

Queen's University Belfast
Inter-Library Loan Survey
May 2011
Report

1. Introduction and Methodology

- 1.1** An inter-library survey was carried out in 2011. A number of significant changes had been introduced since the previous one which was carried out seven years ago. This main purpose of this survey was to obtain feedback from staff and postgraduate research students on recent developments such as online requesting and the electronic delivery of articles. More generally it sought to gauge the extent to which the service was meeting their needs with a view to identifying areas for improvement and development.
- 1.2** The survey took the form of a web-based questionnaire which was emailed to all academic staff and postgraduate research students, a total of 3,216 people.
- 1.3** The survey remained live for a two week period. It ran from 6th May till 23rd May 2011.

2. Respondent Profile

- 2.1** A total of 646 questionnaires were returned which equates to a twenty percent response rate. This is good, particularly as the survey was all inclusive and did not target just regular or recent users of the inter-library loan service.
- 2.2** A slightly higher percentage of staff completed the questionnaire, nearly 22% of the 1501 emailed as opposed to 19% of the 1715 postgraduate students contacted. However, as Table 1 shows, the actual feedback is more or less evenly divided between the two categories.

Table 1

Category	Number of responses	Percentage response rate
Staff	322	49.8%
Post-graduate research student	324	50.2%

- 2.3** All twenty schools are represented in the completed questionnaires. Medicine, Dentistry & Biomedical Sciences feature prominently followed, some way behind, by English and then by Biological Sciences. A detailed breakdown by School is given in Table 2.

Table 2

Your School	Number of responses	Percentage response rate
Biological Sciences	45	7.0%
Chemistry and Chemical Engineering	41	6.4%
Education	20	3.1%
Electronics, Electrical Engineering and Computer Science	34	5.3%
English	49	7.6%
Geography, Archaeology and Palaeoecology	31	4.8%
History and Anthropology	28	4.4%
Languages, Literatures and Performing Arts (Now School of Modern Languages)	29	4.5%
Law	22	3.4%
Management	25	3.9%
Mathematics and Physics	31	4.8%
Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering	28	4.4%
Medicine, Dentistry and Biomedical Sciences	71	11.0%
Music and Sonic Arts (Now School of Creative Arts)	15	2.3%
Nursing and Midwifery	25	3.9%
Pharmacy	38	5.9%
Planning, Architecture and Civil Engineering	36	5.6%
Politics, International Studies and Philosophy	18	2.8%
Psychology	23	3.6%
Sociology, Social Policy and Social Work	34	5.3%
Total	643	

- 2.4 The respondents were asked how long they had been using the inter-library loan service because online requesting and the electronic delivery of articles are both relatively recent innovations. Fortuitously the individuals who completed the questionnaire were evenly divided between those who had been using the service prior to the changes and those who had only begun to use the service in recent years. See Table 3 below.

Table 3

How long have you been using the inter-library loan service at Queens'?	Number of responses	Percentage response rate
More than 3 years	285	44.4%
Less than 3 years	288	44.9%
Haven't used it yet	69	10.7%

- 2.5 The survey sought to establish the average number of requests submitted by users. Over half of the respondents placed fewer than ten requests per year. Although nearly a third of the users asked for considerably more than that, only a small number actually exceeded thirty. A detailed breakdown is given in Table 4.

Table 4

How many inter-library loan requests do you submit on average per year?	Number of responses	Percentage response rate
None	74	11.5%
Between 1 and 9	370	57.3%
Between 10 and 29	155	24.0%
Between 30 and 49	30	4.6%
Over 50	17	2.6%

3. Feedback on Recent Service Innovations

- 3.1 Part two of the survey focused on the users' reaction to service developments. This included online requesting, the method of payment, and the electronic delivery of journal articles.
- 3.2 The move from printed forms to online requesting has been a resounding success with nearly 90% of the respondents finding the electronic method of submission more convenient. See

Table 5 for the figures. Interestingly there was no significant difference in the response from those familiar with both methods, and the more recent users who would not have known anything else. Greater speed and efficiency were cited as the main advantages of online requesting while several touched on the environmentally friendly aspect. Less interaction with library staff was the only downside. A selection of typical comments is listed below.

Table 5

Do you find submitting requests online more convenient than handling printed forms	Number of responses	Percentage response rate
Yes	569	88.4%
No	12	1.9%
No preference	27	4.2%
Not applicable	36	5.6%

Comments about online requesting

Would not want to go back to the printed forms.

Much more convenient.

It saves time and is much handier.

Huge improvement.

No hassle.

Having moved recently from another institution where requests had to be made on paper, I have found the online system here infinitely more convenient.

Absolutely! Speedy & green!

It is more convenient but it is better to hand the request to an actual person who deals with it and who can help out if something goes wrong.

Online forms are easier, faster and do not require leaving the office.

This is a fantastic and time saving improvement.

It's easier and I can do it in University or at home.

Faster and more efficient than the paper forms.

Much more straightforward.

It's brilliant - love it.

Much better than the old system of completing a form and submitting to the library directly.

I usually talk to one of your incredibly helpful staff.

Has really improved the service.

Excellent and quick.

It is also more eco-friendly.

- 3.3 There are two ways of submitting inter-library loan requests online, either by selecting the 'Inter-Loan Request' option in the Library's catalogue (QCat) or direct from a database search when using QConnect. The survey sought to gauge the user's views on both methods.
- 3.4 Three-quarters of the respondents have used the inter-library loan request form available in QCat, the Library's catalogue. See Table 6. The general consensus is that it is quick, convenient and easy to use with just a few quibbles about the request form or QCat itself. A selection of typical comments is given below.

Table 6

Have you requested inter-library loans using the 'Inter Loan Request' option on the Library's catalogue?	Number of responses	Percentage response rate
Yes	480	75.2%
No	158	24.8%

Comments re requesting ILLs using the online form on the catalogue

Generally very quick and easy to use.

The form could be a little more intuitive.

So convenient to do everything from your desk.

Sometimes the page freezes and I don't know if the request has actually gone.

Excellent service.

QCat is not the most convenient or easy system.

Very efficient.

I really like this method of requesting interlibrary loans. The service is very prompt and staff have always been very helpful if I've had difficulty in tracking down a book or article.

Very slow.

Extremely convenient.

This is how I would usually order inter-library loans - it is a fantastic service.

Very effective.

It is simple and convenient to use.

There is still a lot of room for improvement.

Much easier than paper version, but online request form is not ideally suited for journal articles.

Great system.

Easy to use. Can be requested remotely and at any time.

Seems very easy and runs efficiently.
Maybe the best service at QUB.
It is a very quick service and efficient.
I found this easy & if I needed assistance it was provided quickly.

