



**University  
of Victoria**  
Libraries

## 2024 User Feedback Survey

Summary and Key Insights

August 2024



## Acknowledgements

The 2024 UVic Libraries Feedback Survey was developed by the Libraries' Organizational Analysis and Web Team. We would like to extend our gratitude to all the groups and individuals who contributed to the development of the survey. Special thanks to members of the Libraries' Information Services Working Group, Decolonizing Spaces Working Group, and Collections Strategy Working Group for their invaluable input into questionnaire development. We also appreciate the work of Library Communications for their assistance in promoting the survey, as well as students and faculty who provided feedback during user testing. This work would not have been possible without the collaborative spirit and hard work of everyone involved. Thank you!

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## Brief summary

### What we are doing well:

UVic Libraries scores highly in terms of overall user satisfaction across all user groups. In particular:

- The spaces we provide for study and research are in high demand and are critical to student success.
- The library either often or always has the resources needed for coursework and research, across research disciplines.
- Our staff are seen almost universally as being very respectful and providing high quality support to students and faculty.
- Our workshops and events are highly valued by our community.

### Areas for improvement:

- Improve the number of seats and workspaces in our libraries.
- Increase the accessibility of washrooms and provide more universal washrooms.
- Streamline our web presence to improve awareness of and access to our resources, services, and spaces.
- Integrate more library communications and resources into Brightspace to improve student awareness.
- Address identified gaps in the collections and clarify mechanisms for users to suggest new resources.
- Improve visibility of and access to Indigenous-focused content and scholarly works with diverse authors.

## Introduction

### Background

The University of Victoria Libraries 2024 User Feedback Survey gathered insight into the needs and satisfaction of the key communities we serve. The survey focused on three general areas of our work: library services, spaces, and collections. Through this survey, we aim to establish a baseline for understanding and responding to user needs as they evolve over time.

The survey questionnaire was developed internally by the library's Organizational Analysis and Web Team, in collaboration with the Libraries' Information Services Working Group, Collections Strategy Working Group, and Decolonizing Spaces Working Group. Testing and validation of the questionnaire was completed with a voluntary group of UVic students and faculty before data collection. Before release, we received approval from UVic Research Ethics (#230610).

The survey was open to responses during a six-week period, from March 1 to April 12, 2024. Participation was open to current members of the UVic community, including undergraduate and graduate students, faculty members, lecturers, visiting researchers, and support staff. Their participation was voluntary and anonymous.

## Questionnaire design

The survey questionnaire consisted of 20 core questions organized thematically into topics of spaces, collections, and services. Participants were required to provide general information about their affiliation to the university, while responses to all other questions were not required.

Participants were required to proceed to the end of the survey before submitting their responses. Questions were designed to assess how frequently our resources and services are currently used, as well as participants' level of satisfaction with them. Opportunities for open-text feedback were provided in each section to gather qualitative feedback. An optional questionnaire soliciting additional demographic information was included at the end of the survey, with the aim of identifying the views of underrepresented groups.

## Response statistics

The User Feedback Survey gathered 2,488 responses. Table 1 shows the distribution of responses by user group, and Table 2 shows their distribution across UVic faculties and divisions.

**Table 1. Survey response rate for UVic user communities.**

User Groups	Count of survey respondents	Percentage of survey respondents	Percentage of total UVic population <sup>1</sup>
Undergraduate students	1,891	76%	10%
Graduate students	377	15%	9%
Faculty and lecturers	140	6%	16%
Other staff (support staff, visiting researchers, etc.)	80	3%	NA

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<sup>1</sup> Undergraduate and Graduate students: SASS portal official snapshot dates for 2023-2024; Faculty and lecturers: UVic Factbook Table 31 - Unique Faculty by Full/Part Time and Rank for 2023

