

**FEEDBACK AND COUNTER PROPOSAL IN RELATION TO THE PROPOSED CREATION OF AN  
INTEGRATED STUDENT AND INFORMATION SERVICES TEAM**

**This document is submitted for consideration on behalf of the User Services team**

**04 March 2021**

**\*Please Note: This is a redacted version of the User Services counter proposal. In order to comply with the confidential nature of the original business case, direct quotations have been removed along with the bulk of the team's feedback. It has been included here in a summarized format\***

## **User Services David Wilson Library Collective Feedback and Counter Proposal**

In response to the document sent to all affected staff entitled 'Proposed Creation of an integrated student and information services team' dated 28 January 2021, the User Services team are submitting this document as their collective feedback and to offer a counter proposal.

This document recognises our collective rejection of this business case, and offers our willingness to engage in the consultation process to reinvigorate the service and to align with the University's strategic vision.

This document has been split into three parts. Part 1 will offer a counter proposal to the staffing structures proposed in the business case. These have been created to acknowledge the changes in student experiences and expectations, taking on board many of the aspects of the original business case while adapting them to reflect User Services staff's collective feedback and lived experience of running our services. To allow flexibility and a productive discussion to take place, several separate staffing structures have been posited in our counter-proposal. Each structure involves varying degrees of integration with the Student Services Centre and includes the rationale underlying each structure's creation. The proposed structures do not necessarily sit in isolation to each other and we are open to discussions of differing elements of said structures being combined.

Part 2 will cover the feedback collectively given by the User Services team, as well as highlighting areas which require further clarification for the business case to be fully substantiated. It is this feedback that informs the basis of the counter proposals outlined in Part one.

We would like to formally recognise that as a team we have a track record in pushing for innovation and improvement in our services and we welcome meaningful engagement with senior management on ways to further our work on reshaping our services. We fundamentally disagree, however, that the current business case will achieve its stated aims without alterations.

## Part 1

### Counter Proposal

#### Proposed Staffing Structure Options – Organisational Charts

##### Introduction

In this section we present 4 different Organisational Charts to counter what has been put forward in the case for change document. These are options A, B, C and D. Each chart is a reimagining of a team that would build and contribute to a service that would respond to our student body in both Library and Student Services support. We ask that you consider the arguments made for particular posts both within and outside of the structures presented. These posts can be factored into a new staffing structure proposal, and should not only be taken into consideration within the bounds of the options in which they have been put forth.

As previously stated during the collective consultation meeting the proposal to reimagine the Student Services Centre and User Services Library team is not based on financial grounds. However, we have decided to highlight staff savings where appropriate per Organisational Chart option to lend clarity to our rationale, and to ensure that we have considered this alongside the overriding driver, which is to ensure that the best possible customer centric service is made available to our students.

Each of the following Organisational Charts contains a proposed management team, alongside a proposal for a Grade 4 (or something similar) supporting team offering. The management team is represented in grey and the associated supporting team is represented in blue.

It was also a consensus whilst building these structures to alter the team name and coinciding job titles. To save repeating the rationale per option this is outlined here. The team name and job titles explicitly state that both *Student* and *Library* support is available via these team members. The title of Customer Service Advisers does convey front facing support on a number of issues, but we believe this could become problematic when students are seeking expert advice on confidential and sensitive issues. We believe that the term *customer* detracts from the specific knowledge and expertise that is expected of the staff in these roles. The title of Student Information and Library Services Adviser would convey to users a more encouraging level of professionalism when looking for advice and support from staff. Separately, for staff in these positions, there is a level of professionalism to the job titles which is more explanatory of the work that they have to undertake and the knowledge and skills that they bear. As Grade 4 posts are seemingly becoming a springboard for an advancement in career it would be inappropriate for these extensively knowledgeable and heavily skilled individuals to be given such a generic job title. For the benefit of the rest of our University community a more obvious, more descriptive use of terminology would better communicate more thoroughly the purpose of our team. We believe that a thorough Customer Service Ethos would translate to this team's modus operandi when assisting members of the University, even with the omission of *customer* from their job title.

Within each option we are supporting the inclusion of 1.5FTE Shelving Assistants. Through the supporting feedback and supporting evidence sections of the document we hope to convey the importance of the shelving staff. They are absolutely integral to the functioning of the shelving aspect of our service, and to the high standards of building security and safety.

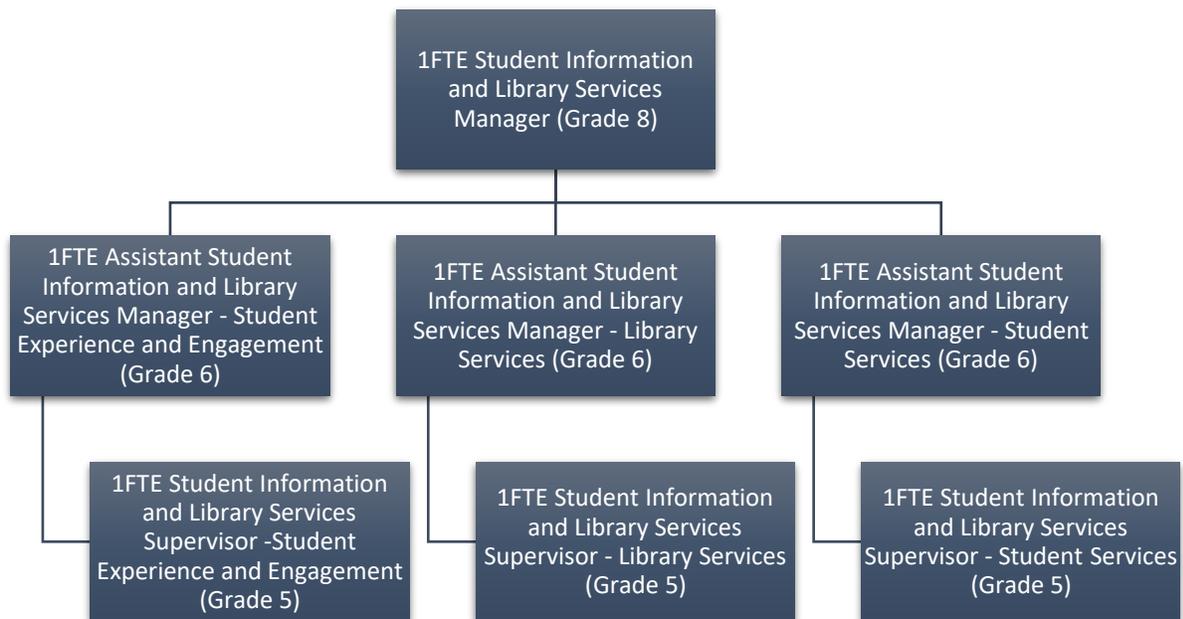
### Option A: Summary Statement

The Option A Organisational Chart is a reimagining of the team with additional posts of our own creation. These are 3 x 1FTE Grade 5 Student Information and Library Services Supervisors. The rationale behind the suggestion of this post, as well as a brief list of key responsibilities of the post is detailed below the chart. The Grade 4 FTEs is also suggested to increase by 2FTE from the original case for change structure. The structure does however comply with the cumulative reduction of overall staff numbers and posts from Grade 2 to 9. You will find that the following existing held or occupied posts are not present in this counter proposed org chart:

- Associate Director of User Services (Grade 9)
- DWL Manager (Grade 8)
- Student Services Manager (Grade 8)
- DWL Assistant Manager (Grade 6)
- Library Assistants (Grade 3)
- Shelving Assistants (Grade 2)

Option A represents a management team and cohort of staff that would support enquiries covering the full range of services, both current Library and Student Services Centre queries. The JSFs of the Grade 4 position is something we have not rewritten but have commented on in the Collective Feedback documentation. There is an increased number of Grade 4 FTEs in all options. The reasons for which are fully evidenced in the feedback within this document.

### Option A Management Structure:



## Option A Grade 4 Proposal:

20FTE Student  
Information and  
Library Services  
Advisor (Grade 4)

### Rationale for Suggested Structure (Option A):

The structure will amount to a total saving of (including current unfulfilled vacancies) 1FTE at Grade 9, 1FTE at Grade 8, 1FTE at Grade 6, 7.8928FTE at Grade 3 and 2.4563FTE at Grade 2. There would be an addition of 3FTE at Grade 5 and 2.0858 FTE at Grade 4.

In brief this level of staffing would provide the service cover of the following:

- 15 Support Staff working 9am - 5pm, Monday - Friday
- 5 Support Staff working 5pm - 9pm Monday - Friday
- 7 Support Staff working Saturday and Sunday, all day.

