

## Executive Summary

- To assess library service quality since the last one conducted in 2019, the CUHK Library conducted the 5th LibQUAL+ survey from March 20 – 24 April 2023.
- The Library received 3,979 responses and 1,123 written comments. 68% of respondents indicated that University Library is the library they use most often.
- Core questions of the survey covered three service dimensions of service quality: Affect of Service (*helpfulness and competency of library staff*); Information Control (*access to and provision of print and electronic resources*); and Library as Place (*physical environment*). For each question, respondents were asked to indicate their minimum acceptable service level, their desired service level, and their perceived service level provided by the Library on a scale from 1 (low) to 9 (high). Two gap scores were calculated: Service Adequacy (*Perceived Score – Minimum Score*) and Service Superiority (*Perceived Score – Desired Score*). The gap scores are scaled such that higher scores are more favourable.
- **Overall Performance:** The results in 2023 showed that the ratings across all service dimensions have improved from the 2019 survey. Overall, postgraduate students had the highest expectations for service level in all three. There was marked increase in users' minimum service standard across all service dimensions compared to 2019 and 2014 surveys while desired service level stayed consistent across the board.
- **Affect of Service:** This dimension outperformed users' minimum level of service the best among all three dimensions (highest adequacy gap).
- **Information Control:** Overall, this dimension exceeded users' minimum level the least (lowest adequacy gap) but users also had a high expectation (high desired level) for this service dimension. Among the three dimensions, postgraduate students and academic staff rated highest desired level of service in Information Control.
- **Library as Place:** This dimension was rated the highest perceived and desired service level. This means that in general users had highest expectations of library space among the three service dimensions but also rated current standard highly. Among the three dimensions, undergraduate students rated the highest desired level in Library as Place.
- **Use of library:** Undergraduates are the most frequently users of the physical library. 69% of undergraduate students visited on a daily or weekly basis, while it is 64% for postgraduate students. For digital library, postgraduate students (77%) and academic staff (68%) used the library's e-resources on a daily or weekly basis. Comparing 2019 and 2023, frequency of physical and digital library remained similar for daily users in all user groups. There was a slight drop in weekly use of physical and digital library among user groups.

## 1. The Survey

This was the fifth time the CUHK Library participated in the LibQUAL+ survey. LibQUAL+ was developed and administered by the Association of Research Libraries in the United States to gauge users' perceptions, preferences, and expectations of library services.

The survey consisted of 22 core questions to measure the quality of library services in three dimensions:

- **Affect of Service (AS)** - helpfulness and competency of library staff
- **Information Control (IC)** - access to and provision of print and electronic resources
- **Library as Place (LP)** - physical environment

In addition to the eight questions, the survey contained questions on general satisfaction with the library, information literacy outcomes, library use, and an open-ended comment box where users could submit their feedback on library service.

## 2. Responses

A total of 3,979 surveys were completed. Figure 1 below shows the response rate by user group.

**Figure 1. Respondents by User Group**

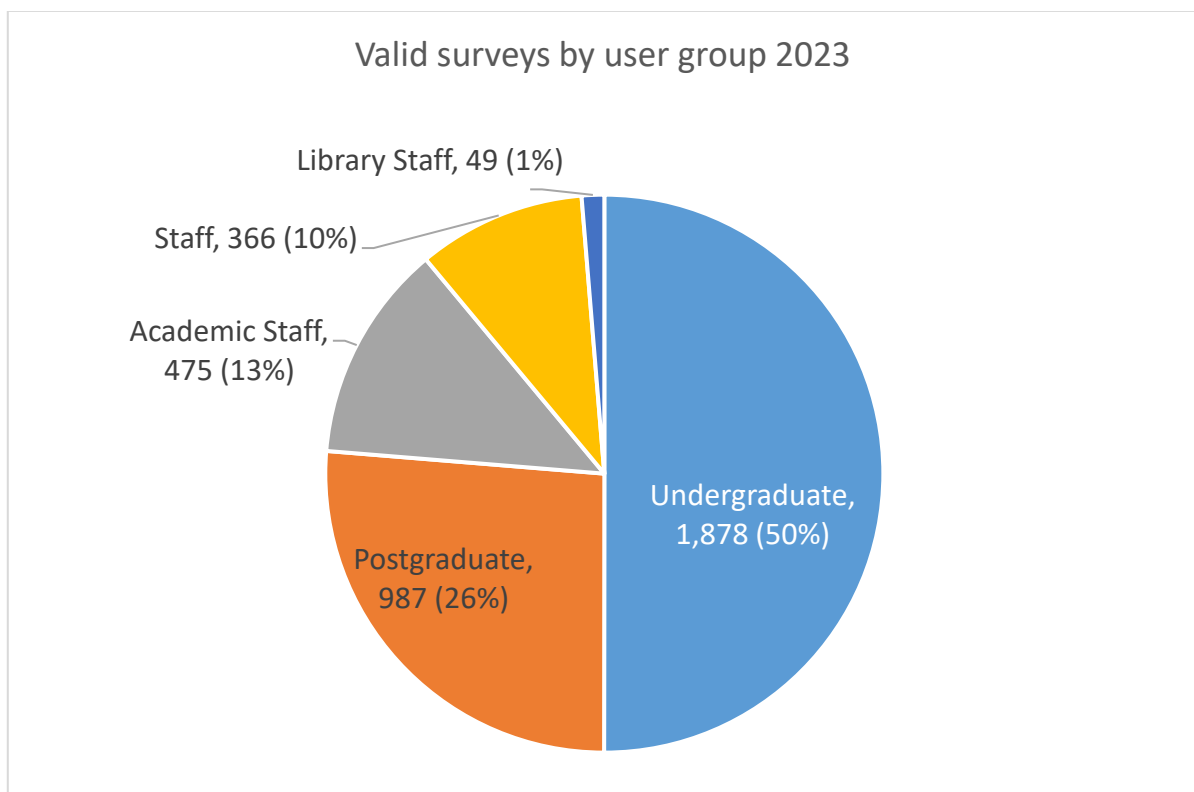
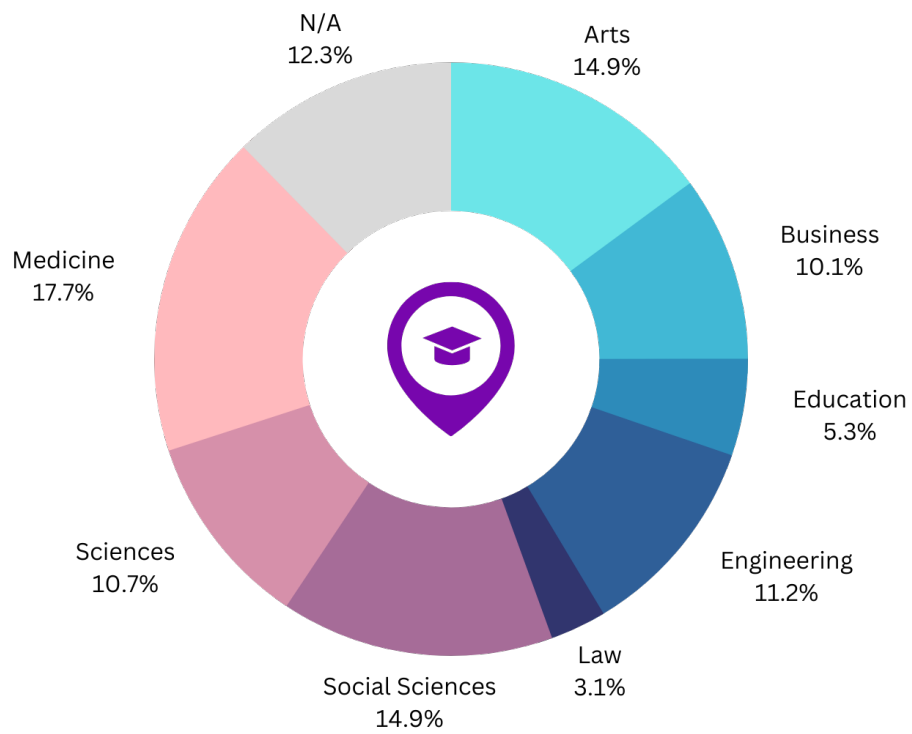


