

LIBRARIES OF CURTIN UNIVERSITY: A GLOBAL VISION

BARBARA PARNABY discusses how Curtin University provides library services to campuses around the world.

Curtin University has a long-standing commitment to the delivery of international education and runs programs throughout the world at Curtin campuses in Dubai, Malaysia, Singapore and at partner institutions in a number of countries including Mauritius, Sri Lanka and China.

In turn, the Curtin University Library based at the Australian campuses in Bentley, Kalgoorlie and Perth, supports the university's goals by embedding its connections and collaborating with global partners in its day-to-day practices, in its strategic approach to developing and delivering library services and through its operating philosophy.

Library staff establish ties with the separately managed libraries at partner institutions around the world, sharing their experience, their vision to be a library with great heart that empowers great minds, and providing practical support, including ensuring access to an extensive suite of online resources for all of Curtin's staff and students, regardless of their location. Staff also undertake visits to exchange information in more detail, deepen ties, and to facilitate quality assurance activities as part of a formal role to ensure learning resources, educational support and library facilities meet the needs of staff and students.

On a day-to-day basis, library staff keep in touch with global colleagues to answer questions, share developments in services and facilities and offer support and advice. These exchanges have led to an online professional development meeting; sharing resources for exhibitions; cross promoting activities on social media channels (with the aim of giving staff and students a flavour of life and libraries in different countries); and work to develop a Curtin Library mascot to travel between libraries.

To extend collaborative opportunities, the university library identifies a global focus area or areas in its

annual review and planning of strategic and operational initiatives. For example, a recent initiative has been to profile international higher degree by research students to determine specific library needs and provide recommendations for key services that enhance the learning experience of this specific group. Additionally, in preparing all initiatives, library staff are prompted to consider potential global implications for their proposal and incorporate this dimension into their approach.

The collaboration efforts have not been focussed on producing any shared, formal vision statement among the libraries, however, fulfilling the aims to provide practical support, professional sharing and interest in the work of colleagues, has led to far better engagement and a higher awareness of the impact of services in different locations. Curtin University library staff proactively seek and incorporate the views and experiences of staff and students from across the globe when reviewing, evaluating and developing library services. They share the outcomes from survey data and reports on services and they have greater awareness that content on the library website has a global reach, with staff and students throughout the world accessing the site to find online information and learning resources to support their research and academic skill development.

The strength of the relationships established through ongoing work with partners has helped the Curtin University Library based in Australia take a global perspective, make the most of opportunities to involve partner libraries and has opened avenues for conversations on a vision for the future of libraries where global voices are heard. 

BARBARA PARNABY AALIA (CP)

Manager, Client Engagement
Curtin University Library



EMAIL

barbara.parnaby@curtin.edu.au


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