

LibQUAL 2016

UBC Vancouver survey results

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Executive Summary

In January and February 2016 UBC Library ran the LibQUAL survey to measure faculty and student perceptions of library services. On the Vancouver campus we collected 881 valid responses, 39% of which included written comments. A UBCV working group of eight library staff members reviewed both the numerical results and the comments, identifying prominent themes.

Respondents rated the quality of UBC Vancouver library services 7.3 on a scale of 1 to 9, exactly the same as in 2010 and 2013 survey years.

Survey results do not prescribe specific actions, but they help focus the Library's attention on areas where perceived performance is not aligned with user expectations, and where user expectations are especially high or low. Here are some of the prominent findings from the 2016 survey:

- Users tend to identify the Library with its collections. Among LibQUAL 2016 respondents' highest priorities is a journal collection that meets their work and study needs (see also [Appendix B](#)). Expectations for collections differ significantly across disciplines and respondent groups: when it comes to print materials, researchers from the Humanities and Social Sciences are the least satisfied with current collections.
- Library collections are valuable when they are accessible, and LibQUAL results reinforce this message. Respondent expectations are highest for remote access to collections, and to the online tools that make UBC Library collections available for independent use. Satisfaction with the library website is low, especially among faculty members.
- Students are the respondent group most engaged with the Library's physical spaces. In general UBC Library performs well when it comes to Library space, though respondents note crowding in popular areas. There is demand for establishing and monitoring quiet study spaces, especially among graduate students.
- Customer service is where the Library shines. Perceived service meets user expectations on all questions, and students and faculty recognize and appreciate the work of library employees. Respondents indicate that employees have the knowledge to answer their questions. Dissatisfaction and negative experiences are less common and tend to refer to a single incident or flash point. Examples include times when systems are down, stress levels are high, or books are missing.

About this report

The interpretive work represented in this report is the collective effort of the UBCV LibQUAL Analysis Working Group, tasked with summarizing respondents' written comments and presenting them alongside overall survey results:

- | | | |
|-------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| • Jeremy Buhler (chair) | • Julie Mitchell | • Wendy Traas |
| • Laurie Henderson | • Kajsa Moore | • Meghan Waitt |
| • Schuyler Lindberg | • Lea Starr | |

We hope the reader will treat this report as a starting point: that it will raise questions and curiosity, leading to discussion with colleagues, further exploration of the results, and meaningful consultation with library users.

Introduction

LibQUAL is a standardised survey instrument developed by the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) that measures user perceptions of library services. Libraries implement LibQUAL periodically to better understand user priorities and to monitor library performance relative to student and faculty expectations.

UBC Library ran LibQUAL in 2007, 2010, 2013, and 2016. While survey questions are broad and results do not prescribe specific actions, the survey helps libraries understand their longitudinal performance in four areas:

- Library collections
- Access to collections
- Library spaces
- Customer service

Most LibQUAL questions have a 3-part structure. Respondents are presented with an aspect of library service such as “Making electronic resources accessible from my home or office,” then asked to provide minimum, desired, and perceived scores on a scale of 1-9.

When it comes to...	My Minimum Service Level Is									My Desired Service Level Is									Perceived Service Performance Is									
	Low				High					Low				High					Low				High					
1) Employees who instill confidence in users	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	<input type="checkbox"/>
																												N/A
2) Making electronic resources accessible from my home or office	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	<input type="checkbox"/>
																												N/A

The survey instructions provide these definitions:

- *Minimum*: the number that represents the *minimum* level of service that you would find acceptable
- *Desired*: the number that represents the level of service that *you personally want*
- *Perceived*: the number that represents the level of service that you *believe* our library currently provides

If you are unfamiliar with this question structure or with the graphs used to represent it, please consult Appendix A. Reading and understanding graphs of LibQUAL results.

To reduce the burden on individual respondents UBC uses a short version of LibQUAL called LibQUAL Lite. Each respondent answers demographic questions, four core questions about library services, and a random sample from the remaining questions. No single person answers every survey item, but collectively the library hears from all user groups on each question.

As in past years, UBC Library ran LibQUAL separately at the Okanagan and Vancouver locations. At both locations the survey opened Monday, January 18 and ran for 3 weeks, closing Friday February 5. This report is limited to results of the Vancouver survey.

Overview of UBC Vancouver results

Response rates

UBC Vancouver's response rate has decreased slightly each survey year since 2010. The overall response rate in 2016 was 14%, compared to 15% in 2013 and 17% in 2010. As shown in **Figure 1**, the response rate was highest for undergraduate students (17%) and lowest for faculty members (8%).

Figure 1. LibQUAL 2016 sample size and response rate, UBCV

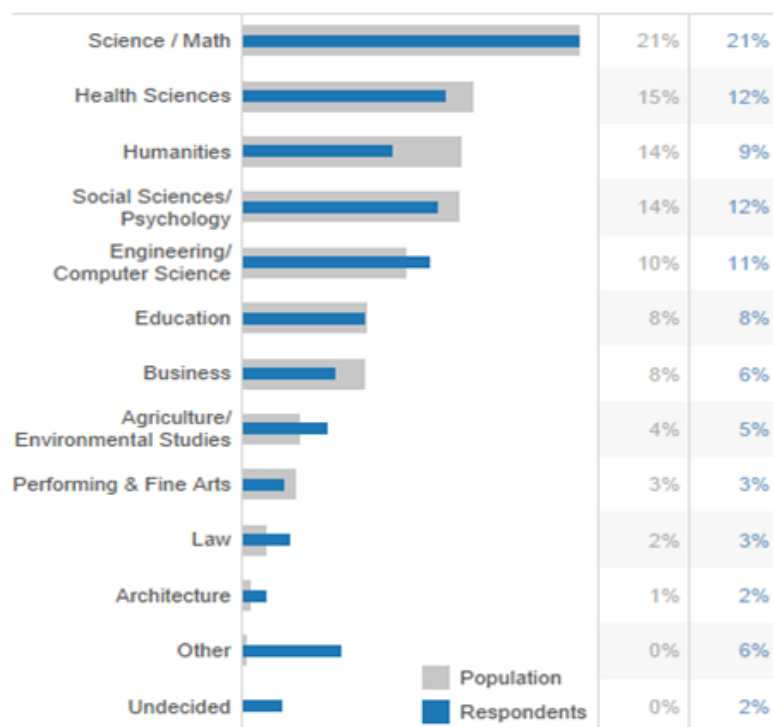
Population	Sample size (randomly selected)	Successful delivery*	# of responses	Response rate
Undergraduates	2700	2698	466	17%
Graduate students	1800	1790	272	15%
Faculty	1800	1790	143	8%
Total	6300	6278	881	14%

*Excludes email delivery failures; does not mean recipients actually opened email

Demographic representation

For the reliability of survey results, proportional representation of the campus community is more important than response rate. As shown in **Figure 2**, the percentage of survey responses from each discipline (blue) roughly follows the distribution of total campus population (gray), indicating that respondents are balanced.

