

# SLS/BIALL Academic Law Library Survey 2017/2018

David Gee

Librarian

Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, School of Advanced Study, University of London

By-line This is the latest report analysing the results of the Society of Legal Scholars and BIALL Survey. It has been written by David Gee, Librarian at the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, School of Advanced Study, University of London

## Summary of key findings

- The response rate was 83.04%. The rate was lower at 80.36% last year (section 3);
- There was a slight decrease in the enrolment of PhD and MPhil students in old universities (down from 100% to 98%) whilst new universities maintained the enrolment of these type of students at 83% (section 5);
- Only 16% of respondents failed to meet the SLS Statement of Standards 3.1 on space and physical facilities, through not housing all relevant collections in one place. In the previous year the failure figure was higher at 20% (section 6);
- The ratio of students to seats (with or without a PC workstation) was 4.63:1 which is very good. Some caution should be expressed in using the “student : seat” ratio, for many librarians noted the difficulty of identifying the number of “seats by the law collection”, where the trend in design is towards seating areas provided according to different study environments (silent, quiet, group activity) rather than made available to serve a particular subject (section 7);
- All 93 respondents (100%) provided figures for the number of laptops for loan within the law collections and law schools. Of these 21 or 23% did not loan laptops at all. Of the 72 libraries (77%) who did loan laptops, the average number of laptops for loan was 83 (2016: 62) (section 8),
- The ratio of students to PC workstations / laptops for loan is still very favourable with a ratio of 1.81 students to every PC workstation / laptop (2016: 1.79 students to every PC workstation / laptop) (section 8);
- The survey also asked respondents if the total number of public workstations / laptops for loan had decreased. Ninety three (or 100%) of respondents answered. However only 11 (or 12%) of respondents said that the number of workstations / laptops for loan had decreased (section 8);
- 25% of respondents reported an *increase* in the number of physical visits to the law library; 62% said numbers were *constant* and 13% reported a *fall*. Therefore, like previously, the majority of institutions reported that the number of physical visits remained constant (section 9);
- The results for *term-time* weekday opening indicate that there has been another significant increase in the number of libraries open for longer and an increase in the number of libraries opening for more than 100 hours per week. Moreover, the median and average *vacation* opening hours significantly increased on 2016 as well (section 10);
- 46 libraries (38% of all respondents, 18 old universities and 28 new universities) stated that they provided 24 hour access throughout the term to their paper-based collections. Overall this is a marked increase on the 36 libraries in 2016 (section 10);

- Staffed issue services were available for a slightly *shorter* time period, on average, than previously, whilst 96% of libraries continued to provide self-issue machines (section 10);
- There was a *decrease* in the average number of hours a reader enquiry service for law was provided by professionally qualified staff (section 10);
- 41% of libraries serving distance learning students provided three basic means of access: a link to the catalogue, a link to full-text databases and a link to full-text materials scanned into the VLE (section 11);
- The three most popular law databases in terms of number of subscriptions continued to be Westlaw UK, Lexis@Library and HeinOnline. But there was still some fluidity in the range of subscriptions held, for 17% of respondents were considering cancelling a subscription to an electronic source before the end of July 2019 whilst 11% were considering a new subscription before the same date (section 12);
- The median number of legal database subscriptions taken in responding libraries in February 2019 was 6 and the average number was 8 databases. The numbers of legal databases offered by institutions ranged from 1 to 65 (section 12);
- JSTOR was still the most widely used general database in law libraries (section 13);
- Nexis UK and Proquest continued to be the two most widely subscribed to newspaper databases which are used to contribute significantly to teaching and research in law schools (section 13);
- As a result of subscribing to law e-journal databases, 42.5% of those with access had cancelled a print subscription to a law journal (section 14);
- 33% of respondents said they had cancelled subscriptions to the print version of law material (e.g. a journal) during the current year, where the same resource was available electronically (section 14);
- Law journals and law reports were most frequently cut. Respondents said that the cuts were often made on the basis of the availability of an electronic alternative (section 14);
- The three most popular e-book publishers in terms of number of subscriptions were Proquest [including My i-library, EBL, E-brary and eBook Central], Dawsonera and EBSCO host (section 14);
- Mean expenditure on law materials *increased* by 10.9% across all respondents on the level in 2017. Old universities reported a 13.15% *increase* in mean expenditure on 2017 and new universities reported a 5.58% *increase* in mean expenditure on 2017 (section 15.1);
- This year the mean spend per student at old universities has overtaken the mean spend per student at new universities. Mean law materials expenditure per student in old universities was £235.38 (up 7.39% on 2017), whereas in new universities it was slightly lower at £234.08 (still up 6.19% on 2017). The trend in this area is of a *narrowing* gap between sectors (section 15.1);
- The proportion of total law material expenditure on monographs decreased by 2% to 20%, serials continued its downward trend to its lowest ever percentage of 33% and databases increased to 47% (section 15);

- Separate results on overall expenditure on law library materials in institutions not providing vocational or professional award courses are provided (section 15.7);
- The highest proportion of income to fund the acquisition of law materials continued to come from general library funds (section 16);
- 70% of all law schools made *no* contribution at all to funding the acquisition of law materials. However, of those law schools that did contribute, they appeared to do so more generously with the mean amount contributed by law schools increasing by 3% on last year (section 16);
- 19% of responding libraries did *not* have any library staff which spent 50% or more of their working time on the care and servicing of the law collection (18% in 2017). Several explained that their activities were being diluted into library-wide responsibilities or the law collection was being serviced from a team of staff with wider subject duties (section 17);
- Overall average staffing numbers slightly decreased in old universities to 2.93 FTE (3.30 FTE in 2017) and slightly increased in new universities to 1.64 FTE (1.50 in 2017) (section 17);
- 81% of respondents had at least one member of law library staff who had a LIS qualification, although for 26 institutions this was less than one full-time member of staff (section 17.4);
- As found in previous surveys, library staff with law qualifications were much more common in old universities (section 17.4);
- 83% of respondents were aware of the revised SLS Statement of Standards (2009 version) and 46% had used the Statement in discussions on funding and administration (section 18);
- A majority of 51% of respondents considered a *significant* move towards electronic provision likely in the next five years (section 19.1);
- 58% of respondents felt that over the next five years the proportion spent in their library on the purchase of law monographs as compared with law serials would remain *constant* (section 19.2);
- 72% of respondents considered that over the next five years the proportion spent on purchasing legal materials relating to the law of Great Britain and European Union as compared with foreign and international law would remain constant (section 19.3).

## 1 Introduction

The following report outlines the activities and funding of academic law libraries in the UK and Ireland in the academic year 2017/2018. The figures have been taken from the results of a survey questionnaire undertaken by Academic Services staff at the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies on behalf of the Society of Legal Scholars (SLS).

This survey has been run on an annual basis since 1996 and reported in *The Law Librarian* and latterly in *Legal Information Management*. It is sponsored either by the British and Irish Association of Law Librarians (BIALL) or by the Society of Legal Scholars (SLS).

I shall attempt to draw comparisons with previous surveys where helpful. In particular “2017” refers to the 2016/2017 data (Gee, 2018), “2016” refers to the 2015/2016 data (Gee, 2017) and “2015” refers to the 2014/2015 data (Gee, 2016). All the surveys referred to are referenced at the end of the report.

Finally I am very pleased to note that this ongoing research project to publish a report on the SLS/BIALL annual survey of law libraries in the UK and Ireland received national recognition in June 2016 when it received the BIALL Wallace Breem Memorial Award:  
[http://ials.sas.ac.uk/news/Library\\_Wallace\\_Breem\\_Memorial\\_Award\\_2016.htm](http://ials.sas.ac.uk/news/Library_Wallace_Breem_Memorial_Award_2016.htm).

## **2 Methodology**

The survey methodology followed the improvements made a few years ago, conveniently making an electronic editable PDF form version of the survey questionnaire available to be completed. In March 2019 an email containing both a link to the survey questionnaire on the IALS website and an attached editable PDF form was dispatched to 112 institutions in the UK and Ireland. Respondents could therefore complete the electronic questionnaire at one sitting, save it under the name of their institution and email it back to us. Alternatively they could print out the questionnaire to work on over a period of time and then complete the electronic version, save it and email it back to us. We were also still happy to receive completed paper versions of the survey questionnaire by post if this was the method preferred by individual respondents.

As in the past research centres with no students or only small numbers of postgraduates where the main university law library was invited to respond to the survey, were excluded. For similar reasons, the Oxbridge college libraries were excluded but, as usual, responses from the Bodleian Law Library and the Squire Law Library were invited.

This year's survey is funded by the Society of Legal Scholars (SLS). A copy of the questionnaire is available on the IALS website at: <http://ials.sas.ac.uk/library/ials-information-initiatives/slsbiall-academic-law-library-survey>.

## **3 Response rates**

This year 93 forms were returned from 112 libraries representing a response rate of 83.04%, an increase on last year's 80.36%. Last year we had 90 forms returned from 112 libraries. I am very grateful to all those law librarians who took the time to respond. I am not usually made aware of the reasons for non-returns, but this year I was told that several libraries were recruiting new law librarians and this explained why they did not return a completed questionnaire. Another key reason for non-returns was that law librarians are finding it difficult to extract relevant data (particularly financial data) from the central university. On our part we tried to be very flexible and have permitted some respondents to take a number of weeks to send in a promised return.

A response rate of over 83% is very welcome and should permit the presentation of a reasonably accurate picture of academic law libraries in the UK and Ireland. A complete list of the academic law libraries that returned a completed 2017/2018 survey questionnaire is contained in the Appendix.

To help detect patterns in law library provision, the data has been analysed, as in previous years, by type of institution:

- "old" universities incorporated before 1992
- "new" universities incorporated in or after 1992
- institutes of higher education and other types of institution

Forty-three old universities responded (39 last year), as did 47 new universities (48 last year) and 3 other institutions (3 last year). The response profile has therefore changed slightly, with four more results for old universities and one less results from new universities. This may affect comparisons with past results.

## 4 Definitions

In many of the following sections, the survey responses are analysed using range, mean and median.

