

University of Leeds Libraries Forward Plan 2022–2025

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BE INSPIRED THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

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Overview

This forward plan sets the framework for the libraries to deliver the vision for 2030: [Knowledge for all](#).

In developing this forward plan, we take into account the changing nature of the institutional, internal, and sectoral landscape along with a post-pandemic view for the libraries. We also consider the current cultural challenges and change capacity, and thus provide a focus not just on what we will achieve (our goals) but also how we will achieve them (our culture). Our aims and approach, collectively, will shape and define our overall success.

About this document

If you have not yet familiarised yourself with our vision, [Knowledge for all](#), please take a moment to do so as it would significantly improve the experience of reading this forward plan.

This document defines Objectives and Key Results (OKRs) for the next four years (2022–2025), under two categories: Functional shift and Cultural shift. Functional shift defines the OKRs for strategic programmes, whereas the Cultural shift defines the activities we will undertake in achieving the culture that is necessary for us.

During discussion, to refer to any objective, use the objective reference eg O2. To refer to any key result, use the objective reference followed by key result reference eg O2–KR1 or O19–KR3.

This document is written for both internal and external (to the libraries) audiences. This means there is a broad level of detail in here for internal teams to know what is expected of them. It is expected that programme sponsors will work with individuals from several teams to define implementation plans against objectives.

The implementation plans will be developed under a framework called Projects, Initiatives, and People (PIP), which will streamline the way we operate in libraries and build collaboration by design. This is likely to feel unnatural at the beginning and that's OK. We will evaluate our progress and our approach every year during June and July, and revise and readjust our ways of working accordingly.

Situational analysis

The new [University strategy](#), and the background of a global pandemic, have acted as trigger points for us to rethink our services, and to shape our future differently. We have encapsulated this transformation in the [libraries vision](#), which was developed in a highly consultative fashion with key stakeholders within and beyond the University. This vision was soft launched in July 2021 with the Vice-Chancellor in an all-staff meeting for the libraries, and after further design iterations and minor adjustments, officially launched in November 2021.

The vision was designed to be supplemented by two forward plans. This document is the first of these two forward plans and captures our thinking and approach for years 2022–2025.

The environment in which libraries operate has been changing rapidly. Digital has fundamentally altered the requirements and expectations of our users. We are currently living in an *information economy*. Information management is our business, it comes naturally to libraries. However, the information economy, fuelled by digital change, has also changed the way we work with a new generation of *connected customers*¹. We need to respond to the needs of a connected customer in a holistic way.

At a sector level, the Research Libraries UK (RLUK) new strategy, [The Library Transforming](#), is also highlighting the transforming nature of the libraries. Its strategic strands are: Role of research library; Digital shift; Open scholarship; Culture and Heritage; and Collective Collections. Its cross-cutting themes include: Infrastructure; Rights, Copyright and Licensing; and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

The Association of European Research Libraries (Ligue des Bibliothèques Européennes de Recherche – LIBER) [current strategy](#) highlights three strategic directions. These directions are: Innovative Scholarly Communication; Digital Skills & Services; and Research Infrastructure.

The Association of Research Libraries (ARL) in North America has [four strategic priorities](#). These are: Advocacy & Public Policy; Data & Analytics; Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; and Scholars & Scholarship.

The Council of Australian University Librarians [strategic themes](#) include: Advancing Open Scholarship; Building Sustainable Leadership; Enabling a Modern Curriculum; and Respecting Indigenous Knowledge.

The Arts Council England (ACE) [strategy](#) for 2030 highlights three strategic outcomes. These are: Creative People; Cultural Communities; and A Creative and Cultural Country.

The National Archives strategy, [Archives for Everyone](#), highlights a renewed focus on Potential, Inclusivity, Entrepreneurship, Disruption, Action, and Creativity.

The [University of Leeds Libraries vision](#) is strongly aligned with these sectoral strategies, ensuring we remain a strong voice in shaping our collective future.

