

Managing Undergraduate Dissertation Collections – Library & Academic Skills January 2018

The library currently collects examples of UG dissertations achieving a 1st or 2.1 from all Falmouth University UG courses and some University of Exeter courses (self-selecting on an opt-in basis). While much valued by students, the dissertations are time-consuming to collect, catalogue and manage, and take up a lot of space in the library. Some courses no longer require students to submit dissertations in print format and the library is being asked to develop processes to handle online access. As the shift to online collections continues, it seems timely to review the management of dissertations and the potential for saving space and staff time by no longer keeping print dissertations.

Issues

- Space constraints - library can only keep dissertations for 3 years. Tutors tend to assume they will be available for longer.
- Management - copies go missing
- Staff time - collecting, cataloguing, labelling shelving, tidying
- Student usage -not just seen as examples, but as valid academic source for their studies. Students photocopying the whole dissertation, or removing from library
- Increasing volume of dissertations at 2.1 or First
- University of Exeter does not collect undergraduate dissertations at Streatham

Options

1. Continue to keep print and/or online copies of dissertation as at present
2. Keep online copies only - continue to add to catalogue
3. No longer collect dissertations - but offer optional service to host secure PDF and provide link to go in VLE

Conclusion

Following consultation, at the Library & Academic Skills Liaison Group in November, it was agreed that the Library would:

- no longer collect paper versions of dissertations
- continue to catalogue those supplied electronically
- continue to accept Firsts and 2:1s

All electronic dissertations will be made available as secure PDFs and can only be accessed by staff and students at the Falmouth and Penryn campuses using their institutional login.

Since the University of Exeter has no institutional policy for collecting undergraduate dissertations, it will be the responsibility of the department supplying the dissertations to check that the Library has permission to host the students' work on the library catalogue.