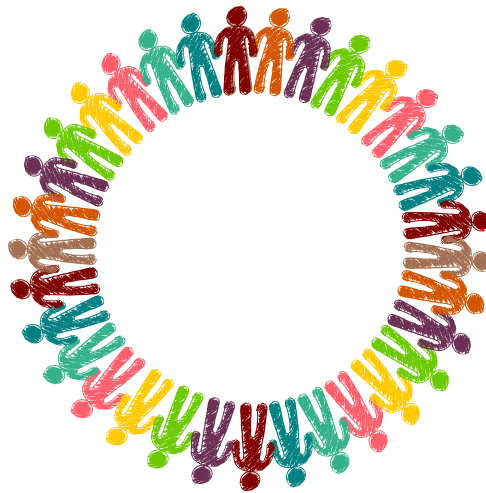




UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS



**POSTGRADUATE RESEARCHER LIBRARY
EXPERIENCES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS
INCLUSION, ACCESSIBILITY AND INTERSECTIONALITY**

REPORT OF THE PGR DIVERSITY STEERING
COMMITTEE (2024-25), UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

POSTGRADUATE RESEARCHER LIBRARY EXPERIENCES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS: INCLUSION, ACCESSIBILITY AND INTERSECTIONALITY

This is report based on the project conceptualise and undertaken by the PGR Diversity Steering Committee (2024–25) at University of Leeds under the supervision of Sherry Iqbal.

The members of the committee, each of whom brought their own experience, knowledge and perspective to this work were as follows

- Arwa Alghamdi
- Dikko Yusuf
- Durdona Karimova
- Gloria Adichie
- Lizzie Wright
- Lujain Hamdan
- Roshni Marath Jairaj
- Samuel Summerfield
- Yashashwani Srinivas

Any query regarding the report can be directed to Sherry Iqbal through PGRDiversity@leeds.ac.uk

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Abstract

This report has been produced as part of the work by the 2024-25 PGR Diversity Steering Committee, a group of 9 PGRs from various academic and personal backgrounds, all of whom identify as being part of marginalised populations. This group is appointed by the PGR Diversity team to undertake project work that focuses on enhancing the university experience for under-represented PGRs.

It was decided by the group that the 2024-25 project work would focus on the PGR experience in the university libraries. This was influenced by the lived experiences of members of the committee surrounding their perceived lack of inclusion in the libraries, based on factors such as disability and neurodiversity, academic background, and cultural differences.

The decision was made to focus partially on the experiences of disabled and neurodivergent PGRs, in order to build on the previous year's work which focused on how neurodivergent PGRs experienced support and wellbeing (which culminated in the report, 'Building Bridges: Educating and Supporting Neurodiverse PGRs in Higher Education'). This area has been identified by both the 2023-24 and 2024-25 committees, as well as the PGR Diversity team, as being underrepresented in academic research.

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List of Abbreviations

ND	Neurodivergent
NT	Neurotypical
PGR-DSC	Postgraduate Researcher Diversity Steering Committee
PGR	Postgraduate Researcher
PGT	Postgraduate Taught Master's
UoL	University of Leeds
ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
SpLD	Specific Learning Difficulties

Key Terms

Across this report, the following terms will be used:

Neurodiversity and neurodivergence:

We approach this report with the following framework of neurodiversity and neurodivergence.

Neurodiversity describes the ‘diversity of human minds, the infinite variation in neurocognitive functioning’ (Walker, 2025), and relates to how people process information and experience/interact with the world around them (National library of Medicine, 2025).

Neurodivergence and neurodivergent people are commonly associated with conditions such as Autism Spectrum Disorder, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD) such as dyslexia and dyscalculia, and additionally Tourette’s and epilepsy, though it should be noted that not all people who have a diagnosis of these conditions identify with the neurodivergent label.

Those who are not neurodivergent are neurotypical (NT).

Disability:

According to the Equality Act 2010, disability can be defined as having a physical or mental impairment that has a ‘substantial’ impact on one’s daily life (Gov.uk, 2025).

We also want to acknowledge definitions of disability outside of the legal framework. The Northern Officer’s Group, based in Leeds, developed this definition of disability in 1996:

A disabled person is a person with an impairment who experiences disability.

Disability is the result of negative interactions that take place between a person with an impairment and her or his social environment. Impairment is thus part of a negative interaction, but it is not the cause of, nor does it justify, disability.

[...]

Disability: the loss or limitation of opportunities to take part in society on an equal level with others due to social and environmental barriers.

Because the university has a legal duty under the Equality Act (2010) to ‘afford [...] access to a benefit, facility or service’ to all students, we have included the legal definition of disability as a protected characteristic. However, we hope that by including the Northern Officer’s Groups’ definition, which aligns far more with the social model of disability, both our report and the approach to improving spaces and accessibility in the UoL libraries will be more expansive than merely meeting the legal requirements.

Inclusion:

Inclusion aims to give equal access and opportunities (Inclusion.me, 2025), removing discriminatory barriers and acknowledging differences such as culture. These differences are essential to understand and incorporate to create a more global environment, where everyone feels welcomed and seen.

Within organisations, this means fostering environments that allow those with differing backgrounds, characteristics, and ways of thinking to work effectively together, and most importantly (in an educational context), to fulfil their potential (Thompson, 2017, p.2).

In a space-related context, inclusion refers to the creation of spaces where people of different backgrounds feel welcomed and appreciated. Inclusive environments can only be actualised through overcoming personal unconscious biases and learning to deal with them (University of Edinburgh, 2022)

Accessibility:

According to the UK Government (2024), accessibility means creating and building in ways that mean ‘most people can use [something] without needing to adapt it, while supporting those who do need to adapt things’. The University of Leeds has stated a commitment to create accessible libraries whether that is in the physical space, digital content or cultural experiences (University of Leeds, 2025).

Accessibility is an aspect of inclusion that this report takes particular interest in. There cannot be true inclusion without accessibility, and accessibility gives way to inclusion. Therefore, the two terms will be used to refer to accommodative practices adopted, as well as conditions created, by the university through support such as disability services, and specifically focused within the library context.

Barriers for Disabled and Neurodivergent PGRs in Learning Spaces

Statistics show that the reported number of disabled students has been increasing in the higher education sector, an increase of 47% since 2014/15, with SpLD being the most prominent followed by mental health conditions (House of Commons library, 2025). The wellbeing and career outcomes for neurodivergent students tend to be worse compared to neurotypical students. Students can have good academic achievements if they receive support although they experience burnout easily (Hamilton and Petty, 2023). A lot of neurodivergent students experience personal challenges in terms of how they view themselves as well as being potentially subjected to alienation at a university environment (Hamilton, Petty, 2023).

It is well-recognized that neurodivergent and disabled students might face learning difficulties compared to their NT peers. The focus of this report will be on the inclusivity of the library spaces at the University of Leeds. Neurodivergent students have different sensory preferences in the learning environments including sensory challenges such as sensitivity to light, level of noise, smell, texture, which eventually hinders students' ability to concentrate and learn. Some of them need a space for movement as some neurodivergent students struggle with sitting for prolonged periods. Whilst this is not the focus of this report, it is worth mentioning that some neurodivergent students also experience difficulties in social contexts potentially feeling anxious about being in social settings and forming social connections (Oktra, 2025).

Library Spaces: Value, Access, and Limitations

Whilst digital library services provide access to a wider range of texts than the physical library, the offering of a physical library space holds value beyond merely accessing texts. Indeed, the shift to digital textual provision only emphasises the other services the library provides, both directly (physical books, advice from library staff, study spaces) and indirectly (community, security, etc.). Antell and Engel found that doctoral students (PGRs) and faculty members considered the library a place ‘conducive to scholarship’ (2006, p.552), despite the access that they often have to private offices and workspaces. The university library, rather than being a place of solitude and only for intensive study, is becoming increasingly characterised as ‘dynamic and vibrant’ spaces, where learners are also ‘socially and academically networked, supported, and developed’ (O’Donnell and Anderson, 2021, p.232). These new qualities can perhaps provide different or superior experiences depending on what the researcher wants or needs.

A previous study in this area, based on experiences from Ulster University, provides evidence that doctoral researchers value the library services at Ulster, and rely ‘heavily’ on its online resources (Delaney and Bates, 2017, p.78). They attribute the lack of use of the libraries by doctoral students partially to lessened awareness of the library’s services, wrongly assuming that the library primarily focuses on ‘collection management and services to undergraduate’ students (Delaney and Bates, 2017, p.64). The Ulster study provides important opportunity to compare the experience of PGRs at Leeds with those at an Irish university. This report does however expand on this by honing in on those with accessibility needs, providing a

perspective on how disabled and ND PGRs experience the library, which may differ from their able-bodied or NT counterparts.