Figure 2 shows a breakdown of students and academic staff by discipline, based on the LibQUAL+ standard discipline categories.

**Figure 2. Respondents by Discipline**



### 3. Core Survey Questions Summary

#### 3.1 Scoring

There were eight questions in the survey. Users were asked for their judgments on 3 scales for each survey question:

The **desired** level of service they would like to receive;

The **minimum** they are willing to accept, and;

The actual level of service they **perceive** to have been provided.

The scoring was on a scale from 1 (low) to 9 (high). Library staff ratings are not counted in the aggregated mean scores since the focus is on the Library users only. Two gap scores were calculated:

**Service Adequacy = Perceived Score – Minimum Score**

**Service Superiority = Perceived Score – Desired Score**

**Service Adequacy** is an indicator of the extent to which the Library is meeting the minimum expectations of our users. A positive service adequacy score indicates that users' perceived level of service quality is above their minimum acceptable level and a negative score implies a need for improvement.

**Service Superiority** is an indicator of the extent to which the Library is exceeding the desired expectations of our users. A negative value of service superiority means that users' perceived level of service is below their desired level of service. The superiority gap is usually negative since it measures the difference between perceived and ideal library service. However, a negative score is a cause for concern.

In general, the higher the adequacy and service superiority scores, the better the Library's performance. The adequacy scores are usually cited by libraries participating in the LibQUAL+ survey.

### 3.2 Results

The following table (Table 1) displays mean or average scores for each core question.