At a local level, there are three broad areas of focus for the libraries. These are to tackle **Legacy** issues, to provide **Stability** to services introduced during the pandemic, and to position us for planned **Growth** to accelerate and support the implementation of the University strategy. This can be achieved through a step change for the libraries, through a functional and cultural shift, and this forward plan provides the framework for this shift. The

¹ Four baseline characteristics of connected customers include Immediacy (instant gratification); Personalisation (is this service designed for me); Consistency (same high-quality experience expected all the time from all parts of the service); and Anticipation (predictive of needs). Salesforce “State of the Connected Customer” research – 2018

challenges ahead of us are also great opportunities. Exploiting these opportunities will allow us to reposition ourselves as a globally significant library.

Governance and working approach

The forward plan will require participation from staff at all levels and across all teams. It is designed to empower teams in the libraries to take ownership and responsibility for our overall success. By teams, we do not necessarily mean existing teams, but colleagues who come together in an adaptive way to respond to the objectives set in the plan.

Our staff have immense expertise which will be recognised and celebrated in the implementation of our Projects, Initiatives and People (PIP) framework. There will be action plan(s) supporting this forward plan, which will allow for prioritisation and progression of projects and initiatives and will support horizontal and vertical collaboration (across teams and across all levels).

Leadership for projects and initiatives will also cut across teams and grades, with the most appropriate person providing relevant leadership. The accountability for each implementation plan is with the sponsor of the strategic programme. The accountability of the Cultural Shift is with the University Librarian.

We want to ensure that leadership for this forward plan comes from across the libraries, at all levels. For this purpose, we have adopted six leadership principles that will guide us in how we approach this forward plan. These principles are:

- Trust and Empowerment
- Inclusivity and Psychological Safety
- Being Bold and Taking risks
- High Challenge; High Support
- Developing and Enabling Potential
- Collaborating Across Silos.

It is important that we embrace these principles in our approach. The monitoring of progress will be formalised through quarterly libraries leadership team meetings, and the resetting of objectives/priorities will be done on a yearly basis through an away day. One of these away days will be aligned with the biennial libraries summer conference.

Functional Shift

A post-pandemic, step-change, view of the libraries must come with a functional shift for libraries. We have captured this functional shift in the four strategic programmes of our vision. These are: Digital Futures; Open Higher Education; Sustainable Environments; and Enriched Experiences.

We are taking an Objectives and Key Results (OKRs) approach for these strategic areas, enabling a delegated and empowered response to achieving these objectives.

Digital Futures

Sponsor – Associate Director: Research and Digital Futures

O1 – Adopt a digital literacies framework and embed it through Academic Literacies strategy and Curriculum Redefined.

KR1: Adopt a digital literacies framework institutionally by April 2023.

KR2: Digital literacy embedded across all schools by August 2025.

KR3: Adopt a digital capability diagnostic tool by April 2023 and embed it in SRDS and Careers processes by August 2024.

KR4: Digital Literacy content embedded into appropriate webpages and online resources by September 2024.

KR5: Develop a programme of learning for our students to enhance digital skills by December 2023.

Linked strategic priorities: SP1

O2 – Improve outdated processes and systems to improve user experience and create efficiencies.

KR1: Initial training on Rapid Improvement Exercises (RIEs) conducted by March 2023, followed by more training in Summer 2023.

KR2: Implement Microsoft Dynamics 365 for bookings and enquiries by November 2023.

KR3: Three key processes identified for improvements by June 2023 and improved by March 2024.

KR4: Integration of eresource access management and discovery with metadata management completed by April 2023.

KR5: Review of work processes and shared ownership of Alma completed by November 2023.

KR6: Create a *one collection* experience for our users by integrating museum and archive processes and streamlining curatorial practices by August 2023.

Linked strategic priorities: SP2

O3 – Develop a digital ecosystem that supports a high-quality experience for connected customers.

KR1: Improve our web presence within the institutional framework by December 2024.

KR2: Review our communications and engagement approach through an audience and channels audit by December 2023.

KR3: Develop metrics that determine and improve user engagement by August 2024.

KR4: Review engagement with Virtual Reading Rooms and develop a standard service to facilitate ongoing remote access to special collections and sensitive data by September 2023.

Linked strategic priorities: SP2

O4 – Support the establishment of a Digital Creativity and Cultures Hub (DCCH).

