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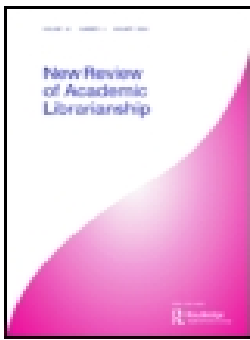
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Putting the learner at the heart of student experience; the role of the University Library in a seven-year journey of superconvergence at Northumbria University, UK

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Title

Putting the learner at the heart of student experience; the role of the University Library in a seven-year journey of superconvergence at Northumbria University, UK.

Short title for running head (max. 50 characters)

Superconvergence at Northumbria University.

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Keywords

Higher Education, UK, learning, academic libraries, convergence, student experience, organisational design, student services

Abstract

Higher Education in the UK is experiencing a level of change unprecedented in the last twenty-five years. Coupled with global drivers and disruptors, from technology to generational differences, the new higher education landscape that is emerging is presenting academic libraries with a series of new and extreme strategic challenges and opportunities. Putting students at the heart of learning, by aligning with and influencing university strategy, creating new and more integrated learning environments, and designing support with student outcomes in mind, are rapidly becoming business critical.

In this paper, we describe the experience of the directorate of Student and Library Services at Northumbria University, in which the University Library has played a pivotal role driving a broad, deep and sustainable superconvergence while transforming in its own right to deliver innovative new services and successful performance. In so doing, we discuss the evolution of the superconvergence portfolio, how structure and roles were arrived at, what phases of change and stages of convergence we passed through, and how we have adopted a new support framework to integrate distinct services, and physical and virtual spaces, whilst retaining the quality of our broad professional expertise. We provide several examples of how the new service is operating and specifically how the University Library works in this

wider context. We conclude with a reflective discussion on the outcomes and impact our approach has afforded, and what may follow.

Introduction

Northumbria University is based in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, North East England, UK. With approximately 22,500 FTE students and 2,500 FTE staff, Northumbria is large by UK standards and is known as a research-rich, business-focused, professional university with a global reputation for academic excellence. The origins of the University date to the 1870s and the creation of the Rutherford College founded by a local reformer who believed in the principle of education for all (Allen and Buswell 2005). Following the UK Government 1966 white paper that set out the policy shift to a binary rather than unitary system for higher education, the college merged with two other city colleges – the Municipal College of Commerce and the College of Art - to form Newcastle Polytechnic in 1969. Following the UK Government Further and Higher Education Act in 1992, the polytechnic was granted university status and became the University of Northumbria at Newcastle.

The University Library dates from the formation of the Polytechnic in 1969 and is currently part of the superconverged 'Student and Library Services (SLS)', responsible for student facing services at Northumbria. In addition to the University Library, SLS also comprises three other distinct professional services; Careers and Employment Services, Student Support and Wellbeing, Student Progress. These four services are supported by a single Management Support and Planning team, and share a single frontline customer service called Ask4Help.

As might be expected given the size of the institution, the University Library is one of the largest in the UK with a record of innovation and performance. In 2018, the University Library provides a comprehensive range of expertise, services, and resources to support learning, teaching and research, including the provision of 2,100 learning spaces across three campus libraries, a print monograph collection of over half a million volumes, and significant online resources.

In this paper, we present an institutional case study of how we have developed SLS as a superconverged student-facing service at the same time as transforming the University Library. In many ways, the story of the University Library at Northumbria in the Twenty-First Century is a story of superconvergence. Similarly, the story of superconvergence cannot be told without understanding the role played by the University Library in helping drive and fashion that change despite facing separate challenges that would ordinarily be difficult to

reconcile with becoming embedded in a larger service. Our premise throughout has been straightforward, namely that the decisions you make in organising and positioning an academic library are the ultimate determiner of the potential for that library to make a positive impact by maximising its contribution to the mission, vision and strategy of its institution. This is because people are the greatest asset and their empowerment is reliant on their role, team, relationships, and alignment to strategy.

We have written this paper from our individual professional viewpoints – that of the service Director who has led the vision and evolution of superconvergence at Northumbria since 2010 after a previous nine years leading the library, and that of the Head of the University Library and superconverged frontline 'Ask4Help', who arrived at the University in 2013, the start of a new five year corporate strategy and a critical decision point for the future of the University Library and wider service.

The need to do things differently – student finance and marketization
As Higher Education has become an increasingly challenging sector to operate in, universities have had to find ways of doing things differently beyond any internal desire and drive to innovate. Academic libraries are not immune to these changes. Understanding the direction of travel and how to succeed in a rapidly changing strategic and operating environment is a prerequisite to decisions on superconvergence.

In the UK, central government has responded to global and national challenges with new policy and legislation, which in turn require strategic response from universities. Since the late 1990s, consecutive government reviews and the national policy changes and legislative reform which follow, have introduced new approaches aimed at achieving sustainable funding and led to the development of new regulatory frameworks intended to assure the quality of teaching and to give students choice through improved information provision and the driving of a competitive market. For universities in England, this has meant the introduction of tuition fees and the replacement of maintenance grants with student loans. Tuition fees started at £1,000 a year in 1998/99 following the Dearing Report, moved to a variable fee up to a maximum of £3,000 per year in 2004/05, and most recently a £9,000 a year fee introduced in 2012/13. At the time of writing this paper, a new Government review of tertiary education is underway and expected to introduce further change to student finance and university funding.

Hand in hand with the introduction of fees have come changes to controls on student numbers, which became more liberal and finally removed in their entirety in 2015 as part of

reform intended to create a dynamic market and provide more consumer choice. For universities choosing to expand student numbers, one significant challenge is how to continue to scale support services within the constraints presented by budgetary pressures. For those universities choosing not to expand, or not able to compete, the challenge is maintaining quality in the face of greater competition. At Northumbria, the last significant change to student numbers was an increase between 2007 and 2010 that settled at approximately an additional 3,000 FTE. Since then, numbers have been maintained at a steady volume through a deliberate strategy to focus on continued improvement of the quality of intake.

New measures of teaching excellence

In 2016, the Department of Education introduced a new national assessment called the Teaching Excellence and Framework (TEF). The TEF was introduced to inform student choice, recognise and enhance teaching excellence, and improve matching of graduate skills with the labour market. TEF assessment is based on analysis of core and split metrics, contextual material and narrative provider submissions across criteria grouped under Teaching Quality, Learning Environment, and Student Outcomes and Learning Gain. In June 2017, participating institutions were rated as bronze, silver or gold following the judgement of an independent panel of experts. Although the core and split metrics did not include library data directly, provider submissions typically featured evidence from libraries in support of the quality of the learning environment. The Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI) 'Going for Gold' review (Beech 2017) of the first TEF outcomes described how evidence from libraries had contributed to Gold ratings through creating an 'embedded culture of student engagement' in designing learning space (ibid. p.27), precision of figures for investment in library resources (ibid. p.41), and user analytics (ibid. p.42). Alongside changes to student finance and numbers, the TEF represents another opportunity and challenge for academic libraries and superconverged services to make and demonstrate a positive impact.

Students as consumers and customers

In parallel to this regulatory change, and partly driven by value for money and a burgeoning consumer identity alongside generational difference and technology trends, student expectation has become more exacting and challenging to satisfy. This change was already becoming manifest by the late 1990s as noted in the 1997 Dearing Report:

"The growing emphasis on learning rather than teaching in higher education means that students can be expected to place increasing demands upon support staff to provide them with advice and guidance... Library staff, for instance, refer to students starting to behave

more like 'customers', and being more demanding in the services they seek, particularly if they are self-funding or mature students.” (Dearing 1997; 14.10)

Recent research by Universities UK (2017) has demonstrated that students today value a personal and collaborative educational relationship with their university, and that trust rather than transaction is the defining characteristic when a customer-relationship is expected. The 2017 annual joint Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI) and Higher Education Academy Survey (HEA) survey of student academic experience found a trend of falling student perception of value for money and clear preference to protect investment in student support services and learning facilities when asked how they would like their university to save money (Neves and Hillman 2017 p.48).

