

To: Library Directors Council

From: David Nutty

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LibQUAL Survey for URSUS Libraries

LibQUAL can only be used on the timelines established by ARL. It can be administered in either the Fall or Spring Terms, but Spring is the recommended period so that the incoming students from the previous Fall Term have had time to gain experiences with the libraries. The entire process takes about **10 months** from first planning through results. There is a six month period of preparation before the survey is conducted. See the attached for details of the timeline.

If we chose to administer the survey in spring 2007, we need to begin the process in August 2006. Can we commit the financial and staff resources to this timetable? Obviously the next opportunity would be Spring 2008/August 2007.

We will need to establish a consortial structure to manage LibQUAL. ARL wants a single contact between us and ARL, though how we internally manage the survey is up to us. However each individual library will need to register and will have a primary contact for the individual library. Essentially the survey is locally administered with both individual and consortial results. The CUNY system had it fully centralized with a single person setting up all surveys. I do not think that is practical. I am thinking we form a system wide LibQUAL Team with 1-2 representatives from each library, depending on size. It is estimated that the survey will require a total time commitment (August-June) of a minimum of 60 hours per institution. ARL says this may be high, but that this is also the kind of project that the more you invest, the better the result and the greater the analysis. The most time consuming aspects of the survey are handled by LibQUAL.

In speaking with LibQUAL at ALA Midwinter, I think I underestimated the budget for incentives. We need to build in strategies to ensure a good sample.

ARL says there may be a modest (\$200) increase for 2007 but this has not been determined.

LibQUAL+TM: Defining and Promoting Library Service Quality

What Is LibQUAL+TM?

LibQUAL+(TM) is a suite of services that libraries use to solicit, track, understand, and act upon users' opinions of service quality. These services are offered to the library community by the Association of Research Libraries ([ARL](#)). The program's centerpiece is a rigorously tested Web-based survey bundled with training that helps libraries assess and improve library services, change organizational culture, and market the library. The goals of LibQUAL+(TM) are to:

- Foster a culture of excellence in providing library service
- Help libraries better understand user perceptions of library service quality
- Collect and interpret library user feedback systematically over time
- Provide libraries with comparable assessment information from peer institutions
- Identify best practices in library service
- Enhance library staff members' analytical skills for interpreting and acting on data

More than 500 libraries have participated in LibQUAL+(TM), including colleges and universities, community colleges, health sciences libraries, law libraries, and public libraries -- some through various consortia, others as independent participants. LibQUAL+(TM) has expanded internationally, with participating institutions in Canada, the U.K., and Europe. The growing LibQUAL+(TM) community of participants and its extensive dataset are rich resources for improving library services.

How Will LibQUAL+TM Benefit Your Library?

Library administrators have successfully used LibQUAL+(TM) survey data to identify best practices, analyze deficits, and effectively allocate resources. Benefits to participating institutions include:

- Institutional data and reports that enable you to assess whether your library services are meeting user expectations
- Aggregate data and reports that allow you to compare your library's performance with that of peer institutions
- Workshops designed specifically for LibQUAL+(TM) participants
- Access to an online library of LibQUAL+(TM) research articles
- The opportunity to become part of a community interested in developing excellence in library services

How Does LibQUAL+™ Benefit Your Library Users?

LibQUAL+(™) gives your library users a chance to tell you where your services need improvement so you can respond to and better manage their expectations. You can develop services that better meet your users' expectations by comparing your library's data with that of peer institutions and examining the practices of those libraries that are evaluated highly by their users.

How Is the LibQUAL+™ Survey Conducted?

Conducting the LibQUAL+(™) survey requires little technical expertise on your part. You invite your users to take the survey, distributing the URL for your library's Web form via e-mail. Respondents complete the survey form and their answers are sent to a central database. The data are analyzed and presented to you in reports describing your users' desired, perceived, and minimum expectations of service.

What Are the Origins of the LibQUAL+™ Survey?

The LibQUAL+(™) survey evolved from a conceptual model based on the SERVQUAL instrument, a popular tool for assessing service quality in the private sector. The Texas A&M University Libraries and other libraries used modified SERVQUAL instruments for several years; those applications revealed the need for a newly adapted tool that would serve the particular requirements of libraries. ARL, representing the largest research libraries in North America, partnered with Texas A&M University Libraries to develop, test, and refine LibQUAL+(™). This effort was supported in part by a three-year grant from the U.S. Department of Education's Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education ([FIPSE](#)).

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Questions or comments? Send e-mail to libqual@arl.org.