



The 2017 results are in! Service Quality @ the Monmouth University Library

In the spring of 2017, the Monmouth University Library invited faculty, graduate students and undergraduate students to complete a library service quality survey called LibQUAL+®. The results are now in and analysis continues.

Who participated?

Undergraduate students	Graduate students	Faculty	Total
208	61	87	356
Respondents by Top 5 Disciplines (% of total respondents)			
Nursing & Health 17%	Education 14%	Business 14%	Biology, Chemistry & Physics 8%
			Social Work 8%

What was measured?

An overall first impression indicates that there is excellent news. Measured against 2005 and 2008 study results, the Library is improving in all three dimensions tested by the survey instrument:

- **Affect of Service**, such as personal service provided at the service desks in the libraries
- **Information Control**, including collections, both electronic and print, and access
- **Library as Place**, which focused on the physical space.

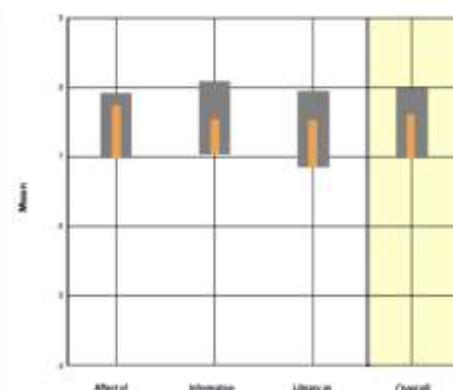
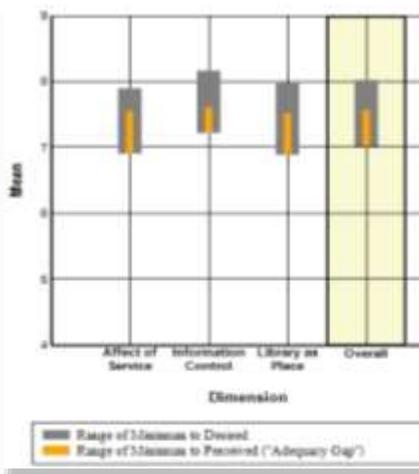
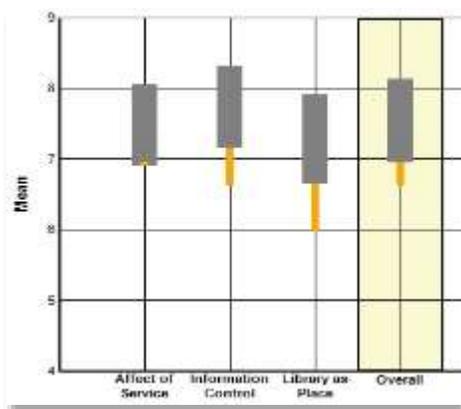
The survey instrument included 22 core questions, as well as local questions. This year we used a shorter version of the original survey. For each question, faculty and students were asked to indicate the minimum level of service acceptable, their desired level of service, and their perceived level of service. Each of these levels was given a rating of 1 – 9, with 1 being the lowest rating and 9 being the highest.

The thermometer charts below illustrate the improvements in the three measured dimensions. The gray bars represent the range of minimum to desired scores for each dimension. The interior gold bars represent the range of minimum to perceived scores for each dimension.

2005 Survey

2008 Survey

2017 Survey



In 2017, service quality continued to improve in all areas, a vast improvement from 2005 when we met minimum user needs only in Affect of Service. Overall, the Library appears to be meeting the library service and resource needs of the campus community. Our customers continue to have high expectations of library services and we have made significant improvements since 2005. Working together with faculty and students, the Library staff has been able to strengthen some of the services that were perceived as weak in 2005 and 2008, as well as further develop areas of strength. However, according to results there is still room for us to grow and to do better.

What changes have we made based on 2005 and 2008 survey results?

- Increased hours
- Added study rooms and comfortable seating
- Updated computers
- Added a Café
- First Year Seminar library instruction sessions
- Student & faculty orientation participation
- New Library website & improved remote access
- Hosted travelling exhibits
- Collaborated with faculty on research
- Introduced Library Research Awards

What is most important to our customers?