The biggest addition to the management structure is the 3 x 1FTE Student Information and Library Services Supervisor. The rationale behind the introduction of this post is tied to the reduced management team, and the complexities of staff support, training and leadership that come with introducing a large number of team members to a new service.

The posts would be in place to ensure practical flow of communication between the management team and the supporting staff, providing greater structure to the outputs of the team and provide necessary support and advice in the absence of senior leaders. The portfolio areas that are assigned to each of the three Assistant Managers will determine specialisms for each of the three Supervisors. This will encourage a sense of ownership amongst the team enabling them to concentrate on and develop a specific area of the service.

In a team this large with all team members at the same grade there is difficulty in ensuring an effective and fair spread of workload amongst all staff. There will therefore be an inevitable amount of disparity between each staff members capabilities; staff who are under confident, whose skills are not as well defined and who have greater training needs will step back from responsibilities, allowing natural leaders to automatically emerge. Through this process the natural leaders will be taking on a larger workload and will be delegated work from managers that is not grade appropriate and be forced to support the less capable staff. With the stripped back leadership team, it will be inevitable work will have to flow downwards as there is little capacity to push work upwards, without this delegation to other members of the team, work will not be completed.

The supervisor positions will allow staff in these positions the opportunity to build upon their skills and their career. Supervisory positions allow staff to experience the management of staff and build on their personal and professional development, so they are qualified to apply to management positions, without this interim step there is little opportunity to gain the experience needed to escalate from a Grade 4 position to a Grade 6 position. We believe that this position will achieve a level of investment in staff that is not strongly felt from the Grade 4 position. Although the Adviser positions invest in building

knowledge and skills allowing staff to practically apply learning through their effective management of enquiries, it does not escalate their skills of supporting fellow staff members nor implementing research-based changes to the services they help deliver.

The supervisor positions would be in place to support the day to day running of the service desks, alongside their participation in the delivery of training and staff support. Alongside the three supervisors we are proposing an increase of 2FTEs Grade 4 Adviser posts. As described fully in the feedback documentation the workload is immense and an increased number of advisers is necessary to enable an effective running of the service. The deployment of these staff would assist in providing reliable, consistent and exceptional customer service to our students.

#### **Brief draft JSF of the Supervisor position:**

The post will be responsible for supervising staff delivering excellent customer services, as well as performing and participating in a range of establish processes and procedures for the Student Information and Library Services team. You will be responsible for ensuring the provision of customer-focused and high quality services, as well as maintaining an excellent study and built environment. You will sit as part of the Student Information and Library Services Management team, taking instruction and leadership from the Assistant Student Information and Library Services Managers. You will be responsible for the integration of work concentrating on the following areas:

- User Experience and Engagement
- Student Support Services
- Library Support Services

#### Principal Accountabilities

- To supervise the day-to-day work of staff in the teams providing public services to users, to maximise service quality, efficiency and excellent customer care. Teams provide enquiry, help team, membership, lending, shelving, collection management services, and assist with maintaining appropriate levels of user behaviour, to ensure the provision of a good study environment within the building. In consultation with managers and other supervisors within Student Information and Library Services, the supervisor prioritises the work of the teams, allocates and delegates work, deploys staff, builds timetables to ensure cover across various service points and monitors service performance. The supervisor may be involved with the work of one team or several, according to the circumstances and needs of the service. Assisting library users with queries in person, by telephone, or email, or online chat.
- To ensure the completion of tasks to meet agreed service standards, service demands, communication styles and visual branding.
- To exercise judgement and initiative in resolving issues relating to the study environment, IT, fines, invoices, membership and access, customer complaints, queries and problems, referring more complex issues to managers. To help library users to use multi-functional devices for printing/photocopying.
- To participate directly in lending, enquiry, and membership services, and in helping to maintain the quality of the study environment. To sort and shelve returned items and to tidy shelves.

- To manage and lead all Student Information and Library Services Advisers, being responsible for ensuring their workload is carried out appropriately, supporting staff where necessary alongside the Assistant Managers.
- To contribute to the build of training programs and participate in their delivery.
- To report personnel, service, building, IT and security matters to the appropriate people in a timely fashion, ensuring a seamless handover between shifts, including to Library Security.
- To empty cash machines and to balance and secure all takings from the till and to secure keys when supervising the closing of the service at the end of the day.
- To undertake fire warden duties including Lead fire warden responsibilities

*End of brief draft JSF.*

With too few staff and the reduced capacity to deliver training and support via the management team (primarily due to the lack of collective presence of managers throughout the working week) the team will need an increased level of staff to deliver a basic level of service whilst the Assistant Managers and supervisors work to develop and deliver the training program and develop the services. The conditions of the User Services processes, as they currently stand, are not in a position to be easily understood by staff who are unfamiliar with the work. The training materials are outdated, and services have altered at such a rate that it has not been practical to effectively record these developments in a way that would be helpful towards training a new team delivering a new merged service.

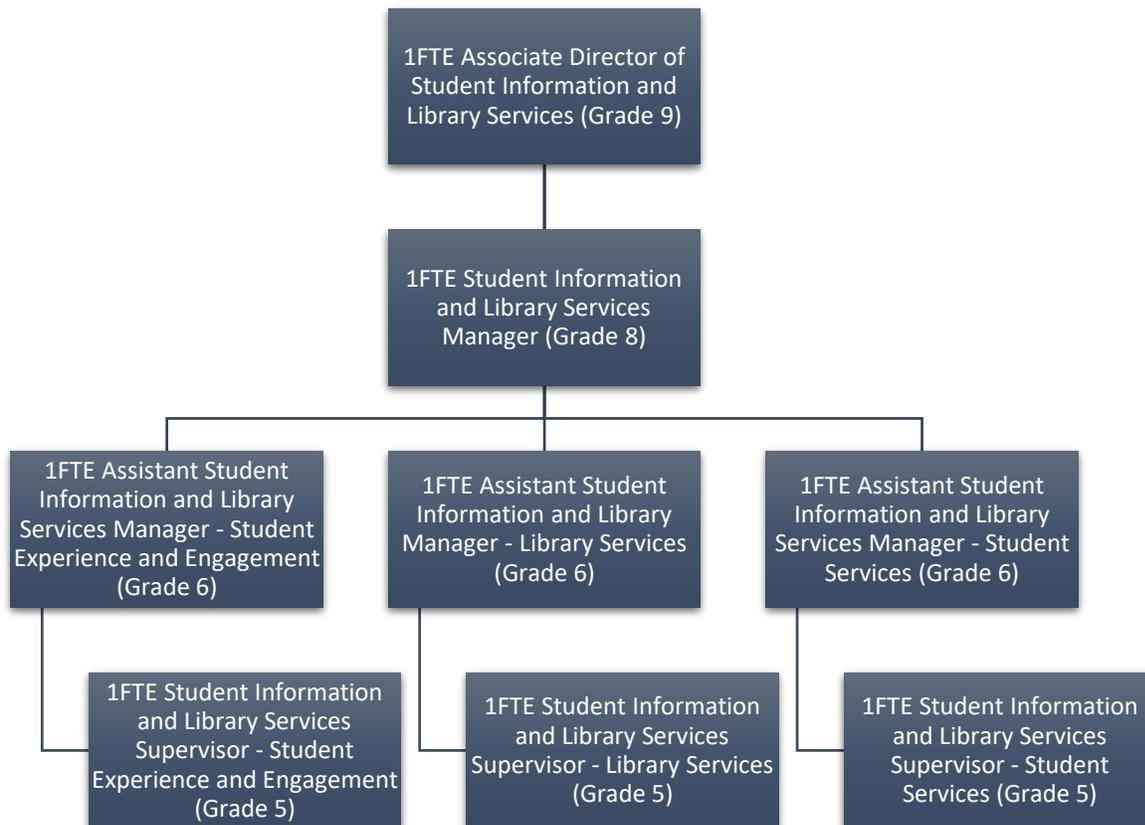
The User Services Management team has been inconsistent since its inception and with that lack of stability has come a degradation in developed service delivery. Changing management team membership and breaks in recruitment to vacant positions has disrupted the development of the service and has lead frequently to staff burnout at management level. The proposed structure would only continue the unmanageable workload placed on the management team and it will lead very quickly to a disenfranchised team with little sense of direction and purpose. So much of the chance for success here relies upon a strong management team and a supportive number of staff. We sincerely hope that you consider changes to the structure based on our rationale.

