

Reinventing Library Research Support Services at Griffith University

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Griffith University provides advice and services to researchers around research grants, ethics and integrity, research performance, and publications and outputs. A broad-based researcher education and development program helps inform and upskill researchers and research students. From 2019, Griffith University Library has developed new services to support data-driven, data-intensive research and assist researchers through the entire research lifecycle. This chapter describes the staffing structure and the ideas underpinning a new service catalogue based around key areas, such as data management, open scholarship, and data wrangling. Methods to achieve this included a collaboratively developed knowledge base, the development of new workshops, mapping of research environments and referral pathways, and developing support for researchers for whom there is no established tool for the kinds of research they want to do. A push to establish the library as a vital and valued partner in research projects was a key driver for change.

INTRODUCTION

Since the seminal report by Megan Oakleaf (2010) on the need for academic libraries to articulate not only their value to their respective institutions but also ‘their contribution to institutional mission and goals’ (p. 6), librarians have been re-examining their support services for staff and students. Given the

importance of research performance as one of the key criteria in the major global university ranking schemes, support for researchers has become an important focus. In some universities, libraries have succeeded in being regarded as essential to research processes (Fernández-Marcial, Costa, & González-Solar, 2016).

The following chapter examines how recent significant changes at Griffith University in both its top-level organisational structure and strategic direction have provided the Library with an opportunity to rethink its research support services. The authors have described a new service model which is currently being implemented, with particular attention given to the ways it contributes to the University's strategic research goals. They conclude with a brief discussion of important additional work which is being planned for 2020 onwards.

CONTEXT

While this chapter has been written from an Australian perspective, many of the drivers for the evolution of research support services are common across the world's developed and developing nations. Striving to be more productive and more competitive, nations seek to address the major social, economic, and environmental challenges of this century. A government's support for research and innovation helps position a nation to achieve these goals.

At the turn of this century, the Australian Government recognised that to 'create research infrastructure to enhance the national innovation system and to foster collaboration' (Australia. Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research, 2010, p. 7), it would be cost-effective and efficient to adopt a national approach to investing in major research facilities and the associated supporting infrastructure and networks. To this end, it created the National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy (NCRIS) (Australia. Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research, 2010), the aim of which was to provide researchers with access to world-class resources.

Since most public research in Australia is undertaken by universities (O'Brien, 2010), these institutions were understandably eager to leverage this strategic national investment to benefit their researchers. With the advent of the data deluge, universities submitted funding bids in their own right or collaboratively with other research partners. Importantly, librarians quickly realised that they, too, could play an integral role as members of proposed project teams (Wolski, Richardson, & Rebollo, 2011).

The next section outlines the current Australian research environment.

Australian Research Environment

The main research funding body in Australia is the Australian Research Council (ARC), a Commonwealth entity within the Australian Government established as an independent body under the Australian Research Council Act 2001. The ARC advises the Government on research matters and administers the National Competitive Grants Program (NCGP), a significant component of Australia's investment in research and development.

Through Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA), the ARC is also tasked with identifying excellence in research, by benchmarking Australia's university research efforts against their international peers, creating incentives to improve the quality of research, and identifying emerging research areas and opportunities for further development. Clinical and other medical research is primarily supported

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