- Modern equipment that lets me easily access needed information
- Easy to use access tools that allow me to find things on my own
- Making electronic resources accessible from my home or office
- Employees who have the knowledge to answer user questions
- Making information easily accessible for independent use
- Print and/or electronic journal collections I require for my work

Customers want modern equipment to do their work. Their approach to using resources is also very independent in nature, with easy to use access tools that help them find things on their own, both in the Library and remotely. A single search box, which the Library implemented a couple of years ago to help with searching multiple databases simultaneously, received very positive feedback.

What do we do best?

The areas where the perceived levels of service provided by the Library were the highest included:

- Giving users individual attention
- A gateway for study, learning, or research
- The printed library material I need for my work
- Employees who have the knowledge to answer user questions
- Employees who are courteous

Once again, the Library was very strong in customer service, particularly in providing individual attention and answering user questions. The most significant area of improvement has been the Library as a space for study, learning and research, which in 2005 was the lowest rated service and has ascended to the second highest overall service in 2017.

Where do users desire improvements?

- Print and/or electronic journals collections I require for my work
- Dependability in handling users' service problems
- Modern equipment that lets me easily access needed information

- Making information accessible for independent use
- Making electronic resources accessible from my home or office

While the Library has added many new databases and e-journals, users still feel that more resources are needed. Improvements in handling service problems and availability of modern equipment were also lower than users desired.

Faculty

Overall, faculty had the highest expectations in all aspects of service among respondents, with 19 of the 22 questions receiving a desired mean over 8.0. The Library has maintained our strength in personal service, with faculty being particularly satisfied with the level of assistance they receive from Library staff. In general, faculty are not heavy users of the physical library since 47% of faculty come to the library less than 4 times a year. However, 77% of faculty visit the Library's website on a daily or weekly basis. Information Control, or the Library's collection of books and journals and access to the resources, was the most important area of service for faculty. Of particular concern was access to print and electronic journals. Although this is a problem area for all college and university libraries, including research institutions, the Library will continue to communicate with faculty regarding their needs for library materials to improve support for faculty's curricular needs as well as conduct of their scholarly research. For articles unavailable through the Monmouth collection, faculty were very satisfied with efficient interlibrary loan services. While most faculty felt that the Library enabled them to be efficient in their work, they also wanted to stay abreast of developments in their fields, stay aware of library resources and services, and to learn how to better access, evaluate, and use information.

Graduate Students

In general, graduate students were most satisfied with personal services provided by Library staff. Similar to faculty, the library as a place to study was not a high priority, although they did want quiet places to study or have space for group learning. This is not surprising since graduate students spend fewer hours on campus, but 81% responded that they use the Library's website on a daily or weekly basis. While remote access to services is high and independent use is common, there is also an expectation of a readiness to respond to users' questions if they need support. Of all respondents, graduate students were the least satisfied with Information Control, or the Library's collection of books and journals and access to the resources. As a result, Interlibrary Loans were important to graduate students in order to access materials not available in the Library's collection. In terms of information literacy, the Library needs to improve ways to inform graduate students of new developments in their field, distinguish between trustworthy and unreliable sources, and improve their information skills.

