VISION
The Library and Learning Landscape at Edinburgh Campus
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Library Reports & Appendices

Part 1 Vision: The Library and Learning Landscapes at Edinburgh Campus Report should be read in conjunction with the Part 2 Strategy Report and supporting appendices:

Part 2 Strategy: The Future Library Spatial Requirements at Edinburgh Campus

Appendix A: Library Observation Study

Appendix B: Library Engagement

Related Documents
In parallel with this study, the Campus Development Projects Team has identified a number of pressing issues. These are summarised in a separate paper by the Projects Team: Appendix 1: PR192_Project Appraisal of Short Term Requirements in respect of Environmental Issues and Relocation of BGS Library Stock

Figure 1: The University of Aberdeen Library
**Introduction**

This document provides a strategic vision for the Library as part of the wider Heriot-Watt University learning environment. The Information Services Directorate is working with Realm ISD to develop a clear vision for the future library environment at Edinburgh Campus.

The vision sits within the wider context of the University's Strategic Plan 2013-2018, the Learning and Teaching Strategy, the Information Services Strategic Plan 2013-2017 and the Space Optimisation Project (SOP) Report, January 2014.

‘Vision: The Library and Learning Landscapes at Edinburgh Campus’ (Part 1) describes the vision for library services, spaces and facilities.

‘Strategy: The Future Library Spatial Requirements at Edinburgh Campus’ (Part 2) describes the spatial requirements to support the delivery of the vision.

These outputs were prepared between August and November 2014 with input from the Information Services Leadership Team, staff and students. On completion of the outputs, a property strategy will be developed, led by the Campus Services. The medium term property strategy will be based on:

- A restricted and phased upgrade of the library building
- An approach based on meeting the minimum needs for library and supported study to 2018
- Integrating library and study needs with SOP opportunities
- Ensuring the required investment in the library building has transitional value to any future university occupant

The longer term property strategy will be based upon a complete upgrade and remodel of the existing library, or a new build facility - the latter requiring a plan for re-purposing of the building to meet other university needs.
“At universities across the world the usage of libraries is increasing. Due to changes in students’ study/work/life balance, patterns of use and increasing student numbers, more and more students are coming to the library every year. Those students are demanding a more modern and higher quality library experience.

Coinciding with this increased demand, the balance of the library collections has fundamentally changed. Currently there are over 50,000 electronic journals - which far outweigh the number of paper based journals – and with over 70,000 e-books in the collection, a third of our books are now electronic.

As physical collections contract, and the demand for the provision and diversity of study space expands, we require a physical response in terms of our library environment that can be easily adapted to meet changes in student expectations, meet rising demand, and to enable new approaches to the learning landscape”

Mike Roch
Director of Information Services

Figure 3: Robert Gordon University (RGU) Library, Aberdeen
Executive Summary

Information Services are facing a number of major challenges in the short to medium term. These must be met within the context of a longer term strategy that ensures the Library offering is world class and meets the needs of an expanding and increasingly diverse learning community.

The Information Services (IS) Directorate provides services worldwide from three locations on campus: the Cameron Smail Library including the Gibson Craig wing; the adjacent AV and media studios; and the Allen McTernan building which houses the main data centre for the whole University and all IT staff. Together, across these locations, IS deliver services to 1800 staff and over 8000 students at Edinburgh, as well as supporting campuses in Scottish Borders, Orkney, Dubai, and Malaysia.

While there would be benefits for the directorate of providing an integrated, co-located IS facility, the principal focus of this vision is customer-centred, and is based upon enhancing the student experience and re-shaping the learning landscape. IS have a leading role in supporting the delivery of the Learning and Teaching Strategy (LTS), and the Library is the principal facility from which this support can be offered. The library environment is therefore fundamental to the delivery of the LTS.

Changing Expectations

The University Library is evolving and new and innovative environments are required to respond to a multitude of changes in pedagogy, technology, lifestyles, and work patterns. The library must embrace these changes and support new ways of working and learning.

There are increasingly high expectations of a quality environment that offers an ample choice of comfortable spaces in which to learn and work. Ubiquitous technology, good coffee and catering facilities, longer opening hours, and easy access to both virtual and face-to-face support ‘on demand’ have become part of a new ‘norm’ in terms of student expectations.

