

Cutting our cloth:
Coping with
budget shocks and
lockdowns at LSBU

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LSBU

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Overview



ABOUT LSBU



CHALLENGE



SOLUTIONS



OUTCOMES

**Around 15,000
students
Largely applied/
vocational degrees
3 campuses, 2 FE
colleges, 2 schools**



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Reading Lists at LSBU



Acquisitions largely reading list driven
“for as long as anyone can remember”



Mandatory* for module owners to
submit a reading list for their module
*where appropriate



Using Talis Aspire since 2012 to manage
creation and sharing of reading lists, but
compliance was falling



Core (must read) items were sourced but
no funds to buy Optional ones



The Challenge

The First Challenge

A declining use of Aspire by module co-ordinators
– lists arrived late, or never – and list review was slow

“How can we ensure students can access the resources they need when they need them?”

The Second Challenge

75% cut in book budget in 2018 from c£200k to £50k

“How can we ensure the money is spent in the most effective way?”

The Third Challenge

A global pandemic closes the physical library in 2020

“How can we ensure students can access core resources remotely?”

A blue ribbon graphic with a 3D effect, featuring a darker blue shadow on the left side. The word "Solutions" is written in white, sans-serif font across the center of the ribbon.

Solutions

Solutions

1. Strictly enforced deadlines
2. “Essential Copies”
3. Evidence-based purchasing
4. Core report – or management by exception
5. Lockdown and E-compliance
6. Post-Lockdown “One Plus One” approach

Strictly enforced deadlines

We communicated deadlines clearly, why we needed them – and we (mostly) stuck to them

- Six weeks in advance of Semester for print books
- First day of Semester for e-books

“Essential Copies”

We were buying books that were not used by our students - about half of the print copies purchased in 2017/18 were not borrowed

Abandoned ratio-based purchasing and moved to One Plus One model – one print book, one e-book (preferably DDA) – flexed for large cohorts at Academic Liaison Librarian discretion

Evidence-based purchasing

Beyond the 1+1 minimum, only evidence-based purchasing

- Holds for print books
- DDA wherever possible for e-books, and auto-upgrade in response to a turnaway

Core Report

Abandoned reviewing lists to looking for gaps
– “management by exception”

Run weekly All_List_Items report, filtering out any

- Bib number
- Valid URL
- Live scan ID

This spreadsheet became Acqs action list

Lockdown and E-compliance

University mandate to make materials remotely available

E-only purchasing (95% of Core items must be in e-format)

Unavailable? Change, chapter scan or talk to us

Academic Liaison Librarians had discretion to waive through lists <95% e-compliance

Post Lockdown “One Plus One” approach

In 21/22, e-compliance threshold relaxed to 75% and reverted to 1+1 approach

Now backfilling missed print copies, and new editions

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Evaluation

What went well

- Targeted spending on “Essential Copies” – we had the funds to ensure essential copies were bought, with discretionary spend on additional copies
- Large e-book collection (from EBSCO) complemented reading list approach and was more cost-effective than buying Optional titles
- Core Report was easy to set up and easy to adapt to changing circumstances
- Purchasing from a list happens within a week of submission, not weeks

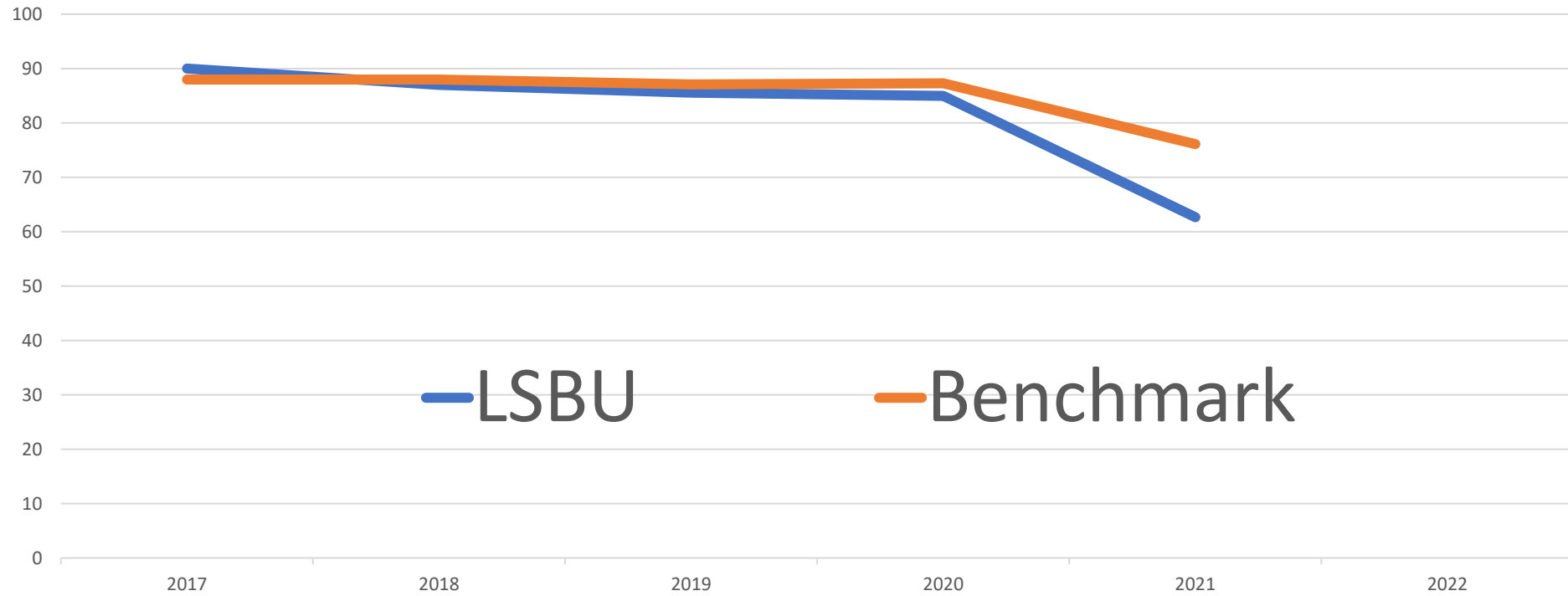
What went less well

- Strictly enforced deadlines only made a modest difference to how early we received lists
- No purchasing after semester start saved money, but impacted our students

Issues to resolve

- Are we missing new editions?
- Are we missing contextual information by not reviewing lists?
- Could we return to multiple-copy purchasing by running the Core Report (should we ever have the budget)?

NSS scores for Q19



Conclusion

A budget cut does not have to be a disaster.

It is how you react to it that counts.

And in case you ask, LSBU is ending its over-reliance on multi-year subscriptions – which is what caused the axe to fall so harshly on the acquisitions budget!

Thank you

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