Current Study Space Provision

PGRs at Leeds often have access, through keys or codes, to their relevant school buildings out of hours, so that they can study outside of the typical opening hours/staffing pattern. However, for studying outside of sociable hours, the library is a far safer option. The university's lone working policy dissuades PGRs from being alone in their school building. In recent years, Leeds have introduced a 24-hour library, firstly in Laidlaw and currently now in Edward Boyle. library staff are present from 7am to midnight, and between midnight and 7am, security staff regularly patrol the area. This coupled with the welcoming atmosphere that comes from using a building that is actively open (keeping lights on, heating, etc) makes for a safer and more appealing place to study for PGRs outside of their school's opening hours.

A common suggestion for PGRs looking to study in the library is to use a postgraduate space, which Leeds has on floor 13 of the Edward Boyle library. This space is open not only to those studying for research postgraduate degrees but also taught Masters (PGTs) which significantly increases the number of people with access. The number of PGTs significantly outnumbers that of PGRs: in 2022-23, there were 2174 PGRs at Leeds, but 8772 PGTs, 4 for every 1 PGR (University of Leeds, 2025). The postgraduate floor of Edward Boyle, as Leeds only dedicated postgraduate library space, has 462 seats (including individual and group study rooms, which require booking). If this space were for the 2174 PGRs, this would be a

seat for every 4 students, but when adding a further 8772 PGTs, this diminishes to a seat for every 23 students. The likelihood of being able to use the postgraduate space at Leeds is therefore lessened due to demand.

The status of the University of Leeds as a member of [the Russell Group](#), a group of 24 UK universities categorized as 'research-intensive' (Russell Group, 2025), indicates a commitment not only to taught education but to researcher experience and excellence. When looking at how Russell Group universities provide for PGRs in their libraries, provision was broken down into three key categories based on common types of provision:

1. No specific space for postgraduates provided
2. Postgraduate space provided, open to taught master's students and PGRs
3. Specific PGR space provided

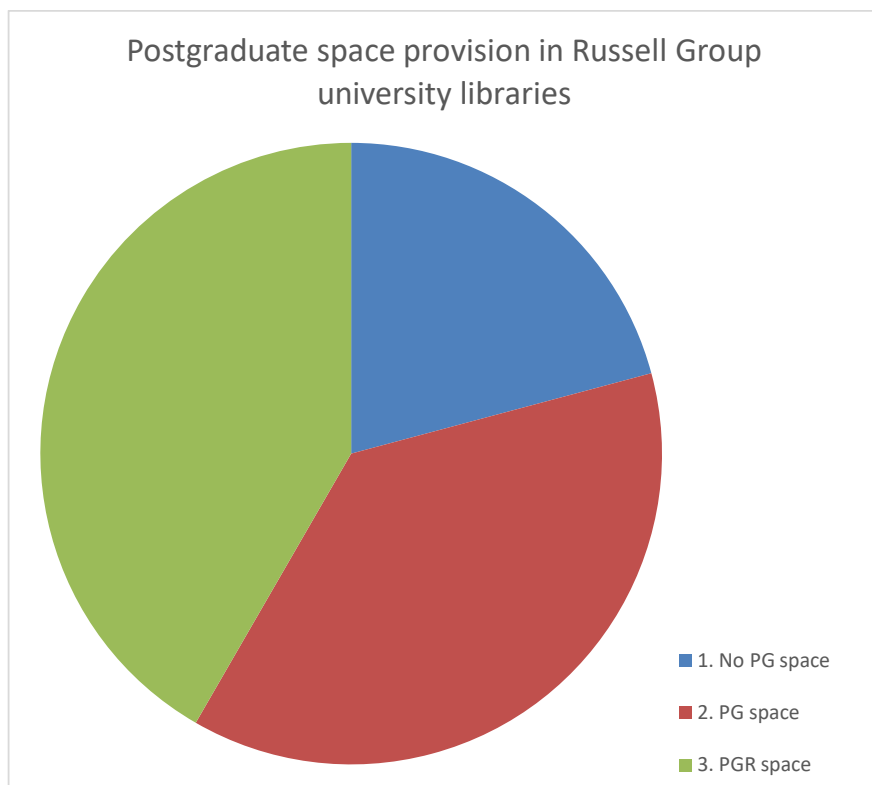


Image 01: PGR Space in Russell Group Universities

Group 1 comprises 5 universities, group 2 has 9 universities (including Leeds), and group 3 has 10 universities.¹² It is positive to see that the largest group, 10 universities, is that which has PGR-specific spaces in its libraries, though this is also owing to categorization of provision.

With university libraries being regarded as the embodiment of the ‘cultural capital and academic status of the university’ (O’Donnell and Anderson, 2021, p.236), and again the Russell Group priding themselves as universities that prioritize research, the lack of cohesion between library spaces and researcher provision indicates a disconnect between what universities say and what is done.

¹ The universities in each group are as follows:

Group 1: Imperial College London, University of Manchester, Queen’s University Belfast, University of Sheffield, University of Southampton

Group 2: University of Cambridge, University of Cardiff, University of Edinburgh, University of Glasgow, University of Leeds, University of Newcastle, University of Nottingham, University College London, University of York

Group 3: University of Birmingham, University of Bristol, Durham University, University of Exeter, Kings College London, University of Liverpool, London School of Economics, University of Oxford, Queen Mary’s University of London, University of Warwick

Data was gained from a mix of information gathering from library public websites, and from inquiries via a library’s live chat/email service when this information was not apparent. It is therefore possible that some spaces were not accounted for, however the lack of both public and librarian awareness of these hypothetical spaces functions much the same as a lack of space.

² It should be noted that the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge’s libraries function differently because of their collegiate system – each college tends to have its own library space, which librarians informed us tend to have both undergraduate and postgraduate spaces. The data used in this poll is from the libraries outside of the colleges.

Additionally, the University of Oxford’s PGR space in their main libraries was, as ascertained from the public website, for those from the Rothermere American Institute. Though these spaces are restricted to those pursuing a research postgraduate degree in the field of American Studies, we have chosen to include it as a PGR-specific space despite its constraints.

Objectives

For the academic year 2024–25, the PGR Diversity Steering Committee focused on understanding the experiences of postgraduate researchers when using University library spaces and services, with particular attention to those from underrepresented backgrounds. This was developed as a priority project, where the key themes were narrowed down to accessibility and inclusion.

From the outset, the committee affirmed the need to consider accessibility and inclusion beyond existing legal or structural requirements. Accessibility has been understood as the creation of conditions that allow diverse students to fully engage with their academic environment. Inclusion has been taken to mean a sense of welcome, safety and recognition for students of all backgrounds, particularly those from marginalised communities.

The objectives of this study have been streamlined in line with the different facilities and services offered by the library. In particular, the focus has been on understanding how resources are accessed and used, the nature and effectiveness of training sessions and workshops, and the extent to which the physical infrastructure of the library is inclusive and accessible. Alongside this, attention has also been given to the online infrastructure, including processes such as bookings, borrowings and other procedural aspects of use. By structuring the objectives around these key areas, the study aims to provide a comprehensive view of how the library supports its users and where further improvements may be needed.

These objectives also provide the framework for the three findings sections of this report. The first objective corresponds to Section 1 (Inclusion), the second to Section 2 (Accessibility), and the third to Section 3 (Intersectionality and Recommendations).

Exploring PGRs' Experiences of Belonging within the library

This objective examines whether library spaces create conditions in which all PGRs, particularly those from underrepresented or neurodiverse backgrounds, feel welcomed, respected and able to thrive.

- Evaluate how PGRs perceive inclusivity in the library environment, including feelings of safety, cultural representation and respect from staff.
- Measure satisfaction in relation to elements such as signage clarity, space layout, staff support and emotional comfort within library spaces.
- Collect open feedback from respondents on how inclusivity could be improved based on their lived experience.
- Emphasise the interdependence between inclusion and accessibility, particularly the importance of spaces that adapt to diverse cognitive and sensory needs.

Mapping library Usage and Accessibility Barriers

This objective focuses on identifying how PGRs engage with the University of Leeds' physical and digital library services, and where barriers exist. Particular attention is paid to the

experiences of disabled students, neurodivergent students, part-time researchers and those with caring responsibilities.

- Examine trends in how PGRs use both physical library locations (such as study areas, group rooms and other spaces) and digital platforms (including e-books, databases and online resources).
- Understand how students engage with the existing infrastructure to access these services, with a focus on the inclusivity of booking systems, communication processes and the role of staff in enabling use of both physical spaces and digital resources.
- Identify the accessibility challenges faced by PGRs, particularly those who fall within the institutional definition of disability, and assess how these needs are being addressed.
- Explore needs that fall outside traditional definitions of disability, such as sensory sensitivities, social anxiety or chronic fatigue, which may not be captured by standard support categories.