**Table 2. Survey response counts from UVic faculties and divisions.**

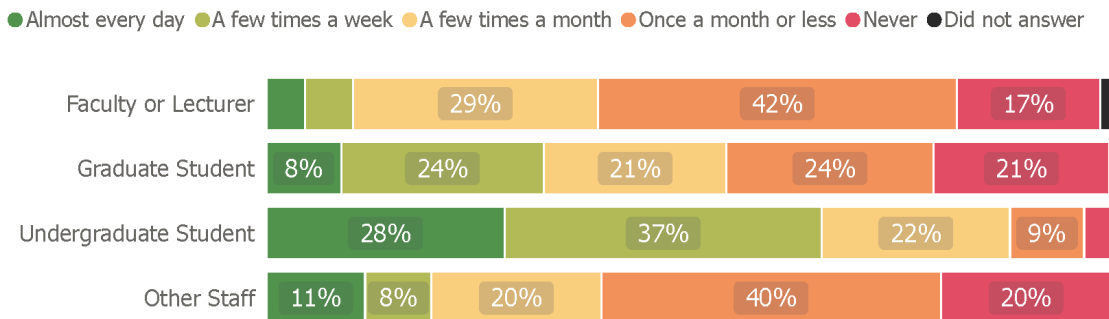
Faculty or Division	Faculty and Lecturers	Graduate Students	Undergraduate Students	Other Staff
Business	7	30	120	4
Continuing Studies	3	70	3	9
Education	13	24	97	4
Engineering and Computer Science	4	74	292	13
Fine Arts	14	20	147	17
Human and Social Development	18	64	81	8
Humanities	31	29	210	7
Law	4	9	53	1
Medical Sciences		7	13	
Science	18	21	387	14
Social Sciences	32	53	588	9
Other Campus Units	2	1	8	43

## Physical spaces

### Library usage

Our two physical buildings, Mearns Centre for Learning - McPherson Library and Diana M. Priestly Law Library, provide essential spaces for study, research, and collaboration, and enable access to library supports and technologies. Unsurprisingly, use of our physical spaces is most frequent among undergraduate students, more than half of whom reported visiting the libraries either daily or multiple times a week (Figure 1). Variation in use is greater for graduate students, who have varying degrees of access to office space on campus depending on their program. Faculty, lecturers, and other user groups access our physical spaces least frequently.

**Figure 1. Frequency of in-person visits to Mearns Centre for Learning - McPherson Library or Diana M. Priestly Law Library.**