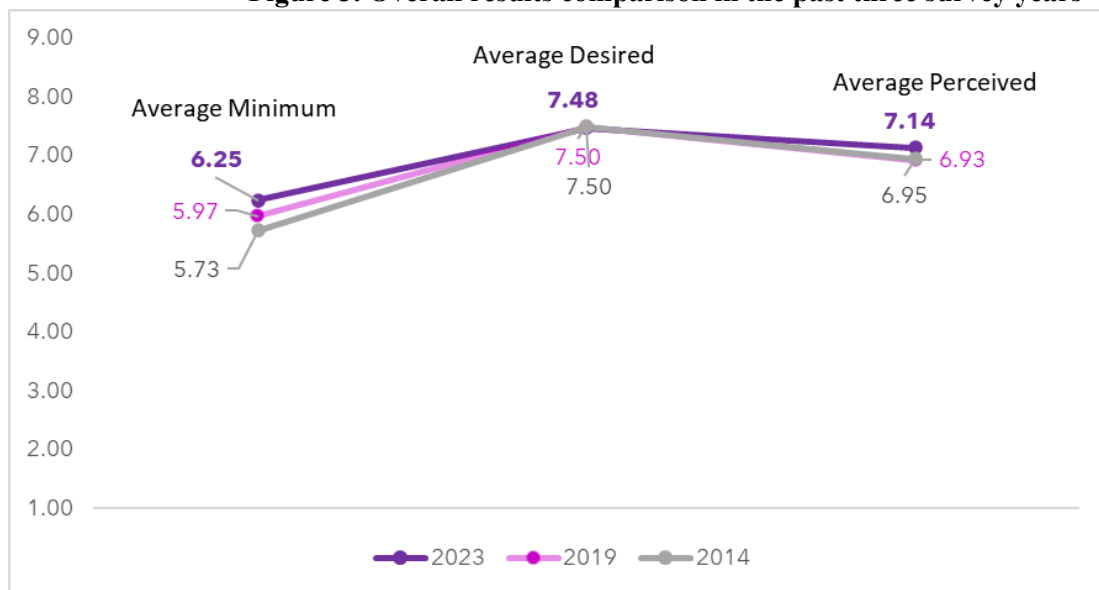
**Table 1. Core Questions Summary**

ID	Question Text	Minimum (M) Mean	Desired (D) Mean	Perceived (P) Mean	Adequacy (P-M) Mean	Superiority (P-D) Mean
<b>Affect of Service</b>						
AS-1	Library staff who instill confidence in users	5.72	7.18	6.92	1.20	-0.26
AS-2	Giving users individual attention	5.33	6.48	6.30	0.97	-0.18
AS-3	Library staff who are consistently courteous	6.19	7.37	7.24	1.04	-0.13
AS-4	Readiness to respond to users' enquiries	6.31	7.43	7.21	0.90	-0.22
AS-5	Library staff who have the knowledge to answer user questions	6.17	7.34	7.15	0.98	-0.19
AS-6	Library staff who deal with users in a caring fashion	5.95	7.16	6.99	1.04	-0.17
AS-7	Library staff who understand the needs of their users	6.02	7.21	6.99	0.97	-0.22
AS-8	Willingness to help users	6.24	7.43	7.26	1.02	-0.17
AS-9	Dependability in handling users' service problems	6.25	7.43	7.17	0.92	-0.26
<b>Overall for Affect of Service</b>		<b>6.00</b>	<b>7.21</b>	<b>7.01</b>	<b>1.01</b>	<b>-0.35</b>
<b>Information Control</b>						
IC-1	Making electronic resources accessible from my home or office	6.32	7.73	7.04	0.72	-0.68
IC-2	A library Web site enabling me to locate information on my own	6.43	7.66	7.17	0.74	-0.49
IC-3	The printed library materials I need for my work	6.16	7.36	7.04	0.89	-0.32
IC-4	The electronic information resources I need	6.45	7.69	7.13	0.68	-0.56
IC-5	Modern equipment that lets me easily access needed information	6.35	7.58	7.21	0.85	-0.37
IC-6	Easy-to-use access tools that allow me to find things on my own	6.42	7.63	7.20	0.79	-0.43
IC-7	Making information easily accessible for independent use	6.46	7.67	7.27	0.81	-0.40
IC-8	Print and/or electronic journal collections I require for my work	6.42	7.63	7.16	0.73	-0.48
<b>Overall Information Control</b>		<b>6.38</b>	<b>7.62</b>	<b>7.15</b>	<b>0.77</b>	<b>-0.47</b>
<b>Library as Place</b>						
LP-1	Library space that inspires study and learning	6.28	7.61	7.25	0.97	-0.36
LP-2	Quiet space for individual work	6.69	7.86	7.29	0.61	-0.56
LP-3	A comfortable and inviting location	6.48	7.71	7.41	0.92	-0.30
LP-4	A haven for study, learning, or research	6.53	7.80	7.46	0.93	-0.34
LP-5	Space for group learning and group study	6.29	7.58	7.14	0.85	-0.44
<b>Overall Library as Place</b>		<b>6.46</b>	<b>7.71</b>	<b>7.31</b>	<b>0.85</b>	<b>-0.40</b>
<b>Overall</b>		<b>6.25</b>	<b>7.49</b>	<b>7.14</b>	<b>0.88</b>	<b>-0.35</b>

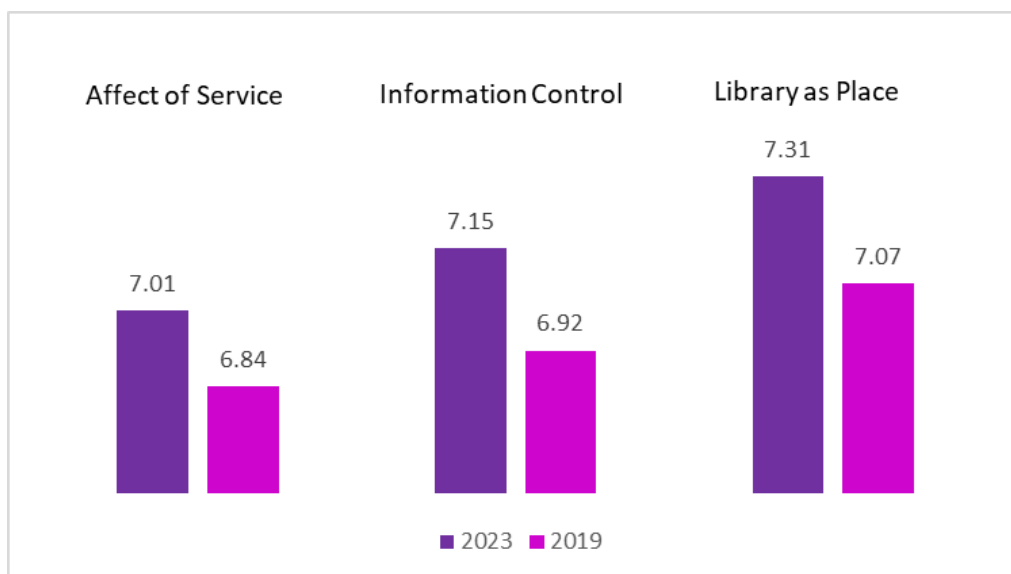
Overall, respondents indicated that the performance of CUHK Library was above their minimum expectations and that the Library’s greatest strength was in the area of Affect of Service (Library staff who instill confidence in users), which received the highest adequacy mean (1.20). Among the three service dimensions, the largest gap between the minimum expectations and perceived level of service appeared in Information Control (0.77). Another area needs to be attended to is “Quiet space for individual work” under Library as Place, which received the lowest adequacy mean (0.61) among the 22 questions. This rating was also in line with many comments received.

