

NoWAL Summary of Activity 2017

The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of the activities of NoWAL in 2017 for presentation at the AGM, for the current and future NoWAL Board and the SCONUL Executive Board. A shorter version of the summary will be available on the [NoWAL website](#).

1. NoWAL Governance

NoWAL is a network of academic libraries in the North West of England, with an outstanding reputation for knowledge exchange, staff development and training; benefitting its members by providing access to specialist skills and shared services across the HE sector. NoWAL serves the 14 Universities and Colleges of Higher Education libraries in Cheshire, Cumbria, Greater Manchester, Lancashire and Merseyside.

NoWAL's mission is:

- to inspire excellence in the learning and research services of member libraries;
- to drive the North West academic library agenda and be a regional voice for SCONUL;
- to celebrate success through collaboration, innovation, influence and partnership.

➤ NoWAL Officers and Organisation

During 2017, Sandra Bracegirdle (University of Manchester) served as Chair, with Susan Murray (Liverpool Hope University) as Vice Chair. Julie Hitchen (University of Central Lancashire) provided financial support in the Treasurer role. Heather Thrift (Liverpool John Moores University) led the Training & Development Group and David Clay (University of Salford) provided the link to the NoWAL Procurement Group and to the NoWAL host institution. Ruth Jenkins (Manchester Metropolitan University) provided a link with the Northern Collaboration.

The Officers met three times in 2017 as the NoWAL Operations Group (also with Nicky Freeman, Operations Officer, ex officio) to oversee NoWAL activities, manage the progression of the NoWAL Plan 2016-2019 and set the agenda for the Board meetings and AGM.

In 2017, NoWAL consolidated its position as a sub-group of SCONUL, with SCONUL continuing to provide administrative and financial support to NoWAL.

The NoWAL Board met in February, June and October with a varied agenda designed to ensure that members were up to speed on progress and activities within the consortium. The strategic themed discussions at the meetings focused on key issues facing the sector and generated interesting discussions, looking at strategic workforce planning, learning spaces and links to NHS knowledge services.

NoWAL extends thanks to the University of Salford Library for continued hosting of the NoWAL Operations Officer during this time.

2. Achievements and Performance

During 2017, NoWAL continued to work to progress the NoWAL Plan 2016-2019 with activities focussed on the three strands:

- Knowledge Exchange and Sharing

- Service and Workforce Development and Planning
- Training and Development

A key strategic initiative has been the continued development and success of the Training & Development programme, led by Heather Thrift and supported by the NoWAL Operations Officer (see the Training & Development Report below).

The year's activity has also underlined the consortium's strong commitment to collaboration and partnership, seen in its exchange of experience events, as well as via the activities of its Special Interest Groups. The NoWAL Procurement Group continued to work hard representing the members' interests in meetings to discuss the framework agreements (see Procurement Group report below).

NoWAL held its biennial conference in July 2017, *Library evolution: developing academic libraries for the future*, held at Lancaster University. It was a great success, due to the high number of delegates; the number of suppliers providing sponsorship; the quality of the speakers; and the enthusiasm and planning skills of the Conference Planning Team.

NoWAL launched its [new website](#) in October 2017, designed to shine a light on NoWAL activities and help celebrate the consortium's collaborative successes. It is now used to showcase the benefits of NoWAL and will be developed to demonstrate where expertise lies in NoWAL libraries.

At the end of the year, NoWAL produced its [Annual Review 2017](#), outlining its key activities over the year and celebrating the achievements of the 14 member institutions and of the special interest and functional groups.

3. NoWAL Special Interest and Functional Group Reports

➤ NoWAL Training & Development Group

NoWAL operated a comprehensive Training & Development programme during 2017, including 12 Exchange of Experience events, 2 TeachMeets, 2 'expert events' and 3 visits to special interest libraries in NoWAL locations. The Digital Scholarship event hosted at the University of Salford was the first expert event in the T&D programme, making use of NoWAL funds for the benefit of its members. UCLan hosted a DCC Event on reviewing Data Management Plans, paid for with NoWAL funds. Both the expert events were well received by attendees and provided additional value to member libraries. In November 2017, NoWAL partnered with CILIP on the delivery of an event aimed at employers and leaders: CILIP's *Employer Forum: Impact and Leadership*, hosted at the University of Salford, was attended by a number of senior leaders from within NoWAL and outside, from across sectors and was a successful day of engagement, discussion and networking.

