

University of Washington Libraries 2018 In-Library Use Survey

Survey instrument, comment codes, and full results via Tableau dashboards are available from the Libraries Assessment website: <http://www.lib.washington.edu/assessment/surveys/ilu>

Executive Summary

The 2018 In-Library Use Survey is the 6th such survey that has been run every three years since 2002. This survey is designed to provide a snapshot of who is using our libraries, why users visited, and what they did during their visits. The In Library Use Survey complements the Libraries Triennial Survey, which is a large-scale user survey that has been done every three years since 1992. One of the UW Libraries 2018-2021 strategic goals focuses on the need to “Develop and advocate for new and evolving library spaces that address student enrollment growth and changes in scholarship and learning.” This survey directly advances this goal by providing an important source of data for both advocacy and understanding student space needs.

One page surveys were distributed to those entering the library during two hour time periods on selected weekdays in April and May and completed surveys were returned as users exited the library. Optional additional survey sessions were run in selected libraries to explore specific questions about space use during weekend and evening hours. While most of the survey instrument is consistent across all libraries, there is the opportunity to do some limited customization for each library. Larger libraries can ask users to mark specify specific areas or units within the library they visited, and each library can add categories to the core questions.

RESULTS: KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **Overall, library spaces are most heavily used by undergraduate students, followed by graduate students.** Undergraduates made up 76% of respondents, graduate students 18%. However, there is wide variation between libraries: 60% of Built Environment respondents, for example, were graduate students. Faculty made up 14% of users at Math Research, compared to 3% overall for all libraries.
- **Over half of patrons spend more than an hour in the library per visit.** Overall, 57% of respondents spent one or more hours in the library during their visit, and visits of less than 30 minutes decreased among all respondent groups. Smaller libraries (Art, BE, Drama, Math) had higher percentages of respondents staying for 30 minutes or less, which is likely connected to the higher rate of respondents at these locations who reported looking for library resources and/or checking out/returning items.
- **Both undergraduate and graduate students tend to prefer quiet spaces that promote individual work.** Most students preferred quiet or individual work spaces. This is in line with responses to other survey questions, which found that 71% of respondents used the library to

work independently. Survey comments also indicated the importance of quiet space, as noise considerations were a key theme. Nevertheless, group study also remains important to students, and survey comments in particular illustrate a desire for more group study spaces on campus.

- **Students are working on a variety of coursework types and assignments in library spaces.** 42% of students were working two or more activities during their stay. 29% of these students were working on assigned class reading and a writing assignment. The majority of undergraduates reported studying for exams (43%), followed by working on writing assignments (31%) and class reading (28%). Graduate students reported working on writing assignments (34%), studying for exams (23%) and conducting research for a course project or thesis/dissertation (21%).
- **Improvements to furniture and cleanliness, as well as the need for additional outlets & charging stations, are key themes in comments.** The highest percentage of comments (25%) relate to furniture, mostly connected to the need for updated furniture and additional tables/study spaces.

LIBRARIES-WIDE RECOMMENDATIONS

Results from the In Library Use survey suggest a number of specific areas for follow up action:

- Share comments about cleanliness with University custodial services and other partners, such as Starbucks and Learning Technologies. Provide students with materials to clean workstations and study spaces themselves.
- Address the issue of noise control in study rooms across various locations. Zoning or other consistent signage to indicate types of study areas could more immediately address the significant number of comments about a lack of distinction (and the disruptiveness this can cause) between types of study spaces.
- The majority of users are in the library for quiet, individual study and expressed a preference for quiet spaces. Care should be taken when creating new group and technology-enabled spaces to preserve quiet/individual work spaces and maintain the balance of spaces across the system.
- Furniture replacement and the need for more comfortable and varied types of furniture should be addressed across the libraries. Specific strategies might include: using dividers on large desks; providing study pods for private/quiet study space; reviewing existing space use in Odegaard to identify places where seating could be maximized.
- Wherever possible, adding additional outlets/charging stations in Odegaard, Suzzallo Allen, and Health Sciences would address a key challenge for users.

In addition, there are a number of recommendations about the ongoing use and communication of the In Library Use survey results:

- Libraries staff should consider using demographic data and patterns in types of work to inform the development of targeted services for specific groups (e.g., Engineering students) and in specific locations (e.g., OUGL).

- In Library Use Survey data should be explored more systematically alongside other data sources (such as computer log-in, User Query, and circulation data) to develop a more comprehensive picture of what is happening in libraries spaces.
- A communication plan is critical for sharing results and improvements with users, and also for communicating why important issues may take longer to address (e.g., gender-neutral restrooms).
- A more coordinated approach to acting on survey results is needed across the UW Seattle libraries. Key barriers to acting on results include a lack of clarity about responsibilities and process for making changes. There are a number of issues that might be addressed system-wide, which could result in cost-savings for the Libraries as well as a more consistent user experience.

University of Washington Libraries 2018 In-Library Use Survey:

Report and Recommendations

INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

The 2018 In-Library Use Survey is the 6th such survey that has been run every three years since 2002. The latest iteration of the survey was postponed for a year (from 2017 to 2018) due to the closure of the cafe in Suzzallo Library during 2016-2017. This survey is designed to provide a snapshot of who is using our libraries, why users visited, and what they did during their visits. The In Library Use Survey complements the Libraries Triennial Survey, which is a large-scale user survey that has been done every three years since 1992 (the two surveys are not run in the same years). While the In Library Use Survey provides specific insights into the use of physical spaces, the Triennial provides broader information about faculty and student priorities, needs, and satisfaction with a range of library services and resources. One of the UW Libraries 2018-2021 strategic goals focuses on the need to “Develop and advocate for new and evolving library spaces that address student enrollment growth and changes in scholarship and learning.” This survey directly advances this goal by providing an important source of data for both advocacy and understanding student space needs.