In reality, we see student identity as naturally plural. Students are simultaneously consumers, customers, learners and partners, in combination with individual identities related to employment, volunteering, sport, lifestyle and so on. This creates a more dynamic and nuanced relationship with the institution and one that academic libraries and other services need to navigate carefully in order to meet expectations in an appropriate and sustainable way.

Meeting rising expectations

This ongoing trend of heightening student expectation and demand for services at a time of continuing economic pressure and national higher education reform, presents academic libraries with two major challenges. Firstly, how to meet student expectations to an extent that can positively impact external measures of student experience and outcome which directly feed information provision to the prospective customers as well as determine league table position. Secondly, how to continue to enhance and expand delivery under budgetary pressure which requires new levels of operational efficiency. In simple terms, academic libraries alongside other services – superconverged or not - need to find ways of doing things differently to do more and better for less.

Superconvergence

Converging previously separate functions in universities to achieve synergies that improve effectiveness and efficiency has been a well-established approach in the UK since the 1980s. Typical convergence portfolios have included libraries, IT, learning resources and AV, and the history of such initiatives prior to superconvergence has been well documented by Field (2005).

Although there is still great diversity in the position of the academic library, there has been a shift in the last decade away from library-IT convergence to superconvergence.

Superconvergence is a term originally coined in the UK by academic librarians to describe a growing trend:

“...to bring together a range of support activities that are generally focussed on student support and are structurally converged. In some institutions these super-converged services are supported by a common help desk and are sometimes provided from one building.” (Heseltine, Marsh, McKnight, & Melling 2009).

In a Leadership Foundation for Higher Education Research and Development Series publication dedicated to exploring superconvergence, Bulpitt (2012) identified four chronological phases of service integration: the learning resources model (integration of wider learning resources, often audio-visual with academic libraries); information services (convergence of library and IT); the learning centre (characterised by a focus on learning rather than information or resources); and superconvergence, characterised by the breadth and variety of how different institutions achieve integrated student support.

The shift from convergence to superconvergence has been characterised by a move to a focus on students and services, rather than information management and technology. Thus as the socioeconomic drivers affecting higher education have changed, so too has the modality for convergence. In addition to Northumbria University, UK universities in which academic libraries currently form part of superconverged services include the University of Birmingham, the University of Exeter, Sheffield Hallam University, and King's College London. Other universities, including the University of Cumbria and Liverpool John Moores University, have superconverged only to move to a different arrangement. These are not exhaustive lists but indicate that the approach is common across different mission groups and types of institution.

The role of the academic library in superconvergence

Superconvergence is not a singular concept and can involve a greater or lesser extent of integration either organisationally or operationally. The role of the academic library in superconvergence can likewise vary. In a comprehensive discussion of superconvergence at King's College London, Poulson and Horrocks (2012) emphasised the notion that the academic library cannot exist in a vacuum, and has much to offer as the natural venue or host for superconvergence. We have shared this position at Northumbria and it has been crucial in how we believe we have leveraged superconvergence to best effect so far. In this context, a key question to consider is why is the library so central? If directors and heads of

service of academic libraries recognise they don't exist in a vacuum and instead should wholly align and embed with the wider institution, then why would that position be perceived as credible and authoritative from perspectives outside the library? Can or should the academic library survive and flourish within this context? It is entirely conceivable that the library could be absorbed and assimilated within the superconvergence context to the extent that it could lose all distinct identity and discrete management.

In considering our experience at Northumbria and reflecting on the five institutional case studies of superconvergence presented in Bulpitt (2012) we propose six discrete factors which have placed libraries in the position to deliver wider benefits for their institution by playing a leading role in superconvergence. A successful academic library will be known for:

- successfully navigating and managing change in response to external and internal drivers, e.g. digital innovation or space pressures on campus.
- working strategically at institutional-scale in a converged context already, e.g. information and knowledge management strategies with long-term goals.
- widespread adoption and driving of national and global-scale shared services, outsourcing, automation and digital for innovation and efficiency.
- systems thinking and a forward outlook, partly reflecting the domain expertise of library and information science.
- an established culture, values and practice for supporting and promoting excellence across all disciplines and for diverse stakeholders putting learning at the heart of the enterprise through a customer-focus with demonstrable standards, and evidence-based practice.
- successful management and development of highly sought after learning and customer service space, often 24/7 at the heart of campus, with high footfall and existing reputation as a critical attraction.

Our approach at Northumbria has been to consider how best to integrate both organisationally and operationally, i.e. roles, structures, systems, processes, places – with a focus on learning and students rather than professional domain and subject matter expertise. Ultimately, people are always a University's greatest asset and it is vital to get the right people in the right roles in the right structure with the right focus. The very nature of superconvergence questions existing professional boundaries and offers opportunities for cross-fertilisation in pursuit of shared strategic ambition.

Northumbria's library before superconvergence

The present University Library at Northumbria originates from the library of Newcastle Polytechnic established in 1969. In 1969, the library comprised twelve staff and few resources, but rapidly benefitted materially from external standards set by the national Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA) who validated polytechnic awards and required a well-resourced and visible library. By the late seventies the library had grown in stature, with a nine floor extension opening in 1977 enabling centralisation and automation, and a staff team reaching seventy-eight staff by 1978 (Harris 1979).

Key to the development of the early library was the concept of acting as a 'teaching library' and thereby providing benefit from a close association between theory and practice for students, library staff, and staff of the Polytechnic's School for Library and Information Studies. This relationship was historically important because of the role Newcastle Polytechnic and subsequently Northumbria University played in educating generations of UK librarians. In the late 1980s, the library became part of a converged service with IT, an organisational relationship which ended by 2001. This timing put Northumbria ahead of the deconvergence of library and IT which many other institutions eventually chose. Critically, this change provided the opportunity to re-establish the library as central to excellence in learning and to develop new thinking on how to best serve rising student expectations.

The decade that followed was characterised by ongoing library involvement in a series of national initiatives that developed capabilities in electronic information and delivered new alignments with quality and excellence in learning and teaching. These included the Electronic Libraries Programme (eLib), establishment of Centres of Excellence for Teaching and Learning (CETLs), and new approaches to professional accreditation for learning and teaching. This enabled library staff to reposition their professional skillset with learning and teaching rather than being ancillary or technologists.

Northumbria's superconvergence journey

The dominant and enduring characteristic of our journey of superconvergence at Northumbria has been a commitment to put the student at the heart of the University by delivering a professional service that provides personalised learning opportunities to support all students to realise their potential. For the last five years, Northumbria's vision has been clearly set out by 'Vision 2025' and delivered via a Corporate Strategy 2013-18. This vision and strategy has acted as the driver for every stage of our superconvergence journey.

Our specific outcomes in this context have always been to make a positive and measurable contribution to student retention, progression, attainment and experience. To achieve this we have aimed to deliver consistent, seamless, and intuitive access to expert information, guidance, and resources 24/7 at the point of need and as a defining feature of the University's learning environment. In common to all professional services in higher education we have worked to achieve unprecedented levels of economy, efficiency and effectiveness in realising these aims. In simple terms, we have aimed to do more and better, for less with a focus on delivering for the institutional vision and strategy.

Our commitment, outcomes, and aims have informed the principles we have chosen to adopt in our service design, and provided a consistent reference for strategic decision-making, and supported a positive response to change, challenge and opportunity, whether planned or not. However, whilst it has always been clear what we have been aiming to avoid or move away from, for example a deficit model of support, or fail and bounce in customer journeys; designing a single and overarching superconvergence blueprint has been far harder to accomplish.

Designing the superconvergence blueprint

Any superconverged service will always reflect the unique nature of its parent institution and consequently there is no off the shelf blueprint to apply. To the extent that any meaningful comparison is possible, we would also assert that we have gone as far in our journey of superconvergence integration as other equivalent services at other universities, both in terms of distance travelled and direction taken. As a result we are now navigating uncharted territory. Achieving a balance between development activity and business as usual service delivery in this context has not been easy, and we have been constantly aware of the need to take significant risks with little room for error, and not to disadvantage any student cohort. Furthermore, it is self-evident that as trust and investment by the institution in a single service increases, so too does the level of risk to the business if that service fails.