Figure 2. Total UBCV population and number of LibQUAL respondents: percentages by academic discipline

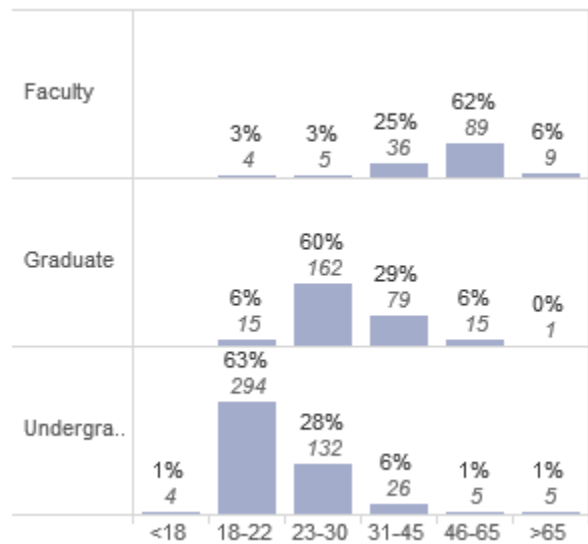


The % of total respondents from each discipline is shown in blue. The % of the campus population for each discipline appears in grey.

In general the number of responses from each discipline corresponds to the overall population. In 2016, *Humanities* and *Business* respondents are somewhat under-represented, while *Forestry/LFS* and *Applied Science* are slightly over-represented.

LibQUAL respondents represent a wide range of ages (see **Figure 3**). *Desired* service level scores tell us that expectations about collection quality and accessibility tend to increase with experience and age. This report does not explore differences across age groups, but responses to any survey questions can be subdivided by age upon demand (contact Jeremy Buhler).

Figure 3. Respondent distribution by age: percentage and number of respondents

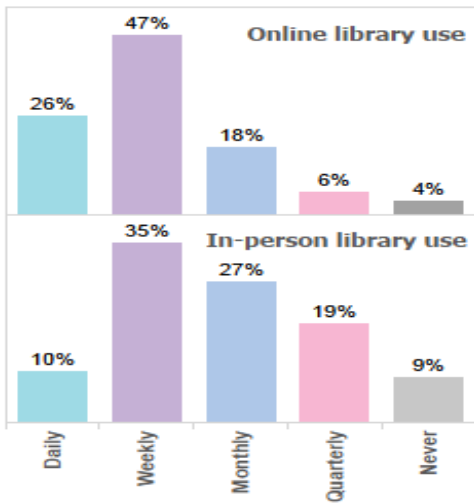


Frequency of library use

Respondents indicated how often they use library services, both online and in person. **Figure 4** shows the percentage of respondents who use library services daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, or never.

On the whole LibQUAL respondents are active library users: 82% say they use library services at least weekly.

Figure 4. Frequency of library use: percentage of respondents who use online and in-person library services



Overall quality of library service, by branch and academic discipline

Every survey respondent is asked to “rate the overall quality of the service provided by the library” on a scale of 1 to 9. In 2016, respondents rated UBC Vancouver libraries 7.3, the same as in 2013 and 2010. The tables below show ratings by branch used most often (*Figure 5a*) and by academic discipline (*Figure 5b*) for the 2013 and 2016 survey years. The number of respondents (N) is shown in parentheses, and the column on the far right shows change since 2013.

Figure 5a. Overall library rating *by branch used most often*.

Rating scale of 1-9; N in parentheses.

	2013	2016	change
Education Library	7.6 (53)	7.7 (46)	0.0
Other*	7.1 (29)	7.5 (38)	0.4
Law Library	7.4 (26)	7.5 (33)	0.1
Woodward Library	7.4 (207)	7.4 (153)	0.0
David Lam Library	7.5 (21)	7.4 (37)	-0.1
IKBLC	7.2 (243)	7.3 (263)	0.1
BMB	7.8 (24)	7.2 (34)	-0.6
Xwi7xwa Library	6.7 (3)	7.2 (5)	0.5
Koerner Library	7.2 (271)	7.2 (258)	0.0
Asian Library	8.0 (4)	6.5 (8)	-1.5
(blank)	8.0 (4)	6.3 (6)	-1.7
Total, all branches	7.3 (917)	7.3 (881)	0.0

*Many of those who selected “other” indicate they use online services

Caution: The number of respondents (shown in parentheses) is small for some branches and disciplines and might not be a meaningful representation of the population.

Results are likely more representative for branches and disciplines with a larger number of respondents, and for UBCV Library overall.

Figure 5b. Overall library rating *by academic discipline*.

Rating scale of 1-9; N in parentheses.

	2013	2016	change
Law	7.5 (18)	7.8 (26)	0.3
Education	7.5 (73)	7.7 (67)	0.2
Health Sciences	7.6 (152)	7.5 (110)	-0.1
Forestry/Land and Food Systems	7.3 (29)	7.4 (46)	0.1
Performing & Fine Arts	7.5 (17)	7.4 (23)	0.0
Undecided	6.8 (12)	7.3 (22)	0.6
Sciences	7.1 (216)	7.3 (182)	0.2
Other	7.4 (41)	7.2 (54)	-0.3
Social Sciences	7.3 (99)	7.2 (106)	-0.1
Business	7.2 (41)	7.2 (50)	0.0
Applied Sciences	7.4 (93)	7.1 (101)	-0.3
Architecture	6.7 (11)	7.1 (14)	0.3
Humanities	7.0 (115)	7.0 (80)	0.0
Total, all disciplines	7.3 (917)	7.3 (881)	0.0

Further exploration of LibQUAL results

In many cases survey results can be subdivided further by library branch, academic discipline, respondent group, respondent age, or any combination of the above. Contact Jeremy Buhler to view results from a particular subset of respondents or from other survey years.

Several online reports are available for those who wish to explore survey results and comments on their own:

- **Longitudinal results.** 2007, 2010, 2013, and 2016 survey results by user group (freely available online): http://bit.ly/LibQUAL_longitudinal
- **Results by topic, user group, discipline, and branch.** Graphs of 2016 results similar to those in this report, with filters to limit by branch used most often and academic discipline (CWL login): http://bit.ly/LibQUAL2016_results
- **Respondent comments.** Comments from the 2016 LibQUAL survey with filters to limit by respondent group, library used most often, topic, and keyword (CWL login): http://bit.ly/LibQUAL2016_comments
- **Distribution of respondents.** Number of respondents by branch and academic discipline, showing which branches are used by respondents from each discipline (CWL login): http://bit.ly/LibQUAL2016_by_branch_and_discipline

Library collections

Users tend to identify the Library with its collections. Among LibQUAL 2016 respondents' highest priorities is a journal collection that meets their work and study needs. Expectations for collections differ significantly across disciplines and respondent groups, especially when it comes to print materials.

Figure 6 shows average responses to the three survey questions that ask about the availability and quality of UBC Library collections, both print and online.

- Across all user groups Library performance is near minimum expectations when it comes to “print and/or electronic journal collections.”
- Average expectations are lower when it comes to “printed library materials.” The Library is within the acceptable range overall, but perceptions vary considerably across disciplines and respondent groups.

In the questions about collections, expectations tend to be higher – and perceptions of library performance lower – among graduate and faculty respondents. These groups usually have more demanding research needs than undergraduates.

Figure 7 shows another perspective on survey questions about collections. 26% of respondents believe UBC Library is below minimum expectations when it comes to “print and/or electronic journal collections I require for my work.” This percentage is even higher among graduate students and faculty members (31%).

