

Senate House Library User Survey 2024

1. Introduction

The purpose of conducting the Senate House Library (SHL) User Survey is to:

- Measure overall satisfaction with our services.
- Identify any changes in the way our members access SHL so that we are able to adjust our services accordingly.
- Discover the extent to which members are using any new services we have introduced since the previous survey.
- Become aware of new or pressing issues that need to be addressed.

The survey is currently conducted annually and this year's survey consisted of nine questions. It included some repeat questions from last year's survey but also new ones designed to better understand how our members use our growing collection of e-resources. Another new question sought their views on possible future changes to the Library's space as part of the [Library Transformation Programme](#).

2. Methodology

The survey was targeted specifically at our current members, although it was available for anyone to complete via our website. A link to the survey was emailed to just over 30,000 of our members and the survey was promoted on social media and through the SHL website. A link to the survey was also sent to the University of London federal member libraries to circulate to their own students. As an incentive, we offered two respondents the chance to win either a £100 John Lewis gift card or a £100 National Book Token. The survey ran for a period of nine weeks between 23 April and 27 June 2024.

The response rate of 6% was lower than previous years, suggesting that there is some survey fatigue amongst our members.

The fact that nearly 2000 members *did* respond means this survey is still a valid way of obtaining feedback and measuring satisfaction, but we will be looking at how we can increase response rates next year – or we may even decide to revert to biannual surveys.

3. Summary of results

The results are presented in full below this brief summary.

Overall satisfaction

The percentage of respondents very satisfied or satisfied with our services was 95%. This compares with 95% in 2023 and 94% in 2022.

How members access SHL's collections, services and spaces

After a noticeable shift back to visiting in person in the years following the pandemic, the way members access our services has remained steady since last year.

58% of respondents said they accessed SHL services in person compared to 59% in 2023. Similarly, the percentage who accessed resources exclusively online remained the same at 7%, with 29% accessing SHL both physically and online (compared to 32% last year). Note that overall visits to the Library continued to rise in 2023-24.

The proportion of users who cited 'using our print collections' as a reason for accessing our services (either in person or online) was up slightly from 39% to 43%.

Their reasons for using SHL were also similar to the previous year: as a study space (71%), to access our print collections (43%), and to access our online collections (31%) being the main ones. Bloom@SenateHouse continues to be a definite draw for our members, with 31% of respondents choosing this (up from 26% last year).

Use (and non-use) of e-resources

We asked respondents who didn't use our e-resources – or only used them occasionally – to tell us why.

31% of members who did not access our e-resources at all said this was because they preferred to use print material and 34% said that it was because the e-resources provided by their home institution (e.g. through their VLE) were sufficient to cover their needs. Responses from members who used online resources a little, but primarily used print, were similar.

However, 25% of respondents who didn't use our e-resources at all said that this was because they *didn't know* how to access them. This shows that there is still work for us to do in better highlighting what is available and explaining how to access it.

Additionally, as part of the [Library Transformation Programme](#), we hope to acquire a new 'discovery' platform and we are also working to improve the navigability of our website – both of which should help to improve awareness of our e-resources.

Lack of offsite access to e-resources (5-10%) and problems logging on (3-5%) were less of an issue than we anticipated.

We were also keen to find out from our members that *did* use our e-resources regularly, how they accessed them. The responses showed that the majority (65%) did so via our Library Catalogue (and the A-Z list of e-resources within it) and another 19% used the library web pages. This suggests that those members who have learned how to access our e-resources are generally able to do so successfully.

New services

We asked our members which of the new services that we have introduced in the past 12 months they had used or benefitted from. The most popular answer was the new seating and space for collaborative study in the Central Hall on the fourth floor (38%). 14% cited the new bookable group study rooms in Bloom@SenateHouse.

New spaces

Opinions about the future refurbishment of the Library were varied but with a definite appetite for more varied types of study space: collaborative spaces or spaces where you can attend online meetings or lectures (68%) and quiet and silent spaces (60%). Perhaps controversially, 49% were in favour of a café within the Library – although there are no plans for this currently.

The responses to this section of the survey will be passed on to the architects who are currently working on plans for how the Library's spaces might be improved and re-developed.

Free text responses and new or pressing issues

We also asked respondents to tell us one thing that they particularly like about SHL and one thing they would like us to improve, introduce or change.

As with last year, our study spaces, atmosphere and location (656 positive comments, 749 if Bloom is included) and our collections (473) remain our most valued services.

