DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

**GUIDELINES FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF LIBRARY SUPPORT
FOR PROPOSED NEW COURSES AND PROGRAMS**

> "Academic programing is the number one factor affecting students' choice of university. Dalhousie's mission and vision and the associated strategic priorities (numbers 1.4, 1.5 and 2.4) speak to the need to foster and support innovation in program development and excellence in teaching and pedagogy, to foster undergraduate research, and to enhance the effectiveness and student focus of our program offerings." (University Secretariat, https://www.dal.ca/dept/university_secretariat/program-proposals.html)

General Comments

- *The University has a structured approach to the introduction of new programs and new courses that is outlined on the University Secretariat's Program Proposal website (https://www.dal.ca/dept/university_secretariat/program-proposals.html)*

- *According to Senate protocol, course and program assessments are completed as a delegated responsibility from the University Librarian. (In the case of Law-only course or program assessments, reports are submitted to the Law Librarian and from there to Faculty Council and ultimately to the Dean of Law.) The University Librarian is notified of new program proposals or significant modifications to programs by the Senate secretary and requested to write assessment reports. These reports will be submitted by the librarian asked by the UL to write the report. The University Librarian, as well as the Associate University Librarian Resources & Discovery, need to be cc'd on the reports. In addition, the UL attends SAPRC (Senate Academic Programs and Research Committee) and Senate to answer any questions about course/program assessment reports.*

- *These Course/Program Assessment Guidelines and the accompanying Template have been drafted by SRMG (The Scholarly Resources Management Group), a committee of Library Council. The Guidelines and Template will be annually reviewed by SRMG. Any revisions will be brought to Library Council for approval.*

- *In some situations, a short summary of the Libraries' ability to support a course may be appropriate. For example, a co-op program that does not rely on library resources may require a short memo rather than a multi-page assessment document.*

- *These Guidelines and the Template refer to course and program assessments only, which are not the same as library reports written for Senate Reviews at Dalhousie.*

Purpose:

Dalhousie University Libraries' collections and services are established and maintained to support the teaching, research, and community service objectives of the University.

Library collection assessments are undertaken by Dalhousie University Libraries staff to:

1. Describe current and proposed directions in an academic program, both at the instructional and research levels.

2. Describe and evaluate current collection resources and gaps. The following factors are considered:

   - ownership of resources
   - access to resources
   - need for new media
   - user population needs and numbers
   - program delivery method (e.g., on campus or distance; with external institutional partners, clinic or practicum requirements, etc.)
   - capacity to support the current or proposed academic program

3. If required, develop a budget that will address immediate collection needs and provide ongoing collections support for the academic program.

Timelines and Procedures:

The course or program proposals including syllabi, assignments, and reading lists, should be sent to the University Librarian by the requesting faculty member. The University Librarian will provide the materials to the subject liaison.

When the subject liaison receives a request for an assessment of a proposed new graduate/undergraduate course, graduate cross-listing of undergraduate course, or proposed new program, they should inform their Library Head of the work anticipated. Course assessments should be completed and delivered to the requesting faculty within three weeks unless outside factors require alternate arrangements. Any anticipated delay in providing a course assessment needs to be discussed with the requesting faculty member and the appropriate Library Head.

Program assessments or multiple course assessments require a longer lead time but should be completed within six weeks. Any anticipated delay in providing a program or multiple course assessments needs to be discussed with the requesting faculty member and the appropriate Library Head.

The completed assessment should be sent to:

- University Librarian
- Head of Library supporting the course or program
- Associate University Librarian, Resources
- Resources Management Librarian
- fgs.curriculum@dal.ca (graduate courses and programs only)
- person(s) who requested the assessment

Methods:

A collection assessment is consultative. The subject liaison should acknowledge the faculty member's request and ensure that a complete course syllabus and reading list, plus expected course numbers, are available and that the timeline for completing the assessment is understood before beginning the assessment.

The scope of the assessment will typically shape the assessment methods used and the amount of time and effort required to prepare a report.

Single Courses

While different subjects may require different methods of assessment, the following steps are typically used to assess the Libraries' ability to support new courses. If the library already collects materials related to the course or program, or if the course has been previously offered, fewer of these assessment steps may be required.

