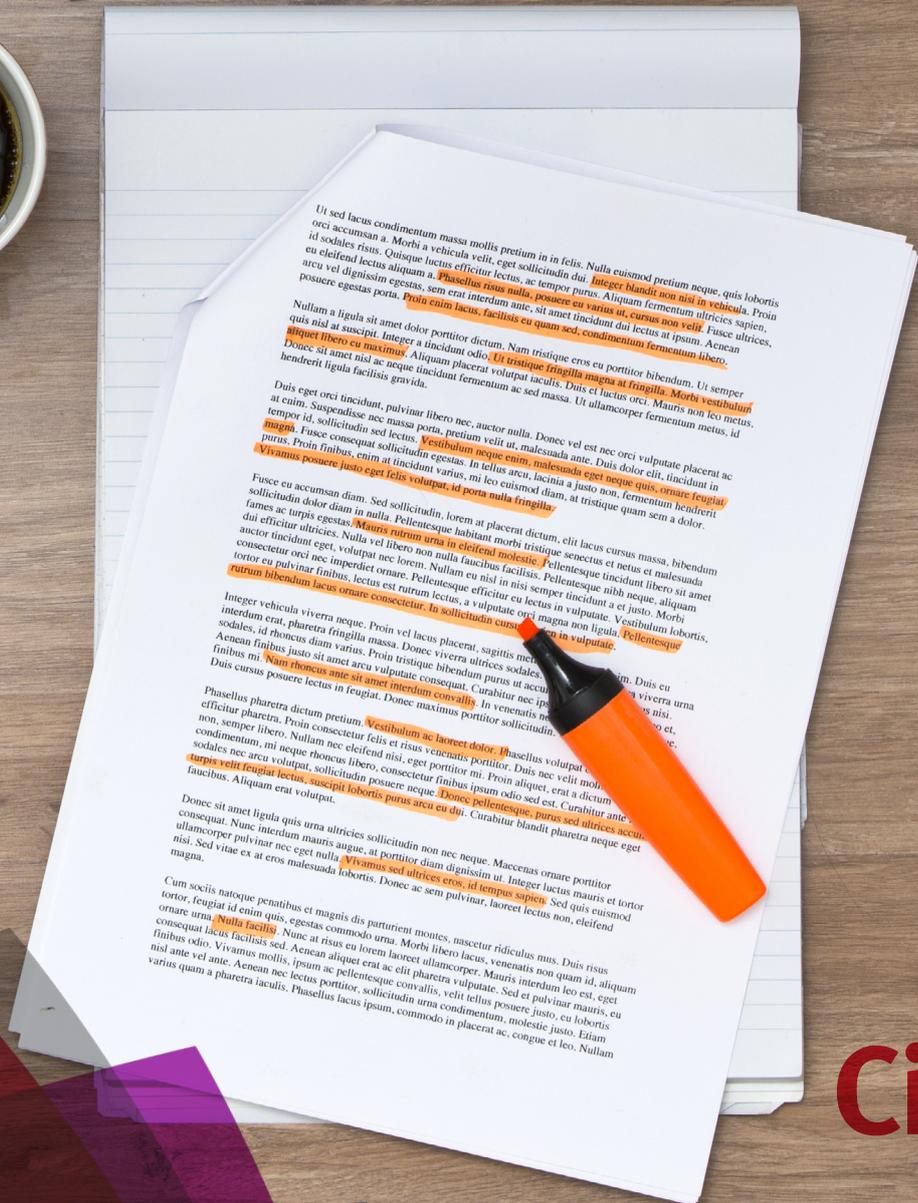
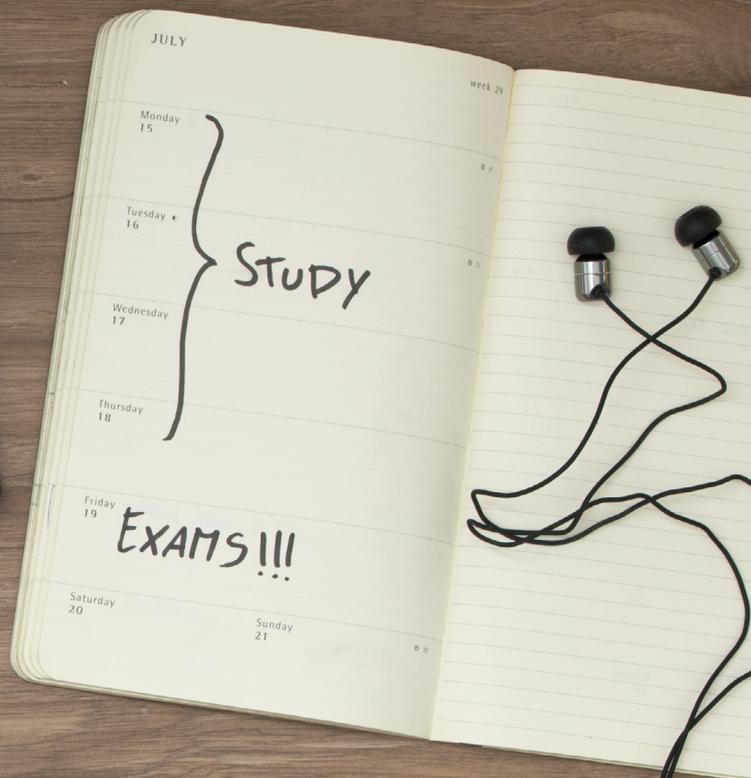