While 83% of respondents feel the Library's “printed library materials” meet or exceed minimum service levels, perception varies significantly across academic disciplines, and some respondents' comments highlight areas of concern (pp10-11). Respondents in the Humanities and Social Sciences are among the least satisfied in this area (see also [Print library materials](#), p. 21)

Figure 6. Collections questions: average perceived service relative to expectation, by user group

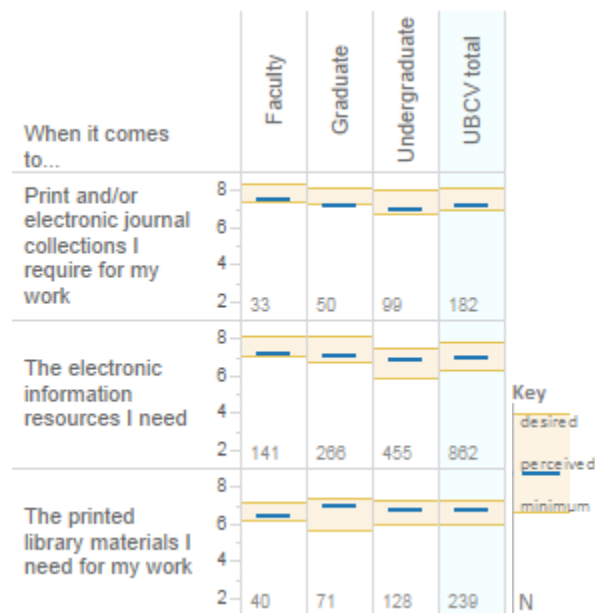
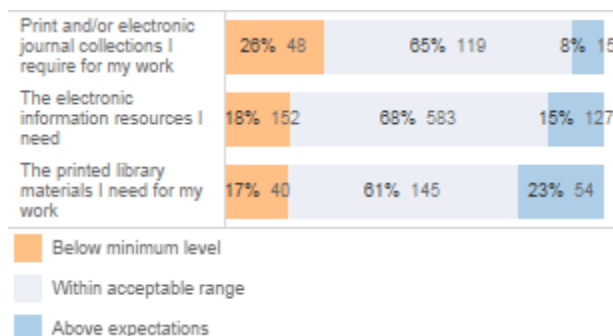


Figure 7. Collections: percentage and number of respondents by satisfaction level (all user groups).



*For help interpreting graphs of LibQUAL results see [Appendix A](#).

Comments about collections

The LibQUAL Analysis Working Group reviewed all respondent comments that refer to the availability, quality, and format of Library collections. While there are both positive and negative comments about UBC Library's collections, more are critical. Below are some of the themes that emerge.

Online collections

- Many respondents speak about the breadth and availability of online collections. A majority of comments are negative. Positive comments are more likely to come from undergraduate respondents whose research needs tend to be less demanding.
- Several respondents comment on eBooks and related interfaces. While some appreciate the extent of eBook collections and request more, comments about eBook interfaces are mostly negative (e.g. functionality; DRM restrictions on printing and downloading).
- Several comments suggest that users cannot find materials that the Library owns. Other respondents criticize gaps in collections by subject area or even specific titles. One comment refers to a journal title not being held that is actually available, suggesting that some negative comments about collection content may be an issue of access or findability (see also [Access to collections](#), p. 12).

Print collections

- Graduate student and faculty respondents from the Humanities are the most vocal group in their dissatisfaction about lack of materials in UBC Library print collections. Some faculty members also appear to be aware of recent budget constraints, noting concerns about funding in their comments.
- There are comparatively few negative comments about print collections from other disciplines. Some respondents observe that print collections are not relevant in fields of study that rely more on electronic resources and on the most current material (e.g. Applied Sciences).
- Some respondents expressed the view that items marked "lost" or "missing" in the library catalogue are not replaced as quickly as they should be.

Selected comments

Access to almost every important journal that I need to read is available and up to date. Just a few exceptions. For modern research science, print editions and a physical library are not relevant or useful. Books are either available on-line or are by nature out of data given the fast-moving nature of the fields.

– Faculty member, Sciences, (no library branch specified)

Compared to large U.S. public research campuses, I think the UBC library is vastly underfunded. It shows in the small number of open stacks, unavailable journals, out of date acquisitions, and growing reliance on electronic holdings. [...] Fine for a bachelor or master's level uni but not a PhD granting institution, let alone one that aspires to remain in upper rankings.

– Faculty member, Humanities, Koerner Library

The number of key journals that we do not have access to either in print or online is staggering. I wish UBC had subscriptions to more online journals.

– Undergraduate student, Humanities, Koerner Library

Love the vast diversity of resources available to us. UBC library is truly an amazing service. I was amazed by the number of archived journal papers, books, music, and more on campus.

– Undergraduate student, Sciences, Woodward Library

LibQUAL 2016: UBC Library, Vancouver campus

There have been numerous scientific papers that would enhance my research and understanding that have not been available to me.

– Graduate student, Sciences, IKBLC

There are many important books which are missing from our library. It will be great, if 'missing' books can be replaced with new copies asap. Rather than just put them under the category of 'missing' and be vague. Also, if we can have more and more of e-books.

– Graduate student, Performing & Fine Arts, IKBLC

The library does not purchase the books (monographs and edited collections) that I need to teach and to conduct research in my discipline. Frequently, I have to order the book from Okanagan or through ILL. It is unacceptable to have to ask the librarian to purchase hardcover books that I and my students need. Furthermore, e-books are not the solution. [...] UBC will continue to sink comfortably into provincialism if its holdings cannot compete with more elite university libraries.

– Faculty member, Humanities, Koerner Library

Access to collections

Library collections are valuable when they are accessible, and LibQUAL results reinforce this message. Respondent expectations are highest when it comes to remote access to collections, and to the online tools that make UBC Library collections available for independent use.

Figure 8 shows two trends about access to Library collections:

- Expectations are relatively high – and perceived Library service is low – for most LibQUAL questions about access to the collections (see also [Appendix B](#)). Of the four areas of service LibQUAL measures, *access* is where the Library falls shortest of user expectations.
- Faculty members rate the Library lowest on access to collections, followed by graduate students. Undergraduate students are more satisfied with existing access to collections for their research.

In particular the Library website, remote access to online resources, and “easy-to-use access tools that allow me to find things on my own” are the three service areas where perceived service is lowest relative to user expectations.

Figure 9 shows that nearly 1 in 4 respondents (24%) rate Library performance below their minimum expectations when it comes to “a library web site enabling me to locate information on my own.” This response is even more pronounced among faculty respondents, 41% of whom rate the website below the minimum acceptable level.

Figure 8. Access questions: average perceived service relative to expectations, by user group

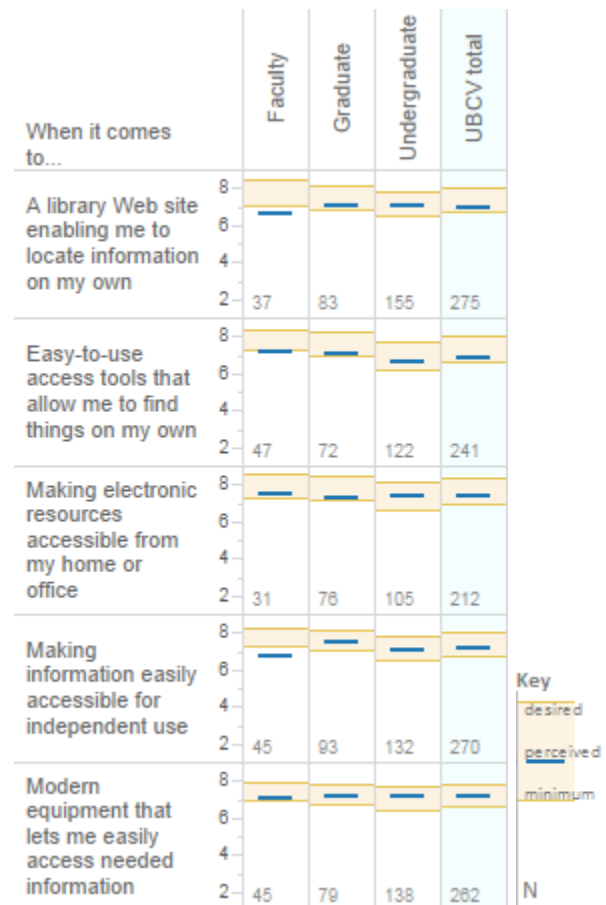
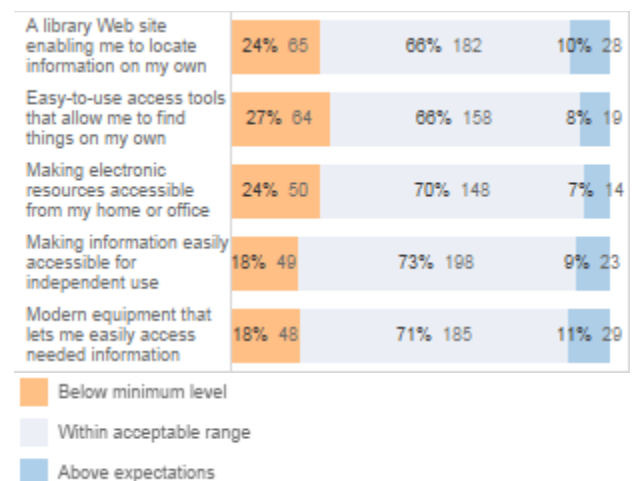


