University of
South Wales
Prifysgol
De Cymru

Library Services

Information Literacy Framework

1. Information Literacy in context

Information literacy is defined as *"Information literacy is the ability to think critically and make balanced judgements about any information we find and use. It empowers us as citizens to develop informed views and to engage fully with society."* (CILIP, 2018).

It also forms part of a wider digital literacy skills set. JISC defines digital literacy as "the capabilities which fit someone for living, learning and working in a digital society" (2014). The JISC report *Deepening digital know-how: building digital talent* indicates the increasingly integral nature of digital literacy skills to employment by illustrating how they apply to those employed in the post-compulsory education sector (2015).
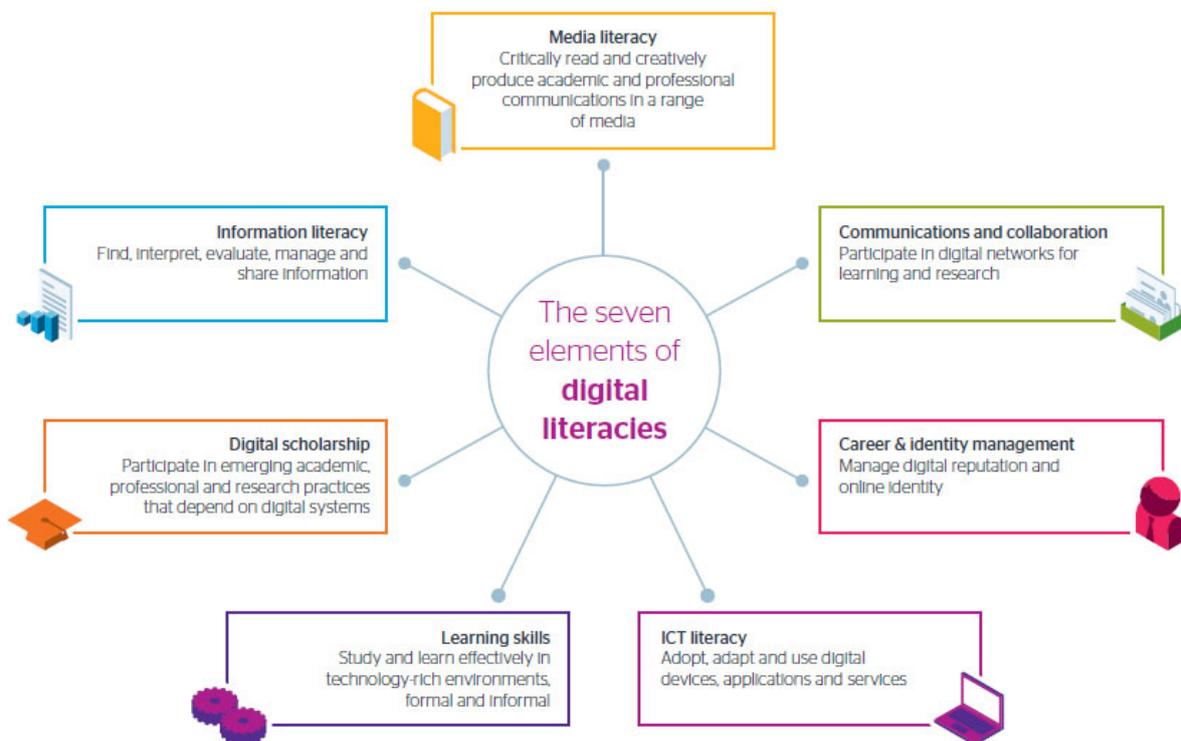
Digital and information literacies underpin the process of learning to learn and support the transition from higher education to independent learning and the workplace. They enable us to harness new technologies to keep pace with current practice in our subject matter, education and research methods.

We want all of our students to study successfully and to develop skills valued by employers. Skills include:

- Finding information online quickly
- Making judgements about the validity of information sources
- Selecting appropriate material or evidence to support decision making
- Being able to research effectively
- Keeping up-to-date with developments in your field

1.2. Benefits of delivering Information Literacy for students and for the University

- Raise academic standards for all students
- Improve student satisfaction via more efficient and successful research for assignments
- Contribute to improved degree attainment
- Contribute to improved retention levels
- Contribute to closing the attainment gap between students from different backgrounds
- Contribute to development of transferable skills valued by employers
- Prepare for entry into higher degrees and research
- Develop life skills: the academic strands of IL are part of a larger skill set e.g. managing your digital footprint, avoiding online fraud and using the internet effectively to save time and money.
- Meet Professional body's validation criteria e.g. the Solicitors Regulation Authority
- Meet QAA Honours Degree Subject Benchmarks

1.3 Key Drivers

1.3.1 Academic Blueprint

The Academic Blueprint for all courses at University of South Wales advocates a single consistent approach to course design with the objective of ensuring quality of provision, and achieving CPIs and KPIs specifically linked to the student experience and employability. The library is acknowledged as being intrinsically linked to this objective in the section 'Immersive learning in the first six weeks, Year 1 & 3', where reference is made to providing all undergraduate students with an induction to the library.

This will be achieved both by timetabled classroom-based sessions, library tours, and supporting online materials.