With the decline in the frequency of faculty and graduate student visits to the physical library, surveying users in library facilities can provide a more accurate method for acquiring information about the usage of library spaces and the services available in those libraries. A decline in importance or use of specific services and resources in the physical library does not necessarily reflect importance or frequency of use in an online environment. For more specific information by user group and unit, see the University of Washington Libraries 2018 In Library Use Survey results, as well as the 2016 Triennial Survey results (both available via the [Libraries assessment website](#)).

METHODOLOGY AND RESPONSE RATES

Survey methodology and distribution for the In Library Use Survey have remained reasonably consistent since its inception. One page surveys are distributed to those entering the library during two hour time periods on selected weekdays and completed surveys are returned as users exit the library. The 2018 survey period ran from April 19 through May 22 (weeks 4-9 in the quarter), and sessions were conducted in selected two hour mid-day blocks from Tuesday to Thursday. All libraries except Foster Business, Health Sciences, Suzzallo-Allen and Odegaard ran the survey for three additional sessions in order to meet a minimum requirement for at least 50 completed surveys in each library (which is important for data analysis and comparison across smaller libraries). In 2018, optional additional sessions were run in Odegaard Undergraduate Library, the Music library, East Asia Library, and UW Tacoma. Data from additional special sessions is not included in the aggregate or unit-specific reports and is analyzed separately.

A full description of methods used for the 2018 In Library Use Survey is available in the appendix.

The nominal response rate for the sessions in common for 2018 was 54%. Detail on the change in response over time is available in the Appendix. The total number of surveys distributed dropped by 25%, while the total number of responses increased by 4%. Larger libraries tend to have lower response rates and users are underrepresented while smaller libraries tend to be overrepresented. However, since 92% of the completed surveys for sessions held in common came from the five largest libraries, the actual impact is fairly small. The table below shows response rates by library for all sessions, with a separate total also showing aggregate response rate during the 3 sessions held in common.

	<i>Distributed, All Sessions</i>	<i>Distributed, Common Sessions</i>	<i>Response Rate* All Sessions</i>	<i>Response Rate* Common Sessions</i>
<i>Art</i>	52	39	88.46%	87.18%
<i>Built Environments</i>	115	60	93.91%	96.67%
<i>Drama</i>	50	21	100.00%	100.00%
<i>East Asia</i>	161	93	84.47%	81.72%
<i>Engineering</i>	534	340	70.79%	73.82%
<i>Foster Business</i>	423	423	73.52%	73.52%
<i>Health Sciences</i>	538	538	67.66%	67.66%
<i>Mathematics</i>	63	21	93.65%	85.71%
<i>Music</i>	112	50	47.32%	46.00%
<i>Odegaard Undergraduate</i>	2665	2665	38.50%	38.50%
<i>Suzzallo-Allen</i>	2276	2276	54.04%	54.04%
Totals	6989	6526	57.42%	54.11%
<i>*The response rate is calculated on the number of surveys returned divided by the number distributed.</i>				

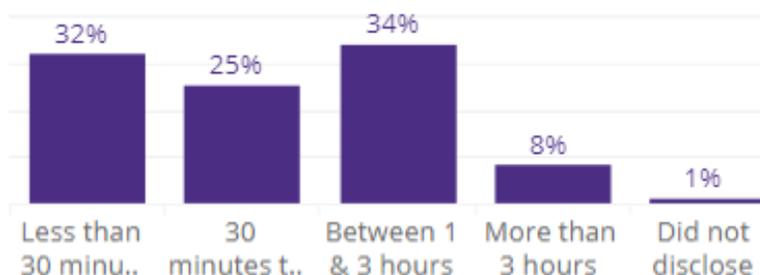
SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS AND TRENDS

Faculty & Staff

Faculty and staff accounted for 3% of library visits, far below their percentage of the campus population, but similar to previous surveys. This is in alignment with the 2016 Triennial Survey results, which showed that faculty library use is overwhelmingly online and remote rather than physically visiting the library.

- Faculty and staff were more likely to use the libraries for relatively short periods (32% of this group spent 30 minutes or less in the library during their visit). This may be explained by the relatively high proportion of circulation activity reported by this group.
- 28% of faculty/staff respondents checked out or returned materials during their visit, compared to 6% across all respondent groups.
- 18% of faculty/staff comments on the 2018 ILU survey related to collections and access, the most common category after facilities (30%). These results are similar to the 2016 Triennial Survey, which found that collections remain key for faculty. 95% of Triennial survey faculty respondents marked a 5 (“very important” on a 1 to 5 scale) for either books or journals in terms of importance to their work. Comments on the Triennial survey highlighted the importance of collections both for teaching and research, and approximately 40% of total faculty comments related to collections.

“How long did you spend in this library today?” Responses from faculty across 3 standard sessions.



“What did you do in the library today?” Circulation-related responses broken down by faculty, graduate students, and undergraduate students from 3 standard sessions.

	Faculty/Staff	Graduate/Professional	Undergraduates
Borrowed/returned items	28%	11%	4%
Looked for lib resources	13%	13%	6%

Students

Across all libraries, undergraduate students represent 76% of respondents and graduate students represent 18% of respondents.

