



Cambridge Information Literacy Framework

Cambridge University Libraries have a pivotal role to play in supporting excellence in teaching, learning and the student experience. We will support students from all backgrounds in fulfilling their potential. We will ensure students have access to training and support so they may gain the information, digital and research skills and capabilities they need to succeed throughout their learning experience, from their transition to University and throughout their studies.¹

Libraries in the University of Cambridge are committed to supporting the strategic vision for Education in the wider collegiate University; a vision which includes the desire for students to develop “a questioning spirit”, and to develop the ability to “learn throughout life”.² The University adheres to standards set by national bodies such as the Office for Students, a higher education regulator in England. Cambridge University Libraries contribute to achieving these standards through offering a range of opportunities for all students to gain confidence in Information Literacy. Partnering with other Professional Services, we seek to contribute to our students’ successful experiences in higher education.³

The CILN Framework makes use of publicly recognised Information Literacy frameworks,⁴ and takes as a starting point the definition of Information Literacy espoused by CILIP, the UK’s library and information association: “information literacy is the ability to think critically and make balanced judgments about any information we find and use. It empowers us as citizens to develop informed views and to engage fully with society”.⁵

The framework forms the basis for our teaching and learning engagement opportunities and has been devised in order that we provide a cohesive, joined-up approach which delivers a consistent experience for students. It allows for information literacy teaching which is closely related to the academic curriculum and is specific to the context and environment in which students are learning. Our information literacy competencies are not intended to be addressed in a linear manner, but to be allied closely to academic subject skills and individual student development, thus supporting the collegiate education Cambridge students receive. All staff involved in teaching should be able to clearly identify how library training will support their students. The Framework embraces all information literacies, including digital capabilities and is cognisant of the digital environment in which students operate.

¹ Cambridge University Libraries, Strategic Framework and Priorities 2019-2024 <https://www.ul.intranet.lib.cam.ac.uk/key-documents/strategic-operational-plans>

² The University’s Mission statement: <https://www.cam.ac.uk/about-the-university/how-the-university-and-colleges-work/the-universitys-mission-and-core-values>; Cambridge College Libraries Statement of Purpose: <https://libguides.cam.ac.uk/colleges/statementofpurpose>

³ Education Policy & Quality: <https://www.educationalpolicy.admin.cam.ac.uk/quality-assurance/external-quality-assurance>

⁴ CILIP

https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.cilip.org.uk/resource/resmgr/cilip/information_professional_and_news/press_releases/2018_03_information_lit_definition/cilip_definition_doc_final_f.pdf

⁵ Library’s Arcadia projects (2011) in devising A New Curriculum for Information Literacy (ANCIL) <https://www.repository.cam.ac.uk/handle/1810/244639>; The Association of College and research Libraries (ACRL) Framework for Information Literacy (2014) <http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/ilframework>;



The Cambridge Information Literacy Framework makes use of four competencies to outline the key elements. Note: The use of the word ‘information’ implies a variety of formats and sources, including data.



Resource Discovery

Developing skills relating to resource discovery leads learners to understand that the search process encompasses the sources themselves and the means to access those sources. Learners understand that resource discovery is likely to be a non-linear, iterative process where they will engage regularly with finding and evaluating information from a wide range of sources to satisfy their research question. In addition, it entails understanding specific formats and types of information appropriate to the discipline, and the implication of format to the discovery process. Resource discovery requires flexibility on the part of learners to pursue alternative avenues as understanding develops.



Critical Assessment

Learners critically examine the resources they are using, asking relevant questions about origins, context, and suitability for the current information need. They understand the importance of how authority, such as disciplinary expertise, is constructed, and will determine the credibility of a source. They understand that the information they find is influenced by those who select and curate information, in addition to those who create it, and the extent to which bias in search algorithms and editorial processes may affect their findings.



Managing Information

Understanding the scholarly practices within their discipline, learners engage with relevant information, related workflows and develop strategies for handling information in all formats. They demonstrate the ability to identify, gather and synthesise perspectives relevant to a research topic. Information has value and, as creators and users of information, learners will understand their rights and responsibilities (ethics) when participating in a community of scholarship. Information use requires learners to provide appropriate attribution and citation to sources they use and to develop practical skills to manage the range and variety of information sources they employ.



Creating and Communicating

Learners should see themselves as being information creators as well as information users. The process of information creation, including presentations, data visualization, essays, maths models and more, may require the application of complex techniques, including digital techniques. Learners embrace review and change, reusing and re-purposing discovered content in different formats or for future study. Learners understand the processes by which scholarly material in their discipline is produced, reproduced and disseminated. Learners consider how they contribute to the body of knowledge through original research work (projects and dissertations) and by joining the scholarly conversation within their discipline specific community of practice.