Central to our journey has been the development of a student support model that incorporates where and how to integrate people, process and place, and what quality standard to adopt. In some aspects, this approach is a continuation of the historical position adopted by the University Library in developments for excellence and quality in teaching and learning both within the institution and as part of national initiatives. Looking back, the journey has so far passed through five distinct stages of development activity;

1. 2005 - the development of a 'Learner Support Model' in Library and Learning Services

2. 2010 - the first version of superconvergence to create 'Academic Services'
3. 2011-12 - the 'Student Access to Services' project
4. 2013 - the refocus of the University Library and creation of a single frontline 'Ask4Help'
5. 2015-17 a University transformation programme, campus development and new version of superconvergence for 'Student and Library Services'

These stages move from the small-scale and local through to University-wide developments, and could be seen in the light of growing institutional strategic ambition as much any natural evolutionary process of creating new capabilities. The superconvergence of 2017 is very different from the superconvergence of 2010, most notably with regard to Academic Registry and Quality which were part of the original portfolio but didn't fit our focus on student-facing so became a standalone unit in their own right, and Student Progress, a new team added to Student and Library Services in 2017 by centralising all student-facing support from every Faculty.

Although we could anticipate how the internal and external landscape could influence Executive decision-making, and although we advocated for the particular form of superconvergence we were developing, we could not rely on accurately predicting what would come next. In this context, it was important to exercise the courage of our professional convictions and make sure we built from foundation upwards and planned with absolute alignment to the objectives, outcomes and KPI's in the University's Corporate Strategy. With the benefit of hindsight, it is evident that these five phases of superconvergence aligned with University vision and ambition, but that the evolution of the service relied on unplanned opportunities and as such could be considered a reflection of organisational readiness as well as the vision itself.

The 'Learner Support Model'

In 2004, the library began to develop a new learner support model, both to inform a student-centric and more joined up approach to planning and delivery across library teams and with a view to creating an approach which could work in any context where students had the opportunity to access multi-level support. Core and Hordon (2010) described how the model was developed by University-wide engagement and pitched as an approach that could be extended and scaled across the whole institution (see Figures 1 and 2). Crucially, the model was situated in a pedagogic context to align with teaching and learning excellence and enable student development. This was in contrast to more conventional deficit support models which still feature in customer service across all sectors, i.e. problem resolution and escalation.

Figure 1 – The Learner Support Model from Core and Hordon (2010).

Figure 2 – The Learner Support Model extending across the institution from Core and Hordon (2010).

At the time, this new learner support model provided a strategic basis for the library to centralise and join-up the multiple frontline service teams and points that were typical of the time, e.g. borrower desk, welcome desk, enquiry desk. As part of this activity a new badge for the library's combined frontline service was developed. 'Ask4Help' was created as a student-centric call to action and alternative to traditional approaches that emphasised one particular process over another or referred to organisational names.

This model and early developments to focus on students formed the seed of the future superconvergence blueprint that was to come.

Superconvergence 2010

In summer 2010, the University created a single Academic Services Directorate, which after a series of changes in the year that followed came to comprise Academic Registry and Quality, Careers and Employment, University Library, and Student Support and Wellbeing. This first move to superconvergence resulted from a number of factors, including proposals by the University Librarian to better align support for academic activity with corporate strategy. This new and developing portfolio presented an opportunity to apply the Learner Support Model and the underlying philosophy to put learning at the heart of support, by exploring where and how to integrate operationally with student services beyond the library.

Student Access to Services

In April 2011, the recently formed Academic Services directorate embarked on a 'Student Access to Services' (SAS) project to explore options and make recommendations for how the new superconvergence could further improve student access to services. The project was designed to act as the mechanism to transition to a new approach based on the learner support model but yet to be articulated in practical detail.

This stage of superconvergence at Northumbria was shared to the sector as the anonymous, for reasons of timing relating to staff consultation, case study 'D' in Bulpitt (2012).

The SAS project was internal in scope and essentially operational with a change management focus on active participation from staff across the new directorate, many of whom had not worked together before either as individuals and teams, or as disciplinary experts from distinct professional areas.

A variety of methods were used to engage and involve staff, encourage innovation, review evidence, identify good practice, and most importantly to empower staff to take ownership of agreeing and following through outcomes. These methods included participatory workshops, cross team shadowing, visits to other institutions, world cafes and feedback. Student engagement and customer consultation were also key, and Sabbaticals from the Students' Union played active roles as members of the project steering group and various sub-groups. In retrospect, much of the value of this project was the storming and norming of individuals and teams as they found a new position and formed new relationships in the superconverged context. Over the duration of the project, sub-groups worked in detail on six discrete strands:

1. Service desk software
2. Triage and Service Models
3. Staff Development and Training
4. Piloting colocation and single frontline
5. Roving Service
6. Branding

Collectively, these strands reflected the operational areas seen as most challenging or offering most opportunity by each department in Academic Services. The fourth strand was instrumental in preparing the way for later developments. Refurbishment work at the library at Northumbria's smaller Coach Lane Campus, presented an opportunity to close a suboptimal part-time student services centre and to pilot collocating Careers and Employment Services and Student Support and Wellbeing teams for that campus with the University Library and Ask4Help. During the pilot period, appointment rates with both services were maintained or increased, with no discernable change in non-attendance. Perhaps unsurprisingly, there was an increase of student footfall to Coach Lane Library (10%) over the course of the pilot. Given the nature of the newly collocated support activity, and the fact that the Ask4Help service point and many of the one to one spaces for individual face to face support were located at or near the entrance to the library, it was felt this increase in footfall would not exert any negative impact on the quality of library learning space.

Reimagining the University Library

At the start of 2013, the University Library had an established reputation for delivering excellent services and innovation. This included staffed 24/7 opening, achieving from 2010 the UK Government's gold standard for customer service 'Customer Service Excellence (CSE)', participation in the United Kingdom Research Reserve (UKRR), and early adoption of federated then unified search technology (WebFeat then Summon). However, superconvergence and a new Corporate Strategy had brought a new set of challenges and opportunities and prompted an examination by service leadership of how the University Library could continue to be successful in its own right, define and communicate a new unique selling point, and also play a crucial role in wider delivery.

Moving beyond the subject librarian role

By 2012, the University Library was actively assessing an alternative to the established subject liaison librarian role, which at Northumbria was performed by Library Liaison Advisors (LLAs). A growing perception in library management was that the role was not the right one if the University Library was going to make a significant contribution to the aims and objectives of the new Corporate Strategy, including an ambition to become increasingly research-rich. The University's eight Schools had recently become four Faculties and this offered an opportunity to explore how to move our librarians to new roles.

In 2013, we identified five factors comprising both push and pull forces, which to us provided the compelling case to move beyond subject liaison roles:

- Demand for professional library expertise increasingly encompassed a wider and more diverse portfolio, particularly with regard to research, e.g. Open Access, Research Data Management, Digital Scholarship, and research by Mary Auckland for RLUK in 2012 (RLUK 2012) had found a significant skills gap in these emerging areas of research support. This trend meant that workload distribution and expertise were difficult to exercise and make sustainable at the necessary depth. A role that historically may have had a workload model split five ways, had become more demanding by requiring a twenty way split. Consequently, relationships with Faculty and the quality of provision that followed became inconsistent and more reflective of the strengths and interests of individual role holders than the need of the institution.
- The evolution and transformation of academic disciplines driven by knowledge discovery, greater specialisation, and interdisciplinarity, challenged the established approach where librarians developed specific subject knowledge as a core approach

in their practice. Exceptions to this such as foreign language were not relevant to Northumbria.

- Library-related requirements for Professional, Statutory, and Regulatory Body (PSRB) accreditation of programmes did not specify the need for an individual subject or liaison librarian, including for programmes historically cited as a justification to continue this approach, e.g. Law.
- External measures of performance, in particular the National Student Survey (NSS), were highlighting disparity between student experience across subjects, and thus an outstanding need to deliver more consistently.
- Professional expertise needed to drive and lead innovation of library services through project activity was tied up in work that did not appear to be delivering value aligned to planning, despite significant resource allocated to cross-library committees and meetings.

