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**Guidance 3xix      Designing a module reading list for in-house,  
franchised and joint programmes**

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**The place of reading lists in the student experience**

Your reading list plays a key role for students in directing their self-study, helping them understand the boundaries and key concepts of a module and acquainting them with the leading authorities on a subject. Your reading lists enable you to direct students to a variety of sources including print books, eBooks, online journals, websites, online videos, galleries, museums, etc. You can see examples of this in our model reading list MDX1234. Unless advised to the contrary, students expect that all titles on a reading list will be readily available either through the University Library or via MyLearning or the internet for electronic resources. When this is not the case, students will understandably be dissatisfied with the Programme and the Library resources. The inability to obtain textbooks and journal articles can be a cause of complaint in NSS comments and at Programme Voice Groups.

It is therefore important that not only is a reading list pedagogically sound, but also that it is aligned with the resources that the University or partner can offer; and if students are expected to provide materials themselves (e.g. purchase a core textbook) this is made very clear on the reading list itself.

The University Personal eTextbook (Kortext) scheme purchases one book for every student on an in-house Module based at Hendon or Mauritius, guaranteeing access for students to the material (except where programmes have opted for Adobe CC provision instead). A reading list will typically include both “essential” and “recommended” reading – in the case of “essential” works, there needs to be a strategy in place to ensure that all students can access this material when they need it. The personal eTextbook title should be the first essential book listed.

Where feasible, this material should be made available digitally, which will also support courses delivered by distance learning. Where “essential” material is only available in print format, it should be made clear to students how they are expected to obtain it. There should be discussions with the appropriate Liaison Librarian to ensure that there is a mutual understanding of how students can access the material, whether it can be digitised, typically up to 10% or a whole chapter and whether there are substitutes available etc. The Library Digitisation team offers a copyright checking service to all academic staff and can provide digitised content (Book chapters, journal articles) and add them to reading lists.

Middlesex University uses an online reading list system managed by the Library Lists are made available to students through MyMDX and MyLearning. The University considers these lists to be the definitive record for students.

**Constructing a reading list – a ten key principles**

To help with the construction of your reading list(s), we recommend that academic staff follow the ten principles below. These are not intended to prescribe what a reading list might look like, but to ensure that it becomes an effective tool from a student perspective. It is important to think about the make-up of your reading list and to align it with the inclusive curriculum principles: [Inclusive Curriculum Framework \(mdx.ac.uk\)](http://www.mdx.ac.uk)

1. Speak with your Liaison Librarian. They can work with you to create a reading list that is easy for students to use and makes best use of our resources and is affordable. For example, do you want it organized by week or by topic? Look at the model reading list MDX1234 to see how you might arrange yours.
2. Be clear about what is “essential” reading and how students are able to access this whenever they need it
  - a. Essential means that they have to read this. Is this what you mean?
  - b. If there are several essential books – do you expect students to choose one or read all? Is this clear?
  - c. Is it clear if the book is essential for the whole module, or just a part of it?
  - d. If this module is running at an overseas campus or a partner institution, will all students be able to access all the material they need, as they will not have access to personal eTextbooks?
3. If you expect students to buy a book
  - a. Is this clearly stated?
  - b. Have you considered the price – is there a cheaper substitute which would suffice?
4. Where possible, eBooks should be cited, as they can be accessed by students more easily. If you have a choice of suitable books, books available electronically are to be preferred and provide accessibility features for students. This is particularly important for any module which is being studied by a disabled student as the University has a legal obligation to anticipate their study needs well before the module starts.
5. The Library always looks to hold the latest edition of each reading list textbooks. Where textbooks are included in a list, is it clear to students whether or not previous editions of a textbook would be acceptable or not? In some subjects (e.g. law) it may be essential that students only use the latest edition of a text. For example, where the revisions in the current edition are relatively minor, an earlier edition may suffice. Guidance of this nature is particularly valuable when students are making decisions on purchasing second-hand texts.
6. Where individual book chapters or articles from journals are not otherwise available electronically, we will seek to make these available electronically within the Library’s Copyright Licencing Agency (CLA) licence.
7. Have you made full use of the Library’s wide range of electronic resources - including articles from thousands of full-text e-journals? These are all available to students via the Library Search or MyMDX.

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8. Remember that you can include a wide range of resources that are freely available over the internet e.g. videos , which can be linked to directly from the reading list, provided licencing allows. Liaison Librarians can advise on this.
9. Treat this as the start of a dialogue. You might like to consider including annotations and comments which could direct the students. (You might also ask for their feedback).
10. For new courses it is helpful to hold discussions with the Liaison Librarians about resources early in the Validation process, before the formal Validation event. This is vital if there is a need to purchase an expensive resource for the new programme such as a new journal collection. For ongoing courses, a lead time of three months from when students will require the materials is a general guide. Ensure that the reading list is created and communicated to the Library in sufficient time for resources to be acquired and made available (see **Submission dates for reading lists** below)

### **New courses – reading lists at the Validation stage**

Reading lists are included in Validation and Review documents to indicate to the panel the range of material that students will be expected to consult, scope out the boundaries of the topic and provide evidence that the curriculum is pedagogically sound. It is recognised that, in the case of second and third year options which won't be taught for at least 18 months after the programme is approved, the reading list is often indicative and titles will be later augmented or replaced by newer material.

Before the formal Validation event it, will be necessary for the programme team to have a conversation with your Liaison Librarian to discuss the resources required to support the course, this is vital if there is a need to purchase an expensive resource for the new programme such as a new journal collection.

Your Liaison Librarian will be able to advise you regarding accessibility and availability of the content of the list and how to create and update the reading list using the online reading list system, which you should link to in your Validation documentation.

### **Going beyond the reading list**

Reading lists provide a framework for students to develop an understanding of the subject-matter, but as they progress through university it is also important that students develop skills of independent research and inquiry. The ability to frame a research question, search for, retrieve and evaluate information is what turns students into independent learners with valuable lifelong skills. It is therefore important that not only does the reading list “work” for students but also that they are provided as part of their curriculum with the appropriate skills to go beyond the reading list and this ability is appropriately built into assessment and feedback mechanisms. Your Liaison Librarian can train your students in these skills as an embedded part of the curriculum.

**Submission dates for reading lists**

We strongly recommend that you email your Module Reading Lists to your Liaison Librarian before the 30<sup>th</sup> June, to ensure resources required for your students are available via the online reading list system for the start of term.

Each year the Library receives well over 1,000 reading lists, the date gives us time to be able to check and carry out the following tasks:

1. Purchasing the requested resources (including checking for any new editions)
2. Ensuring we can purchase the resources in an accessible format suitable for any disabled student on the module to ensure legal compliance.
3. Sending the lists to the overseas campus libraries in good time for them to order the necessary materials as some may have longer turnaround times
4. Providing feedback to Module Leaders on any issues with their suggested resources
5. Processing digitisations
  - Sometimes only possible after the book / article has been acquired
  - Sometimes involving time-consuming licensing negotiations