Widespread shifts towards more active and engaged learning styles have led to an increase in project-based, collaborative and peer to peer working. Such activities generate demand for new types of collaborative group study spaces, with integrated technology, display facilities, and more social and interactive settings.

Demand for quiet or silent study space at university libraries also continues to remain high, in particular when the library was first built, the population totalled around 1500 students. Now, in 2014, there are over 8000 students FTE, with continued growth projected to 8700 by 2018.

During peak revision times, the library staff now regularly record in excess of 3000 people a day passing through the library gates. Demand for access to the Edinburgh Campus Library is continuing to increase, year on year, as the campus population expands.

Despite recent changes in the way we are able to access library resources and materials, the student appetite for ‘the Library’ as a central place of learning appears undiminished. The library remains very much at the heart of the university experience.

Background

The Cameron Smail Library was built in 1974, designed by architect Sir Basil Spence. The architecture is typical of that era, with large load bearing floor plates providing expansive book storage in the centre of the building. Study spaces are placed around the perimeter in order to make the most of the light and beautiful views onto the campus gardens.

During the period since the building was constructed, a great deal has changed in the way that students live and learn, and so the context in which the library now operates is radically altered.
during revision time. Contemporary library designers take a creative approach to this need by offering a wider choice of quiet settings, and study atmospheres with more informal ambience. Examples include modern takes on the ‘reading room’ with subdued lighting, quiet study lounges and research rooms or ‘clubs’ for academic and postgraduate use.

In tandem with the introduction of new and more diverse study settings, the nature of the library collection is fundamentally changing, with a far greater emphasis on electronic collections and enabling physical access to sought-after texts and publications. As the virtual collections expand and the physical collections contract, there is an opportunity to re-design and re-balance the provision of space in the library, to better meet demands for more and better study space, and enable innovations in the learning environment.

In the context of changing expectations, the overall response across the Higher Education (HE) sector is the evolution of a more student-centred approach to library design, both in terms of the environment, and in terms of the services provided. Drivers to improve the student experience have led many universities to adopt new models for co-located or converged facilities, bringing together, library with service areas, with a view to enhancing the services offered, making operational improvements and or improving the convenience for the students.

It is clear from many examples across the HE sector that the usage of the library is indeed changing and evolving, but is not diminishing. The rate of change within the design of learning, study and working environments is more rapid now than at any time in recent years.

The challenge for universities in the context of such rapid change is to create a range of adaptable learning, working and study environments that meet these new evolving expectations of a quality modern library experience.

Recent Changes
Over recent years, the library has undergone some minor upgrades, including the introduction of Dewey’s café, with a staffed coffee kiosk, and the installation of self-service RFID technology which has reduced queueing times.

In summer 2014, further improvements were made including a re-design of the service desk, the creation of a number of new collaborative study areas on the entrance level and a change to 24 hour opening throughout the academic term. These recent improvements made have been well received by staff and students and are generating positive feedback.

However, the improvements made have been limited to minor upgrades of limited areas, and are by that limitation, relatively low impact. In general, it is acknowledged that the interior fixtures, fittings, and furnishings are tired and dated, the environmental conditions are poor, and the majority of the study settings provided are not equipped for modern ways of working.

The Cameron Smail Library is now in need of a more substantial upgrade to extend the working life of the building and to provide a quality modern environment for working or study.

Student Feedback
The University’s annual satisfaction survey suggests that students are largely satisfied with the library services that they receive. However, a more in-depth analysis reveals that the library only met students’ minimum expectations in terms of the quality of the physical environment.

In the Student Barometer survey of 2,151 students, the HWU score for the physical library facilities was 84.7%. This appears numerically high, however when viewed in relation to UK competitors, Heriot-Watt ranked 19 out of 22 UK ISBSB institutions.
Analysis of the comments received identified some of the key areas in which the library environment is currently falling short of students’ expectations:

- Overcrowding in peak periods
- Quantity and quality of study settings
- Availability of silent study
- Quantity and availability of group study
- Opening hours
- Availability of computers
- Access to reading list texts

Since the survey feedback was received a number of changes have been made, including the extension of 24 hour opening throughout term time. IS continue to engage directly with student representatives to identify and pilot new initiatives and introduce enhancements to both the space and services.

**Current Context**

The feedback from both staff and students is clear: the current provision of study space in the library is insufficient, in particular during peak study periods.

