

News

SCONUL Executive Board

SCONUL is pleased to announce that at its AGM on 16 July, Sarah Pittaway (Birmingham City University) and Rachel Scott Halls (Buckinghamshire New University) have been elected to the Board. Congratulations to Sarah and Rachel. With many thanks to Regina Everitt and Emma Walton who are standing down.

SCONUL's support for members

SCONUL has published its *Annual report and audited accounts* for 2025. This gives a useful overview of its activity over the last year and sets out our future plans. The report can be found at:

https://sconul.ac.uk/media/gvqpmiiz/sconul_annual_report_and_audited_accounts_2025.pdf

SCONUL Statistics 2024-25

SCONUL is pleased to announce that the *SCONUL Annual Library Statistics 2024-25* has been published and is available to members on our website at <https://sconul.ac.uk/services-for-members/benchmarking-statistics/sconul-annual-library-statistics-2024-25/> (you'll need to log in to view this page). SCONUL has also provided additional analysis alongside its 2024-25 Annual Statistical Data entitled *Spotlight: The academic library landscape: current realities and emerging challenges* (2026). The report looks at the data for 2024-5 assessing how the worsening economic climate is shaping library provision across the sector. The 2024-25 data is available on the Reporting Tool, which sits on a separate website, and can be accessed via: <https://access.sconul.ac.uk/reporting-tool>. You will require a different login to access this. If you do not already have a login for the reporting tool, please email sconul@sconul.ac.uk.

NSS results for libraries

The NSS results, published 9 July, show continuing high levels of student satisfaction with university libraries' support for students. The results for question 20 "Q20: How well have the library resources (e.g., books, online services and learning spaces) supported your learning?" give an average score across the UK of 90.6*, up on last year's score of 90.1 and showing the second most positive rating for any aspect of student satisfaction covered by the NSS after Q1 on the quality of teaching. Congratulations to the top three institutions who scored over 97%: University of Oxford (97.9), =2. Architectural Association School of Architecture (97.7), =2. Rambert School of Ballet and Contemporary Dance (97.7), and Royal College of Music (97.1). [Read more](#)

SCONUL AGM and members meeting, Peter Mason presentation

SCONUL was pleased to welcome Peter Mason, Transformation and Efficiency Lead at Universities UK, who delivered a keynote presentation at the SCONUL AGM and Members' Meeting on Thursday 16 July. Peter spoke about the transformation and efficiency programme being undertaken by UUK and

discussed the changes and challenges facing the sector. Members can access the recording and presentation [here](#).

SCONUL Autumn Conference, 13 November, Birmingham

SCONUL is pleased to announce that it is bringing members together on Friday 13 November for a one-day face-to-face conference at The Studio in Birmingham. The conference will focus on demonstrating a and delivering value and will offer high-quality plenary presentations and lightning talks as well as a chance for delegates to take part in workshops. This will be an excellent opportunity for colleagues to connect and network. Further details, including an agenda, will be available shortly. For registration details, please email sconul@sconul.ac.uk.

SCONUL AI coffee mornings

SCONUL's regular AI coffee morning will pause for the summer break and will be back on Friday 25 September at 10am where we'll hear from Hannes Lowagie, Metadata Librarian at the Royal Library of Belgium. Hannes Lowagie will talk about metadata creation with AI. The coffee mornings brings together those with an interest in AI developments within libraries on the last Friday of every month. SCONUL members can register for future AI coffee mornings [here](#) and access recordings and resources [here](#).

SCONUL AI and Information Literacy CIG meeting, 3 September

Join us at the next AI and Information Literacy Community of Interest Group meeting on 3 September from 11.00 – 12.00hrs, which will focus on AI, Academic Integrity, and the library's roles and responsibilities. We look forward to hearing from colleagues around the sector on perspectives in developing practice and on the approach to developing teaching and guidance to help steer students and colleagues in making ethical use of AI in research habits and helping to address acknowledgment and citation concerns. The CIG officers are looking for volunteers to give a short presentation at the meeting. If you are interested in participating or have questions, please email the CIG officers: Ella Mitchell e.mitchell@mdx.ac.uk, Callum Perry Callum.Perry@uea.ac.uk, Anna Richards a.richards@ed.ac.uk. For registration details to attend the meeting, please email sconul@sconul.ac.uk.