Juxtaposing library Practices with PGR Lived Experiences to Shape Recommendations

This objective ensures that findings lead to meaningful and sustainable improvements in library policy, design and engagement with the PGR community.

- Produce a final report that summarises key findings and outlines evidence-based recommendations.
- Share the report with library leadership and relevant University bodies to ensure alignment with broader institutional priorities for researcher support.
- Propose follow-up actions such as co-creating pilot interventions, trialling space redesigns or improving communication and visibility of support services.
- Facilitate continued collaboration between the library, PGRs, Disability Services and Researcher Development to support future improvements.

Methodology

The methodology for this project evolved from its original proposal through sustained discussions within the PGR Diversity Steering Committee and in collaboration with the wider PGR Diversity Team at the University of Leeds. These ongoing conversations helped shape the scope and design of the project, ensuring it reflected the priorities and experiences of PGR students, particularly around issues of accessibility within University library spaces.

Data collection was undertaken at two levels: engagement with library staff and a targeted online survey for PGR students.

Initial engagement with staff at the library began through a connection facilitated by a member of the PGR Diversity Team, who introduced the committee to colleagues at the Laidlaw library working on accessibility and disability services. This was followed by semi-structured conversations with staff from the Academic Skills and Digital Services and the

Research Services team, both based at Edward Boyle. The committee also met members of the Cultural Collections team at Brotherton library. Each conversation was attended by two committee members and was designed to explore how accessibility is conceptualised and operationalised within the library context, the specific initiatives being undertaken, perceived challenges, and how these intersect with the needs and lived experiences of PGR students. These conversations provided staff perspectives that complemented and contextualised the survey findings.

In parallel, the committee designed an online survey to capture the accessibility experiences of PGR students (included in the appendix). The survey was developed collaboratively by the committee, with input and review from the PGR Diversity Team. It was distributed using the University's prescribed JISC platform and launched on 19 May 2025. To ensure wide reach, the survey was disseminated through established communication channels managed by the University's PGR Diversity Office. To encourage participation, respondents were invited to enter a prize draw for one of five £20 vouchers.

The survey remained open for 27 days and received 79 responses. It included 39 questions, combining demographic information (such as school affiliation, stage of PhD, enrolment status, and home or international student status) with a mix of closed-ended questions and open-ended prompts. These covered the categories of library Experience, Accessibility and Suggestions.

This mixed-methods approach enabled the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data, providing a nuanced understanding of PGR students' experiences with accessibility

and inclusivity in the University's library ecosystem. Quantitative data came from demographic and other closed-ended questions with selectable options, while qualitative data came from both the staff conversations and the open-ended survey responses. The research was conducted in line with the University of Leeds' ethical research standards and overseen by the PGR Diversity Team. A key aim throughout was to foreground perspectives that are often underrepresented or overlooked, drawing on the diverse backgrounds of the committee members themselves.

There are some limitations to this study that must be acknowledged. Due to human error, one survey question was omitted, and the scope for in-person interviews was limited. The majority of interviews were with library staff and representatives rather than with PGR students, whose insights would have been particularly valuable. Constraints of time and availability also shaped the extent of data collection. Not every survey question had a clear explainer, and some terms (such as "Accessibility Kit") were official labels that respondents did not always recognise, which may have affected responses. The online nature of the survey further restricted the space available to explain concepts in detail. In addition, the committee at times relied on external staff support, which, while helpful, may have introduced perspectives beyond those of the PGR student community.

Data analysis was carried out through both quantitative and qualitative approaches, tailored to each strand of the findings. In the Inclusion section, responses were examined across three areas: general concerns raised by PGRs, issues of signposting, and gaps identified by

underrepresented groups. Multiple-choice and open-ended responses were analysed, supported by charts and tables to illustrate key patterns.

In the Accessibility section, data from questions 18 to 27 was analysed using a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. Numerical responses were converted into percentages through manual calculations, while satisfaction ratings were interpreted using a ten-point Likert scale and categorised into levels of satisfaction using the Net Promoter Score model (Reichheld, 2003). Open-ended responses were examined individually to ensure each was considered on its own terms, and Braun and Clarke's (2021) Reflexive Thematic Analysis was used to generate themes that captured both surface meanings and underlying patterns.

In the Intersectionality section, the analysis focused on how inclusion and accessibility interact to create compounding disadvantages. Drawing on Crenshaw's framework, particular attention was paid to the ways in which multiple identities such as disability combined with international status, caring responsibilities, or socio-economic background shaped the library experience. Testimonies from the survey were used to illustrate how these intersections created barriers that could not be explained through single-identity analysis alone.

Findings

The findings of this study are presented in three sections: inclusion, accessibility and intersectionality. Each section draws on survey data and testimonies from PGRs to highlight

how library spaces and services are experienced, with particular attention to underrepresented groups.

Section	1:	Inclusion
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This section examines the extent to which PGRs feel welcomed and supported within the University libraries. The aim is to understand whether library spaces create a sense of belonging for all PGRs, especially those from marginalised backgrounds. The analysis considers general concerns raised by PGRs, the effectiveness of signposting to existing resources, and gaps in provision that may limit inclusion. By doing so, it highlights how practical conditions, communication, and representation influence the overall inclusivity of the library environment.

Section	2:	Accessibility
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This section focuses on the availability and effectiveness of resources and facilities that enable PGRs to make full use of the libraries. The aim is to identify the barriers encountered by disabled and neurodivergent students in particular, while also recognising broader accessibility issues that affect the wider PGR community. The analysis explores awareness of specialist resources, satisfaction with facilities, and suggestions for improvement, drawing attention to both structural challenges and positive experiences. In doing so, it assesses how well the libraries meet their commitment to creating environments that are usable and supportive for all.

Section 3: Intersectionality

This section considers how overlapping identities and responsibilities shape library experiences. The aim is to move beyond single categories, such as disability or international status, and instead explore how these intersect to create compounded disadvantages. Testimonies are used to show how factors such as disability combined with international status, caring responsibilities, or socio-economic background lead to distinct barriers. By highlighting these layered experiences, the section emphasises the importance of joined-up provision and communication across different parts of the University.

Taken together, these three sections provide a comprehensive picture of how inclusion, accessibility and intersectionality shape PGRs' experiences of the University libraries, and they form the evidence base for the recommendations that follow.

Section 1: Inclusion, Accessibility, and Intersectionality

In this section we present and analyse the data that we collected from our survey on library inclusion and access, which captures responses from PGRs in the University of Leeds. By inclusion and accessibility, we refer to the accommodative practices adopted, and conditions created by the University through its support services like the disability services, and facilities such as the library and other digital collections. Further on in the section we also look at the intersectionality between inclusion and accessibility.

1.1 Inclusion

In this part we focus on the PGRs' responses to the library's inclusivity as set out in our survey questions from numbers 8 to 17, as well as 20, 24, and 26. We have identified three key

trends in the responses from the survey: practical concerns, improper sign posting to available resources and support, and potential gaps in available support and facilities. We will first present the data recorded on the survey and then provide analysis of that data.

1.1.1 Presentation of Data

Question 8 of our survey asked respondents “Which of the University of Leeds libraries have you visited?”. Respondents were allowed to select multiple libraries. The responses indicate varying level of engagement with different library sites. Edward Boyle library was the most visited, with 91% of PGRs reporting that they have visited it. Laidlaw library followed, with 77% reporting usage, whilst Brotherton has been visited by 63%. Health Sciences library has been mentioned by 25%, the lower number indicating that perhaps this is used only by PGRs who are in health science related disciplines. 4% of respondents indicated that they have not visited any library during their time at the University.

