

Learning Spaces, Refurbishment: planning, implementation and reception  
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Lancaster University Library - Redevelopment finished in 2016

Before redevelopment:

Dark, confusing, extremes of temperature, poor wifi, limited power, limited power, poor toilet provision

1997 extension. Provided more working space. Light touch refurbishment to rest of the library to ensure two bits of the library fit together

Coloured zones

"A resource that reflects the University's reputation as a world class centre for teaching, scholarship and research"

Intuitive wayfinding

Shoulder to shoulder support

Aspirations

A unique, serious academic space

1,200 study spaces

32 acoustically separated groupwork for students

Enhanced WiFi/power/data

PGR study room

36 person teaching space

Study support rooms

Can be booked fourteen weeks in advanced compared to other study rooms, where they can only be booked two weeks in advanced

Booking in advanced helps those with autism or those meeting with support workers

People tend to be reliable in turning up

No signage outside the rooms to show they are booked

These are bookable rooms for students with specific learning differences. They are bookable for all - but only via the dyslexia and dyspraxia web page

More in use for 1:1 support work than group work. Otherwise often used by those who need a more secure environment to study in

The rooms also have more shielding than other rooms which are more open/glass

Some comments from other universities: York and Sheffield have similar spaces, but they are restricted to only those who need them

Very few seating with arms

Study support rooms - doors only open inwards and wheelchair users find it difficult to get out

Who pays for these changes?

Some comments from other libraries about the problem of listed status. Stops required changes being made

Conflict

No handrail on one side of the main stairs

Lip on the main door in. Its a little bump that's difficult to get a self-propelled wheelchair over

Only one entrance

Steel/material doormat - An incredibly unpleasant effect

'Makes me feel panicked'

Blocky contrasting carpet. Visually impaired student says it looks like steps

Issues post-refurbishment

Usage is up 50% from before refurbishment  
Joint #1 in Times Higher Education Student Experience Survey (2017 & 2018)

Feedback

Specific website for the refurbishment (noise level indicators)  
Presentations to staff, students, professional services  
Targeted communications to disabled students  
Attended start of term inductions

Communication plan

On demand book retrieval for disabled users  
1-1 orientation sessions for disabled students  
Accessibility of equipment (height adjustable tables)  
Height adjustable tables in the library and alternative study spaces. Increased numbers and locations during refurbishment

Accessible during the refurbishment

Webex meetings offered  
Alternative silent study in another building  
Relocated the study support rooms.

Main phase completed in one academic session  
Additional study spaces booked outside of the library  
Only frontline staff in the building  
Book retrieval service open  
Open during the whole refurbishment

During the refurbishment

Wider isles, lower shelves  
Lower height options for all services  
Accessible versions of each type of workspace - height adjustable  
Some spaces with task lighting  
All-gender toilets  
Improved refuse points  
Improved turning circles outside the lift  
Only one lift for C floor + (up a few steps from C floor in the extension)

An accessible environment

BIG desks on the open floor - so people can come up and get support.  
Open plan  
They have no live chat. They have a question point for when their information is closed  
How obvious is it that this is available?  
Different levels of staff working in that area. Simple and complex queries - both are not delineated  
Roving support wasn't used. Nor were information points on each floor. These were replaced with the shoulder to shoulder support

Shoulder to shoulder support

Only on the ground floor as they come into the building  
Touchscreen information  
E-campus screens  
Co-location of staff in office with public access during office hours

Accessible support

But - if you got to the library now, there is LOTS of signage. It wasn't as intuitive as thought. The same with signage for the quiet and silent study spaces.  
Have moved some furniture around as some attracted more noise than others

Minimal signage

Books in a clockwise sequence  
Services in the same place on each floor  
Tree! A tranquil courtyard  
Calm colour palette  
Water fountains, coffee and cold snacks vending  
Three floor library, two are silent  
One information service desk - ground floor  
Staff offices on B floor - there is public access, but they look intimidating so students pop in....

An environment everybody can study in

During exams, they extend this and monitor the noise in the quiet area as it was getting loud. So these floors stayed as silent study.