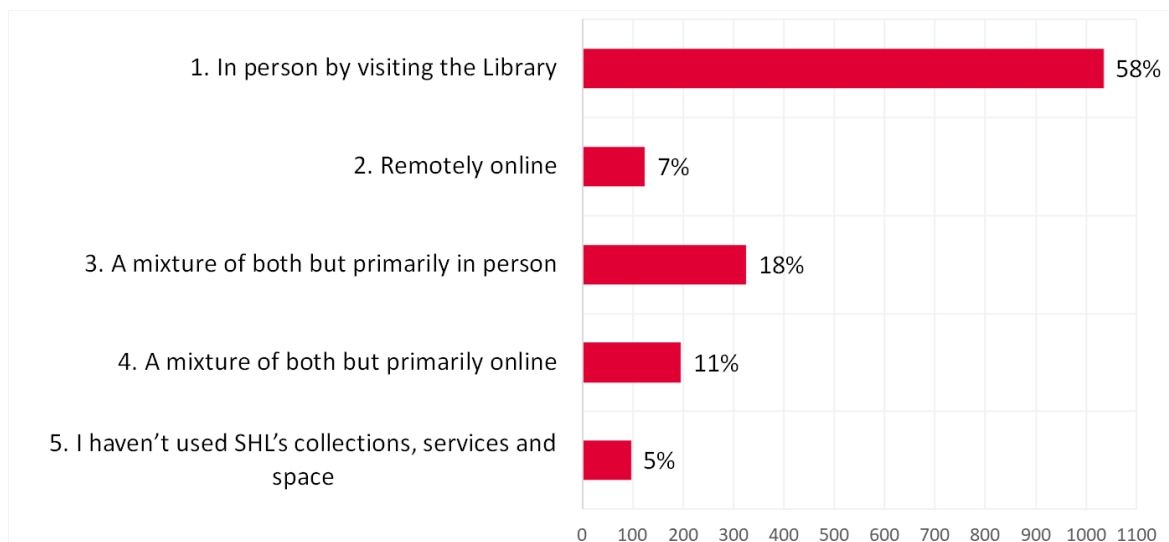
Conversely, different aspects of our buildings and facilities (413 comments, 795 if Bloom and study spaces are included) are what our members most want us to improve – and again, these comments will be shared with the architects and our Estates colleagues.

We are currently analysing these free text comments in more depth to gain a greater understanding of our members' views. So far, there do not seem to be any specific new or pressing issues that have not been raised before.

Individualised versions of the survey (including free text comments) are shared with our federal and SAS colleagues.

4. Survey results in full

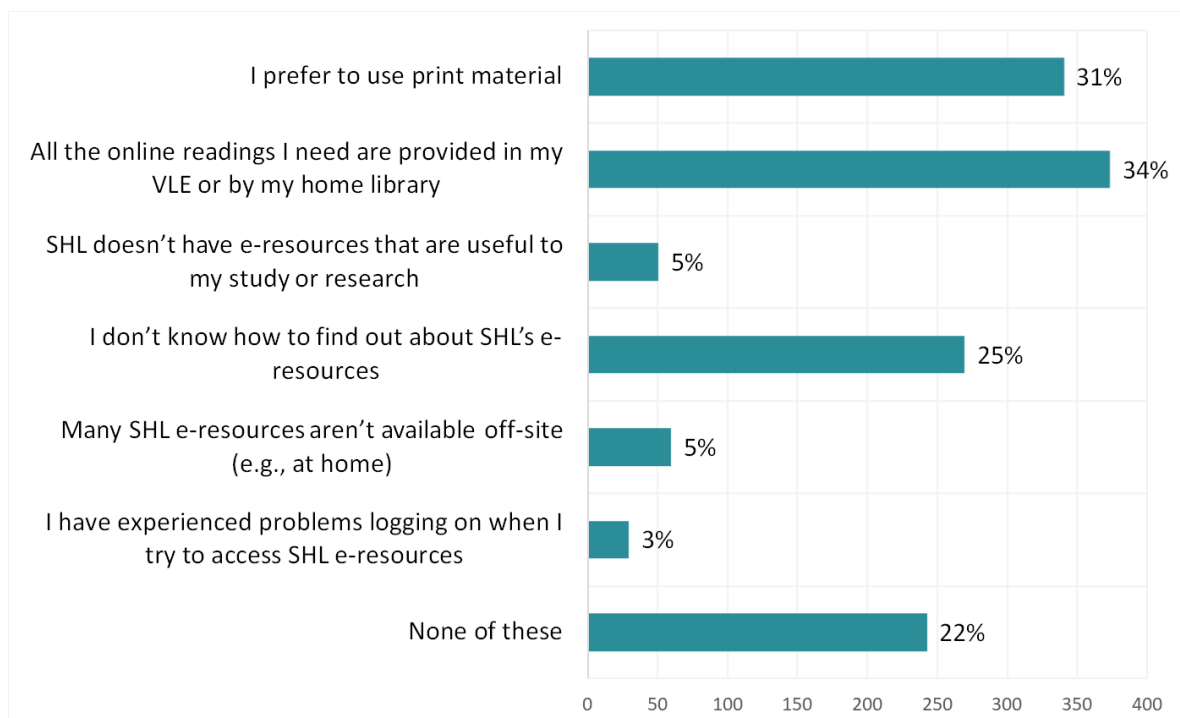
1. How have you accessed SHL's collections, services and spaces in the past year?