KR1: A website for DCCH established by September 2022, bringing together Digital Humanities activities.

KR2: Business case for DCCH approved by March 2023.

KR3: Physical DCCH established and staffed in our premises by August 2023.

KR4: Digital skills development programme for academic staff established by September 2023.

KR5: Partner in at least two research grant applications on top of DCCH by August 2024.

Linked strategic priorities: SP3, SP14

O5 – Transform our digital infrastructure and digitisation capability.

KR1: Develop an International Image Interoperability Framework enabled, scalable digital infrastructure by December 2024.

KR2: Develop and implement a digitisation plan that increases access to resources by August 2025.

KR3: Develop the business case for upgrading White Rose Libraries shared research repositories by June 2024.

KR4: Develop case studies that highlight the impact of the digital transformation in each year.

KR5: Partner in at least two research grant applications on top of upgraded digital library infrastructure by August 2024.

Linked strategic priorities: SP4

O6 – Transform institutional records management and digital preservation approach.

KR1: Revise the digital preservation policy at an institutional level by March 2023.

KR2: Set up the governance for records management and digital preservation by August 2023.

KR3: Build a case for electronic records management system and implement it by August 2024.

KR4: Implement a production ready system for digital preservation by June 2023.

KR5: Embed records management culture and digital preservation service by August 2025.

Linked strategic priorities: SP5

Open Higher Education

Sponsor – Associate Director: Content and Discovery

O7 – Further position libraries as a leader in open research.

KR1: Support the launch of Open Higher Education summit in 2022.

KR2: Develop an institutional open research and rights retention strategy by January 2023.

KR3: Develop simple and easy to understand communications (and tools) by December 2023.

KR4: Negotiate an initial set of publisher deals that support full open access by December 2024.

KR5: Embed Open Research practices across schools by August 2025.

KR6: Review and accelerate our approach towards open Infrastructures by December 2024.

Linked strategic priorities: SP6, SP7

O8 – Actively support diversification and decolonisation of collections.

KR1: Complete the diversification of reading lists pilot project by August 2022.

KR2: Define service offer in relation to the diversification of reading lists by December 2023.

KR3: Devise a sustainable plan to ensure language across all metadata is inclusive by June 2024.

KR4: Develop and implement acquisition policies that will actively support diversification of collections by August 2023.

KR5: Commission and acquire artworks that improve the diversity of our collection by August 2025.

KR6: Create research fellowships and student scholarships on the topic of collection diversification and inclusive practice on an ongoing basis.

Linked strategic priorities: SP6, SP15, SP18

O9 – Establish academic literacies development as an essential element of student learning.

KR1: Establish the Academic Literacies Strategy as a core element of the Curriculum Redefined programme and Learning Design Agency offer by September 2023.

KR2: Academic literacies development embedded throughout all taught programmes by September 2025.

KR3: Lead development of the institution's co-curricular workshop offer and online resources, in partnership with academic and professional colleagues, to support students' development as global citizens, by September 2025.

KR4: Design measures to evaluate the impact of the Academic Literacies Strategy by September 2023.

Linked strategic priorities: SP8

O10 – Establish a positive approach towards academic integrity.

KR1: Co-produce an easy-to-understand definition for academic integrity by September 2022.

KR2: Review the academic integrity test and tutorial and update it by June 2023.

KR3: Review and update academic integrity elements of online skills resources and workshop programme by September 2022.

KR4: Support the University in delivering on Academic Integrity Action Plan on an ongoing basis.

Linked strategic priorities: SP8

O11 – Support a positive research culture through responsible metrics and institutional systems/practices.

KR1: Update supporting material with responsible metrics content for academic reward and recognition processes by December 2022.

KR2: Devise a service for research metrics use in faculties and schools IPE (integrated planning exercise) by December 2022.

KR3: Support the faculties, schools and institutes through effective bibliometric data by July 2023.

KR4: Further raise institutional awareness of DORA and align related initiatives with the People and Culture plan by August 2024.

KR5: Support Research Information Management systems and process to improve researcher experience, research quality and impact by June 2024.