- Demographic patterns varied by library; at Health Sciences, graduate students represent 56% of respondents, at Built Environments, graduate students represent 60% of respondents.
- Students in the College of Arts & Sciences, Natural Sciences represented the largest percentage of undergraduate respondents (28%), followed by Engineering at 16% and Arts & Sciences, Social Sciences at 15%. Students who indicated that their major was “Undecided” represented 10% of all respondents.
- Graduate and professional students were more widely distributed with 15% in Engineering, and 10% in Medicine and Pharmacy.

Work Spaces: ‘What did you do in this library today’ & ‘What sort of environment do you prefer?’

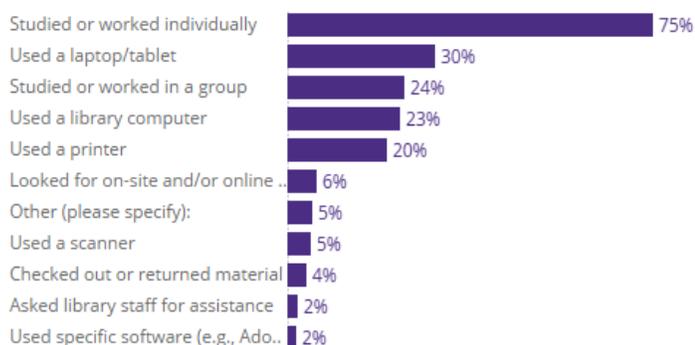
Group and Individual Study

“What did you do in this library today” is a core question on this survey and has been used to better understand the behavior and activities of library users. In 2018, “What sort of environment do you prefer to work in” was added to capture user preferences for particular types of work spaces, which may or may not align with the types of spaces students were actually using. The results from these questions

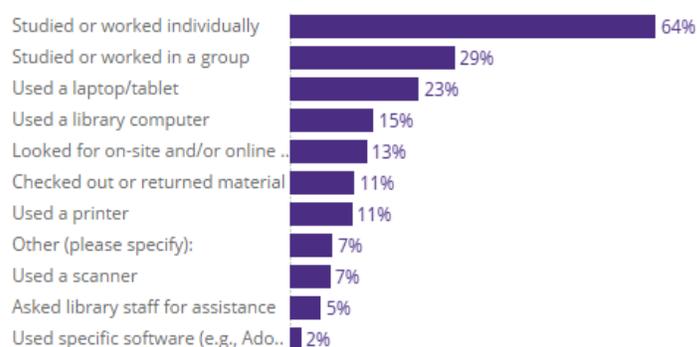
are presented together, as it is important to understand preferences as well as behavior in order to ensure spaces continue to meet current and emerging needs.

“What did you do in the library today?” Responses from undergraduate and graduate students from 3 standard sessions, sorted to show top categories for each.