- The *range* indicates the smallest and the greatest value of the responses and helps us understand the diversity of responses.
- The *mean* has been calculated by adding up all the responses and dividing by the number of responses to get an “average”. The mean can be distorted by one or two responses which are very large or very small.
- The *median* is the mid point and is calculated through ordering the responses by size from the smallest to the greatest and finding the middle response. There will be an equal number of responses below the median and above the median and so it provides a benchmark of what a “typical” university is doing.

Percentages from this point onwards have generally been rounded to the nearest whole number.

## 5 Student numbers

A representation of the number of law students served by the libraries helps in understanding the framework in which provision is made and can assist librarians in comparing their provision with institutions of similar sizes.

Respondents were asked to indicate the total number of taught course students (bodies, not FTEs) in the Law School enrolled on exempting undergraduate law degrees or professional or academic postgraduate courses in law. Eighty three out of the total of 93 respondents gave figures for student numbers, ranging from 30 to 8,506 (50 to 7,000 in 2017). The median number of law students was 675 (666 in 2017) and the mean number was 911 (833 in 2017), both figures therefore increasing on last year.

Respondents in old universities reported student numbers between 30 and 2,860 (50 to 2,100 last year), with a mean of 1,026 (897 in the previous year) and a median of 993 (834 in the previous year).

In new universities, the range was 148 to 8,506 (128 to 7,000 in the previous year), with a mean of 842 (809 in the previous year) and a median of 528 (540 in the previous year).

Among the 3 other institutions, the range was 100 to 104 (90 to 150 in the previous year). The mean was 102 (120 in the previous year) and the median was also 102 (120 in the previous year).

Upward trends are therefore evident in the number of students attending responding institutions in 2017/2018 as compared with the previous year. In particular the average number of students in both old and new universities have increased.

Ninety-two or 99% of respondents (89 or 99% in the previous year) offered an exempting undergraduate law degree.

Twenty seven or 29% of respondents (25 or 29% in the previous year) hosted the Legal Practice Course (LPC) or Bar Professional Training Course or Diploma in Professional Legal Practice (Scotland) or Professional Practice Course (Ireland) or Degree of Barrister-at-law (Ireland). This represents 19% of old university respondents, 40% of new universities and 0% of other institutions.

Twenty one or 23% (21 or 23% in the previous year) of respondents provided courses leading to other law professional awards, such as the CPE or Chartered Institute of Legal Executives qualification. 16% of old universities, 26% of new universities and 67% of other institutions ran such courses.

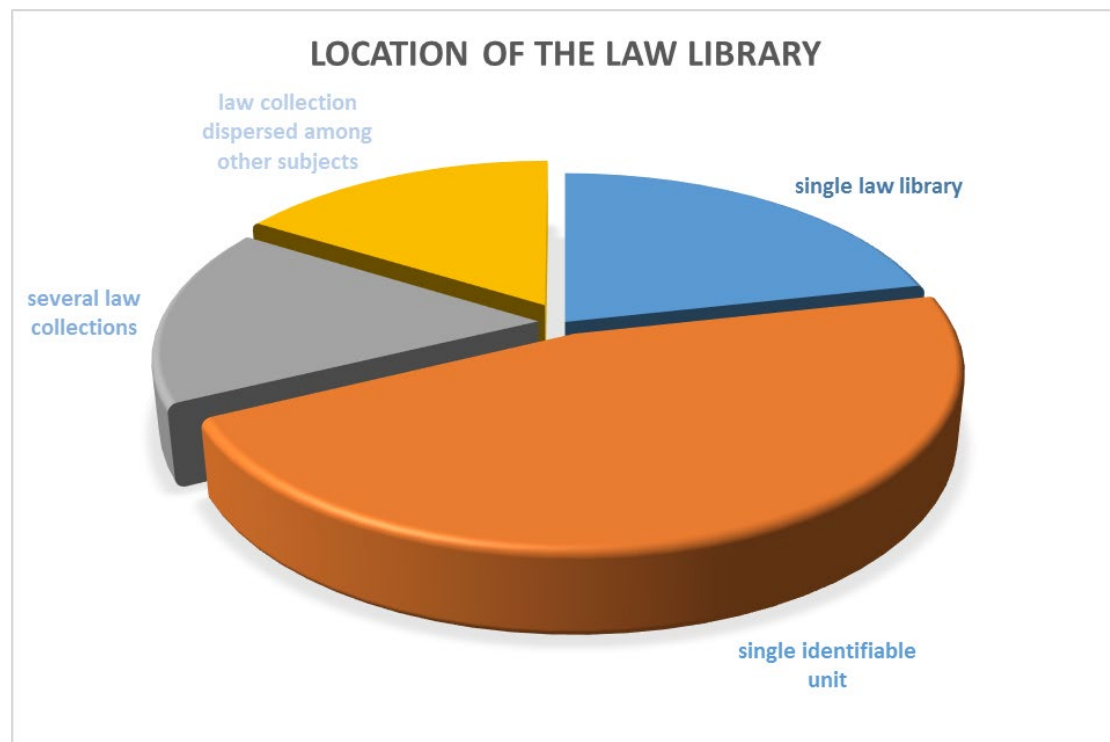
The final category was for other taught courses, such as the LLM, which led to a postgraduate award in law. Seventy eight or 84% (80 or 89% in the previous year) of institutions ran these postgraduate courses, including 95% of old and 85% of new universities and 0% other institutions. The movements in the percentages of respondents offering particular courses this year are very small and are probably mainly due to changes in the survey profile.

Respondents also indicated whether the law school enrolled students onto research courses, such as those leading to PhD and MPhil. Overall 81 or 87% (79 or 88% in the previous year) of institutions indicated that they did. 98% of old universities, 83% of new universities and 0% of other institutions had such students. Research students were not included in the count of law students detailed above. The percentage for old universities is slightly down on the 100% in the previous year and the exactly the same for the new universities at 83% (83% in 2017, 73% in 2016, 80% in 2015, 72% in 2014 and 66% in 2013).

This year we again asked about the number of students enrolled on distance learning courses for law. The question was last posed in 2016. Twenty seven institutions or 29% (2016: 29 or 29%) offered this mode of study. Student numbers ranged from 3 to 885 (2016: 3 to 1,538). The median number of students was 68.5 students (2016: 80) and the mean 140 students (2016: 243). Thirteen or 30% of old universities (2016: 28%) had students enrolled on distance learning courses; the number of students ranged from 3 to 234 (2016: 12 to 350), with a median of 68.5 (2016: 73.5) students. Thirteen or 28% of new universities (2016: 33%) had distance learning students, with numbers ranging from 15 to 885 (2016: 3 to 1,538), and a median of 73.5 (2016: 100) students. One other institution (2016: none) had students enrolled on a distance learning course. Although, in general, relatively small numbers of students are enrolled on distance courses, libraries provide special support arrangements which are investigated in section 11, below.

## 6 Location of the law library

Respondents were asked to indicate, from a list, which most closely matched the circumstances in their institution.



Graph 1: Location of the law library

As the above pie chart demonstrates, across all respondents:

- **22% had a single law library in a location separated from other subject collections** (21% in 2017). Of these, there were 13 (2017: 12) old universities, 7 (2017: 7) new and zero (2017: 0) other institution.
- **46% had a law collection not so separated but shelved so as to form a single identifiable unit** (43% in 2017). These included 21 (2017: 16) old universities, 20 (2017: 23) new and 2 (2017: 1) other institutions.
- **16% had several law collections each in a different location** (16% in 2017). These included 5 (2017: 6) old, 10 (2017: 8) new universities and 0 (2017: 0) other institution.
- **16% had a law collection dispersed wholly or partly among other subject collections** (20% in 2017). Of these, 4 (2017: 6) were old universities, 10 (2017: 10) were new universities and 1 (2017: 2) other institutions.

Thirty percent (2017: 31%) of old universities responding had a single and separate law library, while 15% (2017: 15%) of new universities and zero (2017: 0%) of other institutions had a single and separate law library.

Forty nine percent (2017: 39%) of old universities described their law collection as being shelved so as to form a single identifiable unit but not separate from other collections. Forty three percent (2017: 48%) of new universities described their law collection in a similar way, and 67% (2017: 33%) of other responding institutions.

Twelve percent (2017: 15%) of old universities had several law collections, each in a different location, but 21% (2017: 17%) of new universities and no other institutions (0%) reported several collections (2015: 0%).

As in past surveys, the main reason for more than one law collection was the establishment of a separate library targeted at vocational course students, such as those on the LPC or BPT, in addition to a main law collection. Other respondents mentioned other reasons for separate locations, for example, one respondent mentioned that a small separate law collection was needed as a "teaching collection".

The comments to the SLS Statement of Standards 3.1 (Society of Legal Scholars, 2009) on space and physical facilities require "the housing of all relevant collections ... as a unified whole in one place ...". This year the figures suggest that this criterion was not met by at least the 16% of institutions reporting dispersed collections.

Nine percent of old universities, 21% of new universities and 33% of other institutions had law collections wholly or partly dispersed among other subject collections. Last year the figure was 20% overall: in detail, in 2017, 15% of old, 20% of new and 67% of other institutions had dispersed collections.

Although the overall percentage trend of dispersed collections has declined to 16% from 20% in 2017, one must remember that the general response profile for different types of institution has altered a little between last year's and this year's surveys, so the actual institutions responding are different and are probably partly the reason for the results noted.

## **7 Provision of seating**

Respondents were asked this time to indicate the total number of seats in study areas by the law collection/s, with or without workstation places. Eighty five institutions provided figures. The figures ranged from 4 to 2,000 with a mean of 288 and a median of 150. The results should be viewed with a little caution. As has been noted in section 6 above, there is a significant number of institutions where the law collection is not separate from other subjects, and respondents have taken different views on how to count the amount of seating which was 'by the law collection' as required by the survey question.

A more useful measure is the ratio of students to seats. Eighty one of the 93 responding institutions were able to provide data for both variables. The ratio ranged from 0.12 to 79.25 students per seat, with a median of 4.63 and a mean of 7.48 students per seat. The data was analysed according to the type of institution. The 38 old universities had a ratio of between 0.12 to 14.54 with a median of 4.59 and a mean of 5.43. The 41 new universities had a ratio of between 0.35 and 79.25 with a median of 4.64 and a mean of 9.59. The 2 other institutions had a ratio of between 0.66 and 5.78, with a median of 3.22 and a mean of 3.22.

