

1. Introduction

SCONUL, the professional association for academic libraries (www.sconul.ac.uk), is seeking to develop materials and tools to support members in workforce planning. The task and finish group leading this work is focused on three areas specifically: (a) fostering diversity in the workforce; (b) the pipeline for new talent and (c) mechanisms for developing the current workforce.

As part of this work, SCONUL intends to commission research to understand the expectations and experience of three key groups: new and recent entrants to the profession (within the last 5 years); their immediate line manager; and those leading the services. In particular, we are seeking to understand the experience of new entrants to the profession including, for those working in HE libraries, their original entry point and salary band and their current position and salary band at the time of this research. SCONUL does not collect this data automatically but we anticipate that HE institutions in both their role as providers and employers will hold a good deal of this data in a form which is not personal or sensitive.

The research will cover all SCONUL members rather than just HE members and all the nations and regions that SCONUL embraces. The research will need to establish the type of institution and the country they are in.

This document is the brief for that research. For more information on SCONUL members, please see: <https://www.sconul.ac.uk/members-and-representatives>

We anticipate that the research will involve survey and interviews (see below) and there is a clear expectation that the research project will provide robust quantitative data. We expect statistically significant levels of responses to any initial survey, including at least 300 responses from new and recent entrants. It should explore a range of issues including but not limited to:

From the perspective of new entrants:

- prior education and training, including CILIP accredited courses
- whether expectations of library school were met and whether their skill set on leaving library school was a good fit for HE or other academic libraries
- prior career development and whether their skill set on joining was a good fit for HE or other academic libraries
- whether expectations of HE or other academic libraries were met once they began working in the sector
- whether their development has been supported (and how) by both their employers and the wider sector
- experience of any blocks to their career to date and - if so - what these were
- experience that would improve their skills/career/development prospects.

From the perspective of line managers and heads of service

- what were their expectations of recent entrants' knowledge, skills, experience and competencies
- were these expectations met?
- what gaps if any did they perceive in new entrants' knowledge, skills, experience and competencies
- what actions, if any, have been or could be undertaken to address identified gaps?

2. Project management

The project will be overseen by the four project contacts identified below. Libby Homer and Caroline Taylor will be the primary contacts and will act as the main liaison and point of contact with the consultant(s) to ensure that the aims and the objectives of the project are met.

Libby Homer (SCONUL Board member), Ronan O'Beirne, Caroline Taylor (Vice-Chair of SCONUL and Chair of the [Workforce Development Task and Finish Group](#)) and Ann Rossiter, Executive Director of SCONUL, will be involved in the key decisions at each stage of the research as set out below.

The project contacts for this piece of work are as follows:

Libby Homer

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Ann Rossiter

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3. Research brief

SCONUL is seeking to commission research to understand the expectations and experience of three key groups:

- new and recent entrants to the profession (within the last five years)
- their immediate line manager
- those leading the services

The consultancy will entail:

- identification of new and recent entrants to the profession (and their line managers, service heads) working in SCONUL libraries who wish to participate in the research
- development, conduct and analysis of a survey of new and recent entrants (and their line managers, service heads)
- development, conduct and analysis of approximately 10 – 12 in-depth interviews
- analysis of sector demographics and destinations of participants (e.g., over the past 5 years and, more specifically, for those working in HE or other academic libraries their entry point and their current position and grade (see above)).

4. Identification of new entrants to the profession (and their line managers, service heads) working in SCONUL libraries

The specific approach proposed for this element of the work must be agreed with SCONUL before it proceeds. Participants must be reassured that their responses will be anonymised. Access to relevant SCONUL lists will be made available, however, the supplier should develop their own approach to this appreciating that there will be limited support from the SCONUL Executive or project leads.

The output for this phase will be a list of potentially contactable new entrants to the profession (and their line managers, service heads) working in SCONUL libraries who are prepared to be involved in the research.

5. Initial survey

It would be appropriate for the consultant to focus on developing an initial survey. The findings from the survey should then be written up and key themes identified, which in turn will inform the development of a pro-forma to inform a set of approximately 10–20 in-depth interviews. These interviews might focus on a particular subgroup, or look in detail at a set of model institutions in order to gain insights into expectations and experiences of the various identified stakeholder groups in SCONUL libraries.