**Option B Summary Statement:**

Option B reinstates the proposed deleted post of Associate Director responsible for the strategic planning of the team. The job title here has changed in line with the changed team name, making the Grade 9 post in this proposal *Associate Director of Student Information and Library Services*. The proposal seeks to define a wider management team that is united in delivering both areas of service to a high degree, with shared strategic goals and input into the guidance, line management and implementation of the service amongst all team members.

The largest alteration from the above is the separation of the Adviser positions. These would be in support of our pre-change feedback, given to help inform the case for change proposal, highlighting specifically that a merge of management team and location of service delivery would be a positive change for both Library User Services and the Student Services Centre, but that an integrated adviser post would be too complex and loaded to be achievable. The chart below therefore splits the Grade 4 positions into Library or Student Services Support roles. The rationale behind the renewed proposal supporting a merged location, but specific staff to support these services separately can be found below the following chart.

**Option B Management Structure:**



**Option B Grade 4 Proposal:**



**Rationale for Suggested Structure (Option B):**

As explained above the management team would support both areas of service, but advisors would be specifically deployed to support the various operations. Currently there are 6.5FTE dedicated SSC staff who support the delivery of front line support in the Student Services Centre. In this option we reduce this to 4FTE to align with the reduced workload that is referenced in the case for change proposal. The Grade 5 position exists here to support the aforementioned points, surrounding the positive motions these will have towards staff development and an increase in staff retention. These positions will also be vital in encouraging consistent delivery of service for both Library Information and Student Services enquiries. This will also help to support the management team as they are pushed to covering such a wide breadth of responsibilities.

This option gives unity to the managements approach to delivery of a service from a joint location. The differentiation between the Library Adviser and Student Services Adviser positions will allow users to receive the upmost specific support per area of expertise. This would wholly support a more robust higher quality customer service delivery for our users.

The Grade 9 position that is proposed to be deleted has been reintroduced in Option B under the title of Associate Director of Student Information and Library Services, we recommend the reintroduction of the Grade 9 position across all of our options. There is a consensus that the affective strategic direction of this new integrated service could be compromised by not having a dedicated associate director for this team. As the business case presented to us failed to address the workload carried out by the current Grade 9, which is to be absorbed by the University Librarian, we have provided a rationale for the necessity of this post. Our counter-proposal is that the size of the Library Senior Leadership not be reduced and the G9 post of Associate Director: User Services be retained. It would continue to provide the dedicated oversight, strategic direction and professional expertise particularly necessary for ensuring and shaping excellence in a new service development. We recognise that strategic leadership is essential for the successful delivery of services, especially one that is so high profile and integral to an excellent student experience. It is important that the University Librarian takes an overall steer, as they do for all areas of the Division and Library but the current proposal does not address the issue that this change is being introduced under the tenure of an interim University Librarian, whose acting arrangement ends on the 31 July 2021. It is therefore unclear that if this proposal or an alternate goes

ahead who would be leading this very significant change at the very time it would be expected to start continuing to have the Grade 9 post would ensure no potential disruption to the implementation of the proposed change.

We note too that the University Librarian will be leading and developing on a new customer service ethos across relevant professional services and the management of central non-teaching learning spaces. This statement in itself does not describe the extent and scope of that new remit or explain why the Grade 9 post whose role includes being the professional lead and expert in customer facing service and study/learning spaces and has led on these on behalf of the University Librarian delivering many successful projects such as the Digital Reading Room and Customer Service Excellence is no longer required to do so.

The Grade 9 role also carries with it the daily responsibility for providing strategic direction, operational oversight and effective leadership to the David Wilson Library and User Experience teams, promulgating and sustaining support for learning, teaching and research to the highest possible standards of excellence in these customer facing areas, which given the size and nature of the Library and frontline services is a significant remit. It is questionable that the University Librarian can give the level of time required, given that they have responsibility for all areas of the University Library and all the attendant formal work and planning this requires, and now in addition have responsibility for customer service across professional services.

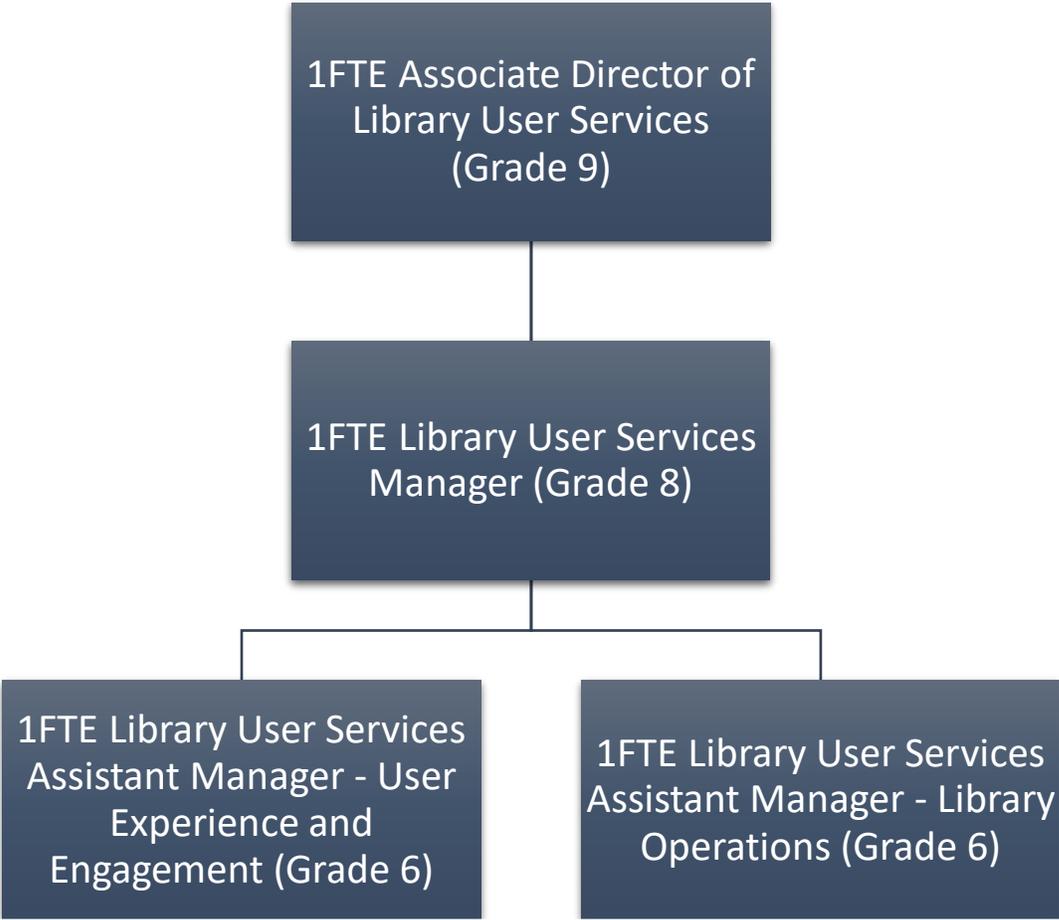
The proposed structure removes the Grade 9 role and has the team reporting directly to the University Librarian. It is unclear why all the other areas in the Library need a Grade 9 but not the new team. It is usual in academic libraries for services/functions to report into an Assistant or Deputy role. The usual model of not reporting directly into the University Librarian ensures that they (The University Librarian) retain and are seen to hold an objective overview across of all the Library operations and ensures that these areas have substantive daily direction and lead from the appropriate grade as in the current structure. There is a significant risk that the Grade 8 post will find themselves being expected to take on the responsibilities of the Grade 9 role, especially as the Grade 9 role requires the post holder to deputise for the Director and University Librarian as required.

The document does not address the additional portfolio responsibilities that all of the Grade 9 Associate Directors hold. In addition to delivering significant and positive impact as a professional expert and change agent on the long-term direction, strategy and objectives of the University Library, they have responsibilities regarding budgets and planning along with further Division wide responsibilities. For this particular post it is being the Divisional strategic lead for customer service, marketing and communications and for staff development. That this Shaping for Excellence proposal requires a focus on providing excellent customer service and will also need a substantial training and development programme it is not realistic or appropriate to disinvest in this position at this time. It is also not clear from the proposal how these areas of work will continue to function and what impact there may be on others workloads, responsibilities or what would be the impact if this work was to cease.

**Option C Summary Statement:**

We do not believe we have been provided with a clear, transparent rationale for the User Services team being merged with Student Services. The business case states that the aim is to provide ‘agility, partnership and performance’, and that User Services and the Student Services Centre are the busiest front-facing points on campus. This does not, however, outline why a combination of the two teams will aid the student experience. In the below structure we suggest a complete rejection of a combined service, and instead look to improve the current management structure by reinstating the open Assistant Manager position and unify the team by operating the front of house service via 18FTE User Services Advisers, rather than having a mixture of Library Assistants and Advisors. We also support the continuation of Shelving Assistants as part of the service. We highly recommend that the Shelving Assistant posts exist within all of the four structure options. The reasons for which can be seen in full as part of the collective feedback.