Undergraduate Students



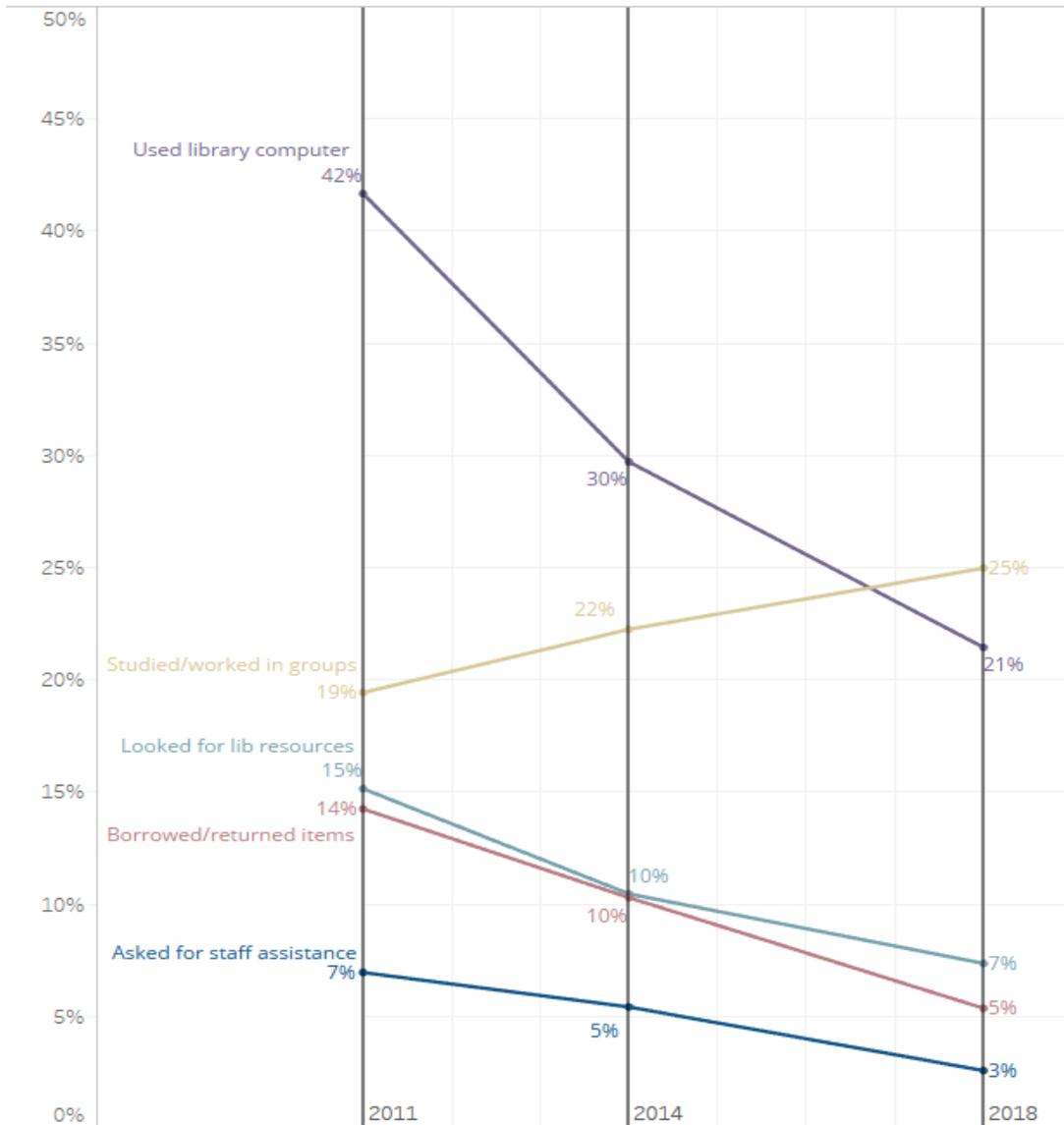
Graduate Students



Students use and value the types of individual and group study spaces provided by the Libraries.

- Survey results show that a majority of students engage in several different types of activity during their visit, including both group and individual work.
- 71% of respondents studied or worked alone and 24% studied or worked in groups.
- Between 2014 and 2018, the percentage of respondents who studied/worked alone increased from 63% to 71%, and the percentage of respondents who studied/worked in groups increased slightly from 21% to 24%.
- This trend is also reflected in the survey comments, a high number of which reflected the need for additional study spaces or additional furniture and resources to enable studying. 12% of all survey comments were about study spaces.
- Comments highlight the tension that can accompany spaces for group work and individual work that are in close proximity.

“What did you do in the library today?” Change in response over time of student responses (combined graduate and undergraduate) from 3 standard sessions.



Students tend to prioritize quieter spaces that promote individual work.

- Most students preferred quiet (58% of undergraduates and 49% of graduate students) or individual work spaces (55% of undergraduates and 55% of graduate students).
- Graduate students are more interested in silent study than other groups. Silent spaces scored higher among graduate students (39%) than faculty/staff and undergraduates (both 29%).
- 8% of all survey comments were about noise.

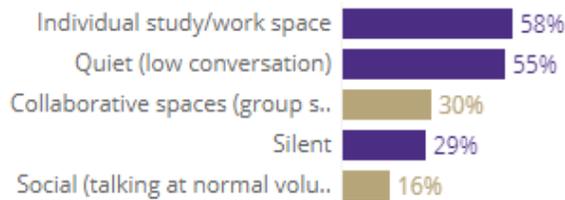
Study Spaces Comments (Graduate & Undergraduate Students, Selected)

- More reservable collaborative spaces might be helpful, but I appreciate the individual desks and the emphasis on quiet spaces. I also appreciate the natural lighting! (Graduate)
- More study spaces for students, that goes for all buildings & libraries because there's no place for us to study on campus. (Undergraduate)
- More small group tables/ work spaces in non quiet areas; Reduce echo in (quiet) reading room (Undergraduate)
- Better separation between quiet area & common area. I can always hear people talk in common area though myself is sitting in quiet area. (Graduate)
- More computers or tables or chairs (especially during midterms and finals week) (Undergraduate)
- More tables/seating on the first floor [of Odegaard] because the library gets crowded during midterm/finals time. (Undergraduate)
- Free printing! Also potentially more tables during dead week/finals week. (Undergraduate)

“What sort of environment do you prefer?” Responses from undergraduates and graduates from 3 standard sessions. Respondents were asked to select their top 2 preferences. Those selecting 4 or 5 are excluded from results. Gold highlights collaborative/social, purple indicates silent, quiet, and individual.

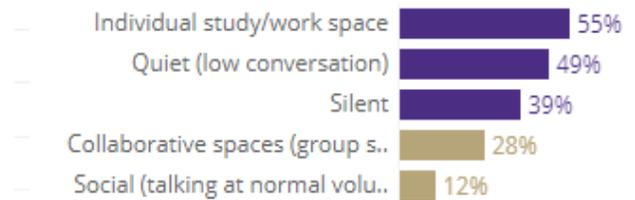
Undergraduate Students

What sort of environment do you prefer?
Select top 2



Graduate Students

What sort of environment do you prefer?
Select top 2



Undergraduate students are also interested in collaborative or social study spaces.

- Collaborative spaces scored highest among undergraduates (30%), followed by graduate students (28%).
- Social study spaces scored lowest of the five options for every group, but they were more popular among undergraduates (16%) than other groups.

Quiet & Individual Study Spaces Comments (Graduate & Undergraduate Students, Selected)

- I've always found it a really comfortable space to get serious work done in, there are no distractions. *(Graduate)*
- More silent spaces, enforce noise restrictions in "quiet" section. i.e. don't hold loud events on the 4th floor "quiet" section *(Undergraduate, Suzzallo/Allen)*
- Encourage people to be quieter, and to be courteous of students doing actual work *(Undergraduate)*
- Foster Library can get SO loud sometimes! I wish there were a better way to regulate that. So many people talk at regular voice level or are loud walking through the library. This place would be a lot better if it was a little more quiet! *(Undergraduate)*
- A library cannot have too many places one can enter, close a door, and read/study in solitude or near-solitude. So more of that would be awesome. *(Graduate)*
- The only library area I equally prefer are the "carrels" in the law library. Adding carrels to Suzzallo may be an ok improvement. I greatly appreciate that this library is not as crowded or boisterous as Odegaard. *(Undergraduate, Suzzallo/Allen)*
- I love quiet nooks to be comfortable while working on my computer; needs good light and an outlet. You guys have great chairs, but not enough laptop work surfaces for those comfy chairs. *(Undergraduate, Built Environments Library)*
- More individual work spaces because they fill up pretty quickly. *(Undergraduate)*

Desire for more group study spaces is consistent over time.