Linked strategic priorities: SP9

O12 – Establish libraries as the institutional lead for open educational resources (OERs) and position White Rose University Press (WRUP) as a globally recognised high quality press.

KR1: Invest in alternative forms for open textbooks by December 2023.

KR2: Take institutional ownership of OER agenda and develop an OER referatory by August 2023.

KR3: Raise awareness and promotion of WRUP to increase throughput of titles by Jan 2023.

KR4: Embed OER practices across the institution by engaging 20% of the schools by August 2025.

KR5: Surface relevant open resources as widely as possible by March 2023.

Linked strategic priorities: SP10, SP18

Sustainable Environments

Sponsor – Associate Director: Student Learning and Experience

O13 – Measure and improve our environmental impact and promote sustainability in our services.

KR1: Undertake an environmental analysis of our physical and digital spaces by June 2023, and identify approaches that reduce the environmental impact of libraries by December 2023.

KR2: Remove single-use plastics across the library by 2025.

KR3: In co-production with students, improve sustainability in libraries by June 2024.

KR4: Bring more nature into our spaces, through plants, living walls, and investigate feasibility of Laidlaw terrace as a green space by December 2024.

KR5: Ensure staff are linked to networks that enable us to use collections in support of sustainable development and knowledge sharing on an ongoing basis by July 2023.

Linked strategic priorities: SP11

O14 – Develop an incremental plan to refurbish Health Sciences and Brotherton Libraries.

KR1: Develop a staged business case for refurbishment of Health Sciences spaces by June 2023.

KR2: Complete refurbishment of Brotherton West Building link corridor by August 2022.

KR3: Develop a staged business case for refurbishment of Brotherton Library by July 2023.

KR4: Implement final phase of the Brotherton Library stock moves by August 2025.

KR5: Improve Art Gallery infrastructure to display textiles and digital artworks. Incorporate digital screens in interpretation by August 2024.

Linked strategic priorities: SP11, SP12

O15 – Improve the aesthetics, quality, and overall provision of our spaces.

KR1: Improve the vibrancy and sense of belonging in our spaces through art, colour, plants and furniture by December 2024.

KR2: Improve user experience and access to Brotherton and Edward Boyle Libraries by changing layout of reception and enquiry desk areas by September 2023.

KR3: Invest in adequate high value, inclusive spaces including sensory spaces, family space, and wellbeing spaces by August 2024.

KR4: Develop new forms of spaces to support post-pandemic student experience by December 2023.

KR5: Develop a programme of art framing and conservation to enhance collection use in buildings by May 2025.

KR6: Improve the provision of the Skills Zone and Maths and Stats Zone to meet increasing user demands by September 2024.

Linked strategic priorities: SP11, SP12, SP13, SP16, SP20

O16 – Embrace smart campus program and improve our data analysis capability.

KR1: Improve our physical infrastructure to collect and use appropriate data by June 2023.

KR2: Develop and deploy a data dashboard for evidence-driven decision making by December 2023.

KR3: Position libraries as a testbed for smart campus initiatives by September 2024.

KR4: Integrate smart campus functionality in the SpaceFinder app by December 2024.

KR5: Develop an approach for digital wayfinding within and beyond libraries by August 2024.

Linked strategic priorities: SP11, SP14, SP2

O17 – Provide leadership for improving education spaces across the institution.

KR1: Develop a *students as co-producers* framework for space design by December 2023.

KR2: Develop an entrepreneurial space in the libraries for students by September 2023.

KR3: Improve the quality of centrally accessible PC clusters by August 2024.

KR4: Implement SpaceFinder app for space findability across campus by September 2022.

KR5: Contribute to Digital Accelerator Incubator and Invention Labs programs on an ongoing basis.

KR6: Contribute to the wider postgraduate research hub development across campus by September 2023.

Linked strategic priorities: SP13, SP14, SP17

O18 – Embrace digital in our approach to encourage interdisciplinary experimentation.

KR1: Launch a scheme to advance implications of technologies on libraries by August 2022.

KR2: Support the Deanery building plan for integrated digital support by August 2024.

KR3: Review and improve the digital collaboration functionality in libraries by August 2024.

