# LIBRARY INFORMATION SKILLS RESOURCE

## SUMMARY

The Library’s Information Skills Resource is available through MOLE for use by all University of Sheffield staff and students. It covers information literacy skills, namely: "knowing when and why you need information, where to find it, and how to evaluate, use and communicate it in an ethical manner." (CILIP, 2004)

## WHO IS THE RESOURCE FOR?

All staff and students have access to the Library MOLE course. Library staff initially designed the ISR for undergraduate students but further material has been developed of interest to all levels, including postgraduate research. The resource can be used by the student for self-study, revision, as discrete learning modules or part of a blended learning experience to support specific assessment activities.

## WHAT DOES THE RESOURCE DO?

The resource supports students becoming information literate. Material is categorised as generic and therefore of potential interest to all students, or subject specific, of interest to students in particular departments.

The resource has the following sections:

- **Generic tutorials** - forming a search strategy; finding information including individual tutorials on using the library catalogue, databases, electronic journals, the Internet; using other libraries; evaluating information; avoiding plagiarism

- **Subject specific tutorials** - referencing according to individual departmental guidelines; guides to specific subject databases; finding specialist materials for specific subjects e.g. law, planning, politics

- **Library Resource For ...** available for every department, which library holds your essential reading

- **Quick Starts** available for every department; which are the key information resources for your subject

- **Self-help Quizzes** to test the students’ understanding.

A detailed mindmap of the resource is available from:

http://www.lbasg.group.shef.ac.uk/mindmap/Information_Skills_Resource_mindmap.html

This resource is currently available through MOLE only. Elements may be made more easily accessible in due course so that TASH can make most effective use of this important and extensive resource.
HOW IS THE RESOURCE STRUCTURED TO SUPPORT STUDENTS?

Students need to appreciate the relevance of the tutorials to their own learning so subject hooks are provided within the generic materials wherever feasible. Users can work sequentially through the various information skills tutorials or as an alternative way in to the resource they can take the quizzes both to test their level of understanding and so that they can be directed to appropriate tutorials for them. Each tutorial ends with a summary page of the intended learning outcomes and the facility to revisit sections of the tutorial as required. Rather than work through the tutorials sequentially, some students prefer to use the revision page as a starting point and then jump to the sections that interest them the most.

The Information Skills Resource has been designed as separate tutorials, which can be taken individually or combined to form a course or part of a course. They can be treated as reusable learning objects, tailored to individual course requirements and embedded in appropriate MOLE courses to support particular exercises or assessments. The Library is keen to work with departments on developing appropriate learning outcomes and assessment of information literacy in all courses at all levels to ensure that Sheffield Graduates are information literate.

WHY DO STUDENTS ENGAGE WITH THE RESOURCE?

Students engage with the resource because it has clear instructions on how to carry out essential academic tasks. It is interactive, provides specific subject examples and can be used in multiple ways to support different learning styles. Students learn ‘by doing’, either by working through ‘guides on the side’ or by taking the self help quizzes and exercises included in every individual tutorial. Individual tutorials can be studied at the student’s own pace and used for revision as and when needed. They can build up their confidence and have a clearer understanding about what is expected of them at university.

Tutors can promote the use of the materials to reinforce departmental guidance on research skills, academic writing, referencing and the dangers of plagiarism at the appropriate part of the course. These skills are often only considered at induction, which can be too early, before students need to apply them and when they are already suffering from information overload. The tutorials can be used to support the explicit teaching and assessment of information literacy and also used for revision and reinforcement in subsequent years by either groups or individual students with particular needs.

Student comments include:

‘Fantastic resource!’

‘Everything’s good enough as it is now!’

‘Good starting point for research’

Feedback comments have always all been positive and reflect improvement in student learning. Results from the online evaluation questionnaire show that 78% thought the interactive exercises were useful; with another 81% considering the feedback helpful. 50% of the students thought that their skills had improved a great deal after taking the tutorials, whilst another 45% considered that they had improved a little.

LINKS AND CONTACT DETAILS
Further details are available from: http://www.shef.ac.uk/library/services/infoskills.html

If you would like to incorporate any of the Information Skills Tutorials into your own MOLE course, please contact Lyn Parker, Academic Services Development Team, University Library, l.a.parker@sheffield.ac.uk.