Support Services and Facilities Review

Library Review
25th March 2019

Introduction

GMIT aims to improve the learning experience of students and meet the needs of its stakeholders through a process of continuous enhancement. The review of support services and facilities is an important element of GMIT's quality assurance framework. The support services and facilities provided by the Institute are key to the provision of a student-centred learning environment and meeting the needs of our many stakeholders. GMIT's policy provides that support services and facilities will be reviewed on a cyclical basis. The main elements of the review are a self-evaluation and an external peer review process. This review of support services focuses on the contribution of each of the services and how they can be developed to enhance the quality of provision to learners, staff and other stakeholders.

This report documents the review of the library service in GMIT over the last five years, and specifically the Dublin Road (Galway), Centre for Creative Arts & Media (CCAM) and Moore Library (Mayo Campus) branches of the library service. Letterfrack campus library is not included in the review, as until September 2018 it reported to the Head of Campus rather than the Institute Librarian. However, the Letterfrack library will be included in the next library review.

Terms of Reference

The terms of reference for the review process is outlined below. The review process considered the following:

- Organisation and management of the Function: resources, roles and reporting structures shall be evaluated to determine whether they are fit for purpose, viable and support the activities and role of the Function. Standard operating procedures shall be reviewed and evaluated with any gaps identified and addressed. Staff development shall also be evaluated and the importance of quality and quality assurance in the Function culture shall be evaluated.

- Functions and services supporting internal and external stakeholders: each Function will describe the aims and objectives of the Function and determine and detail the user experience of the Function, both internal and external.

- Evidence based decision making: The decision-making process utilised by the Function shall be evaluated, information gathered and stored shall be reviewed, the information used to make decisions shall be identified and the quality and source of information shall be reviewed.

- Institute wide engagement: The Function's contribution to the Institute's Function shall be reviewed to include items such as participation in GMIT committees, reviews etc. Each Function shall also detail how it engages with relevant external agencies and its contribution to external bodies.

- Integration of all Function users: Each Function shall review how it ensures the integration of and equity of support for, for example International, Life Long Learning, Mayo and Letterfrack campuses.

- Communication and information systems: Internal communication systems within each Function and between the Function and other academic units, departments, management structures and other Function's shall be reviewed. Information management systems and communication tools shall be reviewed to determine whether they are fit for purpose. Each Function shall ensure that they collect, analyse and use relevant information.

- Quality assurance: Compliance with GMIT quality systems and institute policies shall be determined. Existing Function specific policies and procedures shall be described, and their effectiveness reviewed and detailed.
- Specific functions: Review of specific areas or functions unique to the particular function.
- Strategic plan for the Function: Each Function shall develop and detail their strategic plan and evaluate its alignment with the GMIT Strategic Plan 2017-2022 and its implementation targets.

Overview of the Library

GMIT Library consists of four campus libraries, namely Dublin Road, CCAM, Mayo Campus and Lettterfrack Campus. It uses the KOHA library management system integrated with EBSCO's Electronic Discover service providing access to numerous electronic information resources on a 24/7 basis. Complemented with over 130,000 print items the library operates a very efficient interbranch (between campuses) and document supply service (external libraries) ensuring optimisation of the collection.

Training in online information retrieval, database coverage and reference software is provided by library staff, who are also involved in library induction, Learning and Innovations skills, and Information Skills training. An Academic Writing Centre and Maths Centre are also available in the library. The library maintains a website which provides access to extensive online help and support guides.

The library in Galway has an area of 4,086 sq.m, accommodating 509 readers with networked computers installed in 25% of study places. Special rooms include IT room, Training room, Silent Study room, Independent Learning Unit, an Archive room and a Copy room for copying, scanning and printing. The library also has a suite of fifteen group study rooms which are available for booking by students for student group work.

CCAM library measures 442sq.m. ad provides 90 study spaces. It is a vertical space, housed over five floors, and with limited accessibility. It has computing facilities, printing and study spaces.

The Moore Library in the Mayo campus occupies 515 sq.m. and provides seating up to 119 spaces. It is on two floors with computing facilities, printing, study space and one study room occupying the first floor.

The library service aims to:
- Provide a library environment conducive to study and catering for the diversity of the library user.
- Support the learner by providing up to date relevant learning materials both in print and electronic format.
- Continue to develop and enhance the Information skills module to underpin teaching and learning in the Institute.
- Support the research interests of the Institute by the promotion and fostering of the Research@THEA repository and the provision of advanced eResources and referencing.
- Support the regional remit of the Institute.
- Provide a welcoming and supportive space and service to international students.