**Option C Management Structure:**



**Option C Grade 4 proposal:**

18FTE Library  
User Services  
Advisor (Grade 4)

**Option C Grade 2 Shelving Assistants (Term Time only contract):**

1.5FTE Library Shelving  
Assistants (term time  
only) (Grade 2)

**Rationale for Suggested Structure (Option C):**

The structure will amount to a total saving (including open vacancies) of 7.8928FTE at Grade 3 and 0.9563FTE at Grade 2. There would be an addition of 4.6858 FTE at Grade 4.

We understand the explanation that the integration of the User Services team and Student Services could provide a more coherent experience for students. There is uncertainty as to how the team would be fully integrated when there are still two physical locations for the proposed collective team to be responsible for. It is unclear how students will know which building they need to be in for a required service. Some Student Services processes, such as their work with visas, can only be done in one location for legal reasons, how then will having two desks be a 'one stop' service? We feel it is counter-productive to merge the teams in a bid to minimise touch points, whilst not similarly minimising the physical touch points.

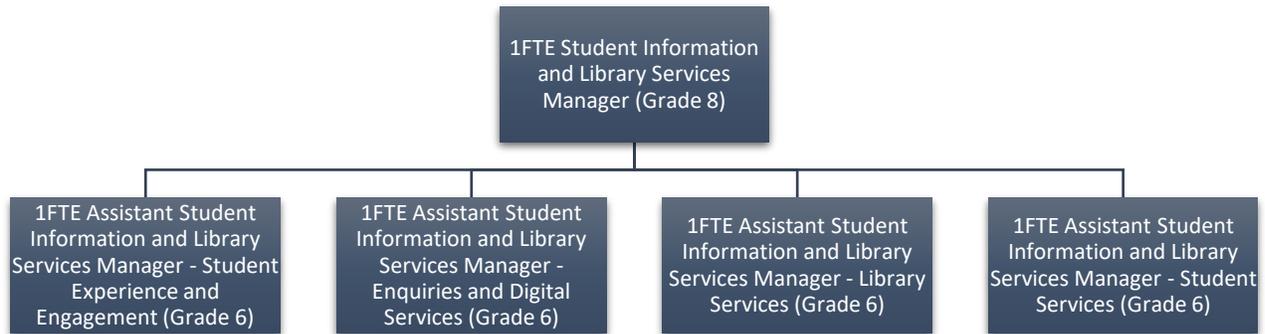
One of our primary concerns submitted as feedback to the pre-change consultation in November stated that the goal of providing an enhanced student experience cannot be achieved with a merged front-facing team with less overall members of staff, as their experience and knowledge will be diluted considerably. It is difficult to see how a smaller team with diluted knowledge will effectively be able to resolve diverse and complex queries. It is also the members of staff that have been in post the longest who are disproportionately the ones marked for redundancy, erasing valuable knowledge of the team as a whole. Reducing the current team by more than a third, whilst also combining them with another University team does not address any of the concerns raised in the initial feedback. There is a failure in this proposed business case to harness the assets that the at-risk staff bring to the team, and to the student experience.

We therefore put forward this option to rectify the issues present in the current staffing structure looking to create a more cohesive staff unit to carry forward the customer focused approach to service delivery that the proposal speaks towards.

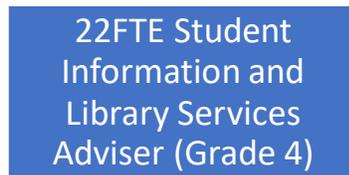
**Option D Summary Statement:**

The Option D Organisational Chart is a reimagining of the team with an additional post that is inspired by the current Library User Services management model. The additional post is 1FTE Assistant Student Information and Library Services Manager - Enquiries and Digital Services. The rationale behind the suggestion of this post, as well as a brief list of key responsibilities of the post is detailed below the chart. The structure is also putting forward an addition of 4FTE Student Information and Library Services Advisers to support the ongoing stability of the team.

**Option D Management Structure:**



**Option D Grade 4 Proposal:**



## **Option D Rationale:**

Firstly we suggest that in order for the management team to run robustly an additional Assistant Manager should be recruited, stabilising the management provision adequately across each day of the week. It has already been proven that the Library service cannot be efficiently run without damaging the development of the service with only one DWL Assistant Manager. Merging further services into the management team's remit without increasing the Library services support in this team will cause great damage to the service. To again reiterate, the proposed structure will only continue the unmanageable workload placed on the management team and it will lead very quickly to a disenfranchised team with little sense of direction and purpose.

Since the departure of the Library's User Experience and Engagement Manager, whose role was graded at Grade 7, the workload carried out by this manager was absorbed by the Associate Director of User Services, the DWL Manager and the DWL Assistant Manager. This workload was absorbed as grade appropriate work for each of these positions, but for the Grade 6 DWL Assistant Manager who became the manager of and the person responsible for the Library's key communication channels which was outside of their remit and was working above their pay grade. This work will now be absorbed into the 3 suggested Assistant Manager positions, however the concern over the grade appropriateness of this work still exists. Of course this work will be overseen by the Grade 8 Manager but there are certainly capacity issues as the job description across the board here are so great. Without work of the Grade 6 members being compensated appropriately coupled with the immense strain placed upon them as individuals there will be a high probability of staff burn out and/or a wish to leave the institution, in respect of them being undervalued in their monetary compensation and their wellbeing.

One of the operational benefits of having an additional Assistant Manager will ensure that evening shift cover can be appropriately achieved without confused and changeable deployment. It would also make weekend cover more attainable and would increase the chance of staff retention in the management team. We can foresee very little work satisfaction, poor staff wellbeing and a decreased chance of staff retention in the management team if it is not benefitted by an additional position.

The Library Services portfolio will be overloaded with the multifaceted responsibilities that exist. We know that the current Library services are process heavy, and these need to be readdressed and although some of this work can feasibly cease, the management team need to be in a position to handle the analysis and removal of unnecessary work being done. This will not be quickly achieved whilst our primary aim will be to support a general front of house service that we will have to integrate and train staff in across a very short window. The training and close leadership demands on the management team will span over at least the first 12 months, however the room for management's personal development, and time for them to dedicate towards service development, will simply not be found.

The portfolio area for the Grade 6 Assistant Manager position is Enquiries and Digital Services, this increases resilience in the form of enquiry management system support and increased dedication to the Student Information and Library Services contribution to digital services to develop our student body's relationship to digital library services. The Assistant Manager would have a close working relationship with both the Digital Services Manager and Content Services Manager. This unity would help support the effective integration of service developments in these areas into the front facing student support. This will be particularly important during the initial stages of the service changes as the Student Support Centre's digital systems are transferred into the Library's existing Enquiries Management System. Having

this portfolio of work explicitly written into the Grade 6 Assistant Manager post will help to avoid single points of failure and this aspect of service integration will have a greater level of success.

Additionally to the Grade 6 position we are advising an increase in Grade 4 FTEs. The rationale behind the additional posts is something which we collectively feel very strongly about and the need for an increased number over the 18FTE originally suggested is evidenced in the feedback portion of this document and will not be repeated in full here. The evidence outlined above conveys the need for additional staff, the service will not be effective without an additional 4FTE. To give a better insight the mock timetables created as part of this counter proposal represent how the service will run most effectively. Without this number of staff, training, to be both planned and delivered, will require staff who can be made available from other front facing and business critical duties. The really lean staffing levels proposed will simply not be sufficient to allow for the team to be adequately trained. This isn't just a short term need while the new team beds in, with staff turn-over and ever expanding range of enquiries (to give an example, new platforms for access to electronic content, student engagement and outreach activities, changing use of Library as a physical space etc.) training is an ongoing requirement so capacity to develop training materials and to deliver training sessions must be built into the new structure if it is to succeed. The statistical information given in the feedback section aims to give insight into how long the business critical work takes, we hope that through the reading of this a greater awareness of the necessity for more FTEs will be achieved.

In the case for change it is suggested that members of the management team work one in every two weekends alternating Saturday and Sunday working per weekend. In principle we do not stand against the suggestion of a management presence at weekends to offer guidance and support. We do however have feedback and counter proposals to this arrangement.