In 2013-2014, the provision of study space in the main library was 610 seats, an average of 1 seat per 14 students FTE, considerably lower than the UK average of 10 seats per student FTE.

In response to this feedback and declining seat ration, IS proposes a target to increase the study seats by 10% per annum. However, meeting this target within the current facility presents significant challenges.

Over the last few years, IS have struggled to accommodate the rising demand for study space within the constraints – in particular the environmental conditions of the existing library building.

Many other universities have been operating in the same context, with existing library buildings of a similar era, and against a backdrop of increasing student numbers and rising demand. Many of these UK competitor institutions have refurbished, extended or remodelled their outdated facilities. Others have invested in new library buildings to support wider strategic aims.

Library buildings of this typology are not inherently redundant, but do require investment to continue to deliver and support learning needs. The library is currently operating under the following constraints:

- Without investment in environmental services, the library is unable to accommodate any increased occupancy
- Without investment in re-planning and re-furnishing, the library is unable to increase seat provision to meet rising demand, which will impact on student satisfaction
- Without investment in the fabric of the building and refurbishment of the interior, the quality of the environment is poor and will continue to attract negative student feedback
- Without investment, the library cannot compete effectively with the offering at other institutions across the UK

In the context of the changing expectations, rising demand, limitations on capacity and falling student satisfaction, the implementation of the output recommendations of this study are of vital importance to the University and fundamental to the delivery of the Learning and Teaching Strategy.

![Figure 4: University of Aberdeen Library, Atrium](image-url)

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Figure 5: University of Sheffield, Information Commons

Figure 6: Library of Birmingham Interior
Vision

The following Key Design Principles were defined in consultation with IS staff at a visioning workshop.¹ These high level principles can be referenced with regard to the design of the future library or other library-managed facilities, such as the learning commons.

Welcoming: The library landscapes will provide
- A personal welcome and connection to staff at the help-desk
- An open environment which is easy to navigate, with good sight lines & signage
- A safe and secure environment for students, with controlled access and CCTV

Comfortable: The library landscapes will provide
- Excellent environmental conditions (heating, ventilation, lighting and acoustics) conducive to study over prolonged working hours
- A well-designed quality environment, with a comfortable planning density and a feeling of space and light, in particular, in the working areas
- A well zoned landscape, with clear separation between conversational and quiet study areas, and between student and staff workspaces

Student Centred: The library landscapes will provide
- An environment that reflects student aspirations for a modern university
- Easy access to complementary services such as welfare, careers advice, academic support and other services
- Library facilities that listen directly to the student voice and answer their needs

Holistic: The library landscapes will provide
- Everything you could possibly need for the study experience in one place
- The capacity to meet the growing demand for flexible and sustainable study space
- Destinations designed as an integral part of the wider learning landscape

Supported: The library landscapes will provide
- Supported learning environments, with access to information, resources and support on hand
- A triage service to direct students easily and effectively to other services
- A place that brings experts together to deliver a joined up service

Dynamic: The library landscapes will provide
- Zones for groups of students to modify / re-purpose space to suit learning needs
- An environment that changes to offer different experiences or moods at different times of the day
- Flexible and pop up study facilities that can adapt to cyclical demand for space

Nucleus: The library landscapes will provide
- A destination, a ‘go-to’ place for study
- A centre of activity that makes learning visible, accessible and fun
- A centre of community at the heart of the student learning experience, well located in relation to other significant places for living, working, learning and socialising

Inspirational: The library landscapes will provide
- Clustered, high quality, stimulating learning environments across campus
- An inspiring space for learning that fosters engagement
- An element of surprise through unexpected learning experiences, spaces, activities or events

¹ The IS team would like the New Library to reference the McDonald Principles. McDonald, A.C. (2006) Liber Quarterly: The Ten Commandments revisited; the Qualities of Good Library Space
The Library and Learning Landscape

Information Services seek to reshape the library landscape to provide new study environments to meet the growing demand for study space, to enhance approaches to learning, and to support the student learning experience.

In the short to medium term, IS seek to implement changes that will significantly improve the Student Barometer rating and the UK position on performance of the physical library environment.

In the longer term IS seek to augment these changes and integrate services to create an Edinburgh Campus Library that is world class, and meets the needs of an expanding and increasing diverse learning community.