The Future of the Systems Librarian CIG meeting, 17 September

The next meeting of the Future of the Systems Librarian CIG, *Different ways of working*, will look at how the role can sit outside the library and how this can work effectively. Also reflecting on the importance and visibility of the role. The CIG meeting will take place on 17 September, 13:30–15:00hrs. For registration details, please email sconul@sconul.ac.uk.

SCONUL Business Intelligence CIG meeting, 14 October

SCONUL's Business Intelligence Community of Interest Group are currently planning for their next meeting on 14 October. The topic for the meeting is the SCONUL benchmarking statistics and the CIG officers are looking for presenters for some lightning talks. This is where you come in. Are you responsible for collating your institution's SCONUL stats? How do you go about collecting them? What issues and challenges do you face? How do you make use of SCONUL statistics at your institution? The Business Intelligence CIG is looking for presenters to give short sessions of around 10 minutes on any of these aspects of SCONUL statistics. If you are interested or have any questions please contact the CIG officers: Michael Whitton m.whitton@soton.ac.uk, Philip Vaughan ab1409@coventry.ac.uk, Emma Hollinshead e.l.hollinshead@aston.ac.uk. Please send your expressions of interest by the end of Friday 7

August. To attend the meeting on 14 October from 10.00 – 11.30hrs, please email sconul@sconul.ac.uk for the registration details.

Student AI use for discovery and its implications for libraries: Webinar 15 October

Users' deployment of AI tools has changed the way that they are engaging with academic sources. Traditional conceptions of discovery behaviour no longer fit the reality in which many students are using AI tools to guide their search for appropriate resources – including those who starting with AI generated explanations and working back to the original sources. This has significant implications for many aspects of libraries' work. This webinar will explore these questions with two sets of contributors: Meg McMahon (User Experience Researcher) and Amy Deschenes (Interim Director of UX & Discovery) both at UX and Discovery, Harvard Library and Leo S Lo, Dean of Libraries and University Librarian at the University of Virginia. Amy and Meg have conducted fascinating research on how users are using library discovery services differently, including looking at how students are using AI to build their understanding. Leo has written about the development of an "answer first" behaviour by students and has developed the CARE approach (Classify, Assess, Review, Enhance), which articulates a critical way of engaging those answers with users. The webinar is part of a SCONUL project, Digital Futures, which is exploring the library community's technology needs 5–10 years in the future, grounded in an exploration of users' needs and behaviours. The webinar will take place on 15 October from 14.00 – 15.30hrs. For registration details, please email sconul@sconul.ac.uk.

A further session exploring these issues will be held at the SCONUL Autumn Conference when we will hear from Dr Stephen Gow, Leverhulme Fellow, Department for Learning and Teaching Enhancement at Edinburgh Napier University, who will be reporting on his recent extensive study looking at student experiences of navigating the generative AI landscape in UK higher education. For registration details, please email sconul@sconul.ac.uk.

SCONUL Small and Specialist Institutions Forum, 5 November

SCONUL brings together this group of members to share experiences, information and best practice. It is open to all those leading SCONUL member institutions who define themselves as specialist or small and their senior teams plus invited guests. Members are also invited to suggest topics or issues to cover. Join us next on Wednesday 5 November from 10:00 – 11:30hrs, please email sconul@sconul.ac.uk for registration details.