KR4: Develop a wide-ranging understanding of copyright, licensing, and rights management for digital use and reuse by August 2024.

KR5: Create CultureTech initiatives to support experimentation at the intersection of culture, knowledge and digital technologies by August 2025.

Linked strategic priorities: SP13, SP14, SP3

O19 – Develop a storage plan to manage the physical growth in our Special Collections and to improve storage facilities for modern collections.

KR1: Support the development of a national distributed print collection through stock audits and addition of retention statements by Dec 2023.

KR2: Establish a rolling programme of stock-editing of main collections at all sites by December 2024.

KR3: Rehouse main collection through an appropriate institutional storage facility or external storage options by December 2024.

KR4: Develop and implement appraisal and deaccessioning plans for effective management of Special Collections by July 2023.

KR5: Review the use and functionality of the Western Campus Store as part of an institutional storage facility planning by July 2025.

KR6: Review the governance of cultural and heritage acquisitions by the University by May 2023.

Linked strategic priorities: SP15

Enriched Experiences

Sponsor – Associate Director: Special Collections and Galleries

O20 – Develop an institutional cultural programme that positions the University as a major cultural hub. Contribute to Leeds 2023 through innovative programming.

KR1: Commission a sustainable sculpture on campus as part of the public art trail by August 2023.

KR2: Review the public art strategy with stakeholder consultation and events series, building on the collective regional strength by May 2023.

KR3: Improve our thematic partnerships with galleries and cultural organisations, with an initial programme launched with Hepworth Gallery by December 2022.

KR4: Evaluate the impact of campus wide cultural programmes and economic and social contribution to region by August 2022.

KR5: Establish a community engagement programme for collections and galleries by August 2024.

KR6: Enhance audience learning through art works and creative practice, starting by developing a collaborative program with Marks and Spencer by August 2022.

KR7: Promote opportunities to engage with key and recently acquired collections by July 2025.

Linked strategic priorities: SP16

O21 – Better understand and meet the information needs of our users.

KR1: Review academic and student engagement with the new reading list system by June 2023.

KR2: Review how we support faculties and schools (including faculty reports) in delivery of their strategic aims by January 2023.

KR3: Better understand how our users engage with our resources by March 2024.

KR4: Develop capacity for real-time intelligence on use of our assets and resources by June 2025.

KR5: Undertake collection management, enhancement and interpretation activities to expose unique features and discoverability of our collection by July 2024.

KR6: Embrace new standards and technologies to improve the discoverability and promote the use of collections and resources by November 2024.

Linked strategic priorities: SP15, SP18

O22 – Create engagement programmes that inspire curiosity, creativity and knowledge sharing for diverse audiences locally and from around the globe.

KR1: Develop a plan to support educational engagement and widening participation by August 2023.

KR2: Produce high quality digital storytelling content using AI and extended reality by July 2025.

KR3: Provide volunteer opportunities to engage with our collections and each other by July 2023.

KR4: Initiate co-curation and co-production opportunities, working with our communities as partners, by July 2023.

KR5: Collaborate with Schools to devise skills modules and work placements focused on curatorial and archive practices on an ongoing basis by September 2022.

Linked strategic priorities: SP16, SP20, SP3

O23 – Develop an alumni offer for the libraries and attract philanthropic funding opportunities.

KR1: Renegotiate publisher licenses wherever possible to provide alumni access by December 2024.

KR2: Contribute to the institutional philanthropic fundraising targets, particularly in the areas of digital, collections and space on an ongoing basis.

KR3: Revise external access policy and charging structure to reduce barriers to access the libraries by alumni and members of public by September 2023.

Linked strategic priorities: SP19, SP20

O24 – Extend access to our buildings to support the needs of diverse audiences.

KR1: Provide longer and more consistent access to study spaces by August 2023.

KR2: Provide 24-hour access to a managed space all year round by August 2023.

KR3: Undertake accessibility reviews and upgrade our physical and digital spaces to be fully accessible by August 2024.

KR4: Use library spaces more effectively to tell the stories of our communities by July 2024.

KR5: Streamline the front of house offer for the Brotherton Research Centre and Galleries by July 2023.