Review Process
A team of library staff volunteered to coordinate the library review, chaired by the Institute librarian. An extensive data gathering exercise was undertaken which involved stakeholders on the three campuses covered by the review. This included focus groups with undergraduate and postgraduate students, academic and professional, management and support staff, IHub and research staff and external members of the library. Depth interviews were conducted with senior management staff, the Executive Board, Central Services Managers, Heads of Department and with Galway Community School. In addition, staff and student questionnaires were administered online. Library staff were involved in providing feedback through an online form and a brainstorming session. The analysed data provided key information for the review and allowed the formulation of a plan for future enhancement of the library service. The library prepared a Self-evaluation report which was submitted to the expert review panel for consideration. The panel, who visited the Institute on 25th March, were:

- **Dr Joe McGarry** (Panel Chair)**,** Higher Education Advisor
- **Mr Patrick Doherty,** Librarian, IT Tralee
- **Dr Mary Delaney,** Head of Library & Information Services, IT Carlow
- **Dr Eleanor Rainsford,** Lecturer, School of Science, GMIT (Stakeholder Representative)
- **Mr Victor O'Loughlin,** Deputy President for Education, GMIT Students' Union (Stakeholder Representative)
- **Ms Carmel Brennan** (Secretary), Assistant Registrar, GMIT

The panel met with the following individuals/groups:
- Librarian and Deputy Librarian (Bibliographic Services)
- Library Staff representing three campuses
- Students
- Staff
- Researchers – Staff and Students

Further details of the staff and students who met with the review panel are available in Appendix A. The review panel visited both the Dublin Road and CCAM libraries to review the facilities provided.

Findings of the External Peer Panel
The Library has prepared a comprehensive self-evaluation report based on widespread engagement with stakeholders, evidence collected and considerable self-reflection, culminating in a detailed five-year strategic plan which will contribute to the Institute's mission and strategy. The library team engaged with the review panel in a positive and open manner.

It is the view of the panel that the library provides a positive experience which supports students and staff in their learning and research. GMIT library provides a wide range of services and activities in support of this. The library as a space is also of key importance, and this was reflected in the feedback received from stakeholders on all campuses. The online resources provided by the library are to be commended including video tutorials and LibGuides.

GMIT library is different from that of many other Institute's in that it encompasses four libraries spread over a wide geographic area. The communication mechanisms, formal and informal, engaged in by the library staff allow the service to operate well within a multi-campus environment, and provide a relatively consistent experience for students on each campus. While recognising that Mountbellew students visit the Dublin Road campus at least once per week, the provision of limited library service on that campus should be explored. The panel welcomed the fact that Letterfrack

branch is now reporting to the Institute Librarian and will be included in the next review of library services in GMIT.

The common feature of feedback received from all stakeholders was the esteem with which the library and its staff are held in. The panel were struck by the level of satisfaction expressed within the self-evaluation report and by each group of stakeholders that it met. They felt that the documentation provided did not do justice to the positive perception of stakeholders as to the service provided by the library and the professionalism, expertise and helpfulness of library staff. The team working in the library should be proud of how they are perceived in GMIT and feel supported in their endeavours.

One of the themes which recurred was that in all campuses the physical environment was in need of updating. This included access control, seating, improving or maintaining the spaces aesthetically, and the need for better temperature control. The technology available to library users was raised with the panel, specifically the speed of PCs and Wi-Fi reliability.

A number of the students met had missed induction and were having issues with navigating the library services efficiently. Library guides and the Academic Writing Centre were viewed as helpful. Email was considered the best method of communication with social media being viewed as a personal rather than academic means of communication. Both staff and students found the library website helpful but found it difficult to navigate given the extensive and useful resources, supports and information it contains. The range of services provided by the library are not known by all. Therefore, there needs to be better linkages and communication between Academic Units and the library.

All students expressed the desire for extended library opening hours, which were deemed particularly important for students who may have imperfect study conditions in their accommodation. One staff member attached a significance and symbolism to the library which is not attached to other parts of the building, and that as such the library should be open as long as is feasible to emphasise and facilitate the key activity of the institution, namely learning.

The use of the library by non-GMIT students at busy times of the year can be frustrating for students, and the issue of access control was also raised by staff.