Over the years to 2018, the rapid growth in student numbers together with the limitations, costs and timescales associated with refurbishment of the existing building, indicate that the library landscape will require expanding beyond the main library building into a secondary location, a learning commons.

Across the combined library and Commons, there will be a joint provision of 950 seats, to meet the needs of the growing student population:

- The library will offer between 700 and 750 seats after refurbishment
- The learning commons (a new facility) will offer a further 200 seats, including 80 seats in a 24/7 PC lab

This provision sits within a context of a wider expanse of study facilities available on campus – circa 550 seats, including social study zones and central computer labs, which are managed by IS. The total combined open access study seat provision will therefore be 1500 spaces, in clearly signposted facilities.

The Library and Learning Commons

The library will remain a ‘go-to’ destination for study on campus, providing the central hub of supported study space and library resources.

A secondary library managed study hub – a learning commons - will be created on campus offering similar hours of access, support, facilities and services, with library resources and collections accessible in online format. Across these two facilities IS will seek to:

- Provide a range of adaptable supported study environments to meet changing needs across the academic year
- Offer a wide choice of formal and informal workspaces for individual and group study
- Create a high quality study environment to meet or exceed student expectations
- Increase the library study provision to align with UK average (1 seat per 10 students)

Distinct Study Zones

In both the library and learning commons, there will be clear and distinct zones for conversational, quiet, silent and group study. The overall approach of zoning by floor will be maintained, creating study floors that are predominantly quiet or conversational in nature.

- The entrance floor of the library will be a buzzy environment (conversational study)
- There will be one floor of silent study space
- Other floors will adapt from conversational to quiet during the course of the academic year in response to changing demand

The study atmospheres in each distinct zone will be messaged using coloured lighting and easily adaptable signage and graphics, so that the use of the space is clear, intuitive and easy to change. Particular care will be given to the zoning and acoustics, with the whole environment designed to support library protocols, and encourage responsible and considerate behaviours.
Library Study Zones

Silent / Quiet Study
Information Services have identified that there is a high demand for quiet and silent study space, in particular during exam revision periods. In respect of this, there is a consequent need for the provision of quiet and silent study to be expanded in line with an increasing student population. The new library will include:

- Open plan study space with a quiet concentrated atmosphere on upper floors of the library, away from the activity of the entrance
- Flexi-floors will adapt from conversational to quiet study during exam time
- Quiet areas will be buffered from noisier areas with use of book stacks, acoustic dividers and good practice in space planning of zones
- Glazed group study rooms will be provided for easy adaptation from collaborative to silent study during exam revision
- Silent study booths will be provided, and will include wheelchair accessible rooms.
- The environment will provide a third of the settings as silent study with the same again able to convert from collaborative to silent study space with ease.

Conversational / Social Study
IS have identified that students are seeking out more active spaces, where they can study with friends or peers, and engage in conversation as they work. IS seek to include more relaxed, conversational and social study spaces within the library and the learning commons:

- Conversational or social study space will be provided on the entry level of the main library, near to a café facility, short loans library and help desk
- Study zones will include a range of study tables, touchdown areas, café tables and informal study settings such as soft seating
- Conversational zones will provide a good location for group study pods and booths
- Settings in these areas are more relaxed, but do require good table surfaces and power sockets, as they are working areas

The learning commons will be a potentially busy node of the learning activity offering a range of tech enabled group and individual study facilities in a social and relaxed setting.

Group / Collaborative Study
Tech-enabled collaborative study space is increasingly in demand in the library, reflecting wider changes in learning and teaching. To meet the rising demand, IS seek to increase collaborative study provision, by creating new group study facilities in both the library and the learning commons to include:

- Collaborative settings where students can meet, share ideas and create content using technology collaboratively
- Semi-enclosed tech enabled booths in buzzy areas of the library and learning commons
- Low tech cosy booths for students who want to work in groups in a more relaxed environment
- Bookable collaborative tables in group study rooms, for groups of 4 to 7 students working together on coursework
- Presentation areas created in buzzy areas or enclosed rooms where students can rehearse presentations with peers
- Enclosed group study rooms with glazed frontages, that can be quickly rezoned as silent study, to cater for changing demands in a flexible way

Within the library the increased seat provision and diversity of well zoned study spaces will offer students choices of study environments and enable easy adaptation of the space to meet changes in demand over the academic year.
Figure 7: Queen Margaret University, Learning Resource Centre, Edinburgh

Figure 8: Queen Margaret University, Learning Resource Centre, Edinburgh
Library Collections

**Physical Collections**
In the future, book stock will continue to be housed in the Edinburgh Campus Library with a mix use of existing paper based collections, new core texts and an ever expanding digital catalogue of books and periodicals.