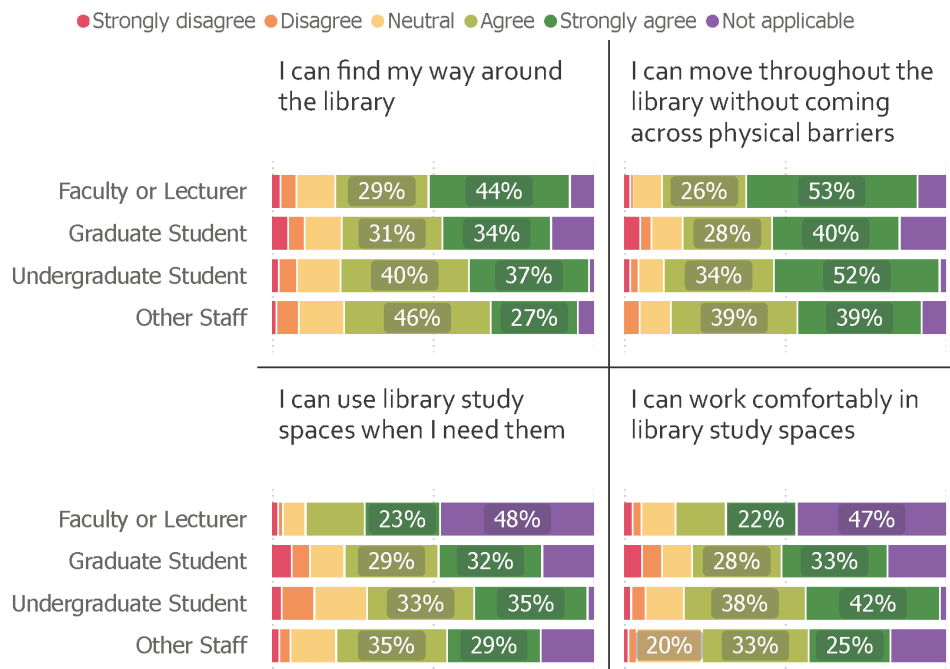


## Availability and accessibility of spaces

Overall, participants’ ratings show that our spaces are meeting most user needs (Figure 2). Many comments noted the productive atmosphere, access to natural light, and diversity of workspaces as key features. However, there is room to improve availability and accessibility of the Libraries. Notably, a quarter of respondents disagreed with the statement “*I can use library spaces when I need them*” (26% undergraduate; 23% graduate) and among those who provided comments, there was a high level of frustration about inadequate study spaces.

- Concerns around crowdedness and difficulty in finding places to sit and study were top of mind for respondents, whether seeking space for group work or silent study. Some respondents also requested extended opening hours.
- The washrooms in Mearns - McPherson are not accessible or inclusive for many users. Respondents frequently requested more universally accessible washrooms and gender-neutral washrooms throughout the building.
- Group study rooms and Tek Booths are valued resources. However, their availability is limited, prompting requests for more of these types of spaces and that alternative booking models be explored (e.g. shorter booking windows or waitlists).
- Many users noted uncomfortable chairs as a barrier – especially the red rolling chairs – requesting more ergonomic or alternative seating types. “Café style” seating is ineffective for computer work and writing, and more table surfaces and power outlets are needed.
- Some users expressed feeling overstimulated in the Libraries, whether from overcrowding, noise, or harsh fluorescent lights. Many users requested more neurodivergent-friendly spaces and services (e.g. adjustable lighting, quiet spaces, ear plugs, and fidget toys).

**Figure 2. Perceptions of the accessibility of the Libraries’ physical spaces.**

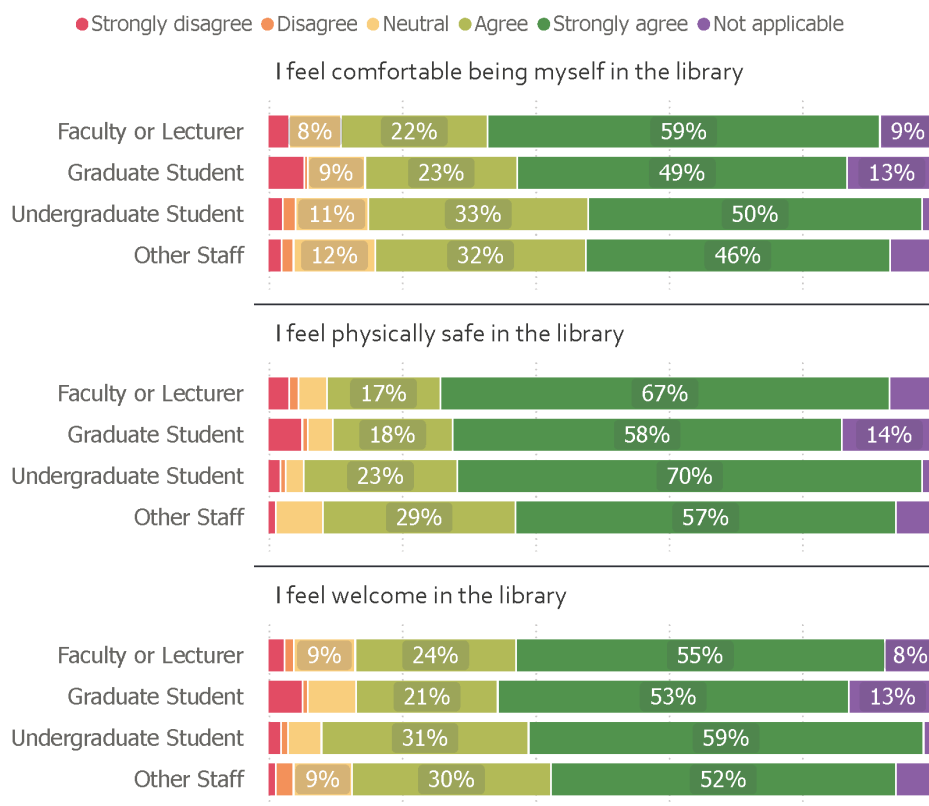


## Feelings of belonging and safety

When we asked participants about their perceptions of the library’s physical spaces, most respondents agreed or strongly agreed with statements of feeling welcome (87%), feeling comfortable being themselves (81%), and feeling physically safe in library spaces (90%) (Figure 3). Overall, these findings are favourable. However, we received recurring comments about several areas for improvement.