- 3.5 Only a third of the respondents requested inter-library loans whilst searching databases via QConnect. See Table 7. Their responses were generally favourable and, in particular, they appreciated the convenience of the form being populated automatically. However, many were unaware of this function as borne out by some of the comments below and would have appreciated a bit more guidance or information about the facility.

Table 7

Have you requested inter-library loans direct from your database search results using QConnect?	Number of responses	Percentage response rate
Yes	209	32.8%
No	428	67.2%

A selection of comments re requesting ILLs using the form embedded in QConnect

Use this frequently. It works very well.
Was not aware of this feature - will look into it.
Extremely useful.
I actually tried but failed.
This is the only method I've used to request inter-library loans and I find it exceptionally convenient as all of the fields are therefore already filled in.
Did not know this was possible.
Good joined-up service.
Hate it.
I may not have been fully aware of the facility.
Can be frustrating when the details don't appear to transfer across to the form successfully.
Very user-friendly and the fact it populates automatically very many specifics about the request, it makes this process very simple and easy.
Don't know how to!
This is a very efficient way of making requests and ensures that all of the correct information is present.
Would like more info on this.

Really fast and time efficient. Simply excellent and reliable.

Wasn't aware of this facility.

This is brilliant.

I'll have to look out for this in the future.

Not really sure of all options. A small summary would be good.

All very straight-forward.

Must try this sometime.

- 3.6 The introduction of online requesting heralded the end of paper vouchers to 'pay' for requests. A system of online credit allocations was set up in its place. The comments indicate that many users are unaware of this aspect of the service and this is probably because it is managed by their school office. In any case about 90% of the respondents claim to be happy with the arrangement. See Table 8. Even though the information is readily available, the comments also reveal a surprising lack of awareness regarding the cost of obtaining an item via the inter-library loan service.

Table 8

How satisfied are you with the method of allocating credit units (vouchers)?	Number of responses	Percentage response rate
Very satisfied	141	25.3%
Satisfied	367	65.9%
Dissatisfied	40	7.2%
Very dissatisfied	9	1.6%

Some comments regarding the method of paying for inter-library loans

The current system is much more efficient than the previous voucher system.

I'm not sure exactly how the allocations work but I have been happy with what is available to me.

I don't understand how it works, I just request a loan electronically and it arrives. I didn't realise the vouchers were still in use.

I think this comes automatically from my centres budget - so I don't really have an opinion on it.

I didn't realise that I had paid for inter-library loans. Maybe I should keep quiet!

I don't actually know how many credits I or my school have to spend, so it's bit like giving me a blank cheque.

The allocation is insufficient for the size of the School.

As a member of staff I don't really encounter this. It may be that my school is less satisfied.

When told that credits have been removed from your departments allowance, I really have no idea how 'valuable' these are, what my fair share of them is etc., I think this should be mentioned to new PhD students, perhaps in the welcome pack or similar. Apologies if it already is and I have just overlooked it.

An excellent system.

I haven't found the need for inter library loans. Given that almost everything can be obtained from Google Scholar/ Web of Science or by asking the author of an article directly, it should be cheap.

I'm not sure how many vouchers are given per school, but I've never had a problem getting articles.

Sensible arrangement.

Actually I do not know that the credit units system continued to exist after online version of request form is being introduced.

It seems like the fairest system.

I do not know much about this. I think inter-library loan facility is free of charge.

Unsure how this is actually allocated.

The use of paper vouchers encourages hoarding when budgets are tight.

I find the fees structure quite outrageous. Apart from this, for staff the current system may work ok, but when a student needs to request an inter-library loan for one of their assignments, they have to get it signed off by their HoS, which I find risible. I might want to add that I come from a system where it goes without saying that any number of inter-library loan requests a student may put in are covered by the tuition fees they are paying anyway.

I wasn't aware the School was still being allocated credit units since we switched to the online system.

Do not really know about this...

To be honest im not quite sure what the method is or how many vouchers are allocated to the school.

The system of credit units is not explained clearly - I don't really know how it works I'm afraid!]

I don't know much about this aspect of interlibrary loans.

I keep an eye on this as a number of my PGR students need to use the ILL service and I have not been aware of any problems in recent years.

- 3.7 Secure Electronic Delivery is another relatively recent innovation. Despite all the drawbacks mentioned in the comments below only about 8% actually expressed any dissatisfaction with this method of delivery. See Table 9. The speed and convenience offered by SED is appreciated. The main gripe is actually with the restrictions associated with Digital Rights Management. Problems downloading material also gets a mention but this should be now more or less a thing of the past with the adoption of the File Open platform nearly a couple of years ago.

Table 9

Whenever possible journal requests are delivered electronically to your desktop. How satisfied are you with this method of delivery?	Number of responses	Percentage response rate
Very satisfied	263	41.2%
Satisfied	191	29.9%
Dissatisfied	36	5.6%
Very dissatisfied	17	2.7%
Haven't received anything via SED	131	20.5%

Comments regarding the SED service

In my opinion this is the best way to have the document delivered.

The only problem with SED is you cannot save and print again. Sometimes if there is any problem with the printer, the article cannot be accessed again.

The speed of SED is a real benefit, but the quality of the pdfs provided by the British Library is very variable. Particularly if a paper contains graphical material, it can be very hard to read or use.

I hate the way the document effectively self-destructs... this means that you only get a paper copy, which cannot be searched electronically and viewed using modern methods (e.g. on a tablet)

It's such a good service. I find it really convenient.

My only issues would be that it can sometimes be difficult to open the files, and it can be a bit stressful knowing that the file can only be printed once in case there is a problem with the printer and for some reason the file isn't printed when it's sent to the printer. Also the computer I use in lab can't open that type of document (and I can't download the software to a department computer without administrator privileges) so often I have to make an otherwise unnecessary trip to the library to print the documents.

Sometimes there are problems with the delivery service - ie. they may not download properly/ do not print properly - and in doing so you have lost your only print option

A very fast service.

More or less satisfied. The fact that you can only download it once within a certain time period can be annoying. Sometimes I would like to download it to my laptop as well as to my office computer.

A great idea - quick and common-sensical.

This is a huge problem for me! For academics working in several locations we cannot print the article where and when we need it! It is really problematic to download and start reading and then NOT be able to download the same article to print it from another machine. It has made me use the service much less than I would.

SED saves me having to keep checking my pigeon hole. I think it's much faster and wastes less paper.

Once I was in holiday and missed a 14-day deadline to print off the pdf - doesn't seem fair?

I would prefer print copies. SED is occasionally dysfunctional -- especially on a Mac.

Read privileges seem to time out after a certain period of time.

It's a pain not being able to keep a digital copy of the article for later reference.

I do not want to print if came online. Why can't we save and browse, instead of printing and wasting paper?