As the total size of the physical collections contracts, the floor area occupied by books will be substantially reduced through a process of ongoing stock review and consolidation on high density shelving. The additional capacity created through this rationalisation will be used to create new study environments and increase seat provision.

The future library will be based on a capacity for:

- c. 95,000 volumes of open access books, requiring c. 2,650 linear metres of shelving
- c. 900 volumes of short loans books, to be allocated an area near to the helpdesk, providing students easy access to core texts and reading list materials
- c 2,000 linear metres of journals, of which 150 linear metres located in closed stacks
- c. 60 linear metres of open access shelving for dictionaries
- c. 15 linear metres of DVD’s and daily newspapers

Around 4,700 volumes of library stock will relocate to storage archives on or off-site, or to archive space in a new library building.

The short loans facility on the helpdesk floor will be increased and provided a secure and comfortable designated area.

Where open access shelving is retained, it will be used to improve the zoning of study activities and help provide both separation and a level of sound absorption between library zones.

**Virtual Collections**
While the technology infrastructure should be designed to reflect the shift towards students using their own technology platforms, it must be recognised that a great many students use university PC’s and this provision remains a vital part of an inclusive university library landscape.

This need will be catered for as follows:

- Open access and short stay PC’s will be provided at ratio of 1 desktop for every 4 study spaces
- Study tables and workstations should be provided in a manner that enables additional PC’s to be added if required
- Within the library there will be a mix of open PC areas and designated quiet PC rooms (c.200 seats)
- Within the learning commons, a new PC Lab is proposed, offering a flexible teaching and study environment with 24/7 year round swipe card access (c. 60-80 seats)
- Mobile technologies will be available ‘on loan’ to meet peak demands, and enable users without their own devices equitable learning choices
- Assistive technologies will be offered at designated PC’s within the library, with the necessary help on hand to ensure all students have an equitable support provision
- Specialist technologies will be provided at designated PC’s to enable out of hours access to course specific software and enable students to continue working in evenings and through the nights with access to relevant software

Other technology requirements include:

- Access to online library resources and materials
- Bandwidth to support multiple devices per user
- Access to power sockets at every study place
- Facilities to connect to shared screens for collaborative work
Library Services

Help on Hand
In the new library and learning landscape, front of house support will be provided at a main Help Desk located near to the entrance, and adjacent to self-service facilities. The help desk will offer support on library and IT services and offer a triage service to other specialist areas.

From induction onwards, students will be encouraged to take a proactive and self-directed approach to routine enquiries, such as issue and returns. This approach will free up library staff to offer more support for the learning experience and to continue to expand their programme of skills development support.

Skills Development
Library Services bring together highly skilled specialists from varying disciplines to offer support to students in the form of induction, ‘Power Hours’, surgeries, clinics and 1-2-1 study support. The future library and learning commons will incorporate facilities to enable the continued expansion of this programme of support, providing an array of environments for consultations and training.

Academic and IT skills sessions will be offered from within the library and learning commons and staff will offer drop in clinics and roving support across the library landscape. Digital signage in both will keep students informed of clinics or events operating across both locations.

The library landscape is unique on campus for the potential breadth of student support activity over extended hours of operation. Such support could be further extended by adopting a tech enabled cross-campus model of operation, with ‘out of hours’ links to other campuses for help or assistance. This approach would enable the University to capitalise on the unique level of support that a global university can offer.

Integrated Working
The library will provide an open, integrated and well-designed team workspace for all library support staff. The workspace will be light, modern and fit for purpose with a mostly open plan environment, with a provision of small bookable work / meeting rooms available to staff, and private offices allocated only on the basis of functional need.

A range of spaces for interaction - formal, informal and social - will be incorporated, to facilitate cross team interaction and promote integrated working. Where enclosures are provided, they will be glazed for visibility and to encourage communication.