CITY UNIVERSITY  
LONDON

# Library Services Information Literacy Strategy



# CityLibrary

[www.city.ac.uk/library](http://www.city.ac.uk/library)

# Information Literacy Strategy

## Purpose

The core purpose for developing an Information Literacy Strategy is to ensure a clear relationship between student support (in terms of workshops and 1-2-1 support) the Library Services offer and the University’s Education and Student Strategy.

Library Services recognise supporting the acquisition of such skills aids student retention and progression through their time at University and beyond. Our long term goal is to ensure Information Literacy skills extend within our students beyond University, creating independent learners, and encouraging employability and lifelong learning as a result of the effective use of information. This then enables our graduates to remain prepared for and competitive within the jobs market, which in turn raises the profile of the University.

## Background and Guiding Principles

There are many definitions of Information Literacy (IL), the most commonly cited being that of The Chartered Institute of Libraries and Information Professionals (CILIP) which defines information literacy as;

*“knowing when and why you need information, where to find it, and how to evaluate, use and communicate it in an ethical manner”* (CILIP, 2015),

and that of The Society for College, National and University Libraries (SCONUL) which defines information literate individuals as demonstrating;

*“an awareness of how they gather, use, manage, synthesise and create information and data in an ethical manner and will have the information skills to do so effectively”* (SCONUL, 2011).

Both definitions emphasise the fact that the key is not just the ability to find the information in the first place, but what the individual then does with it – the analysis and evaluation of the information or data, as well as the communication and/or ethical reuse of what they have found.

Whilst these definitions are useful, in order to understand the guiding principles behind what Library Services aims to achieve, it is helpful for the purposes of this strategy to review the existing frameworks which are widely cited in academia, upon which Library Services have based our IL provision for City users.

The ‘Seven Pillars of Information Literacy’ developed by SCONUL in 1999 has widely been used for many years as the basis for and tool upon which to plan and develop IL provision across all sectors, but predominantly in higher education. The model lists the seven pillars (or key skills) as a set of generic skills (manage, evaluate, present, gather, identify, plan and scope) which underpin

all IL teaching and understanding.

More recently ANCIL (A New Curriculum for Information Literacy) has developed these ideas further, creating a learner-based framework featuring ten strands (see fig. 1), and provides tools for institutions to map/analyse their current information literacy provision. The ANCIL framework can be used to underpin student learning in a digital age, but also as a list of desirable graduate attributes for employability or further study. ANCIL defines IL within teaching and learning as being transitional (for example, transition from school to university), transferable (behaviour and skills which can be developed and allow students to forge their own way forward independently) and transformational (changing attitudes and behaviours). This fits closely with **City’s strategic plan** as to how it wishes to equip graduates with attributes useful for employability, and has been used to inform the competencies framework outlined in Appendix A. ANCIL references the UNESCO Alexandria Proclamation which states;

*“Information Literacy empowers people in all walks of life to seek, evaluate, use and create information effectively to achieve their personal, social, occupational and educational goals. It is a basic human right in a digital world and promotes social inclusion in all nations.”* (UNESCO, 2005a)

The Alexandria Proclamation (UNESCO, 2005b) goes further to describe IL as including media literacy (referring to multimedia specifically) and ANCIL has similarly expanded on the definition of IL to include academic literacies, digital literacies, media literacies and new literacies (see Appendix B).