Figure 3. shows the comparison between minimum (mean), desired (mean) and perceived (mean) scores in the past three survey years: 2014, 2019, and 2023. Overall, users’ minimum acceptable level of service increased steadily with a 9% increase from 2014 to 2023. Whereas desired level remained at a similar level, the perceived level of service increased around 3% from 2019.

**Figure 3. Overall results comparison in the past three survey years**



**Figure 4. Perceived scores for three dimensions of service in 2019 and 2023**



All three service dimensions have recorded improvement from 2019 survey (Figure 4). Library as Place received the highest perceived score, followed by Information Control and Affect of Service for both 2019 and 2023. Users ranked Library as Place - A haven for study, learning, or research received the highest perceived score in the 2023 survey (7.46). This was in line with the written comments received.

### Expectations/Needs of CUHK Library Users

The following table (Table 2) displays the most desired service dimension by user group. The results indicated that postgraduate students and academic staff had the highest desired level or expectations in Information Control, whereas undergraduate students rated Library as Place as more important for their study and learning.

**Table 2. Most Desired Service Dimensions – Summary by User Group**

Dimension	Undergraduate n=1,878	Postgraduate n=987	Academic Staff n=475	Staff n=366	Overall N=3,706
Affect of Service	7.04	7.43	7.41	7.21	7.21
Information Control	7.48	7.84	7.81	7.52	7.62
Library as Place	7.71	7.81	7.68	7.53	7.71

Below are the top five areas where overall Library performance was most/least satisfactory based on adequacy scores.

Top five most satisfactory areas (by *highest Perceived Mean*):

- A haven for study, learning, or research (LP-4) (7.46)
- A comfortable and inviting location (LP-3) (7.41)
- Quiet space for individual work (LP-2) (7.29)
- Making information easily accessible for independent use (IC-7) (7.27)
- Willingness to help users (AS-8) (7.26)

Top five least satisfactory areas requiring improvement (by *lowest Adequacy Gap & lowest Superiority Gap*):

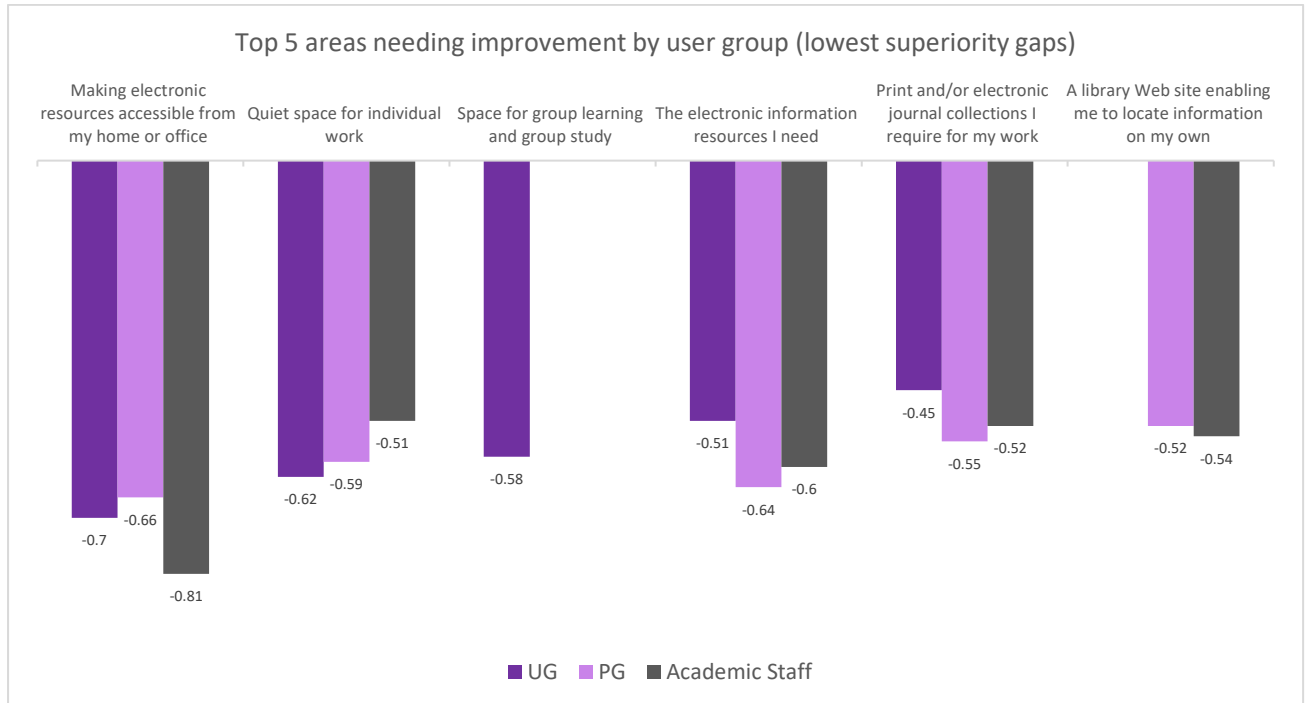
- Quiet space for individual work (LP-2) (0.61, -0.56)
- The electronic information resources I need (IC-4) (0.68, -0.56)
- Making electronic resources accessible from my home or office (IC-1)(0.72, -0.68)
- Print and/or electronic journal collections I require for my work (IC-8) (0.73, -0.48)
- A library Web site enabling me to locate information on my own (IC-2) (0.74, -0.49)

Top five most important services (by *highest Desired Mean*):

- Quiet space for individual work (LP-2) (7.86)
- A haven for study, learning, or research (LP-4) (7.80)
- Making electronic resources accessible from my home or office (IC-1) (7.73)
- A comfortable and inviting location (LP-3) (7.71)

- The electronic information resources I need (IC-4) (7.69)

**Figure 5. Top five areas needing the most improvement by user group (by lowest superiority gap):**



#### 4. General Satisfaction Questions Summary

The following table (Table 3) shows the three general satisfaction questions that were asked and their respective mean scores: Satisfaction with Treatment, Satisfaction with Support, and Satisfaction with Overall Quality of Service. Each question was given a rating on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 9 (strongly agree). Postgraduate students are the most satisfied user group for all questions, followed by academic staff, and undergraduate students.