This thinking and consequent intention to do things differently was not unique to the University Library at Northumbria and has been the subject of debate since the 1990s. Gaston's review (2009) of the changing role of the subject librarian observed that an original focus on subject-based collection development had evolved into wider subject-based user support including teaching and delivery of skills, reflecting a shift in the drivers and recommendations of national library reviews. Gaston further identified responsibility for liaison as a defining element of the subject librarian and one that explains the survival of the role.

A more recent study of eleven UK academic libraries by Hoodless and Pinfield (2016) found an increasing level of adoption of 'functional' teams and concluded that many libraries had adopted a balance of subject and functional approach. In comparison to these findings we observe that all the common drivers were present at Northumbria, but to which we would add the context of superconvergence which effectively linked decision making regarding the future of our subject librarians with institutional strategic drivers.

Design principles for a functional approach

Our approach in determining what is functional contrasts to what has been described for other academic libraries in the literature, e.g. at the University Manchester (Bains 2013) and in professional exchanges.

This is for two reasons. Firstly, if you move to what is described in library terms as a functional structure for subject and liaison roles then it would follow – by virtue of the inter connectedness of the library whether through planning or workflows – that all roles at every level would need to change. This is the holistic approach we adopted. However, many libraries were describing a move to functional without making changes wider than subject librarians and their teams.

Secondly, and in the scope of our ambition, ‘functional versus subject’ as conventionally portrayed seemed a false dichotomy in the context of organisational design. This is because what is defined as ‘functional’ can be informed by plural concepts, and according to a textbook description, e.g. Daft, Murphy, & Willmott 2014, p.106-130, functional groupings are based on discipline or work process in contrast to horizontal groupings based on end-to-end and cross-functional arrangements, or divisional which are based on product lines. As such, it is the underpinning concept for grouping roles and teams that matters most rather than the notion of ‘functional’. Arguably, the situation is complicated further where new approaches to roles and structures create what are essentially new disciplines through multi-skilling, thus making meaningful comparison between academic libraries difficult. In this context, and by way of example, ‘acquisitions’ cannot be considered equivalent to ‘research data management’ because the former describes what is essentially a local ‘function’, i.e. process, and the latter describes what the institution might understand as ‘horizontal’, i.e. end to end.

On this basis, we set out to identify the set of customer-centric complementary groupings – whether functional, horizontal or divisional – that we needed to fulfil our role as an academic library in the superconvergence context and with alignment to institutional strategy.

Once we had established an overall approach to defining new groupings we also factored in additional design principles, including;

- end to end processes starting with and working back from the customer, whether student, Faculty or other stakeholders.
- multiskilling library staff across traditional boundaries and challenging sacred cows.
- empowering staff to take ownership of their business area and exercise their expertise and leadership in alignment with institutional strategy via ‘golden threads’ from role descriptions, personal appraisal, team plans, service catalogues and dashboards.
- rightsizing teams to reflect business need, and building in the flexibility to continue to do so on a regular basis rather than through periodic change.

- unified relationship management (see below)
- Digital First (see below)

Moving from liaison to learning partnerships and relationship management

To replace the subject-based approach to liaison we developed an integrated approach based on creating new learning partnerships with stakeholders and a framework we called 'unified relationship management'. This followed the principle that every role in the library could engage with Faculty without the need for relationships brokered or managed by subject librarians. Coordination and join-up would instead be provided by a Programme Support Team that would focus on participation in University committees, supporting professional, statutory, and regulatory bodies (PSRB) accreditation, action planning and framework alignment (e.g. with the Quality Code). This team later developed into the 'Learning Partnerships' team which continued to develop the new approach but with an emphasis on expert partnership for collaboration rather than support or account management.

Becoming 'Digital First'

In March 2013, we had been set an objective by the University Executive to produce a digital strategy for the University Library. Our response, which we continue to apply five years on following Executive endorsement in 2014, is called 'Digital First'. Simply put, this strategy places 'digital' first in our thinking when we plan and develop our services. As such, it is a different approach from 'digital by design' or 'digital by default' because there is no implicit preference or exclusive focus on digital. Instead our emphasis has been on maximizing the potential of technology optimally within a customer-centric context based on student insight and customer journey mapping. To structure and coordinate our Digital First strategy we created a framework (Figure 3) that outlines the key domains, their relationships, connectivity, literacy, and quality, and acts as a lens for innovation across all our activity, rather than any preoccupation with content such as ebooks. Early examples of how we applied Digital First were presented at the annual Charleston Conference in 2014 (Woolley 2014).

Figure 3 – Digital First framework 2013

Organising with a strategic focus

Based on the thinking and approach outlined above, our LLA role then transformed to become more focused on several specialist areas, each of which defined a new team-led

service in a flatter structure; collection development and management; skills development; scholarly publications; copyright; content delivery; customer support; reading lists; research skills and programme support with greater workload allocated to innovation and enhancements through projects, team leadership and management and shared responsibilities for induction and training. By taking this approach we also aimed to empower and enable what we had been inspired by in Lashinsky's (2012, p.67-68) account of the secrets of behind the success of Apple where DRIs – 'Directly Responsible Individuals' in place of committees arising out of divided responsibilities. It was not accidental that an early outcome of the 2013 refocus was significant release of staff time by removing nine out of ten meetings from individual and team diaries.

This set of groupings in 2013 was monitored and reviewed with an understanding that it was unlikely we would get it right first time. In 2015, and after two years of operation, we undertook a realignment of our new organisational design and streamlined from five top-level teams to two divisions; Learning and Research Services and Collection and Digital Services (see Figure 4). This realignment provided new senior leadership in these key areas, while further empowering librarians to act as leaders for strategically aligned portfolios. A good example of how these new areas of focus were and continue to be expressed to stakeholders is the University Library online (see Figure 5).

Figure 4 – University Library structure from 2015 onwards. Bibliometrics and Research Data Librarian roles were additions in 2018.

Figure 5 – Screenshot of the University Library online in May 2018.

An illustrative example of how our approach to the 'functional model' has delivered impact is for scholarly reading and collection development. In the UK, it is common for every module of an academic programme to include a significant volume and diversity of directed reading. This is not exclusive of the independent and self-directed scholarly reading students are expected to undertake, but it means that the University Library has to find a way of discovering what Faculty direct students to read beyond short lists of textbooks.

In a typical academic library delivery of resources to support directed reading has historically required several different roles in multiple teams to work together, for example subject specialists, acquisitions, subscriptions, digitisation and online services. If in a reimagining your starting point is the value proposition of ensuring students can discover and access all their

directed reading in a way that is convenient and that Faculty can discover the best resources to support their curricula and straightforwardly work with the library to create and update lists, then the optimal organization would be horizontal and comprise the end to end process from Faculty to student. This was our starting point and as a result we created a single Reading List team where each Assistant is multi-skilled and empowered to engage with Faculty, to advocate and provide training, review lists, digitise extracts, order print and ebooks, and deliver data-driven insights and analytics to inform planning and to demonstrate impact. The outcome of this approach has been more comprehensive and higher quality coverage of module reading lists than previously possible, including the provision and management of over 100,000 references, ability to track format and type of resource, more targeted provision and assurance of return on university investment, improved discovery and access for students, leading to positive impact of more reading and more learning – higher levels of satisfaction and a reduction in negative feedback about resources for directed reading.

In reimagining the University Library this way, one big question remained? Could the University Library give up its frontline services to enable the creation of the superconverged frontline recommended by the SAS project and required to make the support model work?

Frontline integration for student experience

The timing of the University Library re-structure in 2013 and our central commitment to achieving a complete transformation of all library roles and teams provided a unique and timely opportunity to take forward selected recommendations from the SAS project. Specifically, we saw the creation of a single frontline service to deliver all 'Level 1' support as a priority both in terms of improving student experience and enabling full operationalisation of the Learner Support Model.

From the outset, this opportunity presented the University Library with the dilemma of two major, and to all purposes irrevocable, decisions. Namely, could a large academic library operate successfully in its own right without a dedicated frontline? If so, was the University Library prepared to contribute a significant proportion of staff to create a separate frontline service?