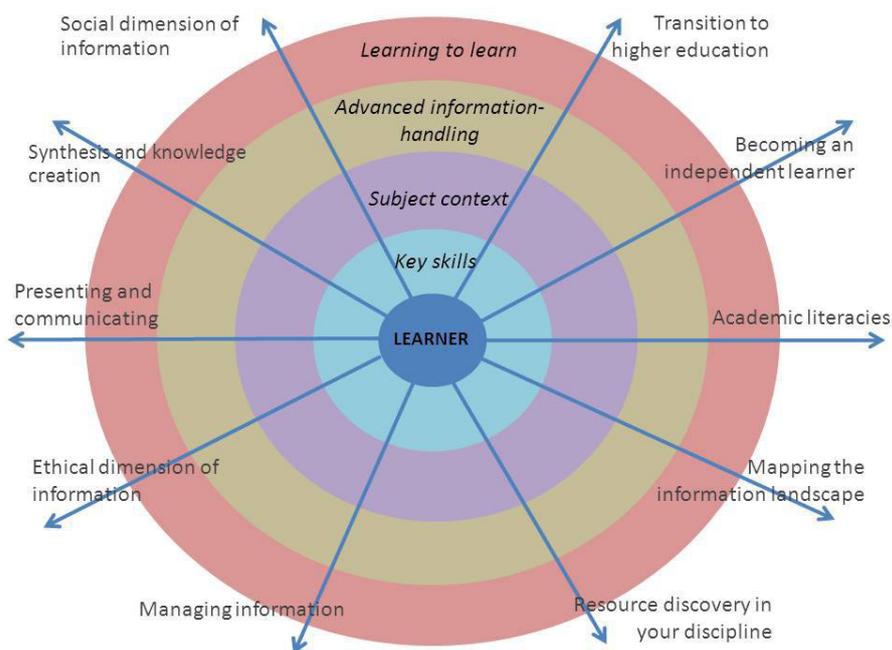


Figure 1 ANCIL Framework (Secker & Coonan, 2011)

For the purposes of this strategy, when referring to Information Literacy this is used as an over-arching term which includes all aspects of IL including digital literacy as outlined above. In the current educational climate digital literacy skills form a core part of all IL, given the move to digital in more-or-less all facets of life. It is also important to understand that the 'Google generation' and 'Millennials' (or Generation Y) are not at any kind of advantage over traditional scholars in this respect. Some argue in fact that they are worse, due to the seeming ease at which they can find 'everything' at the click of a button, without having the requisite skills to evaluate their discoveries.