- Survey comments in particular illustrate a desire for more group study spaces on campus: 5% of all survey comments related to group study.
- This is consistent with results from the 2016 Triennial survey, where space-related comments represented 50% of all undergraduate comments and 30% of graduate student comments. Across both groups, individual study spaces represented 27% of space-related comments on the Triennial survey and group study spaces represented 12%.

Group Study Spaces Comments (Graduate & Undergraduate Students, Selected)

- I understand that second floor is a non-silent study area; but it does get too loud from time to time. I really prefer to study under a semi-quiet environment (low conversation) with my friends. *(Undergraduate, Odegaard Library)*
- Additional group study space. *(Graduate)*
- App for available seats? Sometimes a group of 4 or 3 people can't find a group table. If not possible, get signs on group table that say only with groups? *(Undergraduate)*
- Expand the Research Commons. It is always packed to capacity around midterms and finals. It is the best place for group work, by far. *(Undergraduate)*
- In the past, it's been difficult for me and peers to find collaborative work spaces. We know about reserving study rooms online but those always seem to be booked. It's especially frustrating when we really need those spaces to work on high-stakes projects for our master's program together. *(Graduate)*

Technology

Trends in technology use:

- Between 2014 and 2018, the overall percentage of respondents who used a library computer declined from 29% to 21%, continuing the historical trend over a number of survey periods.
 - However, it is important to note that computer use varies by library: 34% of Odegaard respondents reported using a library computer, indicating the continued importance of access to computers for undergraduate students at this location in particular (which is also reflected in survey comments).
- 28% of 2018 respondents used a laptop or tablet.
- Survey comments indicated strong interest in additional outlets and charging stations in library study spaces, as well as in additional or updated library technology equipment. 23% of all survey comments mentioned either information technology or outlets and charging needs.

“What did you do in the library today?” Technology-related responses across all sessions at each library.

	Art	BE	Drama	EAL	Eng	Foster	HSL	Math	Music	OUGL	Suzz/All..
Used laptop/tablet	22%	14%	18%	30%	30%	31%	29%	15%	26%	23%	33%
Used lib computer	15%	8%	16%	13%	17%	15%	17%	9%	26%	34%	16%
Used a printer	13%	14%	18%	9%	15%	17%	14%	5%	19%	22%	17%
Used a scanner	4%	10%	10%	4%	11%	4%	3%	5%	19%	5%	4%
Used specific software		2%	2%		2%	1%	2%			3%	2%

Desire for additional outlets and updated equipment is consistent over time.

- In the 2016 Triennial survey, furniture and outlets represented 12% of all comments for undergraduate students and 4% for graduate students. IT in general represented 15% of Triennial survey comments for undergraduates and 7% for graduate students, while computers in particular represented 8% for undergraduates and 3% for graduate students.

IT & Charging Comments (Graduate & Undergraduate Students, Selected)

- Accessible charging station near computers would be better since I came to library to study. *(Undergraduate)*
- I don't like the idea of just plugging my phone in somewhere and just leaving it. I'd prefer to be able to check out phone charging cables or to at least have all the charging stations within arms-reach of a chair. *(Undergraduate)*
- I need more places to charge my laptop while studying. *(Graduate)*
- I avoid using the computers because they either don't work or take too long to load my account. *(Graduate)*
- Improved technological resources in group study rooms (i.e., screen projector) *(Graduate)*
- I usually prefer to use computer in the library. But sometimes it's really hard to find a spot. Maybe need more computers available for students. *(Undergraduate)*

Use of materials

Use of libraries for borrowing/returning of materials continues to decline.

- Between 2014 and 2018, the overall percentage of respondents who looked for library resources decreased from 11% to 8% and the percentage of respondents who checked out or returned materials declined from 11% to 6%.
- Four percent (4%) of undergraduates and 11% of graduate students surveyed in 2018 visited the library to check out or return materials, compared to 8% and 19%, respectively, in 2014.
- This is consistent with the declining circulation trend seen by both UW and other academic libraries over the past number of years (circulation figures indicate a drop from 391,232 in FY 2014 to 234,991 for FY 2018).
- While checking out materials was a relatively uncommon response overall, it was still the most common response among faculty/staff respondents (28%). This is a decrease from previous years (39% in 2014 and 33% in 2011) but still reflects the 2016 Triennial Survey results, which found that the library's collections remain key to faculty.
- There is variation among libraries: while the general system trend is moving away from functions such as circulation, smaller libraries tend to have higher percentages of respondents who report checking out and returning materials.

“What did you do in the library today?” Circulation-related responses across all sessions at each library.

