

Ireland's Memory. Ireland's Discovery.

CONUL Strategy
2016 – 2019



conul
consortium of national & university libraries



What is CONUL?

The Consortium of National and University Libraries (CONUL) is the representative body of research libraries in Ireland and Northern Ireland.

Its members are Dublin City University, Dublin Institute of Technology, Maynooth University, National Library of Ireland, National University of Ireland, Galway, Queen's University Belfast, Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, Royal Irish Academy, Trinity College Dublin, University College Cork, University College Dublin, University of Limerick and Ulster University.

Why is CONUL Distinctive?

CONUL is the only research libraries consortium that encompasses the island of Ireland, has independent governance and is open to all research institutions with significant print and digital collections.

What can CONUL do?

CONUL is in a unique position to deliver collaboration, innovation and best practice across all of Ireland's research libraries.

Who are our users?

There are over 240,000 individual members of CONUL libraries, including students, researchers, members of the public and visitors.

What is CONUL's vision?

Irish research library collections hold Ireland's memory and enable Ireland's discovery. CONUL is at the heart of Ireland's global advance as a place of new research, of digital depth and cultural breadth.

Our Strategy 2016 – 2019 is:

The **voice** of Ireland's research libraries

The **inspiration** for our work in research, education, and public engagement

The **framework** for improving services and enriching collections

The **home** of staff development and shared practice

The **platform** for our international presence

CONUL Fact

550 Miles of Shelves – equivalent to travelling full circle from Dublin-Cork-Limerick-Galway-Coleraine-Belfast-Dublin

The **voice** of Ireland's research libraries

CONUL will advocate the essential purpose of Ireland's research libraries and their collections in national life and will lobby for funding, representation and transformation.

CONUL is in the privileged position to work across the island of Ireland for the benefit of its library users and to promote a shared agenda for Irish research libraries.

CONUL will use its cumulative expertise to be the first point of contact for research library issues on the island of Ireland.

CONUL will be open and available to the national and international media concerning the complex field of libraries and archives, and their enabling role in research practices and on the promotion and interpretation of Irish culture and science.

CONUL Fact

25,000 seats in our libraries –
equivalent to 133 Boeing 737's

Actions:

- Deliver a new web presence for CONUL that reflects its expertise and professional standing
- Ensure that a Press Office function is supported by a shared structure across the libraries
- Retain representation for research libraries on relevant government committees and boards across the island of Ireland
- Produce regular position papers on major changes or developments in appropriate research fields and national policy

CONUL Fact

240,000 members of our libraries

The **inspiration** for our work in research, education, and public engagement

CONUL represents all the principal research libraries in Ireland and will aim to be a key part of the research lifecycle from new discoveries to the permanent record.

CONUL will support students and staff and will ensure that its libraries are central to Learning & Teaching.

CONUL will seek to engage the Irish public and the many visitors to Ireland through its activities and collections.

CONUL will adopt formal collaborative positions on key issues such as cultural heritage management and Open Access to research.

CONUL Fact

Over 20 million books – Laid end-to-end would reach from Dublin to Amsterdam

Actions:

- Share best practice in the support of Learning & Teaching through national events and collaborative resources
- Ensure that access policies are focused on user requirements and are adopted in all CONUL member libraries where possible
- Form new partnerships with other cultural heritage sector institutions, particularly those with significant archival and special collections resources
- Seek representation on bodies relevant to the interpretation and especially digitisation of Ireland's cultural record

CONUL Fact

3.5 million items in our digital collections



The **framework** for improving services and collections

CONUL will assess and review key aspects of library provision in Ireland and will seek to share capital and intellectual resources.

Ireland's research infrastructure is both digital and physical. CONUL will aim to join-up and share services that underpin the national research effort.

CONUL will be a customer and reader focused organisation determined and creative in its design and delivery of outward-facing services.

CONUL will support its libraries in collective thinking and collaborative project management.

CONUL Fact

Over 3 million loans per year – Ten times the annual football ticket sales

Actions:

- Deliver a major project to assess the options for a shared storage facility in Ireland
- Begin a technology assessment of the current market in Library Management Systems to provide evidence for a shared national system
- Establish in the near-term an Irish Union Catalogue to provide holdings information on the national collections
- Develop an expert group to support member libraries in projects through events and materials

CONUL Fact

Over 30,000 Inter-library Loans in Irish libraries

The **home** of staff development and shared practice

CONUL's greatest strength lies in its staff, providing comprehensive expertise in all aspects of contemporary librarianship, archives management and digital enterprise

CONUL will enable all staff in all its libraries to work across appropriate projects and to be fully involved in strategic and operational development.

CONUL will work to increase collaboration between Irish libraries and other parts of the cultural heritage and commercial sectors.

CONUL will promote libraries as creative workplaces and will exploit the power of the consortium to benefit our individual members of staff.

CONUL Fact

Over 3500 named research materials in our archives, manuscripts and special collections

Actions:

- Review the structure and membership of all existing CONUL special interest groups and committees in line with the Strategy 2016 – 2019
- Staff training and development programmes will celebrate the authentic delivery of world-class services by our combined staff in support of all our researchers
- Establish a new communication process between the CONUL Board and its groups and committees
- Support events, training and staff exchanges within and beyond the consortium

CONUL Fact

Over 20 million searches on our catalogues every year

The **platform** for our international presence

CONUL values its links with consortia and organisations across the world and will seek to develop these to mutual benefit for staff and users.

CONUL will establish a core group of such relationships, particularly across Europe, Australasia and North America.

CONUL will aim to ensure Irish representation at significant events and conferences relating to research libraries.

CONUL recognises that Ireland projects itself internationally in many ways and will actively support these where appropriate.

CONUL Fact

More than a quarter of a million items in
our institutional repositories

Actions:

- Establish a fund from within CONUL to support representation of CONUL at significant international gatherings
- Ensure that the new website is outward-facing and inclusive of all partners and co-consortia on the international stage
- Produce a map of core relationships and professional bodies that are essential to the global support of research
- Facilitate an agreed programme of exchange visits for Irish librarians and international colleagues

The CONUL Board

Dublin City University	Christopher Pressler
Dublin Institute of Technology	Philip Cohen
Maynooth University	Cathal McCauley
National Library of Ireland	Sandra Collins
National University of Ireland, Galway	John Cox
Queen's University Belfast	Elizabeth Traynor
Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland	Kate Kelly
Royal Irish Academy	Siobhan Fitzpatrick
Trinity College Dublin	Helen Shenton
University College Cork	Colette McKenna
University College Dublin	John Howard
University of Limerick	Gobnait O'Riordan
Ulster University	Janet Peden

CONUL Strategy Group

Strategy Editor: Christopher Pressler, University Librarian and Director of Historic Collections Research Centre, Dublin City University

Strategy Facilitator: Helen Shenton, Librarian and College Archivist, Trinity College Dublin

Eoin McCarney, Head of Collection Services, University College Dublin
Ciara McCaffrey, Deputy Librarian, University of Limerick
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Janet Peden, University Librarian, University of Ulster
Sandra Collins, Director, National Library of Ireland
Carmel O'Sullivan, Associate Librarian (Planning, Admin. and Collections), University College Dublin
Miriam Corcoran, Sub-Librarian, Head of Collections and Systems Services, Dublin City University

Images courtesy of: Dublin City University, Queen's University Belfast, Maynooth University, University College Cork, University College Dublin, University of Limerick, Royal Irish Academy, Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, National University of Ireland, Galway



For more information:
conul.ie