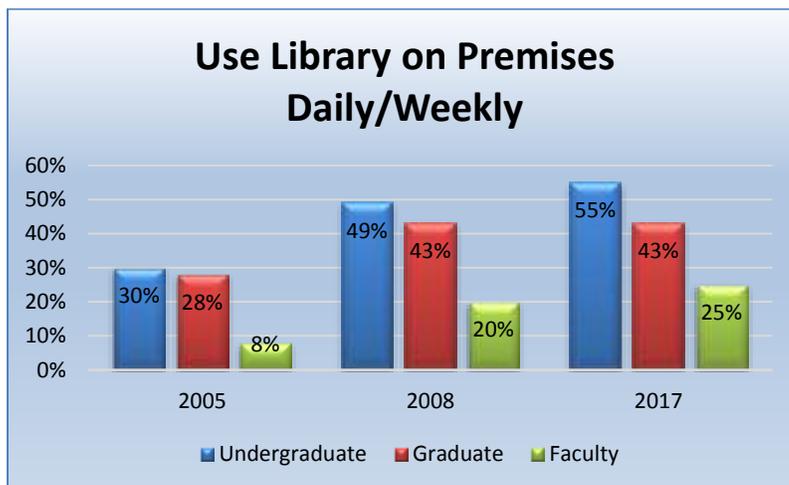
Undergraduate students

Overall, undergraduates' desired levels of service were lower than the other respondent groups and were the closest to being fully met. The Library's responses to users' questions, employee courtesy, and willingness to help, all exceeded students' expectations. Undergraduates were also satisfied that the Library enabled them to be efficient in their academic work, provided them with the information skills they need, and a single search box to access information. The physical library is important to

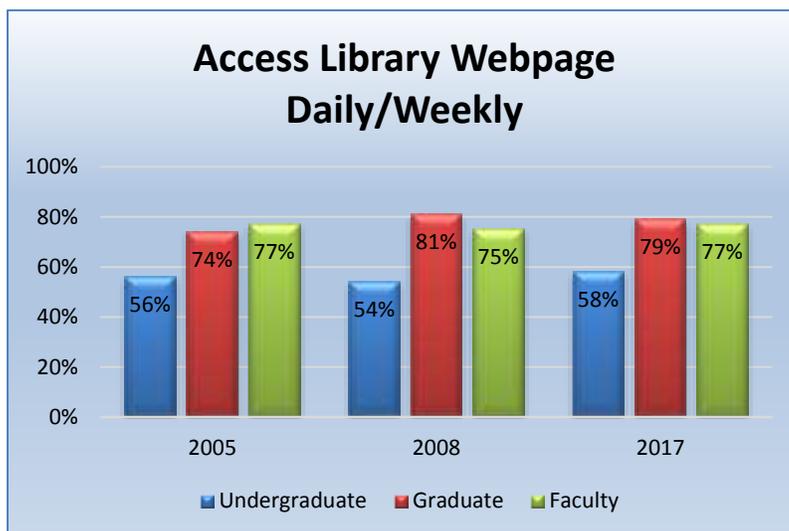
undergraduate students, with 55% using the facility on a daily or weekly basis. Respondents rated the Library high for quiet space, as well as a place for study, learning, and research. However, comments from undergraduate students indicate a desire to have the Library open for longer hours. While students were satisfied with print materials available, they desired modern equipment to access electronic resources and tools to find things on their own.

Use of Library Facility and Website

An increase in usage of the Library facility by all patron groups was noted in survey results. During the 2005 survey, the Library was undergoing a major renovation to the facility, and a number of the collections had to be moved off-site. The renovated facility and improvements in services, study rooms, and new furniture have clearly made an impact on service ratings.



Use of the Library website was slightly higher among undergraduates, and lower on a daily/weekly basis among graduate students and slightly lower by faculty compared to 2008. The use of internet gateways, such as Google, to seek information was utilized by all students much more frequently, at 87% daily or weekly.



User Comments

In addition to the 27 questions (including local questions), the LibQUAL survey included a box for comments. This is a significant tool for feedback that is specific to Monmouth University. Approximately 44% of survey respondents provided comments and we are grateful for this additional information which helps us interpret the survey scores and identify key issues.

Comments on the quality of service provided by Library staff were overwhelmingly positive, praising staff for excellent assistance in helping with research and interlibrary loans, as well as guiding patrons to improve their research results. In terms of improvements, additional hours, and more instruction for graduate students were requested.

“Library staff is OUTSTANDING!!!” Undergraduate student (Social Work)

“I am so pleased with the Library Service, especially staff. Whenever I need help they exceed expectation, usually aligning me with the information I need that is beyond what I was even considering. Thank you for your wonderful work!” Faculty (Performing & Fine Arts)

“The library is the focal point of the university.” Faculty (English)

“If the hours of operation increased, the library would become the ideal place to study.” Undergraduate (Biology, Chemistry, & Physics)

“The library should be open later than midnight throughout the year.” Undergraduate (Criminal Justice)

The Library facility received particularly positive feedback. The renovations have clearly made a difference in how patrons use the library. Furthermore, features such as the café, comfortable seating and group study rooms were hits with patrons. Parking still seems to be an issue and another problem is finding quiet areas for individual study.