In many ways, the context at Northumbria had prepared the way for this decision to be more straightforward than it could otherwise have been. As business objectives, the refocus of the University Library, and the creation of a new frontline service aligned totally to the University's Corporate Strategy to maximise student experience and strengthen operational

efficiency. The University Library's history of putting learners at the heart of experience in both professional practice and through developing the Learner Support Model provided a level of confidence and insight that confirmed this decision was the right thing to do. The leadership and line management of the frontline service would also remain, future change notwithstanding, with the Head of Library Services, which provided notional reassurance and a guarantee of business continuity. If this situation changed in the next University strategy cycle, our expectation was that our ongoing innovation through Digital First and the changing expectations and behaviours of students and Faculty would reduce historical dependencies on face to face service points for the majority of library delivery. Where face to face library support added value it would be available as part of the new support model as for other services.

Approximately 25% of the University Library's total staffing FTE were reallocated to create a new Ask4Help team to provide a single frontline for students. At this point in time, no other contribution of staff FTE was made by any other service. This was a level of resource calculated to sustain a face-to-face and virtual operation across two campuses, including 24/7 opening during Semester (over two hundred and fifty days each year) at City Campus Library. The total staff resource was also periodised throughout the year, using part-year contracts and agency staffing, to reflect evidence-based changes in demand related to the academic calendar.

We designed the structure of Ask4Help to be as flat as possible to enable clear reporting and responsive decision making in what we anticipated would be an increasingly demanding and dynamic customer service environment. The team comprised three roles; Service Manager; Coordinator and Assistant. In contrast to many frontline operations in student-facing services, including academic libraries, the Ask4Help team had a sole focus from the outset on managing student contact. No additional administrative or 'back-office' tasks were included in the service portfolio which more closely resembled the level of customer focused operations found outside higher education. The ongoing recruitment strategy for Ask4Help was to attract and select talent from any customer service background. This approach quickly provided benefits as the team composition diversified to include experience from sectors such as local government, tourism, and finance.

A major challenge in moving from local service frontlines to a single unified frontline was establishing what 'Level 1' support actually comprised for every service in SLS. This in effect became the first real phase of operationalising the Learner Support Model and in so doing required a re-articulation of that model as part of a new service blueprint in a way that hadn't

been possible or in scope of the SAS project. The resulting 'Academic Services Support Model' made more explicit the 'who, why, what, where and when'. As part of this process and in line with our annual strategic planning, we added a 'Level 0' to encompass delivery through self-service.

Alongside defining Level 1 in this new support model we applied the following design principles to Ask4Help:

- Delivering a service for students rather than for students and Faculty. In contrast, to traditional library approaches the new frontline was designed for students. Although contact from any stakeholder had to be properly received and handled there was no requirements for Faculty to use the service. For the University Library this was possible due to the new approach to relationship management explained above.
- Providing students with a high proportion of support at first contact and proactively developing services to shift support to Level 1 and / or Level 0.
- Where support cannot be delivered at Level 1, refer right first time and with clear hand-over to expert support at Level 2 and 3.
- A quality of service to match student expectation and one that does not need them to develop any special understanding of who does what in the University. A minimum of queuing with choice in time and place of contact.
- As part of the student support model, be scalable and extensible, and open to fronting additional services.
- Getting the basics right and progressing from strong foundations.

We also applied the principles that informed our reimagining of the University Library, including multi-skilling and Digital First.

Shifting transactional activity to self-service

An early test for the support model and Ask4Help was to support shifting transactional activity for student letters to self-service. A self-service project at Northumbria had recently introduced enhanced access to standardised status letters such as confirmation of enrolment, Council Tax Certificate, bank, and benefits letters. In the context of our newly realised support model this allowed us to shift transactional activity to 'Level 0' self-service, and use 'Level 1' and Ask4Help to provide support for any exceptions. For a team with origins in the University Library this was familiar and comfortable ground, given historical success shifting transactional library service activity such as circulation to self-service.

Ask4Help supported self-service letters in three ways; by providing guidance to students on how they could access and use the self-service (i.e. Level 1 providing a signpost and walkthrough to Level 0); by providing a pick-up and authorisation point for bank letters (i.e. Level 1 resolution); and by referring standard letter exceptions to the Student Support and Wellbeing team (i.e. Level 1 referral to Level 2). Following a two-week implementation start to finish timescale for Ask4Help, the service was launched on 12th September 2013 with an email to all students notifying them of the service enhancement. By the end of term (16th December), 6,947 letters had been generated by the new service with over 92% of these via student self-service where available. Of 535 bank letters manually generated as exceptions, Ask4Help had issued over 92% (496) at Level 1 with the assurance of Customer Service Excellence, 24/7, and at a location that all students visited – the University Library.

Evaluating Ask4Help

Since 2013, we have adopted a plural approach to evaluating Ask4Help. The quality of the service has been tested and validated through achievement in its own right of the Customer Service Excellence (CSE) standard, and additional assessment activity such as mystery shopping through a reciprocal relationship with the academic library of a neighbouring university. Ultimately, student assessment is considered most important, and our annual library survey of students includes several questions about Ask4Help. In the most recent 2017 survey, 95% of student respondents (n=594) found Ask4Help friendly and welcoming, 93% found Ask4Help was helpful, and 84% found Ask4Help knowledgeable and efficient. The comparatively lower satisfaction with the latter measure was also present in the 2016 survey, which returned a similar spread of results. Our interpretation of this variance is that as the service areas Ask4Help represents has widened the rate of knowledge acquisition of the staff has become a factor in student satisfaction. Understanding student and other stakeholder perception of Ask4Help is important in determining the success of our model of superconvergence and this is discussed alongside other challenges later in this paper.

By 'giving up' its frontline customer service the University Library took a significant risk but in so doing has been able to make a powerful contribution to wider student experience and access to services. In this context, it is arguable that the most revealing evaluation of Ask4Help is student satisfaction with the library overall. In the UK, the National Student Survey (NSS) which all final year students have the opportunity to complete includes a specific question on satisfaction of the library. At Northumbria, the University Library's performance in the NSS has been consistently higher since the creation of Ask4Help. It is of course not possible to claim that this is solely because of Ask4Help as the quality and

availability of learning space, collections, and expert support are key factors. However, we can say that the University Library does not appear to have been disadvantaged so far.

Superconvergence and University transformation

In 2014, Northumbria commenced a multi-year transformation programme to review how students interacted with the University across the whole lifecycle, with a focus on the many administrative processes that were key to student experience. The programme consisted of several packages each following a phased approach through discovery, requirements gathering, business process redesign, mobilisation and implementation. The role of technology featured heavily in the programme, and an early expectation was that a Customer Relationship Management system (CRM) would enable the University to interact with students in a more joined-up way. The prevailing approach throughout was to centralise and simplify in order to put students at the heart of the University.

The University engaged external consultants to collaborate closely with Northumbria staff. With the exception of the University Library given transformation in 2013 and 2015, many of the business processes managed by the other departments of SLS were in scope of the project. Our support model and the Ask4Help service were heavily scrutinised and we provided full access to our operational manual, knowledgebase, timetables, and dashboards.

The transformation programme engaged hundreds of staff and students in workshops to identify what students wanted and what processes needed to change. A very clear picture of student requirements emerged which corresponded closely with what SLS had understood and had been working to since 2010. Students wanted a personalised and consistent service with 24/7 access to support, with queries answered at the first point of contact and the option to self-serve basic administrative tasks quickly, and the option for face to face support the right level of support and professional expertise at the appropriate time for their needs.

In advocacy of our approach to superconvergence we submitted a stimulus paper to the consultants to present the theory and practice of our student support model and demonstrate how it aligned strategically with the change programme. Our approach was validated and the stage set for the next phase in our journey.

Figure 6 – Student and Library Services 2017 to present

The model becomes a framework with new physical and digital one stop shops

One stop shops have been an aspiration in achieving improvements in student experience and in theory can be enabled by superconvergence. Although 'one' is suggestive of 'single', in reality many universities with one stop shops still provide multiple frontlines staffed by different teams with different opening hours and different standards. In scaling our support model to become a framework and in creating 'Ask4Help' our strategic ambition was to create true student-centric one stop shops in the form of both physical and digital channels to our services. Foremost in our awareness was the need to take a knowledge first, platform second approach.