Advocacy webinar on Innovation and resilience in managing change, 10 November

SCONUL published a set of [advocacy case studies](#) highlighting how library leaders are responding creatively to the challenges facing the sector – from reorganising services to pioneering new forms of practice. Following on from this, we will be holding a webinar where three contributing institutions will expand further on their experience. We will hear from Rachel Scott Halls, Library and Archives Director at Buckinghamshire New University, who worked on improving the library service and its morale and reputation, by creating a new Library and Archives Directorate; Lesley Castens, Director of Education Services at University of Plymouth, who employed a more radical reorganisation in an attempt to develop new ways of working together in a transformed service, as a way to deal with further budget cuts; and Louise Doolan, Director of Library Services at City St George's, University of London, who navigated a merger, bringing together and consequent restructure of very different library services, systems, staff

and users from City and St George's universities. Join us on 10 November from 14:00 – 15:30hrs by emailing sconul@sconul.ac.uk for registration details.

HE Reference Models webinar series

SCONUL is holding a series of three webinars exploring the HE Reference Models and their relevance to libraries.

Engaging with the HE Reference Models, 25 November

There are clear advantages for those leading library in having a good working knowledge of the HE Reference Models and their uses in the wider institutional context as they can be a powerful advocacy tool, making visible the myriad ways in which the library supports wider capabilities within the institution, and providing a tool for demonstrating the value of the library to the institution's missions. This third webinar in the series on the HE Reference Models will provide an opportunity to hear from SCONUL members who have successfully engaged with the use of the models within their institution and to explore how these can be to support the library's engagement with the institutional leaders and to advocate for the library. This webinar will take place on 25 November from 14:00 – 15:30hrs, please email sconul@sconul.ac.uk for registration details.

Recordings and resources from the previous two webinars are available:

- [Everything you wanted to know about the HE Reference Models but were afraid to ask](#)
- [HE Reference Models as a tool for institutional transformation](#)

If you don't yet have access to the HERMS documentation and would like a copy, please contact the SCONUL team at sconul@sconul.ac.uk.

Expressions of interest in membership of SCONUL new deputies groups

SCONUL is putting out a call for expressions of interest in membership of new deputies groups. The SCONUL deputies groups are a chance for deputy directors to come together to share experiences and learn from each other in an informal way. These provide a source of support and advice both virtually and through face-to-face meetings. Each group has their own discussion list, and conversations are generally assumed to be confidential unless otherwise agreed. The SCONUL office facilitates the group's first meeting, after which, the groups are expected to self-organise. If you think you would benefit from joining such a group, please email Noura.Mokhtar@sconul.ac.uk. If you are part of an existing group that isn't active anymore and would like to join a new group, please feel free to get in touch as well.

SCONUL Mentoring Scheme

SCONUL's mentoring scheme supports emerging and newly appointed leaders, by partnering them with more experienced colleagues, who can guide them in their professional growth. The scheme is seeking mentors and mentees from across SCONUL who want to be a part of this highly valued scheme. Click [here](#) to discover more about how the scheme works. Information on becoming a mentor and how to apply can be found [here](#). If you would like to sign up as a mentee you can find further information [here](#).

Research Professional Futures survey – invitation to SCONUL members

The [Research Professional Futures project](#) aims to reshape how research is delivered in the UK. It focuses on Research Professionals, who are a diverse group of specialists whose skills are essential for delivering research. RPs operate in various areas, including research development, governance and systems, public

engagement, knowledge exchange, commercialisation, and library services. Research Professional Futures (RPF) are keen to hear your views and experiences as part of this project, recognising the important contribution which academic and research library professionals make to supporting and enabling research in UK Higher Education Institutions. If you are a Research Professional working in a UK Higher Education Institution, this survey is an opportunity to feed into the RPF project by telling us about your experiences, the work that you do, the skills and networks which you use and your views on challenges and opportunities over the next five years. Your responses will help to define the current landscape and shape the outputs of the Research Professional Futures project. This survey, developed and delivered by [Research Consulting](#), takes around 30 minutes to complete, and you can add your response here: <https://survey.alchemer.eu/s3/91122368/RPF-survey-2026>

