University of Greenwich Partners with ProQuest for Peace of Mind

Top-rated UK University’s High-Touch Relationship with Global Content and Technology Provider Expands Library Staff’s Reach

There’s a reason that University of Greenwich’s library orders all books, whether digital or print, through ProQuest. It’s not only because ProQuest acquired Coutts Information Services in 2015, taking over the content group that has provided Greenwich with fast print and digital fulfillment and delivery since the early 1990s. It’s because of the support and partnership role that ProQuest has played over the years as the library aims to be more efficient while meeting the ever-growing needs of students.

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“From the very beginning of working with ProQuest, I’ve benefitted from more than just the services of a vendor — I’ve had a true partner,” shares Joyce Hamilton, acquisitions manager at the University’s Stockwell Street library. “I talk to our customer service representatives. I approach them with problems that need solutions, or with requests for additional guidance to make collection development decisions and they’re always willing to help. They also regularly approach us and inquire about what further support we need. It’s a two-way street — we help each other.”

ProQuest Helps Greenwich Librarians Provide a High Level of Service to Researchers

Greenwich’s three campuses serve a total of over 21,000 students and they serve them well. In fact, 89 percent of students who took part in the National Student Survey reported being definitely or most satisfied with the quality of their degree courses at Greenwich.\(^1\) The University not only has impressively high student satisfaction levels, but it boasts just as impressive student outputs as well. This gives the impression that students not only have access to world-class library facilities on each of the three campuses, but that they also must have the support of three full-time staffs dedicated to the work at each facility.

**In reality, that’s not quite true.**

Greenwich doesn’t face a unique challenge, but rather one that librarians in institutions of all sizes can recognize: not enough time in the day to manage the collection while offering the level of service that they’d like to provide to the tens of thousands of students who they serve. In fact, the three campuses combined have one cataloger, just over a dozen selectors and no designated processors.

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\(^1\) [http://www2.gre.ac.uk/about/news/articles/2012/a2342-student-satisfaction-is-at-a-record-high-again](http://www2.gre.ac.uk/about/news/articles/2012/a2342-student-satisfaction-is-at-a-record-high-again)
“Many of our staff take on multiple roles,” adds Hamilton. “In fact, the acquisitions staff at our Medway Library is also charged with circulation, leaving hardly any time to dedicate to the tasks associated with getting books into students’ hands once they are delivered.”

Students’ expectations for immediate delivery of the resources that they request adds to Greenwich’s need for more than just a content aggregator or library technology provider.

**ProQuest’s Technology Streamlines and Its People Add Value in Expertise That Can’t Be Found Elsewhere**

The first of Greenwich’s needs is very basic: simplified workflows and access to tools that can translate time-consuming manual tasks into automated processes. ProQuest’s technology delivers just that.

“Theyir shelf-ready services alone have made a great difference,” shares Hamilton. “From ordering to processing invoices, they’re ready and willing to customize to suit our library’s needs. This means less time spent on manual tasks on our end and more time serving students.”

Tools like OASIS — ProQuest’s free web-based system for searching, selecting and ordering print and electronic books for academic libraries — are a must-have for the busy librarians at Greenwich as they provide access to the broadest title database in the industry with powerful search tools that help locate titles quickly and efficiently. Via OASIS, Greenwich has access to locally based print distribution centers and EBL, MyiLibrary and ebrary ebooks, the top eBook platforms in the market which they use regularly.

But Greenwich needs more than just technology.

“ProQuest’s recent promotion where they offered 50 percent off ebooks if you held the print version is a great example of why we need more than just a vendor,” shares Hamilton. “We wanted to take advantage of this offer since it would help us offer unlimited access to high-usage titles while providing more ebooks, which our users are requesting more and more. Our obstacle was finding the time to determine which books we could potentially buy.”

Hamilton’s ProQuest customer service representative was there to help. He produced a list of Greenwich’s print ISBNs, matched them against its ebook holdings and deduplicated against all of the library’s resources in order to provide an actionable list based on the University’s own data. Hamilton and the rest of the library staff could spend the time they would have dedicated to this preparation work making the strategic acquisition decisions that they’re best suited to make.

“It’s not just that ProQuest has the content or offers promotions that sets it apart, but it’s their people who are the unique value. I contact my customer service representative probably a couple of times each week with queries,” shares Hamilton. “It’s useful knowing the person who answers your call — and perhaps more so, useful having them know me and my library’s unique needs.”

**Partnership Delivers Shelf-Ready Books and Peace of Mind**

Partnering with ProQuest means Greenwich librarians can rest assured that they’re serving users as best as they can and fulfilling their needs as quickly as they possibly can.

“The results that we see from our partnership with ProQuest extend beyond just books. For instance, our multimedia resources come in security cases that would otherwise take time to process and enter into our system. That’s time we don’t have when there are students waiting for access to these resources. With ProQuest, they come shelf-ready and with a MARC record, driving discovery without requiring much effort on our end.”

Furthermore, working with ProQuest, and with OASIS specifically, simplifies what could be a complicated situation for Hamilton and other library staff:

“The Medway campus library serves University of Greenwich, University of Kent and Canterbury Christ Church University. Greenwich is the lead institution so we take on all of the ordering for these students. That means that if University of Kent’s music school students need sheet music, we find it and make sure it’s available to them. With OASIS, we know that we have access to the widest range of resources in multiple formats and we know that they’ll be delivered to the appropriate campus.”

What’s next for Greenwich and ProQuest? More of the same, according to Hamilton: “It’d take an earthquake to make me change the relationship that we’ve established,” said Hamilton when asked about future plans for the partnership.

**About University of Greenwich**

The University of Greenwich has three campuses in London and Kent, England and serves over 21,000 students. The University’s range of subjects includes architecture, business, computing, education, engineering, humanities, maritime studies, natural sciences, pharmacy and social sciences. It has a strong research focus and well-established links to the scientific community.

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