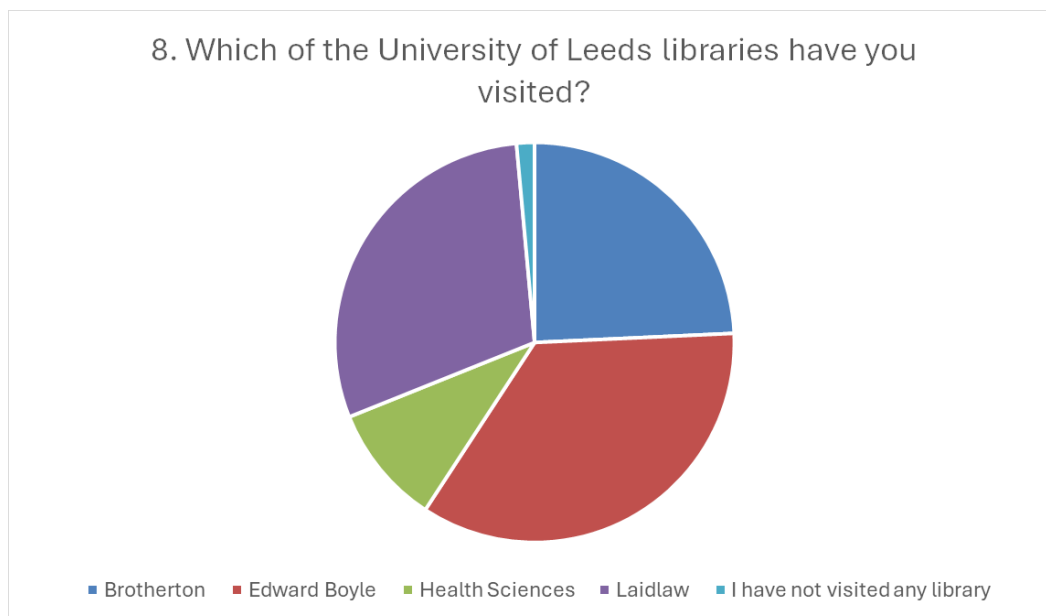


Figure 1: PGR library Inclusion and Access Survey – Question 8

Practical Concerns

Here we report general concerns shared by all respondents, regardless of their identification as having a disability or being neurodivergent. In Question 9 “In what conditions do you prefer to work?”, the PGRs were invited to describe their preferred working conditions. Respondents highlighted specific technical and ergonomic preferences that directly affect their ability to work productively in library spaces. Over 80% respondents referred explicitly to a need for quiet, low noise or silent spaces. One respondent said, “I prefer to work in a quiet and structured environment. [...] I generally perform best in calm, low-noise surroundings.”

Similarly, respondents expressed the need for private or semi-private spaces, with calls for individual rooms or cubicles. One respondent expressed preference for an “Individual room or desk.” Another noted that they “prefer quiet, well-lit, airy, and cool conditions to work in [...] partitions between study desks and/or a cubicle to myself. I would also like easy access to printing facilities.” A few respondents mentioned that they had concerns about air quality and ventilation in the library, identifying the need for “windows” and “airy conditions”. Other students highlighted the temperature as something to consider. For instance, one respondent states that, “the University should think beyond heating and consider cooling for hotter seasons too.”

Sign Posting Issues

According to the survey results, many PGRs who stand to benefit most are unaware of the support available within the University. This is evident in responses to Questions 20, 24 and 26, which asked directly about awareness of services, equipment and facilities.

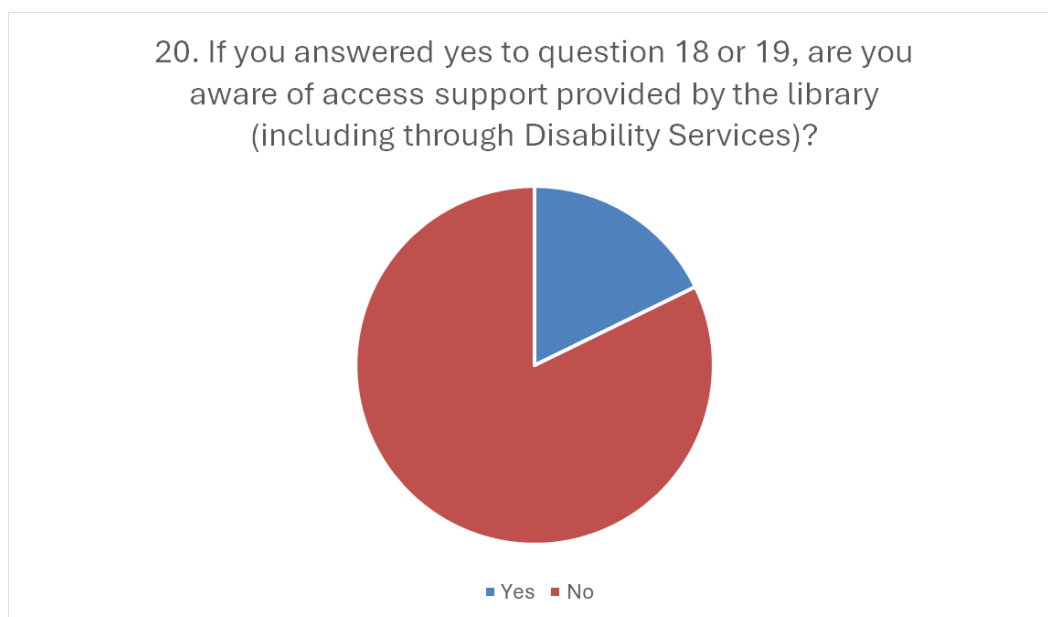


Figure 2: PGR library Inclusion and Access Survey – Question 20

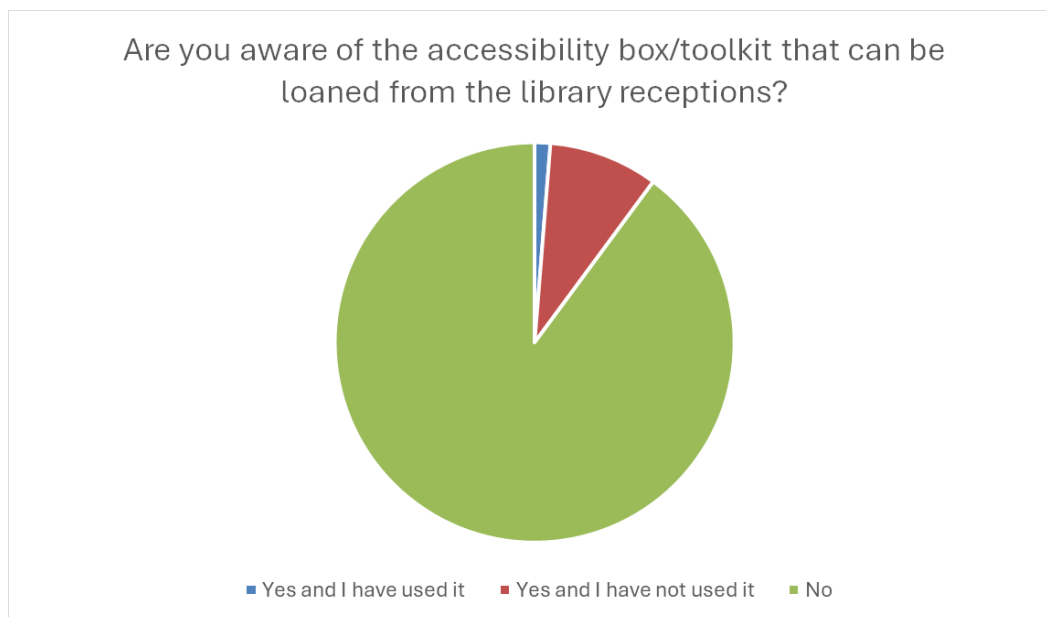


Figure 3: PGR library Inclusion and Access Survey – Question 24

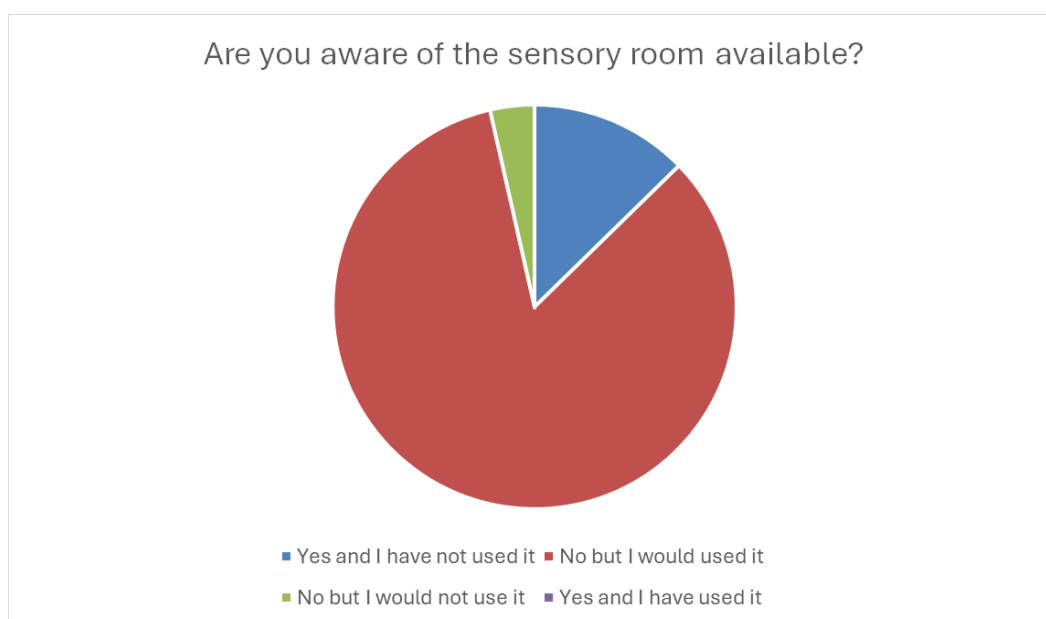


Figure 4: PGR library Inclusion and Access Survey – Question 26

Only 8% of respondents who identified as disabled and/or neurodivergent said they were aware of access support provided by the library (including through Disability Services). 8% of the overall respondents were aware of the accessibility toolkit, while only 5% knew about the sensory room. This lack of awareness is also evident in other responses to the survey questions. For instance, a respondent described the type of room that meets their needs as “a quiet environment where I can adjust the light levels myself, i.e., a separate small individual study space.” Another respondent identified “bright lights” and noise in ‘quiet areas” as barriers that hinder their use of the library. These respondents are describing features of the “sensory room” which, according to the survey, only 5% know of it and no respondent has used it before.