Figure 9. Access: perception relative to expectations, percentage and number of respondents (all user groups)



Comments about Access

There are both positive and negative comments about access to UBC Library collections, but about two-thirds are negative. Below are some of the most prominent themes that appear in the comments.

Web search interfaces and navigation

- There are several negative comments about the relevance or comprehensiveness of search results. This includes challenges finding known items in the collection.
- Many users express difficulty navigating and using the library website, with some describing the process of accessing journals as “clunky” or requiring too many “clicks.” Comments do not always mention specific web pages, but they suggest that the overall online experience could be improved.
- Several users make unfavorable comparisons between the UBC Library website and the search interfaces of other universities.

Remote access

- There are several comments about EZProxy. Positive comments tend to appreciate that the service exists at all; negative comments focus on usability challenges and are often from faculty members.
- Some faculty respondents request a return to VPN authentication, noting VPN’s more seamless integration with search tools like Google Scholar.
- Some users express frustration with remote access to the point of no longer using library resources as they did in the past. This, too, is mostly a concern among faculty members.

Wayfinding and stack maintenance

- Access to print collections was an area of concern as well. Several respondents note that they could not find books on the shelves. It is not possible to tell whether this is because items were not in the correct location, or because the user had difficulty navigating the stacks and call number ranges.
- There were comments about wayfinding and difficulty navigating physical spaces from users at Koerner and Woodward Libraries.

Selected comments

Overall, the library is a great resource. I would only express some frustration with the library website, and the sheer number of "clicks" it often requires to access a resource, perform a search, login to my account, etc.

– Faculty member, Social Sciences, Koerner Library

I really like that cwl login makes accessing journals a lot easier than in the past.

– Graduate student, Faculty of Education, IKBLC

I access journals multiple times each day. There was a change recently in UBC's off-campus access that means, instead of being able to identify an article via PubMed and directly clicking on the article to view, I now have to open a separate window, go first to the UBC library, select the journal, then scroll through the journal archive to find the paper. It's a small change but infuriatingly clunky, especially when multiplied over every article access each day. This only happens when reading papers from home, and I think the change may be the loss of support for VPN networks. Please could we find a solution?

– Faculty member, Health Sciences, Woodward Library

EZProxy is a lifesaver for me. Being able to have full access to the electronic resources of the library without being present at the library is the only way I'd be able to fulfill family and professional commitments while remaining a graduate student. It would be impossible any other way. Thank you for making doctoral studies for a mature working student possible!

– Graduate student, Health Sciences, BMB Library

I talk with people in my program all the time about how difficult it is to use the libraries here at UBC. The search functions don't yield meaningful results, I have difficulty navigating the online platform and frequently the library does not have access to the resources I require. I am VERY unsatisfied with my research experience here at UBC. Instead I have been using UofT and Carleton University alumni logins rather than having to move through the burdensome UBC library.

– Graduate student, Applied Sciences, IKBLC

The library search engine is in dire need of an upgrade. It is one of the poorest library search tools I have ever used in North America and I say this as a doctoral student who has attended three different universities (including UBC) and conducted research at a wide variety of institutes across North America, Europe and India. [...] I can't tell you how many times I have searched for a book that I know UBC holds but despite typing in the exact title of the book in quotation marks, it is still buried deep within the results.

– Graduate student, Humanities, Koerner Library

Library staff need a system wherein books that have disappeared need to be found. I have had experiences on more than one occasion where the library catalogue showed the book was on the shelf, and then could not find it on or near the shelf where it was supposed to be. Checking back several times in the span of a week or two proved fruitless. On each occasion, the library desk/circulation staff were absolutely useless in helping me find the book.

– Graduate student, Education, Koerner Library

One thing I sometimes find confusing is when I am searching for a book, especially in Woodward, and I can't find the section where the book should be [...]. It would be very helpful to have a map at the entrance to every level showing how the books are organized on that floor.

– Undergraduate student, Forestry/Land and Food Systems, Woodward Library

Library spaces

Students are the respondent group most engaged with the Library's physical spaces. In general UBC Library performs well when it comes to Library space, though respondents note crowding in popular areas. There is demand for establishing and monitoring quiet study spaces, especially among graduate students

Expectations for Library space vary from one user group to the next. **Figure 10** shows that faculty expectations are lower than those of students on all questions, which aligns with students' need for the Library as a place to research, study, and meet (see also [Appendix B](#)).

Student respondents want both quiet space and "community space for group learning and study." 2016 survey results indicate that current users feel a greater deficit of quiet and silent spaces in many of the Library branches (see also respondent comments, pp. 16-17).

In all other questions about space, average perceived service is within the acceptable range.

Because library physical spaces are less important to faculty – and because the library meets or exceeds faculty expectations on all questions about space – **Figure 11** shows the satisfaction level of *student respondents only*.

As noted above "quiet space for individual activities" is the area where service is lowest relative to expectations: 30% of student respondents feel UBC Library performs below minimum expectations in this regard. Among the large UBCV branches this percentage is highest at Koerner (33%), followed by IKBCL (30%) and Woodward (26%).

Figure 10. Library spaces: average perceived service relative to expectations, by user group

