**Introduction**

Knowledge is at the heart of the University’s activities. It is the currency by which we achieve our mission. Our researchers create new knowledge by discovering, synthesizing and interpreting information in their subject areas. Our students need the skills to manage an information-rich environment, so that their learning experiences at the University will be fulfilled. All students at Swansea University need information and digital literacy skills so that they can maximise their opportunities for academic achievement, employability and lifelong learning.

**Definition of Information Literacy**

Information literacy “is knowing when and why you need information, where to find it, and how to evaluate, use and communicate it in an ethical manner.” (CILIP, 2012)

Students generally overestimate their own information skills. After all, there is no shortage of information on the internet. However, many students lack the skills to evaluate the authority of the information itself. Acquiring these skills will help them to achieve academic success. It is not sufficient for students to just absorb existing information; they must evaluate the information around them.

**Definition of Digital Literacy**

Digital Literacy takes the essential criteria of Information Literacy and applies it to our digital age. Definitions of digital literacy vary, however it does sit neatly beside information literacy in a student’s personal and employability development, defined as:

“…the ability to find and use information (otherwise known as information literacy) but goes beyond this to encompass communication, collaboration and teamwork, social awareness in the digital environment, understanding of e-safety and creation of new information. Both digital and information literacy are underpinned by critical thinking and evaluation.” (Open University, 2013)

Further information about current developments and standards in the field of Information Literacy in the UK can be read in Appendix 1.

**Why We Need an Information and Digital Literacy Strategy**

- **To meet students’ needs:** Students face an ever increasing quantity of information, particularly in the electronic environment. The skills needed to retrieve this information, and to determine which resources are authoritative and useful to the question at hand, are important in order to fulfill their academic requirements. In addition, information and digital literacy skills will equip students
with the understanding that use of this information should be in an ethical and legal manner.

- **To support the University’s Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy:** Swansea University’s Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy ensures that “We are committed to enhancing the information literacy of our students as both an aid to their study and to improve their employability on graduation.” Information literacy plays a significant role in developing intellectual and cognitive skills by providing students with an understanding of information management.

- **To embed information and digital literacy in the curriculum:** This will make information and digital literacy skills relevant and achievable for students and staff. Although these skills can be defined in a generic way, they are best delivered according to discipline in order for students to acquire the ability to navigate the literature of a particular field of knowledge. Collaboration with academic staff is desirable in order to embed the learning of these skills into the curriculum in a timely fashion and make them relevant to subject studies. It is imperative that the curriculum includes post-induction sessions in order to fully take advantage of the information and digital literacy skills training that is available.

- **To aid retention of students:** Providing adequate support for learning and creating confidence in retrieving and evaluating information can play a major role in retaining students.

- **To develop research postgraduate students:** Skills in information retrieval, evaluation and management are essential for the research postgraduates, as has been recognised by Research Council requirements. Digital literacy is also very important for researchers who want their research to reach an international audience.

- **To meet the current requirements of educational bodies in the UK:** Educational bodies in the UK, including the QAA and Research Councils, have produced statements and benchmarks which define the skills set which graduates and postgraduates should attain. These include information literacy skills detailed in Appendix 2.

- **To develop key lifelong learning skills:** A person with information and digital literacy skills will be confident in navigating an information-overloaded world. They will be able to use those skills to their advantage in any learning situation.

- **To ensure employability in a changing world:** In recent decades the UK has shifted from being an industrial economy to an information-based economy. The government (Treasury, 2004, p.25) has stated that employees will need the skills for “navigating vast online data/information resources, determining the providence and quality of the information, and wider issues of security and access”. Without an acceptable level of information and digital literacy in our working population, employees will have difficulties keeping abreast of new developments, in focusing on the most authoritative information and in evaluating the information they encounter in their working lives. UNESCO’s Prague
Declaration “Towards an Information Literate Society” (2003) states that “the creation of an Information Society is key to social, cultural and economic development of nations and communities, institutions and individuals in the 21st century and beyond.” Many employers recognise information literacy as a core skill. As such, students should be encouraged to engage with Personal Development Planning (PDP) processes offered to students at Swansea and keep reflective portfolios recording their personal development (See Section 7.9 of the Teaching Quality Manual). Some of the aims of Swansea University’s Careers Education, Information Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) Policy are to provide students with opportunities to acquire and develop their knowledge skills, gain key skills and apply research skills.

