

Creating Reading Lists

As we all know, good use of Reading Lists can really enhance the learning process and provide a positive experience for our students. The Library is here to work with academic colleagues to provide relevant and resourced lists available in a timely fashion.

Based on student feedback the Library offers the following advice:

What students are expecting

Reading Lists should help students by guiding and directing their reading. Long bibliographies without an explicit structure may provide a comprehensive overview of a subject but they can seem overwhelming to students.

Students have told us what they find helpful are:

- a Reading List that is well structured and organized (e.g. by week, topic) and where reading intentions are made clear by level of importance-essential/recommended/further
- an indication of texts they are expected to buy
- up-to-date lists where all items are easily available to them (ideally electronic and not out of print)
- a list of manageable and realistic length making it easier for them to prioritise their readings;
- accurate references
- some level of consistency in approach between module lists

What to keep in mind

When you are creating lists and working with the Library to make resources available it may be helpful to consider the following factors:

- **Ordering time** - it can take from four to eight weeks for new acquisitions to arrive in the Library from our approved suppliers. Foreign language materials can sometimes take longer

- **E-book availability** - where available the Library will purchase e-books in order to improve student access but please be aware that sadly, not all titles will be available in e-book format
- **How many e-books** - some e-books may be restricted to one-use-at-a-time by the publisher. We can work with you to provide the best access model for e-books within publisher and cost constraints
- **Out of print items** - depending on the discipline, certain items on your list may be out of print. Therefore, it is not always possible to source multiple or even one copy of some texts. In such cases we may need to consider alternative items
- **Price of books** - some academic books can be very expensive (costing hundreds of pounds) and in such instances we will contact you to consider alternatives and to ensure the effective use of the Library book budgets. Expensive books may also present challenges for students if they are expected to buy their own copies
- **Latest editions** - the Library will order the latest edition of a title unless alerted otherwise
- **Requesting digitisations** - subject to our CLA licence we can scan materials (up to 10% of a book) and link it to your Reading List. This may be useful for high demand items or items where we cannot buy multiple copies
- **Length of list** - students may feel overwhelmed in attempting to prioritise their reading based on a long list. In addition, if long lists need significant resourcing, this could of course greatly reduce the book budget and the amount available for other modules

We estimate there are around 2,800 modules with Reading Lists running across the University. It can take several hours to review a list and order items or process digitisation requests. Therefore we ask that lists are sent to the Library as far in advance of the start of the new academic year as possible, bearing in mind the volume of lists to deal with and the ordering times from suppliers, etc.

However, we do appreciate that you may not always know the full content of your modules until very close the start of term. If so, we would still ask that you submit your list to the Library and make it available to students, although we cannot guarantee items will be available for the beginning of the course.

Setting reading importance

Clearly giving items 'reading importance' allows students to plan their time and reading strategy. It also helps the Library when ordering materials as we use a ratio based on student numbers and importance to guide our acquisitions.

Within Talis Aspire there are four 'reading importance' categories to choose from:

1. **Suggested for Student Purchase** – select this category if you expect students to purchase a particular text
2. **Essential** - these are core items that all students must read as part of the module.
3. **Recommended** - items you would recommend students should read to expand their knowledge on a specific topic, e.g. when choosing a certain essay title.
4. **Further** - items students could read if they wanted to explore a subject further.

These different 'reading importance' categories inform the number of copies purchased. We buy most copies of the 'essential readings' to ensure all students have access to these texts, with fewer copies of other categories. E-books are always preferred for Reading List items to maximize accessibility for all students.

How the Library can help

We can help you:

- present your list to students [Reading Lists](#)
- provide advice on availability of materials
- provide advice on e-book formats
- provide guidance on alternative resources
- offer training and support to help students find materials to support their studies (e.g. at induction)

Your Academic Support Librarian is available if you wish to discuss your Reading List and provision further.