

Approved by:	La Trobe University Library Policy Advisory Committee
Updated:	19 September 2009
Review Date:	November 2010
Contact:	Information Literacy Coordinating Committee

Purpose	2
Scope	2
What is information literacy?	2
Objectives and Responsibilities of Library	2
Strategy	3
Framework	3
Supporting documentation	4
Appendices	5
1. Information Literacy Strategy	5
Undergraduates.....	5
Postgraduates.....	7
Staff.....	8
Other distinct groups.....	8
2: Information Literacy Framework	9

Purpose

At La Trobe University, the development of skills in research excellence 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 graduate capabilities, in particular capabilities related to inquiry/research.

Scope

The policy encompasses undergraduate and postgraduate students and staff of the University. It is aligned with the [La Trobe University Strategic Plan](#), the University's plan for curriculum review and renewal [Design for Learning \(White Paper\)](#), the [University Library's Strategic Plan](#) and the stated values which guide research, scholarship, teaching and organizational practices of the University.

What is information literacy?

The skills of inquiry/research are aligned with what is commonly referred to in the literature as 'information literacy'. 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

Objectives and Responsibilities of Library

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

In order to achieve this objective the University Library will contribute within the following areas:

Curriculum Design and Evaluation

- Promote the systematic and systemic integration of information literacy instruction into the University curricula structure through implementation of the Framework and Strategy
- Contribute to new and revised curriculum design particularly in cornerstone and capstone subjects
- Collaborate with university colleagues to provide course-related and course integrated inquiry/research skills instruction in a range of delivery modes

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

Student Experience

- Provide opportunities for self-directed learning, participation in generic programs and use of flexible resources to support and reinforce development of inquiry/research skills regardless of mode of study
- Coordinate information literacy related services in a student-centred way

Staff Development

- Facilitate appropriate professional development opportunities for library staff to inform their teaching, learning and research in this area, including professional mentoring
- Provide appropriate resourcing and infrastructure to support Library staff in implementation of the Framework, including appropriate ICT support
- Provide all university staff with information about services and resources of the Library

Strategy

The Strategy ([Appendix 1](#)) outlines the Library's plan for contributing to the development of information literate graduates and, in doing so, offers leadership for a university wide approach to developing graduate capability in inquiry/research.

The Strategy is based on the following key principles:

- Inquiry/research skills are developed most effectively in students when skill development is embedded in the curriculum and reflected in assessment tasks
- Library staff work in partnership with University staff involved in teaching and learning to develop programs which contribute to the achievement of student learning outcomes related to the graduate capability of inquiry/research
- The approach outlined is systematic and sustainable, within current staffing and funding levels, aiming for consistent outcomes across the University
- The Strategy builds on the Library's established reputation for customer service and responsive programs, while embracing new technologies and University initiatives
- The Library will periodically review and evaluate the strategy to reflect the changing University, educational and technological environment
- Effectiveness of the Library's information literacy programs will be evaluated in conjunction with teaching staff and will use meaningful, measureable and transparent key indicators of student learning as an integrated part of the normal curriculum assessment process. In addition, the Library will assess client satisfaction and/or usability of programs

The Strategy suggests a range of approaches for four user groups; undergraduates, postgraduates, staff and other distinct groups, both internal and external to the University.

Framework

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 (ANZIL 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 2](#)) to guide incremental progression of information literacy skill development. It outlines learning outcomes at three levels: foundation, proficient, and advanced.

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, which align most closely with capability in inquiry/research.

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.

Supporting documentation

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 2009 – 2012
<http://www.lib.latrobe.edu.au/about/strategic-plan.php>

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

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

Appendices

1. Information Literacy Strategy

This Strategy outlines a university-wide, collaborative approach to the development of skills in inquiry/research. A person with this capability

- Recognises the need for information and determines the nature and extent of the information needed
- Finds needed information effectively and efficiently
- Critically evaluates information and the information-seeking process
- Manages information collected and generated

The Strategy builds on existing strengths and introduces new approaches to provide a more systematic and sustainable program for students and staff.

Students

The strategy for students aims to identify the fundamental skills essential for successful academic research and to ensure that all students have the opportunity, early in their course, to develop these skills.

All commencing students will complete a diagnostic tool to determine their current level of competency. Students will then be directed to complete a set of online modules designed to develop specific skills, followed by assessment to gauge their level of competency.

Inquiry/research skills will be further developed throughout the undergraduate and postgraduate years in a discipline specific way, in collaboration with academic and other learning skills staff. This will be supplemented by optional training and support programs which students may access as needed.

Undergraduates

The strategy for undergraduates is designed to provide all students with access to a strong foundation on which they can build the inquiry/research capabilities that are essential for academic success. It encompasses the following approaches to enable students to develop these skills sequentially through their undergraduate degree:

- Foundation skills instruction embedded in the first year curricula structure
- Inquiry/research skills instruction integrated in the discipline-based curriculum where relevant
- Voluntary instruction to support and reinforce skills acquisition through a range of library services

To measure the ongoing relevance and impact of the undergraduate strategy, student entry-level skills will be mapped and development of inquiry/research capabilities will be assessed to facilitate future planning and program review.