**Information and Digital Literacy: Key Principles**

- All students will recognise the importance of information and digital literacy for their academic achievement at Swansea University and the contribution it will make to their employability and their capacity for lifelong learning.

- Information and digital literacy are key elements in a range of generic and study skills (including ICT skills, employability, personal development) which will form part of the learning experience for all students at Swansea University.

- With the support of subject teams in Information Services and Systems, all Colleges will move to embedding information and digital literacy in their curricula.

- The Learning and Teaching Committee and Colleges’ Learning and Teaching committees will develop practical options to include information and digital literacy, along with other generic skills, in their quality procedures.

- The University’s Careers and Employability policies and services will include the need for all of our students to be information literate, to improve their employability and lifelong professional development.

**Action Plan**

Information and digital literacy training for students is arranged by ISS in liaison with the Colleges. This formal training is delivered in the classroom, supplemented by online learning support; students learn how to construct strategies for locating information and how to locate, access and cite good quality information via the resources available to them. However information and digital literacy provision is by no means comprehensive. In many Colleges, attendance is not compulsory and so attendance is low; there is often nothing on offer beyond a basic induction for first years.

To address the need to embed information and digital literacy skills into the curriculum, an Information Literacy Strategy was written and presented to the Learning & Teaching Committee. The first version of the Information Literacy Strategy was adopted by Learning & Teaching Committee June 2007, and updated September 2011, as part of
the Learning & Teaching Strategy. The Strategy will be reviewed and updated in 2013, and will be presented for approval.

**Targets**

- Information and digital literacy will be embedded into undergraduate and taught post-graduate programmes, with a minimum requirement of a library induction session.
- Library inductions will be made mandatory for undergraduate students.
- ISS subject librarians and subject teams to liaise with College Learning & Teaching committees (or contacts) to support the embedding of information literacy in the curriculum. Consultation will focus on the varying needs of students and researchers, College by College with a view to drawing up subject-specific delivery plans.
- Digital literacy session, including social awareness in the digital environment, e-safety and creating an employable online profile, will be introduced within the curriculum.

**Task objectives**

- Ensure that post-induction information literacy sessions are planned throughout the curriculum, scheduling classes at appropriate times which would benefit students the most.
- Develop and maintain online learning objects in Swansea’s VLE for students to access at any time.
- Maintain links with the Postgraduate Training Officer and continue to develop a wider range of information and digital literacy sessions for the postgraduate researchers training programme.
- Improve marketing methods to increase awareness of information literacy sessions and improve attendance.
- Subject team members to continue to embrace new technologies to enable wider participation in information and digital literacy by the student population.
- Subject Librarians will collaborate closely with the Superintendent for Assessment and the Unfair Practice coordinators to combat plagiarism and enhance understanding of good academic practices amongst students, such as referencing.
- Improve links with tertiary sector and invite Reaching Wider students to the Library for a “taster” introduction to an academic library and the study aspects of university life.

**Linkage to University Strategies**

The development of information literacy skills in our students and staff facilitates a number of key University strategies. These include:
**Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy**

Information literacy skills underpin the Learning and Teaching Strategy’s emphasis on:

- Ensuring equality of learning opportunity
- Supporting future employability
- Promoting key skills

**Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance Policy**

Information literacy skills underpin the Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) Policy which includes statements that students should be able to:

- Acquire, develop and be aware of their intellectual and knowledge-related skills and personal qualities.
- Use these attributes subsequently in the effective management and development of their careers.
- Understand the importance of skills gained through academic study being transferable to the workplace.
- Record the development of their skills, knowledge and experience by reflecting on learning.
- Develop strategies for effective career planning throughout the duration of a course of study.
- Apply research skills to analyse careers, jobs and other opportunities.
- Make full use of Careers and Employability services and resources both online and in person.

For detailed information on the CEIAG Policy and Personal Development Planning (PDP) please see Section 7.12 of the Teaching Quality Manual together with Appendices 8 and 9.

**ISS Services Subject Services Aims**

The Library Subject Teams liaise with the Colleges to provide library support for their learning, teaching and research needs.