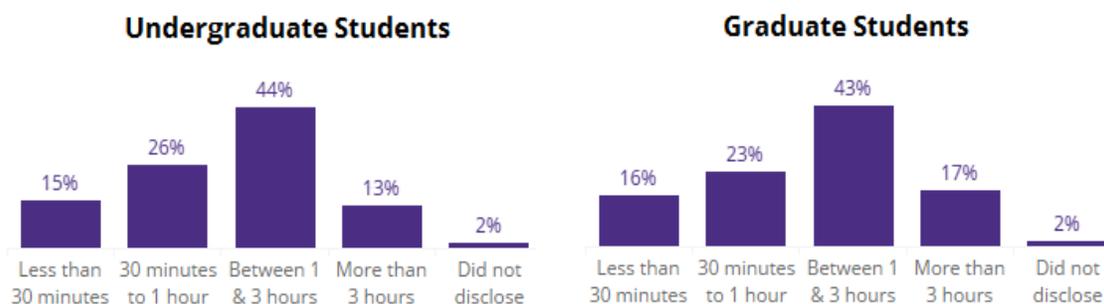
	Art	BE	Drama	EAL	Eng	Foster	HSL	Math	Music	OUGL	Suzz/All..
Checked-out or returned	48%	29%	28%	5%	3%	4%	3%	41%	21%	4%	7%
Looked for items	26%	21%	22%	16%	7%	3%	10%	34%	28%	5%	9%

Duration: How long did you spend in this library today?

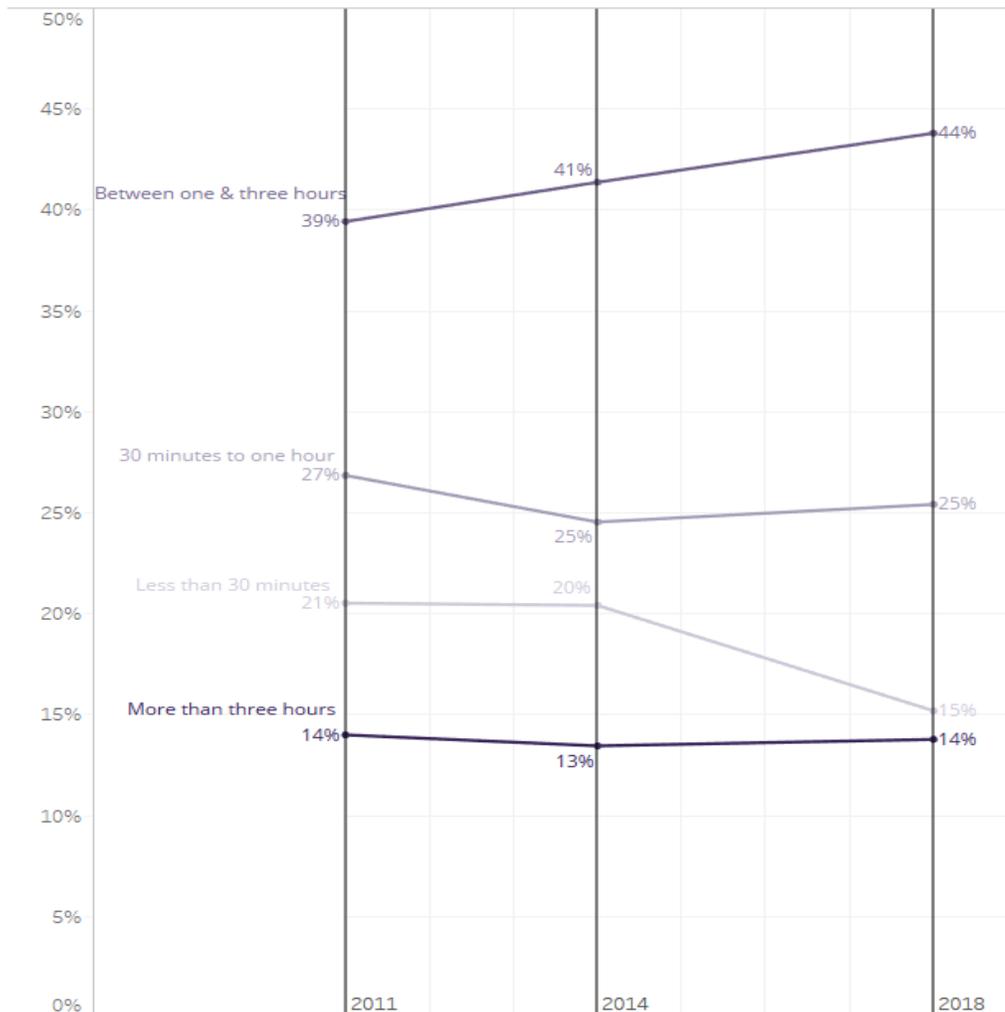
Over half of patrons spend more than an hour in the library per visit.

- 57% of undergraduates and 60% of graduate/professional students spent one or more hours in the library. Library use for less than 30 minutes decreased for all respondent groups.

“How long did you spend in this library today?” Responses from undergraduate and graduate students from 3 standard sessions.



“How long did you spend in this library today?” Change in response over time of student responses (combined graduate and undergraduate) from 3 standard sessions.



Larger libraries tend to be used for longer periods, related to the number and quality of user spaces available.

“How long did you spend in this library today?” Responses across all sessions at each library.

	Larger libraries					Smaller libraries					
	Suzz/A..	OUGL	Foster	Eng	HSL	Art	BE	Drama	EAL	Math	Music
Less than 30 minutes	16%	14%	12%	16%	11%	43%	40%	48%	20%	44%	26%
30 minutes to 1 hour	24%	26%	22%	22%	27%	28%	27%	36%	33%	19%	25%
Between 1 to 3 hours	44%	43%	50%	44%	46%	22%	23%	16%	39%	29%	42%
More than 3 hours	14%	15%	14%	17%	15%	4%	7%	0%	7%	8%	8%

Activities: What did you work on today?