Jisc Digital transformation library lens pilot programme

Following the successful completion of the [Jisc Digital Transformation Library Lens pilot programme](#), Jisc is exploring opportunities to support a new cohort of higher education libraries from 2027 and would like to understand the level of interest in the sector. Through the programme, libraries have used the Library Lens as a tool to help enhance their visibility within their institutions, demonstrate their contribution to strategic priorities, and identify opportunities for transformation and innovation across a range of areas such as digital capability, research support, AI, library data, and physical and digital spaces. Participants also benefited from a supportive peer network and knowledge exchange opportunities through in-person events, webinars and Action Learning Sets. Please let Jisc know if you would be interested, in principle, in participating in a similar programme in 2027 by answering this [one-question survey](#) by 31 August. Jisc will publish the programme findings in the Autumn. In the meantime, you can learn more about the experiences of participating libraries through the [Digifest 2026 podcast](#) and the [recording of the programme's final presentations](#).

Sam Harris joins CILIP as Interim CEO from 3 September 2026

CILIPs Board of Trustees have appointed Sam Harris as Interim CEO, effective from 3rd September 2026 for a period of one year. An interim leader and organisational development specialist, Sam works with membership bodies and charities through periods of significant change and comes to CILIP from two Interim CEO assignments driving the development of the new strategic plan. Before that, she spent nearly ten years at NUS Charity, a UK-wide membership body serving more than 400 students' unions across the four nations, latterly as Deputy CEO with responsibility for strategy, membership engagement and development services. Kate Robinson, Chair of Trustees, said: *"Our focus remains firmly on delivering our strategy, supporting members and advancing our mission. There will be no interruption to the services, programmes and support you expect from us. We are confident that Sam will provide strong leadership during this next phase"*.

Bursary places available for the RBSCG conference

CILIP is delighted to be able to offer two bursary places for the CILIP Rare Books and Special Collections Group conference in Cambridge. The deadline for applications is Thursday 13 August and successful applicants will be informed of the decision in the week beginning 17 August. The bursaries are sponsored by the RBSCG and are:

- One full bursary – includes a free place at the conference, accommodation, and up to £150 for travel costs.
- One local bursary – a free place at the conference without accommodation or travel costs.

Priority will be given to applicants from underrepresented backgrounds, including those from the global majority, LGBT+ community, people with disabilities and those who have caring responsibilities. CILIP is also keen to support attendance at the conference by those who are new to the rare books and special collections sector. You can find more information on how to apply [here](#).

Burnham reforms

Andy Burnham's arrival in Downing Street has triggered a significant restructuring of the UK government. His administration has begun "rewiring the state", creating a new Office for the Prime Minister and Cabinet that merges parts of the Cabinet Office, Treasury and housing ministry, and establishes No.10 North in Manchester as a second centre of government decision-making. This shift moves strategic functions such as local economic growth and devolution out of Whitehall, reflecting Burnham's commitment to decentralising power and embedding economic development closer to communities.

Additional machinery-of-government changes include closing the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology with science and innovation policy (including research) moving to a newly expanded Department for Business, Innovation, Science and Trade (DBIST). AI policy has moved to the Cabinet Office where Burnham has created a new AI Taskforce within the Office for the Prime Minister and Cabinet (OPMC). Kanishka Narayan has been appointed Minister of State for Artificial Intelligence, jointly across the Cabinet Office and DBIST, and will attend Cabinet. Digital functions previously in DSIT including digital transformation, inclusion and skills have moved to a strengthened Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), now renamed back to Digital, Culture, Media and Sport where Burnham ally Lisa Nandy remains Secretary of State. He has also created a new OneGov Delivery Agency to manage operational and back-office public sector services.