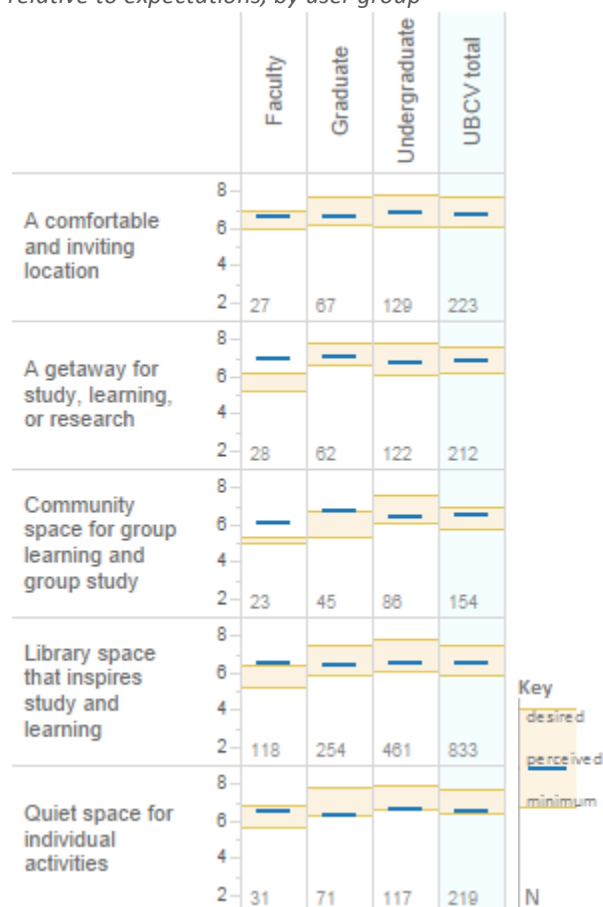
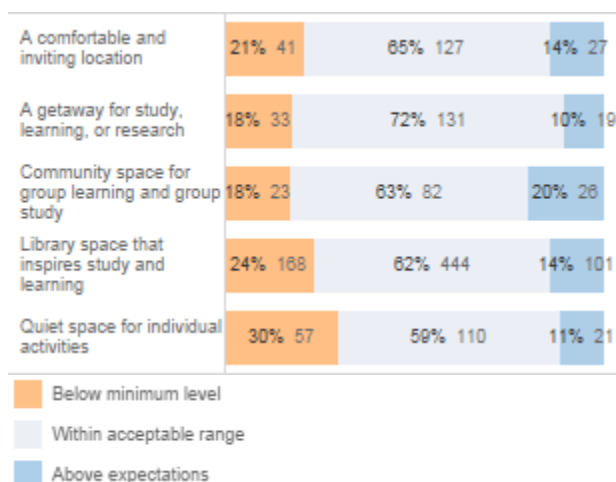


Figure 11. Library spaces: perception relative to expectations, percentage and number of respondents (graduate and undergraduate respondents only)



Comments about library space

Library space is a common theme in student comments, especially among undergraduate students who use IKBLC most often. While there are occasional comments about the quality of library spaces (e.g. furnishings, cleanliness), the most common concern is about the availability of study space in general, and of *quiet* study space in particular. Several respondents also comment on desired hours of service.

Balancing need for quiet space and community/group space

- Student respondents want both quiet space for individual work and space for group work, but the emphasis on quiet space is strong.
- Several respondents comment on crowded Library spaces, especially at IKBLC but also at Koerner and Woodward.
- Users from a range of disciplines use and appreciate the quality and tone of Law Library spaces.

Quality of space

- A few respondents comment on both the desirable and undesirable qualities of specific spaces (e.g. cleanliness, furniture, availability of food services, sound insulation). (These comments will be shared with branch heads and other stakeholders as appropriate.)
- There are several comments about establishing and enforcing policy on appropriate use of certain spaces, especially in terms of noise levels. These comments include requests for more supervision/monitoring by library staff.
- There are several comments related to facilities maintenance (e.g. washrooms, light bulbs). These are infrequent and will be shared with the branches mentioned.

Service hours

- Some respondents want expanded service hours during peak periods.
- Koerner Library had the greatest number of requests for longer hours, especially on Friday evenings and weekends.

Selected comments

I love the UBC libraries and use them all the time! [...] There is more than enough study space and the staff are friendly and helpful. My only suggestion is that some of the libraries should be open later, especially in the summer. I wish Koerner was open until 10 p.m.

– Undergraduate student, Humanities, Koerner Library

There should be more distinct areas for group study and silent studies. Most of the time the rooms are not sound proof which is disappointing for both the user and the neighbors.

– Undergraduate student, Forestry/Land and Food Systems, Woodward Library

The libraries can get really crowded at times and it gets difficult to find room to study.

– Undergraduate student, Forestry/Land and Food Systems, IKBLC

I wish there were more library spaces to sit that have tables & plugs for charging laptops while studying.

I feel that the first floor of Irving K Barber where the couches are, are good, but half of the space could be equipped with tables (maybe even those small flip tables that get connected to chairs).

– Undergraduate student, Performing & Fine Arts, IKBLC

LibQUAL 2016: UBC Library, Vancouver campus

I always study in the library. It is great that the libraries have many study area and computers . However, I do found that it is so hard to focus because there are many discussion going on in the library . I think it would be better to have slightly more places are restricted conversation.

– Undergraduate student, Sciences, Koerner Library

Provide more quite study areas with extended hours, for students that are actually in the library to study and get work done as opposed to those just hanging out in the library with their friends.

– Graduate student, Applied Sciences, IKBLC

I'd like to see a dedicated doctoral quiet reading/writing room. We had something like this at York U, where I did my masters, and it creates a very welcoming, quiet space for writing. The individual cubicles at Koerner really don't help, because you can't even leave to go to the washroom because when you come back it's gone.

– Graduate student, Faculty of Education, Koerner Library

I think more group study rooms should be available. Whenever I look to book one, they're always filled up!

– Undergraduate student, Sciences, IKBLC

Not enough study spaces. Not enough outlets. Crowded and loud. I go to Law Library when I need to get substantial work done.

– Undergraduate student, Applied Sciences, IKBLC

I love the abundance of study space in Koerner especially downstairs where it is quiet. Overall, work environment is good.

– Undergraduate student, Humanities, Koerner Library

My biggest concern is the hours of service. Other than the study rooms in Irving K, most libraries close by 10pm max. It's very hard to find a quiet, well-lit study area after hours.

– Graduate student, Health Sciences, IKBLC

It was difficult at the beginning of the semester to understand where everything is [...]. It may be helpful if there was a map or something made available which pointed students in the right direction for what they're looking for I do like the study spaces in the library - Koerner's is the only one that is not insanely busy everyday.

– Graduate student, Applied Sciences, Koerner Library

The cubicles has really been the de facto silent area for David Lam. It would be great if a monitor would walk through every once in a while and got those that are talking in this silent area to stop talking. More signs that say no talking would also be greatly appreciated.

– Undergraduate student, Business, David Lam Library

Customer service

Customer service is where the Library shines. Perceived service meets user expectations on all questions, and students and faculty recognize and appreciate the work of library employees. Respondents indicate that employees have the knowledge to answer their questions, but there is room for improvement handling challenging service interactions.

Year after year, UBC Library performs best on LibQUAL’s questions about customer service.

Figure 12 shows similar expectations on questions about service across user groups. Respondents find UBC Library employees courteous, understanding of their needs, and generally equipped with the knowledge to answer their questions.

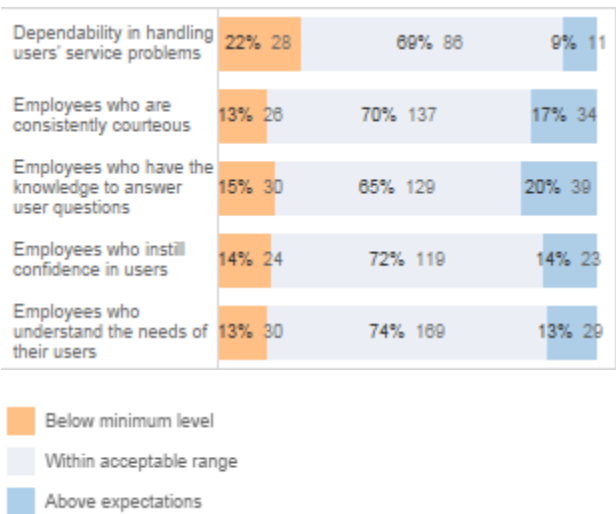
Customer service scores are lowest when it comes to “dependability in handling users’ service problems,” especially among faculty and graduate students. Like many of LibQUAL’s questions, the wording of the question is broad and the results can be difficult to interpret. Respondents’ comments provide further detail that can help identify areas for improvement (see comments section, pp. 19-20).