**Table 3. Users' Satisfaction Questions**

Satisfaction Questions	Undergraduate n=1,878	Postgraduate n=987	Academic Staff n=475	Staff n=366	Overall n=3,706
In general, I am satisfied with the way in which I am <b>treated</b> at the library.	7.32	7.64	7.44	7.24	7.42
In general, I am satisfied with <b>library support</b> for my learning, research, and/or teaching needs.	7.29	7.58	7.41	7.19	7.37



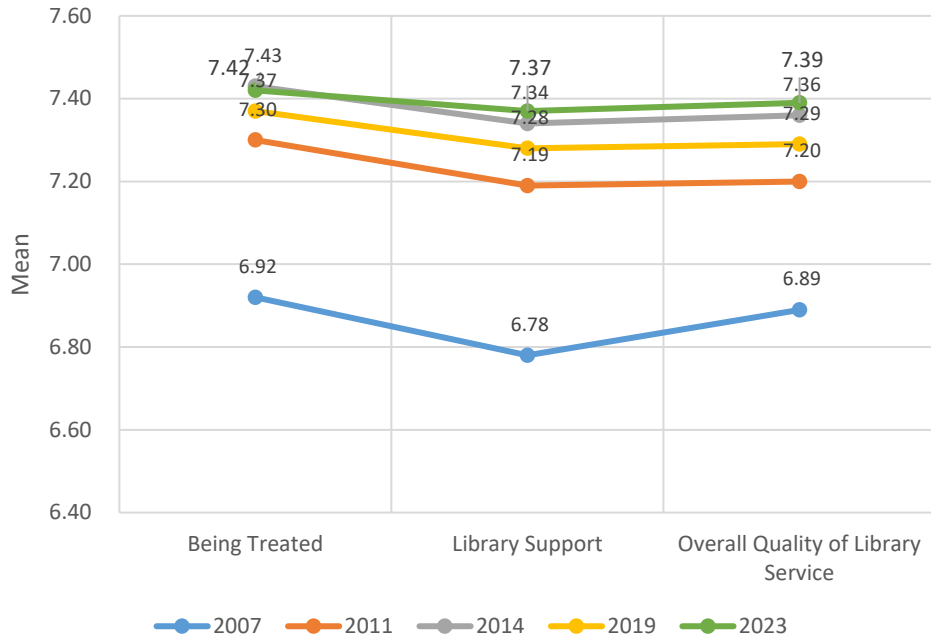
How would you rate the  
**overall quality of the  
 service provided by the  
 library?**

7.28                      7.60                      7.44                      7.30                      7.39

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The chart below (Figure 5) compared the Satisfaction Question Results for 2007, 2011, 2014 and 2019 and 2023. Overall, 2023 satisfactory ratings are the highest compared to previous years.

**Figure 5. Satisfaction Question Results 2007, 2011, 2014, 2019 & 2023**



## 5. Information Literacy Outcomes Questions Summary

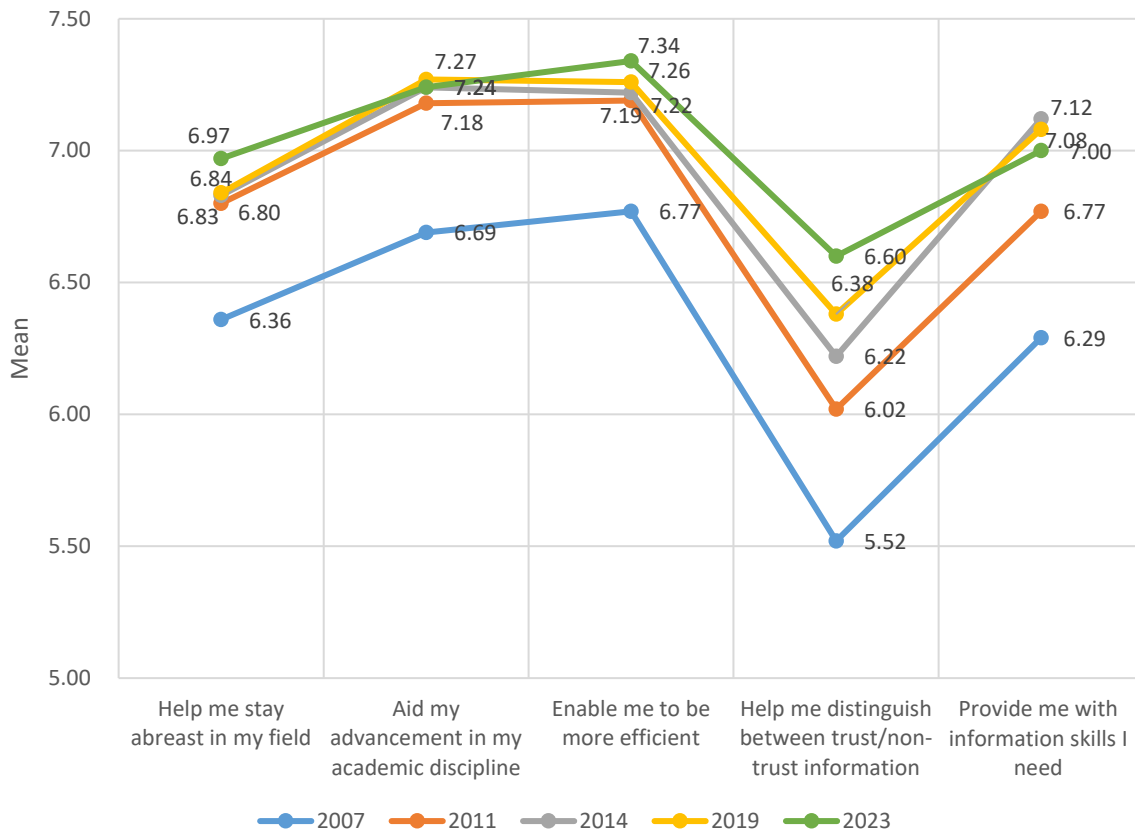
There are five questions on information literacy of which the respondents were asked to rate their levels of general satisfaction on a scale from 1-9 (strongly disagree – strong agree). All user groups ranked “The library enables me to be more efficient in my academic pursuits or work” the highest.