A significant factor in the development of superconvergence at Northumbria was the lack of a physical home for collocated services from the outset in 2010. The first pilot activity to test and demonstrate a proof of concept of collocation took place as part of the SAS project in 2012 (see above) but the next significant collocation did not occur until summer 2015 with the collocation of the Careers Zone into City Campus Library as part of an early delivery phase of another University project called 'Student Central'.

This also provided an opportunity to scale shared use of one to one rooms, which we designed to accommodate a range of support activity but also function as flexible learning space for student use outside advisor hours. As part of the same development the international office 'Northumbria Global' was relocated to the ground floor of City Campus Library, although with a dedicated entrance and reception.

Student Central started in 2013 as a cross-university project to explore the potential for a new physical gateway to the campus as part of the estates strategy and developing campus plan, and opportunities like one stop shops. It had the widest possible scope and considered enterprise and international alongside what was then Academic Services. In 2015, the Student Central project then realigned to focus on the priorities identified in University's transformation programme.

By the time our superconverged service collocated staff and service space we were over a decade into the development of the blueprint, and seven years into superconverged portfolio. The benefit of this relatively long gestation was that by the time an opportunity to develop new space presented itself we knew exactly what was needed by applying the principle of 'form follows function'. Firstly, the physical channel had to be co-located wherever possible adjacent to a physical library, to take advantage of the factors outlined above. Secondly, we decided early on – during a workshop in April 2013 – that we should

plan to create a single service point rather than 'shopping mall', which a unified frontline service team could deliver. The success of Ask4Help since 2013 and through the most recent transformation programme allowed us to do exactly that.

In simplifying the customer journey for students, and reducing fail, wait and bounce as originally intended, Student Central offered significant operational efficiency as fifteen service points and twenty team offices in nine buildings across three campuses became three 'Student Centrals'.

In the same way we developed Student Central as a physical channel we also developed a digital channel to the same principles. The University's transformation project included an objective to implement a Customer Relationship Management system (CRM) and to refresh the student portal as the online one stop shop for self-service and hub to access other digital services. Our participation in both allowed us to advocate a knowledge management approach where properly created content and a taxonomy could ensure a student view rather than organisational, and provide a scaffolding to route student contact to the right level of support and opportunity. A well-designed CRM was critical to enable the student-centric focus of our support framework, in contrast to the deficit model of problem-solution enabled by more traditional service desk software.

Figure 7 – The Northumbria Student Support Model 2017

Comparing approaches to integration

The case studies presented in Bulpitt 2012, allow a comparison, although admittedly of snapshots of different stages of development, between our approach at Northumbria with that adopted at Cumbria, Exeter, King's College London, and Liverpool John Moores.

A characteristic of our model at Northumbria is service integration through a single frontline team Ask4Help combined with discrete professional services, namely as it stands in 2018: the Careers and Employment Service; Library Services; Student Progress; and Student Support and Wellbeing. A single back-office team, Management Support and Planning, support all four professional services. This is similar to the approach at King's College London described by Hall (2012) but markedly different to the blended approach Weaver (2012) describes for Cumbria. Although single frontlines and one stop shops are common, the variation in scope and approach is significant. At Liverpool John Moores University the frontline team was drawn dynamically from all teams and staff had joint roles (Melling 2012),

in contrast to the dedicated focus and resource of the Ask4Help team at Northumbria. What activity occurs at various levels of superconvergence support model or blueprint also differs. Hall's (2012) description of generalist tier 1 and advanced generalist tier 2 at King's College London is equivalent to what we have incorporated in our Level 1 at Northumbria. On the same basis, tier 3 support at King's appears equivalent to Level 2 and 3 at Northumbria.

Whilst it seems reasonable to speculate if, as for academic libraries, there may be an optimal structure and model for superconvergence, given variation in portfolio and local context, most specifically institutional strategy, it is perhaps unsurprising how approaches differ.

Challenges

The University Library, and wider Student and Library Services at Northumbria have faced many challenges through this superconvergence journey. Ultimately how these are perceived is subjective and dependent on roles and responsibilities. The three areas of challenge we share below are from a service management and leadership perspective.

Establishing shared identity, culture and values

Our choice to retain distinct professional teams in our superconverged structure has provided many benefits, including focus for delivering expert support at Level 2 and 3, opportunity to target resource and investment, and visibility to stakeholders of impact and alignment with institutional strategic objectives. However, for this approach to be sustainable and to continue to put the student at the heart of what we do, it is necessary to develop a high level of shared understanding and purpose across professional identities and boundaries. In our experience, this takes sustained effort and a positive attitude to mutual learning. This is particularly the case given the consecutive change we have introduced and that we anticipate will need to continue to do so in the future. In terms of group development, and following Tuckman's (1965) model of forming, storming, norming and performing phases, we observe that cross-SLS groups at every level, including senior leadership, have often had to adjourn at a frequency that limits reaching or spending time at the performing stage.

Haines, Methven, & Yeoh (2005) describe one of the lessons learnt in two decades achieving library-IT convergence at King's College London as 'the need to help staff recognize different professional cultures and to find ways to identify common values' and in this context advocate the importance of accepting evidence-based and reflective practice as

common professional values. An ongoing challenge resulting from consecutive change in addition to the superconvergence context is group development.

At Northumbria, our adoption of Customer Service Excellence (CSE) as the externally validated standard for all SLS has provided a common framework within which to achieve this. Other activities which help establish common ground include involving staff in developing a single service plan as part of University planning, supporting opportunities for exchange outside of day to day delivery, and institutional frameworks such as staff development and attributes.

Stakeholder perceptions

Achieving successful advocacy and influence with stakeholders is critical for any academic library, and aligning to institutional strategy offers no exception. A common perception we have encountered is that new buildings or technology are the change and deliverable that directly improves student experience. When faced with this view we have explained that although space and systems are critical enablers, it is our professional staff, their expertise, which makes the difference. Without their 'content' the platforms and channels formed by buildings and technology would be empty. In some aspects this challenge in perception could be construed as semantic, but it is especially interesting when compared to the student view as captured in recent sector-wide surveys in the UK. 45% of student respondents in the 2017 HEPI Student Academic Experience Survey expressed a preference for their university to save money on new buildings in comparison to 6% (the lowest) expressing a preference to save money on learning facilities like libraries (Neves and Hillman 2017 p.48). The UK's new regulatory body for higher education in England, the Office for Students, commissioned student unions to conduct research into the student perspective of value for money. In response to the question 'to what extent do you agree that your student fees should be used to fund the following', 85% of respondents agreed library resources, and 58% of respondents agreed 'Capital investment (new buildings and facilities)' (Office for Students 2018 p.14).

In contrast to this perception of where value is derived, is an equally challenging perception of where failure happens. In developing Ask4Help as the student facing frontline which by necessity is 'downstream' of institutional systems and processes we have amplified aspects of the student experience which are sub-optimal. When issues surface, the instinctive reaction of many stakeholders has been that these are 'Ask4Help issues'. Although this is conceptually similar to what many library customer service operations experience within the

boundaries of the library, the scale and risk brought with superconvergence introduce a very different level of challenge.

Staff retention and development

Although our 2013 transition from subject librarian roles to new roles with more focused responsibilities was participatory and did not involve any reduction in FTE, some challenges around staff retention and development have followed. After the first few years of operating in new roles, some staff who had previously worked as subject librarians chose to move to other institutions to continue their previous career path. Although the majority of staff in our new librarian roles report they are professionally satisfied with their portfolio of responsibilities, the increased focus has reduced the breadth of experience that subject librarian roles could offer to proactive post holder.

Conclusion

After seven years of superconvergence, our reflection is that we have maintained momentum and adopted a continuous improvement approach that has allowed us to realise new benefits every year. While our focus and principles have remained constant throughout, our journey is one of scaling-outwards from the library, firstly across the superconverged directorate, and then to the wider university.