Figure 13 reinforces the positive overall message about customer service: while there is always room for improvement, on most questions more than 85% of respondents say UBC Library performance meets or exceeds expectations. As a Library we can feel proud of our customer service.

Figure 12. Customer service: average perceived service relative to expectations, by user group



Figure 13. Customer service: perception relative to expectations, percentage and number of respondents



Comments about customer service

LibQUAL comments about customer service were overwhelmingly positive. Though some respondents were not satisfied and described negative experience the vast majority showed gratitude and appreciation, sometimes naming specific employees and service points. There are a few things to keep in mind when interpreting these comments:

- Respondents don't necessarily use library terms to describe employees: in many comments the words "librarian" or "staff" could refer to anyone working in the library, including student employees.
- The survey measures user perceptions: comments reflect what respondents experienced but don't necessarily tell the whole story.

In general, comments about customer service are positive

- Positive comments outweigh negative by far.
- The words "friendly" and "helpful" are used repeatedly by survey respondents to describe the service and attitude of UBC library employees.
- Positive comments often suggest ongoing relationships with the library, usually within a user's most frequently visited "home" branch.

Some negative comments suggest areas for further improvement

- Negative comments tend to refer to a single incident or flash point. Examples include times when systems are down, stress levels are high, or books are missing. These comments are often about an employee's ability to help a user through a challenging time or process. This may be a clue to understanding responses to the question about "dependability in handling users' service problems."
- Two respondents described different experiences in the same scenario: employees assisting them with books they could not find. In both cases the book was *not found*, but one person described the employee interaction as positive while the other found the experience very negative. These parallel comments suggest that even when the problem is not solved, employees can still provide positive customer service depending on *how* they handle the situation.

Selected comments

One of my favourite places on campus: generally well-informed, helpful, and courteous staff.

– Faculty, Humanities, Koerner Library

I've been using the UBC libraries for many, many years and have always received help from anyone working there, and I have always left feeling like they taught me enough so that I can be comfortable accessing something on my own next time.

– Undergraduate, Social Sciences, Koerner Library

The staff are always there to help and any questions I have are always answered and they can solve any research problems I have.

– Undergraduate, Performing & Fine Arts, IKBLC

[The book] was not on the shelf when it looked like it should be available. The librarian was great and took my name and was going to look for the book. It was not able to be found, but she followed up with me and suggested an interlibrary loan. Even though the book was not available I appreciate the effort in trying to get me a copy.

– Graduate student, Sciences, IKBLC

LibQUAL 2016: UBC Library, Vancouver campus

I have had very mixed encounters with library staff. I have found some very generous with their time and helpful and I have also encountered some librarians that deter me from using the services.

– Graduate student, Health Science, Koerner Library

The staff are kind and professional. Keep up the good work.

– Graduate student, Business, David Lam Library

I prefer to have my questions answered by people rather than finding the information online. I frequently find though that staff at the library seem to be exasperated with student questions which makes the library feel less inviting that I'd like it to be.

– Graduate student, Architecture, IKBLC

The librarians at Woodward have been extremely responsive to my research group and our needs. They went beyond the call of duty this year to secure access to an important electronic research portal that required a US\$ subscription, but that was outside the normal funding structure.

– Faculty, Sciences, Woodward Library

I have consistently found that library staff can't answer questions about printing services, computer issues or lost and found issues; don't follow up and usually provide inaccurate information.

– Undergraduate, Business, Koerner Library

The staff is always friendly, helpful and efficient; I couldn't ask for more.

– Undergraduate, Humanities, Koerner Library

Longitudinal survey results: selected changes since 2013

LibQUAL survey questions remain the same from year to year, allowing for comparisons over time. Despite many changes to UBC Library spaces and services during the past three years, respondents’ average overall rating of UBCV Library was the same in 2013 and 2016: 7.3 on a scale of 1 to 9.

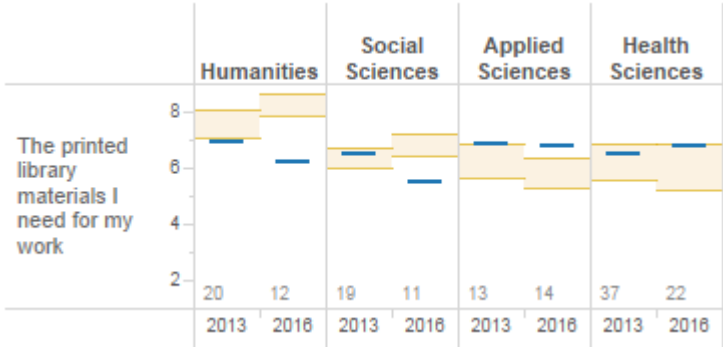
While overall rating remained the same, the Library’s performance on specific questions changed. In some cases the change is favourable and could be related to actions taken by the Library. In other cases the changes raise concerns that warrant further investigation and action. The selection below is not exhaustive but provides examples of how user perceptions of the Library have changed over time. If you have questions about changing user perceptions in other service areas, please contact Jeremy Buhler.

Print library materials: lower scores among faculty and grad student respondents in some disciplines

Figure 14 shows how faculty and graduate student perceptions of print collections shifted between 2013 and 2016 in selected disciplines.

Responses from the Humanities and Social Sciences fell below expectations in 2016, a large drop from 2013. In comparison, satisfaction with print materials in other large disciplines remains high.

Figure 14. “Printed library materials I need,” faculty and graduate students combined, 2013 and 2016



Modern equipment to access needed information: students respondents report improved service

In 2013 many students commented negatively about aging public computer workstations. Since then workstations across the library have been upgraded, likely contributing to the increased student satisfaction shown in Figures 15 and 16.

Figure 15. “Modern equipment,” graduate and undergraduate respondents, 2013 and 2016

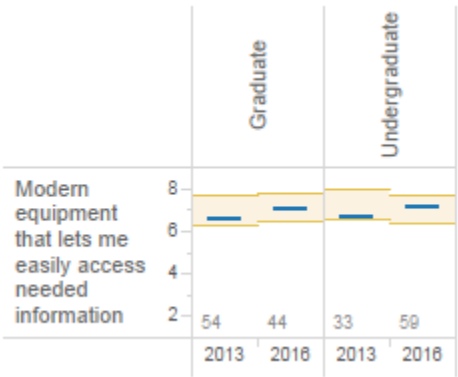
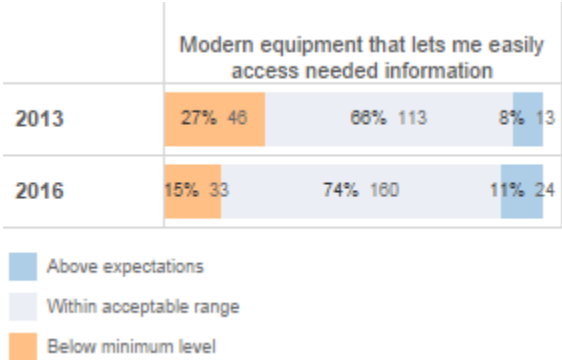


Figure 16. “Modern equipment,” perception relative to expectations, 2013 and 2016 (students only)

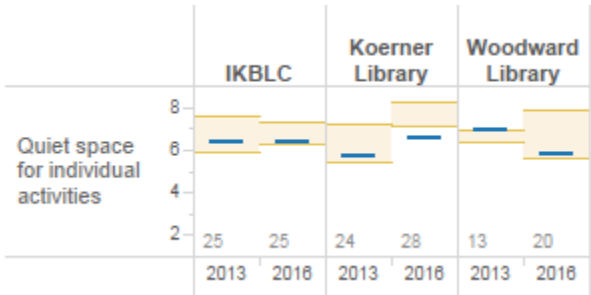


Quiet space for individual activities: decreased satisfaction among student respondents, especially at Koerner

As mentioned in the section on Library spaces (pp. 15-17), among students there is a demand for more quiet or silent study space.