The amount of restriction on the use of the document (eg printing or forwarding to postgrad students) is a problem. If the School printer isn't working this can mean the loss of access to the document.

I can only download on one of my computers, and at least one document expired before I had time to read it.

Had a problem once where the article wdn't open - something to do with the software.

After some initial difficulties -my fault- I now know how to download it - again it is quicker and more efficient.

As a researcher I just need the papers. Where is the problem sending them just as a normal pdf I can include in my citation library? The expiry date of the received pdf-files is incredibly annoying and, as Queen's already paid for the service of the British library I wonder why I can't keep a copy!? Besides, the system is not compatible with Linux, which I preferentially use, and thus unfairly boosts Windows. In addition, I wonder why I get just poorly scanned pages of a book instead of the electronically available pdf version of the paper, which can't be accessed by Queen's (fair enough) but SURELY by the British main library in London - that's ridiculous!

I find it a slight inconvenience having to print the SED document. Of course it would be great to be able to store the document electronically but I imagine for security reasons, this cannot be done

It's very quick and efficient, but sometimes there can be problems opening them successfully (especially as they can only be opened once).

Maybe an option of printing articles twice would be more useful.

Some problems opening on Mac, but otherwise satisfied.

- 3.8 The users were asked which aspect of the interlibrary service, from a choice of four options, was the most important to them. Half of the respondents placed speed of service first while a quarter opted for the convenience of online requesting. The assistance provided by library staff was also highly regarded. Given the drawbacks and difficulties associated with Secure Electronic Delivery mentioned in the above comments, it is not surprising that only 5% rated it above the other three options. See Table 10 for more detail.

Table 10

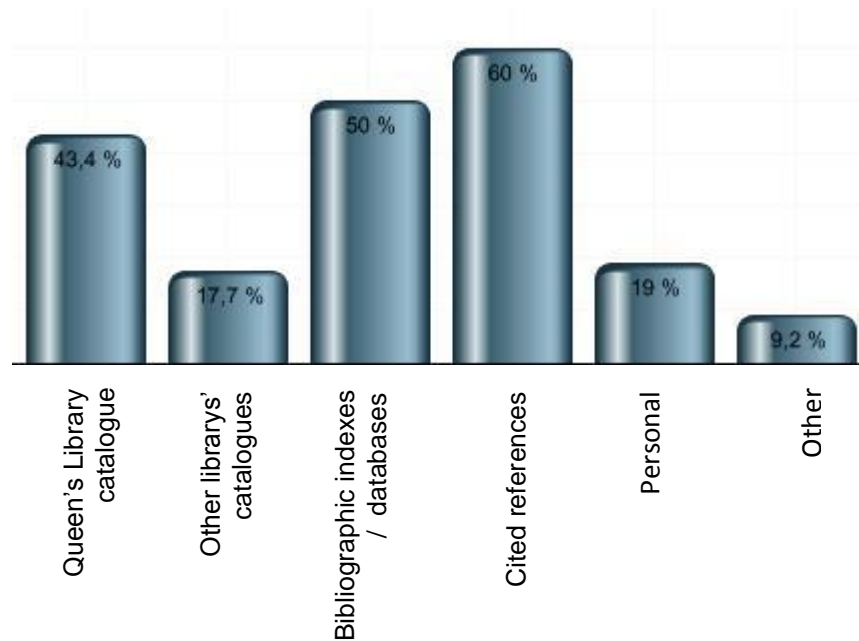
Aspect of the service	Number of responses	Percentage response rate
Speed of service	320	51.4%
Online submission of requests	158	24.5%
Helpful/knowledgeable staff	114	18.3%
SED - Secure electronic delivery of articles	31	5.0%

4. Information Sources and Information Gathering Habits

- 4.1** The third section of the questionnaire sought to establish some facts about the way in which staff and postgraduate research students find out about the material they request via inter-library loan. It also sought to obtain information on what other sources they use to obtain full-text articles not available in the Library.
- 4.2** There are broadly five ways to obtain bibliographic references and staff and research students were asked to indicate which ones they used. They could select as many as were appropriate and could specify 'other' if necessary. Cited references in books and journals and bibliographic indexes and databases were the top resources and both are used by over half of the respondents. QCat, the Library's catalogue, also proved popular as a resource. At the other extreme only 19% relied on personal recommendation and a similar number consulted the catalogues of other libraries. See Table 11 for the details. Interestingly there was no significant difference between the response from staff and the response from research students.

Table 11

Where do you find out about the material you request on inter-library loan (choose more than one option if appropriate).



- 4.3** Fifty-seven individuals, or 9% of the sample, selected 'other' but many of the resources they went on to specify would have actually been covered by one of the other categories. A representative sample of the examples they gave are listed below.

A representative sample of the 'Other' resources specified

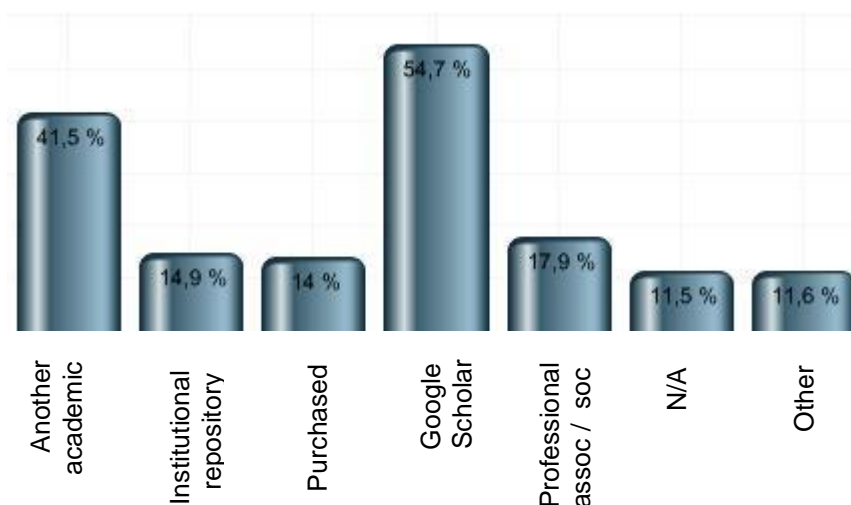
Copac
Amazon
Google Scholar
PubMed
Online search
Google Alert and Amazon Alert
Bookshops sites (Amazon, Bookfinder)
QCat search
AFBIs library
Scifinder, Web of science
Staff who are very helpful
From journals' webpage
Library of Congress
During induction program

4.4 The survey sought to establish what other sources, besides inter-library loans, the respondents used to obtain full text articles. Over half of them have used Google Scholar and many have been able to obtain what they needed from another academic. Less reliance was placed upon sources such as a professional bodies or institutional repositories. Eighty-nine individuals, or 12% of the sample, actually purchased the material online from a publisher. Within that overall picture, staff relied more heavily on another academic than did the research students, 48% as opposed to 35%. The trend was reversed for Google Scholar with 62% of students using it as opposed to 47% of the academics. In all other respects their responses were similar. See Table 12 for the details.