Please note: we expect that a proportion of the responses will be from those who have left the profession. Bidders should make clear in their proposed methodology how they propose to address this point specifically.

6. One-to-one interviews and analysis

It is envisioned that there will be between a minimum of 10 to a maximum of 20 interviews conducted.

Interviews will be conducted by the consultant and are expected to take place in person, by phone, skype or equivalent. The informed consent of participants will be required within the ethical framework agreed for the project. The mechanism(s) for interview data capture should be proposed by the consultant.

The output should comprise of a) anonymised raw interview data and b) themed analysis arising from interviews and, c) a comparative analysis of demographic data.

The anonymised raw data collected is for the purposes as outlined in this document; SCONUL retains the right to hold the data beyond the life of the project and potentially reuse it for other projects afterwards.

7. Project outputs

The anticipated deliverables are:

- design and delivery of a survey of identified stakeholders within an appropriate ethical framework and identification of key themes that emerge
- analysis of key themes emerging from survey
- development of an interview pro-forma and administration of the arrangements for the interviews within an appropriate ethical framework, including shaping and administering permissions for use of data
- collation of survey and interview(s) findings in an agreed format, e.g. a written report
- report of emerging themes and demographic of interviewees anonymised raw data from interviews
- findings enable evaluation of the benefits of CILIP chartership; library school training and other routes into the profession
- findings enable assessment of the implications for the development of level 7 apprenticeships.

The project leads identified above will provide a resource for the consultant throughout the project and will agree critical milestones and outputs, including the following:

- ethical framework for the research
- design of the focus group
- interview pro-forma
- format for collation of findings
- report on emerging themes.

8. Project timescales

Project brief advertised	13 May 2019
Deadline for receipt of completed submissions	Noon on 12 June 2019
Shortlisting	June 2019
Interviews	July 2019
Award of consultancy	July 2019
Work to commence	August 2019
Project deliverables fully completed by	December 2019

9. Project costs

Consultants are asked to provide a fixed price cost for this consultancy as part of their response to the project brief and to provide an estimate of expected expenses. Where feasible, interviews and meetings with the project leads are undertaken virtually.

10. How to respond to this brief

- Consultants are expected to provide a proposal for the completion of the project within the defined timescales noted above, including a fully costed project plan. As part of your responses, please;
 - address the proposed methodology, including any intention to depart from the outline set out above

- identify any risks you anticipate to the success of the project
- provide evidence of experience with quantitative and qualitative interview and survey design methodology and the management and analysis of interview data
- set out your experience and knowledge of ethical frameworks associated with personal data capture
- provide evidence of experience of recruiting and working with diverse groups of respondents
- provide the CVs of all those who will be working on the project along with a statement of the role they would fulfil
- provide confirmation of your ability to complete the work to the proposed timescale
- provide a breakdown of costs including expected external and travel expenses
- Selection will be based on an evaluation against the criteria above and the response to the brief, taking account of the cost effectiveness of the proposed approach
- A phone or skype interview will be scheduled to discuss the supporting statement and the approach proposed by shortlisted consultants.

11. About SCONUL

SCONUL represents all university libraries in the UK and Ireland, irrespective of mission group, as well as national libraries and many of the UK's colleges of higher education

SCONUL promotes awareness of the role of academic libraries in supporting research excellence and student achievement and employability, and represents their views and interests to government, regulators and other stakeholders. It helps academic libraries collaborate to deliver services efficiently, including through shared services, and to share knowledge and best practice. If you would like to know more about our programmes, and how we work, you can read our welcome document [here](#).

SCONUL members are the academic libraries themselves, with the heads of library service making up the Executive Board which is responsible for governance and for setting the strategy for the organisation. SCONUL also has a number of groups supporting the strategy and ensuring that the academic library community is informed about, and engaged with, the major issues and challenges facing the library sector.

One of these groups is the Workforce Development Task and Finish Group, chaired by SCONUL Chair, Caroline Taylor, University Librarian at the University of Leicester.

The aim of the group is to provide support to members in their own workforce planning. There are three sub-groups looking at different aspects of workforce planning:

- diversity (and how we foster it)
- the pipeline for new talent
- developing the current workforce.

This brief relates to the first of these sub-groups and will be used to inform a wider set of outcomes including identifying good practice, advice and guidance on fostering ethnic diversity relevant to library directors, and bringing outputs together into practical advice for members.

10 May 2019