A further analysis highlights the differences between the various categories of respondent: 21% of old universities were in the quartile of respondents with the least favourable student to seat ratios, as compared with 29% of new universities and 0% of other institutions.

The median ratio of students to seats is 4.63:1 which is very good. Some caution should be expressed in using the "student : seat" ratio, for many librarians noted the difficulty of identifying the number of 'seats by the law collection', where the trend in design is towards seating areas provided according to different study environments (silent, quiet, group activity) rather than made available to serve a particular subject.

This ratio of 4.63:1 may be compared with the former University Grants Committee ratio for law libraries of 2:1. This ratio received indirect endorsement in the Follett Report of 1993. Further, the comments to SLS Standard 3.2 states that 'a ratio of students per seat exceeding 5:1 should be regarded as high and in need of early reduction, or of compensation through extended opening hours'. The survey results indicate that study space is under continuing pressure from student numbers in all sectors but, as discussed in section 10 below, there continues to be a considerable increase in the opening hours of responding libraries.

## **8 Workstations and laptops for loan**

The survey asked respondents to indicate the number of PC or Mac workstations which can access electronic law materials, and are available for law student use:

- adjacent to, or in the same building as, the law collection
- in the building where the law school is housed.

In response to the first part of the question, a number of respondents noted that although the workstations counted as 'in the same building as the law collections' they were shared with non-law students. It was difficult to determine accurately the numbers available for law student use. Further, some respondents not only included fixed workstations but noted the number of laptops and tablets available for student use. The questions on workstation provision were devised originally in the mid-1990s, when the SLS was concerned about the level of investment in IT hardware. But since then developments in library facilities and computer technology (and the availability of laptops and tablets for loan in many libraries) have made accurate tracking of the relative ease of law student access to IT much less reliable.

Eighty-five respondents (91%) provided figures for the numbers of workstations near the law collections. The numbers ranged from 0 to 1,000 – 51% (the median) had at least 226 (2016: 219; 2014: 215) and the mean was 283 (2016: 282; 2014: 275). The very positive trend of providing additional workstations to complement traditional study places seems to have increased still further.

Seventy seven respondents (83%) provided figures for the number of workstations in the law school. Of these, 28 law schools did not have any workstations for student use (2016: 29; 2014: 22). For those who did, the range was from 0 to 1,079 (2016: 0 to 968; 2014: 0 to 585), with a mean of 77 (2016: 81; 2014: 62) and a median of 22 (2016: 23; 2014: 31). Comparing 2018 with 2016, the range of numbers has increased. However the means and medians have decreased; this may be due to changes in the responses profile.



All 93 respondents (100%) provided figures for the number of laptops / tablets for loan within the law collections and law schools. Of these 21 or 23% did not loan laptops / tablets at all. Of the 72 libraries (77%) who did loan laptops / tablets, the range was from 2 to 350 (2016: 2 to 200) with a mean of 83 (2016: 62) and a median of 60 (2016: 50). Comparing 2018 with 2016, the range of numbers, means and medians have all increased, although this may be due to changes in the responses profile.

The ratio of law students to workstations and laptops for loan gives a more effective picture of the levels of provision. The figures for PC workstations adjacent to the law collections and in the law school and those laptops available for loan were combined for this measure. 82 (2016: 81) institutions were able to provide data for all parts of the ratio.

The ratio ranged from 0.30 to 55.56 students per workstation / laptop, with a median of 1.81 (2016: 1.79) and a mean of 4.45 (2016: 3.64). Forty six institutions had a ratio of law students to workstations / laptops of less than 2 students per PC / laptop (2016: 45). When interpreting these figures the comments at the beginning of this section should be noted: the difficulty of identifying accurately the numbers of PCs "in the same building as the law collections", where they were shared with non-law students.

The results for the average law student to workstation / laptop for loan ratio were dissimilar in the old and new university sectors. In the 35 old universities, the mean ratio was 7.57 and the median was 2.89 (2016: 5.97 and 2.56). For the 43 new universities, the mean was 1.82 and the median was 1.22 (2016: 1.88 and 1.34). The figures for the 3 other institutions were a mean of 3.07 and a median of 3.07 (2016: 1.62 and 1.54).

The overall median ratio of students to workstations / laptops for loan in past surveys has been 2014: 2.13:1 and 2016: 1.79:1. This year's ratio of 1.81:1 is still favourable and only slightly higher than in 2016. Although some caution should be expressed in using the student to workstation ratio, for many librarians noted the difficulty of identifying the number of 'workstations by the law collection'.

The survey asked respondents if the total number of workstations and laptops for loan had decreased based on the combined total of PCs next to the law collection, in the law school and the laptops available for loan. Ninety three (or 100%) of respondents answered. However only 11 (or 12%) of respondents said that the number of workstations and laptops for loan had decreased. Of these 11 respondents, 9 gave "students bringing in own devices" as a reason; 1 gave "reduced budget" as a reason; and 3 gave "other" reasons such as: "moved to new purpose-built campus with a bring your own device policy" or "offered larger screens and more space around PCs, meaning fewer PCs in the same cluster space".

## **9 Library use**

This year we continued to monitor trends in the number of visits to the law library, last measured in 2016. The aim was to determine whether increased access to law databases from outside the university or college campus had affected the number of visits to the library. The question asked respondents to compare the number of visits to the law collections in 2016/17 with 2017/18. The question recognised that a level of judgement would be needed but asked respondents to note the basis for their comparison. Ninety one institutions (98%) responded. Twenty three institutions or 25% (2016: 23%) saw an increase in visits, in 56 or 62% (2016: 55%) the number of visits remained constant, and in 12 or 13% (2016: 22%) the number of visits decreased. Therefore the majority of institutions reported that the number of visits remained constant.

Twenty three (25%) respondents mentioned more than one basis for comparison. Personal observation was mentioned 62 times, exit gate logs 27 times, SCONUL statistics 8, issue desk statistics 7, non SCONUL headcounts 5; student numbers 5, one-to-one student appointment statistics 1, online usage statistics 1, and shelving / feedback statistics 1. The

continued heavy reliance on personal observation as the basis for comparison might suggest the results are subjective rather than objective.

## 10 Opening hours and services

Opening hours were last surveyed in 2016. For the 93 responding libraries the median number of term-time weekly opening hours was 150 (2016: 112). The mean for weekly *term-time* hours was 131.64 (2016: 125.17). Hours ranged from 49.5 to 168 (2016: 49.5 to 168). Forty six libraries (38% of all respondents, 18 old universities and 28 new universities) stated that they provided 24 hour access throughout the term to their paper-based collections. Overall this is a marked increase on the 36 libraries in 2016. Sixty three responding libraries were open for more than 100 hours per week (2016: 60); they were 28 old, 35 new and no other institutions (2016: 26 old, 34 new and 0 other).

Ninety three respondents (100%) gave details of opening hours in *vacation*. The median for weekly opening times was 79.5 hours (2016: 74 hours) and the mean was 90 hours (2016: 84).

The results for *term-time* weekday opening indicate that there has been a significant increase in the number of libraries open for longer, a significant increase in the number providing 24 hour access to print collections, and a marked increase in the number of libraries opening for more than 100 hours per week. Moreover, the median and average *vacation* opening hours significantly increased on 2016 as well.

Ninety one respondents gave details of *term-time weekend* opening. Three did not open on Saturdays (2016: 3). The number of institutions opening on Sundays decreased by 0.1%. In 2018, 94.6% of institutions opened as compared with 94.7% of institutions in 2016. In previous years the incidence of term-time Sunday opening used to vary between types of institution. However in 2018 and in 2016 there was no gap between old and new universities: 98% of old universities, 98% of new universities opened on Sundays. The results for term-time weekend opening in 2017/2018 indicate very similar opening hours.

Information was sought on the time at which the law library closed in a standard term-time week, Monday to Thursday. This information was first sought in the 2002 survey. Ninety three respondents (100%) provided this information this time. 49 libraries, comprising 20 old universities and 29 new universities, stated they provided 24 hours access during these days (2016: 43, comprising 17 old universities and 26 new universities). Of the remaining 44 libraries, 9 or 9.7% closed at 10pm and 3 or 3% at 9pm. 13 libraries or 14% closed at midnight. The earliest closing time was 7.30pm (2016: 7pm) and the latest closing time (aside from libraries which opened 24/7) was still 2.30am (2016: 2.30am). The median time was 11.30pm (2016: 11.00pm).

Not all facilities are necessarily available throughout opening hours. To help provide an indication of key opening hours respondents were asked to indicate the number of hours during a term-time week when a staffed book loan service was available for law items. Ninety one institutions responded. For these 91 respondents the mean was 61.04 hours (2016: 62.91 hours). The median was 69 hours (2016: 70 hours). The range was 0 hours to 112 hours (2016: 0 hours to 112 hours). Twelve institutions (7 old and 5 new) reported that there was no staffed issue service and they were entirely reliant on self-service for issuing materials. This is the same number as in 2016 (12 institutions, 6 old and 6 new).

This year, the survey results for the availability of a staffed book loan service show a slight decrease in the average number of hours for which this service was available to patrons but no change in the number of institutions with no staffed issue service which remained at 12 institutions.

As in previous years we asked whether respondents provided a self-issue system for use with items from the law collection. For 2018, 96% (2016, also 96%) said they did provide self-issue facilities.

93 respondents (100%) indicated the number of hours during term-time weeks that a reader enquiry service for law was provided by professionally qualified staff. Hours when professional staff could only offer a service of referral onto a law specialist were to be excluded. Ten respondents did not provide a reader enquiry service for law (2016: 6). For the remainder, the mean number of hours for which an enquiry service was available was 31.4 hours (2016: 34.7 hours) and the median was 36 hours (2016: 37 hours). The range was 0 to 68.5 hours (2016: 0 to 78.5 hours). 58% of respondents provided an enquiry service for between 35 and 40 hours per week (2016: 60%).