4.5 The specific examples cited under 'other' shows that individuals are prepared to travel to other libraries whilst others are willing to purchase material themselves. More interestingly the comments testify to the attraction and easy availability of online alternatives to the inter-library loan service such as Deepdyve, a rental service providing access to full text articles from leading publishers.

Table 12

How else do you obtain full text articles not available in Queen's Library? (Choose more than one option if appropriate).



A representative sample of the 'other' alternatives specified

Archive.org

Hire them on www.deepdyve.com

From the many freely available journals (at least older issues).

I have bought my own material on a number of occasions.

Buy journal or book from Amazon, Abebooks etc.

Travel to other libraries (such as BL) for extensive work.

Pharmacy at the Belfast HSC Trust

Other libraries using friends login details.

Public Library.

It usually means having to fund myself for a trip to London or Cambridge.

Email the study author as they are keen to get citations. Usually get a pdf back within 24 hours.

Travel to the relevant location.

List-serv group of law librarians : Intl-law

From industrial contacts

I purchase subscriptions to journals

Try to access in other libraries eg BL/Paris

From other libraries.

5. Beyond Inter-Library Loans: Document Delivery from Stock

5.1 The fourth part of the survey was designed to sound out users about possible developments and to determine if they would be prepared to pay for an extended inter-library loan service.

5.2 The distinction between articles sourced from the British Library and articles delivered from the Library's own stock is not always obvious to the end-user. Secure Electronic Document Delivery and online access to full-text journals held in Queen's has almost created a seamless document delivery service. However users still need to visit the library in person to use journals held only in print so the survey sought to establish if staff and research students would like the Library to send them copies of this material. The response was overwhelmingly in favour with over three-quarters saying 'yes'. However the associated comments give a clearer picture with many considering it a nice but unnecessary luxury. Others saw it as a waste of resources, money as well as staff time and, some acknowledged the value and pleasure of actually visiting the library. See Table 13 along with the comments below.

Table 13

Would you like to see document delivery extended to include articles held in Queen's	Number of responses	Percentage response rate
Yes	475	77.4%
No	139	22.6%

Comments on the provision of a fetch and copy services for journals available in the Library but only in printed format.

That would be wonderful - it would save me a lot of time and effort.

Would be convenient, but not necessary.

It is real sign of indolence if you cannot bother to go over to the library and look up and photocopy an article!.

Having to manually copy articles from the library can be a pain.

This may stretch the service unnecessarily and we might lose out on what's genuinely unavailable here. If the material is here then it is upto to us to drop in at the library (unless there are disability or other issues which may be separately considered).

It would be nice, but recognising the cost of library staff time, I fear that this would not be a good use of money.

What for? So people have even less need to actually do their library research in the library? This is non-sensical.

This would be amazing. As I usually work from home and live 80 miles away from the university (and have two young babies) it would be great to have this service without having to travel to Queen's.

I'd rather spend the money on retaining as many subscriptions as possible. It is always possible to walk over and photocopy something.

Not for me - I like going to the library but maybe it should at least be an option for others.

Especially those in special collection. Keeping all the Irish history in special collection is just horrendously annoying. I understand if it was rare or old documents, but the most up to date literature is kept there, as are the journals. And, we need to use these for are research, but have to come and sit in the library to do our jobs. This means you can't just catch up on your literature in a spare moment, or on the train, or in the evening at home- but have to sit in the library, which requires allocating blocks of time to make it worth your while. Historians already spend considerable time in archives and libraries consulting primary research, without having our secondary reading restricted too!

If this means library staff doing photocopying for academic staff, I don't see that being an appropriate use of their time - academic staff can and should do it themselves.

My priority is access and this seems not worth it to me -I'm happy to copy my own articles and often they are available on JSTOR anyway

I think this is unnecessary and resources would be better directed at maintaining the speed of obtaining articles not available at QUB.

I'm divided on this - I see no harm in retaining the inter loan system as it stands. Yes it might be nice to be able to request every article from your desk - but this will mean fewer visits to the library in general. In my opinion it's important to retain this contact - If nothing else it's useful to remind yourself now and again how the library referencing system works and there's a bit of satisfaction in grey literature searching. Sorry, sounds a bit sad :) but I think we should be encouraging more visits to the library, I feel the medical library is already under utilised.

Yes, this would be very useful for student who are doing research to save their time.

I find it time consuming and inconvenient to hunt down the article required and photocopy it.

Well, this would be a great luxury! For articles not currently available via online databases, I keep a running list and spend a day in the stacks and photocopying as needed. The idea of being able to ORDER one of these articles would be a great luxury, but not necessary, really.

- 5.3** Following on from this, the next question sought to establish how much staff and research students (or their School) would be willing to pay to have articles held in Queen's photocopied and delivered to them. To help them put it in perspective they were told that each inter-library loans request costs £10. Over half of the respondents were not prepared to pay anything for this service and only a quarter were willing to pay half the current rate. See Table 14 and the associated comments below. There was no discernable difference between the response from staff and from research students. In fact with regard to unwillingness to pay for the service the figure was 57% and 53% respectively.

Table 14

How much would you, or your School, be willing to pay to have an article held in Queen's photocopied and delivered to you? (Items obtained from other libraries normally cost £10).	Number of responses	Percentage response rate
£9 per item	15	2.4%
£7 per item	13	2.1%
£5 per item	162	25.9%
I wouldn't be willing to pay for this service	347	55.5%
Other, please specify	88	14.1%

A selection of typical comments on the prospect of paying for a fetch, copy and delivery service from the Library's own stock

If the library already has it in stock, I would not be willing to pay for the service.

It would be blasphemous to charge services like these!

We simply don't have the budget for this, though it would be nice!

I wouldn't be willing to use School resources for this. Queen's library is centrally placed and easily accessible.

I can attend the library but if it was necessary I'm sure the school would pay a similar amount to an I.L.L. Speed would be the most important factor - if I was paying for this service it is likely that it would be due to me not having time to go to the library myself.

I didn't realise this service costs so much money.

I don't want paper wasting photocopies but handi pdf files! (most modern scanners or even copy machines include the feature "store as pdf" anyway) For that I (my school) would be willing to pay £2 an item.

I would be willing for it to be appropriately costed, as an institutional cost.

If the quality of the photocopied document was of good standard and came in a comb binding with cover then I'd be happy to pay £5, depending on the length of the document.

I didn't realise it was that expensive.

Depending on the article size between 1- £5 but I would prefer electronic delivery for environmental reasons.