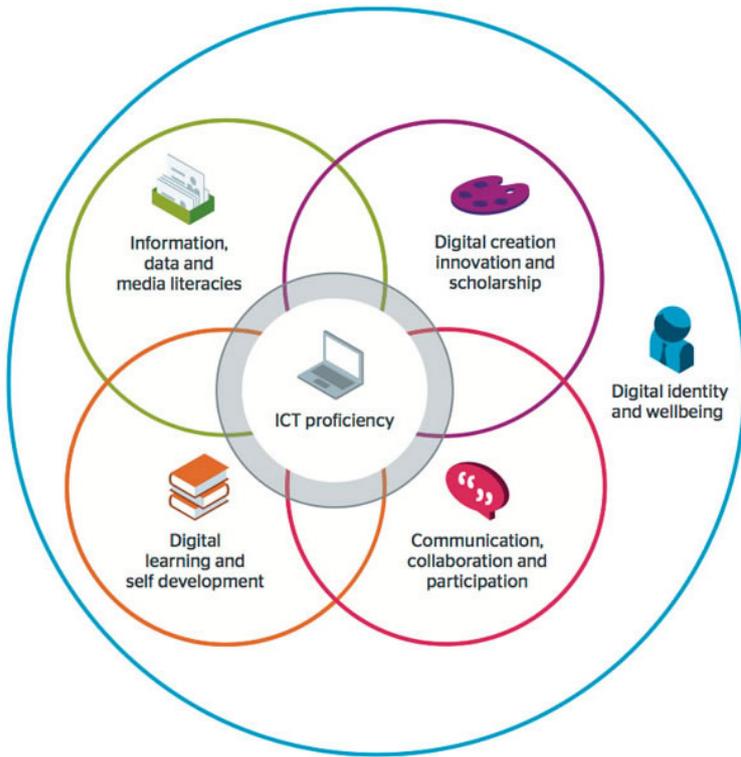


Figure 2 Digital capabilities: the six elements (JISC, 2015)

The idea of digital literacies has recently been expanded through the JISC capabilities project to outline six elements of digital capability;

Research conducted into students' information seeking skills has repeatedly revealed that they do not have the expertise needed to navigate the various information sources available to them, or to then evaluate the results retrieved. They rely on poorly constructed search strategies and using web search engines rather than taking advantage of the high quality information sources to which Library Services subscribe. The variety of media now available to students as well as the new types of (non-traditional) learning resources (for example; wikis, blogs, podcasts) require skills in finding, evaluating and using the information available. This means that impressing on our students the importance of good practice when searching for information is key, and a focal point to what we aim to offer as a service. The JISC model demonstrates the need for these core digital skills as well as highlighting digital identity as being something which should be (and hasn't always historically been) addressed.

## Aims

Library Services aims to support and enable the goals of the University as indicated in the current [City University London Education & Teaching Strategy](#) and [Strategic Plan](#). City aims to support students throughout their education and career development from undergraduate through to postgraduate and doctoral study, including continuing professional development. Library Services shares these goals as indicated in the [Library Strategy](#) and the training and support provision in place aims to mirror this approach. The emphasis on professional and personal development is a core part of the service we offer.

Library Services aims to provide student centred Information Literacy provision, using different modes of delivery dependent on the target audience. We recognise that there are many different types of users with very different backgrounds within the Schools at City (as well as across the five Library sites), with different Information Literacy needs. Library Services aim to provide a consistent and high quality service to all our users, across all Schools/programmes/courses, using innovative and engaging methodologies.

By providing appropriate IL training and resources our students will;

- have the ability to construct effective search strategies,
- be aware of the best/most appropriate and extensive range of resources to use for their studies/research,
- have the ability to correctly reference their work and therefore avoid plagiarism,
- be able to critically evaluate their findings and effectively disseminate them,
- have the tools to develop as critical thinkers and independent learners, and,
- as a result be better prepared for employment.

Library Services aims to develop the University's staff as well as our students, enabling them to gain an awareness and enthusiasm for Information Literacy, encouraging the professional development of skills, and the acquisition of appropriate qualifications.

## Implementation

In order to implement this strategy Library Services will;

- Annually audit IL provision across all library sites, ensuring consistency, identifying gaps in provision, and identifying areas warranting further attention via staff and student feedback.
- Produce an action plan for ongoing activities, highlighting resource needs and issues. This will include addressing any gaps in provision as identified in the annual audit.
- Continue to develop Information Literacy sessions for both staff and students, including generic and tailored face-to-face sessions and personalised 1-2-1 support.
- Create online study materials to support face-to-face learning wherever possible. This will include development of enhanced Library Guides to support blended learning.

- Create open access online content and study materials to be suitable for use remotely and with the greatest flexibility to support the widest range of student needs.
- Use innovative training methods (with appropriate use of educational technologies available) to enhance the learning experience.
- Offer enhanced support for our postgraduate research students and research staff.
- Offer IL support which is responsive to the changing needs of our staff and students.
- Work in partnership with relevant stakeholders across the University (in particular LEaD) wherever possible to further integrate Information Literacy within the organisation.
- Promote generated content to relevant stakeholders via formal and informal mechanisms.
- Benchmark our IL support against other HEIs, identifying new ideas and opportunities.
- Support staff engagement with IL and as a result their continuing professional development.