Therefore in 2018 there was a decrease in the average number of hours a reader enquiry service for law was provided and a decreased concentration of availability within the range of 35 to 40 hours a week.

### **Reciprocal borrowing schemes**

As in 2016 we asked about membership of reciprocal borrowing schemes. 93 (or 100%) respondents provided details. Eighty six respondents (92.5%) were members of SCONUL Access (2016: 90.5%).

10 (11%) were members of SCONUL RX (2016: 9.5%).

27 (29%) were members of regional schemes (2016: 22%).

6 (6.5%) were members of other schemes (2016: 6%) providing specialised reciprocal borrowing or access arrangements with other institutions. The ACLID scheme, M25 Consortium, University of London reciprocal access scheme, White Rose Libraries reciprocal scheme, Bradford colleges agreement and Cardiff colleges scheme were mentioned.

## **11 Distance learning**

At the request of the Society of Legal Scholars (SLS) we again asked questions this year about special support provided by the law library for distance learning courses. As has been noted in section 5, above, only 27 or 29% of respondents (2016: 29 or 29%) offered this type of course.

Five of these institutions (4 old universities and 1 new universities) had made arrangements for their distance learning students studying law to have access to a physical (not electronic) law library other than at the institution where they were registered and outside the national reciprocal borrowing schemes mentioned in section 10 above (2016: 5 institutions). Ten institutions (4 old university and 5 new universities and 1 other) provided no additional support other than reciprocal borrowing arrangements (2016: 9 institutions).

Seventeen institutions provided additional support to distance learners other than that already described (2016: 20 institutions). 14 (2016: 14) provided a remote phone/email/skype legal research enquiry service, 12 (2016: 14) provided postal loans, 12 (2016: 12) provided postal delivery of photocopying (subject to copyright), 6 (2016: 5) undertook database searches by library staff on behalf of the distance learning students and 3 (2016: 1) provided study packs. Also mentioned, by 7 respondents (2016: 8) were extended loan periods, access to the online student portal, online guides and reading lists, digitised items, training videos on the VLE, reading list software (ASPIRE) for distance learning and on campus modules, and the VLE.

Sixteen respondents offered a package including more than one of the services noted.

Some further questions probed the nature of the additional services a little deeper. Twenty six or 96% of institutions (2016: 97%) offering law by distance learning provided access for learners outside the campus to databases and learning materials. All 27 or 100% (2016: 100%) also used a virtual learning environment (VLE) for the delivery of law distance learning courses. All 27 of these institutions provided details of how to access law library materials (by

which was meant the law and commentary on it) through the VLE. Respondents were asked to include as many means of access as applied.

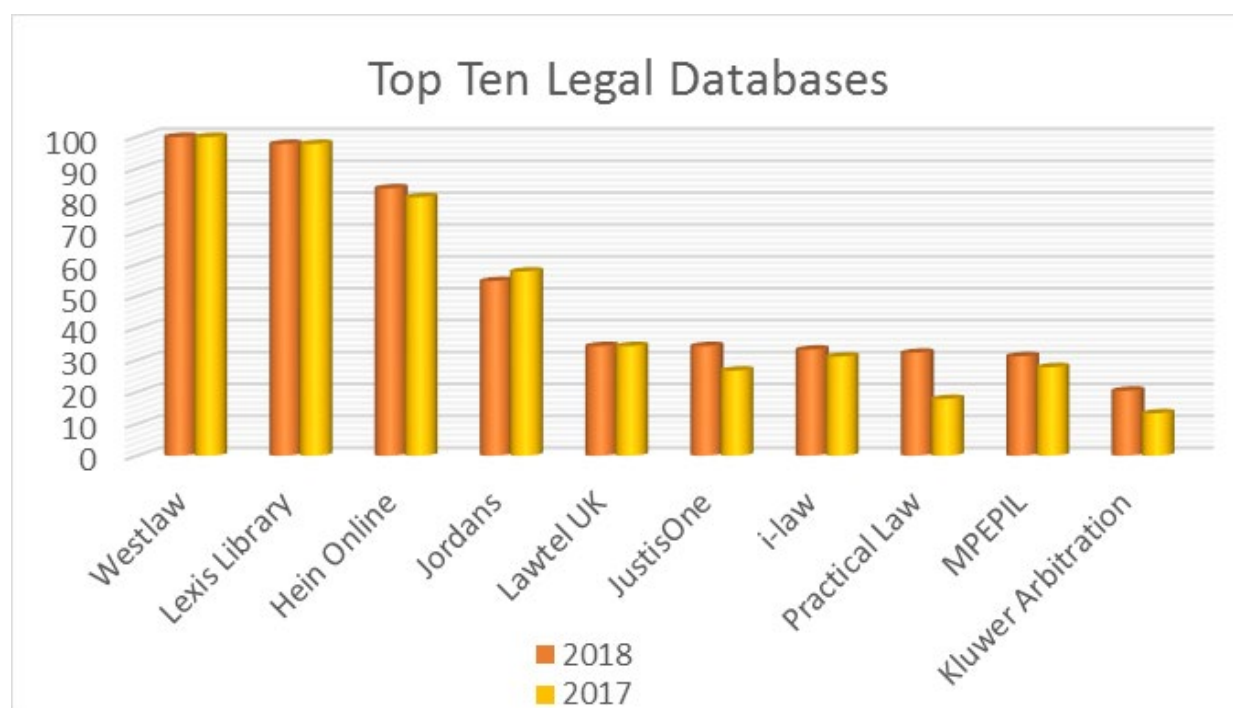
Twenty three (2016: 24) provided a link to the library catalogue, 26 (2016: 27) provided links to full text online subscription databases, 12 (2016: 18) scanned full text material into the VLE, and 10 (2016: 6) used Talis Aspire / online reading list software to access digitised readings. One respondent a piece mentioned: A-Z and subject lists of databases; links to library portal with further collated information; and study support materials and links to library subject support pages.

Twenty seven or 100% (2016: 29 or 100%) of institutions provided more than one means of access, with 11 or 41% (2016: 18 or 62%) providing all three suggested means of access on the questionnaire: a link to library catalogue, a link to full text databases and a link to full text materials scanned into the VLE.

## 12 Legal Databases

Contrary to the rest of the questionnaire, respondents were asked to indicate their legal database subscriptions at the present time, rather than in the year 2017/2018. The results below therefore show the position in February 2019.

As in recent years, all respondents gave details of subscription databases used in connection with the teaching and research work of the law school. The ten most frequently mentioned law databases are displayed in the graph below.



Graph 2: Top 10 legal databases

The law databases' academic market is still fluid but much less so than several years ago and generally very similar to last year. On a positive note, 11% of respondents (12% last year) were planning new subscriptions before the end of July 2019. However on the negative side, 17% (18% last year) noted planned or recent cancellations before the financial year end.

Like in previous years, a small number of law databases continue to dominate the market. According to the snapshot survey results using exactly the same survey questions format as

in the previous year, in February 2019 Westlaw UK was taken by 93 respondents (100%) and Lexis®Library was taken by 91 of respondents (98%). Last year Westlaw UK was also taken by 100% of respondents and Lexis®Library was taken by 98%. HeinOnline, kept the third position it first gained in 2007 being taken by 78 or 84% of respondents (last year: 81%). Jordan's Family Law Online (now part of Lexis®Library) remained in fourth place with 51 or 55% of respondents (58% last year).

Of the other popular databases mentioned by respondents, Lawtel UK continued in fifth place with 34% of respondents (34% last year) and JustisOne moved up to joint fifth place also with 34% (27%). i-law dropped one place to seventh place with 33% of respondents although many respondents state that they only take parts of this database (31% last year) and Practical Law moved up to eighth place with 32% (18% last year). The Max Planck Encyclopedia of Public International Law dropped one place to ninth place with 31% of respondents (28% last year). Kluwer Arbitration remained in tenth place with 20% of respondents (13% last year).

Looking at the returns for Westlaw in more detail, no cancellations and two new subscriptions were planned (one to Westlaw International and one to Westlaw eBooks). Two respondents reported that they already subscribed to Westlaw China, three reported they subscribed to Westlaw e-books, five reported that they subscribed to IDS Brief and two reported they subscribed to Westlaw Australia.

Sixty eight respondents or 73% subscribed to Westlaw International (79% last year) as well. Six respondents subscribed to Westlaw IE (Irish Law). Four were based in the Irish Republic, one was from Northern Ireland and one from the UK mainland.

Respondents were asked to indicate the subscriptions they took to particular parts of the Lexis®Library product. No planned new subscriptions were reported, but one respondent reported that they were planning to cancel their subscription to Lexis PSL and one respondent said they were planning to cancel the newspaper module on Lexis because of low usage.

The Cases module and the Legislation module were the most popular products, both taken by 96% of respondents. The Journals module was taken by 94% of respondents. Halsbury's Laws was taken by 82% of respondents and Newspapers on Lexis by 68%, whilst the International Materials module was taken by 62% of respondents. The Encyclopaedia of Forms and Precedents in electronic format was taken by 62%. 15 respondents or 16% took Lexis PSL.

26 respondents ticked "other Lexis®Library products" in the survey questionnaire. However most did not specify specific products so it is difficult to give a safe popularity percentage split between the other Lexis®Library products, other than to say that the following products were specifically mentioned by respondents: Harvey's on Industrial Relations and Employment Law, Legal Practice area, Tolley's Tax, Trusts and Wills.

Two respondents stated that they subscribed to LexisNexis®Juris Classeur and two respondents took Lexis Middle East Law as standalone products.

HeinOnline retained its third position with a higher percentage, being taken by 78 or 84% of respondents (last year: 81%). However one respondent reported that they were considering cancelling their subscription before 31<sup>st</sup> July 2019 because "they could not afford it".

Jordan's Family Law Online (now part of Lexis®Library) remained in fourth place with 51 respondents or 55% (52 or 58% last year). However one respondent reported plans to cancel their subscription before 31<sup>st</sup> July because of "low usage".

