copy of set texts which would not be available for loan?
Update from JK	Allie Taylor, academic liaison librarian, will look at some possible suggestions such as having short loan or not for loan copies at the Hive in addition to the loan copies and consult with students.
ISES StAR	It's common knowledge that some students hide books
JK	We recognise that this is a problem and staff have responsibility for checking particular areas of shelves and returning books to their proper place, but it's impossible to stop this from happening
Institute Rep, Education	Why have SOLE updates taken place over the weekend and why were we not warned that Blackboard would be unavailable last weekend?
LS	There was a warning notice on Blackboard for three weeks and all students should have received an email notification about this. This is not the norm, however – upgrades usually take place over the summer – but there was an issue affecting assessments which had to be addressed quickly.
ISE StAR	There is a discrepancy between when staff receive all-user emails and when students receive them. As a member of staff as well as a student, I know that sometimes staff receive these messages a week before students do.
LS	In this case, staff were alerted first to allow them to plan accordingly. It may not be generally known that the second Sunday of every month is an ICT "at risk" day.
WBS StAR	SOLE repairs coincided with e-submission deadlines too. Some work was corrupted

	and some students had to re-submit work via email as staff advised that e-submission was too risky
MS	This was an exceptional circumstance and there have been lots of discussions at a senior University level about how this can be avoided in the future
Institute Rep, Education	Many students missed the window for printing cover sheets required to submit by hand
ISE StAR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E-submission has been embraced in ISE and it's been a great success. • There are issues with OpenAthens – you cannot get past it. •
MS	The University is working on making e-submission available to all students.
JK	Students should be able to go via Summon, or through a link from the LibGuide
ISE StAR	OpenAthens is a blocking point – it's much easier to use Google Scholar
Update from JK	<p>We'll add a link on the relevant LibGuides to take students straight through to the search page.</p> <p>However, the best way to access any of our resources is always through Library Search or the lists on the Library Search page after logging in. Going via Google Scholar or directly to databases is always liable to cause problems. We would also urge students to let us know when there are problems with access so we can try and do something about it – either contacting their academic liaison librarian or askalibrarian@worc.ac.uk</p>
IE StAR	What's the situation with Turnitin? We've only been able to use it for one assignment
LS	Turnitin is integrated with Blackboard. A submission area has to be set up by the tutor. Open access doesn't work as a second submission would result in a 100% match. An alternative may be part of the Blackboard interface.
MS	We're in a developmental phase with staff in relation to plagiarism detection software. The University wants students to be able to use it in a formative way, as a learning tool; we will take stock at the end of the year to see what progress has been made.
ISES StAR	Neither students nor staff trust Turnitin
LS	There are support issues with Turnitin, which is one of the reasons for considering alternatives
IHCA StAR	There are problems with the Macs in Peirson
Update from CG	Photoshop is available on both mac and windows side of the macs in PN1002, unfortunately is not installed on any other machines in Pierson due to licencing restrictions. The room availability for PN1002 is shown outside the room on the timetabling screen so students know when they can freely use the suite.

WBS StAR	There are also access issues for HND students to SAGE software, which is only available in the café at City campus. Might this be moved to Peirson? Similarly, Microsoft Project Manager is not available.
Update from CG	SAGE and MS Project are only available at the City Campus and EEG031 on the St Johns Campus due to licencing restrictions, there are open access PCs at the City Campus, including some machines that are available 24/7, and EEG031 can be accessed when not used for teaching. A new computer suite on the lower GF of Charles Hastings was also created over the summer that is available for students to use in addition to CH1001 and CH1007.
LS	These questions and issues will be fed back to ICT staff for their response
ISES StAR	There are rumours circulating that lectures may be timetabled in the evenings in future – are these true?
MS	There is some truth in this rumour. There are very good reasons why some lectures are scheduled for the evening (often to allow part-time students to take modules, or to give students a choice of day/time), but currently evening lectures are not evenly distributed across Institutes. In the future, it is likely that there will be a more even spread of evening lectures across all institutes.
TC	It's worth repeating that currently, the University states that "Classes may be timetabled between 09:15-21:15 Monday to Thursday and 09:15-18:15 on Friday." For more information, see http://www.worcester.ac.uk/registryservices/1048.htm
IHS StAR	Last year, psychology students had a 9:15 – 22:15 timetable.
MS	This was unacceptable and classes no longer run beyond 21:15 and we try to ensure scheduling of classes is more balanced.
IHCA StAR	Can staff please be encouraged to include links on Blackboard?
ISES StAR	Students had a shock when they received the bill for the mandatory sports kit. It is not clear upfront what these costs will be.
MS	The University is currently reviewing its Teaching and Learning Strategy and is developing a Technology Enhanced Learning Strategy. We would like a group of students to be involved with this review, particularly to ensure that the strategies are written in language which is accessible to students. An invitation will be sent to StARs shortly to ask them to take part in the review. We will feedback the point about sports kit.
Additional feedback received in advance of Forum by StARs unable to attend	
Yr 2 Biochemistry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using the Hive: Many students find this a difficult place to study as it is a shared facility with the public. An area designated purely for students would be appreciated. The short loan books and the rules re how long you can keep them is difficult for commuting students. They would appreciate a little longer to return books. The students like using Blackboard but would like some consistency in how documents and other files are uploaded by lecturers. We don't use PebblePad – don't even know what it is! Turnitin is used by some staff and is the