➤ NoWAL Procurement Group Report

The NoWAL Procurement Group, chaired by Regina O'Brien from the University of Salford, met 3 times in 2017 to review framework agreements, monitor acquisitions and procurement activities and to facilitate events for NoWAL staff involved in procurement.

The new Joint Consortia Agreement for Books, Standing Orders, E-books and Related Material began in August 2017, running until July 2019, with an option to extend on an annual basis to 2021. The Serials Framework Agreement ran throughout 2017 (May 2016 to April 2018). A meeting to review the first year of the new serials agreement was held in December 2017, providing an opportunity for members to raise any concerns with supplier performance.

The accessibility work led by NoWAL colleagues as part of the national e-books sub-group was merged with the general Lis-Accessibility work to review eBook platforms and their accessible features. Two members of the NoWAL Procurement Group presented at the NoWAL conference, running a successful workshop on the ebook accessibility audit, the results of which fed into the new book framework agreement.

➤ **NoWAL Research Group Report**

In July 2017, RNCM hosted a half-day event entitled 'Who's talking about our research: the real-world application of Altmetrics'. Scott Taylor from the University of Manchester spoke enthusiastically on the use of Altmetrics, including some of the innovative things Manchester has been doing to measure impact and influence alongside their conventional citation reporting.

In September 2017, a survey was circulated to member institutions, aiming to understand more about the work undertaken by member institutions in all aspects of research support, and the role NoWAL may play in the future. A Task and Finish Group, made up of a cross section of NoWAL members working in research support, assessed the responses and drew up a report and action plan for presentation to the NoWAL Board.

The Research Data Management Group held two meetings during the year. Topics discussed at the meetings included the JISC RDM Shared Service; DOI minting; data champions; and RDM for Practice-based Research, as well as updates of RDM activities at member libraries. The RDM group is especially useful as a forum for those libraries just starting out with RDM to get support and advice from member libraries with more experience in this area.

➤ **NoWAL Academic Librarians' Group Report**

The Group met in January and November 2017, rotating the meetings round the member libraries, with UCLan and Edge Hill hosting. The meetings provided a varied agenda looking at outreach and promotional activities amongst the members; the implications of changing LMS and Discovery Services; helping academics support transition and retention; and sharing good news stories. Staff in attendance have cited the opportunity to discuss pertinent issues with peers from across the region as a key benefit of the meetings and of the group in general.

The Group held a TeachMeet at UCLan in March 2017 with the theme '*Exploring Online Learning in Information Literacy*'. The event attracted a large audience from across NoWAL and saw presentations from four institutions on a range of online learning tools and experiences, as well as opportunities for group discussions. The feedback received from the event was very positive and there was enthusiasm for further similar events to be held in the Training & Development programme in future years.

➤ **NoWAL Senior Staff Group Report**

The newly-formed Group met twice in 2017, and developed the format of the meetings to follow that of the NoWAL Board, introducing a members' update section, a networking lunch and a themed afternoon discussion. It was agreed to continue with a 'roving chair' for each meeting, suggesting reviewing the arrangement annually to ensure it is still meeting staff's needs. The Group has developed over the year, and has become an invaluable way for senior staff to share knowledge and experience across a range of key areas in service development.

The Group was able to add their comments to the NoWAL Plan 2016-2019 and also to outline how they felt they could provide input into the progress of objectives. Themed discussions in the meetings over the year looked at space and design in library spaces; compiling management

Information in relation to usage of spaces; and customer feedback and the off-campus experience, all of which led to a productive sharing of knowledge and experiences.

➤ **NoWAL Copyright Group Report**

Over the course of the year, the Group reviewed and rewrote its Terms of Reference and reactivated the discussion list for its members. The Group aims to have a core membership of colleagues to organise and coordinate group events allowing discussions on relevant topics and themes for the wider membership. The Group was keen to run an expert event on copyright and copyright education, led by external presenters, as part of the programme of events for 2018.

➤ **NoWAL Special Collections Group Report**

Throughout 2017, the discussion list was used on an ad hoc basis to share information and knowledge across the group. It was also used to 'advertise' members' collections and exhibitions taking place throughout the year. The annual Special Collections event, '*Smart strategies for tough times*', was held at LJMU in June 2017 which attracted 17 people from across NoWAL. There were new ideas for collaborations, links and funding opportunities arising from the presentations.