**Table 4. Information Literacy Outcomes Questions**

<b>Information Literacy Outcomes Questions</b>	<b>Undergraduate</b> n=1,878	<b>Postgraduate</b> n=987	<b>Academic Staff</b> n=475	<b>Staff</b> n=366	<b>Overall</b> n=3,706
The library helps me stay abreast of developments in my field(s) of interest.	6.85	7.21	7.05	6.90	6.97
The library aids my advancement in my academic discipline or work.	7.16	7.48	7.28	6.92	7.24
The library enables me to be more efficient in my academic pursuits or work.	7.29	7.55	7.34	7.02	7.34
The library helps me distinguish between trustworthy and untrustworthy information.	6.51	6.81	6.50	6.58	6.60
The library provides me with the information skills I need in my work or study.	6.88	7.24	6.97	6.94	7.00

The chart below (Figure 6) shows the ratings of Information Literacy Outcomes for 2007, 2011, 2014, 2019 and 2023. Scores for Information Literacy Outcomes remained high, with the highest recorded score received for “The library enables me to be more efficient in my academic pursuits or work.”

**Figure 7. Information Literacy Outcomes 2007, 2011, 2014, 2019 & 2023**



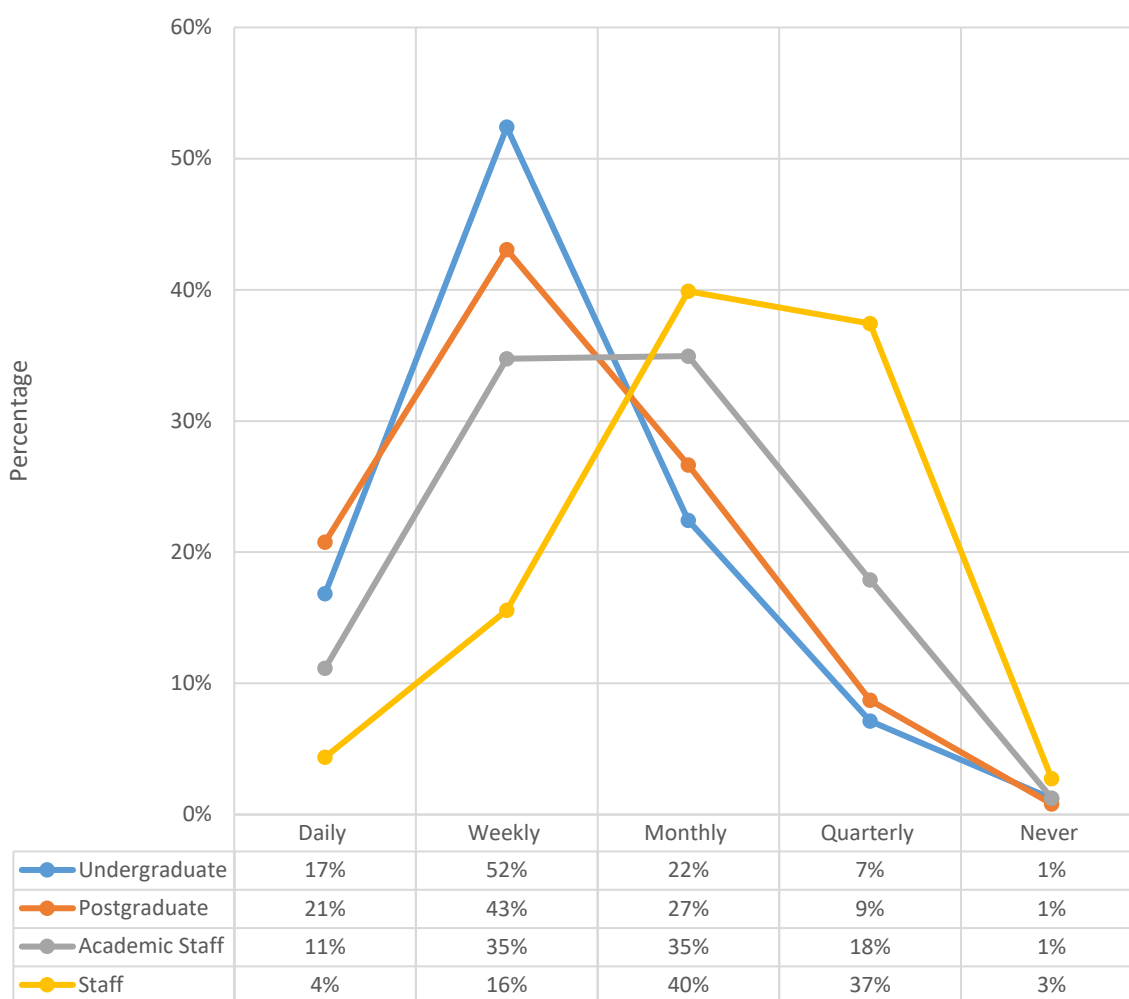
## 6. Library Use Summary

Two questions on library use (both on the premises and electronically) and one on non-library information gateways such as Yahoo and Google were asked in this section. The two questions on library use being:

- How often do you use resources within the library?
- How often do you access library resources through a library web page?

