

Enter the Library

This episode we're going to be talking to Roo who works in the library, who's going to be sharing his top tips for new students. We'll also be looking at the library and study hub websites and we'll introduce you to the library search tool.

So there are two university libraries for you to get to know. We'll start with Penryn Campus Library and then I'll tell you more about the Falmouth Campus Library.

As you come into the library, you'll probably notice how noisy it is. Lots of students spend all day here making use of the different spaces. This is because it's set up for group study - there are quiet areas on the next floor - you'll see the help desk where they're able to help you. And if you're a student who's based off campus and you need help, you can always phone or email us or use the live chat service, Ask The Library. Links and details about these can be found on the library web pages.

Near the Help Desk you will find the printers, which also work as copiers and scanners and are operated via a University ID card. Over by the printers you'll see the Hold Shelf. This is where you can pick up a book or DVD that you may have reserved. There are also some smaller bookable rooms, set up for groups to work in. To the left of the entrance, we have the current newspapers and magazines on display. This is a great place to come and browse if you have time between lectures. And of course, you'll have access to lots more online magazines, so what you see here is just a small selection.

Before we go upstairs, let's meet Roo who works in the library and he'll tell us a little bit more about life at the help desk. Could you say a little bit about what you do?

The version I tell my mom is that I move books around. But more accurately, I make sure that books are in the right place and that people can access them. So I spend a lot of time on the Penryn Help Desk helping students and staff access resources, tidying up books and make sure they go back on their shelves, sending and receiving books from Streatham Campus in Exeter, and I also work with the Academic Liaison team promoting new resources, making videos for the web, and editing these podcasts.

And what's a typical student like on the Help Desk?

That's a really hard question because it varies hugely through the term. The Penryn library is open 24 hours a day for most of the year, and gets much busier and more frantic around deadlines. But to give you a general idea; every day we help students locate books, access electronic resources, we hand out books from other libraries, and we show people how to use the printers and find their way around the library, we tidy up the space, and answer other random questions.

So what's the question you get asked the most by students.

At the start of the year, everyone asks where the books are. Because when people walk in the first time, I think they're surprised that it's loud and they can't actually see any books. So the majority of the library is study space. And we've got such a huge range of students that we've got huge range of different spaces. So we've got loud group study, solo study, quiet study, bookable group rooms, group desks, private desks, sofas, booths, and one solitary beanbag which moves around everywhere. And actually all the books and the DVDs and the maps and the vinyl and the archives, everything is upstairs. I get asked that probably 20 times a day at the start of them.

Great, thank you very much. And what would be your top tip for new students?

Come to your library induction, or at least come for a walk around library before you need to use. We'll tell you all about using the library, and we don't actually expect you to remember everything, but it will reduce your anxiety when you actually come to use the library for the first time. Learning how to use the library early on means that all your studying will be that much easier, because you can use the library like a tool instead of learning to use that tool as you go.

And finally, do you have a favourite bit of the library or favourite library resource?

I love the music collection. Since working at the library, I've gotten into so much old pop music and jazz from the collection that's up there. And I do a sort of fortnightly 'recommended listening' display, highlighting what's in the collection by putting albums in the listening station and finding old reviews and just to try and pass on to all the students and staff who come in how amazing that collection is.

Let's get back to the Library. When you go up the stairs by the magazines you arrive at an area set aside for solo study. There are also two silent study rooms and these are ideal for when you want to work quietly on your own. They also have some great views out to the coast. If you go through the double doors up in the quiet study area - where most of the book collections are - the books are arranged numerically with books on the same topic shelved together. The record is on the end of each shelf, which can be the shelf number or subject area.

Library catalogues are dotted throughout the space, which you can use to check to see if the library has certain books and where they're shelved. Remember that we have a huge collection of ebooks too. So if you're based off campus or just can't make it in, you will have access to a wide range of books. As you go further into the space on the right, there's the music collection of vinyl and CDs. There's a record player here and the CD listening post so you can try before you borrow.

Past that is the DVD collection. This is made up of films we've bought in and programs that have been recorded off the TV. Some of this collection is also available via our streaming service so you can access them off campus. And just beyond the DVDs, you'll see the flexible learning room. You may have a session in that room, so watch out for it on your timetable. On this floor there is also the reading room. When the rest of the library gets busy. You're bound to find some spaces available here.

Now to the second library at the Falmouth Campus. It's a bit more compact and everything is on one floor, but they offer a very similar service. So you will find the books which support the courses that are taught there. There is an area which displays new magazines, an area for group work and a separate room for quiet study. And of course, there's friendly staff available to help you. You're welcome to use either library, whichever campus you are based on.

So the library isn't just about physical space. Next we're going to browse through the library website. If you're based off campus, this will be your library. To find the website, simply type www.library.fxplus.ac.uk or type 'FXPlus' and 'Library' into a search engine like Google. It might be a good idea to bookmark this.

You will see that the website is divided into lots of different panels. One of these is for new students. These pages will tell you the basics you need to know - how to use the service for example - how many books you can borrow, and how you can contact us. There's also a video you can watch which gives you a quick tour of the two libraries. If you're a distance learning student there's also a link to another page which explains a bit more about the extra services we have for you, back on the main page of the website.

Next to the new student section is a link to the Study Hub. This is a great resource for advice, tips and techniques to help you improve your academic work. For example, you'll see there are sections about lectures and how to make the best of them, how to deal with written assignments and advice about referencing. To get back onto the library web page, just click on 'library' on the top menu bar.

On the library website, you'll also see there's a subject guide section. They'll be more about this in podcast three. But for now, maybe go and find the subject guide that's been created for the subject you're studying.

Probably one of the most common reasons for using these web pages that to use a search tool to find a book or other library resource. At the top of the screen, you'll see the search box. If you know exactly what you're looking for, type in the author's last name and a few words from the title. So let's look for a book by John Berger called 'Ways of Seeing' so typing 'Berger', and 'ways' and 'seeing' into the search box results brings back details of the physical print book, and the link to the Ebook version.

If you want to do a search for a topic you're interested in, just type in some keywords that would describe it. For example, social media marketing brings back a mixture of books and articles, reports and TV programs that mentions these words. We will get a lot of results back from that sort of search, so remember to use the filters to narrow it down. There will be much more about this in a later podcast.

So that's it. We've covered a lot. We've looked around two physical libraries and a virtual one. We've had a chat with someone who works here.

The next podcast is called Explore the Library and looks at finding and using your reading lists and subject guides.