

UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES GRADUATE & PROFESSIONAL SURVEY SUMMARY



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Assessment Committee

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Summary of Key Findings

The University Libraries conducted this survey with the goal of better understanding the learning, research and teaching goals of our graduate and professional students and their perspectives on the role of the library in helping them to achieve these goals.

This report includes a summary of the key findings drawn from the survey analysis and strategic recommendations. Details on methodology and a link to the complete survey questionnaire follow.

Higher Education Objectives

Graduate and professional students were asked about the goals they want to achieve during their academic experience. The objectives that the majority of respondents chose are of interest to the Libraries as we think about how we develop services and spaces that support academic success and skills related to information seeking and management.

- 96% responded that “having advanced academic knowledge about a specific subject, field or major” was very important or important.
- 85% responded that “improving my ability to find sources of information on a range of topics” was very important or important.
- 74% responded that “collaborating on research projects with professors or advisors” was very important or important.

Coursework and Academics

The majority of graduate & professional students agree or strongly agree that the library serves as a starting point for locating information and resources used in coursework or research projects.

- 70% agree or strongly agree that the main responsibility of the college or university library is to help access print or electronic versions of books, articles, data, images and other resources that are needed for coursework or research projects.
- 67% agree or strongly agree that the library should be supporting student learning by helping students to develop research skills and find, access and make use of books, articles, data, images and other resources.
- 42% of respondents agree or strongly agree that library staff help them develop research skills.
- Respondents indicate that the two main reasons for interacting with librarians and staff are to get help with finding resources (40%) and to checkout an item or items (36%).

Role of the Library

Graduate and professional students responded that the primary roles of the library are to pay for, store and organize resources, but they also recognized many other roles of the library as being important.

- 75% responded very useful or extremely useful to “the library supports and facilitates my learning or study activities.”
- 70% responded very useful to extremely useful to “librarians or library staff provide assistance in finding sources for coursework or research projects.”
- 66% responded very useful or extremely useful to “librarians or library staff provide assistance or guidance on managing citation of books, articles, data, images or websites for coursework or research projects.”

Library Space Planning

Graduate and professional students do use campus libraries for study, access to materials, computing and printing, and are generally satisfied with library spaces.

- The lowest satisfaction rate was for the availability of power outlets for which 20% of respondents indicated extremely dissatisfied, dissatisfied or somewhat dissatisfied.
- 56% of graduate students use print collections in a campus library sometimes or regularly.
- 78% indicate that a digital media commons or makerspace for creating or improving digital media projects is somewhat to extremely useful.
- 91% indicate access to software or computer applications for coursework and research is somewhat to extremely useful.

Research Practices

The majority of graduate students indicate that it is important or very important to conduct or collaborate on research projects, either individually or with faculty.

- 49% of graduate & professional students indicated they have collaborated on an original research project with one or more faculty advisors, instructors or professors.
- 64% indicated that the accessibility of needed academic books or journal articles is an important or very important consideration when choosing a research topic for a dissertation, thesis or capstone project.
- 56% indicated that it is very or extremely useful to publish in open access journals or institutional repositories.
- Only 34% have been directed by a faculty advisor, instructor or professor to consult with a librarian.

Demographics

Visiting campus libraries in person may be challenging for students who are taking courses online or working in full or part-time jobs.

- 31% agreed with the statement that 100% of their coursework is online.
- 49% have a full-time job on or off campus.

Assessment Committee Recommendations

1. Collaborate with the Office of Graduate Studies and Graduate Program Directors to improve communication with graduate students and graduate advisors about library services and resources.
2. Advocate for collections that support graduate & professional student research across the disciplines.
3. Continue to advance and promote the Libraries' capacity to provide services and resources virtually.
4. Work with the University Libraries Student Advisory Council to ensure library spaces provide digital media and software applications that support coursework and research demands.

Methodology

The survey was distributed by e-mail to all 6,543 enrolled graduate and professional students on October 2, 2017. A voluntary opportunity to participate in a random drawing for twenty \$25.00 Amazon cards was offered as an incentive for participation. There were 1,307 respondents who clicked on the survey, with 1,191 starting the survey (18%) and 939 respondents completing the survey for an overall response rate of 14%. The survey closed to responses on October 27, 2017. This report covers results from completed surveys and does not include an overview of partially completed responses.

Responses were received from students in all colleges and schools. Note that law school students were not included in this survey process.

All respondents answered questions on “Higher Education Objectives,” “Coursework and Academics,” and “Role of the Library.” In addition, respondents were presented randomly with either a module on “Library Space Planning” or “Research Practices.”

Aggregated results for all questions are available online at library.missouri.edu/about.