

Systematic Review Service – Phase 1 - 12 month Pilot Review

1. Background

Overview

Following an initial scoping exercise to address a lack of clarity in what the Library offers and how systematic reviews should be supported, the Library piloted a Systematic Review Service from March 2014 – April 2015. During the pilot phase, the service was delivered by Claire Hodgkinson, Teaching and Learning Librarian (0.5 FTE, with no additional funding).

The objectives of the pilot were to:

- a) Address the needs of postgraduate researchers requiring tailored in-depth help with their literature reviews.
- b) Establish the scale of systematic review activity and the potential market for a paid service
- c) Make recommendations on the scope and remit of a systematic review service within the Library

Scope of the pilot

The pilot service was primarily marketed at MHS postgraduate students and included:

- Advice on search strategy and search terms
- Advice on using databases and other subject resources
- How to replicate searches on other (alternative) databases.
- Search checking

2. Evaluation

110 staff and students used the service during the pilot phase.

Table 1: Breakdown of service users by school

Nursing, Midwifery and Social Work	29
Dentistry	11
Psychological Sciences	22
Manchester Pharmacy School	7
Manchester Medical School	12
Manchester Business School	4
Institute of Population Health	10
Institute of Inflammation Repair	4
Institute of Cardiovascular Sciences	1
Institute of Brain, Behaviour and Mental Health	2
Life Sciences	1
Other	7

Systematic Review Service – Phase 1 - 12 month Pilot Review

Table 2: Breakdown by user type

User type	Staff	PGT	PGR	PhD	UG	External
Number of users	24	22	12	28	19	5

In March 2014 a survey was sent out to all 110 users asking them to evaluate their experiences. 23 people responded and the replies were largely positive. Of the 23 respondents 8 were staff, 15 were students.

Key findings from the survey:

Satisfaction

Overall satisfaction with the service was good with the majority of respondents stating that they very satisfied or satisfied.

Comments about the speed of response were largely positive (95 % thought response times were good or very good).

Support provided

Most of the responses were positive regarding the support received. The three top areas were advice on search terms, checking search strategies and advice on formulating searches - service users would like us to develop these further, especially more support in conducting searches.

Expectation:

In its first year, the service provided met the expectation of 20 of the 23 respondents.

What are other institutions doing?

In order to compare our service against that of other institutions, we asked two other Universities and four NHS libraries in Manchester what level of research support they offered to their patrons. All 4 NHS trusts have more than one person involved in running literature help services. Manchester Royal Infirmary Library offers a complete Systematic Review Service, conducting searches from scratch. They also provide “search on demand”, with the capacity to draft in additional help. The other 3 NHS libraries’ services are similar to ours (search technique guidance, database help etc.). Queens’ University, Belfast runs a similar service to ours. The University of Exeter have a specialist team who conduct full systematic reviews alongside research groups within their institution. They become full members of that research department team for the duration of the study.

3. Summary and recommendations

Feedback from our service users and analysis of services provided by other institutions, has given us valuable insight into what happens elsewhere, what we have achieved so far, and what we can realistically expect to attain in the future. The evidence gathered during the pilot points to a clear customer need for this service.

Systematic Review Service – Phase 1 - 12 month Pilot Review

The current service of checking searches and giving advice on searching is highly valued; however, it is not currently feasible to **conduct searches** for several reasons:

1. We do not have capacity to undertake searches for our service users. Searches take many hours and involve several people and many revisions
2. There is an ethical point which is that a Systematic Review is a learning and discovery process and thus for our students the searching is a key part of this.

Recommendations.

1. The Systematic Review Service should move from pilot to full service, to be reviewed on a 12-monthly basis.
2. The Systematic Review Service should continue to be run by Claire Hodkinson (0.4FTE) with assistance from Ingrid Zollinger (0.1FTE)
3. The systematic review service should continue as a search checking and advice service
4. The service can now be actively promoted
5. Service standards to be introduced to help manage expectations.

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Systematic Review Service – Phase 1 - 12 month Pilot Review

Appendix 1. Feedback

1. *[The service] “Actually exceeded my expectations Claire is an excellent teacher and extremely knowledgeable. Resources excellent”*
2. *“The service helped me to problem solve issues and gave me recommendations to progress with my search.”*
3. *“The service was incredibly useful for having an experienced yet fresh set of eyes look over the search strategy and spot any errors. Also to give advice based on results from scoping to enable project to be complete in projected time line. I have done systematic reviews before but i found the service invaluable and have completed a valuable piece of work as result of it.”[sic]*
4. *“It's always good to have some sort of individual support especially for something as complex as a systematic review. The staff involved in helping me was very clear and concise and explained things well.”*
5. *“I felt the search strategy and formulation of search terms could have been improved by greater involvement of the staff.”*
6. *“I was conscious that the service could only offer me a restricted level of support. It would be helpful to have more support stretching to being able to give more hands on with the actual searching.”*
7. *“I'm not sure if this already happens, but running rolling workshops for each stage of the review would be really useful (e.g. developing a question and protocol, developing and conducting searches, identifying relevant articles, quality assessment, data extraction, synthesis etc.). Particularly with the opportunity to practice at a computer.”*