Lawtel UK took joint fifth place with 34% of respondents taking the database (34% last year). However one respondent reported plans to cancel their subscription because of "the need to save money". JustisOne also took joint fifth place with 34% of respondents (27% last year). However two were planning to cancel because of price increases.

Other than the databases already discussed in detail, the following databases were mentioned by 10% or more respondents:

	2018 <i>Institutions</i>	2018 %	2017
<i>Index to Legal Periodicals</i>	13	14%	13%
<i>Index to Foreign Legal Periodicals</i>	11	12%	11%

Databases cited by 3 or more respondents included Oxford Reports on International Law (ORIL) and Oxford Scholarship Online (each with 7 respondents); OGEL – Oil, Gas and Energy Law and Hague Academy Collected Courses (both 6 respondents); Beck Online and Trade Law Guide (both with 5 respondents); Oxford PIL, Investment Arbitration Reporter, WorldTradeLaw.net and PKULaw (with 4 respondents) and Dalloz.fr, Foreign Law Guide, IBFD, Investor-State Law Guide, Kemp on Lawtel, Manupatra, Bloomsbury Professional, Making of Modern Law and SCC Online (each with 3 respondents).

The median number of legal database subscriptions taken in responding libraries in February 2019 was 6 (February 2018: 6) and the average number was 8 databases (February 2018: 8). The numbers of legal databases offered by institutions ranged from 1 to 65 (1 to 57 last year).

### 13 Other databases

In addition to law databases, law schools use a range of more general information databases such as the newspapers which are of relevance to students in a wide range of disciplines. Eighty five respondents (91%) noted other subscription databases which contribute significantly to the teaching and research work of their law school. This shows an increase from the 88% recorded last year.

JSTOR was again the most widely used general database with 62 or 67% of respondents (61 or 68% last year). House of Commons Parliamentary Papers (HCPP) was mentioned by 56 or 60% of respondents (56 or 62% last year) and gained second place. Third was EBSCO Business Source with 55 or 59%. Fourth was ISI Web of Science with 48 or 52%. Fifth was EBSCO Academic with 31 or 33%. Criminal Justice Abstracts with 30 or 32% was sixth and ASSIA with 24 or 26% was seventh. The following databases were used by fewer than 10% of respondents: SCOPUS was used by 10 or 9% of respondents and Proquest [dissertations and theses, business collection science reworks and parliamentary papers] was also used by 10 or 9% of respondents. The following databases were mentioned by 3 respondents each: Public Information Online and Project Muse. ABI Inform; IBSS, Sage Research Methods and Wiley Online were mentioned by 2 respondents. A further 35 non-law subscription databases were mentioned only once.

By February 2019, 62 or 67% of respondents used a web-based combined newspaper database to access the full range of newspapers (57 or 63% last year), although not every respondent specified a particular database and many respondents subscribed to more than one database. In addition many respondents had subscriptions to the archives of individual newspaper titles. Taking into account all those respondents who did specify particular databases, the top supplier was again Nexis UK used by 31 respondents (32 last year). Proquest [news-stand, news stream, historical and just Proquest] with 18 respondents (17 last year) was second. Third was Gale [Newsvault, primary sources, infotrac and just Gale] was taken by 12 respondents (5 last year). Factiva was taken by 4 respondents (4 last year) and UK Press Online was taken by 2 respondents (2 last year). The following databases were

mentioned once a piece: Access World News and Newsbank. Therefore the results for this year indicate that Nexis UK and Proquest continue to be the two most widely subscribed to newspaper databases which are used to contribute significantly to teaching and research in law schools.

## **14 E-journals and e-books**

Every other year since 2004, we have asked questions about electronic journals and books. We repeated the same questions as used in 2014, to try to gauge the impact electronic materials are having on print subscriptions.

Eighty, or 86% of respondents (2016: 82, 87%) said they subscribed to an electronic journal database which includes law titles, excluding Lexis@Library, Westlaw UK, HeinOnline, e-journal gateways (e.g. SwetsWise) and special deals (e.g. NESLI). The pattern across different types of institution showed no change in the take-up amongst old universities and a slightly decreased take-up amongst new universities on 2014. Forty were old universities (2016: 40), 38 were new universities (2016: 40) and 2 were other types of institution (2016: 2).

However, as a result of subscribing to law e-journal databases 34, or 42.5% of those with access had cancelled a print subscription to a law journal (2016: 39 or 48%). Twenty two old universities (2016: 24), 11 new universities (2016: 15) and 1 other institutions (2016: 0) had replaced a law journal print subscription with electronic access.

A similar number of institutions: 31 or 33% of respondents (2016: 37 or 39%) said they had cancelled subscriptions to the print version of law material (e.g. a journal) during the current year where the same resource was available electronically. They were 16 old universities, 14 new and 1 other types of institution.

As in previous years we sought more information about the impact electronic subscriptions were having on print subscriptions. Which types of print publication were being cut? Were there differences in the cuts made by the different types of institution?

Twenty eight institutions (2016: 33) provided details of the titles of print materials they had cancelled where the same material was available electronically. They comprised 14 old institutions, 14 new and 0 other. A further 5 respondents said there were too many titles to list or they did not have the information. Of those who sent lists 8 mentioned more than 10 publications (two mentioned over 20 items) and 3 had lists of between 5 and 10 titles.

Excluding instances where respondents said they were cancelling duplicate subscriptions to leave only a single subscription, a total of 108 print titles were cancelled (2016: 153). That number excludes five vague answers. All this adds up to a substantial number of cancellations in one year, although perhaps fewer overall than was recorded in previous years leading one to speculate that the number of print cancellations in favour of an electronic alternative may have reached a plateau for the time being.

In 2018 the cancellations axe fell almost entirely on print law journals and law reports. Of the 108 specifically mentioned cancelled print titles, 69 were law journals and 28 titles were law reports. Looking only at journals, old universities mentioned 24 titles which had been cancelled, whilst new universities mentioned 45 cancellations. Fewer print law report titles were cancelled: 3 by old universities and 25 by new universities. The titles cancelled included both core and specialised titles. The few remaining cancelled print titles were mainly loose-leaf works, practitioner works and digests.

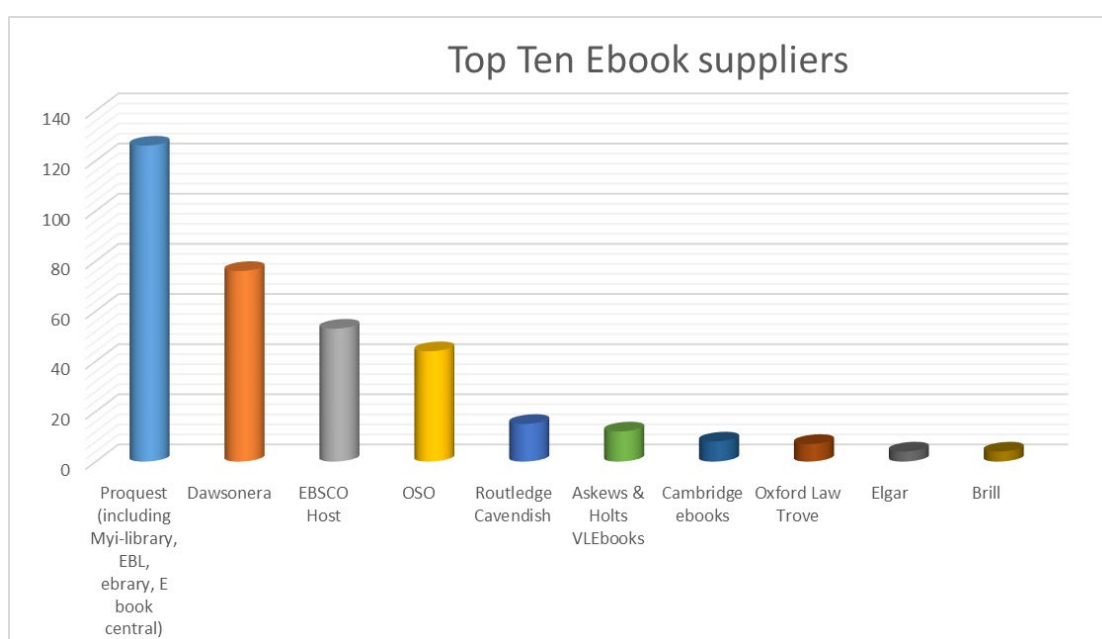
In summary, this snapshot of cancellations indicates that the priority for cancellation appears to remain with law journals and law reports including, though not exclusively, those available electronically.

We asked two questions to gain an impression of which parts of the law collection had sustained cuts and why. Of the 54 respondents who reported cuts, 21 or 39% reported the

cuts falling more heavily on domestic law materials, 11 or 20% falling equally on foreign, comparative and international (FCIL) materials; and 22 or 41% more heavily on both domestic and FCIL materials equally.

Forty six of the 54 respondents gave reasons for where the cuts fell, some citing different factors. The most frequently cited (15 times) was that the cuts had to fall on domestic materials because there were very few or no FCIL materials held. Second most frequent (11 times) was the availability of materials in electronic format. And thirdly 4 institutions said the reason was low usage rather than jurisdictional factors. Other reasons mentioned were “needing to focus on international law for their LLM programmes” and “maintaining a balance of teaching materials”.

As in previous years we asked about subscriptions to e-book publishers. Ninety two respondents (2016: 94) listed the e-book publishers to which they subscribed for law titles. They were 43 old universities and 46 new universities and 3 other types of institution.



Graph 3: Top 10 e-book publishers

As the graph above shows, 126 subscribed to Proquest [including My i-library (47), EBL (41), E-brary (33) and eBook Central (5)]. 76 subscribed to Dawsonera (2016: 75), 53 subscribed to EBSCO host (2016: 39), 44 to OSO - Oxford Scholarship Online (2016: 43), 15 to Routledge Cavendish (2016: 11), 12 to Askews and Holt VLE Books (2016: Askews 11 and VLEbooks 5), 8 to Cambridge e-books (2016: 9) and 7 to Oxford LawTrove. In addition 4 recipients each subscribed to Brill and Elgar (5 each in 2016). Westlaw eBooks were selected by 3 institutions (4 in 2016), T&F by 3 institutions (2 in 2016) and Hart by 2 institutions (3 in 2016). A further 9 niche products were taken by just one library.