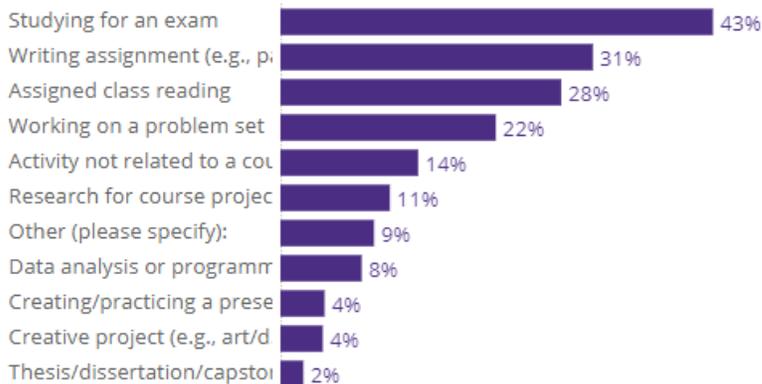
This question was added in 2018 in response to feedback from library staff about their interest in learning more about the kinds of work happening in the library, not just which library services, resources, and spaces were being used. These responses can be useful for outreach or targeted programming and services in various spaces. As this is a new question, there is no trend data.

Students rely on the library to complete a range of coursework and assignment types.

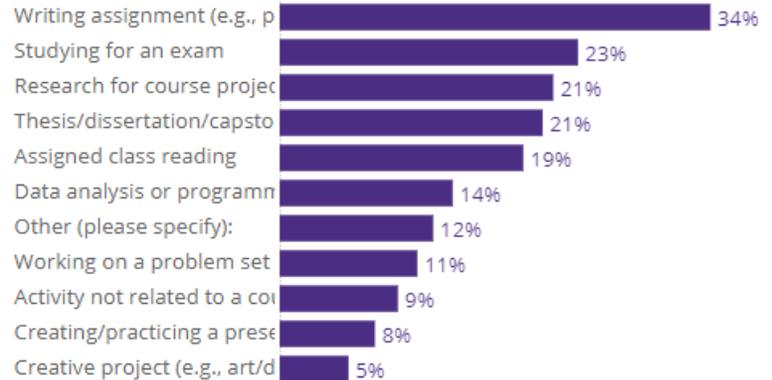
- 42% of students were working two or more activities during their stay. 29% of these students were working on assigned class reading and a writing assignment. Among undergraduates, the most common single activities were studying for an exam (43%), working on a writing assignment (31%), and doing assigned class reading (28%).
- Among graduate students, the most common responses were working on a writing assignment (34%), studying for an exam (23%), research for a course project (21%), and working on a thesis/dissertation/capstone (21%).
- There is variation between libraries in the kinds of work students are doing. 35% of students in the Engineering library, for example, worked on a problem set and 16% worked on data analysis or programming (the highest for those categories across the Libraries system).

“What were you working on in the library today?” Responses from undergraduate and graduate students from 3 standard sessions.

Undergraduate Students



Graduate Students



Write-in responses for the “Other” option (9% for undergraduates, 12% for graduates) includes answers such as applications and interview prep for internships and jobs, holding office hours, and activities to pass the time.

LIBRARIES-WIDE RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations are not intended to be comprehensive, but instead highlight broader areas for attention in order to improve services, resources, or spaces for user communities. These recommendations are intended to apply across the Libraries system at the UW Seattle campus. Recommendations for individual libraries are available in library-specific reports.

Results from the In Library Use survey suggest a number of specific areas for follow up action:

- Comments about cleanliness can be shared with University custodial services and partners within our spaces, such as Starbucks and Learning Technologies. Immediate action can be taken by providing students with materials to clean workstations and study spaces themselves.
- The need for noise control in study rooms at various locations has been a consistent theme over time at a number of locations. Consider addressing this and other key issues systemically, rather than at the level of a single library. Zoning or other consistent signage to indicate types of study areas could more immediately address the significant number of comments about a lack of distinction (and the disruptiveness this can cause) between types of study spaces.
- While comments indicate unmet demand for group study spaces, the majority of users are in the library for quiet, individual study and expressed a preference for quiet spaces. Care should be taken when creating new group and technology-enabled spaces to preserve quiet and individual work spaces and maintain the balance and variety of spaces across the system.
- Furniture replacement and the need for more comfortable and varied types of furniture should be addressed across the libraries. Specific strategies might include implementing a regular schedule for furniture updates; using dividers on large desks in high-use areas; providing study pods so that individuals have more private/quiet study space and do not need to use study rooms designed for groups; reviewing existing space use in libraries such as Odegaard to identify places where more study tables (or different types of furniture) might be added to maximize seating, especially at peak times during the quarter.
- Outlets and charging stations are always needed and have consistently come up as a top priority for students. Wherever possible, adding additional outlets/charging stations in Odegaard, Suzzallo Allen, and Health Sciences (where these comments were most prevalent) would address a key pain point for users.