The role of the Library Services Information Literacy Operational Group is to achieve the above aims, by monitoring, reviewing, developing and promoting the IL provision within the University and beyond.

Delivery of IL provision is contributed to by all Library Services staff (although predominantly the Academic Services Team), and one of the additional roles of the IL Group is to provide support and training for staff to enable them to do this.

A set of competencies (Appendix A) has been developed based upon the key frameworks and strategies outlined above. These competencies outline an overview of the key skills students need to develop throughout their time at City. They form the basis of how Library Services develops support materials, training resources and workshops, and act as a benchmark against which information literacy skills can be measured.

## Measuring Success

For an area such as Information Literacy it is very difficult to define success in a measurable way, as Library Services are unable to assess students' abilities or track their progress when it comes to IL skills other than by observation and discussion. However, there are a number of performance indicators which measure student satisfaction with Library Services and the training and support that is offered.

Formalised feedback and comments from the National Student Survey (NSS), Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES), Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES), and Your Voice allow Library Services to review whether there is a perceived need for additional support, and adapt IL provision in line with this feedback. Less formal feedback is obtained from training session/workshop attendees, as well as from the annual 'Library Loves Feedback' promotion, and this provides more valuable qualitative information. Dialogue with City students encourages suggestions and ideas for improvement or expansion of IL support.

An annual audit of IL provision will take into account what is offered to students at all levels and across all library sites. This

will look at what is offered and the method of delivery/format in which it is provided (as this will cover both face-to-face and online support). The audit results can then be reviewed in line with requests and feedback from students as mentioned above. Benchmarking against our competitors will help to identify areas of improvement or new ideas for further development of the service.

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## Appendices

### A. Competencies Framework

### B. ANCIL Information Literacy Landscape

## Appendix A: Competencies Framework

This framework works on the assumption that students have already acquired basic level IT skills (ability to use online search engines, send email, and use word-processing packages).

	Undergraduate Level	Postgraduate/Research Level
Using Library Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Locating Library and facilities</li> <li>Finding and accessing print and online resources</li> <li>Awareness of training/support available</li> <li>Obtaining material beyond City (e.g. Inter-Library Loans, SCONUL Access)</li> </ul>	
Research Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Successfully find resources from a reference/reading list</li> <li>Ability to select the most appropriate resources for the information required (both Library resources and Internet-based)</li> <li>Ability to combine keywords to formulate a search</li> <li>Ability to refine search results and apply limits</li> <li>Ability to select relevant/appropriate results from a search</li> <li>Develop advanced Internet searching skills, and an ability to critical evaluate quality of websites found</li> <li>Using Google Scholar to locate City resources</li> <li>Ability to critically evaluate material found for academic integrity, bias, validity and currency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ability to formulate a clearly defined research question</li> <li>Ability to identify information requirements for research being undertaken, the level of information required, and the types of material needed (which could include specialised information such as datasets, archives, past theses, professional networks)</li> <li>Ability to formulate complex search strategies, refining and adapting where required, including citation searching</li> <li>Ability to carry out an independent literature search for a topic across multiple (relevant) databases</li> <li>Understanding and use of Boolean operators, truncation, wildcards and limiters</li> <li>Recording, saving and re-using search strategies and sources used</li> <li>Ability to select relevant results from a search, and then use these to develop/extend search strategies</li> <li>Use advanced Internet searching skills to critically evaluate quality of websites found</li> <li>Ability to critically evaluate material found for academic integrity, bias, validity and currency</li> </ul>
Academic Writing & Communicating Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Awareness of plagiarism and the importance of correct referencing</li> <li>Awareness and use of referencing management software (RefWorks) using in-text citations</li> <li>Copyright awareness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Awareness of various reference management tools available</li> <li>Use of preferred reference management software throughout the research process, using in-text citations</li> <li>Accurate referencing and bibliographies produced in accepted departmental style</li> <li>Observing copyright law and awareness of data protection issues</li> <li>Understanding/use of City Research Online and other digital repositories for both finding and depositing research</li> <li>Understanding of the peer-review process</li> <li>Understanding of the most effective mechanisms for dissemination of research</li> </ul>