Gaps in Support Services and Facilities

It is not always clear whether the issues raised by respondents reflect actual gaps in provision or a lack of accessible information about existing support. Several respondents explicitly highlighted gaps in current provisions, particularly for disabled students and those with specific access needs. These gaps create barriers and limit inclusion for PGRs with specific access needs and caring responsibilities. One detailed and critical contribution from a respondent with a physical disability highlighted:

“There are exceptionally few spaces in the library where I can actually take notes or write. [...] The Leeds Uni libraries don’t provide dictation software in their accessible study rooms. [...] They also don’t provide lockers for disabled students to store assistive tech.”

Whether or not dictation software is currently available, the respondent's perception of its absence highlights either a gap in provision or a lack of awareness about existing resources. In both cases, the outcome is the same: their ability to work independently in the study room is restricted. Assistive tech is also very expensive and can take a while to replace, so lockers need to be available so that items can be stored. The points raised by this respondent will doubtless impact how much they will use the library. Similarly, PGRs with caring responsibilities have also indicated the high cost of childcare as their reason for not using the library. One respondent said that they had "parenting responsibilities - need to take care of child during the day."

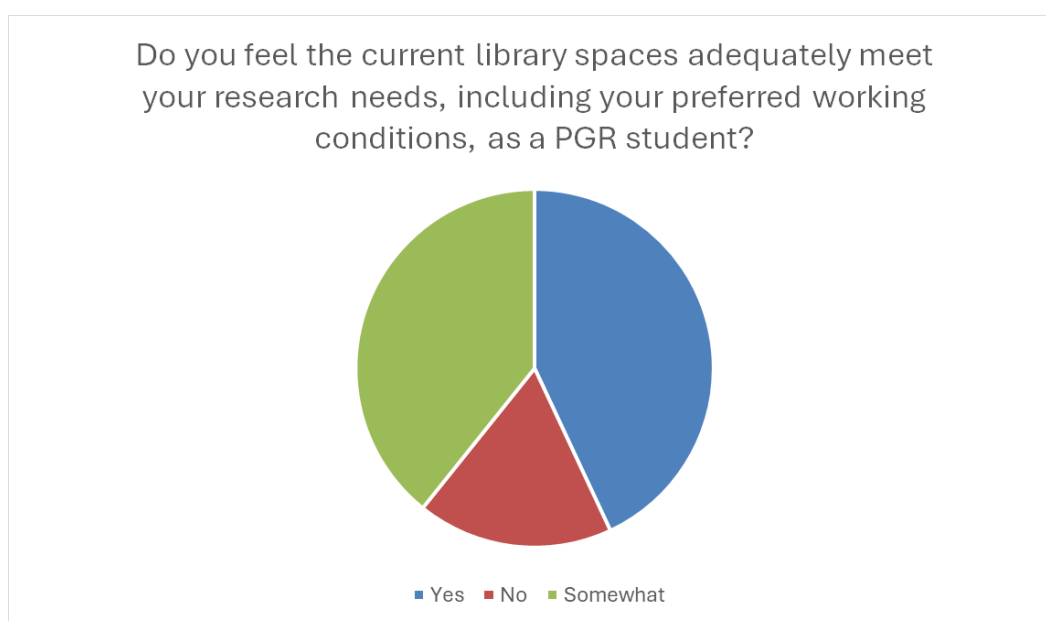


Figure 5: PGR library Inclusion and Access Survey – Question 10

Overall, as shown in the chart above, less than half the respondents (43%) said that current library spaces adequately meet their research needs, including their preferred working condition as PGR students. Meanwhile, a combined 57% indicated either partial (39%) or complete (18%) dissatisfaction. As we have suggested so far, there is a gap between knowledge of what support is available, and what needs are actually not met despite existing support. This response from the survey aptly captures the points we have raised thus far in this part:

“I only just recently found out that you can book individual study spaces! I feel like the onboarding process could have been better - especially for students who, like me, couldn't make an in-person 'Introduction to the library' session.”

Responses like this, which indicate lack of awareness of available support and services, were repeatedly made in the survey. But a clearer picture emerges when we consider this point in light of other responses from the survey questions. In the next part of this section on inclusion, we analyse the data presented here and discuss those responses further.

Data Analysis

The survey data shows higher satisfaction with the personnel in the library as opposed to the facilities available. About two thirds of the respondents (65%) reported feeling welcome in the library, even as only 43% are satisfied with the current state of the library. Some respondents said the staff were “very accommodating,” “friendly,” “welcoming,” and others commended specific units like the Document Supply Team and Special Collections. One respondent remarked that “In my first week in Leeds [...] the library staff explained to me the

set up... and provided me with a temporary pass.” This analysis therefore recognises that respondents seem to have more dissatisfaction with the facilities and practical support than with their general enquiries and engagement with library staff.

12. Do you feel welcome as a PGR when using University of Leeds libraries?			Responses: 79
Option	Count	Percentage	
1. I feel very welcome as a PGR	40	51%	
2. I feel somewhat welcome as a PGR	14	18%	
3. I feel neither welcome nor unwelcome as a PGR	20	25%	
4. I feel somewhat unwelcome as a PGR	3	4%	
5. I feel very unwelcome as a PGR	2	3%	

Figure 6: PGR library Inclusion and Access Survey – Question 12

Many respondents cited noise and overcrowding as key factors that adversely affect their library experience. Therefore, a recurring theme was the need for dedicated PGR-only spaces, with one respondent stating, “I wish there was a PGR-only area, I appreciate Masters students need somewhere to go but the PGR resources and spaces (at least in my faculty) are dire.” Others emphasised that while postgraduate spaces exist, they are not well-suited for research students, such as the comment that “the PG space in Edward Boyle is inappropriately set up for PGRs, and better designed for PGTs.” Several respondents proposed the creation of extended individual study room bookings, particularly useful during the writing-up phase of a PhD, with one suggesting, “Ideally, an individual room that could be booked for a week and where PGRs could leave their books overnight.” The lack of rest

areas was another concern, with one respondent stating, “There is no rest space to have a nap.” A separate respondent highlighted related issues with campus facilities, noting, “The lack of a ‘kitchen area’ or healthy affordable meals makes it less likely for me to be on campus as often as I need to.”

Moreover, a detailed critique from a disabled PGR underscored the disconnect between expectations and the practical realities of library accessibility. It is worth quoting their remark extensively here:

Information on what disability services actually covers and when and under what circumstances is extremely [un]transparent and often does not get explained in advance, which means that disabled research students might propose research projects assuming that they will get help with certain aspects of the research because those aspects are inaccessible. [...] I would never have proposed to do a narrative research project if I had known in advance that disability services does not cover transcription.

This highlights how unmet support needs can fundamentally affect students’ academic decisions. It also stresses the need for synergy in the support provided by the Disability Services and the library. Overall, these responses reveal that while library staff are appreciated, there are clear opportunities to enhance their services and library support facilities inclusivity, usability and alignment with PGR-specific needs.

Another survey question asked about the library's consideration of PGRs diverse cultural, ethnic, and disciplinary backgrounds. Here, many respondents (60%) selected either "Somewhat well" or "Very well", indicating a generally positive perception of the library's effort to meet the diverse needs of PGRs.

A significant portion, 33% (26 respondents), chose "Ok", reflecting neutral or mixed experiences. This suggests that while the library does not actively exclude or neglect diversity, it may not be fully meeting expectations across all areas or for all groups. Meanwhile, 5% (4 respondents) reported that the library caters "Not very well", and 1 respondent (1%) said "Not well at all", pointing to specific dissatisfaction or unmet needs, possibly due to lack of inclusion, insufficient tailored resources or limited disciplinary representation.