	preferred method of assignment submission (especially for the commuters)
FDA in Early Years (Flexible and Distributed Learning) 2014 - 2015	<p><u>Using the Hive</u> As distance learners we have not visited the Hive, we were all given the opportunity to do so on the initial induction day</p> <p><u>Reading lists and set texts</u> There are most useful and relevant, but often not referred to by our tutors</p> <p><u>Availability of and access to books and e-resources</u> We all use this facility and find it beneficial</p> <p><u>Blackboard, PebblePad and Turnitin</u> The Blackboard facility is utilised daily as distance learners and we find the facility an integral part of the distribution of information and online learning activities. The discussion boards are often not as beneficial as face to face group discussions off-line and we are using the Blackboard facility as instructed to by tutors and not as we could find beneficial as an overall discussion tool, can we facilitate change here? The way that tutors upload information to Blackboard needs to be considered, prior to pressing the upload button! We received in one day 77 documents that needed to be reviewed for importance and relevance. I can not envisage sending colleague 77 emails in one day to be opened and read! Not all students have been given training on PebblePad, although requested These are our concerns regarding our first year of study; whilst overall we enjoy the course content and find it an interesting area of study we would like the University to be aware of some of the issues impacting on our degree.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Feedback from tutors can be sporadic, lacking and unconstructive and whilst it is understood that our formative work is not graded, often as distance learners with little feedback and face to face contact, we are unsure that what we are working on will enable us to complete a successful summative assignment, thus leading to us lacking direction from tutors which in turn has led to many students lacking the confidence in abilities. Feedback is essential for a distance learner who is not present in the day to day lectures. 2. How does the University support students when a tutor is absent for long periods of time? Understandably this could not be prevented but in another profession a long period of absence in a school for example would not have left children without a teacher? 3. Hours of study – the hours of independent study that are stated in the module outline are inaccurate and we have found it is hard to keep up with the assigned online learning activities that, on occasions, are more often that the advised 2 weeks. 4. It would have been useful to have a course outline and reading list before we commence the degree. Students have also found it difficult to access the student handbook and had to contact the University for it to be uploaded. 5. Lack of student participation, we have found some students to be absent in the online participation and not participating in the online activities set. How are they then able to continue in the study group, benefiting from the hard work of others? 6. Inconsistency between tutors, whilst it is understood that all teachers will deliver a lesson differently, thus the same of tutors. A consistent method

	<p>would be preferred when discussing the final summative, which we are graded upon.</p> <p>7. The course content, although specified covers aged 0 – 8 years old does not include years 5 – 8 making it difficult for students to find relevance when working in KS1/KS2</p>
Additional questions, comments and suggestions from StARs (submitted in writing)	
Yr 2 Education Studies	<p>As StARs, we want to put in an input but can't make everyone put some notes within an email.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could you do a workshop about Summon and library search to give students a practice and chance to have a better understanding? • One student is not coping well with lecturers placing certain and important materials on Blackboard • Not all journals work on Summon which we can't access – how do we overcome this?
Yr 3 English Literature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding e-books is still too complicated for students – we are getting re-directed to something else • Good idea with getting reading lists, but there are simply not enough books (only one copy for 30+ students) or no e-books. This is not helpful for English Lit students. • The silent study area has been requested if it could be made bigger, more welcoming • Students not bringing copies of books back on time and not fair to other students
Yr 3 History	<p>Is the Hive really fit for students? I can name incidents of the general public on sites such as "Single and Pregnant" and a paedophile utilising the printer service to print off some disgusting images. How could the University invest in such a building and not reserve a dedicated section, for peace and quiet, exclusively for students? It's ludicrous. This is only compounded by the fact that history is horrifically underfunded. We run no field trips and continually fight for one core book for our course. My learning is horrifically affected by both of these, let alone my fellow course books (<i>mates?</i>).</p>
Yr 1 Outdoor Adventure Leadership and Management	<p>Internet maintenance is an inevitable possibility. Would a simple solution not just be to add an extension period if hand-in dates are within a set period of site down time?</p> <p>Blackboard app for Windows phones too!</p>
Yr 2 Accounting	<p>In relation to resources for the Accounting students it will be highly valuable. However, both students and lecturers will need thorough training.</p>
Yr 2 Psychology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The use of both pre- and post-lecture slides in some lectures is not helpful and causes confusion • Lack of availability of set texts in the Hive – many students cannot afford their own copies, so struggle with assignments • Concern from several students who feel that some set texts do not map onto lectures (eg Inclusivity and Diversity) and so struggle with reading around topics