- Our spaces are not monitored effectively for noise or food and beverages. Users requested better signage or reminders of policies and community norms around space use.
- Some respondents shared concerns about security, particularly in Mearns - McPherson, due to poor visibility in the stacks and incidents of theft.
- The most challenging comments concern feelings that our spaces can be exclusionary; from inaccessibility of physical spaces, to who and what we promote on our walls and shelves. These comments emphasize the need for our physical spaces to reflect our values and commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility.

**Figure 3. Perceptions of the Libraries’ physical spaces.**



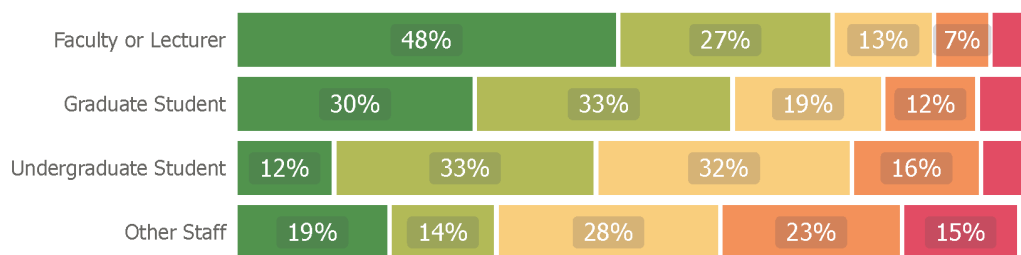
## Online spaces

### Website as research platform

The Libraries' online spaces, including our main website, online research guides, and digital repositories, are portals to millions of scholarly resources and the key point of communication and access to our services. Frequent use of our online spaces is highest with faculty and lecturers (Figure 4), and most of the comments received about our online presence relate to our main search tool, reinforcing the fact that our website is first and foremost a research platform.

**Figure 4. Frequency of use of UVic Libraries website and online resources.**

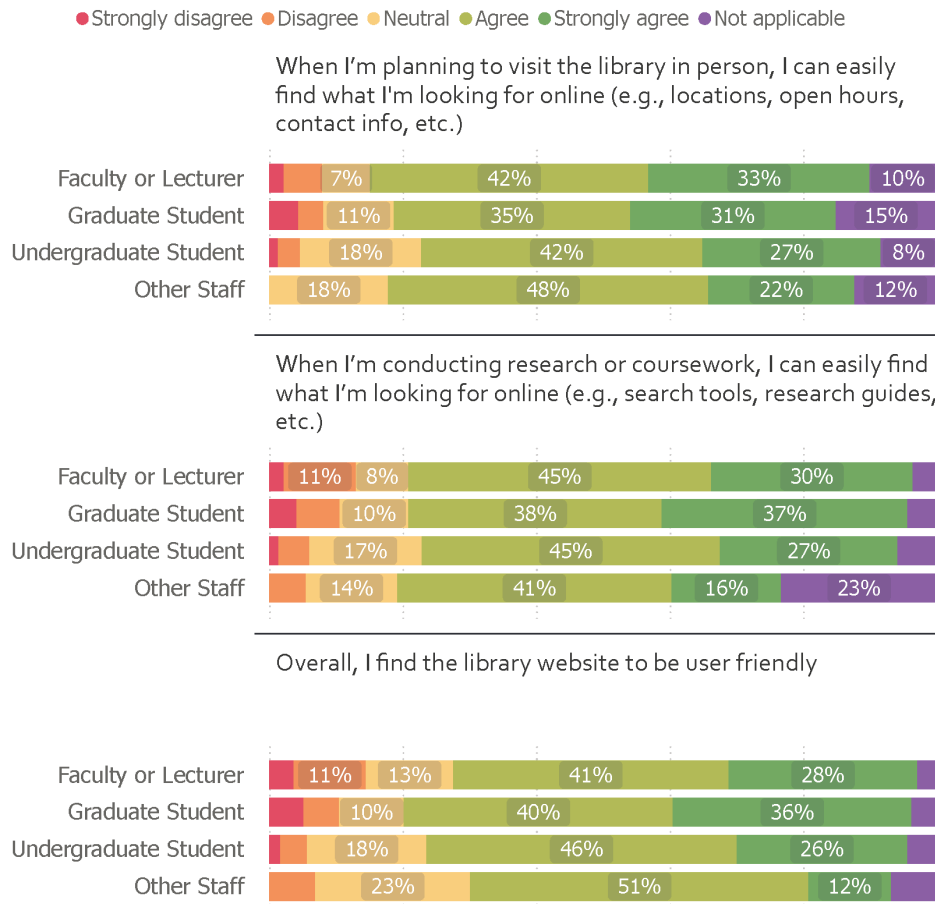
● Almost every day ● A few times a week ● A few times a month ● Once a month or less ● Never ● Did not answer