The Department for Education (DfE) is led by another Burnham ally, Lucy Powell, replacing Bridget Phillipson, who has moved to the role of Minister for Women and Equalities. Powell now leads policy across post-16 education, further education, technical qualifications, SEND reform and higher education, placing her at the centre of Burnham's agenda to rebalance academic and technical routes. Her remit includes reviewing student loans, stabilising university finances, aligning degree provision with regional economic needs, and overseeing the rollout of new Level 2 qualifications and V Levels – reforms that directly reshape the landscape universities operate within. These ministerial changes sit within Burnham's broader shift away from a university-first model of education, emphasising technical pathways, employer-linked learning, and parity between academic and vocational routes. Universities will be expected to integrate more closely with regional labour markets, adapt curricula to local economic priorities, and operate within a system where technical routes receive equal status.

Triennial US Library leaders survey echoes UK concerns

The findings of the November 25 Ithaka S+R survey of US library leaders echoes the challenges being faced by library leaders in the UK. This includes funding constraints limiting the capacity of the library to sustain core functions and a perception that the value of the library is under-recognised within their institution. On AI, there is increased demand for AI literacy teaching and staff reskilling, but AI take up by the library is uneven so far. One third of US institutions are looking at hiring staff for AI and machine learning roles. The report is available here: [US Library Survey 2025 – Ithaka S+R](#)

Impact of AI search on scholarly publishing: report from the publisher perspective

A report has been published by KUDOS which looks at the impact of AI on scholarly publishing from the publisher perspective: Taming the Crocodile: Future-proofing scholarly publishing in the AI-First ecosystem. It identifies the growth of AI summary led discovery ("zero-click search") and the development of Gen AI as a challenge to publishers: "AI discovery threatens not only usage, but also research integrity and transparency. It takes content out of context (divorcing it from quality indicators and trust signals), and amplifies / camouflages misinformation (treating non-authoritative user-generated content the same as peer-reviewed content)." It states that these two forms of AI-mediated discovery have become the starting point for over a third of information seeking journeys, and reduced usage of content by up to 70%. A summary of the report is available here:

<https://3cxvc.share.hsforms.com/2Zkn8u513RXeavugD0GjTOA>.

EThOS platform restored

The EThOS (E-Theses Online Service) is now available again following restoration work. EThOS provides access to over 650,000 metadata records of UK PhD theses. Almost 65% of these records provide links to the institutional repositories, where the full text theses can be consulted, if available. All metadata records previously available on EThOS have now been restored, along with an additional 14,000 records added since the service was taken offline. Records will continue to be added as part of a rolling programme of updates.

Expressions of interest to join the planning team for a joint ALN and RLUK Relationship Management Community of Practice (RM CoP) two-day conference

The ALN/RLUK Planning Team are inviting expressions of interest to join the planning team for a joint ALN and RLUK Relationship Management Community of Practice (RM CoP) two-day conference, to take place in April/May 2027. They are looking for colleagues with an interest in relationship management to form a planning team. Previous experience of conference or event planning would be helpful but is not essential. You can find brief descriptions of the roles involved [here](#) and the aim is to have an initial meeting in September. This is an exciting opportunity to gain experience working with colleagues across the sector, and interested colleagues are encouraged to discuss this with their line manager with a view to putting themselves forward. Please complete this [form](#) by Friday 14 August to apply.

Making the most of your SCONUL membership

- [Sign up to lis-sconul](#) to participate in discussions with your peers as well as hear about news and events.
- [Join](#) the SCONUL community on [LinkedIn](#).
- [Register](#) to access all the resources on the SCONUL website.
- [SCONUL mentoring scheme](#) supporting emerging and newly appointed leaders.
- [Join](#) a SCONUL [Directors or Deputies Group](#).