### Concern

One in every two weekends is too frequent to allow the management team to adequately support the running of the service at its busiest and most critical time during the week. With the pattern of working suggested the effects felt by management absence during the week will be a detriment to our service during its busiest hours, it will take time away from the core working hours that other University staff operate within limiting our ability to liaise and work with colleagues in SAS and LLIS and staff from other departments. The benefits of access to management staff at weekends will be negatively felt three fold during the weekdays and will have a detrimental effect on the service delivery. We suggest that weekend support can be delivered on a less frequent basis, especially given the additional Grade 6 staff member.

### Alternative suggestion 1

Management staff from across the department should be required to work on site or from home one weekend day on a rota basis. This will increase unity within the department, would dramatically increase the effective running of the Student Information and Library Services team whilst giving staff from across the department an investment in the 24/7 access to Library based services. There is little engagement from staff in other teams to see the Library as a service that runs beyond Monday – Friday, 9am – 5pm opening, and this outlook needs to change to create a cohesive department. Encouraging staff across the department to work weekend days on site would enable them to be more engaged with Open Days and Offer Days, supporting the recruiting of prospective students. Their presence would offer

the opportunity to support staff training and development from their own areas of service into the regular front facing service. It would be beneficial for them to engage their own teams on the work happening outside of the limited view they get from Library Management Team Meetings. This option also gives access to improving the connection our staff have with Special Collections, occasionally working with that head of service and the University archivist. Combining the existing managers would mean LLIS managers would work 1 weekend day in every 10 weekends, making the time to take back very manageable.

Alternative suggestion 2

If the managers across the Library will not work weekends then we put forward the suggestion that management staff from Student Information and Library Services management team do not support both weekend days every weekend but alternative week by week. This will mean that management staff only work one weekend day in every 5 weekends, enabling them to both better support the service at its most business critical times, and still be present to work alongside staff who work regularly on Saturdays and Sundays.

<b>Week 1</b>	<b>Manager in</b>
Saturday	Y
Sunday	N
<b>Week 2</b>	<b>Manager in</b>
Saturday	N
Sunday	Y
<b>Week 3</b>	<b>Manager in</b>
Saturday	Y
Sunday	N
<b>Week 4</b>	<b>Manager in</b>
Saturday	N
Sunday	Y
<b>Week 5</b>	<b>Manager in</b>
Saturday	Y
Sunday	N

Management staff working one weekend day per week means that the management team can be one individual down every Friday or Monday enabling a 2 day weekend regardless of which weekend day they are due in. It will mean that in some instances they will be working a 6 day week, followed by a 4 day week, but this would only occur every fifth week so enabling a healthier work life balance than what is currently proposed.

Alternative suggestion 3

Management staff from Student Information and Library Services are available remotely to offer support and guidance aligning with the University’s commitment to agile working. Management staff would still have to take the hours worked at the weekends back in the weekdays so the frequency proposed in the pre change proposal would still create the exact issue we would have if staff were on site. Therefore the frequency in this needs to be reconsidered. It could fit the above brief or it could be managed as such:

<b>Week 1</b>	<b>Manager WFH</b>
Saturday	Y – manager no.1
Sunday	Y – manager no.1
<b>Week 2</b>	<b>Manager in</b>
Saturday	Y – manager no.2
Sunday	Y – manager no.2
<b>Week 3</b>	<b>Manager in</b>
Saturday	Y – manager no.3
Sunday	Y – manager no.3
<b>Week 4</b>	<b>Manager in</b>
Saturday	Y – manager no.4
Sunday	Y – manager no.4
<b>Week 5</b>	<b>Manager in</b>
Saturday	Y – manager no.5
Sunday	Y – manager no.5

Management staff working both weekend dates means that every five weeks management staff would work 6 days in a row, but would have two days off in a row to accommodate an appropriate rest aiding a healthier work life balance.

The structure will amount to a total saving (including current unfulfilled vacancies) 1FTE at Grade 9, 1FTE at Grade 8, 7.8928FTE at Grade 3 and 2.4563FTE at Grade 2. There would be an addition of 4.0858 FTE at Grade 4.

**Summary of Counter Proposal – Staffing Structure Options**

We hope that the explanations alongside our suggestions for appropriate staffing structures is utilised well throughout the next stages of the consultation process. We would like to only reiterate the point that these options are flexible in nature. A more robust management team, more members of staff contributing to the services and the reversal of shelving staff redundancies are our main drivers here. This counter proposal seeks to prove that further consideration needs to be made upon these three points if any reshaping for excellence is going to be achieved. The collective feedback found below coincides with the suggested structures and contains vital information in support of the occasionally brief rationales above. The statistical data and in depth analysis can be found below in the Counter Proposal Supporting Evidence section, this cannot be ignored.

## Part 2

### Summarisation of Collective Feedback

Below we have collated feedback regarding specific aspects of the proposed business case for integrating the Library User Services team and Student Services Centre. As we have all read through each point of said business case in detail and outlined our thoughts, our expectation is that the University will do the same for what we have presented. We would like to be clear that this summary page does not encapsulate the entirety of our feedback and should not be taken as such. Rather, it highlights key elements of our feedback that have been addressed in our counter proposal. As the pages above include supporting data and staff feedback based on lived experience of the service, they are required reading before reading the summaries below. We will unfortunately be unable to accept any responses to this document (or the counter proposals themselves) that use these summaries in isolation and do not refer to the supporting data detailed above.

#### **Staffing and Workload**

The proposed 18 FTE Grade 4 posts will not be sufficient to staff the service. The business case does not accurately reflect the workload involved in many of the 'back office' elements of the Library User Services team and the Student Services Centre, as well as the physical management of the Library building itself. Additionally, the proposed staffing will allow for very little flexibility for staff sickness and leave. We believe that the staffing numbers are absolutely key in reshaping the service, not only to ensure the services can be delivered effectively but also to support staff training and welfare. If a new service is implemented and the staffing numbers are too few this will unavoidably result in staff burnout and high levels of sickness, negatively impacting the service and the overall student experience. We have offered alternative staffing structures in Part 1, supported by projected timetables.

We are similarly concerned about the workload for the new Grade 4 role, which covers a very broad remit. With a 'jack of all trades' approach, we are concerned that the service will not be robust enough to handle complex enquiries as specialised staff knowledge will be lost. The result of this will be more enquiries passed on to other University teams and longer wait times for students. This was a point made in feedback to the initial pre-change engagement meeting in 2020 by both Library User Services and Student Services Centre staff. We do not believe that the business case, as written, successfully conveys how the proposed service would avoid this negative outcome for the student experience.

We propose that the staffing of the desk in the Percy Gee building is not in our remit, and would be best placed to be filled by a receptionist post within the wider student and academic services team. To have this space supported by a Grade 4 Advisor is a waste of resource and the responsibilities, workload and purpose of service delivery is ill thought out. We propose that this be reconsidered and SAS should employ a separate entity to support the booking of appointments and manage referrals to support services. This position is better suited to an administrative assistant only, not a member of staff that is equipped to handle complex library based enquiries. To honour our commitment to delivering excellent customer service however, we suggest a Library pop-up in the Percy Gee Building once a month to engage with users who do not see the Library as an accessible place for them to receive support and guidance in their studies. This will ensure that the Student Information and Library Services team have a strong presence in user engagement and which will positively drive student experience and would encourage students to see us as partners in their educational journey.

### **Shelving and Physical Book Stock**

The proposed business case does not take into account that the current decrease in the physical borrowing of books will not continue exponentially. Some books, due to their publisher, publication rights or age will never be available electronically. Moreover, there are a notable number of students who prefer physical books or have a specific learning requirement for them. It also does not take into account that there are collections in the Library (such as the Majut collection, Microfilm and Microfiche collection etc.) not applicable to the majority of student courses. The statistic that 55% of David Wilson Library books have not been borrowed since 2016 implies that the current Library collections may not be suitable for purpose. It is a disservice to our students to extrapolate that they have no need for physical books at all, without examining what is and is not currently being borrowed. If physical books were not in demand, the Library's recall system or postal loan service would never be used.

Moreover, the number of Grade 2 Shelving Assistant staff members has fallen in greater numbers than the reduction in borrowing. This, alongside the fact that shelving is more physically strenuous and time consuming due to the loss of the Sorter Machine, means that the workload in this area has not lessened.

An increase in the usage of electronic resources also means that there is similarly an increase of queries related to these items. Resolving these issues can be complex, requiring specialised knowledge and IT Skills. In 2019, the User Services team received 493 e-mails regarding issues accessing e-resources. In 2020, due to lockdown and an increased usage of said resources, 1285 e-mails were received instead. This is an increase of just over 160%.