User satisfaction with the Libraries' website and online navigation is mixed (Figure 5). For instance, across user groups, over one-quarter of respondents disagreed that our website is user friendly. Some specific user comments shed light into this finding; however, our concurrent research into library website usability will provide more insight.

- Many users have challenges finding what they need on our website, particularly finding specific databases, accessing streaming media, and searching our Special Collections and University Archives.
- There is general confusion about the integration of tools, leading to difficulty accessing licensed materials via publisher websites and off-campus.
- Connecting our collections and services into Brightspace is an important opportunity for improving access, especially for undergraduate students (Table 3).

**Figure 5. Satisfaction with UVic Libraries website and online presence.**



**Table 3. Preferred methods for discovering scholarly resources.**

Preferred method of finding material	Faculty and Lecturers	Graduate Students	Undergraduate Students
A.I. research platforms (e.g., Semantic Scholar, Elicit, etc.)	7%	15%	10%
Brightspace	21%	54%	71%
Connection with other scholars (through personal connections, conferences, etc.)	38%	16%	9%
Course reserves	10%	20%	24%
Google Scholar	52%	59%	52%
In-person at UVic Libraries	25%	28%	18%
Internet search engine (e.g., Google, Bing, DuckDuckGo, etc.)	52%	56%	58%
Library databases (e.g. Scopus, Business Source Complete, JSTOR, etc.)	70%	51%	59%
Library search (main search box on the library homepage)	72%	57%	57%
Pre-print repositories (e.g., Academia.edu, arXiv, SSRN, etc.)	16%	10%	4%
Publisher websites	21%	16%	17%

## Collections

### Collection satisfaction for coursework

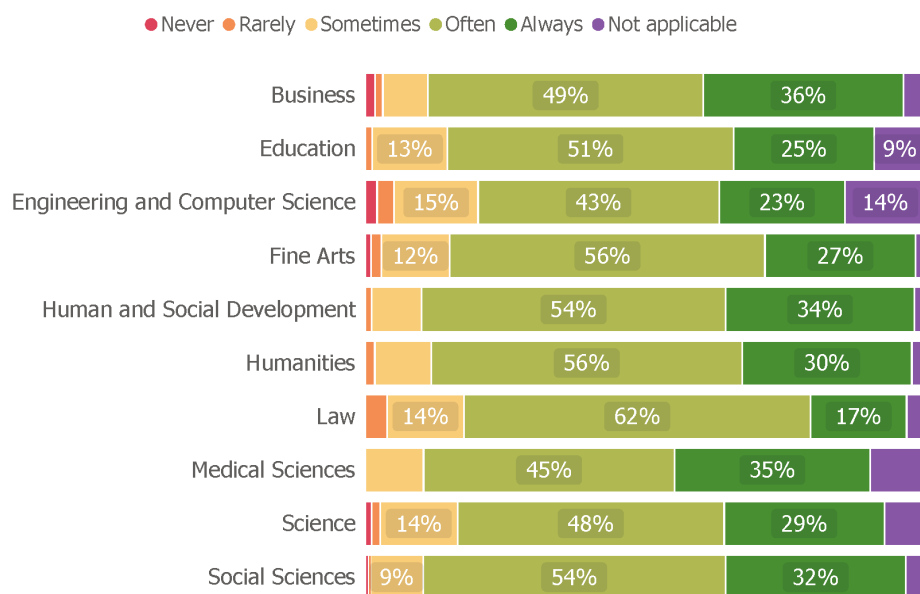
The variety of materials available in our collections was noted as a strength of the Libraries. We asked respondents identifying as either graduate or undergraduate students about their satisfaction with library resources for coursework.