1.3.2 Student Experience Plan 2016-2020

The Student Experience Plan is built around the concept of the student journey. The importance of providing a good start to the student journey in aiding retention has been recognised in a project focusing on improving the experience of starting University. The library is key partner in this, and an initial library session has long been part of the introduction of the student to University study. Increasing the employability of students lies at the heart of the student experience plan and the University has identified a set of graduate attributes that it aims to develop within students during their time in the University.
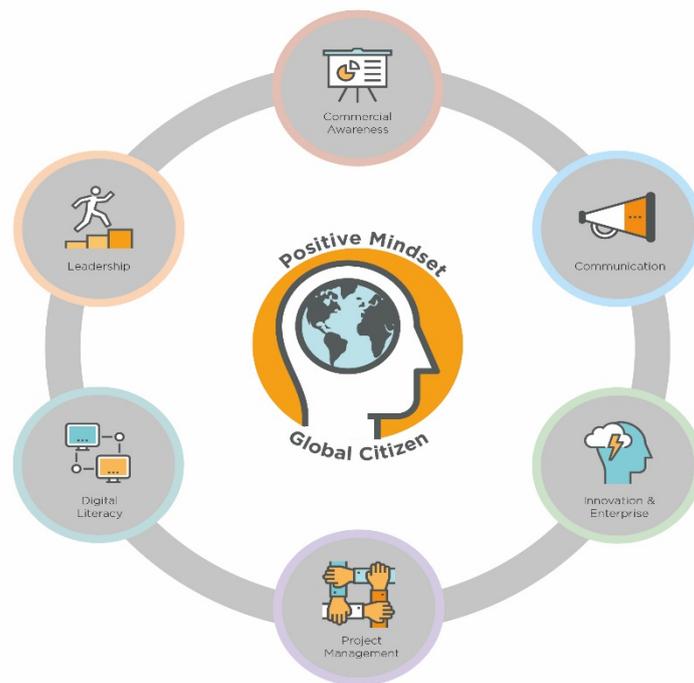
The ability to find, evaluate and manage information underpin these graduate attributes, in particular the following:

Digital literacy: Information literacy is an integral part of the larger digital literacy skill set which equips people to exploit the benefits and opportunities of living in a digital society.

Commercial awareness and *Innovation and Enterprise:* The ability to find accurate, reliable and up-to-date information about business and enterprise activities is essential for the development of commercial awareness and to identify gaps in the market where innovations can be made.

Leadership and *Project Management:* Effective leadership and project management is dependent on acquiring relevant information and being able to manage information.

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2. Our Information Literacy Offer

Our Information Literacy offer defines the type of information and digital literacy awareness practices and skills, which Information Librarians can support at USW.

We have defined a minimum standard for two distinct information literacy sessions, delivered face-to-face in the classroom, and supported by a range of online and print materials, including video tutorials and subject guides. These sessions can be tailored to meet the individual requirements of a specific group:

2.1 Library Skills: Getting Started

This session is aimed at students who are new to the University. It is envisaged that it will be delivered to students during the first term of their course.

Aim: To welcome new students, introduce them to the library facilities and resources and to how to use Findit to find information for their assignments.

Students will understand:

- How the library service operates, including where the libraries are located, what facilities and services are offered and how help can be obtained.
- The key characteristics of different types of information (e.g. book/journal/report, print /electronic, primary / secondary, freely available / subscriber only / invisible web) that are relevant to academic study in their subject area.
- The advantages and disadvantages of using different types of information sources in academic study.

Students will be able to:

- Identify suitable information sources in their subject area for academic study.
- Identify Findit as the key tool for finding information from library services.
- Find book(s) and journal article(s) from a reading list using FINDit.
- Use basic search techniques on FINDit to find relevant learning materials, eg. use filters to refine a search, identify appropriate keywords.
- Evaluate information using appropriate evaluation criteria.
- Record details of sources of information used.
- Reference information used correctly using an appropriate standard.

2.2 Library Skills: The Next Step

An in-depth session focused on preparing students for undertaking a substantial piece of individual research, such as a dissertation.

Aim: To extend students' skills in systematically searching academic information sources for up-to-date information.

Students will understand:

- Common search features work across different databases and the web.
- The issues surrounding plagiarism and take appropriate steps to avoid it.

Students will be able to:

- Use a range of techniques to clearly define the selected information topic.
- Select and use a wide range of sources appropriate to the discipline, from the Library and beyond.

- Independently carry out a subject search within a single database
- Use common search features across FINDit, individual databases, and the web, to find relevant learning materials, eg. truncations, wildcards, and filters.
- Interpret database results (e.g. bibliographic or full text), and use results functionality (e.g. sorting, saving, exporting)
- Apply appropriate quality/evaluation criteria to critically evaluate information from any source to determine authority, bias, etc, which sometimes may be subtle to detect.
- Be aware of the range of tools and techniques for managing and exporting and able to select and use as appropriate.
- Accurately and appropriately refer to the thoughts and ideas of others in your work.
- Use information found ethically and responsibly.

References

JISC (2015). *Deepening digital know-how: building digital talent: key issues in framing the digital capabilities of staff in UK HE and FE*. Available: https://digitalcapability.jiscinvolve.org/wp/files/2015/08/5.-Report.pdf . Last accessed 8 March 2019.

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