### **Investment in Student Self-Service**

We are concerned in how student self-service will be facilitated and implemented. The notion of increasing the ability and capacity for student self-service is something we support, but is also something that will require significant investment in digital and physical spheres. For example, there is currently no way for students to pay fines or invoices online and the new Library self-service kiosks do not include a card machine for fine payments. This means that students have to join queues to make any payments, taking up their own time and staff time for something which otherwise need only take a few moments. Additionally, the Library website is not fit for purpose in this regard, particularly since the recent relaunch.

The self-service aspect is integral to any proposed integrated team being able to deliver services effectively and successfully. It is unclear how there will be staff time or flexibility to further introduce self-service elements in the proposed structure and we do not believe the timeframe will be long enough for them to be appropriately implemented in the 21/22 academic year.

### **Proposed Integration Timeline and Staff Training**

We have substantial concerns about the proposed timeline for the integration of the two teams, and do not believe that the service as proposed will be in a position to effectively support students by the start of the 21/22 academic year. The business case does not outline any details of a training programme nor how services will be fully integrated. A few months will not be a long enough time period for the new service to be rolled out effectively and it is not realistic to expect the new management team to create, refine and deliver said training while they are still acclimatising to the new service, their new roles and each other.

The students starting their University journey in the 21/22 academic year will have had both their personal and academic lives severely impacted by a global pandemic. They will require support in a University environment that may not be fully back to 'normal', even with the current successful rollout of vaccinations, and will be looking for confirmation that they made the right choice with the University of Leicester. The proposed integrated team would be one of the most prominent representations of the University on campus and be the frontline team with the most interactions with students per member of staff. It is therefore vital, for student wellbeing, satisfaction and retention, that the staff and services they encounter are fully trained and robust. The short time between this service integration being proposed, staff being redeployed or made redundant and the start of the upcoming academic year will not be enough time for the service to be successfully launched.

### **Impact on Other Library Teams**

The proposed changes will have a significant impact on other Library Teams - Grade 4 Library Advisor staff and Grade 3 Library Assistant staff contribute to many of the services and processes of said teams and the proposed job specifications and projected 18 FTE Grade 4 roles do not fully take this into account. If the business case implemented as proposed, the workload of these teams will increase and negatively affect the services they are able to offer our staff and students. Moreover, the User Services team resolves many first line enquiries that fall under the remit of said teams. With the proposed job roles and staffing, there will not be the time or training for the Grade 4 staff to answer these enquiries in an in-depth manner - they will instead be immediately passed on to another Library team and further increase their workload. Accordingly, we request that the other Library teams are given the opportunity to read through the business case and offer their feedback.

We anticipate that the proposed business case will similarly have an impact on many of the other Teams in Student and Academic Services, particularly as the majority of the tasks and responsibilities staying in this Division were the purview of the Grade 6 Student Services Centre Team Leader positions. We therefore ask that they too be allowed to contribute to feedback to the business case to ensure that any potential restructure continues to give students the high standards of support they expect from a top 25 University in the UK Times Higher Education Rankings.

We would like to reiterate that the User Services team has collectively agreed that we have no issues with relevant University teams (such as those in the Library and in Student and Academic Services) having access to the full business case. We are of the opinion that their input will only aid the reshaping process and ensure any changes are sustainable for both our staff and students.

### **Financial Data and Staffing Budgets**

Although this restructure has not been proposed on a purely financial basis, we are aware that the current pandemic (as well as the United Kingdom leaving the European Union) has had an impact on the finances of universities across the country. It would therefore be remiss of us not to consider the financial implications of our feedback and the counter proposals themselves. We are committed to reshaping the service into the best possible for our staff and students whilst taking any financial restraints into account.

On this basis, we would like to request both the financial data underpinning the proposed business case and access to the proposed staffing budgets. This will ensure that our counter proposals fully reflect the current financial position of the Division/University.

### **'One-Stop Service' and Percy Gee Staffing**

We are concerned how the desk in the Percy Gee building will run alongside the proposed service. The very existence of this desk appears to be in stark contrast to the idea of a 'One-stop service'. Given the nature of many Library User Services and Student Services Centre tasks, some things will only be possible at either the Library or Percy Gee desk, resulting in students being passed between desks. If managerial support is required, students will similarly have to move between desks or wait until a manager is able to travel to the other location. We believe this desk set-up, as proposed, will result in confusion for students and a disconnect between services.

### **'Student and Information Services' and Job Titles**

We are concerned that the name for the proposed integrated team, 'Student and Information Services' does not appropriately reflect the nature of the combined service. It is not clear to students, staff or external members that this team will be able to help with Library enquiries or that this team will be able to help University staff or external Library members at all. We anticipate this may result in a higher workload for the Academic Librarians, as both students and staff will direct more first line enquiries their way.

We have similar concerns about the 'Customer Services Adviser' job title, which does not reflect the workload or breadth of knowledge required for the job role. It will also impact the professional development of the team, as the job title on a CV, even with explanation, will not be an effective communicator of what they have accomplished in the position. With the job market expected to become even more competitive due to the current global pandemic, this could have a negative influence on staff's future job prospects.

Our counter proposals in Part 1 offer alternative naming conventions for both the service and staff roles, which we hope you will take into account.

## ***Counter Proposal Supporting Evidence***

The User Services team have collaborated to outline an alternative proposal to the business case presented to us on 28 January 2021. We believe that these plans will ensure that our service going forward proves us to be true 'Citizens of Change' and demonstrate the agility of the Library as the University of Leicester enters its next century. As Agility, Partnership and Performance are to be built into the New Professional Services Vision we must ensure that our proposal supports this endeavour. We feel that the evidence provided in this section support the University's strategic aims and conveys how our team has and always will ensure that the decisions we make about our services are always to support our student body and are always student centred.

### **Proposed FTEs and the Current Grade 2 and Grade 3 Workload**

All of the above alternative staffing structure proposals includes more than the projected 18 FTE Grade 4 roles (in whatever form they take) outlined in the original business case. This has been done because 18 FTE is not a suitable number of roles to staff the proposed service sustainably. Many of the reasons why have been outlined in the feedback in this document and in the staffing structures above. However, the business case presented to us also did not sufficiently recognise the scope and value of the workload currently carried out by the Grade 2 Shelving Assistant Staff and Grade 3 Library Assistant Staff. Their duties have been grossly underestimated and not truly reflected in the proposed 'Customer Service Advisor' job specification.

We have therefore created a breakdown of the current Grade 2 and Grade 3 workloads to demonstrate the scope of their activities, the importance of them to the service, and to recompense their absence in the business case. The outdated job descriptions of the Grade 2 and Grade 3 posts do not depict the true reality of the activities undertaken in each post on a daily basis. This section will outline the true scope of their duties, and in particular the additional ones undertaken to those outlined in their original job summary forms. We hope this section will demonstrate their value to the service and how 18 FTE Grade 4 roles will not appropriately encapsulate the workload of the current Grade 4 Library Advisors, Grade 3 Library Assistants and Grade 2 Shelving Assistants.

### ***Grade 2***

#### **Shelving**

Shelving is, quite understandably, a large part of the Shelving Assistant role and the workload required is not accurately presented in the proposed business case. The average trolley of books has between 40-45 books over two shelves of the trolley. Depending on the section of books being shelved (e.g science books are much bigger and local history books/education are generally smaller) the average time to shelve one trolley is 25 minutes. For less experienced staff, this can be much longer. Given the average timings, the hours spent shelving the books processed in 2019 (see table 2.1 below) amount to 2622 hours. This averages to 7 hours per day (if the Library was open 365 days a year) and does not include time spend shelf-tidying or moving entire sections of books when shelves become unevenly populated. For shelving alone, discounting all the other duties of a Shelving Assistant, 1.4 FTE is needed to ensure books are appropriately shelved.

99.96% of these books were re-shelved within an hour of them being returned by students. Shelving is an important and vital contributor to the student experience. The availability of print material is also

extremely valuable to the research excellence strategy of the University. Experienced shelving staff are essential to the smooth running of the Library, without whom the Library environment would not be successfully maintained.