## 15 Expenditure

Seventy two of the 93 libraries (or 77% of respondents) were able to provide total expenditure figures for 2017/2018. Those respondents who did not respond either could not disaggregate law expenditure from other subjects or were not prepared to provide the information.

### 15.1 Total expenditure on law materials

Total expenditure on the acquisitions of law materials ranged from £10,472 to £1,406,000 (2017: £13,108 to £1,500,000). Mean expenditure was £185,726 (2017: £167,436), a 10.9%



increase on 2017. This increase in expenditure on 2017 (following on from a small decrease in the previous year) is welcome, although to sound a note of caution the increase may be partly a reflection of the changing pool of survey respondents and the fact that some recipients may not want to report their figures when finances have declined.

It is helpful in understanding these changes to compare the expenditure in the different types of institution.

Old universities: 32 out of a possible 43 responses (2017: 32 out of 39).  
Range from £42,512 to £795,400; median £204,943 (increased by 31.32% on 2017); mean £234,850 (increased by 13.15% on 2017). 75% of old universities spent at least £120,500 (up 44.58% on last year). 25% spent more than £335,600 (up 38.53% on last year).

New universities: 38 out of a possible 47 responses (2017: 44 out of 48).  
Range £21,748 to £1,406,000; median £100,000 (up 3.06% on last year); mean £152,492 (up 5.58% on last year). 75% of new universities spent at least £68,948 (up 9.44% on last year) and 25% spent more than £152,490 (up 6.01% on last year).

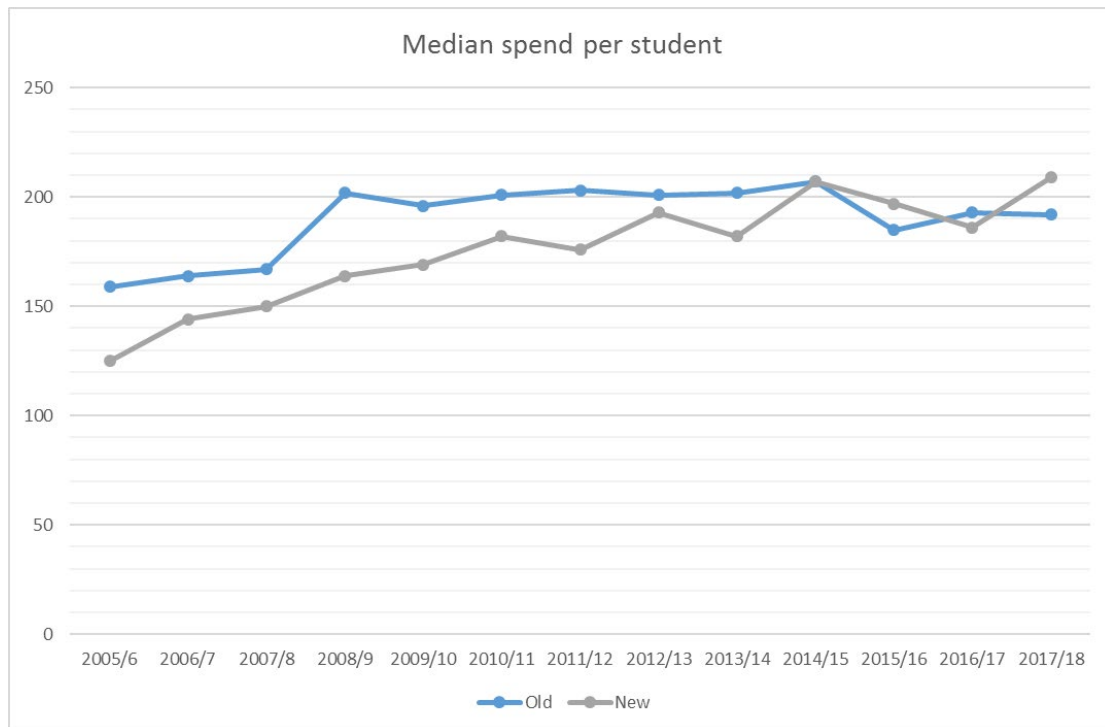
Other institutions: 2 of possible 3 responses (2017: 2 of possible 3 responses)  
This sample is too small to be meaningful or anonymous.

Based on the means, these results seem to indicate that expenditure on law materials has increased both in old universities and new universities.

For each law student in a typical university (looking at the median) £199.13 was spent on law materials. This is a small 3.5% increase on the figure for 2017.

However, the rate of increase has not been evenly distributed across the higher education sector. In an old university, median spend per student was lower at £191.56 (2017: £193.28), whilst for a student in a new university the median was higher at £209.43 (2017: £185.77), creating a wider gap between old and new universities of 8.53% (2017: 3.9%). This year therefore the median spend per student at new universities has overtaken the median spend per student at old universities. In other types of institution the median spend per student was £301.91 (2017: £329.26).

As graph 4 illustrates, the gap between old and new universities has fluctuated over time but slightly widened in 2017/2018 due to the decrease in median expenditure in old universities and the large increase in the median for new universities. (Per capita expenditure at other types of institution decreased, however this statistical change is due to the very tiny sample and should be used with caution and is not shown on the graph below.)



Graph 4: Library materials expenditure per student

Taking the mean, rather than the median, the pattern is reversed with the mean spend per student at old universities overtaking the mean spend per student at new universities, but with the gap between the two means being very small. Mean law materials expenditure per student in old universities was £235.38, up 7.39% on 2017 and in new universities it was £234.08, up 6.19% on 2017. In other types of institution the mean spend per student was £301.91 (2017: £329.26), indicating a steep decrease, but these results have been calculated over a very few respondents and should be treated with caution.

## 15.2 Monograph expenditure

Sixty one respondents provided details of spending on books, thirteen fewer than last year. Some respondents had difficulty providing a discrete and accurate figure for law expenditure alone owing to the way the university or college budget is divided amongst subject areas.

Expenditure on monographs ranged from £3,046 to £236,000 (2017: £3,020 to £225,000), with a mean of £36,070, an increase of 1.09% on 2017 and a median of £27,611 an increase of 15.47% on last year.

In 2018, on average, monograph acquisitions accounted for 20% of total law material expenditure (2017: 22%). The proportion of total expenditure spent on books ranged from 3% to 55% with a median of 17% (2017: 3% to 71% with a median of 19%).

Analysed by type of institution the figures for monograph expenditure were:

Old universities: 28 respondents (2017: 31)

Range £5,629 to £155,000; median £44,100, an increase of 36% on last year; mean £49,607 an increase of 9% on 2017. Mean of 23% of total law material expenditure (2017: 22%).

New universities: 32 respondents (2017: 40)

Range £3,046 to £236,000; median £17,054 a decrease of 25% on last year; mean £25,235, a decrease of 15% on last year. Mean of 17% of total law material expenditure (2017: 22%).

Other institutions: 1 institutions (2017: 2)

The range, median and mean figures are not very useful because of the tiny sample.

The mean figure for old universities showed an increase of 9% in expenditure on monographs, whilst the mean figure for new universities showed a decrease of 15%. The percentage of total law expenditure devoted to monographs has increased very slightly for old universities whilst it has decreased for new universities. Please note that these figures may be partly a reflection of the changing pool of survey respondents.

### **15.3 Serials expenditure**

Seventy respondents who gave any financial figures were able to provide a figure for their spending on serials (70 last year). The questionnaire defined serials as law journals, statutes, law reports and loose-leaf updates.

As a mean, serials accounted for 33% of total law materials expenditure (2019: 35%). The proportion of expenditure given to serials ranged from 4% to 70% (2017: 6% to 71%) with a median of 35% (2017: 35%). Overall, serials expenditure ranged from £2,136 to £540,000 (2017: £1,529 to £540,000), with a median of £39,889 (2017: £42,829) and a mean of £72,406 (2017: £64,402).

Analysed by type of institution the figures were:

Old universities: 29 responses (2017: 29)

Range £4,490 to £540,000; median £70,250 up 22.42% on last year; mean £108,979, up by 14.71% on last year. Mean of 38% of total law material expenditure (2017: 39%).

New universities: 39 responses (2017: 39)

Range £2,136 to £200,000; median £25,696, down 13.02% on last year; mean £44,298, up 0.02% on last year. Mean of 29% total law material expenditure (2017: 32%).

Other institutions: 2 responses (2017: 2)

The range, median and mean figures are not very useful because of the tiny sample.

The percentage of total law expenditure devoted to serials has continued to fall for both old and new universities. Please note that these figures may be partly a reflection of the changing pool of survey respondents.

### **15.4 Database expenditure**

Databases accounted for 47% of total law materials expenditure in the mean, ranging from 13% to 85% with a median of 47% (2017: 43% of total law materials expenditure in the mean, ranging from 9% to 85% with a median of 43%). Of the 57 responses (2017: 70), expenditure ranged from £25,043 to £970,000 (2017: £5,942 to £1,100,000) with a median of £52,115 (2017: £47,118), an increase of 10.6% on last year, and a mean of £88,771 (2017: £75,700), an increase of 17.27% on last year.

Analysed by type of institution the figures were:

Old universities: 24 respondents (2017: 29)

Range £25,043 to £258,040; median £88,362, an increase of 37.12% on last year; mean £98,003, up 24.58% on last year. Median 39% and mean 40% of total law material expenditure (2017: 38% and 38%).

New universities: 32 respondents (2017: 39)

Range £27,110 to £970,000; median £47,631, up 26.18% on 2017; mean £83,771 up 8.94% on last year. Median 50% and mean 53% of total law material expenditure (2017: 45% and 47%).

Other institutions: 1 respondents (2017: 2)

The range, median and mean figures are not very useful because of the tiny sample.

Median and mean spending on databases in both old and universities has increased on last year. The median and mean percentages of total law expenditure devoted to databases has continued to increase for old and new universities.