The office area will be located where it will best support the student learning experience and library operations. The distinction between front and back of house areas will be clear and the space will be zoned to provide a quiet and productive environment for library staff, whilst retaining visual connectivity between the office and helpdesk.

Support zones will be integrated into the planning to provide requisite facilities for storage, printers, and book trolleys.

Ideally all library staff will be based in a contiguous office area, recognising that within the existing building there may be a requirement to balance the benefits of working adjacencies with the optimal configuration of the study environment. The office will include all teams presently based in the library and may explore potential for co-location of other related student facing areas where this may be of benefit to the students and the University.
Convergence Opportunities

Emerging Trends
Sector wide drivers to improve the student experience and integrate services, has led many universities to explore and adopt new models for collocated or converged library facilities. There is a clear emerging trend for convergence of a wider range of services than library and IT.

Examples of super-converged libraries bring together library services with other services including IT, student support, careers services, welfare and counselling, student finance and school administration. Such an approach is often based on the library as a ‘store’, where seamless access to support from a range of student services can be found all under one roof.

The key operational benefit identified is the creation of more efficient and integrated service departments, while the benefits for the students include enhancing the student experience and improving service over longer hours of operation. IS see an opportunity to create a provision where conventional library and IT services could be offered alongside other complementary services.

These may include:

- The inclusion of academic support, training and advisory sessions to promote attainment and learning success.
- The inclusion of access to extended hours support and welfare services to positively impact on wellbeing and student retention rates.
- The inclusion of careers services to provide advice, job or academic fairs and enhance awareness of employment opportunities, area linked to skills development.

There are opportunities to create student consultation zones within the library and the learning commons to provide seamless access to all the services on offer on a flexible roaming basis.

Long Term Aspirations
Ideally in the longer term IS would be seeking the creation of a new super converged facility, an opportunity which could be explored more fully in an extended or a new building. A longer term approach could involve colocation of facilities such as student support, careers services, welfare and counselling, student finance within a larger new library facility.

Figure 9a, 9b, 9c: University of Aberdeen Library, Furniture Expo
Other Facilities in the Library

Refreshments
Quality refreshments should be available to support the study experience, and food and beverages will be welcome within designated zones of the main library and learning commons.

Recent modifications to the main library include the creation of ‘Dewey’s café’ on level 1, a facility that IS would seek to include and enhance in the future library. Vending areas should also be provided in a series of student lounge areas located near to facilities such as lockers, toilets, printing, scanning and recycling areas.

A Public Café
The Library Café has a key role in supporting the study experience. The quality of the facility should be high, so as to encourage students to take breaks from study, and avoid users having to leave the library for extended periods to seek catering elsewhere. The café should serve a wide range of hot and cold food, drinks and snacks and provide a comfortable and relaxing environment.

Ideally the café facility will be in a publicly accessible foyer area of the library, not within the study zones or on the ‘secure’ side of the controlled entry system that will be introduced. With the cafeteria open to all, there is potential for links to other adjacent facilities and to the outdoors.

Retail
The main library seeks to provide all of the facilities for study under one roof. As well as library resources and catering, this would include a small retail outlet for purchasing stationery such as notebooks, pens, mobile phone top ups, earphones and other study materials.
Such facilities could be provided via a small student outlet or perhaps a vending facility within the library building.

Museum and Visitor Centre
Currently although the library and the museum share a building, there are no direct links for the public, students or visitors between the spaces. The museum is located in an area with poor access and visibility and the visitor footfall is low.

In the refurbishment options there would be an opportunity to redesign access to the museum, address the relationship of both spaces to the public café and improve links to the main entrance area. Taking a coherent approach and integrating the museum and the ‘visitor experience’ into the re-design of the library building may give rise to new opportunities for improved public engagement.

A new museum or visitor centre accessed via a shared foyer and including commercial facilities such as a café, retail facility or event space may allow the operational cost of the facilities to be shared. By improving visibility, accessibility and raising public awareness of the facility through better design, may increase footfall. The public museum collection is small and integration of display material into foyer and café areas within secure display cases could also be considered.

Access to the museum and the library could be improved by looking at the design of external linkages between the library building and the main heart of the campus. Design opportunities that could be explored include, landscaping change and the potential for a gallery of covered promenades between the library and reception areas.