<b>Digital Skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness of own digital footprint, and impact of own presence on the Internet</li> <li>• Awareness of how online communication tools and mobile applications might be used for study purposes and for the sharing of knowledge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of collaborative online tools (e.g. mailing lists, social media) to expand research networks and build a professional online profile</li> <li>• Use of current awareness tools and alerts to stay up-to-date on current research in a thorough and systematic way</li> <li>• Use of online collaborative tools for obtaining and sharing research findings/knowledge</li> <li>• Ability to critically evaluate which online collaborative tools would be most appropriate, in terms of usefulness</li> </ul>
<b>Employability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using search and critical evaluation skills gained through the above to carry out background research into sector and/or specific organisations when preparing for job interviews</li> <li>• Identifying and using trade publications, company data and professional publications to research and be aware of sector developments</li> <li>• Use of social networks to stay up-to-date on sector and company news</li> <li>• Use of professional and social networks to obtain information on potential opportunities for employment, both by formal and informal mechanisms</li> </ul>	

## Appendix B: ANCIL Information Literacy Landscape

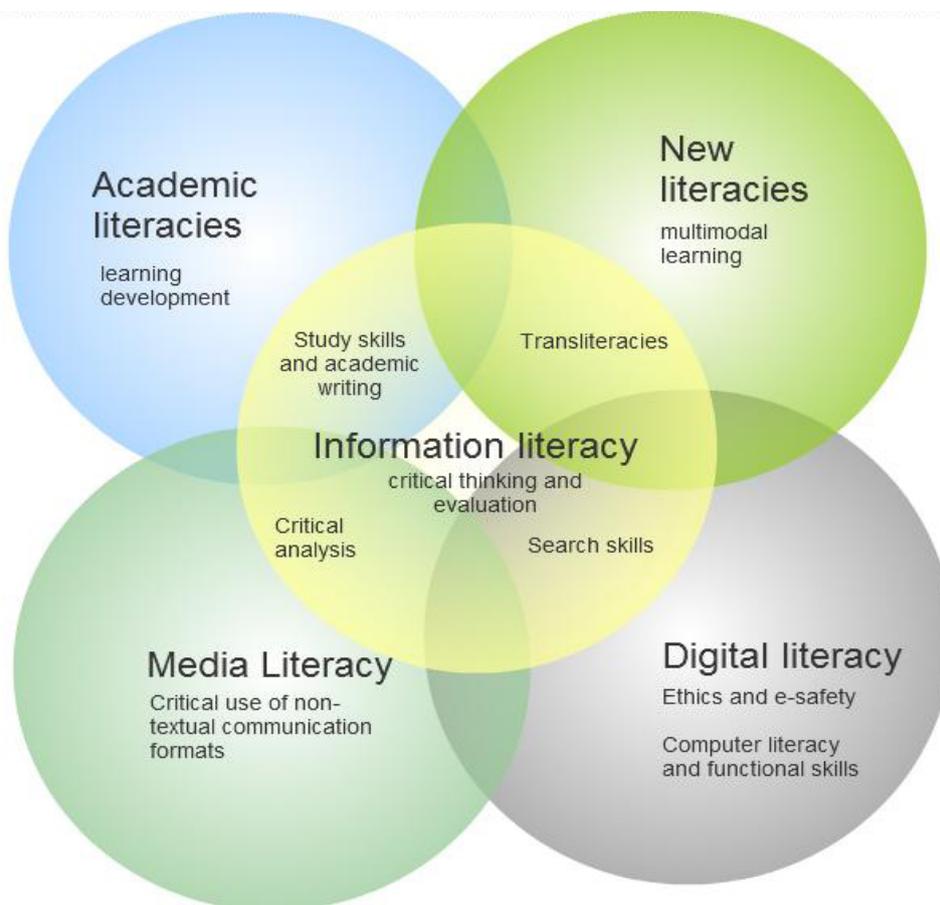


Figure 3 Information Literacy Landscape (Secker & Coonan, 2012)

**City University London**  
Northampton Square  
London  
EC1V 0HB  
United Kingdom



**Email Enquiries**  
[library@city.ac.uk](mailto:library@city.ac.uk)



**Telephone enquiries**  
+44 (0)20 7040 8191



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