For the University Library, superconvergence has both demanded and given space for a radical reimagining, through which the act of aligning with corporate strategy to integrate with the university as part of the Northumbria Student Support Model and Framework has paradoxically helped us to become more visible and more successful. Through the period of superconvergence so far, the University Library's outcome and impacts have included:

- high-level performance, e.g. a record level of student satisfaction including 92% of respondents agreeing 'The Library resources and services are good enough for my needs' in the 2016 NSS and joint first place in Times Higher student experience survey 2016.
- retained Customer Service Excellence (CSE)
- accelerated innovation and the creation of new student and Faculty centric services, especially with regard to research support, including Open Access and Bibliometrics.
- a new strategic focus that has led directly to successfully making business cases for investment, e.g. a new digital platform and search solution (Ex Libris Alma and Primo), refurbishment and extension of 1,500 learning and research spaces through

three phases since 2014. Most recently, this has included the creation of a new 300 capacity reading room, a dedicated PGT space and a Research Commons in 2017.

- greater agility and responsiveness e.g. developing and delivering a new operating model for Northumbria's new London Campus and Amsterdam Campus.
- more outward facing partnerships, collaboration, and funding e.g. JISC Open Access Pathfinder, JISC ARMA ORCID pilot.

Looking back, the University Library at Northumbria could be characterised as one that has consistently put the learner at the heart, and through driving superconvergence has been able to apply the same professional principle and value to wider student experience.

Through our chosen approach, and importantly our alignment with institutional strategy, we believe we have maximised the potential of superconvergence for the institution whilst not compromising the value of professional expertise. Like other forms of organisation, superconvergence will no doubt wax and wane in popularity and we are under no illusion that success determines longevity. Our approach throughout has been wholly focused on what works as the best fit for Northumbria. Nevertheless, we hope that some of our experience is informative for academic libraries in higher education globally.

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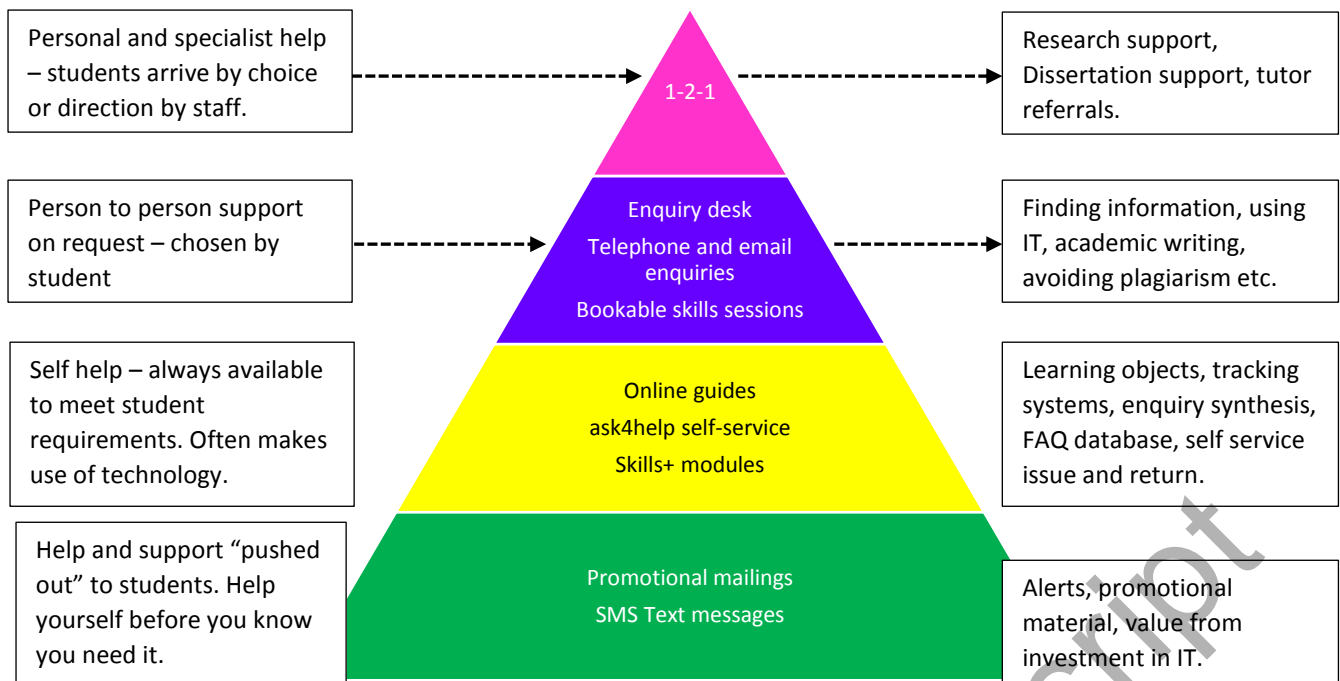
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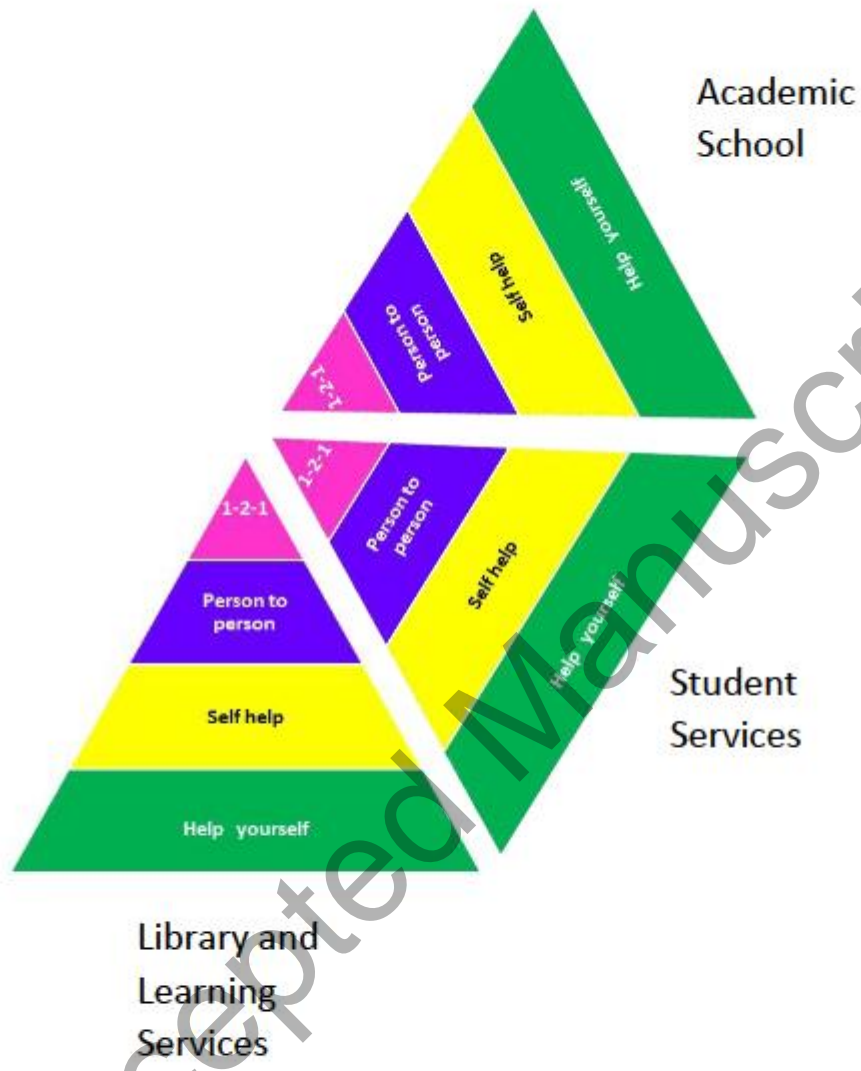
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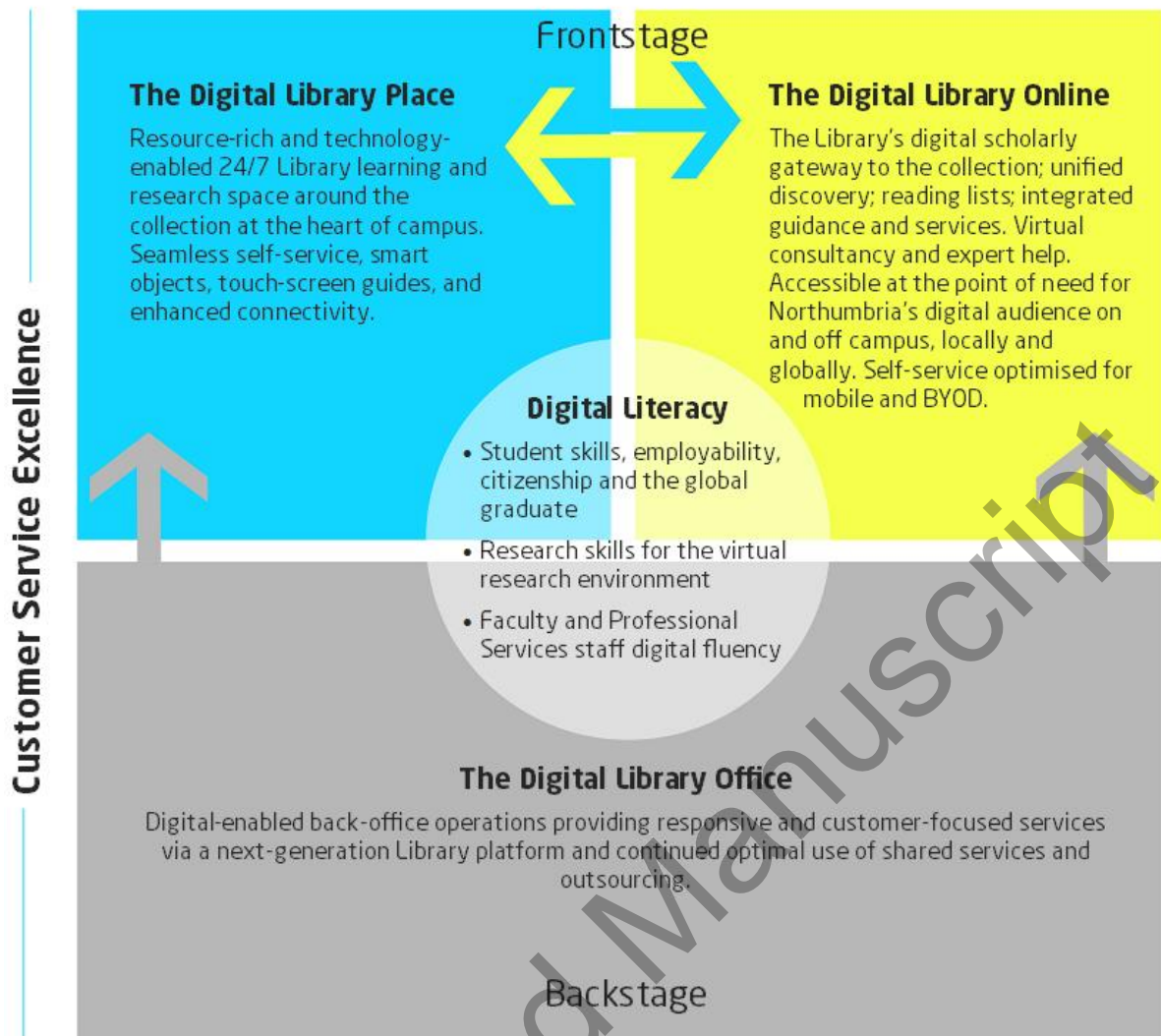