The reduced library budget has been noticed, with reduced access to online journals and deficiencies in resources relating to new subject areas being highlighted. Scope for improvement in the process and speed of ordering books was identified.

Recommendations:
- Work with the Registrar's Function and Departments/Schools to formalise the involvement of the library in the process of programme development and review, particularly in light of new programme delivery modes and an increasingly diverse student population. This will ensure that the library is aware of the resources required to deliver programmes in a timely manner, can make relevant recommendations, and has the funds to support new or updated programmes.

- Work with new programme development teams to integrate access to the library's information skills supports into the programme proposal. Programme teams should be encouraged to include information skills workshops as part of induction and as the student progresses through their programme of study. Working with academic colleagues, provide

refresher library inductions for students who miss initial induction or require updates as they progress through their programme of study.

- Consider how the library can better communicate information on resources and services to stakeholders. In particular, conduct user testing on the library website to consider if the structure could be easier to navigate given the large volume of relevant resources available to users.

- Work with Computing Services in relation to enhancing WiFi and upgrading PCs, as relevant, as part of the IT upgrade project given the importance of these to students who use and value the library as a space.

- Prepare a plan for minor works addressing the infrastructural issues identified and submit to Buildings and Estates for work during Summer 2020. Given the 'flagship' nature of the libraries on each campus the Institute should seek to maintain and improve the standard of the library as a space for users.

- Develop a business case for the introduction of new technologies (e.g. swipe card access gate, RFID) for presentation to the Executive Board, given the access control issue and the benefits of enhanced data for decision making.

- The Institute should ensure that all branches are accessible for students with mobility issues.

- As the library is recognised as part of the Institute's core academic infrastructure consider how library hours and/or reading room facilities can be extended in line with stakeholder needs.

- The library has been impacted by diminished resources for the last few years. The restoration of resources, particularly online databases, should be prioritised by the Institution.

- Explore the potential for offering a limited library service for Mountbellew students.

- Continue to collect and disseminate data to inform stakeholders of the usage of library services and allow data informed decisions to be made. Submit an annual report to Academic Council and the Executive Board on the library service in GMIT. Share the data from the annual survey on a wider basis.

- Review the library plan in light of the recent publishing of the Institute's Strategic Plan, amending if necessary. Develop an implementation plan to support the achievement of the library's plan.

Appendix A
Library Staff and Stakeholders Who Met with External Peer Panel

Library Staff	Function/School/Programme
Margaret Waldron	Librarian
Maura Stephens	Deputy Bibliographic Services
Bernie Lally	Deputy Reader Services
Catherine McTigue	Library Team
Kathryn Briggs	Library Team
Barbara Faherty	Library Team
Colette Harlowe	Library Team
Helen Flatley	Library Team
Teresa Donnellan	Library Team
Johannah Duffy	Library Team
Aidan O'Callaghan	Library Team
Mena Costello	Library Team
Majella King	Mayo Campus Library
Paula Madden	CCAM Campus Library
Lecturers	
Maureen Melvin	School of Business
Irene Hayden	School of Engineering
Colm Kelleher	School of Business
Conor Graham	School of Science and Computing
Judith Wurmel	School of Science and Computing
Marion McEnroy Higgins	School of Design
Students	
Annmarie Griffin	Year 3, Bachelor of Business
Connor Carney	Year 1, BSc in Software Development
Ann Bateman	Year 4, BB Accounting
Rossana Cooke	Year 3, BA in Design
Tara McCormack	Year 1, Public Health Nutrition
Chloe Hanley	Year 1 BB in Marketing & Sales
Rionagh Mullins	Year 2, BB in Marketing & Sales
Jacinta Moore	Year 4, BA in Contemporary Art
Aisling McGroary	Year 4, Bachelor of Business
Gerry Wynne	Year 4, BA in Heritage Studies
Niamh Murphy	Year 4, BA in Hotel & Catering Management
Justin Coen	Year 4, BSc in Sport & Exercise Science
Daniel Porter	Year 4, BB in Entrepreneurship
Research Staff and Students	
Mark Kelly	Lecturer, School of Engineering
Mark McCarthy	Lecturer, Galway International Hotel School
Celine Curtin	Head of Department, CCAM
Eilish Kavanagh	PhD student, Heritage Research Group
Anita Furey	Masters Student, Food Science
John Lohan	Lecturer, School of Engineering
Barry McMillan	Lecturer, Galway International Hotel School