



Best practice guidelines for online reading lists

“when reading lists are poorly designed and their relevance to modules is misunderstood by students then a fantastic opportunity for effective and efficient teaching and learning is missed, and the considerable expenses of academic staff time, library staff time, and the resources budget spent on reading lists are wasted” (Croft, 2018: 5)

The Library has developed a [Reading Lists for Bradford](#) exemplar list using the Talis Aspire reading list system.

This is a one-stop shop to support development of reading lists at Bradford. It includes best practice guidelines and is based on research of the Higher Education sector reading list practice, which looks at pedagogically sound practice and how students actually use reading lists. It also provides information on the current Higher Education debates around reading lists and decolonising the curriculum, including ideas on developing more diverse reading lists, and a list of alternative publishers.

What students want from their reading lists

- They need to be well structured and easy to navigate. Consider dividing the list into sections that mirror the module structure, e.g. by topics, weeks or lectures. An A-Z list of 20+ books in author order with no annotation is not helpful.
- They must provide guidance on what students need to read. Annotation which clearly explains how to engage with a particular resource is helpful, e.g. *“Chapter 4 provides a good introduction to academic writing.”*

Improve access for your students

- Use the ‘**set importance**’ option to clarify which items are **core**, **recommended**, **further reading** or **student purchase**. Where possible, your core reading should be available electronically. Also consider identifying alternative resources to help maximise access to resources, rather than all students trying to get hold of one or two core titles that are only available in print. Consider whether there is a key chapter in a book that could be digitised to make it available to all students.

- Ensure reading lists are ready 8 weeks in advance of a module starting, to allow the Library to obtain alternative formats, where necessary, for students with specific accessibility or educational requirements.
- Include a mixture of resources on the list, e.g. audio-visual content, journal articles and digitised readings to support different learning styles and preferences.
- Consider whether your list includes an appropriate and diverse range of different perspectives and authors. For example, authors of different genders, and authors representing different nationalities and ethnicities, publishers from different countries, representation of different international and socio-economic contexts.

Encourage independent reading and research

- Include a link to relevant library subject support pages (<https://www.brad.ac.uk/library/subject-support/>) which highlight databases and other sources of information that may be particularly relevant.

Keep lists up-to-date with all items stocked by the Library

- Revise and update your list at least once a year. Lists are rolled over annually.
- Click on 'Request review' when your list is complete, so the library can check items for currency and quantity.

Guidelines adapted from reading lists best practice guidance from *Sheffield Hallam University Library*.

References

Caroll, J. (2002) *Suggestions for teaching international students more effectively*. Oxford Centre for Staff and Learning Development Learning and Teaching. http://cs3.brookes.ac.uk/services/ocsd/2_learntch/briefing_papers/international_students.pdf. Accessed 4 April 2019.

Croft, D. (2018) *What is a reading list for? A guide for module leaders on aligning reading with learning outcome*. Oxford Brookes University. <https://radar.brookes.ac.uk/radar/file/fe7ecca9-3a7f-4aa3-b70c-368d66d8a174/1/Reading%20list%20guide.pdf>. Accessed 4 April 2019.