University of York Information Services  
Reading List Guidelines

1. All departments adopt the Reading List Policy

Principle

The Reading List Policy should be adopted by all departments unless there are compelling academic reasons which make this impossible. In this case the department should discuss the issues and alternatives with their Academic Liaison Librarian.

Rationale

To contribute to a consistent and high quality experience for students we need to adopt a consistent and high quality process for the provision of information resources. Continued poor feedback on access to reading list materials requires action by both the Library and academic staff.

Following the Guidelines is the best way to ensure that your reading list is useful to students and processed in time for your course.

2. Content of reading lists is appropriate and realistic

Principle

To ensure that appropriate resources are available for students, the content of reading lists should take into account the mode of attendance of students, method of delivery and the anticipated use of resources.

Module Convenors/Coordinators should discuss their requirements with their Academic Liaison Librarian and agree the appropriate balance between digitisation, electronic resources and physical copies and, in particular, how we provision items in high demand.

Rationale

To provide a positive experience for students it is essential to plan reading lists to maximise access to the resources when and where they are needed.

Access

Academic Liaison Librarians will work with Module Convenors/Coordinators to ensure that, wherever possible, all resources are fully accessible by students, whatever their individual requirements. Electronic resources (e-books and e-journals) should be considered wherever possible. The Library will always provide up-to-date advice on copyright issues as appropriate following the Copyright Licensing Agency’s (CLA) guidelines.

Structure and categories

The structure of the reading list should align to the structure of the module, for example week-by-week readings or one set of readings to cover all weeks, as appropriate.

Reading lists should also be organised into three distinct categories to help students prioritise their reading:
Essential, Recommended and Background.

**Essential** (students must read this): reading that is required of all students to broaden and deepen their understanding of the subject. The Library will meet the demand for essential reading by a combination of multiple electronic and print copies, digitisation and different loan periods. If requested, Essential books may be placed in the Library’s Key Texts collection. The number of additional copies purchased is initially determined by an agreed formula, which varies between departments, and is subsequently driven by evidence of high demand.

**Recommended** (students are advised to read this): reading that is desirable, as it expands understanding of the subject. It is expected that students will read at least some material from this category and the Library will endeavour to purchase at least one copy of each of these titles.

**Background** (this will help students to broaden and deepen their understanding of this subject): in some disciplines, and at some levels of study, students may be expected to explore the subject in greater depth. Please note that the Background Reading category should not be used as a bibliography; you are strongly advised to only include readings here which the Library already provides access to. Careful consideration should be given to the length of this section. Students should also be encouraged to use YorSearch to search the Library catalogue and use databases and journals in order to discover relevant readings for themselves. The Library will not automatically purchase any titles in this category.

**Out of print resources**

We do not advise placing out of print material on lists unless the item is a classic. The Library will attempt to obtain a copy, but cannot guarantee purchase at a particular time, or at all.

If out of print resources are on the list and are not already held in the Library, the reading list should clearly indicate that the resource may not be available in the Library.

3. **Reading lists are produced with accessibility in mind**

**Principle**

All reading lists should be fully accessible to all students, whatever their individual requirements. The Library will always endeavour to supply resources in appropriate formats wherever possible.

**Rationale**

No student should be disadvantaged by not being able to access resources on their reading lists.

4. **The Library’s Reading Lists tool is used for all reading lists**

**Principle**

All reading lists should be managed using the Library’s Reading Lists software (Leganto, powered by Ex Libris) which links to the Yorkshare and Moodle VLE sites and provides the framework for achieving the Reading List Principles.

**Rationale**

The Reading Lists software provides a consistent standard for presenting reading materials to students. It
also provides several reports which enable the Library to respond quickly to requests for digitisation, purchase or High Demand reading. Reading Lists offers the following features:

- Clear and structured format
- Stable links to the Library catalogue or to electronic resources
- New reading lists created or changes to existing lists are identified immediately and can be actioned as soon as received (e.g. digitisation, purchase or High Demand requirements)
- Uses data from Library catalogue records so inaccuracies in referencing are reduced
- Clear overview of items that appear on multiple reading lists
- Easy to add items directly from source

More information is available from the online Practical Guide to Reading Lists.

5. **Module Convenors/Coordinators are responsible for reading lists and maintenance**

**Principle**

Module Convenors/Coordinators are responsible for maintaining their lists or delegating and monitoring the work. Issues with reading lists will impact on the module and/or programme evaluation and it is the responsibility of academic staff to maintain the quality of their courses.

**Rationale**

Reading lists are integral to module delivery and support learning outcomes. As such they are part of the module development, review and quality assurance process.

**Responsibilities**

Examples of how departments manage their lists in practice:

- Module Convenors/Coordinators set up and maintain all their own lists
- Library staff can set up new lists on behalf of Module Convenors/Coordinators by prior agreement and subject to sufficient notice and staff time being available. It is the responsibility of Module Convenors/Coordinators to ensure future maintenance from then on.
- Maintenance can be delegated to VLE Coordinators, PGWT or administrative staff. It continues to be the responsibility of the module leader to ensure the quality of the list; any issues will impact on module and/or programme evaluation.

6. **Reading lists are updated by the deadlines**

**Principle**

Reading Lists may be updated at any time.

However, if resources are required for the start of term, Reading Lists should be updated by the agreed deadlines below to give the Library sufficient time to arrange digitisation, purchase resources or move specific items into the Key Texts Collection.

The Library sends out deadline reminders to all departments via Academic Liaison Librarians.
Separate provision is made for modules with multiple intakes or which run at non-standard times.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TERM</th>
<th>DEADLINE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Autumn</td>
<td>8 weeks before the start of the academic year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>end of week 6 of the Autumn term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>end of week 6 of the Spring term</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Rationale**

The Library receives over 3,000 reading lists each year and actions them in order of receipt. If lists are updated after the deadlines, it may not be possible to action requests for digitisation, purchase or moves to Key Texts in time for the start of term and students will not be able to do their work.

**Dependencies**

There is little scope for flexibility:

- The Library endeavours to action lists received after the deadline by employing extra staff hours; however it should be noted that lists are processed in order of receipt (to ensure fairness) and there is finite funding;
- External factors also impact on how quickly requests can be actioned, e.g. copyright clearance for digitisation, book supplier turnaround;
- The Library must follow University financial procedures and use agreed suppliers, which means it is not possible to make last-minute purchases from local bookshops. By using certain suppliers the Library benefits from discounts and the material arrives shelf-ready, which makes it available more quickly to students once it has arrived.

7. **Help with reading lists**

The Library’s online Practical Guide to Reading Lists provides information about setting up reading lists and how to access further help. Any other queries should be directed to your Academic Liaison Librarian in the first instance who can provide further support and training.

All general enquiries about reading lists can be emailed to the Library’s Reading List Team: lib-readinglists@york.ac.uk.

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