“I always enjoy going to the Monmouth University Library. It’s a beautiful, quiet environment that allows me to work on assignments with little to no distractions.” Undergraduate student (Nursing & Health Studies)

“The evident accessibility of library rooms for both faculty and students has increased the overall appeal of a most congenial staff as well as the desired academic climate at Monmouth.” Faculty (English)

“More group study rooms would be beneficial” Graduate student (Social Work)

“It would be nice to have areas designated for quiet study only.” Graduate student (Nursing)

“The library is an effective, beautiful, and intimate venue to have guest speakers and exhibits in addition to academic research use.” Faculty (World Languages)

“I would suggest more Monmouth inspired wall art...” Undergraduate (Psychology)

“Parking should be better” Undergraduate student (Business)

In terms of the Library’s collection of resources, some improvements were noted since the earlier surveys. Similar to previous surveys, the majority of the suggestions were to add more current resources, both print and electronic.

“Our library is outstanding and does an excellent job in supporting my own research and that of my students. I am grateful that our library values books and electronic media, both are vital to learning. Thank you! Faculty (History & Anthropology)

“The library is an amazing resource both on campus as well as online and has helped me greatly with my studies.” Undergraduate (Business)

“The library itself is beautiful and all the materials in it are up to date and extremely helpful for studying and pursuing a high level of education.” Undergraduate (Social Work)

“The library should be understood as the core learning center at Monmouth. Although online services are valuable nothing can replace the hands-on assistance of a librarian.” Faculty (History & Anthropology)

“I love the online resources. Super useful for essay writing.” Undergraduate (Performing & Fine Arts)

Library resources including instructional sessions help support my students’ thinking and learning.” Faculty (English)

“I love the MU Library but it could use a technology upgrade...” Undergraduate (Criminal Justice)

“The social work journals are not readily available, there are so many articles that I cannot get.” Graduate (Social Work)

“Our library is very good, especially for a small college. However, in a modern age we should have electronic access to every important professional journal and publication resource and that is still a problem.” Faculty (Psychology)

“There are often topics I search for in the electronic database that I would expect to have ample information on but end up being shown information too generic or unrelated to use as a source.” Undergraduate (Business)

I would love to see more up to date electronic films, documentaries, etc. for use in online courses.” Faculty (Health, Nursing & PA)

“Need updated articles.” Doctoral (Health, Nursing, & PA)

“I find the library super helpful for me. As a transfer student, I had many questions but the librarians/libraries tools really made it fast and easy to access information.” Undergraduate (Social Work)

“I work over in the graduate center. It would be great if we could have a library “shuttle” where we can request items (books, articles, media) and they are delivered/retrieved one/day or twice/week. Also, it would be great to have a librarian to access for faculty and students one or two nights/week – maybe in the computer lab?” Faculty (Professional Counseling)

Next Steps

The Library will continue to analyze the data from the 2017 LibQUAL study in order to better appreciate the perceptions of patrons regarding current services. As we review the needs voiced by patrons we will address key issues that still need improvement and implement changes. A preliminary review of survey results has already revealed several opportunities for new or updated services:

- Creation of quiet study zones in the Library
- Improvement of tools for accessing print and electronic materials
- Upgrades to computer equipment
- Delivery of workshops on evaluating internet resources and building research skills
- Collaboration with faculty to identify key disciplinary resources
- Development of disciplinary news updates
- Establishing a Library presence and expanding services in the Graduate Center
- Exploring options for 24 hour study space on campus

We would like to thank students and faculty members who participated in the 2017 study. Your assessment of service quality will help us make user-centered improvements to our library services and resources. We will keep the Monmouth University community informed of new services and hope that you notice the changes we begin to implement over the next few months.

Our goal is to position the Library an integral part of our students’ education and transformation while attending Monmouth University.