These matters are for consideration in consultation with the museums team. As yet, there has been no engagement to assess interest or establish a view on the long term ‘best home’ for the collection.

For the purposes of assessing the opportunity, the strategy will look at space needs with and without inclusion of the museum in order that this can be explored further by the University.
Figure 10: The Alan Gilbert Learning Commons, University of Manchester

Figure 11: The Alan Gilbert Learning Commons, University of Manchester
Figure 12: The Information Commons, University of Sheffield

Figure 13: The Information Commons, University of Sheffield
Distributed Study Hubs

The Learning Commons
As part of the emerging vision, a need for a secondary library study hub is being identified, providing around 200 seats in a IS managed space.

A Learning Commons (also known as Information Commons or a Digital Commons) is a new ‘book free’ typology of library or learning environment for both study and collaboration, offering IT based access to library and online content, resources and relevant library support. The commons concept originated in North America in the 1990’s and a decade ago had developed into a clear learning centred model, based around clustering IT resources with the “physical, digital, human, and social resources organized in support of learning” 2

Changes in learning, teaching, technology, student lifestyles and work patterns, are impacting on the types of spaces, settings, and facilities that are now in demand in university libraries and learning commons. Across the sector, we are seeing rising demand for new types of study settings, with more tech-enabled collaboration facilities, group learning spaces and social or interactive study facilities, reflecting recent changes in pedagogy and more collaborative blended learning styles.

While demand for quiet or silent study space remains high during peak revision periods, the environments now being created have an increasingly informal ambience, and offer a much wider choice of settings for working alone or with others. There are increasingly high expectations for high quality that offers ample choice of comfortable settings in which to learn or work with ubiquitous technology, good coffee and catering facilities, longer opening hours, and easy access to both virtual and face-to-face support on demand.

A learning commons differs from the conventional library in that spaces, IT and support are organised primarily around delivery of wider learning objectives, enabled by enhanced technologies, and supported on an evolutionary basis through librarian-academic partnering. The creation of a learning commons at the Edinburgh Campus will provide an ideal opportunity to support the LTS and to design a space that can enhance the student learning experience and foster the HWU key graduate attributes.

The Edinburgh Campus Learning Commons will provide:

- A state-of-the-art digital learning and study centre, with extended hours of access and a flexible support model
- A vibrant study ‘destination’ - a space that is bright, attractive, appealing and fun – a ‘go to’ place for students
- Around 200 seats offering a variety and choice of learning and study settings
- A conversational study space with, ‘round the clock’ activity and a relaxed feel - a place of interface and interaction
- Mixed study, with particular focus on collaborative learning facilities
- Study settings with collaboration and communication technologies, including screens that can be connected to laptops for group work
- A convenient accessible location
- Supported access to the full online catalogue, self-service book drop areas and loan renewal facilities. There will no book stock in the space
- An apple-shop style help desk operating during core hours, providing a triage service and specialist IT and VLE support
- Out-of-hours support could be provided via a cross-campus link-up, capitalising on the unique opportunities a global university can offer

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2 Beagle, Donald (2004): Whitepaper for University of Southern California Conference Information Commons: “Learning Space Beyond the Classroom”.
Pop-up and Other Study Locations

In common with other universities, there is a high demand for daytime study space in the lead up to examinations. The changing needs for study space across the year can be catered for by actively managing space by adopting measures such as:

- Reconfiguring existing facilities e.g. teaching rooms to quiet study rooms during exam period
- Introducing signposting (digital and physical) to advertise availability of study facilities e.g. computer labs and school study hubs
- Introducing ‘pop-up libraries’ by converting spaces to temporary library spaces

These strategies will be of vital importance in the short term, due to the rising student numbers and an out-of-term programme of library refurbishment.

At Edinburgh Campus there are some teaching rooms that may be temporarily converted to silent study rooms, working around limitations where spaces will also be used as examination space. To be most effective, temporary study facilities should be provided in spaces that can be colonised during peak study periods (November to December and April to May) without any timetabling conflicts.

There is also an opportunity to create a Pop-Up Library on campus at peak periods. This concept could be supported by a partial short term conversion of catering space, such as a zone of the Elements café, which presents an ideal location - central, easily accessible, adjacent to the student service centre and to catering facilities. To be effective as a library environment, this space would require to be furnished with library study settings, to adopt library protocols and to have staff presence and support on a roaming basis.