**Table 3.1 Shelving Statistics 2019**

Month	Time (in hours) between books being returned and being shelved							Total	Trolleys within 1 hr (%)
	< 1 hr	1-5	5-10	10-15	15-20	20-24	24+		
January	582	1	0	0	0	0	0	583	99.8%
February	111	0	0	0	0	0	0	111	100.0%
March	746	0	0	0	0	0	0	746	100.0%
April	551	0	0	0	0	0	0	551	100.0%
May	917	0	0	0	0	0	0	917	100.0%
June	570	0	0	0	0	0	0	570	100.0%
July	431	0	0	0	0	0	0	431	100.0%
August	395	0	0	0	0	0	0	395	100.0%
September	493	0	0	0	0	0	0	493	100.0%
October	555	0	0	0	0	0	0	555	100.0%
November	529	0	0	2	0	0	0	531	99.6%
December	410	0	0	0	0	0	0	410	100.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>6290</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6293</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Now that there is no longer a sorter machine in the sorter room, Grade 2 Shelving Assistant staff are also required to physically return and sort books returned to the Library. Previously, the sorter machine would automatically return books and use a conveyer belt to move them to a bin which correlated to a Library floor. These bins would then be emptied on to the appropriate trolley. Without the sorter machine, this process is far more time intensive and involves more physical handling of book stock. The business case does not take into the account the way in which this change has increased the shelving workload.

**Additional Duties**

Tidying shelves is an important and underappreciated aspect to the current Grade 2 role. It greatly affects students’ morale and does not promote confidence in our services if they are messy. An organised shelf makes it so much easier to find what they are looking for and is less intimidating to new students (who have been given very little practical training on how to use the library and physically find books). Tidy shelves also empower students to locate the books they need themselves rather than needing to ask for staff assistance. Currently, the shelves are unkempt due to staffing shortages and as a result they have been neglected for a while, giving the impression of a badly run and mismanaged service, rather than the professional one our students deserve.

Shelf-checking is regularly undertaken by Grade 2 staff. For each three hour shift the current Grade 2s work, thirty minutes are dedicated to shelf-checking. As a result, mis-shelved or hidden books are constantly found and replaced in the correct place. This is vital to maintaining the availability of print stock to students, particularly for those high-demand text books that are often misplaced and/or hidden.

Grade 2 Shelving Assistants are a constant presence on the floor which greatly helps with noise reduction, cleanliness/preventing students from eating, and enables us to help with queries to assist new students, most of whom don't know how to find a book or even roll the stacks. These individuals are vital to maintaining the physical space within the Library, and ensuring a productive learning environment is promoted throughout the building. Here is an example of the scope of enquiries received by one member of staff (working 0.25714 FTE for 35 weeks a year) in one academic year:

### ***Academic Year 2018/19***

Enquiries: 19

12 x book location queries (some declaring no knowledge of dewey, shelfmarks etc):  
4 x users had located items in catalogue which weren't on shelf, could I check?  
3 x book-location queries (users said they didn't know dewey/how to use shelfmarks)  
1 x where is the Linguistics section (asked by a PG student who said they didn't understand dewey shelfmarks)  
1 x where is the Maths section?  
1 x where are the 320s?  
1 x on-shelf location query for a book with an obscure Local History classmark  
1 x user asked about a Law book from an Amazon page (so we checked catalogue, found item and shelfmark, and located it on shelf)

7 x miscellaneous:

1 x student showed me a book with 3 publishers listed and asked how she should list this in her bibliog.  
1 x user asked if a Law book with red band partly removed was borrowable or not  
1 x how do I move the shelves?  
1 x unjammed copier at user's request  
1 x how many books am I allowed to borrow?  
1 x what is the check-out procedure for 'hold' books?  
1 x what is the check-out procedure for books on the public shelves?

Library Environment Issues: 12

6 x talking in Silent Zones  
2 x talking/laughing in Yellow Zones  
1 x making phone call in Silent Zone  
1 x making phone call in Yellow Zone  
1 x user wearing earphones tried to close ranges while I was very briefly inside  
1 x user had problems returning 30 books through the sorter-machine wall-slot, which caused tech problems when I was on alone and delayed other sorter-room duties

All these resolved queries reduced the number of touch points for students. Having experienced and knowledgeable staff present on the Library floors is vital for keeping the service running, and to a high standard. It also takes pressure off the busy Library staff working on the frontline services.

The current Grade 2 staff are responsible for training new members of User Services staff on all aspects of collections management relating to their role. This is not in their current job summary, and is training that is vital to the continuation of the service, and the student experience. New Unitemps Shelving Assistants were also trained by the Grade 2 staff, something that takes time and they are always the first point of contact on account of their in depth knowledge, which could be lost in the proposed business case.

Additionally, something not considered or addressed in the new Grade 4 job summary form, 3 Grade 2 members of staff are currently responsible for the daily shelving of the current periodicals processed each day by Content Services. It includes requesting new boxes when needed and closing boxes (by pen) when full; the collection of old stock, i.e. those periodicals only kept for 3 or 6 months; filing of legal journal papers and removing out of date papers; and recently it has also included the shelving of current Off Pubs items. The task can take up to an hour or more to complete depending on the time of year, e.g. June/July and December/January are the busiest.

### **Grade 3**

Completely erasing the Grade 3 role without a full consideration of the duties undertaken by individuals currently in this role, as is proposed, will result in the eradication of important experience and knowledge. As will be detailed, the duties carried out above their paygrade are vast, and full appreciation of this has led to a gross underestimation of what the proposed Grade 4 role will actually look like. In addition to the daily duties maintaining the Library enquiry service and responding to user issues, the following processes are carried out largely, if not solely, by Grade 3 staff.

### **Searches**

This procedure is currently overseen by one part-time Grade 3 member of staff. Other Grade 3s, and some Grade 4s, assist in the physical searches. All of the administration, training and ownership of this process is carried out by one member of part-time Grade 3 staff. We conduct a first search and if the item is found we make it available for the reader. This only took a few minutes in 2019 as all items would be put on the holds shelf. A search for a postal loan will take longer if found as it needs to be posted out. The statistics below have focused on campus based 'Requests' where a reader may come to the desk to ask for a book.

#### **First Search from start to finish**

- Take Search at desk – 5 mins
- ALMA check and Search for item – 15 mins
- Update spreadsheet/Make available – 10 mins
- Total for first search = 25 mins

#### **Second Search**

- Check item is still missing on ALMA – 2 mins
- Actual search – 15 mins

- Admin – 10 mins
- Total for second search = 27 mins

Total for two searches plus associated admin: 52 minutes per item.

Monthly Report (2 hours per month)

- Approx 1 hour to print and shelf check an average month – often find 2 or 3 books this way
- Approx 1 hour to withdraw the stock from an average month

Taking the below figures (table 2.2) for 2019, the searches conducted and associated admin amounted to 181.75 hours.

### How much *finding* these books is saving

For the calendar year 2019, if we calculate the items found via those process, which otherwise would have remained missing, and assume a £40 replacement cost per book (this is the figure used for Out of Print stock in invoicing):

- We found 57 items on the first search
- We found 95 items on the second search.

If we assume this average price of £40 (and it could be higher now as we replace with eBooks where possible) then in 2019 a total of 152 books were found by us representing a saving of **£6,080.00**.

**Table 3.2 Searches Statistics for 2019**

2019	FIRST SEARCH TOTAL	FIRST SEARCH FOUND	SECOND FOUND	ISSUED TO MISSING	REFERRED TO ACADEMIC LIAISON	FOUND ON 3 MONTHLY LIST	Others found
January	28	8	1	19	2	1	No stats
February	34	7	9	23	4	0	No stats
March	24	4	14	14	2	4	No stats
April	20	5	7	8	3	2	No stats
May	14	4	18	6	0	2	10
June	7	1	10	3	2	1	No stats
July	6	3	3	2	2	1	No stats
August	4	1	0	0	0	5	No stats
September	8	1	2	7	2	No stats	No stats

October	48	8	12	15	1	No stats	etc
November	34	10	9	26	1	No stats	
December	10	5	10	7	0	No stats	
<b>TOTALS:</b>	237	57	95	130	19	16	0

## Claims Return

Currently this procedure is overseen and carried out by four Grade 3 members of staff. Although the entire team deals with claims return queries when they first present to us, they are then passed to the core four members of staff that have taken it on themselves to take ownership of this process.

The process involves thorough searches of possible locations for the missing item remaining on user's accounts. Communications with users must be balanced, fair and no assumptions made about what has happened to the book. Under non-COVID restrictions, there would be a process of three thorough searches, three official emails to the user (although in reality many more arise when discussing different situations with users). The full process takes 3-4 weeks to resolve, therefore paperwork must be kept in an orderly, organised manner to stay on top of the workload. Throughout the Claims Return process a users' personal circumstances are always considered, and their welfare is important throughout. This user centred approach means many claims returns are successfully resolved, and what could be a difficult day to day issue is handled fairly and sensitively for students by Grade 3 staff. For this reason, the process could not be system automated.

Context: Each Claims Return (C/R) and Claims Never Had (C/N/H) case takes a minimum of 1 hour 20 minutes to complete + an additional 10 minutes for invoicing.