In addition, there are a number of recommendations about the ongoing use and communication of the In Library Use survey results:

- Libraries staff should consider using demographic data and patterns in types of work to inform the development of targeted services and resources for specific groups (e.g., Engineering students) and in specific locations (e.g., OUGL). The data offers valuable insights into how the Libraries might connect outreach, services and resources in more targeted, yet scalable, ways.
- In Library Use Survey data should be explored more systematically alongside other data sources (such as Access + computer log-in, User Query, and circulation data) to build up a more comprehensive picture of what is happening in various libraries spaces. Follow-up studies that include space counts and observations can also provide important context and detailed space data to inform decision making alongside the In Library Use Survey results.
- A communication plan -- implemented either at the Libraries-wide or specific library level -- is critical for sharing results and improvements with users, and also for communicating why important issues may take longer to address (e.g., gender-neutral restrooms). There are consistent themes emerging from the 2014 In Library Use Survey, the 2016 Triennial Survey, and the 2018 In Library Use Survey, indicating that the Libraries should take action on persistent issues, wherever possible, and communicate more effectively with users about their feedback.

Assessment & Planning staff should work closely with Libraries staff to monitor and track changes arising out of survey results in order to assist with the overall communication strategy.

- A more coordinated approach to discussing and acting on survey results is needed across the UW Seattle libraries. Key barriers to acting on results in the past include a lack of clarity about responsibilities and process for making changes to various spaces. There are a number of issues that might be addressed system-wide, which could result in cost-savings for the Libraries as well as a more consistent user experience.

CONCLUSION

The In-Library Use Survey focuses on the importance and use of UW physical libraries. Thus, it provides an important, but limited, picture as it does not include online use or “overall” importance regardless of mode of use. The 2018 results show a continuation of trends observed in previous surveys. Library space continues to be highly valued, but the use and importance of services have changed, especially in the importance of the library as individual and collaborative work spaces.

APPENDIX

RESPONSE OVER TIME

Percentage of respondents for all sessions run in common (3 sessions)

	2005	2008	2011	2014	2018
Art	4%	3%	2%	2%	1%
Built Environments	2%	3%	2%	1%	2%
Drama	2%	1%	2%	1%	1%
East Asia	1%	2%	3%	2%	2%
Engineering	5%	4%	3%	7%	7%
Foster Business	4%	5%	7%	10%	9%
Health Sciences	10%	9%	9%	9%	11%
Math Research	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Music	1%	3%	2%	1%	1%
OUGL	28%	23%	28%	30%	30%
Suzzallo-Allen	36%	38%	41%	37%	36%
Total response rate*	57%	57%	48%	43%	57%
<i>*The response rate is calculated on the number of surveys returned divided by the number distributed.</i>					

SURVEY METHODOLOGY AND PROCESS

Survey methodology and distribution for the In Library Use Survey have remained reasonably consistent since its inception. One page surveys are distributed to those entering the library during two hour time periods on selected weekdays in April and May and completed surveys are returned as users exit the library. The 2018 survey period ran from April 19 through May 22, and sessions were conducted in selected two hour mid-day blocks from Tuesday to Thursday. In 2018, the survey ran from weeks 4-9 in the quarter, a change from 2014. Feedback from previous years indicated that distributing the survey later in the quarter, closer to finals week, caused anxiety for both staff and students. Surveys were distributed at all libraries for three core sessions. There was a change in survey distribution for Suzzallo-Allen, as surveys at the West Entrance were distributed beyond the entry path to the cafe. All libraries except Foster Business, Health Sciences, Suzzallo-Allen and Odegaard ran the survey for three additional sessions in order to meet a minimum requirement for at least 50 completed surveys in each library (which is important for data analysis and comparison across smaller libraries).

UW Bothell and UW Tacoma libraries began their participation in 2008 and used the same schedule and survey format as UW Seattle, although their results were shown separately and not included with UW Seattle results. In 2014 and 2018, UW Bothell did not run the survey due to concerns over survey fatigue at this campus. UW Tacoma developed their own set of questions and their survey was treated separately in order to speak directly to the needs of the UW Tacoma campus library.

In 2018, optional additional sessions were run in Odegaard Undergraduate Library (1 weekday evening), the Music library (1 weekend day and one weekday evening), East Asia Library (2 weekend days and 1 weekday evening), and UW Tacoma (1 weekday evening). Data from additional special sessions is not included in the aggregate or unit-specific reports and is analyzed separately.

Survey design, distribution and analysis are done by the Libraries Assessment and Planning Department, in close collaboration with Libraries staff. The survey format has traditionally used a series of three core questions: what did you do in the library, how important are specified library services and resources, and how would you rate specified services. A fourth question was changed in 2011 to ask for length of visit; this question has been included in every In Library Use Survey since. The question asking users to rate specific services was removed for the 2014 survey, and a new question was added asking users about why they choose to visit a particular library. This question was removed in 2018. In addition, there were two open-ended questions on the 2014 survey: one (removed in 2018) asked users to “Describe this library in five words or less”, the other asks for suggestions for improvements to library services and resources. The 2018 survey removed the question about the importance of specified library services and added two more new questions: what did you work on in the library today, and what sort of environment do you prefer to work in. These questions were designed to provide Libraries staff with greater insight into the kinds of assignments/coursework students were working on in different libraries, and user preferences for quiet, group, or collaborative study spaces. This data is intended to help guide space design, as well as targeted outreach and communication efforts.

The survey asks for minimal demographic data – user group and (for the UW community) academic program affiliation. One feature of the survey is the opportunity to do some limited customization for each library. Larger libraries can ask users to mark specify specific areas or units within the library they visited, and each library can add categories to the core questions.

Both aggregate and individual library results are reported. Aggregate results are presented only for the three sampling sessions held in common, while results for specific units use all common survey session responses for that unit (3 sessions for Suzzallo Allen, Odegaard, and Foster; 6 sessions in common for all others).