1. Consult faculty members on receipt of the request if:
   - Course information provided is insufficient or unclear
   - Guidance on the utility or appropriateness of a particular resource is needed

2. Check course reading lists and syllabi against local holdings. Note the absence of a reading list if none is provided at the time of assessment. If a reading list is not provided, but it seems likely that the course would include readings, contact the faculty member to request the reading list. Note availability of electronic textbooks and number of available copies or seats.

3. Examine the current print and electronic collection. The examination can reveal size, scope, depth, currency, condition, and significance of collection. Keep in mind that print items may be circulating. The subject liaison may consult faculty on their perceptions of the strengths or weaknesses of the current collection. In 2017 and 2018, the Collections Strategy Librarian has access to Greenglass, a collection analysis tool, which may be helpful in assessing the strength of Dalhousie holdings.

4. Identify strength of collection and possible items to add to the collection by searching headings, keywords, and authors in:

   - Novanet. Depending on the uniqueness of the proposed course, comparator library catalogues may be consulted.
   - Journal bibliographic databases (e.g., Compendex, MLA, PubMed)
   - Monograph databases (e.g., Doody's Review Service)
   - Specialist publishers
   - Pricing information resources (e.g., EBSCONet, YBP, Coutts)
   - Multimedia sources
   - Data sources
   - Journal Citation Reports

5. Identify supplemental holdings. While the most important collection support will be provided by Dalhousie Libraries, the subject liaison may also determine if other local holdings will supplement the course.

Complete Programs

Program assessments are typically more extensive and can require a greater depth of analysis to complete.

While different subjects may require different methods of assessment, these steps are typically used to assess the libraries' ability to support new programs:

1. Consult faculty members on receipt of the request if:
   - Program information provided is insufficient or unclear
   - Guidance on the utility or appropriateness of a particular resource is needed

2. Check course reading lists and syllabi against local holdings. Note the absence of a reading list if none is provided at the time of assessment. If a reading list is not provided, but it seems likely that the course would include readings, contact the faculty member to request the reading list.

3. Examine the current print and electronic collection. The examination can reveal size, scope, depth, currency, condition, and significance of collection. Keep in mind that print items may be circulating. The subject liaison may consult faculty on the status of the current collection.

4. Identify strength of collection and possible items to add to the collection by searching headings, keywords, and authors in:
   - Novanet
   - Comparator library catalogues
   - Journal bibliographic databases (e.g., Compendex, MLA, PubMed)
   - Monograph databases (e.g., Doody's Review Service, etc.)
   - Specialist publishers
   - Pricing information resources (e.g., EBSCOnet, YBP, Coutts)
   - Multimedia sources
   - Data sources
   - Journal Citation Reports
   - Database vendor sites (eg. ProQuest, EBSCO). Some new programs may benefit from a subscription to a particular bibliographic database to which Dal Libraries may not yet subscribe.

6. If possible, identify standard subject lists and compare local holdings to available standards. For graduate program proposals, consider faculty members' research interests. For accredited programs, consider accreditation requirements.

7. Identify supplemental holdings. While the most important collection support will be provided by Dalhousie Libraries, the subject liaison may also determine if other local holdings will supplement the program.

ASSESSMENT REPORT

Examples of completed assessment reports are located here: O:\Libraries - Resources & Discovery\Resources\Assessments - Collections

Format:

The following recommendations are intended to make it easier for both the author and audience of the course/program assessment:

1. Use the current library assessment template for the first page.
2. For extensive reports, consider an executive summary and a Table of Contents
3. Include page numbers for reports of more than one page.
4. Submit the completed assessment in PDF format.

Content:

While course assessments will be shorter than program assessments, both should include most of the following elements:

Element	Course	Program
Summary of library's ability to support the proposal	✔	✔
Summary of any financial needs to close gaps in the collection	✔	✔
Description of evaluation methods	✔	✔
Sources consulted	✔	✔
Bibliographic searching results	✔	✔
Comparison to comparators' collections		✔
Major resources available at Dalhousie	✔	✔
Resources available in other local collections	✔	✔
Significant collection needs, including approximate prices. Itemized list should include - Print resources (books and journals) - Electronic resources (including additional seats for currently licensed materials) - Multimedia resources	✔	✔
On-going collection maintenance needs		✔
Needs of remote or distance learners	✔	✔
Significant non-collection needs (e.g. additional staff, impact on document delivery)		✔