

LA TROBE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

Information Literacy Policy

Approved by:	Library Policy Advisory Committee
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Review Date:	July 2009
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Purpose

At La Trobe University, the development of students' information literacy skills is undertaken as a partnership between academic staff, librarians and other teaching and learning staff. The purpose of this policy is to outline the Library's objectives and responsibilities as a key collaborator in promoting and supporting the development of information literate students at La Trobe University.

Scope

The policy encompasses undergraduate and postgraduate students, academic staff, and general staff of the University.

It is aligned with the [La Trobe University Strategic Plan](#), the University's [Learning & Teaching Plan](#), the [University Library's Strategic Plan](#) and the stated values which guide research, scholarship, teaching and organizational practices of the University.

Definitions

If a person is information literate they have "learned how to learn, they know how knowledge is organized, how to find information and how to use information in such a way that others can learn from them. They are people prepared for lifelong learning."¹

The Australian and New Zealand Information Literacy Framework provides the principles and standards upon which this policy is based. It states that information literate people:

- Recognise a need for information, determine the extent of information needed, and access information efficiently
- Critically evaluate information and its sources
- Classify, store, manipulate and redraft information collected or generated
- Incorporate selected information into their knowledge base, and use information effectively to learn, create new knowledge, solve problems and make decisions
- Understand economic, legal, social, political and cultural issues in the use of information and access and use information ethically and legally
- Use information and knowledge for participative citizenship and social responsibility
- Experience information literacy as part of independent learning and lifelong learning

¹ American Library Association (1989) Presidential Committee on Information Literacy: Final Report. Chicago, ALA.

Framework for Information Literacy

Students are best able to acquire information literacy skills if skills are introduced incrementally throughout their course, in the context of their discipline and through a range of learning experiences. The Australian and New Zealand Information Literacy Framework (ANZIIL 2004, p6) explains that:

Information literacy requires sustained development throughout all levels of formal education, primary, secondary and tertiary. In particular, as students progress through their undergraduate years and graduate programs, they need to have repeated opportunities for seeking, evaluating, managing and applying information gathered from multiple sources and obtained from discipline specific research methods. Achieving information literacy requires an understanding that such development is not extraneous to the curriculum but is woven into its content, structure, and sequence. Furthermore, information literacy 'cannot be the outcome of any one subject. It is the cumulative experience from a range of subjects and learning experiences which creates the information literate person.'

Based on existing frameworks², the Library has developed an Information Literacy Framework (Appendix 1) to guide incremental progression of skills within the Library's Information Literacy programs. It outlines learning outcomes at three levels: elementary, proficient, and advanced. At an elementary level students begin with a predetermined topic and investigate the topic in a guided way. At a proficient level students engage in an open inquiry within structured guidelines. At an advanced level students research an open inquiry using self-determined guidelines.

By articulating the learning outcomes at each level, the aim of the Framework is to assist academics and librarians to develop information literacy programs within the context of each course. The learning outcomes can be used as a basis for mapping and evaluating information literacy skills as students progress through their studies. The Library is involved in all attributes listed in the Framework but with particular emphasis on attributes 1 – 4.

Implementation of the Framework will be a collaborative activity. Librarians will develop information literacy programs in cooperation with academic staff and other University colleagues. The Framework will be implemented across all campuses and will evolve as it is tried and tested in practice.

Objectives and Responsibilities of Library

The primary objective of the Library is to make a major contribution to the development of information literate students.

In order to achieve this objective the University Library will:

- Promote the systematic and systemic integration of information literacy instruction into University courses.
- Use the Information Literacy Framework as a tool to guide the integration of Information Literacy education into the academic curriculum.
- Work in partnership with academic staff to develop programs which contribute to the achievement of student learning outcomes related to information literacy.
- Collaborate with university colleagues to provide course-related or course integrated library skills instruction in a range of formats and at appropriate times within the curriculum.
- Provide generic programs as appropriate that develop transferable information literacy skills.

² Including that produced by the University of Tasmania Library, on which this framework is based.

