Bridging the Gap

Bespoke library services for international student success

University of Technology Sydney (UTS) Library

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Meijun Huang

Information Services Librarian

UTS Faculty of Science
UTS Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology

Experience
University of Technology Sydney Library – 10 years
Tsinghua University Library – 10 years
Other Academic Libraries in China – 8 years

Member of the UTS Library’s International Team
Hossain Salahuddin

Information Services Librarian

UTS Business School
UTS Faculty of Law

Experience
University of Technology Sydney Library – 10 months
Westpac Banking Corporation Research Team – 8 years

Came to Australia as an International Student
Member of the UTS Library’s International Team
UTS History

• Founded in 1988, we are a young university
• One of Australia’s leading public university with a focus on technology
• 130 undergraduate and 210 postgraduate courses
• 46,000 total students - 33% of them are International
• 49% of UTS students have a language background other than English.

• Source: Ranking | Facts & Figures
UTS’ Priorities

• Improving the first year student experience
  Developing a student identity, a sense of belonging to the university, navigating the system: supporting students to understand the UTS environment.

• English language skills
  Students are expected to have sufficient English language proficiencies to be successful.

• Academic integrity
  Academic Integrity is a big focus. UTS believes that good academic practice demands personal integrity and respect for scholarship.
Literature Scan

Academic library’s role in supporting International Students
What the Literature Says

Challenges

- Three barriers of unfamiliarity: Language, Culture and Technology
- 'Library Anxiety',
- Difficulty in understanding Library vocabulary ('third language'),
- Proficient in internet searching, but not in complex research using specialist library databases.

Strategies

- The library provides a vital space to facilitate ‘academic integration’,
- Staff need to develop cross-cultural communication skills,
- Having diverse workforce makes it easier for international students to interact and seek help,
- Make library support materials available in multiple languages,
- Promote Library as a welcoming, inclusive, social place; a convenient point of contact,
- Run orientation and workshops in partnerships with the international student office and academic advisers.

*See the bibliography at the end of the presentation
Resources and Services at the UTS Library

Supporting Academic Integration of International Students
Role the UTS Library plays

In supporting academic integration of international Students, the UTS Library offers -

- Dedicated International Team (bilingual support)
- Resources on General and Academic English
- University’s Academic Advisers in the Library
- Study and Research Help Desk
- Library Rovers (mostly international students)
- Using various social media platforms (FB, WeChat, Weibo, Youku)
- Bilingual web pages, video captions
- Tailored programs and workshops for international students
UTS Library's International Team

- We understand some of the unique challenges faced by many international students
- We offer bilingual support to integrate them into the UTS environment

English Language

Workshops
Tools for English Language Improvement

HELPS
English Language and Academic Literacy Support

Academic Language Support

Help
- Academic Language
- Ask a Librarian
- English Language
  - Forms
  - HeadsUp
  - Referencing
  - Study Guides
  - Study Skills
  - Support for Students
  - Tours & Workshops

Clarity English

IELTS Help

Read & Write Toolbar

Study & Research Help Desk

- Dedicated librarian available to answer any student questions, such as:
  - Study help
  - Referencing questions
  - Research strategy
  - General information
Library Rovers

- They float around the library
- Current UTS students – experienced in UTS systems and processes
- Many of them are international students
- Approachable and available for instant help
Getting started

- Improving first year international student experience
- Supporting student integration into the UTS academic environment

Library Orientation

Library Tours & Workshops
Join us and learn how to find your way around the library and locate your readings with our Tours and Quick Start workshops for new students. Book in via the UTS Orientation website.

HeadsUp: Orientation
If you missed out on attending a session, or want a quick refresher, have a go at our HeadsUp: Orientation module. It will explain how to locate your reading list and find key library resources.

- Library tours (in English & Chinese)
- Library Quick Start Workshops (in English & Chinese)
- Tools for English Language Improvement workshop
UTS Library
Play Day

Free Pizza
Digital Tinker Kits – Maker Space
PlayStation and X-Box
Board games
Ping Pong
Paper planes
Giant Snakes & Ladders
Space Team
Tarot Readings
Trivia
Zombie Scavenger Hunt
Spy Games
Photo Booth
Academic Integrity

• Referencing & avoiding plagiarism workshops in English & Chinese
• Embedding the content in core subjects
• Additional help for international students enrolled in subjects: Advanced Communication Skills in Science and Communications for IT Professional
Workshops and consultations in Chinese

• Understanding Australian academic context
• Starting on your assignment
• Information literacy skills
• Referencing
• Using reference management tools: EndNote, RefWorks
What we have learned
Key learnings

• Ensure staff are aware of cultural diversity and different learning styles,
• Identify the different needs of various groups within the international student community/ies – and deliver targeted services to meet those needs,
• Use clear, jargon-free, stylistically neutral language in library guides, websites, workshops and library online learning tutorials,
• Provide English language learning resources that are easy and compelling to use,
• Collaborate with academics, faculties and other support units to deliver seamless programs and services for international students,
• Provide as many digital resources as we can for our alumni community to support their lifelong learning.


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<tr>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Title</th>
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Thank you