- Most students indicated the library had what they required either often or always (Figure 6).
- Areas for improvement include access to more online textbooks, as well as improved availability of news media and leisure reading materials.

Other comments highlighted barriers to our collections for some students.

- Fines and blocks on accounts prevent use of physical materials for some students, who request more transparency and notice when charges are accruing.
- Longer loan periods for short duration items (e.g. video recordings, course reserves) would improve accessibility for users who have difficulty getting to campus.

**Figure 6. Views of undergraduate and graduate students on library resources for coursework.**



### Collection satisfaction for research

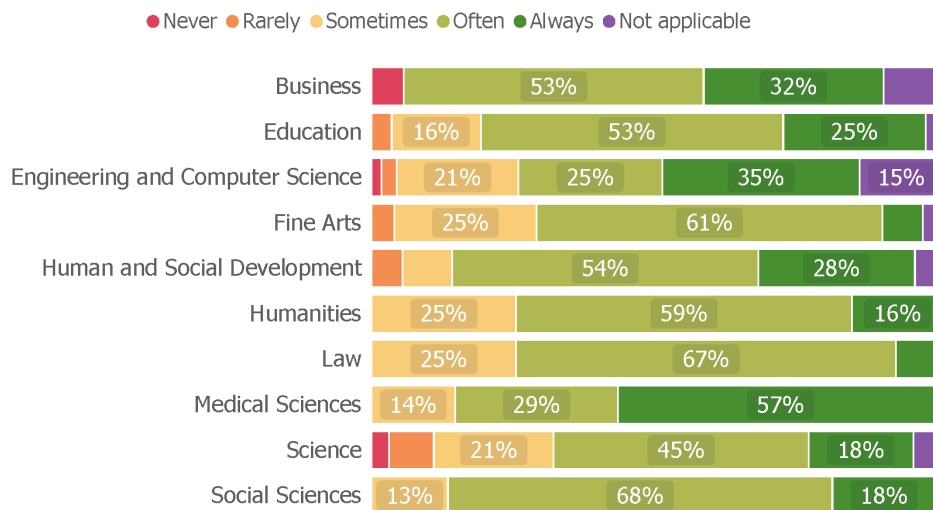
The satisfaction of faculty and graduate students with our resources for research varies by faculty.

- Most respondents indicated that the library either often or always has the resources needed for research (Figure 7). The least satisfied respondents were affiliated with Sciences, Engineering, Business, and Fine Arts faculties.
- Some respondents noted specific resources missing from our collections that are core to their area of research and/or noted confusion over how to suggest resources for purchase.

- Respondents also requested improved access to scholarly works by diverse authors historically underrepresented in our collections, and improved browsability of collections for Indigenous-focused content.

Regarding collection services, faculty praised the work of interlibrary loans and ReQuest document delivery. More training and educational materials that are targeted for specific user groups on how to use search tools and services (e.g. course reserves, interlibrary loans) would benefit all users.

