



University Library Assessment Program

(updated May 2019)

Background

The four components of the University Library assessment program provide a wealth of information to help: understand client needs and the overall effectiveness of the library; determine trends and benchmark versus our peers; assess progress toward strategic commitments; and demonstrate library value to the University community.

Framework for Assessment

The assessment program is linked to the University's Framework for Assessment and its three broad purposes: *quality improvement* to bring performance and goals into closer alignment; *quality assurance* to periodically test performance against expectations; and *accountability* to ensure regular communication of outcomes, desired outcomes, successes, and failures.

Organizational Structure

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

Overview

The University Library assessment program is divided into four major components: 1) library data and statistics, 2) library surveys, 3) key performance indicators and benchmarking, and 4) other assessment related activities.

1) Library Data and Statistics

The first major component of the assessment program requires annual coordination and systematic reporting of library data and statistics for professional associations (e.g. ARL, CARL as detailed below). Strong emphasis is placed on complying with specified data definitions and providing footnotes for any deviations or substantial changes in statistics compared to the previous year. All data submitted is made available in the public domain with raw data provided to member institutions only.

Statistics Submissions

Association of Research Libraries (ARL)

- University Library data: collections; expenditures; fringe benefits; expenditures from external sources; personnel; instruction; reference; circulation; use of electronic resources; interlibrary loans; annual gate count; doctoral degrees and faculty; enrollment
- University Archives/Special Collections data: expenditures; personnel; instruction
- Salary data for professional library employees: salary; job code; gender; years of professional experience; rank; full-time/part-time status; working job title

Canadian Association of Research Libraries (CARL)

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

Association of Faculties of Medicine of Canada (AFMC)

- Leslie and Irene Dubé Health Sciences Library data: institutional profile; facilities; collections (clinical tools, databases, e-journals, e-books, e-learning); services (hours, circulation, reference and information services, education, librarian activities); staffing



2) Library Surveys

The second major component of the assessment program involves gathering library feedback from students, faculty, and staff through surveys for quality improvement purposes. This includes conducting major and custom library surveys and accessing results from library questions in institutional surveys.

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

Major Library Surveys

- Major library surveys are established surveys in the library domain provided by third-party vendors (e.g. LibQUAL+, Ithaka S+R, Insync). These surveys gather feedback from students, faculty, and staff to help determine overall library performance including areas of strength and areas requiring improvement. A significant benefit of participating in major library surveys is the benchmarking opportunities available to participating institutions.
- The University Library conducted a major library survey (LibQUAL+) in 2007, 2010, and 2013 and is currently considering future participation in library surveys offered by Ithaka S+R and Insync.

Custom Library Surveys

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

Library Results from Institutional Surveys

- In addition to conducting surveys, the University Library has access to results from regular institutional surveys conducted at the University, which include general library questions.
- The University participates in the Canadian University Survey Consortium (CUSC) suite of surveys, which operate on a three-year cycle rotating between first-year, middle year, and graduating students. CUSC surveys ask questions regarding use and satisfaction with general facilities and services including “on-campus library” and “library electronic resources”. The CUSC first-year survey also includes a question on success in adjusting to University through various aspects of university life including “using the library”. The University also participates in the tri-annual Canadian Graduate and Professional Student Survey (CGPSS), which includes a question on the quality of experience using various university resources including “library facilities”.
- Although the library questions included in these institutional surveys are limited, there is value in tracking this data over time and comparing to our peers to gauge progress at the highest level. These results can also be used to supplement library data collected through other processes.



3) Key Performance Indicators and Benchmarking

To help gauge progress toward the University Library's strategic commitments, the third major component of the assessment program involves the development of performance indicators to track progress over time and benchmark against peer institutions (e.g. U15 group of Canadian research universities). Through our membership and participation in leading professional associations and consortia (e.g. ARL and CARL), the University Library has access to a wealth of data including comparator data for our U15 peer institutions. Data is also available through independent public reports such as *Maclean's* annual rankings of Canadian universities.