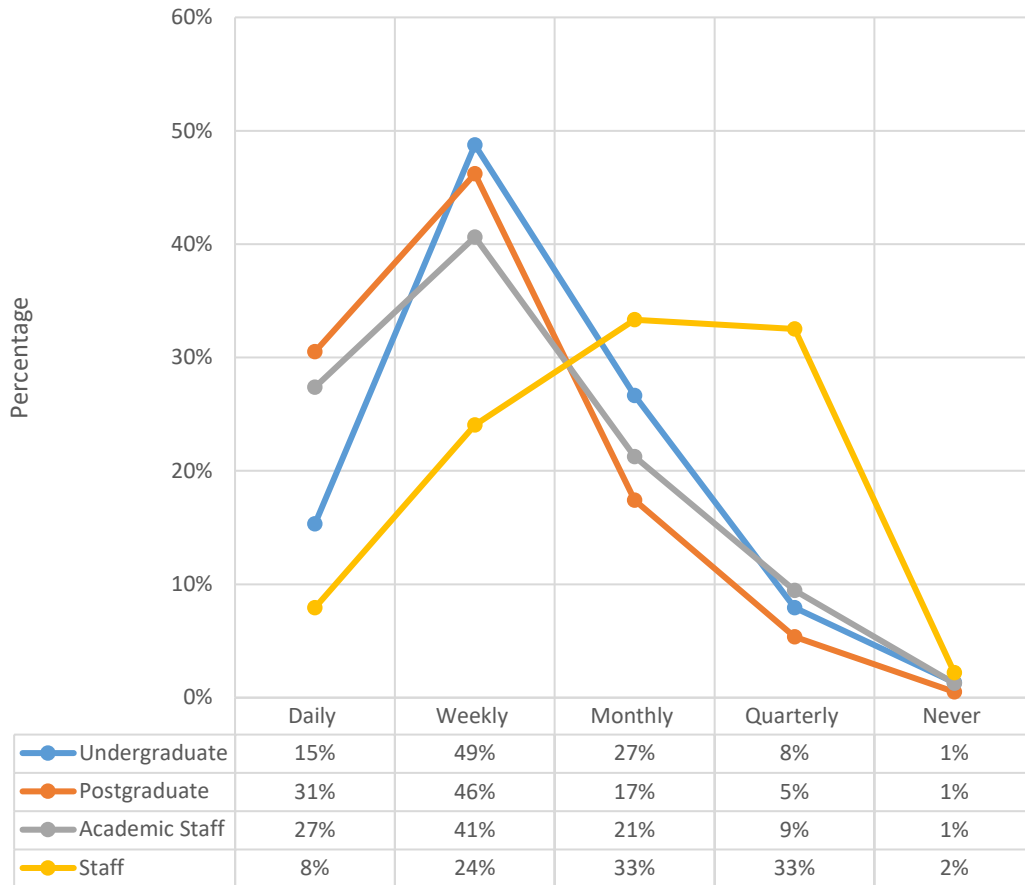
The chart (Figure 8) indicates that over 69% of undergraduate students; 64% postgraduate students and 46% academic staff visit the physical library on a daily or weekly basis.

**Figure 8. Frequency of Use of Resources on Library Premises (%)**



For frequency of access through a library web page, 64% of undergraduate students, 77% of postgraduate students, and 68% of academic staff used the library’s e-resources on a daily or weekly basis.

**Figure 9. Frequency of Access through a Library Web Page (%)**



Comparing pre and post-COVID library use, daily users of the physical and digital library remained similar among all user groups (Table 5). In contrast, there is a slight drop in for weekly users of the physical and digital library.

**Table 5. Frequency of library use comparison 2023 and 2019**

Frequency of use of resources on library premises	2023		2019	
	Daily	Weekly	Daily	Weekly
Undergraduate	17%	52%	17%	57%
Postgraduate	21%	43%	22%	49%
Academic Staff	11%	35%	12%	45%
Staff	4%	16%	5%	24%
Frequency of access through a library web page	2023		2019	
	Daily	Weekly	Daily	Weekly
Undergraduate	15%	49%	17%	57%
Postgraduate	31%	46%	32%	48%
Academic Staff	27%	41%	30%	50%
Staff	8%	24%	7%	30%