To find out more about access to digital collections and e-resources, we asked different questions depending on the responses to question 1.

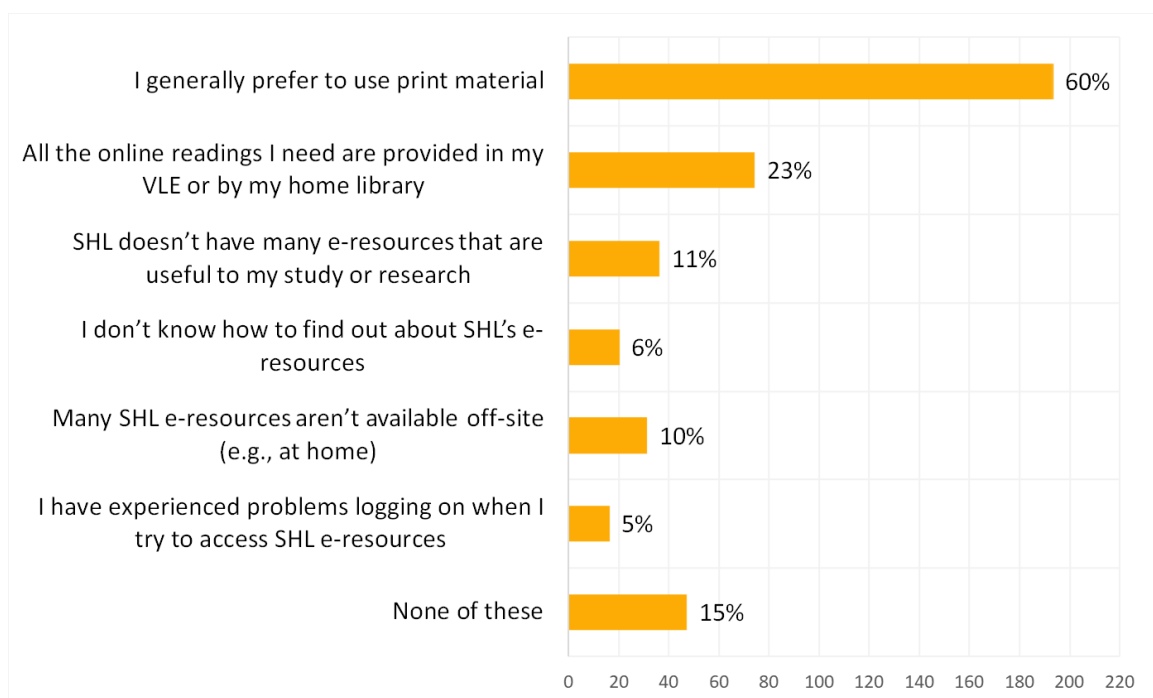
If option 1 - In person by visiting the Library or option 5 - I haven't used SHL's collections, services and space, were selected in question 1, we asked the following:

1.1. The Library subscribes to a variety of e-resources including eBooks, e-journals and databases. If you have not used our online e-resources, what is the main reason? (Please select all that apply)