Updates from our peer organisations:

1. Academic Libraries North <https://www.academiclibrariesnorth.ac.uk/>
2. CILIP https://www.cilip.org.uk/page/IP_news

3. CONUL <https://conul.ie/news/>
4. LIBER <https://libereurope.eu/news/>
5. M25 Consortium of Academic Libraries <https://www.m25lib.org.uk/events/>
6. Mercian Collaboration <https://merciancollaboration.org.uk/news>
7. RLUK <https://www.rluk.ac.uk/rluk-bulletin/>
8. SCURL <https://www.scurl.ac.uk/news>
9. ucisa <https://www.ucisa.ac.uk/News-and-Views>
10. WHELF <https://whelf.ac.uk/>

Appointments and job opportunities

If you have moved to a new role or institution or have any senior job opportunities that you would like us to include, please e-mail SitMui.Ng@sconul.ac.uk. These vacancies can also be found on our website at: <https://www.sconul.ac.uk/jobs-bank/current-roles/>

Vacancy: Subject Liaison Librarian, University College London

A new part-time opportunity is now available within the UCL Bartlett Library team as a 0.6 Part Time Subject Liaison Librarian. The Bartlett Subject Liaison Librarians work proactively to build relationships with students and staff to ensure that services and resources required to support learning, teaching and research are available. On a day-to-day basis, the Bartlett Subject Liaison Librarians are responsible for providing training and support, managing collections relevant to the Bartlett Faculty, and promoting and raising awareness of library developments and initiatives. **Closing date 9 August** [Read more](#)

Vacancy: Director of Library, Archives and Learning Services & University Librarian, University of York

The University of York seeks an experienced senior leader to guide the Library, Archives and Learning Services (LALS). Overseeing campus libraries and the Borthwick Institute for Archives, you will drive strategic vision, advance digital transformation and open scholarship, curate world-class collections, and enrich the student learning experience. You will possess proven experience managing large teams and multi-million-pound budgets, alongside expertise in digital tools and scholarly communications. Join a Russell Group university dedicated to the public good in a historic, vibrant city. University of York particularly welcomes applications from Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic candidates. **Closing date 6 September** [Read more](#)

Vacancy: Head of Operations, Open Book Collective

The Open Book Collective is seeking a highly organised, proactive Head of Operations to help lead the day-to-day running of their growing organisation. Working closely with the Managing Director, you will ensure that their operations are efficient, the team is supported, and projects and grants are well managed. This is a part time, fully remote role, with a working pattern that can fit around other responsibilities. **Closing date 9 September** [Read more](#)

Events

If you would like SCONUL to include any events that may be of interest to directors, please e-mail sconul@sconul.ac.uk.

LIBER Annual Conference, Trondheim, 1-3 July

ARCLIB Conference, Liverpool, 1-3 July

Copim Community workshop: How to 'Market' Open Access, 2 July

World Cafe on Subject Analysis, Edinburgh, 3 July

ALN Conference: Reimagining Openness in Academic Libraries, Manchester, 6 July

ARLIS Conference 2026: Challenging Collections, Leeds, 6-8 July

RLUK Research Shift Programme: 2.4 Impactful, 14 July

AI and the Digital Commons: Perspectives from online collections & archives, Hilversum, 15 July

14th International Congress on Medical Librarianship, Glasgow, 14-16 July

Call for contributions: NLISN (Neurodivergent Library and Information Staff Network) Conference, Leeds, 16-17 July

UKSG Open Educational Resources online seminar 2026, 29-30 July

Implementing Open BIBFRAME with the Blue Core MVP : MDGS Bites no. 12 online seminar, 25 August

CILIP Rare Books and Special Collections Group conference, Cambridge, 9-11 September

Call for submissions: AI4LAM Fantastic Futures 2026: Trust in the Loop, Washington, 15-17 September

OpenFest 2026 on Open Research: People and Place, Sheffield, 15-18 September

OASPA Conference on Open Access Scholarly Publishing 2026, Zagreb, 21-23 September

The European Print Initiative Collaboration conference, London, 30 September – 2 October

ALT Annual Conference: Learning Without Edges, Cardiff, 20-21 October

Call for papers: UKSG Online Conference 2026 – 'Trust', 9 November

46th Annual International Association of University Libraries (IATUL) Conference, Johannesburg,
22-23 November

Call for papers: CGUK Annual Conference, Bristol, 27 November