- Support the research needs of students and staff through one to one instruction or group presentations on advanced research strategies and information resources in specific subject areas.
- Provide opportunities for self-directed learning and use of flexible resources to develop information literacy skills regardless of mode of study.
- Facilitate appropriate professional development opportunities for library staff to inform their teaching, learning and research in this area
- Provide appropriate resourcing and infrastructure to support Library staff in implementation of the Framework.

Measuring effectiveness

Effectiveness of the Library's information literacy programs will be measured in conjunction with teaching staff and will be an integrated part of the normal curriculum assessment process. In addition, the Library will assess client satisfaction with these programs.

Supporting Documents

Australian and New Zealand Information Literacy Framework 2nd ed. 2004
<http://www.caul.edu.au/info-literacy/InfoLiteracyFramework.pdf>

La Trobe University Vision and Strategic Plan 2008-2012
<http://www.latrobe.edu.au/about/vision>

Learning and Teaching at La Trobe University
<http://www.latrobe.edu.au/teaching/>

La Trobe University Library Strategic Plan 2005 – 2008
<http://www.lib.latrobe.edu.au/about/strategicplan-2005.php>

University of Tasmania Information Literacy Policy and Framework
http://www.utas.edu.au/library/assist/learning_teaching.html

Appendix 1: Information Literacy Framework

Information Literacy Attributes	Elementary	Proficient	Advanced
The information literate person...	Engages in closed or open inquiry with predetermined question/issue and criteria	Engages in open inquiry, within structured guidelines	Engages in open inquiry within self-determined guidelines
1. Recognises the need for information and determines the nature and extent of the information needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distinguishes between different information types and is able to interpret a reading list. • Understands the different sources of information available. • Identifies key search concepts. • Devises relevant search strategies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asks research questions that are specific and answerable and guide the inquiry. • Determines nature and extent of information needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asks research questions based on experience, expertise and/or literature reviews. • Determines the nature and extent of information needed to address the open inquiry.
2. Finds needed information effectively and efficiently	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Becomes familiar with the Library's basic facilities and processes. • Undertakes a basic search strategy. • Finds relevant information from prescribed sources. • Locates found items in the University Library system – online and print. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is able to undertake a complex search strategy • Independently identifies sources appropriate to discipline. • Utilises multiple source types, including primary information when possible. • Locates found items at other institutions as appropriate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applies multiple strategy searches.
3. Critically evaluates information and the information-seeking process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assesses the quality, quantity and relevance of the search results, according to set criteria 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defines criteria for evaluating information from a critical perspective • Modify search strategies as necessary or considers if other sources should be used. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluates sources from multiple critical perspectives. • Analyses structure, logic, scope perspective and relevance of sources and search strategies.

4. Manages information collected and generated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Records all citation information, using a given bibliographic style Stores information for future reference and retrieval. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understands the elements of a citation and can format it in an appropriate bibliographic style. Recognises need to systematically store and evaluate information for future reference and retrieval 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilises a bibliographic management system to organise retrieval and access of multiple references (eg: Endnote)
5. Applies prior and new information to construct new concepts or create new understandings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applies understanding and synthesis to the information gathered. Communicates new understandings effectively. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compares and integrates new understandings with prior knowledge Uses appropriate media and forms of presentation for audience/information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Synthesises information to develop new hypotheses, models or research agenda.
6. Uses information with understanding and acknowledges cultural, ethical, economic, legal, and social issues in the use of information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoids plagiarism by acknowledging sources used. Evaluates balance/fairness of the information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies the value and belief systems underlying the information. Conforms with legal and ethical requirements related to accessing, using and storing information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actively seeks out a range of perspectives, critiquing the underlying belief and value systems.
ANZIIL (2004) Standards	Based on the Information Literacy Framework, University of Tasmania, 2006		

Glossary of terms used in this Framework

Basic search strategy – involves identification of main keywords in a topic and combining the keywords with a Boolean operator

Complex search strategy – involves identification of main keywords in a topic and possible alternatives to those terms, and then combining the terms using Boolean operators and/or proximity operators to locate relevant references.

Information Literacy – the capacity of individuals to realize when they need information, be able to find, access and use that information as required.

Information Literacy Skills – the set of abilities enabling individuals to become information literate

Information Literacy Education – teaching the skills required to assist individuals to become information literate as specified in the information literacy policy