This message also appeared in the 2013 LibQUAL results, but it was not as prominent then. *Figure 17* shows how perceptions of library service have changed in the last three years in relation to “quiet space for individual activities.” Relative to student expectations, UBC Library performance has dropped at the three largest Vancouver branches.

Figure 17. “Quiet space for individual activities,” student responses combined, 2013 and 2016

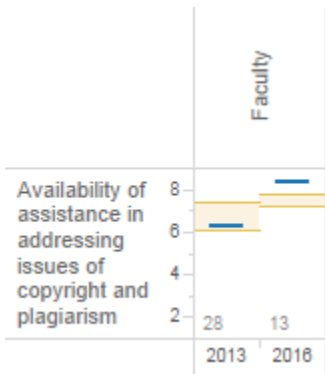


Assistance in issues of copyright and plagiarism: performance exceeds faculty respondents’ expectations

In 2013 the UBC Library Copyright Office was relatively new, still in the early stages of developing and promoting its services. These services include helping faculty members with copyright clearance for course reserve material.

The topic in *Figure 18* does conflate copyright with plagiarism and the number of responses is small (N=13 in 2016). Still, while we don’t know whether this small group represents broader faculty perceptions, the responses are striking and suggest positive change: since 2013 their service expectations increased but UBC Library performance exceeds even this higher bar.

Figure 18. “Copyright and plagiarism,” faculty responses, 2013 and 2016.



Conclusion and next steps

LibQUAL reveals where Library services meet, exceed, or fall short of respondent expectations. This helps the Library focus more effectively on areas to improve while celebrating and maintaining the services that perform well. Survey results are not a mandate for action but they are a very strong suggestion of what to prioritize. In terms of collections, the need to maintain and improve access is one of the strongest messages from respondents in 2016, including topics such as website user experience and remote access. In terms of library space, many students express desire for more quiet or silent study spaces.

Turning LibQUAL results into meaningful action is a shared responsibility. Standing Committees and Library administrative groups have an important role to play and are encouraged to use results to inform their priorities and decisions. Where the number of respondents is high enough to subdivide by branch or academic discipline, heads and AULs can benefit from reviewing responses for their areas of responsibility. LibQUAL results may also provide insights that are valuable to limited-term working groups and to individual Library employees.

Further analysis and consultation will often be required to understand the experience of specific user groups and to determine how best to respond. UBC Library Assessment offers ongoing support in this work: if you have questions or would like to analyze results for a specific topic or group please contact Jeremy Buhler (jeremy.buhler@ubc.ca).

Appendix A. Reading and understanding graphs of LibQUAL results

Most LibQUAL questions ask respondents to provide three scores on a scale of 1 to 9:

- **minimum** the minimum level of service that they would find acceptable
- **desired** the level of service they personally want to receive
- **perceived** the level of service they believe UBC Library currently provides

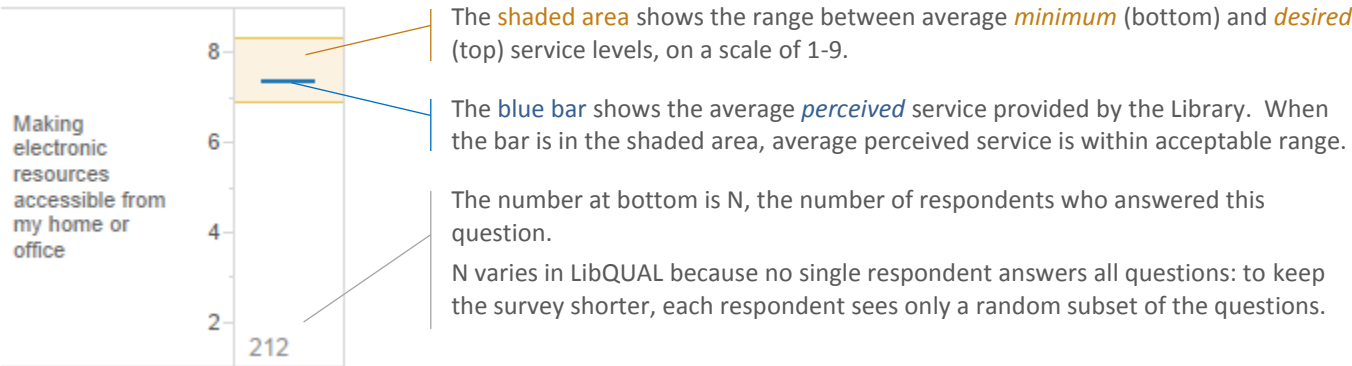
Here’s how the questions are worded in the survey:

When it comes to...	My Minimum Service Level Is									My Desired Service Level Is									Perceived Service Performance Is									
	Low				High					Low				High					Low				High					
1) Employees who instill confidence in users	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	<input type="checkbox"/>
																												N/A
2) Making electronic resources accessible from my home or office	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	<input type="checkbox"/>
																												N/A

Taken together, the three scores quantify Library performance relative to respondent expectations. This report uses two types of graph to represent these results.

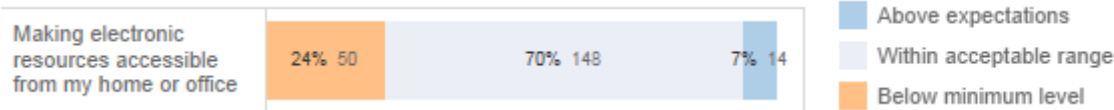
Graph type 1: Average performance relative to expectations

This graph shows the average desired, perceived, and minimum scores for a survey question; in the example below, a question about remote access to electronic collections.