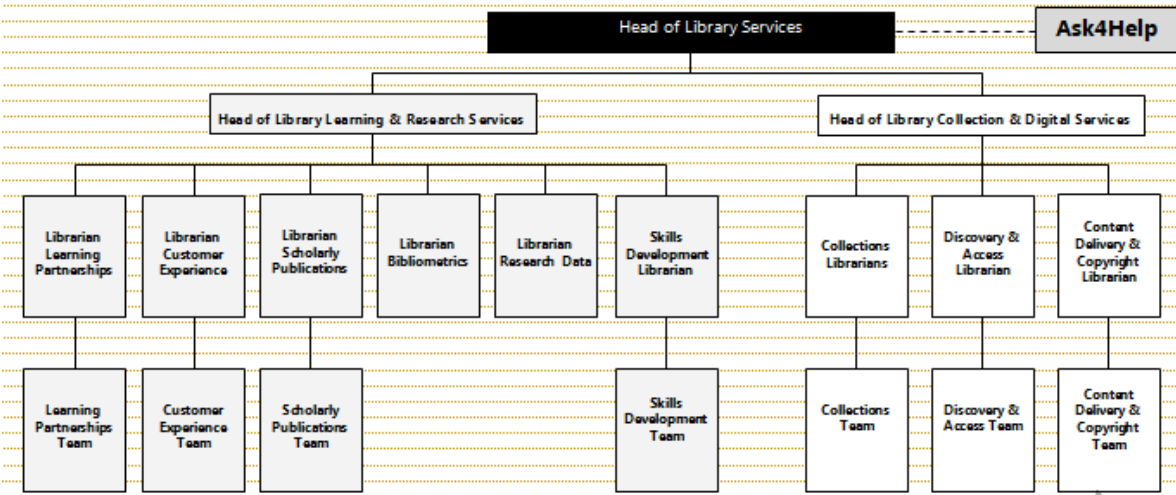
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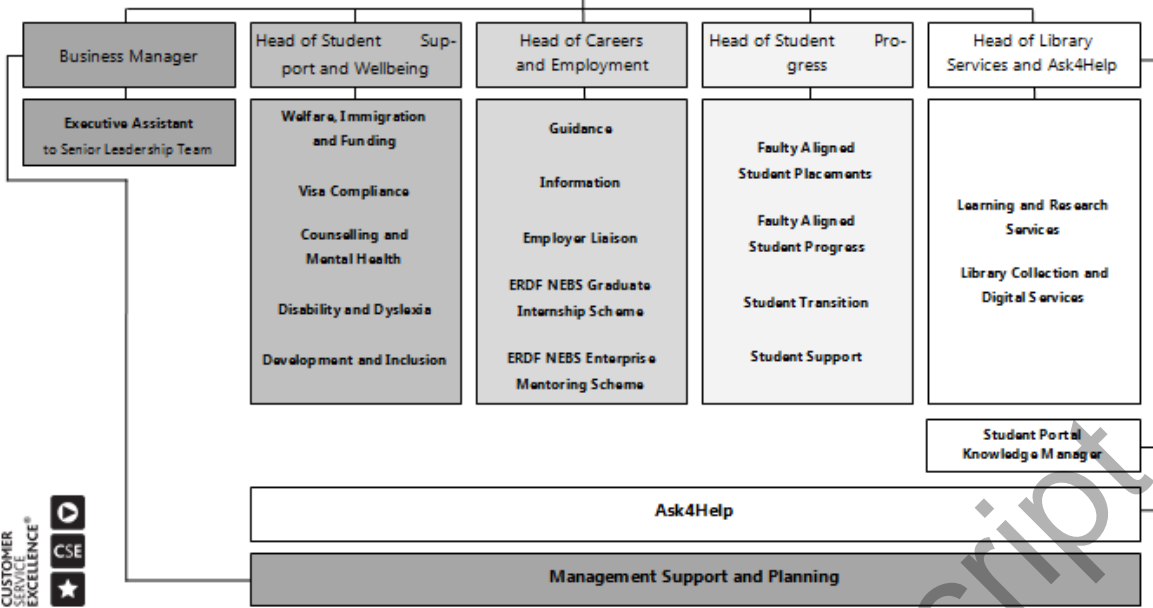
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Director of Student and Library Services and University Librarian



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Northumbria University Student Support Model

WHAT?		WHO?							WHERE?					
		Student and Library Services			Adjacent Services				Online	F2F	Email	Phone		
3	Expert advice and guidance from professional practitioners	University Library	Student Support and Wellbeing	Careers and Employment Service	Student Progress	Finance	Campus Services	Academic Registry	International	Customer Relationship Management System (CRM)				
2	Expert support from professional teams and services	+	+	+						+	Student Central Advice and Support Zone			
1	First point of contact for all enrolled student enquiry resolution or referral	Ask4Help							+	Student Central Ask4Help Point	+	Ask4Help@northumbria.ac.uk	+	0191 227 4646
0	Self-help information and guidance via the Student Portal and other online resources	Student Portal												
		Service specific resources e.g. University Library online												



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