### **15.5 E-book expenditure**

Thirty six respondents provided details of spending on e-books (36 last year). It is important to point out that more respondents probably purchase e-books, but that they were not all able to provide discrete and accurate figures for this law expenditure alone owing to the way the university or college budget is divided amongst subject areas. As a consequence the following e-book expenditure figures should be treated with some caution, but they are of interest nevertheless.

Expenditure on e-books ranged from £692 to £60,000, with a mean of £14,402 and a median of £6,000.

Analysed by type of institution the figures for e-book expenditure were:

Old universities: 18 respondents  
Range £3,268 to £60,000; mean £22,392; median £16,950.

New universities: 18 respondents  
Range £692 to £33,634; mean £7,027; median £5,173.

Other institutions: 0 institution  
No data to calculate figures.

### **15.6 Other expenditure on law materials**

Nine respondents noted "other" expenditure (7 last year). This is a small sample. Expenditure ranged from £143 to £62,777 (2017: £17 to £66,139), with a median of £1,900, and a mean of £9,758.

5 respondents specified what the "other" expenditure was spent on: Digitisation, copyright clearance and binding; document delivery; membership fees and DVDs and videos.

### **15.7 Expenditure by institutions not providing vocational or professional award courses**

At the suggestion of one respondent we have carried out some analyses on expenditure by those institutions which offer only an exempting law degree or LLM courses, that is, do not offer vocational courses, such as the LPC, BPTC, Diploma in Professional Legal Practice (Scotland) or Professional Practice Course (Ireland) or Degree of Barrister-at-law (Ireland) or courses leading to professional awards, such as the CPE, CILEx or Council for Licensed Conveyancers. These institutions believe that vocational courses require the purchase of expensive practitioner materials and so the results given earlier in section 15 are inflated and make comparison with their situation very difficult. So, we have re-run the analyses for total expenditure.

Total expenditure on the acquisition of law materials ranged from £10,473 to £795,400 (2017: £13,108 to £795,400). Mean expenditure was £156,472 (2017: £148,199), a 5.58% increase on 2017. To sound a note of caution the results could be partly a reflection of the changing pool of survey respondents.

It is helpful in understanding these changes to compare the expenditure in the different types of institution.

Old universities: 31 respondents, 24 provided financial data (2017: 28, 24 provided financial data)

Range £42,512 to £795,400 (2017: £45,665 to £795,400); median £174,625 (2017: £161,956), a 7.82% increase on last year; mean £216,620 (2017: £215,188), a 0.67% increase on last year.

New universities: 23 respondents, 19 providing financial data (2017: 25, 24 provided financial data)

Range £21,748 to £233,909 (2017: £13,108 to £260,675); median £69,157 (2017: £74,485), a decrease of 7.15% on 2017; mean £88,178 (2017: £85,327), an increase of 3.34% on last year.

Other institutions: 1 respondent and 1 providing financial information (2017: 8, 1)

Comparing these results with those in paragraph 15.1 for all respondents, there are differences between the medians and means in old universities, but much more significant are the differences between the medians and means amongst new universities. The reason for the differences lay in the *numbers of students* at each institution - those new universities which do not offer vocational courses have generally *smaller* numbers of students than those new universities that do, hence a *smaller* expenditure on the acquisition of library materials. This distinction is less marked at old universities.

## 16 Sources of income

Seventy one (2017: 77) respondents gave details of the source of the funds from which law material expenditure was met.

The greatest proportion of acquisitions was funded from general library funds, and all but two institutions responding received at least part of their income this way. Using the mean, 88% of old universities', 98% of new universities' and 92% of other institutions' income for law library materials was from general library funds (87%, 97% and 100% last year). When the median is used the figures are 99%, 100% and 92% (2017: 96%, 100% and 100%). The increase in the mean percentage for old and new universities indicates an increased focus on general library funds.

Law schools contributed to funding the acquisition of law materials in 21 institutions (2017: 26). As has been noted in previous survey reports, a majority of law schools make no such contribution at all (70% this year, 66% in 2017). This fact is reflected in the fact that, only 44% (2017: 56%) of old university law schools, 19% (2017: 19%) of new university law schools and 0% (2017: 0%) of other institutions' schools contributed something.

Of the law schools that contributed, the amount ranged from £4,898 to £247,903 (2017: £1,136 to £164,982). The median contribution was £16,800, an increase of 14.36% on last year. The mean was £39,477, up 47.97% on last year.

For the libraries that received funds from the law school, these funds represented a mean of 18% of the total income for the purchase of law materials, with a median of 11% (15% and 8% last year).

This year the mean percentage contributions by law schools based in old and new universities widened with old universities contributing a higher mean percentage than new universities.

Of the old university law schools who contributed anything, the mean contribution represented 20.51% of the funds for library materials (2017: 14.53%), while new university law schools

contributed less than last year at 13.55% (2017: 15.19%). No 'other' institutions received funds from the law school (2017: 0%).

In the old universities, median law school funding for law materials was £18,707, up 13% on last year. The mean was £52,498 up by 76% on last year. In new universities the comparative figures were a median of £14,747, up by 87% on last year and a mean of £13,434 up by 1.48% on 2017.

In summary for law school contributions: over two-thirds of all law schools (70%) make *no* contribution to funding the acquisition of law materials. However there was an increase in the old University law schools' average contribution (at 20.51%) to the total funds for library materials and a decrease in the new university law school's average contribution (at 13.55%) to the total funds for library materials.

Seven institutions (2017: 7) reported receiving income from other university budgets for law materials. For these 7 old universities, 0 new universities and 0 other institutions, the amount of income from these sources ranged from £20,000 to £191,197 (2017: £5,000 to £213,869).

No respondents reported funding from user charging (2017: 0).

Finally, 2 institutions (2017: 2) reported receiving financial contributions towards law materials from outside bodies. The sums ranged from £20,076 to £80,000 (2017: £18,500 to £131,545), with a median income of £50,038 (2017: £75,023) and a mean income of £50,038 (2017: £75,023). These were both old universities.

## **16.1 Targeted funding from the law school**

Two further questions sought to explore whether law schools paid for specific materials or services.

The first question asked respondents to indicate whether specific types of materials were paid for by the law school. 26 respondents (28%) replied in the positive (2017: 28%) with some respondents mentioning more than one type of material. By far the most frequently mentioned was payment of, or contributions towards, the cost of electronic databases such as Lexis Library, Westlaw or HeinOnline - 16 respondents (2017: 15). Six respondents noted that the law school contributed towards the cost of law books, journals or reports (9 in 2017) ranging from research journals to specialist monographs to multiple copies of textbooks. Library materials for the Legal Practice Course or Bar Vocational Course were mentioned specifically by 5 respondents (3 in 2017) and contributions to eBook subscriptions was mentioned by 3 respondents (2 in 2017).

In the second question in this section, respondents were asked to indicate whether the law school contributed to law library expenditure other than for the purchase of law materials.

Only 1 respondent (3 in 2017) received this additional funding. The contribution was £20,000, but no explanation was given on what the money was to be spent.

Finally a new survey question was asked this year on whether some or all of an institution's law resources were paid for via a consortium. 4 respondents (or 4%) said they paid for some or all of their law materials via a consortium. 3 respondents mentioned the IReL consortium and 1 respondent mentioned NELLCO.

## **17 Staffing**

The responses to the questions on staffing provide a picture of the number and qualifications of library staff in academic law libraries. The definition of law library staff provided in the questionnaire was the same as for the previous surveys. To be included in the survey, library

staff were to spend 50% or more of their working time on the care and servicing of the law collection.

Eighteen (or 19%) of the 93 responding institutions had no staff which met this criterion (2017: 16 or 18%). Of these, 8 (2017: 7) were old universities, 9 (2017: 9) were new universities and 1 was an "other" institution. In most instances respondents mentioned that law was just one of a number of subjects for which a team of librarians was responsible, but no one spent the requisite 50% or more of their time on law alone, or that their responsibilities were diversifying into library-wide activities.

For the 75 respondents with staff who met the criterion, the full-time equivalent (FTE) number of staff ranged from 0.25 to 23 (2017: 0.15 to 22.37) with a median of 1.0 (2017: 1.0) and a mean of 2.23 (2017: 2.25). 36% (2017: 40.5%) had exactly one FTE member of law library staff.

As in previous surveys, old universities ranged most widely in the number of law library staff and 20% had four or more FTE (2017: 19%), compared to only 5% of new universities (2017: 5%).

The median for old universities' FTE law library staffing was 1.0 (2017: 1.0) with a mean of 2.93 (2017: 3.3). The median for new universities was 1.0 (2017: 1.0) and the mean was 1.64 (2017: 1.5). The other institution staffing levels was 1 FTE (2017: 0.5 to 1).

The staffing figures therefore portray a very slightly worse picture for old universities and slightly better picture for new universities than last year.

The overall mean number of staff decreased from 2.25 FTE in 2017 to 2.23 FTE in 2018, the mean number of staff for old universities decreased from 3.3 FTE in 2017 to 2.93 FTE in 2018, and the mean number of staff in new universities increased from 1.5 FTE in 2017 to 1.64 in 2018.

Respondents were asked for the FTE number of staff in professional, clerical and other posts.

### **17.1 Professional posts**

Of the 75 institutions which had staff with the care and servicing of the law collections as their sole or principal function, only 2 (both old universities) did not have a professional post (2017: 2). Overall, then, of the 75 responding law libraries with staff who met the definition, 73 or 97.33% had a designated professional who could dedicate a significant proportion of their time to the needs of the law service (2017: 97.29%). The number of professional FTE posts ranged from 0.1 to 12 (2017: 0.1 to 11.6) and 38% of institutions (2017: 42%) with any professional posts had exactly 1.0 FTE.

In old universities, 10 of the 33 respondents had exactly 1.0 professional FTE, with 15 institutions with less than 1.0 professional FTE; 8 had more than 1.0 professional FTE and the maximum was 7.4 professional FTE posts (7.4 in 2017). The mean for old universities was 1.21 professional FTE (2017: 1.44 FTE). The results show a slight decrease in the average level of professional staffing in old universities.