Cost is a big issue. It may be better if these costs came out of University overheads charged to research projects. If we are going to be charged directly for this we need to put into our project planning and source the money. In addition it will require added administration at group level to implement.

Slightly higher than the cost of walking over and photocopying in person would be appropriate - especially if the cost would help to support a dedicated member of staff for the service.

If the articles are already in Queen's I don't see why we should be paying anything, I said 1 pound or so just for the copying or maybe you can assign a price that will go to charity.

Even the low price of £5 is robbery as a print cost only 5 pence!! The university only seeks new opportunities to make money.

The school probably wouldn't be willing to pay but for convenience I would be willing to pay around £5.

I would probably be willing to pay up to £10 -- and would use the service selectively (i.e., only in a crunch). I doubt the School of English would support this service for postgrads, however.

Would assume that my student fees would pay for these types of services seeing as they are standard for most universities.

Would gladly pay this for items stored off MBC site if required for e.g. urgent grant applications.

I think it would be a good idea but the financial side would need to be worked out, I would pay too much for the service.

I wouldn't have a problem photocopying the article myself

I do not find that it is necessary as I receive most articles electronically and do not find going into the library and accessing a paper copy of an article inconvenient.

Since I am one of the international students doing PhD research in Queen's, my opinion would be there shouldn't be any charge due to the fees that we've paid to study in Queens.

This strikes me as a waste of resources. Library staff are already very busy and journals are not difficult to find, particularly in the new library.

My Post Grad fees are not insubstantial and I view library services and acquisitions as part of the undertaking.

I would be willing to pay depending on the importance of the article to my research/inability to obtain it elsewhere.

6. Future Service Developments

6.1 The final question gave the respondents an opportunity to suggest ways in which the inter-library loan service could be improved. See below for a selection of comments. These have been divided up into broad areas: -

- Satisfied with the service as it stands (6.2)
- Feedback on pending requests (6.3)
- Time taken to satisfy requests (6.4)
- The catalogue (6.5)
- Journal holdings and funds (6.6)
- Access to electronic resources (6.7)
- Service quality and provision (6.8)
- Publicity and information (6.9)
- Possible developments (6.10)

6.2 Satisfied with the service

Very satisfied with Queen's service.

Very happy with the service - much better than at other institutions I have worked at.

It is generally a very good service. Well done and thank you.

Happy with current service

I have found the inter-library loan service to be excellent.

It is really first class.

I feel I personally get a really good service from library staff - the speed and interlibrary access is satisfactory at this time.

I'm very happy with the service, thank you.

I'm very happy with the service and would like it to continue as it is.

The service is excellent and well-improved.

I am very satisfied with the inter-library loan service. Lately there has been problems with loans from the British Library but I understand this has nothing to do with QUB.

Extremely good already= a good exemplar of a well run service that supports academic research very effectively and informatively. many thanks

I think the system works very well and requires no improvements at this stage.

The most important thing is to retain the service: please do not cut in any way as it is a lifeline!

The service currently works very well, I have no recommendations.

I have had very little experience of the service - just one recent instance. There was a very helpful member of staff and the item (a book) came very quickly - exactly what I hope for from the service.

I am very satisfied with the inter-library loan service and my studies have benefitted greatly from the service over the course of my MA and PhD. I have no suggestions for improvement!

6.3 Feedback on pending requests

If an item is unavailable then the person requesting it should be informed about that, or kept up-to-date about the progress the library is making in trying to get the item= in at least one case I was waiting (and still am waiting!) on an item that seems to be hard to get but I do not receive any communication from the library on this!

When an item is requested but takes longer than average to arrive it would be nice to receive a follow-up email (perhaps after three/four weeks) to explain that the book is in demand, not available or delayed for whatever reason. I have, on a couple of occasions, had requests just drop off my account without explanation. All in all I am extremely happy with the ILL service at Queen's.

More feedback when loans are delayed.

To be kept informed via email on progress of inter-library loan requests (I've had one or two that I never heard about).

Satisfied- if journal not available straight away tell please indicate length of time .

If it is going to be quite long until I receive the article, I should be told this.

You could give, in the 'My Account' listing, an expected time of delivery for each article. Perhaps update this when information becomes available.

Better feedback about difficulties in obtaining certain kinds of material. More information on limitations in securing foreign items.

Sometimes it has not been clear to me why a particular publication is delays or inaccessible - this has been particularly the case for Russian publications.

Thank you for your service for us. I have ever borrowed several books via the inter-library loan service. Some of them are gotten quickly however other are no feedback any more after I submitted the request forms. So my suggestion is, if possible, whether you could send me some feedback if the literature cannot be attained. Thank you very much.

I think the ILL service is fine as is. The most useful thing that could be provided would be a progress report on ILLs so you could see your requests and a likely delivery date. Overall I think it is very good.

It would save money if you sent an e-mail rather than a letter about any problems in finding the right document. - There are a number of documents from foreign sources which I have been waiting for about 4 months. It would be good if there was some feedback to say why this is slow in coming, or whether any efforts have been made to chase up the request. - I think the service is excellent. Thank you very much, I really appreciate it.

Speed Updates on progress

It will be great to have a facility to see more details about the status of items being ordered. The present one is too little. History of dates could be made visible. I have an item sitting on the system as 'reapply', which isn't clear what it means or what action I am supposed to take.

Would it be possible to give status updates or estimated time of delivery for articles before ordering?

It would be useful to have more information about the status of inter-library loans e.g. updates on articles that are difficult to obtain, and also to have a longer record of items that have been ordered.

Written notification of an item being unavailable seems outdated. Is there any way this could be emailed instead? It also seems to take a very long time for this information to come through. Prompter notification would allow more time to look at alternative sources for unavailable material. Thanks.

Could let me know if there is likely to be a delay. Otherwise it works well and the staff are always helpful

The service is usually interminably slow, you don't get any indication of whether a book's likely to come in so you just have to wait and hope. A reliable estimation of the waiting time is essential.

Better feedback on the (admittedly few) articles that can't be sourced in the UK and take ages---often getting lost from the system.

Would it be possible to give status updates or estimated time of delivery for articles before ordering?

6.4 Time taken to satisfy requests

Make the service faster.

The service is quite slow, especially when it comes to SED.

Make it more speedy.

A faster service would be great as I generally request something that I need at that time and waiting is generally not possible or convenient.

When an item is not available at that time from the British Library a letter is sent asking for the borrower to contact the library if they wish to continue with the request. I find this strange. It would be better to assume that the borrower still wishes to continue. If this is not possible, if this letter was sent by email it would be much easier and quicker to reply to confirm.

Perhaps more staff dedicated to it in order to speed up the process, with the potential of a next day e-mail service.

It could be made more speedy if possible.

In the case of books perhaps it should be quicker to get the requested reading.