Foundation level

Aim:	Action:
Establish entry-level skills of incoming first year students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a diagnostic tool for all students that both assesses student entry-level skills and makes explicit skills that are expected
Equip all first year/beginning students with foundation inquiry/research skills	<p>Foundation skills program to be integrated into appropriate cornerstone units in each Faculty</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use Information Literacy Framework to identify foundation skills • Develop online modules to deliver foundation inquiry/research skills instruction appropriate to each Faculty • Incorporate assessment of skill development as compulsory requirement in cornerstone units

Proficient level

Aim:	Action:
Build on foundation skills to develop a high level of proficiency as appropriate within each discipline	<p>Support and reinforce inquiry/research skills acquisition in middle undergraduate years through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ information literacy tasks, assessment and instruction integrated within the curriculum (designed by Faculty Librarians in collaboration with academics) ○ face-to-face learning opportunities either generic or discipline specific as relevant to student needs at each campus ○ individual support via library research help/information desks and virtual help desks ○ self-directed learning opportunities using reusable online learning objects delivered via the library webpage, LMS etc. ○ formal peer support programs
Ensure all graduates have achieved at least a proficient level of inquiry/research skills	<p>Proficient skills program to be integrated into appropriate capstone units in each Faculty</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use Information Literacy Framework to identify more advanced skills appropriate to graduates in each Faculty • Develop online modules to deliver advanced inquiry/research skills instruction appropriate to each Faculty • Incorporate assessment of skill development as compulsory requirement in capstone units • Develop a diagnostic tool for all students that both tests their skill level and can be used to certify that they have reached the expected level of inquiry/research graduate capability for their Faculty.

Postgraduates

The strategy for postgraduates acknowledges that students enter higher degree study with a diverse range of existing skills in inquiry/research but will be required to master advanced skills to complete study at this level.

The strategy offers support for independent learning via a range of online modules, as well as utilising the skills of Faculty Librarians in a customised discipline-specific way. It includes:

- Inquiry/research skills instruction integrated into a University-wide postgraduate support program, such as *Postgraduates Essentials*, with online modules to be accessed as needed
- Discipline specific inquiry/research skills instruction integrated in the curriculum where relevant
- Optional training and assistance to support and reinforce skills acquisition through a range of library services, including individual research consultation

Students will have the opportunity to assess their own inquiry/research skills using a checklist and identify areas for further development.

Foundation level

Aim:	Action:
Establish entry-level skills of incoming postgraduate students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In collaboration with academic and teaching staff, develop an online checklist for self-assessment of core skills for advanced research, to assist students in identifying areas for further development.
Provide opportunity to review and consolidate foundation skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop online modules to deliver foundation inquiry/research skills instruction, which can be accessed on a voluntary basis.

Proficient - Advanced level

Aim:	Action:
Provide all commencing postgraduate students with essential information about services and skills needed for advanced levels of research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work collaboratively with academics and the Graduate and Research Office to develop a postgraduate support program (e.g. <i>Postgraduate Essential</i>) as a platform for further support from Faculty Librarians.
Build on existing skills to develop a high level of proficiency as appropriate within each discipline.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty Librarians continue to offer tailored programs to meet the needs of discipline based groups, in collaboration with academic staff, including orientation sessions designed specifically for research students.
Provide opportunities for students to undertake voluntary activities that will support and reinforce inquiry/research skills acquisition.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to offer research consultations between individual students and Faculty Librarians • Support students on an individual or small group basis via library research help/information desks and virtual help desks • Develop a program of research skill seminars to be offered across the Library, using a range of appropriate delivery methods.

Staff

The strategy acknowledges that staff are already skilled in inquiry/research but may appreciate the opportunity to receive updates on new resources and methods of locating and managing information. The strategy also aims to capitalise on opportunities for academics and librarians to collaborate on curriculum design to support inquiry/research skill development in their students (see Undergraduates).

Aim:	Action:
Provide all university staff with essential information about services and resources of the Library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide all new staff with a 'Welcome to the Library' pack, which includes a summary of relevant services available and a link to the relevant Faculty Librarian. Early contact with the Faculty Librarian will seek to register the teaching and research interests of the staff member to assist the Library in providing responsive services and collection development • Work with University staff to provide input to the 'Introduction to University teaching' program offered by the University • Continue and enhance promotion of resources and services, including 'show and tell' sessions with Faculty Librarians
Provide regular opportunities for university staff to receive training and assistance to support their teaching and research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a program of research skill seminars to be offered across the Library, using a range of appropriate delivery methods • Continue to offer research consultations between individual staff and Faculty Librarians • Work on curriculum design with academic staff and Faculty committees to integrate and align information literacy tasks, assessment and instruction within the curriculum

Other distinct groups

Many groups exist within the University who may require additional support in building capability in inquiry/research.

There are also external groups who visit the Library wishing to understand more about research, resources and services.

The strategy to meet the needs of these groups focuses on flexibility and is supported by Faculty Librarians with specific responsibilities for these groups working in partnership with relevant staff across the University.

Aim:	Action:
Provide appropriate support for internal groups within the university community (e.g. international students etc.) to master inquiry/research skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In addition to the services offered to all students and working closely with relevant University staff, develop learning opportunities, both online and face to face, tailored to the specific needs of identified internal groups
Provide opportunities for community groups, including alumni, to access some of the resources and research assistance which a high quality university library can offer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify target audiences • Liaise with key stakeholders to identify potential need and determine a sustainable level of support from the Library • Develop learning opportunities, both online and face to face, tailored to the specific needs of identified external groups

2: Information Literacy Framework

Information Literacy Attributes ANZIIL (2004) Standards	Foundation	Proficient	Advanced
The information literate person...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Engages in closed or open inquiry with predetermined question/issue and criteria. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Engages in open inquiry, within structured guidelines. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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.

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