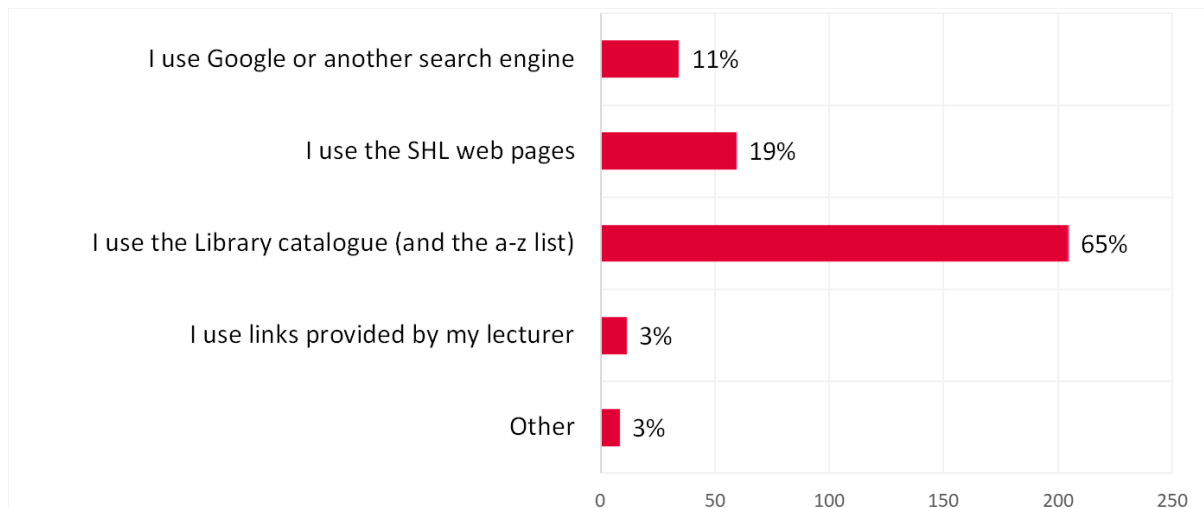
If option 3 - A mixture of both but primarily in person was selected in question 1, the following question was asked:

1.2. The Library subscribes to a variety of e-resources including eBooks, e-journals and databases. Although you have used our online resources you primarily use our print material or study spaces. What is the main reason for that? (Please select all that apply)

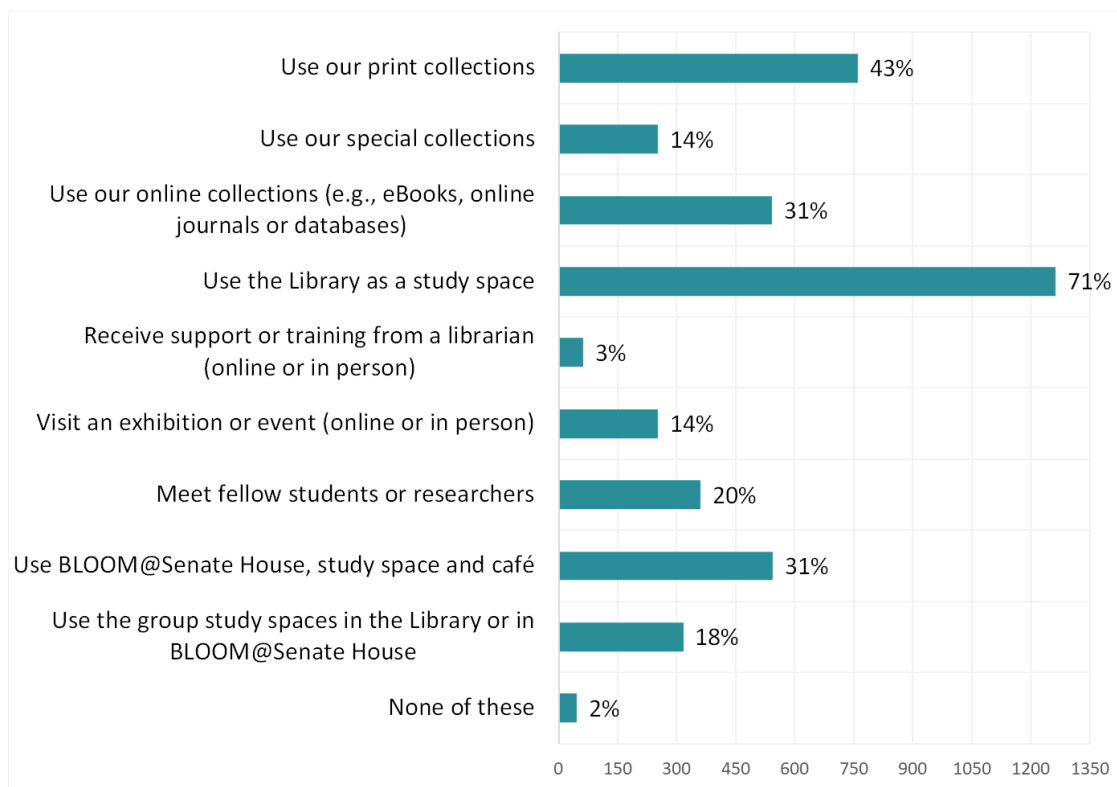


If option 2 - Remotely online or option 4 - A mixture of both but primarily online were selected for question 1, the following question was asked:

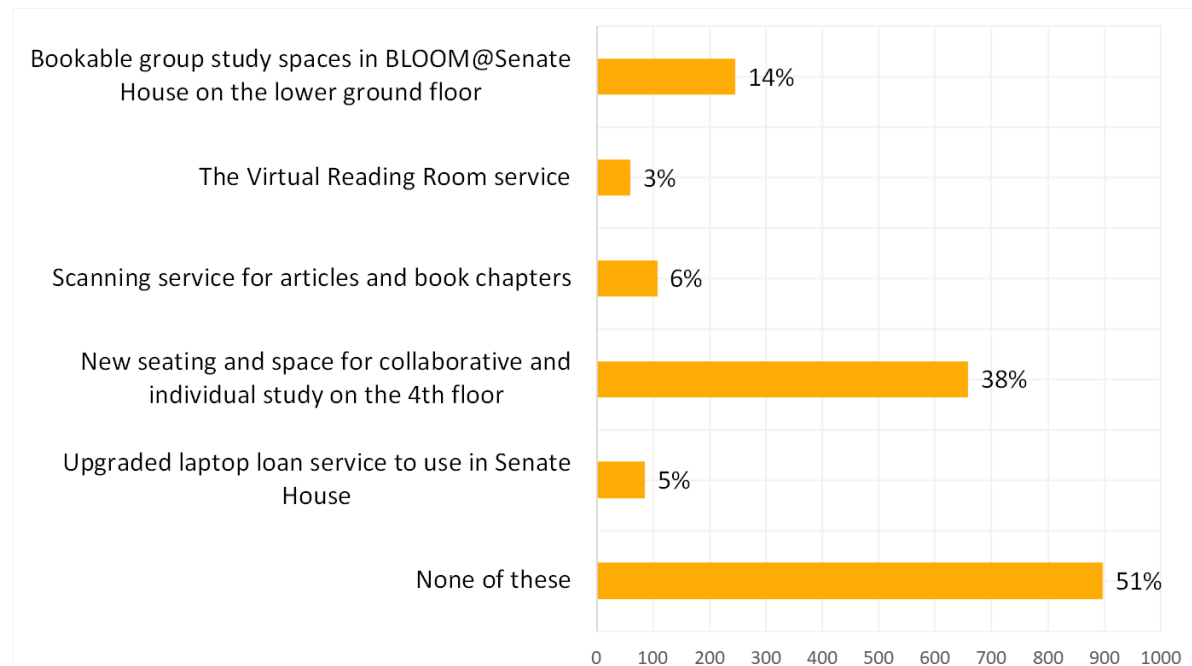
1.3. The Library subscribes to a variety of e-resources including eBooks, e-journals and databases. How do you generally find and access SHL e-resources?



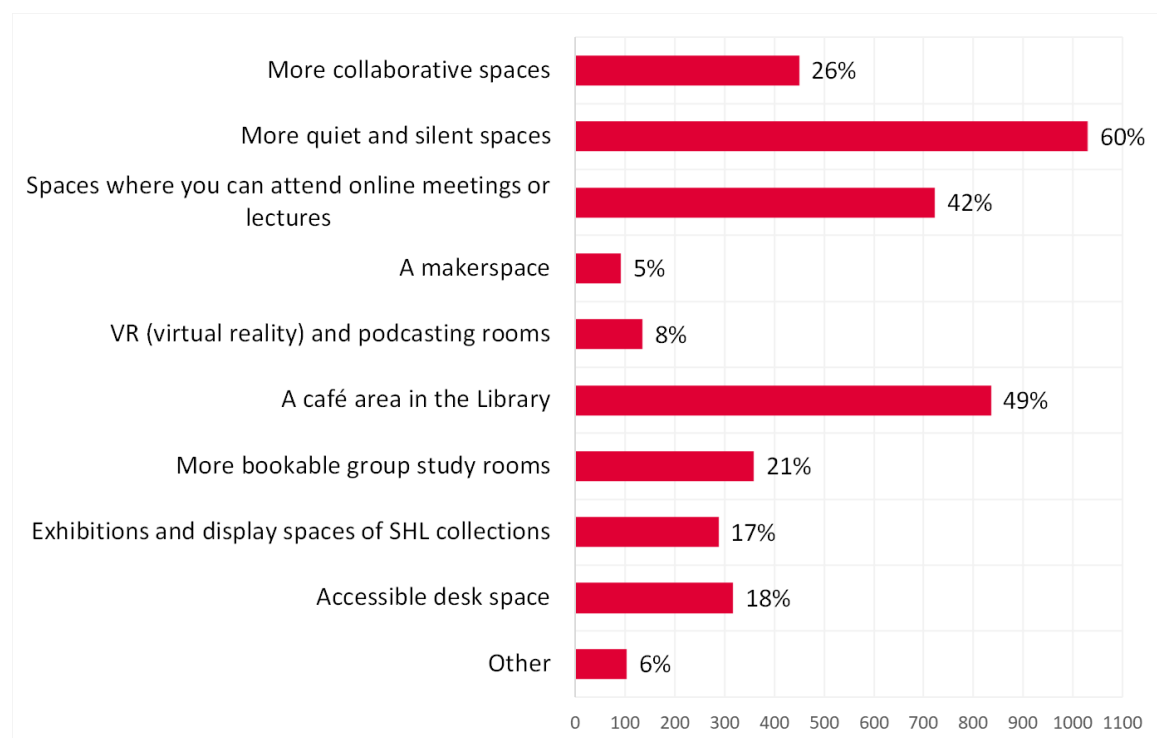
2. Which of the following are your reasons for accessing SHL's collections, services and spaces in the past year? (Please select all that apply)