- C/R April 2020 – February 2021

Our current situation is as follows: 2 x new searches, 4 x first searches, 24 x outstanding with 2 searches completed

Total 30 ongoing C/Rs. Awaiting management decision, will need be actioned when decision is made. (minimum 40 hours staff work for pending C/R).

- C/R Jan- March 2020

The total number of C/R were 16. 36 emails associated with these 16 cases were sent.

Staff hours on C/R Jan to March 2020 were 5 hours, plus an additional 1 hour for invoicing.

To March 2020, we had resolved 11 cases of C/R which resulted in the books being found or returned. Going by the basic book fee of £40 per item, if each case returned only one book into circulation, this equates to £484.

- C/R in 2019

The total number of C/R were 91. 217 emails associated with these 91 cases were sent.

Staff hours on C/R in 2019 were minimum 121 hours, plus an additional 7 hours for invoicing.

In 2019, the Claims Return process successfully resolved 44 individual cases, which resulted in the books being found or returned. Many cases included multiple books for which statistics were not recorded.

Going by the basic book fee of £40 per item, if each case returned only one book into circulation, this equates to £1760.

- C/R in 2018

The total number of C/R were 74. 55 emails associated with these 74 cases were sent.

Staff hours on C/R in 2018 were minimum 98 hours, plus an additional 3 hours for invoicing.

In 2018, the Claims Return process successfully resolved 45 individual cases, which resulted in the books being found or returned. Many cases included multiple books for which statistics were not recorded.

Going by the basic book fee of £40 per item, if each case returned only one book into circulation, this equates to £1800.

- C/R in 2017

The total number of C/R were 91. No date on associated emails sent is available.

Staff hours on C/R in 2017 were minimum 98 hours, plus an additional 3 hours for invoicing.

In 2017, the Claims Return process successfully resolved 57 individual cases, which resulted in the books being found or returned. Many cases included multiple books for which statistics were not recorded.

Going by the basic book fee of £40 per item, if each case returned only one book into circulation, this equates to £2280.

### Invoicing

When books have been overdue for 10 days (this may happen if a user’s account has expired or books have been recalled) and have not been returned, an invoice is prepared to send to the user. Every week the list is printed (generated on ALMA), which then needs shelf checking. Once all items have been checked, the list is part of the administration tasks to complete for the following week. When available for administration work, a user is selected and all of the items that are overdue are priced on Oasis, a book ordering website. Colleagues in Content Services may need to be contacted for advice regarding pricing of out of print or complex items, to ensure the correct price is used. A template letter is then used to send to the invoice to the user, listing all of the items that have not been returned, along with their relevant costs. This is then sent via an email (to both their University and personal account); a statistic is added to their account on ALMA and the invoice is printed and filed.

If the book is not returned or paid for, further emails and letters are processed and sent out. These are sent at three intervals – 4 weeks from original invoice, 8 weeks from original invoice and 12 weeks from original invoice. The list of items that need chasing is generated on ALMA and this is printed off once per week. For the spreadsheet that is generated additional information needs to be manually added before printing as only the users name, IT username and the statistic imputed when the invoice was first created are included and as items need to be shelf checked again, it is necessary to go back to the user’s account and add the book details and shelf marks. A shelf check is then carried out for all items. If they are not found, a template is edited using information from the original invoice and a copy of this is sent via email, but also printed and posted to them. The statistic on their account is then edited and the paper copy updated in the invoice folder.

### Initial invoice:

Stage	Time taken
Edit & print invoice list	10 minutes
Shelf check & search	60 -120 minutes (dependent on length of list)
Pricing & creating invoice	30 minutes per invoice (depending on number of books & complexity of missing items)

Admin – Checking invoice, sending, creating statistic and filing paperwork	15 minutes
Time taken per invoice = 45 minutes, plus shelf checking	

### Follow-up invoices

Stage	Time taken
Edit & print invoice list	30-40 minutes
Shelf check & search	60 -120 minutes (dependent on length of list)
Creating invoice	15 minutes per invoice
Admin – Checking invoice, sending, creating statistic and filing paperwork	15 minutes per invoice
Time taken per invoice = 30 minutes, plus extended time needed for printing invoice list	

In the financial year 2018/19 we created 966 invoices, with an average cost of £89.20 per invoice. Of these invoices, 828 were resolved, with books on 697 of the invoices (worth over £67,000) being returned to the library and put back into circulation. The books on a further 131 invoices were paid for, providing £6, 262.57 to purchase replacement copies or new books for the library. These figures demonstrate the importance of the invoicing process, which results in a large number of books being returned or paid for.

From these figures, it is clear that the initial stage of the invoice process, as all invoices go through this step, a minimum of 724.5 hours were dedicated to invoicing in 2018/19 academic year. This equates to 2 hours a day, assuming the Library is open 365 days a year and staff work on invoices 7 days a week.

The invoicing process is carried out by both Grade 3 and Grade 4 staff. However, due to training and current COVID-19 restrictions, a number of the newer Grade 4 members of staff have not been trained in invoicing and chasing, which means that the majority of this process is carried out by current Grade 3 members of staff.

### Postal Loans

At the end of July 2019 the User Services team took over the postal loans service. This process involves collecting new requests made daily by registered distance learners from the shelves and posting them out via two courier services – DHL and Parcelforce. When this was introduced, only some members of Grade 3 staff members were trained in the process, as it was recognised that delivering comprehensive training to all members of the team was not feasible in the short timeframe this was transferred over from Content Services. As a result a core set of Grade 3 staff became extremely knowledgeable about the process and were instrumental in training other members of the team in the process. As it stands currently, four Grade 4 members of staff are also competent and fully trained in all aspects of the postal loan process.

In January 2020 we began offering pre-paid returns labels to distance learners. As a team we had to create a new DHL and Parcelforce account to action this, which involved working with DHL and the post room to get this up and running. Although a team effort, one Grade 4, and three key members of Grade 3 staff were integral to getting this process up and running. There were lots of initial hiccups with the

software and printer, which were a challenge that the team overcame efficiently, professionally and kept the service running at no detriment to the users.

Key members of Grade 3 staff were instrumental in familiarising themselves with a new process, liaising with external partners when troubleshooting, and writing new training materials, whilst also training other members of the team. As a result of the hard work and dedication of Grade 3 members of staff an extremely very coherent and efficient service for students was developed.

Since User Services took over postal loans towards the end of July 2019, we have processed a total of 3,227 postal loans. The average postal loan item takes one member of experienced Grade 3 staff 10 minutes to process (including collection from the shelves). Therefore, our team have dedicated a total of 538 hours to making available items vital for distance learning students.

1,942 of these postal loans (total of 324 hours) were processed before lockdown began in March 2020, and before the expansion of our services to allow all University of Leicester students and staff to request postal loan items.

These figures do not take into account the time spent troubleshooting when problems arise, and liaising with external couriers (DHL and Parcelforce) to ensure a resolution. Particularly, since 1 January 2021 and increased customs declarations when sending items internationally, a number of lengthy queries have arisen, that Grade 3 staff have been an important element in handling, contacting DHL and the users concerned, and resolving them successfully.

### **Current Training Documents Written by Grade 2s and Grade 3s.**

To demonstrate the key role, and the level of expertise that is currently possessed by the Grade 2 and Grade 3 staff, these are the current training documents in use that these members of staff constructed:

- Claims Return
- Postal Loans (DHL and Parcelforce separate documents)
- Searches (Searches and Searches Monthly Report)
- Invoicing (both creating invoices and chasing process)
- Registration (team of 3s and 4s)
- Processing 'withdrawn students' list
- Updated Shelving Instructions

### **Conclusion**

We believe the above demonstrates another way in how the proposed 18 FTE Grade 4 staff would not be sufficient to run the service. Our counter proposals have carefully considered the current Library workload and mapped them on to the aims of the business case itself. We accept, however, that our knowledge of the current Student Services Centre workload may not be as strong. Therefore, it may be the case that our proposed FTEs may need further additions to fully integrate their services.

Another common thread is that many Grade 2 and Grade 3 staff have played a key part in developing, running, training and rolling out our services. They have strong expertise and customer service skills and in some cases were only unable to apply for a Grade 4 Library Advisor role as the hours were unsuitable for them. On that basis, we would like to request that these staff be given the opportunity to apply for

regrading to ensure their workload is appropriately rewarded and to ensure that they can be job matched to the new Grade 4 roles. This may not be suitable or applicable to all staff, but we strongly ask that the university consider this request. We also have outlined above the importance of the current Grade 2 Shelving Assistants to the service and hope you will consider incorporating them into any future staffing structures.