**Figure 7. Views of faculty, lecturers, and graduate students on library resources for research.**



## Services

### User support

When assessing user satisfaction in libraries, various indicators can shed light on the quality of service and overall user experience. The survey evaluated user satisfaction of library services across four dimensions: awareness of library services, feelings of respect, timeliness of support, and comfort asking for support.

Respondents across all user groups strongly felt they were treated with respect when dealing with library staff (Figure 8), and the helpfulness and positivity of staff was shared in many comments.

Respondents generally indicated feeling comfortable asking for help in the library and receiving help in a timely manner. Several areas for improvement surfaced repeatedly in user comments.

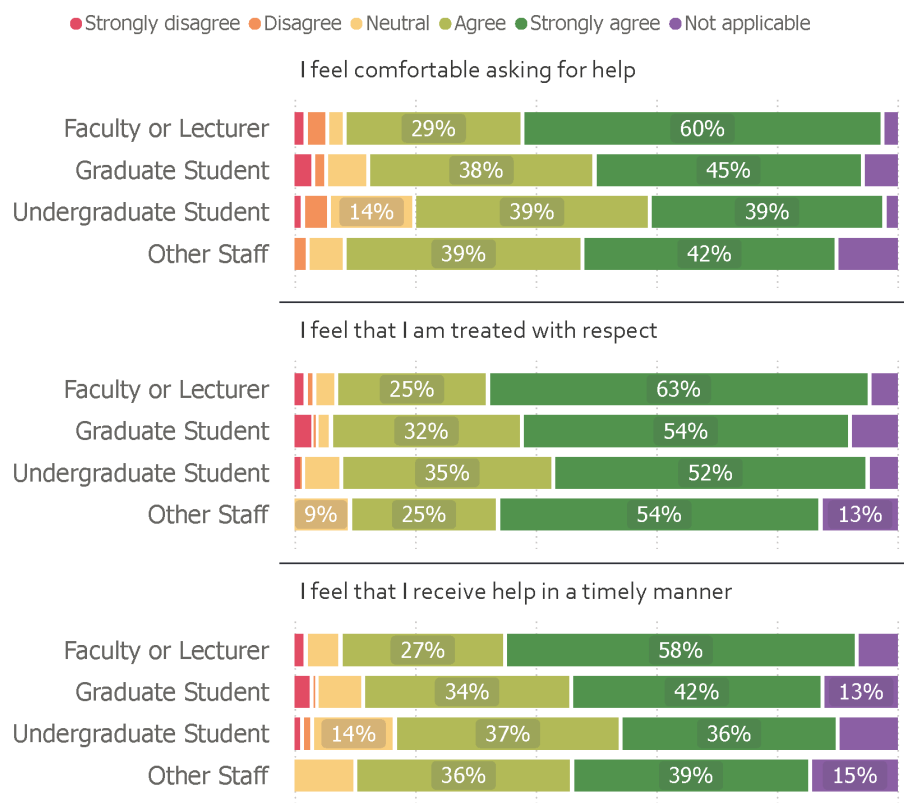
- Both undergraduate and graduate students seek a mix of in-person (drop-in) and online support. Online provides greater accessibility but can leave an impersonal impression.
- The online booking model for research help support can be a source of frustration, as librarian availability can be limited. Many users are unaware they can contact librarians directly for support.
- Access to plain-language tutorials on library services are sought by both students and faculty (e.g. course reserves, finding workshops).

## Research services

The scope of areas of support suggested by users spans the research lifecycle, from support for search strategies and knowledge synthesis, to instruction on working with primary data, through to publication.

- The Libraries' workshops are seen as invaluable resources for all user groups.
- Graduate students are seeking more support with advanced data visualization, source code, statistical analysis, and qualitative research methods.
- Faculty also look to the Libraries for greater support for open-access publishing and reducing the cost of Article Processing Charges.
- Users also expressed interest in more general workshops on archival research methods and accessing our archival materials, which could support more interdisciplinary work.