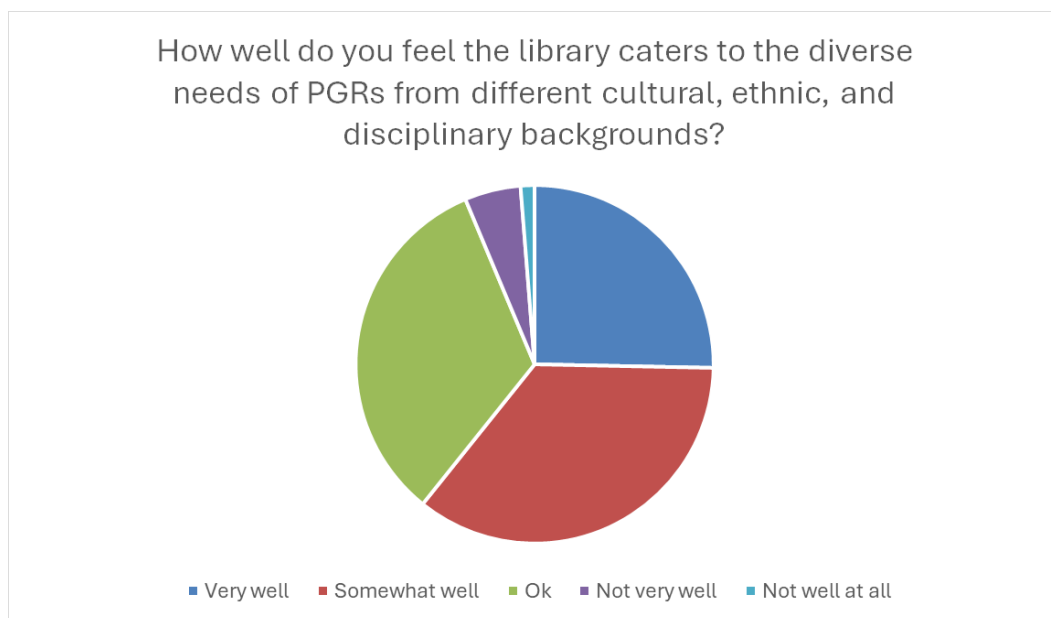


Figure 7: PGR library Inclusion and Access Survey – Question 16

This question on cultural, ethnic, and disciplinary background drew mixed reactions. For instance, a respondent applauded the library for its wide-ranging collections, stating that “I found the literature that I may not have been able to find in my country.” Another participant noted that “I think it could be made easier to order books or articles in languages that are not English [...], because it is sometimes not clear how long ordering such materials will take.” However, one respondent believed that by posing this question, the survey is “triggering a war of bias.” These responses showcase how different PGRs experience their use of the library based on their background and sensitivities. While some, for instance one respondent who called for “collections that reflect non-Western perspectives,” other UK PGRs remarked:

- “I am a White British woman. I don't feel particularly qualified to answer this question.”
- “I am from the UK and whilst a mature student, I don't feel that this necessarily affects my library experience.”
- “hard for me to comment on cultural/ethnic (I am white British!) but in terms of disciplinary backgrounds, I think the access to the libraries are relatively the same?”

From the survey responses we received, UK PGRs largely reported positive experiences in terms of inclusion or representation. Some international students also had similar feedback with some suggestions for accommodating non-western perspectives.

In this section, we tried to report the responses that we received from our survey which highlight PGRs experiences in using the library. We focused on presenting an analysing data that relates to the inclusivity of the current provisions of the University's libraries. The survey

indicates that while there are areas which the library management team may need to reassess considering this report, there is also the need to signpost students to available support and resources. The data presented here also shows how PGRs from minority backgrounds are more likely to experience barriers than UK/home students. On a positive note, most of the respondents reported very favourable experiences in their encounter with library staff. Building on these findings, the next section turns to accessibility, examining how physical, digital and procedural aspects of the library either enable or constrain PGRs' ability to make full use of its resources.

Section 2: Accessibility

To understand accessibility within the library, the survey included questions 18 through 27. For clarity, the responses and reflections have been grouped into three broad areas:

1. Disability, Neurodivergence, Assistive Technology, and library Support (Questions 18–21)

Around one in five respondents identified as disabled under the Equality Act (2010). This may reflect the prevalence of such conditions within the population surveyed, but it may also point to under-recognition or reluctance to disclose. Understanding of disability is dynamic, particularly regarding chronic illness, mental health, and other invisible conditions. Approximately one in four respondents reported being neurodivergent, either formally diagnosed or self-identified, with a further 4% preferring not to disclose. There is likely overlap between those identifying as disabled and neurodivergent. More respondents

identified as neurodivergent than as disabled, reflecting both changing perceptions of neurodivergence as identity and greater willingness to self-identify outside of formal diagnostic categories.

Awareness of support was notably low. Among disabled and neurodivergent respondents, only 18% were aware of specific library services designed for them, while 72% reported no awareness at all. This highlights a major visibility gap: resources that exist are not reaching the intended audience.

Respondents described using tools such as noise-cancelling headphones, transcription services (RNIB), and digital reading platforms (Perlego), which demonstrate the library's role in supporting students with sensory sensitivities and visual impairments. One respondent commented, *"Dictation software... better if provided via apps anywhere."* It is unclear whether this reflects an actual absence of dictation software in accessible rooms, or whether it points to a lack of awareness about existing provision. The respondent indicated they regularly studied in Brotherton, Laidlaw, Health Sciences, and Edward Boyle libraries, which suggests that even frequent library users may be unaware of what is available.

A smaller number of respondents drew attention to positive experiences with book delivery, personal assistance, or direct staff support, which were generally appreciated. One respondent reflected: *"I am too hearing for the first time... more of such tools are very necessary for an inclusive student group."* These comments point both to the value of existing provision and to the need for a broader, more consistently promoted range of support services.

2. Positive and Negative library Experiences and Satisfaction Ratings (Questions 22–23)

Overall satisfaction with accessibility provision varied. 12% percent of respondents reported major barriers and lack of awareness of support, while 17% found some services helpful but identified gaps and delays. Encouragingly, 60% rated their experiences positively. Quantitatively, the average satisfaction score was 7.32 on a ten-point scale, with a mode of 9–10 and a median of 8, indicating broadly favourable perceptions despite significant shortcomings.

Respondents frequently praised staff for their approachability, helpfulness, and responsiveness. Online resources were valued for their flexibility, while inclusive environments, affordable study spaces, and the availability of seating were also recognised as strengths. One respondent who rated the library highly noted a desire to strengthen gender inclusivity, particularly during Pride month: *“spaces and facilities where individuals can openly and comfortably express their gender identity without hesitation or judgment.”* Others described the libraries more generally as safe and welcoming spaces, reinforcing their importance as inclusive environments for PGRs.

At the same time, several respondents observed that while staff were supportive, satisfaction was reduced when systemic barriers limited what staff could do to address underlying issues. Moderate satisfaction responses highlighted limited ergonomic options, insufficient private or silent study spaces, and weak communication about what support exists. One respondent reflected: *“I do not think that we get enough information about the services that are available unless I take a forthcoming approach to enquire about it.”* This

indicates a recurring issue with marketing, communication, and signposting, where support exists but is not well-advertised or easily discoverable.

Issues with sensory overload, lack of assistive technology, and restricted booking of study rooms were also reported. Problems of noise and overcrowding, particularly in areas designated as silent, were among the most frequently cited frustrations. Negative responses most often pointed to physical inaccessibility (stairs, heavy doors, poor ventilation), sensory discomfort (harsh lighting, overcrowding, noise), and limited one-to-one support. Some comments were particularly direct: *“Silent areas are not silent.”*; *“Too many undergraduates use the libraries as a canteen or social space.”*; *“Better air filtration and encouragement of masking.”*; *“More plug sockets in some of the libraries.”* These highlight areas where immediate improvements are both visible and achievable.

3. Accessibility Toolkit, Sensory Rooms, and Suggested Improvements (Questions 24–27)

Almost 90% of respondents were unaware of the accessibility toolkit, with only one person reporting use. Where it was used, items such as laptop stands and noise-cancelling headphones were positively received, and staff were described as helpful in facilitating access. However, several respondents reported already owning similar tools or finding the contents mismatched with their needs, which reduced the toolkit’s relevance. Some also noted that they did not visit the library frequently enough to make use of the toolkit, suggesting that limited uptake may reflect patterns of library use as much as awareness or

content alignment. Taken together, these responses indicate that the toolkit requires both stronger promotion and regular review to ensure its contents match the needs of PGRs.

Awareness of sensory rooms was similarly low. Only 6% of respondents knew they existed, and none had used them. Yet 42% reported that they would use such spaces if they were aware of them. Overall, this means that 94% of respondents were unaware of sensory rooms, highlighting a major gap in communication and visibility. For those who said they would not use them (52%), possible reasons may include lack of understanding of the rooms' purpose, absence of relevant sensory needs, or discomfort and stigma associated with using accessibility resources. Despite this, the high proportion of students who expressed potential interest suggests significant unmet demand for low-stimulation environments that could support neurodivergent students, but which currently go unused due to weak promotion and unclear signposting.