I just like to receive the electronic copies as soon as possible. Prior experience at the University of Bath was that most British Library electronic deliveries were almost instantaneous.

I think the ILL service works well. It is essential service which academics could not do without. The speed is generally good and in most cases delays are due to the book being in demand.

I appreciate the ability to order ILLs online, but the delay is frustrating. Immediate electronic delivery of the electronic version of the article should be possible. It is completely insane to pay for someone to photocopy a hard copy of an article and convert this back to a pdf (inferior quality) and send this when there is an original electronic copy in existence. There must be a better way of organising this! Instant access is available for most articles by pay per view - could the institution not organise payment to the journals instead of ILL?

I think, it is very good and staff is very friendly. Only my concern is only to time (time get the article from the point of request). Better to deliver the article as fast as possible.

6.5 The catalogue

The QUB catalogue needs to be improved= the greatest hassle is trying to find out whether a particular item is held in the QUB library and this usually requires about 3 searches in order to be certain that the item is not already in QUB. In general, the quality of cataloguing information in QUB is very inconsistent and incomplete.

I frequently find that the QCAT records are inadequate, and Library staff inform me that an article is in fact available following a request.

6.6 Journal holdings and funds

With ongoing cutbacks in Journal subscriptions at Queen's the inter-library loan service is all the more important as it the need to keep it affordable.

Wider access to journals

Please could QUB be activated for www.pubget.com ?

Eliminate it by getting more journals.

None, but I feel I have to use it too often. Queen's should have a wider stock of journals!

More funding

Direct purchase of vouchers from ILL at Queens

We need an increase in the number of vouchers allocated to Schools - this is in my view imperative to offset the negative effects of journal de-subscriptions.

In general, i am very pleased with the service that is provided. Sometimes i feel that I have to make use of inter-library loans too much - that the linguistics collection within the QUB library could be improved and updated more regularly. But, the inter library loans service is a worthwhile and convenient alternative.

The most important thing is to retain the service: please do not cut in any way as it is a lifeline!

More funds made available from the school, which is very limited at the moment

Usually articles arrive in a timely fashion, but I have had articles delayed by several weeks with no explanation why. Also, it would save a lot of hassle of requesting inter-library loans if Queen's simply had rights to access more journals. It is appalling to see some of the journals that Queen's does not have access to, this includes journals edited by Queen's faculty.

6.7 Access to electronic resources

It will be nice if we could print 2 copies (instead of just 1) of the article we order via inter-library loan.

Not having digital rights management on the pdfs so I could file the electronic copy in my database rather than having to print it and file the hard copy

Allowing pdfs from the secure online delivery to be saved to a single computer .

To allow the requested article to be printed, and opened on more than one computer. I would like more articles sent electronically IF they were sent as simple to access pdf documents. The secure system is difficult to use and many people in my department have the same issue. In fact I have never found a computer in Queens which I could simply download and print from. I have had several requests rejected due to difficulties in sourcing articles. The letters I was sent to indicate this didn't really clarify the reasons, so better clarity when communicating with users would be great.

As mentioned before: I think it's time to leave the old ways of copying papers but it's about time to move on to send pdfs via email instead. I would like to receive emails with such attachments instead of running to the library where I find 3 of 4 copy machines not working (just happened recently) and actual staff members suggesting I should go to the technician myself and report it (isn't this their VERY job??). The pdf files I receive from the British main library should be freely accessible and in better quality. If they insist on keeping their ridiculous file protection system it, at least, should work for all operating systems (e.g. Linux Ubuntu, Debian etc.). Thank you for caring about us and trying to improve the system!

It would be great if there were more items available electronically, however I think the service is very good at present and the library staff are always very helpful.

If there was a way of keeping copyrighted ILL documents in electronic form and not having to print them, that would be a big improvement.

I don't think that the electronic copies of requested texts have a date by which they are no longer viewable and hence require printing. I prefer to keep and refer back to journals in electronic form and this is prevented and requires me to keep a hard copy of the text at hand.

I often have to access journals which are held in the Medicine library, but cannot do so via the electronic download service. While Medicine has a license, other QUB users can't avail of it. Rather than having to go through the process (efficient as it is) of ordering up an article from Medicine, is there any way that the license could be extended to allow staff working in associated areas to access the material online, immediately?

More streamlined request form for journal articles. Ability to print articles twice / store for more than a fortnight. Appreciate ILL service is disrupted at present, but waiting until November for articles (past useful date) is not helpful. Pay-per-view is instant with unlimited access...

There are often items available on another related service - is it HONI or something like that? Why can't all academic staff have access to those other health sources?

Authority to have softcopies too since it is user friendly to save in notebook, ipad. Much easier compared to carry the whole loads during travelling. Reduction in cost per paper requested perhaps.

let us access the HONNI network and get books brought down from the Medical Library in the same day if ordered before 12.00 hrs - or give staff short stay access to the car park at the QUB Medical Library which sits half empty all the time and totally empty in the evenings .

6.8 Service quality and provision

The possibility of including inter-loan to MA and PhD thesis from other universities, outside the UK, may be improved, even with an additional payment.

Greater attention the precise bibliographic details in requests.

At times the photocopies of journal articles could be made with more care.

Sometime quality of electronic articles is poor and difficult to get replacements.

Postgraduate students should be allowed to take all inter-loan books from the library to their office. Books that are for library-use only are a major inconvenience in terms of time and photocopying credit.

Sometimes when I request an inter-library loan I am told I have already got access to that article, when in fact I don't. It may be that staff have access to certain journals whereas post-grads don't.

It's a great service - efficient, fast and reliable. Only one small thing - sometimes, but not often, the whole journal volume is sent rather than a single article which means going to the library to receive it. This can be difficult if you are on research leave and working remotely. In such cases, a scanned electronic copy of the single article would be good. Otherwise, I find the ILL service invaluable for the odd thing which our library doesn't stock.

Where at all possible obtaining copies of texts that can be used outside the library. Having to use them in the library with no photocopying allowed is very restrictive.

The subject librarian could quickly run through the request and ascertain that if it would be economical to buy a book for the library instead of borrowing it. In some cases, it is much cheaper to buy a book from the publisher. 2. In my case, the list of books that I needed for my study was submitted and very many of them were never bought and hence the need to place inter-library loan requests.

Longer loan periods might be nice, but I've never had much trouble getting renewals, so that's a minor gripe. Thanks.

I have to use inter-library loans regularly, often for astonishingly 'standard' set texts that the library just doesn't have, so part of my criticism relates to the library's meagre catalogue. 1. The inter-library loan service would be improved if it was possible to renew items online. 3 weeks isn't enough if you are researching from the text= more often than not I end up having to buy things myself. 2. The service is usually interminably slow, you don't get any indication of whether a book's likely to come in so you just have to wait and hope. A reliable estimation of the waiting time is essential.

