1. Overview

SCONUL is seeking expressions of interest from contributors with a good working knowledge of the UK HE library sector and strong writing skills for a series of small-scale projects over the coming two years. We are seeking to appoint one or more consultants to deliver this work which will be primarily in the form of commissioning case studies highlighting innovation and/or good practice in the library community. Further details are below.

2. About SCONUL

SCONUL is the professional association for academic and research libraries in the UK and Ireland. Our members range from research-intensive institutions to specialist higher education providers and also include national libraries and those holding important national collections.

We speak for this diverse membership with a single voice on the strategic issues facing the sector, advocating for the value and importance of libraries in teaching and learning, in the research process; in student success and in delivering our institutions' innovation and engagement agenda, for example in the drive for equality, diversity and inclusion and on sustainability.

We are led by our members, driven by their needs and informed by their priorities. Our reach relies on commitment by those at our member organisations who give a great deal of time to formal working groups and through contributions to projects, events and discussions.
The SCONUL community is unstinting in its willingness to share intelligence, strategic insights and experience to meet the community's collective needs. This is our most valuable asset.

SCONUL members are the libraries themselves, with the heads of library service making up the Executive Board which is responsible for governance and for setting the strategy for the organisation. SCONUL also has supporting the strategy and ensuring that our members are informed about, and engaged with, the major issues and challenges facing the library sector. They are supported by an Executive Director and office, engaged in policy development, lobbying and coordination and support.

SCONUL is a UK registered charity (278550) and a company limited by guarantee (England 1436951). Our activities are governed by our Articles of Association and Rules for the Conduct of Business. You can find out more about SCONUL's work in our most recent annual report.

3. SCONUL's Strategy 2023-2026

SCONUL launched its new strategy last year which identified areas of policy work of importance to SCONUL members. The strategy document is available here and the latest update on progress on delivering the strategy is available here.

Key aims of the strategy are "to support innovation and the process of transformation of libraries to maximise the benefits to their institutions and their users" and "to provide leadership to the sector and to use our influence to shape the conversation within and beyond our community, locally and internationally". Central to both of these aims is to identify and share innovation and good practice.

4. Case study projects

A number of the projects currently underway within SCONUL have identified the development of case study materials as an important tool for delivering on these aims.

Subject areas identified to date are:

- A series of 10-12 case studies of technology-enabled library spaces, covering a description of the spaces and the services they offer and a profile of users and usage, but also the business case for the development of the spaces; developing user requirements; funding; value for money and impact measurement.

- A series of 8-12 case studies of equality, diversity and inclusion initiatives by member libraries covering a broad range of protected characteristics but also including class and other disadvantaged groups.

- A series of case studies (numbers to be confirmed) on data-driven decision-making by libraries.

- A set of approximately six case studies highlighting examples of effective use of the SCONUL statistics.

- A set of approximately four to six case studies exploring a variety of approaches to structuring the role of systems librarian across the sector.

We expect to be ready to proceed with the first of these projects in June this year, and for the remainder to be delivered over the course of the academic year 2024/5.
Other case study projects may be identified at a later date, as the projects being delivered as part of the SCONUL strategy develop further.

For an example of previous work of this type carried out by SCONUL, please see our Positive Action case studies which are available [here](#).

5. How we will work

For each set of case studies, SCONUL will establish or call on an existing group to act as a steering group for the project to support the writer to deliver the work. They will produce a short brief specifying the number and approximate length of the case studies to be developed, and identifying the key considerations and themes we are seeking to explore.

The group will also provide the writer with a list of possible case studies and contact details and will support the writer to broker initial contacts with the case study institutions. They will agree a timetable with the writer and will act as a sounding board and resource in the development of the materials.

The SCONUL office will take responsibility for the layout and design of the materials produced and for their publication and dissemination of the final documentation.

Writers will be credited as the case study authors and SCONUL will retain the copyright with all materials being published under a CC BY NC creative commons licence.

6. Expressing an interest

We are seeking one or more contributors to deliver these materials. You should have:

- a good working knowledge of the UK HE library sector including familiarity with the issues, drivers, and ethics of our member libraries, including the diversity of the sector by geography, mission and size

- a good understanding of the quality and standards expected of professional writing and the capacity to deliver this.

We do not anticipate that contributors will necessarily be full-time consultants or authors, and may have other roles within the sector, and we will be mindful of this in establishing timetables and deadlines for projects. However, we will expect that once a timetable has been agreed that the materials will be delivered according to that timetable.

To express an interest in being involved in this work, please contact Ann Rossiter, Executive Director of SCONUL at ann.rossiter@sconul.ac.uk by COP on Monday 1 July setting out:

- details of your experience and knowledge of the HE library sector and how this equips you to deliver this type of project

- details of your experience as a writer of professional materials, including examples where possible

- expressions of interest in any particular elements of the work identified above in line with your particular areas of interest or experience

- details of your approach to charging for such work (e.g. hour or day rate; fixed project fees etc.)

- information about your availability for this work.

For further information about the projects, or for an informal briefing, please contact Ann Rossiter on the contact details above.

10 May 2024