Question 27 invited suggestions for improvement. The most common request, mentioned by 25 respondents, was for more quiet and resting spaces, ideally with low stimulation and comfortable furniture such as beanbags. Other frequent suggestions included clearer communication about what is already available, better enforcement of quiet rules in silent zones, and wider provision of assistive technology (dictation software, mind-mapping tools, screen magnifiers, second monitors). Facility improvements were also highlighted, including better lighting, air filtration, ventilation, overnight lockers, more plug sockets, and improved seating ergonomics. A few respondents called for learning materials to be made

available in multiple formats (audio, large print, screen-reader friendly), with one specifically highlighting the need for resources that are accessible to blind students.

Several respondents also mentioned the need for better space organisation, linking this to the overwhelming layout of existing libraries. Finally, some students expressed a willingness to take part in ongoing feedback sessions, emphasising that engagement with PGRs should be collaborative and continuous. As one respondent put it, *“Ask PGRs like us what we need rather than assume.”*

Taken together, the findings show that accessibility within the University libraries is shaped as much by visibility and communication as by the presence of resources themselves. Although assistive technologies, toolkits and sensory rooms exist, most PGRs are unaware of them or find that they do not align with their needs. Satisfaction is highest where staff provide direct, responsive support, but structural issues such as rigid booking systems, overcrowded spaces, poor ergonomics and inconsistent promotion continue to undermine accessibility. These gaps are most acutely felt by disabled, neurodivergent and caregiving students, for whom barriers often overlap. The next section on intersectionality explores how these compounded disadvantages reveal the need for joined-up approaches across services.

Section 3: Intersectionality

Where the previous discussion within this section has focused on how belonging to one particular identity may lead to disadvantage with respect to the use of the university libraries,

this subsection aims to do something quite different. Here, the focus will be centred on the cumulative effects of the interaction between multiple identities and the unique experiences these create within the university library system.

In this capacity, *intersectionality* can be understood as the overlapping effects of identities and the ways in which these shape PGR's library experiences. Such an analysis reveals experiences that cannot be explained through the lens of individual identities alone, since they are often the outcome of compounding effects between multiple barriers (Crenshaw, 1998). In light of this, this section identifies particular barriers affecting students who may be underrepresented in the university's feedback systems. Each of the following sections will highlight one particular form of intersectionality, drawing on first-hand feedback, with the conclusion offering potential solutions.

3.1: Disability and International Students

From the survey responses, several students have highlighted that disabled international students face particular barriers. These arise not only from accessibility needs but also from cultural and linguistic unfamiliarity and fragmented institutional support. One student noted that a lack of coordination between the International Students Office and Disability Services led to significant challenges:

'I started my degree journey as an international student who was not told very much about how systems in the UK work, because the International students office can[not] give any

information on disability and disability services couldn't give any information on matters which related to me being an international disabled student'.

This feedback underscores how difficulties can arise not only from the lack of specific resources within the library itself, but also from the fragmented communication between wider university services. When departments operate independently, students with intersecting needs—such as being both disabled and international—are left without coherent or accessible guidance.

3.2: Compounding Responsibilities

A wide range of responsibilities that some students hold outside of their research can have noticeable effects on their experiences with both the library and the university more broadly. One commonly identified responsibility was childcare. Respondents described child-caring responsibilities as a barrier to library access, with one student stating plainly when asked for barriers to library use:

‘parenting responsibilities - need to take care of child during the day [sic]’.

Another provided a detailed account of how this interacts with library policy:

‘I appreciate the need for short periods between a book being available and needing to collect it, because it's not very fair for someone to request a book and then leave it sitting on the shelves for weeks, but the hike up to campus with two children that I described above was necessitated by a book becoming available at the start of half term, when I didn't have

any childcare! As a part-time PGR with caring responsibilities, a slightly longer grace period before I needed to collect the book might have made my experience a little easier!!'.

Here, we see how the intersection of PGR status, part-time study, and caregiving responsibilities compounds to restrict access. Policies designed with greater flexibility in mind could make a significant difference for this group.

3.3: Disability and Socio-Economic Status

Another particularly illuminating intersection can be seen in the experiences of disabled PGRs from less affluent backgrounds. One respondent drew attention to a lack of shared resources within the libraries, particularly highlighting the lack of accessible technology and storage:

'The Leeds Uni libraries don't provide dictation software in their accessible study rooms, they also don't provide lockers in the libraries for disabled students that you could use overnight, so that you don't have to bring your assistive technology laptop to university with you every day. In the context of the social care crisis in England where many disabled students don't have enough support at home unless they can rely on family, I think the provision of study spaces and locker spaces and assistive technology for students with mobility impairments and chronic illnesses and especially for students with post viral fatigue conditions (a group that has likely increased in number since the pandemic) really needs to improve [sic]'.

This demonstrates how library practices create a dual barrier. Students must either transport expensive and essential assistive equipment on a daily basis, or risk theft and damage when leaving it unattended. For less affluent students, this presents a disproportionate burden, as the cost of replacing or repairing equipment is prohibitive to library access. Intersectionality, here, reveals how disability-related needs are inseparable from socio-economics realities.

As identified above, an intersectional analysis reveals that barriers are layered; disability combines with international status, child-caring responsibilities, and socio-economic status to create distinct disadvantages in library access.

Recommendations

Libraries embody the University's academic and cultural identity, and the way they are designed and managed has a direct impact on the researcher experience. To ensure they function as inclusive research environments, accessibility must be understood not as an optional addition but as a core component of the academic life of PGRs.

The following recommendations are tailored to different stakeholders within the University. They are grounded in the findings of this report and highlight where existing provision is falling short. In some cases, forward-looking steps are suggested that go beyond what respondents explicitly raised, in order to address systemic gaps and ensure sustained improvement. Together, these actions point towards a joined-up institutional approach in which the library, Disability Services, the Doctoral College, IT, Academic Department, Student Communications, and the PGR Diversity Team each play a role.

Library Services

Evidence-based recommendations

- Lead the development of PGR-specific and low-stimulation study spaces, reflecting survey feedback that current postgraduate areas are overcrowded and not designed for research needs.
- Improve visibility of accessibility resources such as toolkits, sensory rooms and assistive technologies, given that over 90% of respondents were unaware of them.
- Introduce more flexible policies, such as extending the collection window for requested books, to reduce pressures on students balancing caregiving, commuting or fluctuating health needs.
- Invest in infrastructure that responds to student feedback, including ventilation, lighting and ergonomic seating. Investment should also extend to shared technology resources (e.g. dictation software), secure lockers for assistive devices, and improvements in both physical and digital access, ensuring that provision meets the needs of students with overlapping responsibilities or conditions.

Forward-looking recommendation

- Establish an annual accessibility review shaped by PGR feedback. While not explicitly raised in the survey, this builds on calls for regular review and updating of resources and repeated dissatisfaction with facilities. A systematic review process would ensure transparency and accountability.

Disability Services

Evidence-based recommendations

- Align more closely with the library to ensure consistent provision of assistive technologies, responding to feedback about the absence of dictation software and other tools.
- Provide secure storage such as lockers, reducing barriers for disabled students who rely on expensive or bulky equipment.
- Co-develop clearer and more unified guidance with library Services to address concerns that support is fragmented and expectations are often unmet.

Forward-looking recommendation

- In response to complaints about fragmented communication, Disability Services, library Services, and the International Students Office should collaborate to provide students with seamless, joined-up information.

Doctoral College

Evidence-based recommendations

- Embed accessibility and inclusion into the researcher journey from the outset, responding to reports of poor onboarding and late discovery of available resources.

- Create opportunities for co-creation with PGRs, such as focus groups and workshops, to ensure that underrepresented voices shape policy. Forward-looking recommendation
- Position library accessibility as part of wider wellbeing and researcher development strategies, reflecting the report's broader framing of accessibility as integral to academic success.

IT Services and Digital Learning

Evidence-based recommendations

- Expand access to digital accessibility tools such as dictation software, mind-mapping platforms and screen magnifiers, which respondents specifically requested.
- Adapt booking systems to support students with fluctuating health conditions and caring responsibilities, as reflected in accessibility and intersectionality findings.

Forward-looking recommendation

- Work with library services and Disability Services to align digital and physical accessibility, addressing evidence of fragmented provision and ensuring a coherent experience for students.

Academic Departments

Evidence-based recommendations

- Take responsibility for signposting library accessibility resources, given that many PGRs were unaware of existing provision.
- Equip supervisors and PGR representatives to guide students towards these resources, especially since unmet support needs have influenced project choices.