Association of Research Libraries (ARL) Data

- All library data submitted to ARL is compiled into comprehensive annual statistics reports available to all member institutions. These reports include statistics for all ARL indicators, percentages and ratios providing years of statistics to determine trends over time and benchmark to other ARL institutions.
- Since 2014-15, the University Library has analyzed and summarized the annual statistics available from ARL into a report including University of Saskatchewan results versus our U15 peers for all ARL indicators, percentages, ratios, and the library investment index.
- Each year this summary report includes comparisons to the U15 average over the last few years and our ranking among individual U15 institutions over the last couple of years.

Canadian Association of Research Libraries (CARL) Data

- All library data submitted to CARL is compiled into comprehensive annual statistics reports available to all member institutions. These reports include statistics for all CARL indicators. In addition, raw data reports provide statistics for CARL ratios. Together, the reports and raw data provide years of statistics to determine trends over time and benchmark to other CARL institutions.
- Since 2015-16, the University Library has analyzed and summarized the annual statistics available from CARL into a report including University of Saskatchewan results compared to various peer groups (including the U15) for all CARL indicators and ratios.
- Each year this summary report includes comparisons to various peer averages over the last few years and our ranking among individual peer institutions over the last couple of years.

Maclean's Annual University Rankings

- *Maclean's* magazine releases its annual rankings of Canadian universities where the University of Saskatchewan is ranked in a group of 15 medical doctoral institutions defined as offering a broad range of PhD programs and research with all having medical schools (similar to the U15 group). *Maclean's* data is drawn from publically available information and collated by the magazine.
- The rankings include 2 library indicators: library expenses measuring the percentage of the university's budget dedicated to library funding overall and library acquisitions measuring the proportion of the library's budget allocated to the acquisition of new material. The results for these library indicators are tracked annually for the University of Saskatchewan and our medical doctoral peers.



4) Other Assessment Related Activities

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

Academic Program Review

- All undergraduate and graduate programs at the University of Saskatchewan are planned to be systematically reviewed over an 8-year period. As part of this process, the library provides summary reports (supporting documentation) outlining the library's facilities, services, and collections strengths in the areas of each program under review.

Accreditation Processes

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

Evaluation of Teaching

- At the University Library, a systematic program of peer and student evaluation of librarian teaching forms an essential component of tenure and promotion considerations for librarians for whom teaching is assigned.

Library Evidence for the University

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

Periodic Reviews

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

Summary

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



University Library Assessment Program Chart

**University of Saskatchewan
Framework for Assessment**
(comprehensive assessment strategy)

University Library Assessment Program
(4 components tied to quality improvement, quality assurance, accountability)

Quality Improvement
(aligning goals and performance)

Quality Assurance
(testing performance against expectations)

Accountability
(communicating outcomes, successes and failures)

- Activities**
- Library Surveys**
 - Major library surveys (e.g. LibQUAL+)
 - Custom library surveys collecting feedback at the local level
 - Library results from institutional surveys (e.g. CUSC and CGPSS library questions)
 - Performance Indicators and Benchmarking**
 - Analysis of ARL and CARL stats (University of Saskatchewan versus the U15 and other peer groups)
 - ARL library investment index rankings
 - Maclean's* annual university rankings (2 library indicators - library expenses and library acquisitions)
 - Evaluation of Teaching**
 - Student and peer evaluation of teaching
 - Periodic Reviews**
 - Branch, unit, and functional area reviews

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

- Activities**
- Library Statistics Submissions**
 - ARL, CARL, and AFMC annual statistics
 - ARL and CARL annual salary statistics
 - External Publications**
 - ARL and CARL annual statistics and salary statistics publications
 - Maclean's* annual university rankings
 - Internal Publications**
 - Analysis of ARL and CARL stats (University of Saskatchewan versus the U15 and other peer groups)
 - Major library and custom library surveys (summary reports and results)
 - Library results from institutional surveys (e.g. CUSC and CGPSS library questions)
 - Library Evidence for the University**
 - Share library evidence from assessment program with the University to help inform decisions that affect the library