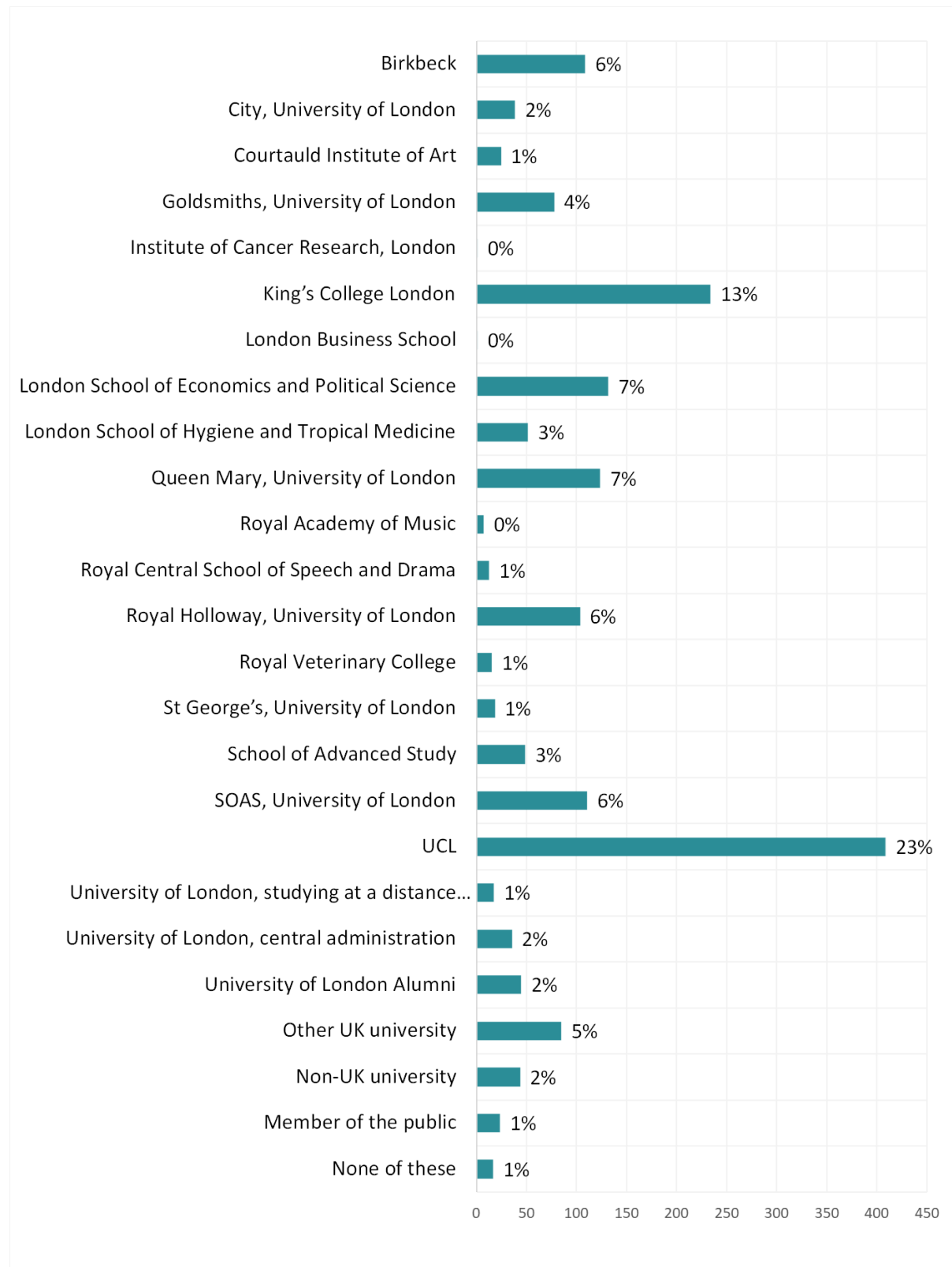
3. Which of the following services that we have introduced in the last year have you used and/or benefitted from? (Please select all that apply)