- Subject Teams aim to collaborate with academic staff to empower the learning experience of all students by:
  - providing formal inductions to the library for all students;
  - providing information skills teaching to undergraduate and postgraduate students and staff

**Human Resources Strategic Plan 2012-17**

- The Human Resources Strategic Plan states that the University’s workforce “have the appropriate skills and experience – through workforce planning and
recruitment of the right people with the right skills at the right time and the development of existing staff to deal with the rapidly changing University environment.”
References


Appendix 1

Current information literacy standards in the UK and overseas

In the UK we have an Information Literacy “model” rather than a set of standards. The model was devised by SCONUL (Standing Conference of National and University Libraries) and is known as the Seven Pillars of Information Literacy:

- The ability to recognise a need for information;
- The ability to distinguish ways in which the information gap may be addressed;
- The ability to construct strategies for locating information;
- The ability to locate and access information;
- The ability to compare and evaluate information obtained from different sources;
- The ability to organise, apply and communicate information to others in ways appropriate to the situation;
- The ability to synthesise and build upon existing information, contributing to the creation of new knowledge.

The 2011 model for the Seven Pillars of Information Literacy can be found at http://www.sconul.ac.uk/sites/default/files/documents/coremodel.pdf, and includes both a core and research model for Higher Education.

In Wales the Information Literacy Framework for Wales: Finding and using information in 21st century Wales, http://library.wales.org/uploads/media/Information_Literacy_Framework_Wales.pdf, aims to promote the understanding and development of information literacy in education, the workplace, and the wider community. This is a strategic document for Wales, funded by the Welsh Government and linked to the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales.
Appendix 2
Information Literacy Benchmarks from UK Educational Organisations & Professional Bodies

QAA Quality Code
The QAA Quality Codes are designed, amongst other things, to “ensure that higher education providers have given thought and developed an approach to enabling student development and achievement whose quality is adequately assured and which meets the needs of all students.”

The QAA Code Chapter B4, you will find Information Literacy included in the lists of skills students will acquire. In particular, Indicator 8 states the requirement that “Higher education providers make available appropriate learning resources and enable students to develop the skills to use them”.

UKRC & Vitae
In 2001, the Joint Skills Statement, issued by the Research Councils, included many elements of Information Literacy.

In 2010, Vitae issued the Researcher Development Statement, updating the Joint Skills Statement of 2001. Information Literacy is specifically set out as part of the essential skills.

Researcher Development Statement, 2010
A1 Knowledge base
1. Subject knowledge
2. Research methods – theoretical knowledge
3. Research methods – practical application
4. Information seeking
5. Information literacy and management

In respect of A1.4 and A1.5, it is expected that students will have knowledge of “sources of information, bibliographic software and other information technologies”, and be able to conduct “effective and comprehensive information searches” and to record, manage and handle information/data using appropriate bibliographic software and other information technologies.

Professional Bodies
The Royal College of Nursing (2011) acknowledged the need for information competencies to complement its published clinical competencies for nursing, midwifery and health and social care.

The GMC (2009) in “Tomorrows Doctors” includes the requirement that graduates will be able to use information effectively. This includes accessing information sources and using that information for “patient care, health promotion, advice and information to patients, and research and education.” This is dependent upon good information literacy skills.


Appendix 3

i) Sessions for Undergraduate students

For the academic year 2012-13, information literacy classes were held throughout the year. Sessions include inductions, literature/information searching, research skills, referencing, Endnote, social media/online presence, and bespoke assignment support.

| Total number of sessions held across all disciplines | 493 |
| Of these session, the number which were inductions only | 75 |

ii) Postgraduate Research programme

ISS staff contributes to the Postgraduate Research programme. New sessions have been introduced each year and many sessions are repeated several times during the year.

In addition opportunities for online learning are provided through a site on Blackboard through the Library Support pages for each College.

Part-timers have been catered for by provision of Library inductions and Endnote sessions taking place during the evening and other sessions taking place on a Saturday.

iii) Postgraduate Taught programme

ISS staff contributes to postgraduate taught programmes and are embedded into some curriculums. These classes can range to class inductions, class information and research skills, or one-to-one support on request.

iv) For staff

ISS also delivers information literacy training to staff. New members of staff receive inductions from appropriate subject team librarians, introducing services and resources available to support their teaching, research and professional development. The ISS provides a varied programme for staff on exploring different resources and how to make effective use of them. Staff may also contact subject teams for individual training or advice.

ISS staff delivers sessions to academic staff either in Library PC rooms or through the Lunch and Learn programmes, such as:

- Citation and Ranking (Scopus)
- E-books
- Open Access
- Copyright
- Research Impact
- Legal Information for Non-Lawyers

Subject team librarians try to meet individual new academic staff members for an introduction to our services.