Graph type 2: Distribution of respondents by satisfaction level

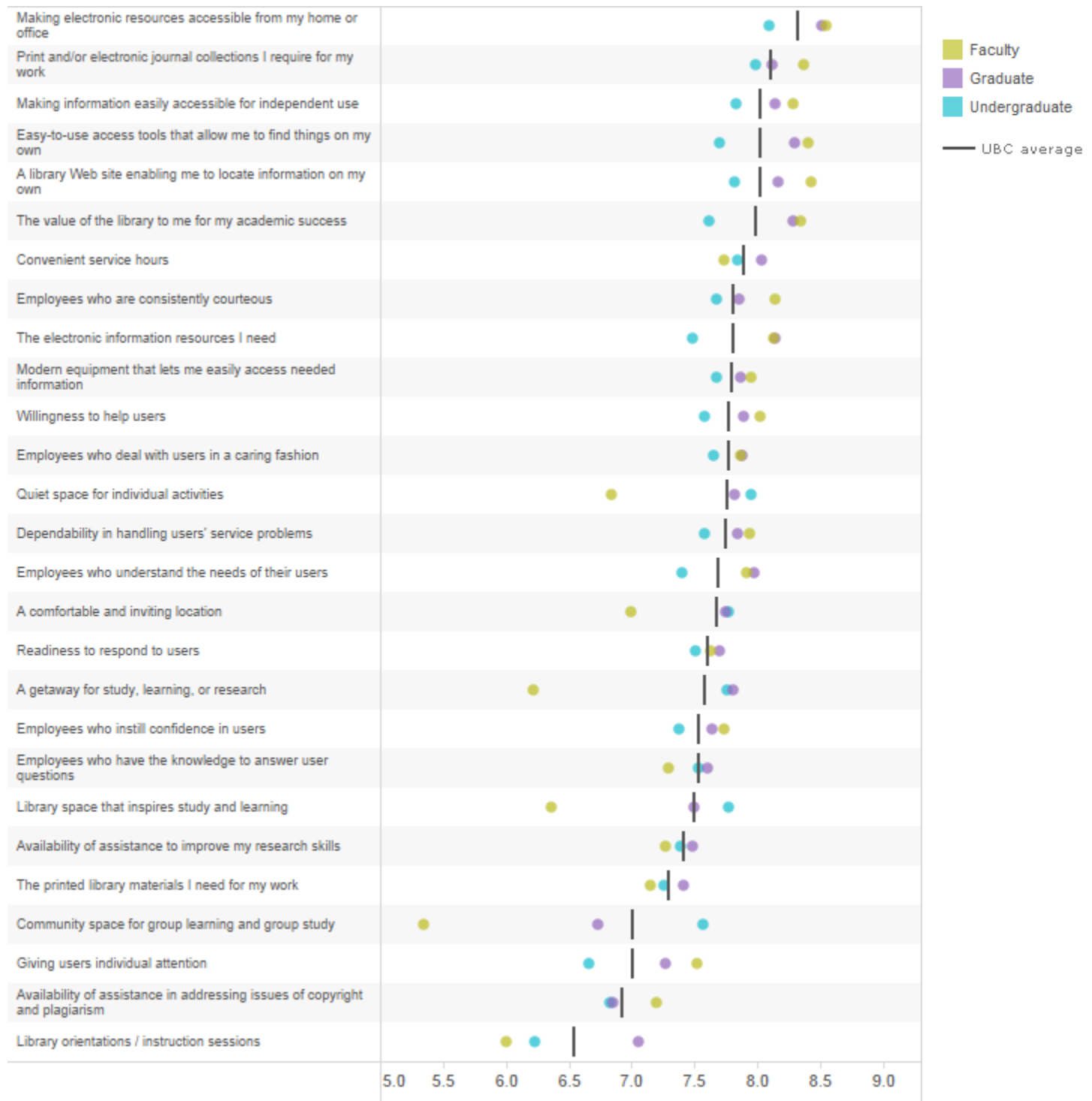
This graph shows the percentage and the number of respondents who reported that UBC Library performance is below their minimum expectations, within an acceptable range, or above expectations.



Even though average scores suggest UBC Library performance is within an acceptable range (graph 1), the second graph shows that nearly one in four respondents rate Library performance below minimum expectations when it comes to “making electronic resources accessible from my home or office.”

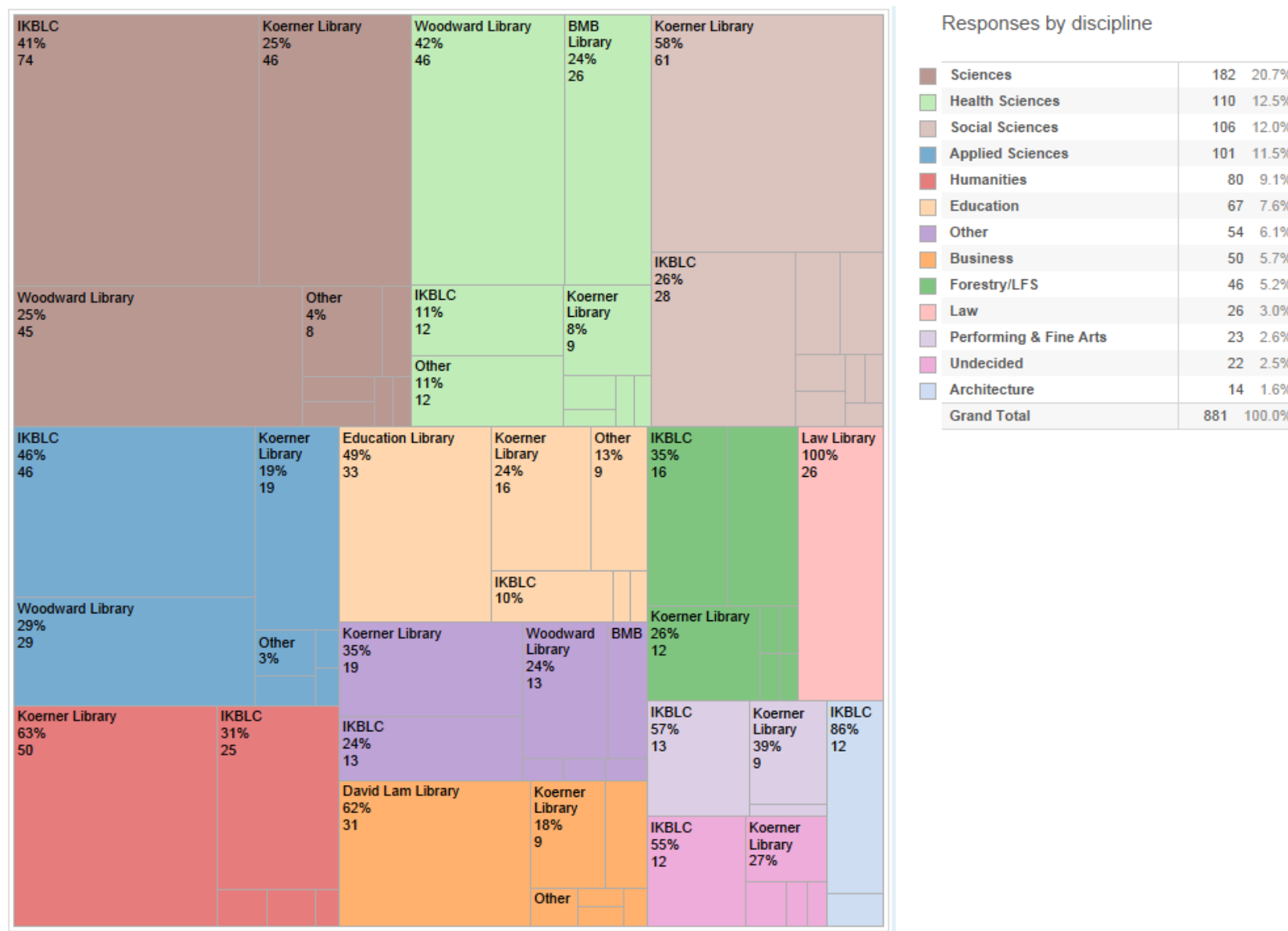
Appendix B. User priorities: LibQUAL questions by desired service level

For each survey question respondents indicate their desired service level on a scale of 1 to 9. The graph below shows average desired service level for all respondents (black bar) and for individual respondent groups (coloured dots). Items with the highest desired service levels are at the top, representing areas of high priority to users.



Appendix C.1. Number of respondents by branch and academic discipline: colour=discipline

Colour indicates discipline. Subdivisions show % and # of respondents within discipline who use a particular branch most often. Sizes correspond to number of respondents. Interactive version available online at http://bit.ly/LibQUAL2016_by_branch_and_discipline (Library staff only, CWL login)



Appendix C.2. Number of respondents by branch and academic discipline: colour=branch

Colour indicates branch used most often. Subdivisions show % and # of respondents within branch who identify with a particular discipline. Sizes correspond to number of respondents. Interactive version available online at http://bit.ly/LibQUAL2016_by_branch_and_discipline (Library staff only, CWL login)