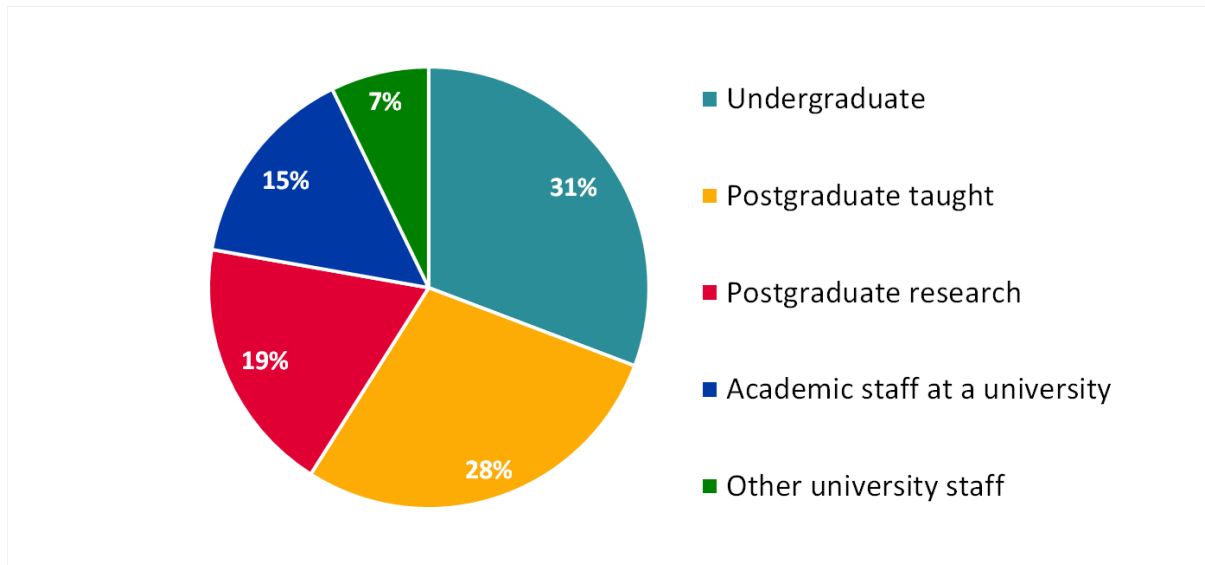
4. This year we created a new space for both individual and collaborative study on our 4th floor. Thinking about how we might refurbish the Library space in the future, please indicate what spaces you would like to see more of (you can choose more than one):