Linked strategic priorities: SP20, SP13

Cultural Shift

Over the next four years, we will focus on a cultural shift that will embrace institutional values of inclusivity, integrity, collaboration and compassion in our activities. We will embrace user experience and focus on developing leadership capacity, a culture of innovation, and take an active approach towards collaboration.

Our delivery mechanisms will consist of stages of acceleration and stages of stability. This is particularly important for staff wellbeing and to avoid burnout. It is also important to mention that we will not measure our cultural shift through KPIs but rather through the velocity and quality of activities that we will undertake, together as a community.

We will develop a collective sense of belonging to the libraries, with individuals and teams taking pride in the achievements of everyone who works here.

User Experience and Innovation

- A1 – Invest in a cyclic user experience (UX) training programme for our staff, developing multiple cohorts' confidence and capability to understand our users better.
- A2 – Develop a simple-to-access user experience fund for our staff that supports development of user-focussed continuous improvement ideas.
- A3 – Strengthen the libraries' student ambassador programme to ensure student engagement is targeted at improving a sense of belonging on campus.
- A4 – Map the emotional journey of our users, ensuring that our focus remains on providing the highest quality experience that connects with users at an academic, social and emotional level.
- A5 – Proactively collect evidence for good practice and develop approaches to support Customer Service Excellence (CSE), Archives and Museums accreditations, and Visitor Attraction Quality Accreditation Scheme (VAQAS).
- A6 – Develop a testbed fund for staff who would like to test, explore, exploit or evolve an idea which generates positive change or improvement to achieve our vision.

Engagement, Collaboration and Community

- A7 – Through our reward and recognition mechanisms, actively reward cross-library initiatives that break traditional silos and take new approaches towards working.
- A8 – Support a wider variety of staff to develop their networks, institutionally and across the sector.
- A9 – Run regular staff pulse surveys to see how we are collectively feeling at any moment, and to seek ideas for improvements.

- A10 – Conduct a staff skills audit and develop coherent plans that include staff up-skilling and wide-skilling to move our libraries forward.
- A11 – Celebrate all that the libraries do through a biennial libraries summer conference, starting in 2022.
- A12 – Run a biennial student innovation event to improve our services, starting in 2023.
- A13 – Improve our staff induction processes, making them inclusive, supportive and fun.
- A14 – Improve our use of Microsoft Teams to allow more open sharing of thoughts and ideas.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

- A15 – Develop an EDI approach to operationalise the Professional Services EDI framework.
- A16 – Conduct a staff inclusivity analysis, ensuring that we understand the diversity of our staff better, and that we support the diversity of our staff further.
- A17 – Review the Libraries recruitment and selection processes, ensuring they are inclusive and reflective of good practices. Provide guidance and support for recruiting managers to embed these good practices in day-to-day activities.
- A18 – Develop a structured support model for staff who join us from underrepresented backgrounds, ensuring satisfaction, retention and inclusion.
- A19 – Investigate development of a positive action apprenticeship or a graduate traineeship to improve the diversity of staffing in libraries.
- A20 – Develop a systemic approach to increase understanding and ownership of EDI amongst all staff.

Leadership and working environment

- A21 – Develop leadership skills across the libraries, initially through a library leadership programme.
- A22 – Develop a high challenge, high support culture across libraries and supplement this with appropriate development programmes to support our staff.
- A23 – Actively work on reducing the fear of failure, change and the tendency of perfection in services. Build a culture of continuous, incremental improvement.
- A24 – Develop appropriate internal opportunities for staff to expand their horizons, through a mixed approach of secondments, internal sabbaticals, shadowing, and portfolio building options.

A25 – Actively encourage pursuit of scholarship and celebrate our staff contributing to research, teaching, engagement, and to sector initiatives.

A26 – Improve internal and external communications and profile building significantly, with an active approach towards meaningful global partnerships.

A27 – Invest cyclically in staff spaces and develop a positive, proactive, approach towards future working.

A28 – Review and update all our policies and plans, and create a mechanism to ensure our policies and plans remain current and under constant review.

Risk Management

The most up-to-date risk register is available in the University's CAMMS tool.