**Figure 8. Satisfaction with library services.**

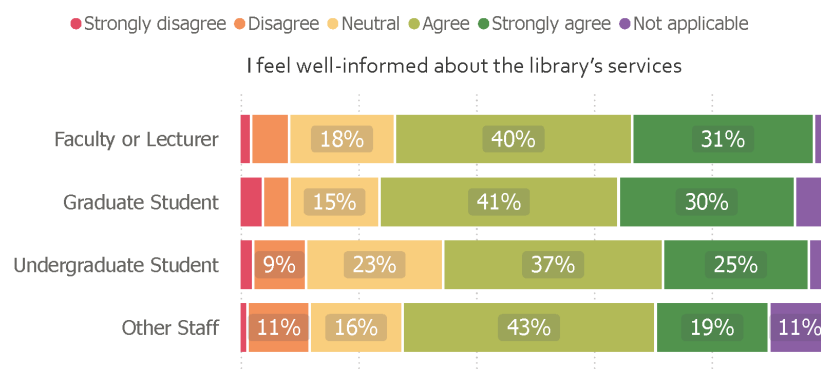


## Awareness and communication

Communication cuts across all major categories of this survey, and while most users report feeling informed about library services, comparatively it is our weakest performing area of user satisfaction (Figure 9). How users learn about library services varies by user group, which can inform more targeted communications (Table 4).

- In their comments, respondents provided many suggestions for services that we currently offer, highlighting low awareness. Many requested a clear presentation of library service offerings, pointing to necessary improvements to the library’s website.
- UVic staff (who are neither faculty nor students) shared their confusion over what library services they are able to access.
- Greater integration of library communication into courses, via lectures, course materials, or Brightspace, is an important avenue for improving awareness for students.
- The relationship between the Libraries and Learning and Teaching Support and Innovation (LTSI) is an important pathway for students, enabling awareness of each other’s services.
- In-person events and exhibits are an important draw across communities, and many of the Libraries’ recent events have left a lasting impression on our users based on comments.

**Figure 9. User perceptions of being informed about library services.**



**Table 4. Methods for discovering information about the Libraries.**

Channel	Faculty and Lecturers	Graduate Students	Undergraduate Students	Other Staff
Class presentation	5%	17%	25%	4%
Club or course union	2%	3%	5%	
Course materials	8%	35%	43%	12%
Library booth at event	5%	5%	7%	4%
Library website	67%	52%	45%	51%
None selected	19%	5%	5%	17%
Referred by a colleague or co-worker	19%	12%	7%	23%
Referred by another student	2%	18%	30%	9%
Referred by library staff	22%	16%	13%	20%
Referred by my instructor	2%	34%	45%	6%
Signs and screens elsewhere on campus	6%	14%	21%	25%
Signs and screens in the library	10%	16%	28%	16%
Social media	8%	20%	24%	12%

## Overall satisfaction

We asked respondents how likely they would be to recommend the library to a classmate or colleague. This question gauges whether users find the service valuable enough to endorse it to others, which is a common indicator of overall satisfaction and perceived quality.

Across all user groups and faculties (Table 5), most respondents indicated they would be likely or very likely to recommend UVic Libraries.

**Table 5. Overall satisfaction with UVic Libraries.**

Affiliation	Not at all likely	Not likely	Neutral	Likely	Very likely	Not applicable	Did not answer
Faculty or Lecturer	3%		8%	24%	61%	4%	1%
Graduate Student	1%	2%	7%	27%	62%	2%	0%
Undergraduate Student	0%	1%	9%	40%	47%	1%	1%
Other Staff		1%	10%	33%	50%	5%	1%

## Next steps

This report is being published to share back the data we gathered from the UVic community. Stay tuned for ongoing communication about the actions we are taking based on your feedback.

We also plan to run this survey again in the future to assess our improvements and evaluate how user needs are changing over time.

Our user survey is just one step in developing more regular engagement and evaluation of user satisfaction. Other opportunities to share opinions about the Libraries' resources and evaluate our services are communicated via the Libraries' [User Engagement Pool](#).

## Questions or feedback?

If you have questions or comments about this report, please contact Shahira Khair, Organizational Analysis Librarian ([skhair@uvic.ca](mailto:skhair@uvic.ca)).