

SECTION 4

OK, are you all settled? Well, first of all, welcome to Cardiff University. I'm here to explain what we can offer you.

Now, as a new student at the university, you will probably need some sort of guidance to help you to use the library effectively to study and research. Some of you have asked about a guided tour but we find this rather muddles people. So, in this first week, we run a series of talks which focus on different aspects of the library and its resources. You'll also find that to get the most out of the library you really do need to be computer literate and so all this term we run small classes which will bring you up to speed on how to access the computer-loaded information.

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OK, now let me give you an outline of what's available to you. You'll find that the computers are increasingly used as a research tool. Many students do most of their research on the internet and the library computers are permanently online. Having found what you need, you'll find you can readily save texts on your personal computer space to print off when you need. You might think that it is the fastest way to get information but the links can be slow. Clearly you can find lots on there but much of it is useless information as it is from highly debatable sources – so be critical. You'll also find that the library has loaded several CD-ROMS onto the computers from specialist reference sources such as the MLA. It means we can expand what we offer you at very little extra cost and saves us having to invest in more and more books. The CD-ROMS contain exactly the same information as the reference books as the two are updated together.

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Now most of you will need to refer to journal articles in your work and you'll find you can also access these online and we encourage you to do so.

Clearly some of you will find the printed version more accessible as it sits on the shelves but I'm afraid the intention is to phase these out eventually. However, you will still be able to print off a version of the text rather than photocopying the journal pages. So you must get used to working online. Naturally we do still have the full range of classic reference books, additional to the CD-ROMS, for you to use and there are several copies of each one. This is because some of you may prefer to borrow a book rather than sit in the library. There is a restricted loan time on these so that they are not missing from the shelves for too long. Although there is a Section Manager for each part of the library, they are very busy and so, if you do get stuck looking for things, you should ask the relevant Cataloguing Assistant. As your Training Supervisor, I just oversee your induction and will not be around after this initial week.

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Some of you may be interested to know that the library is offering specialised training sessions on writing a dissertation. Obviously this is not relevant to those of you who are undergraduates; it is just for postgraduates. Your department will discuss the planning stage of the dissertation – i.e. what you're going to do – with you and we will focus on the structure of it. However, the training will also include some time on the computers. I realise most of you know how to organise files but we can show you the different ways to run data programmes. Your tutors will tell you at the outset how to set out the chapters they require but you will need to ask them how they would like you to organise the bibliography because it varies depending on your subject area. When you've got something together the trainer here will look through the draft version for you to see if it's OK. And, one final point, for those of you who have registered from abroad, we can offer individual sessions on dissertations if you feel you need them. If you require language lessons then they are available from the International Centre next to the Law Department.

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