In new universities, 16 of the 38 respondents had exactly 1.0 FTE professional post, with 15 institutions with less than 1.0 FTE; 7 had more than 1.0 FTE and the maximum was 12 FTE professional posts. The mean for new universities was 1.25 (2017: 1.2 FTE). These results also show a slight increase in the average level of professional staffing in new universities. In the 2 "other" institutions, both had exactly 1 FTE (2017: 0; 0.5 and 1 FTE).

### **17.2 Clerical posts**

Turning to clerical posts, 26 institutions respondents had clerical staff who met the definition given in section 17. Of the 49 who had library staff but no clerical staff, 16 were old universities, 31 were new universities and 2 were “other” institutions.

For the 26 institutions that did have clerical staffing, numbers ranged from 0.25 to 14.85 (2017: 0.25 to 14.85), with median of 1.0 (2017: 1.0) and a mean of 2.92 (2017: 2.94). None of the 2 responding “other” institutions had clerical staff. Fifty four percent of old universities reported clerical staff for law as opposed to 23% of new universities (2017: 47%, 22%).

As found in past years, old universities typically had larger numbers of clerical staff. Six of the 19 old universities with clerical staff had four or more such staff and the mean was 3.25 (2017: 3.89), whereas of the 9 new universities with clerical staff only 1 had four or more such staff (2017: 1 of 9) and the mean was 2.04.

A partial explanation for the large difference between the presence of clerical staffing in old and new universities could be drawn from the location of the law library. Of the 11 (2017: 8) institutions with more than 2 FTE clerical staff, 8 or 73% had a law library located separately from other collections (2017: 6 or 75%). Of these 7 institutions, 8 (100%) were old universities. Where there is a separate law library, staffing is less likely to be shared between subjects, and circulation and other activities will be dedicated to the law collections.

### **17.3 Staff employed in other posts**

Two institutions (2017: 6) noted law library staff, other than clerical or professional staff, who met the criterion noted in section 17 above. Of these, 1 was an old university and 1 was a new university. FTE numbers of such staff ranged from 0.5 to 1.0 (2017: 0.5 to 2.0). The duties were specified as “Assistant Faculty Librarian” by one of the two respondents.

### **17.4 Qualifications of staff**

Respondents were asked to indicate how many of the staff whose principal function was the care of the law collections had a professional librarianship or information science (LIS) qualification or an academic or professional qualification in law. 75 institutions responded to this question.

Seventy five or 81% of all institutions (2017: 74 or 82%) had at least one member of staff who had a LIS qualification, although for 26 institutions this was less than one full-time member of staff (2017: 25).

Thirty two (2017: 31) institutions had exactly one FTE member of staff with a LIS qualification and 7 (2017: 6) had three or more FTE staff with such a qualification.

Importantly it is still true to say that there was no unqualified staff in professional posts. Also this year two with no professional posts had professionally qualified members of staff.

Eighteen of the 75 respondents representing 24% of these institutions (2017: 22%) had staff with an academic or professional qualification in law. Twelve (2017: 16) had at least one member of staff so qualified, and 10 (2017: 7) had exactly 1.0 FTE staff member with a law qualification.

As found in past surveys, library staff with law qualifications were much more common in old universities. Looking at only those institutions which had any staff which met the criterion noted in section 17 above, in old universities 37% (2017: 28%) of law libraries had law qualified staff, compared to new universities where only 13% (2017: 18%) had law qualified staff. None (2017: 0) of the “other” institutions had such staff. Overall, 72% of the libraries with law qualified staff were in old universities (2017: 56%).



## 18 The SLS Statement of Standards, 2009

Two questions were added in 2010 at the request of SLS to gauge how far law librarians were aware of the 2009 Society of Legal Scholars Statement of standards for university law library provision in the United Kingdom and whether they had had occasion to use it in discussions on funding and administration of the law collection in their institution. I can record an increase in awareness in that that an increased number of respondents 77 or 83% (2017: 74 or 78%) stated they were still aware of the revised Statement, and a small decline in those using the Statement in discussions as only 43 or 46% of institutions said they used it in 2017/18 (2017: 46 or 47%).

## 19 The future

Since 2004 and every other year since, we asked for the personal views of respondents on the changes they envisage over the next five years to the provision of legal information within their library. We repeated the questions this year.

### 19.1 Electronic v Paper

Ninety three (100%) of respondents (2016: 95 or 98%) gave their views on the balance of provision between electronic and paper access to legal information. 51% (2016: 53%) felt the move would be significantly in favour of electronic access. However, 41% (2016: 39%) considered that in the next five years in their library the balance would move only marginally in favour of electronic access. Just 8% (2016: 8%) felt the balance would remain constant. As in all previous surveys no respondents considered there would be a move away from electronic access.

Consistently therefore respondents' views on the future have moved away from considering only a marginal move towards electronic provision possible, towards a majority considering a significant move towards electronic provision likely.

Since 2004, when these questions were first posed, the views of the sectors have become more closely aligned, and now a high percentage of respondents in all sectors consider library provision will move *significantly* in favour of electronic delivery.

### 19.2 Monographs v Serials

Ninety three (100%) of respondents provided their views on the balance of expenditure between monographs and serials. The results consolidate trends established in past years. At 58%, most respondents considered the balance would remain constant (2016: 60%). 22% of respondents considered that the balance would move marginally in favour of serials (2016: 22%) and 15% of respondents considered that the balance would move marginally in favour of monographs (2016: 17%). Only 5% of respondents thought the balance would move significantly in favour of serials (2016: 1%) and no respondents thought the balance would move significantly in favour of monographs (2017: 0%).

There was majority agreement between respondents from old and new universities that the balance would remain *constant*.

### 19.3 GB materials and EU materials v Foreign and International materials

Finally, 93 (100%) respondents provided their views on the changes over the next five years in the proportion spent in their library purchasing legal materials relating to the law of Great Britain and the European Union as compared with foreign and international law. The pattern is similar to that reported in the past surveys.

At 72%, most respondents considered the proportion would remain constant (2016: 59%). 16% of respondents considered that the proportion would move marginally in favour of foreign and international (2016: 19%) and 9% thought the proportion would move marginally in favour of Great Britain and the EU (2016: 20%). Only 3% of respondents thought the proportion would move significantly in favour of Great Britain and the EU (2016: 1%) and no respondents thought the proportion would move significantly in favour of foreign and international (2016: 1%).

When analysed by type of institution there was a unanimity of response between old and new universities. Similar majority numbers (old 74% and new 70%) believed that the proportion would remain *constant*.

Overall, there was considerable uniformity in responses between old and new universities on future trends across the higher education sector.

### **Acknowledgement**

My job has been made considerably easier as usual by having Laura Griffiths, Academic Services Librarian at IALS, to fill the important administrative and statistical roles with her usual accuracy and efficiency. She continues to contribute significantly to the administration of the survey and has helped me by calculating many of the statistics for the report.

### **References**

Gee, David (2018) SLS/BIALL Academic Law Survey 2016/2017. *Legal Information Management*. 18(3), 171-189.

Gee, David (2017) SLS/BIALL Academic Law Survey 2015/2016. *Legal Information Management*. 17(4), 245-264.

Gee, David (2016) SLS/BIALL Academic Law Survey 2014/2015. *Legal Information Management*. 16(4), 239-257.

Gee, David (2015) SLS/BIALL Academic Law Survey 2013/2014. *Legal Information Management*. 15(4), 264-282.

Gee, David (2014) SLS/BIALL Academic Law Survey 2012/2013. *Legal Information Management*. 14(3), 215-233.

Gee, David (2013) SLS/BIALL Academic Law Survey 2011/2012. *Legal Information Management*. 13(4), 260-277.

Gee, David (2012) SLS/BIALL Academic Law Survey 2010/2011. *Legal Information Management*. 12(3), 218-232.

Society of Legal Scholars (2009) A library for the modern law school. A statement of standards for university law library provision in the United Kingdom - 2009 revision. Available at URL: <http://www.legalscholars.ac.uk/documents/SLS-Library-for-a-Modern-Law-School-Statement-2009.pdf>

### **Appendix**

#### **List of the 93 academic law libraries in the UK and Ireland that returned a completed 2017/2018 survey questionnaire**

Aberdeen University  
Abertay University

Aberystwyth University  
Anglia Ruskin University  
  
Aston University  
Bangor University  
Bedfordshire University  
Birkbeck, University of London  
Birmingham City University  
Birmingham University  
Bodleian Law Library (Oxford University)  
Bolton University  
Bournemouth University  
Bradford College  
Bradford University  
Brighton University  
Bristol University  
Buckingham University  
Canterbury Christ Church University  
Cardiff University  
Central Lancashire University (UCLAN)  
Chester University  
City, University of London  
Coventry University  
Cumbria University  
Derby University  
Dublin Business School  
Dundee University  
Durham University  
Edinburgh University  
Essex University  
Exeter University  
Glasgow Caledonian University  
Gloucestershire University  
Greenwich University  
Heart of Worcestershire College  
Hertfordshire University  
Institute of Advanced Legal Studies (IALS)  
Keele University  
Kent University  
King's College London (KCL)  
Kingston University  
Lancaster University  
Leeds Beckett University  
Leicester University  
Lincoln University  
Liverpool John Moores University  
Liverpool University  
London Metropolitan University  
London South Bank University  
Manchester Metropolitan University  
Middlesex University  
Newcastle University  
Northampton University  
Northumbria University  
Nottingham University  
Oxford Brookes University  
Plymouth University  
Portsmouth University  
Queen Mary, University of London  
Queen's University Belfast  
Robert Gordon University

Royal Holloway, University of London  
Salford University  
School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS)  
Sheffield Hallam University  
Sheffield University  
South Wales University  
Southampton Solent University  
Southampton University  
Squire Law Library (University of Cambridge)  
St Mary's University in Twickenham  
Staffordshire University  
Stirling University  
Sussex University  
Swansea University  
Teesside University  
Trinity College Dublin (TCD)  
Ulster University  
University College Cork (UCC)  
University College Dublin (UCD)  
University College London (UCL)  
University of East Anglia  
University of East London  
University of Law  
University of the West of England (UWE)  
University of the West of Scotland (UWS)  
Warwick University  
West London University  
Westminster University  
Winchester University  
Wolverhampton University  
York University