I have often received a letter asking me do I still want to continue with a request for an article and that if I do, I should contact the library to let them know. It just makes accessing the article a lot slower and the process a little more complicated. Other than that, very satisfied with this great service!

One of the books I requested was specified for use in the Library only. This was very inconvenient, as I am based in ECIT (Titanic Quarter), so I would have to make a special trip every time I wanted to reference the book. In the end I didn't manage to make much use of the book because it was too inconvenient. Can't there be some way to release books to the care of a nominated librarian in satellite buildings like ECIT?

Be able to renew loan for short period providing no-one else is waiting for it.

Increasing the amount of time you have the loaned book for until it needs to be returned, as often there is insufficient time to fully read the requested book.

I think that it is in general a great service, staff are very helpful and knowledgeable but I regret that the network of Library does apparently not include bigger foreign institutions (or that the British Library's collections seem not to be very rich in (particularly recent) international books. With many thanks for your service, greatly appreciated!

I am happy with the inter-library loan service as I haven't yet encountered any issues or problems. However, I would like the option of being able to extend the loan online.

6.8 Publicity and information

More information - I only found out recently after 9-10 years of being with Queens that I could get electronic copies of journal articles sent to me.

Better information on what's available. I actually didn't know that I could get inter-library loans for the first 2 years of my post-grad because the staff at the library never asked what I did and assumed I was a student so when I asked if there was ANY way I could get things, they said no with no explanation.

Publicize the process better and do so positively instead of treating it like an unnecessary extra hassle. Students already pay excessive fees without having to pay extra to access the resources they need to do their courses. And the range of materials relating to courses in Queens is by no means sufficient a lot of the time. So something would need to be done to make up for it.

From the few academics I'm not aware of, many people aren't aware of the online ILL request scheme and curtail their reading on this basis. It might be useful to publicise a little more. I'm not sure on the feasibility or necessity of photocopying library held resources, but certainly being able to transfer books from one library to another for collection in person from the office rather than having to visit the library would be very handy.

Clearer methods of obtaining the loans, with the online service more widely advertised, and more accessible - Through the use of the chemistry searching software, it is not necessary for me to use the library website, and so an option to request ILL in a more efficient manner would be desirable!

Better advertising of what you do.

More information on the service.

More straightforward, easier to understand and use.

6.9 Possible developments

The SED service seems the ultimate. Improvement could come by reducing cost per delivery.

For the online service to be extended to include articles currently only available as hard copies in the library.

To be able to see my ILL records since day one

Please make E-Books accessible for printing limited pages or a chapter.

*I think the QCAT website could be updated to display a full interlibrary loan history
I like the current on-line system as it stands. Speed of delivery is often important to me because I make most use of the inter-library requests when I'm writing a paper or conducting a review= in which case same day delivery would be fantastic as momentum is so easily lost. Is there any way an electronic voucher system could be created to view and pay for articles from the British library? That would mean that I could search for an article myself - if needed i.e.: instant access.*

Please make E-Books accessible for printing limited pages or a chapter.

It would be great if there were more items available electronically, however I think the service is very good at present and the library staff are always very helpful.

Book loans could be electronic - there is no need to ship the physical book around!

Efficient electronic delivery and expansion of e-books available on loan from publishers

Definitely more online delivery

If there was a way of keeping copyrighted ILL documents in electronic form and not having to print them, that would be a big improvement.

7. Conclusion

The 2011 Inter-Library Loan Survey has provided an abundance of invaluable feedback about the service. Where appropriate all questions included a text box for additional comments and the majority of respondents availed of the opportunity to give additional information. This level of detail has provided valuable insight on how the service could be improved. See Appendix 1 for a copy of the questionnaire.

The survey targeted the two main user groups, academic staff and post-graduate research students. Generally the feedback and comments they provided reveal a very high level of satisfaction with the current service along with a good measure of genuine appreciation for both it and the staff who deal with their requests and queries.

The two big innovations which have transformed the way in which users request items and receive articles have been very well received because they offer a faster and a more convenient service. However, in spite of all the advantage associated with online requesting and the electronic delivery, it is heartening to glean, from some of the comments, the value and pleasure users actually derive from visiting the library in person.

Many of the critical comments about the inter-library loan service relate, one way or another, to lack of information. Not enough publicity about the service along with insufficient information on the practical day-to-day use of the service are reoccurring issues. The Library needs to examine its ILL documentation for users, acknowledge that it is inadequate and piecemeal and produce a

comprehensive and informative practical guide. The availability of such a document would also go a long way towards addressing the publicity issue.

Secondly, the negative feedback suggests that many users are unaware of licensing restrictions and other barriers to accessing and storing electronic information. Again the Library needs to raise awareness regarding these restrictions especially where they are beyond the Library's control.

Thirdly, although the Library sends updates to users on the status of outstanding requests, many respondents stated that they would like more information, or progress reports, on pending material. Usually specific information is not available but a review of our housekeeping procedures to facilitate more regular contact with our readers, even when there is nothing new to convey, may help to address their concerns.

What does emerge from the survey is that the inter-library loan environment is changing and evolving. The information gathering and acquiring habits uncovered by the survey reveal that the Library's inter-library loan service is facing increasing competition from other web based information services. There is ample testament to the popularity of Google Scholar and, many of the respondents turn to it as a faster, cheaper and more convenient alternative to the Library's service. Moreover, some users have discovered other web based information services which meet their needs such as *Internet Archive Service* (www.archive.org), *DeepDyve* (www.deepdyve.com) an online rental service, and *Pubget* (www.pubget.com) a search engine for life science PDFs. However, it is not just the users who are turning to the web; many potential inter-library loan requests are aborted because library staff too search Google in addition to their more traditional resources and are often able to source and supply material at no charge.

In summary, easy access, quick delivery and low cost are the essence of a good inter-library loan service. The source, whether it be another library, a database subscription or the web is immaterial to the user. So the challenge ahead for the Library lies in providing a seamless service by facilitating access to alternative sources as an integral part of the interlibrary loan service.

The recommendations emerging from this survey are listed below.

8. Recommendations

- 8.1 Produce a comprehensive guide to interlibrary loans. One which explains how to use the service including eligibility, costs, charging mechanisms, submitting requests, renewing loans, and feedback on pending requests. One which also explains the limitations and restraints beyond our control such as copyright and DRM and, the restrictions imposed by other libraries on the items they loan to us.
- 8.2 Publicise the service by distributing the guide to Schools, making it available online and including more information on the service at induction and training events.
- 8.3 Review housekeeping procedures and the potential of the new Library Management System to facilitate regular updates to users regarding their pending requests.
- 8.4 Examine the possibility of extending online requesting to taught postgraduate and undergraduate students by investigating the scope of automating the authorization of their ILL requests.
- 8.4 Make more effective use of inter-library loan requests as a tool for collection development by considering purchase as opposed to a loan.
- 8.5 Explore the possibility of integrating the inter-library loan services with the catalogue to alert users to material already available in Queen's.
- 8.6 Move towards greater online provision of resources.
- 8.7 Work toward encompassing web-based information services within the inter-library loan service to satisfy requests more quickly, more cheaply and in the format preferred by the user.