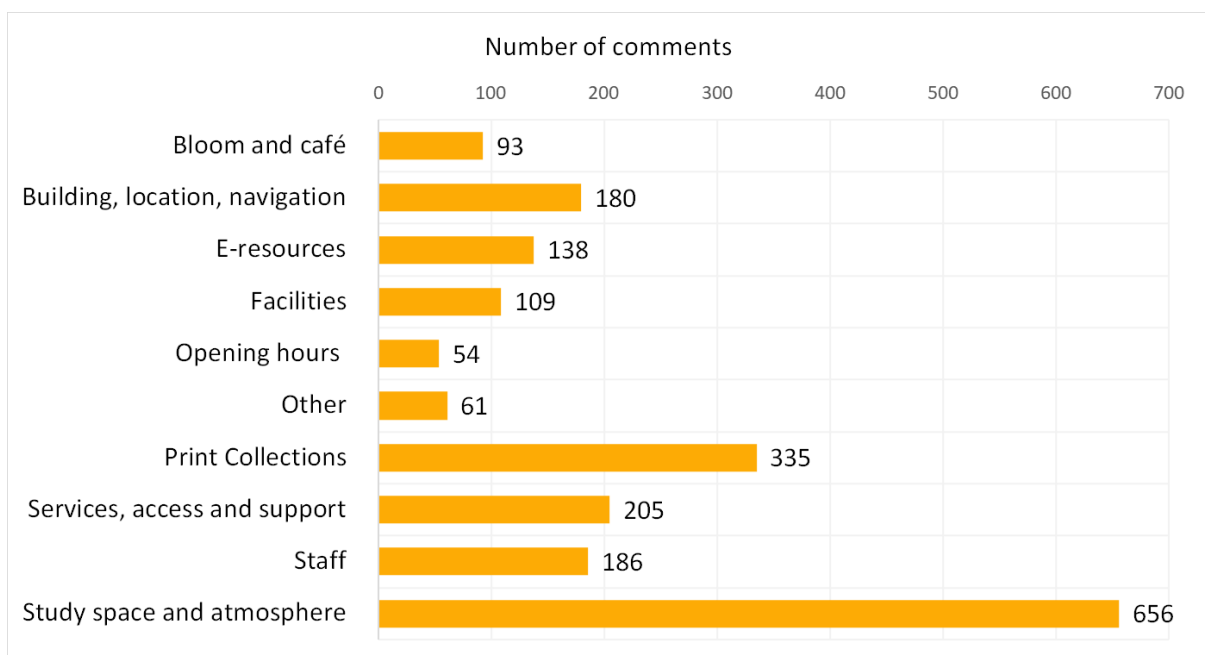
5. Which of the following University of London institution or other membership category do you belong to?



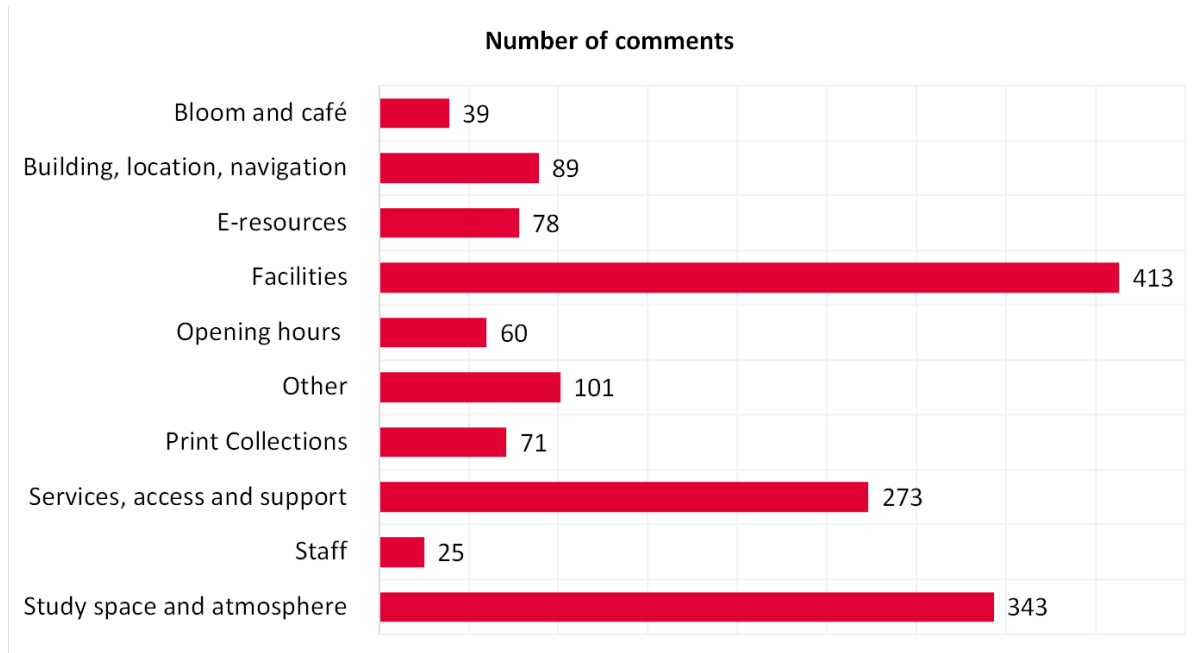
6. If you are a student or member of staff at a university, which of the following best describes you?



7. Please tell us one thing you particularly like about the Library and its current services.



8. Please tell us something you would like us to improve, introduce or change.



9. How satisfied are you overall with the Senate House Library service?