Forward-looking recommendation

- Promote a culture of inclusion by explicitly recognising accessibility as integral to academic success. This builds on the report's emphasis on inclusion as a core condition for research progress.

Student Communications and Engagement Teams

Evidence-based recommendations

- Improve awareness through targeted campaigns, addressing findings that over 90% of respondents were unaware of toolkits and sensory rooms.
- Co-design messages with PGRs who have lived experience, responding to feedback such as *"Ask PGRs like us what we need rather than assume."*

Forward-looking recommendation

- Sustain visibility by embedding accessibility into ongoing engagement strategies, addressing evidence that one-off inductions and introductions were insufficient.

PGR Diversity Team

Evidence-based recommendations

- Continue to gather and amplify feedback from underrepresented PGRs, building on the approach taken in this report.
- Act as a bridge between PGRs and University stakeholders, responding to findings of fragmented communication across services.
- Partner with services on pilot projects and campaigns, consistent with respondents' calls for direct consultation.

Forward-looking recommendation

- Beyond data collection, foster peer-to-peer dissemination of accessibility knowledge, addressing the finding that many students only discovered resources informally.
- Monitor how recommendations are implemented and provide follow-up reflections in future committee cycles, ensuring accountability and continuity.

Taken together, these recommendations make clear that responsibility for accessibility and inclusion cannot rest with the library alone. Progress will require collaboration across services, schools and central teams, with each stakeholder addressing the specific gaps

identified in this report. Crucially, postgraduate researchers themselves must be treated not only as beneficiaries of support but as partners in shaping it. By embedding accessibility into everyday policy, infrastructure, digital systems and communications, the University can towards a culture where inclusion is integral to research. Sustained investment, transparent accountability, and continuous consultation with PGRs will be essential to ensuring that these changes are both meaningful and lasting.

This report has highlighted both the strengths and the limitations of the current library experience for PGRs. While many PGRs value the libraries as safe and welcoming spaces, their full potential is not realised. Three dynamics stand out: existing support is often invisible or inaccessible; systemic barriers in infrastructure and policy undermine inclusion; and while staff are consistently praised, they are constrained by frameworks that do not address deeper inequities.

The findings show that accessibility and inclusion are not optional but core conditions for research success. For disabled, neurodivergent, international, part-time, and caregiving students in particular, barriers within the library reflect broader inequalities across the University. Addressing them requires a joined-up institutional response and sustained collaboration across services, schools, and central teams.

The University of Leeds has an opportunity to lead by example within the Russell Group by embedding accessibility and inclusion into every aspect of its library provision. This requires sustained investment, transparent communication, and collaborative design with PGRs at the centre. By treating PGRs not simply as users but as co-creators of research culture, the

University can ensure that its libraries are not only repositories of knowledge but also spaces where every researcher can belong, participate, and thrive.

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Appendix

The appendix provides supplementary material that supports the findings and recommendations of this report. It includes the full survey questionnaire used to gather data, detailed quantitative tables, and selected anonymised qualitative responses. These materials are presented to ensure transparency in the research process and to allow readers to examine the evidence that informed the analysis. Additional figures, charts, and coding frameworks from the thematic analysis are also included for reference. Together, these resources provide a fuller picture of the accessibility and inclusion experiences of PGRs at the University of Leeds.

1. Appendix A

The following is the survey distributed to postgraduate researchers (PGRs) at the University of Leeds between May 19 and June 1, 2025.

PGR Library Inclusion and Access Survey - May 2025

Thank you for taking this survey, which involves answering questions on your experience with the University of Leeds libraries as a PGR.

We are seeking information with which we will compose a report on the experiences of PGRs in the UoL libraries. This report will then be disseminated to the library team and others at Leeds, with a potential for research publication and presentation.

Data in this survey is anonymised by design and any identifying information you may provide will be anonymised for confidentiality purposes.

Completing and submitting the survey will be taken as you agreeing to participate, with the understanding that the anonymous data you submit will be used for our research.

As a thank you for participating, we are offering the chance to win 1 of 5 £20 vouchers. If you would like to be entered into the prize draw, please enter your email below.

This survey will close on June 9th 2025.

Demographic Information

1. Which Faculty do you study in? *

- ☐ Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Cultures
- ☐ Faculty of Biological Sciences
- ☐ Faculty of Business (Leeds University Business School)
- ☐ Faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences
- ☐ Faculty of Environment
- ☐ Faculty of Medicine and Health
- ☐ Faculty of Social Sciences

2. What stage of your research degree are you currently in? *

- ☐ Pre-transfer
- ☐ Post-transfer
- ☐ Writing up

3. Are you studying full or part time? *

- ☐ Full time
- ☐ Part time

4. Are you a home or international student? *

- ☐ Home
- ☐ International

5. What is your age? *

- ☐ 18-24
- ☐ 25-34
- ☐ 35-44
- ☐ 45-54
- ☐ 55-64
- ☐ 65+
- ☐ Prefer not to say

6. What is your gender? *

- ☐ Woman
- ☐ Man
- ☐ Non-binary
- ☐ Prefer not to say

7. If you would like to enter the prize draw, please enter your email address:

0/32,000 characters

Library Experience

8. Which of the University of Leeds libraries have you visited? *

- ☐ Brotherton
- ☐ Edward Boyle
- ☐ Health Sciences
- ☐ Laidlaw
- ☐ I have not visited any of the libraries

9. In what conditions do you prefer to work? This could relate to sound levels, space, equipment, etc. *

0/32,000 characters

10. Do you feel the current library spaces adequately meet your **research needs, including your preferred working conditions**, as a PGR student? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Somewhat

11. Please explain your previous answer *

0/32,000 characters

12. Do you feel welcome as a PGR when using University of Leeds libraries? *

- ☐ I feel very welcome as a PGR

- ☐ I feel somewhat welcome as a PGR
- ☐ I feel neither welcome nor unwelcome as a PGR
- ☐ I feel somewhat unwelcome as a PGR
- ☐ I feel very unwelcome as a PGR

13. Please explain your previous answer *

0/32,000 characters

14. Are there barriers that affect your access to or engagement with the library? This could include: cultural, linguistic, or digital barriers, issues of accessibility, parenting responsibilities, etc. *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

15. Please elaborate on these barriers and how they affect your access to/engagement with the library

0/32,000 characters

16. How well do you feel the library caters to the diverse needs of PGRs from different cultural, ethnic, and disciplinary backgrounds? *

- ☐ Very well
- ☐ Somewhat well
- ☐ Ok
- ☐ Not very well
- ☐ Not well at all

17. Please explain your previous answer *

0/32,000 characters

Accessibility

18. Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

Under the Equality Act 2010 (<https://www.gov.uk/definition-of-disability-under-equality-act-2010>), this includes, but is not limited to, people who:

- are deaf or hearing impaired
- are blind or visually impaired
- have a physical disability, and/or mobility difficulties
- have a neurological condition (for example MS, epilepsy, Tourette Syndrome, stammer)
- have a mental health condition
- have a long-term medical condition (for example, chronic fatigue syndrome, asthma, diabetes, cancer, HIV)
- have a combination of these *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to say

19. Do you identify as neurodivergent?

This might include experiences such as autism, ADHD, dyslexia, or other ways of thinking and processing that differ from what is considered typical. This includes formal and self diagnoses *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to say

20. If you answered yes to question 18 or 19, are you aware of access support provided by the library (including through Disability Services)?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

21. Please can you describe the access support that you know of that is provided in/by the library?

0/32,000 characters

22. On a scale of 1-10 (1 being not at all, and 10 being excellent), how well do you believe the library services cater to your accessibility needs? *

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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23. Please explain the rating you gave in question 22 *

0/32,000 characters

24. Are you aware of the accessibility box/toolkit that can be loaned from the library receptions? *

- ☐ Yes and I have used it
- ☐ Yes and I have not used it
- ☐ No

25. If you answered 'yes' to the previous question, please comment on your experience using the accessibility box/toolkit or why you have not used it.

0/32,000 characters

26. Are you aware of the sensory room available? *

- ☐ Yes and I have used it
- ☐ Yes and I have not used it
- ☐ No but I would use it
- ☐ No but I would not use it

27. What do you believe the library could do to better cater for accessibility and sensory needs (for example, learning materials, space organisation, availability of quiet/resting spaces, tech support etc)? *

0/32,000 characters

Suggestions

28. Thinking about the equipment, physical resources, and services currently offered to PGRs, what do you feel is missing or needed?

0/32,000 characters

29. How can the library be made more welcoming to you and your cultural and/or disciplinary identity (this could include the types of environments needed, or how you'd like to utilise the space)?

0/32,000 characters

30. If you could suggest one initiative to make the library more inclusive or supportive for PGRs, what would it be?

0/32,000 characters

31. Please use the space below to give any further comments which you feel would be helpful

0/32,000 characters