Queen's University Belfast

Information Services

Inter-Library Loan Survey 2011

Please take a few minutes to complete this inter-library loan survey. We would really appreciate your feedback on the service. In particular we would like to hear your views regarding some recent developments such as the introduction of online requesting and the electronic delivery of articles to your desktop. Your answers will help us to establish how well the inter-library loan service is meeting your needs and thus give us an indication as to how we could further improve the service.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Are you?

- ☐ A member of staff
- ☐ A post-graduate research student

2. Your school?

Select answer

3. How long have you been using the inter-library loan service at Queen's?

- ☐ More than 3 years
 - ☐ Less than 3 years
 - ☐ I haven't used it yet
-

4. How many inter-library loan requests do you submit on average per year?

- ☐ None
- ☐ Between 1 and 9
- ☐ Between 10 and 29
- ☐ Between 30 and 49
- ☐ Over 50



THE SERVICE

5. Online requesting versus paper forms

Do you find submitting requests online more convenient than handling printed forms?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ No preference
- ☐ Not applicable

6. Comments

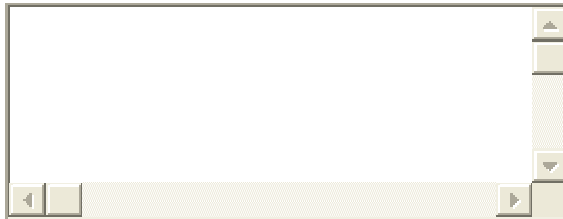
A large rectangular text area with a light beige background and a thin border. It includes standard scrollbars on the right and bottom edges, indicating it is a multi-line text input field.

7. Online requesting via *QCat*

Have you requested inter-library loans using the 'Inter Loan Request' option on the Library's catalogue?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

8. Comments

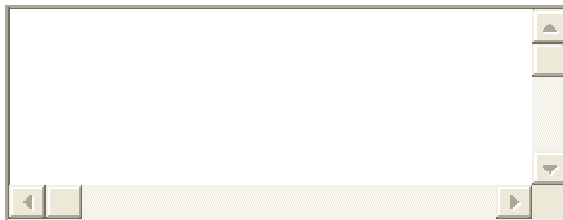


9. Online requesting via *QConnect*

Have you requested inter-library loans direct from your database search results using QConnect?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

10. Comments

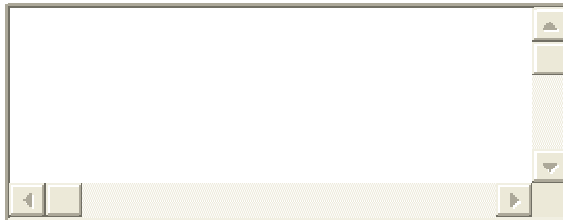


11. Paying for inter-library-loans

How satisfied are you with the method of allocating credit units (vouchers)?

- ☐ Very satisfied
- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ Very dissatisfied

12. Comments

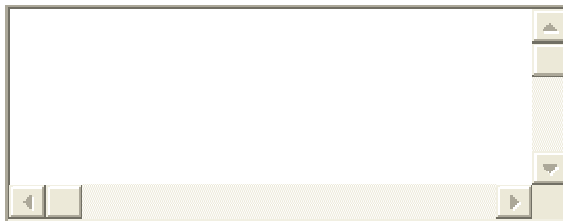


13. SED - Secure Electronic Delivery

Whenever possible journal requests are delivered electronically to your desktop. How satisfied are you with this method of delivery?

- ☐ Very satisfied
- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ Very dissatisfied
- ☐ I haven't received anything via Secure Electronic Delivery

14. Comments



15. What's important?

Which aspect of the inter-library loan service is most important to you?

	▼
Helpful/knowledgeable staff	
Online submission of requests	
SED – Secure electronic delivery of articles	
Speed of service	

GATHERING INFORMATION

16. Your inter-library loan requests

Where do you find out about the material you request on inter-library loan?

(Choose more than one option if appropriate).

- ☐ Queen's Library catalogue
 - ☐ Other libraries' catalogues
 - ☐ Bibliographic indexes / databases
 - ☐ Cited references - in a book or article
 - ☐ Personal recommendation
 - ☐ Other, please specify
-

17. Alternatives to inter-library loans

How else do you obtain full text articles not available in Queen's Library?

(Choose more than one option if appropriate).

- ☐ From another academic
- ☐ From an institutional repository
- ☐ Purchased direct from a publisher (pay-per-view)
- ☐ Via Google Scholar
- ☐ Via a professional association / society
- ☐ Have never used any other sources to obtain material
- ☐ Other, please specify



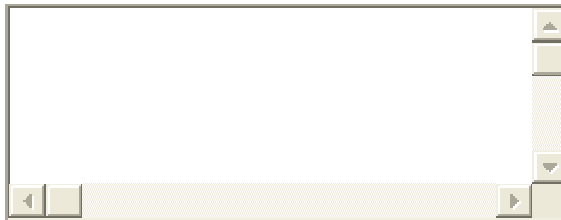
DOCUMENT DELIVERY FROM STOCK

18. Document delivery from Queen's stock

Would you like to see the inter-library loan service extended to include the supply of articles held in Queen's Library?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

19. Comments

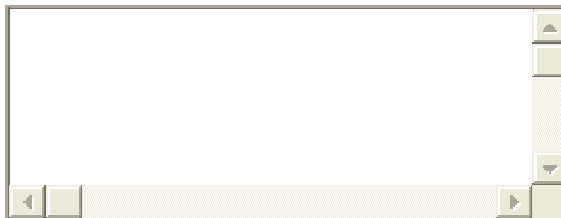


20. The cost of convenience

How much would you, or your School, be willing to pay to have an article held in Queen's photocopied and delivered to you? (Items obtained from other libraries normally cost £10).

- ☐ £9.00 per item
- ☐ £7.00 per item
- ☐ £5.00 per item
- ☐ I wouldn't be willing to pay for this service
- ☐ Other, please specify

21. Comments



FUTURE SERVICES

22. Improvements

Please specify any ways in which you think that the inter-library loan service could be improved?

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Thank you very much for taking the time to complete the survey. Your feedback along with any suggestions are invaluable. The information which you have provided will help us to further improve and develop the service.

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