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students are loving online multiple choice questions for Individual Differences! + the use of videos and polls during lectures from other modules and understanding – can we introduce this in more modules?
Yr 2 Environmental Management	<p>Even though it has been briefly mentioned, I suggest that all tutors who use Blackboard be made to upload lectures at least a day in advance and not just one hour before. Some tutors upload well in advance but some do not and unfortunately this does not help during lectures when we have to take notes on 100+ slides</p>
Yr 2 Animation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The <u>availability and consistency of programs</u> that students can gain access to, especially graphic program, is <u>not</u> fully satisfactory. For example, Flash (a basic animation program) is not available in the animation room Electronic submission system sometimes fails to upload file and <u>deny</u> students' <u>access to submission receipt</u>, which makes some students almost get marked as “late submission” or even “fail to submit” though they do it on time Too many <u>clashings</u> between <u>modules</u> of joint courses, such as <u>animation</u> and <u>screenwriting</u>, restricting students' module choices
Sport coaching and PE StAR	<p>Myself along with a number of peers find the Blackboard app much more useful and user-friendly than the Blackboard website. We almost exclusively use the app as opposed to the site. I would like to ask if you are considering a redesign of the website to make it more user-friendly and effective as a learning tool, for example, the system used in the app uses simpler lists and colour coding to navigate the menu</p>
Yr 2 PE and Sports Coaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We had a feedback and assessments forum before the majority of us had completed any assignments More clarity needed concerning word counts, some modules give 10% extra onto the word count, others don't More frequent forums – I like to hear what is going on in other institutes as well as from the staff involved
ISES Institute Rep	<p>Some of our lecturers give information on how to fill in the NSS/UW survey which is helpful for joint students and balancing positive and negative views. Why are these issues not going forward to CMCs and IQCs?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DO NOT GIVE ISES late lectures! <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students and lecturers are <u>both</u> against this We have been exempt from this rule for years – why change it now?
Yr 2 Human Geography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hive – we have often debated the idea of having a section in the library reserved just for students to eliminate the conflict with the public when looking for PC/quiet place to work. Would this be something that could be discussed??? Books – it would be great if mandatory reading was always available, at least as an e-book and a hard copy in the library The journals available to us for our assignments are great and plenty so big plus there! However, it still happens that Summon finds journals that we can't access for variety of reasons (not there, link not working, no access at all) and that is really frustrating so we often use Google Scholar instead As for learning environment, the whole year of geography is frustrated with

	<p>timetabling and the rooms we have been allocated – having each lecture in a different room for 30 credit module and using rooms too small for us. The lecturers said they tried to change that when they found out but couldn't get it changed. Could there possibly be more flexibility with changing rooms as the year starts??? I do understand that staff have to give expected numbers a year in advance which is tricky, however they said they clearly stated they needed 30 spaces and ended up with 15 ...</p>
Yr 1 Psychology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lectures have been shortened considerably – last week's research methods lasted half an hour instead of the dedicated 2 hours Doodle Poll is brilliant – and if times are inconvenient then tutors often rearrange For convenience (not essential, just people complaining really) can videos be uploaded or submitted to Blackboard as an assignment as people do not like having to use YouTube for distraction purposes PebblePad and Blackboard tutorials in the induction week were helpful and highly recommendable Feedback is not all in one place <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emailed for presentations Blackboard for Blackboard submissions SOLE for exams/physical submission
Yr 3 Archaeology & Landscape Studies + Archaeology & Heritage Studies	<p><u>Using the Hive</u> – staff are friendly, access is good, but there are still problems with actually being able to <u>study</u> in the Hive. It's a disruptive space – not at all conducive to study and also some key texts go missing</p> <p><u>Books and e-resources</u> – really lucky with the Archaeology department, although sometimes links to e-resources can be faulty</p> <p><u>Blackboard, PebblePad and Turnitin</u> – helpful and organised (app also really helps!)</p> <p><u>Equipment</u> – computers usually available, but have had to move at certain times due to ...</p> <p><u>Computer hardware/software</u> – computers can run a little slow</p>
Yr 1 Conservation Ecology	<p>Timetabled into a room with limited time – had to rush and lecture was not finished. Walked past room we often used – empty.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only around 12 hours per week on average in lectures for full-time course? Online submission hopeless Multiple versions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Software Non-compatible issues Problems caused by swapping between versions Lecturers not sure how to use Blackboard Journal links obscure sometimes Is Beta timetable going live? Blackboard glitches at random times Worcester Harvard references not accepted by some lecturers
Update from JK	<p>Responses to library issues submitted in writing</p> <p><u>Some lecturers don't accept Harvard references</u></p> <p>There is a clear university policy that requires all lecturers to accept the Worcester versions of Harvard, APA or Numerical. If your lecturer does not, you should raise it as an issue within your department / Institute, for instance at a course committee.</p>