In the longer term there are real opportunities to re-design this space as a catered learning café / study centre to enable simultaneous use as a central hub for both eating and for study, as seen on other modern university campuses.

Post Graduate Study

The importance of supporting the research and postgraduate community should also be considered. While a library-based postgraduate study area would be beneficial, it must be acknowledged that space in the existing library is constrained and that such a facility is currently provided within The Postgraduate Centre (PGC).

The PGC facility provides a bright modern study space with a good out-look, however, the layout of the space offers few individual workspaces relative to the large provision of informal breakout furniture. The utilisation data collected on the space in 2013 demonstrated that the current usage of the space is not high when compared with the library, computer labs or other open access study hubs on campus. There is an opportunity to consider whether there is a need for:

- A re-design to better meet PG study needs
- New / additional facilities to be included
- A wider (undergraduate) community to be allowed access to the space
- The space to be converted to another use

In the short to mid-term, where the capacity of the library will be constrained, there is a need to retain this as a study hub. The design and layout of the space should be refreshed to cater for the research study needs - largely high quality individual work / study desks alongside some facilities for academic collaboration and social interaction. During this period it may be beneficial to provide a smaller designated PG room / zone in each location and allow undergraduate access to the PGC study hub to help meet the for peak study demand.

In the longer term the inclusion of a PG study facility within the library can be considered in the extension or new build options, which would in turn free up the facility in the PGC for other use.
Figure 14: Example of group study facilities at the University of Aberdeen Library

Figure 15: Example of discussion booths at the University of Aberdeen Library, Furniture Expo
Figure 16: The Learning Resource Centre, Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh

Figure 17: The Alan Gilbert Learning Commons, University of Manchester
Growing Demand Profile

Rising Demand
The University is currently expanding the student population at Edinburgh and in this academic year alone is set to increase by over 400 students (FTE). Feedback from both staff and students highlights a perception of under provision of library study space.

With student numbers on campus continuing to increase, this gives cause for some concern and gives rise to some need for immediate action. In response to increasing numbers IS have identified a strategy to increase the study seat provisional as follows:

- IS proposes to increase the study seats by 10% per annum.
- This strategy would increase seats from 610 seats in 2013-14 to 880 seats in 2017-18
- Based on a projected headcount of 8715 students FTE, implementation of this strategy will provide 1 seat per 10 students
- This provision is aligned with the current UK average (as reported by SCONUL)
- This identifies a consequent need to provide approximately 240 additional study spaces to support the planned growth to 2018
- As the growth trajectory is initially rapid, much of this additional provision is required to be delivered at the earliest possible date

Short Term Strategies
As a minimum, in the short term, an immediate response across a number of areas could be adopted to support this strategy:

- Prioritise electrical / data work and replacement of existing furniture with cable managed desks to provide power to all current study seats
- Actively advertise to students the extent, locations and availability of existing and new study facilities across the campus
- Provide an online facility to allow students to check availability of PC’s at centrally managed labs
- Provide ‘pop-up libraries’ at peak times of the academic year in convenient locations
- Replace some of the informal discussion seating in the top floor Postgraduate Centre with individual study desks to increase the capacity of this area

Medium Term Strategies
As a minimum, in the medium term, the following additional measures could then be adopted:

- Undertake book stock reduction and consolidation in the library, with the installation of high density shelving on the ground floor to create capacity for additional study settings
- Refurbish, re-plan and re-zone the main library, to provide an additional 100 study seats, with these new settings introducing the diversity and choice that the student community seek
- Consistent with SOP, seek to create an additional 120-140 study settings in a new learning commons
- Consistent with the SOP, relocate Scott Russell Central PC labs to the learning commons
- Creating a new 60-80 facility, and bringing the total commons & PC seat provision to 200
- Consistent with the SOP, create studio teaching environments to provide overflow study space

Long Term Strategies
Following implementation of the short and mid-term strategies the University will be equipped to meet the demands to 2018, with the strategy thereafter centred wholly on the longer term vision and growth.

These longer term needs will be met through implementation of the property strategy, requiring either a complete remodel of the existing library or a new build facility. The spatial requirements associated with the longer term needs are set out in the Strategy: The Future Library Spatial Requirements at Edinburgh Campus (Part 2)