Problems accessing e-resources via Summon

I'm sorry to hear that a number of students are clearly not finding links all work as well as they should. There were some problems earlier this year, with Library Search (Summon) itself, and with some of the e-book providers, and these took a while to get resolved with the companies who supply them. We're also double checking that all the databases and journals packages that we subscribe to are set up properly in Library Search as we have found a few anomalies.

However, there are so many resources linking from Summon that it's very difficult for library staff to spot on-going problems, but when we know about them it's sometimes very simple to put things right. It would be incredibly helpful if students could find time to send us specific examples of problem links - just drop a quick email to askalibrarian@worc.ac.uk or to your liaison librarian.

Help using Library Search / knowing how to access e-books

We ran some drop in sessions for several weeks at the start of year on how to access resources, but these were poorly attended. I've passed on the request from Ed Studies for a workshop to the relevant liaison librarian, and students are also welcome to book a one-to-one session for help – check on your subject LibGuide for times available.

Lack of books

I do appreciate how frustrating and difficult it is when there are only a few copies of a key text, especially if there is no online version. This is a problem every university library has to grapple with – how many copies are enough? I accept though that a single copy isn't enough and there are areas of the stock which need building up.

What we are doing:

The Library has requested and received more funding from the University over the last two years and has used this specifically for books. For instance, that's how we funded the extra ebooks initiative this semester.

Our policy is to buy every item that is listed as 'essential' on a reading list. Where there is an ebook available, we always buy one, but unfortunately, a lot of books just aren't published in e-format. Ebooks can also be up to 5 times more expensive than the print copy so we sometimes have to weigh up whether it's worth the expense.

We have worked hard to get copies of every reading list we could this year and have checked every single one (over 1500 lists!) to identify and buy the titles we didn't have in the library. Because this turned out to be quite a large number of titles, we were sometimes only able to buy a single copy this year, but we run regular reports of which titles are being heavily used and will start buying extra copies from next year's budget.

We work with academics to suggest that there should be at least 1 ebook in the essential reading for every reading list and a few different options rather than a single text. If this isn't the case for your module, it may be worth raising directly with the lecturers and asking if they could recommend an online resource or an alternative book instead.

It's good to hear positive feedback about the new reading list system. It will also give students a way to access their reading lists in advance of their course or next module starting.

Other book issues

Short Loan books – we altered the loan length in consultation with the Students' Union last year and also provide the drop off point in Peirson for commuting students to use.

Books not brought back on time by other students – I'm afraid there's nothing we can really do about this other than send reminders and impose a fine when they do bring it back.

Can the Silent Study space be made larger and more welcoming?

Does this refer to the space in Peirson as obviously it's not possible to physically enlarge Level 4 in the Hive? I'll pass this comment on, and would be happy to receive ideas on how to make it more welcoming

The Hive as a Study Space

There were several requests / suggestions for a separate student space in the Hive.

I will take these comments forward, but I believe from experience that having a separate space would not itself actually solve the perceived problems of noise and computer availability. Exactly the same complaints were raised when the library was in Peirson – and indeed, at every other university library I've ever worked at or talked to. It is very difficult to provide facilities that suit everybody all of the time. I believe the answer is to manage the space as well as we can for everybody and work with people causing disruption, whoever they may be. From your comments, we need to continue to work at this.

In the meantime I would encourage students to remember that they can book a PC at the Hive in any area they prefer, with the quietest areas being behind the lifts on level 3 and of course on level 4. Half term week does tend to be very busy and therefore noisier, so using the student only spaces at Peirson and City may be a good option at those times. I will also speak again to the staff at the Hive and ask them to remain vigilant in spotting and dealing with disruption.

With regards to the comment about inappropriate use of computers and printers, I can assure students that all of our staff take this incredibly seriously and any illegal activity that we are made aware of is immediately reported to the proper authorities. If you ever see anything you think inappropriate or are uncomfortable with – at the Hive, Peirson or at any other university site – you should report it immediately to a member of staff.