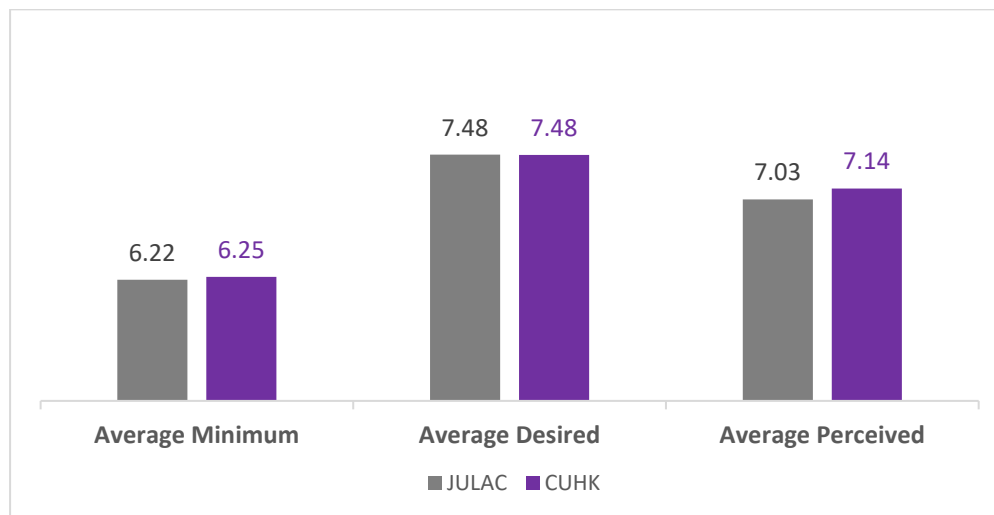
## 7. Comparison to other libraries

All eight UGC-funded libraries participated in the LibQUAL in 2023.

### 7.1 Average Minimum, Desired and Perceived level of services compared

Average minimum and desired levels of service from users are similar across JULAC and CUHK. CUHK scored 0.11 higher than JULAC average for current level of services by users (average perceived).

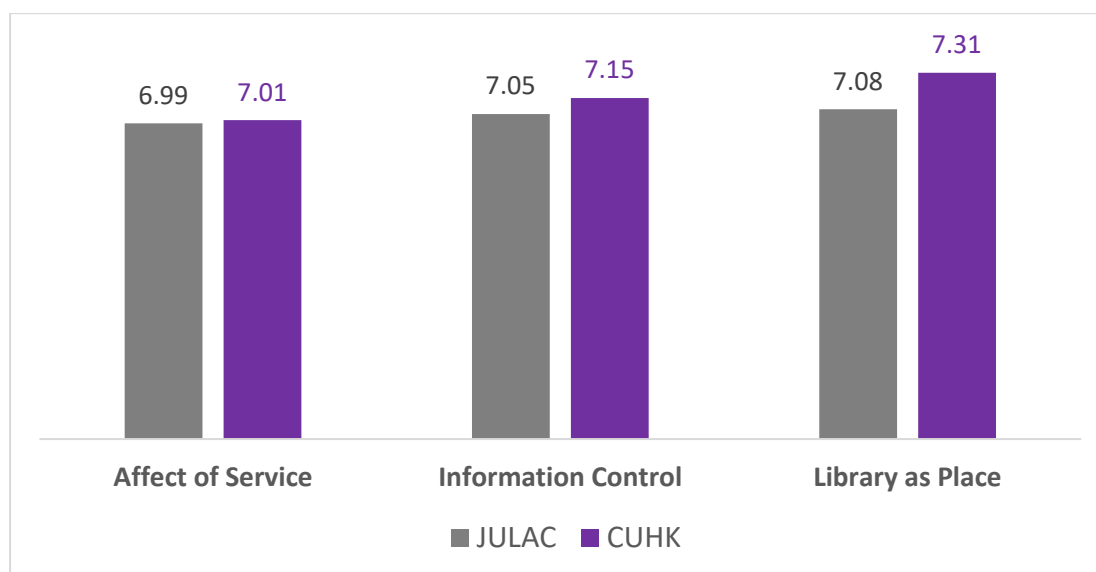
Figure 10: Average Minimum, Desired and Perceived scores - JULAC and CUHK Library



### 7.2 Comparing perceived levels for three dimensions of service

Similar ratings were recorded for the service dimension Affect of Service for JULAC and CUHK. CUHK scored 1.4% and 3.3% higher than JULAC in Information Control and Library as Place service dimensions.

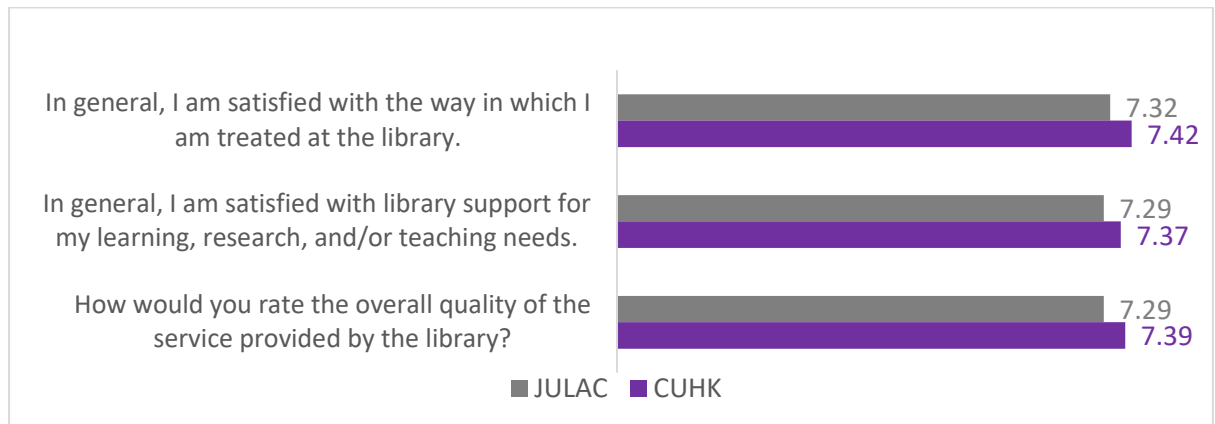
Figure 11: Perceived scores for three service dimensions - JULAC and CUHK Library



### 7.3 General Satisfaction Questions

As to the General Satisfaction Questions, the chart below shows that CUHK Library is rated above JULAC Libraries for all three questions.

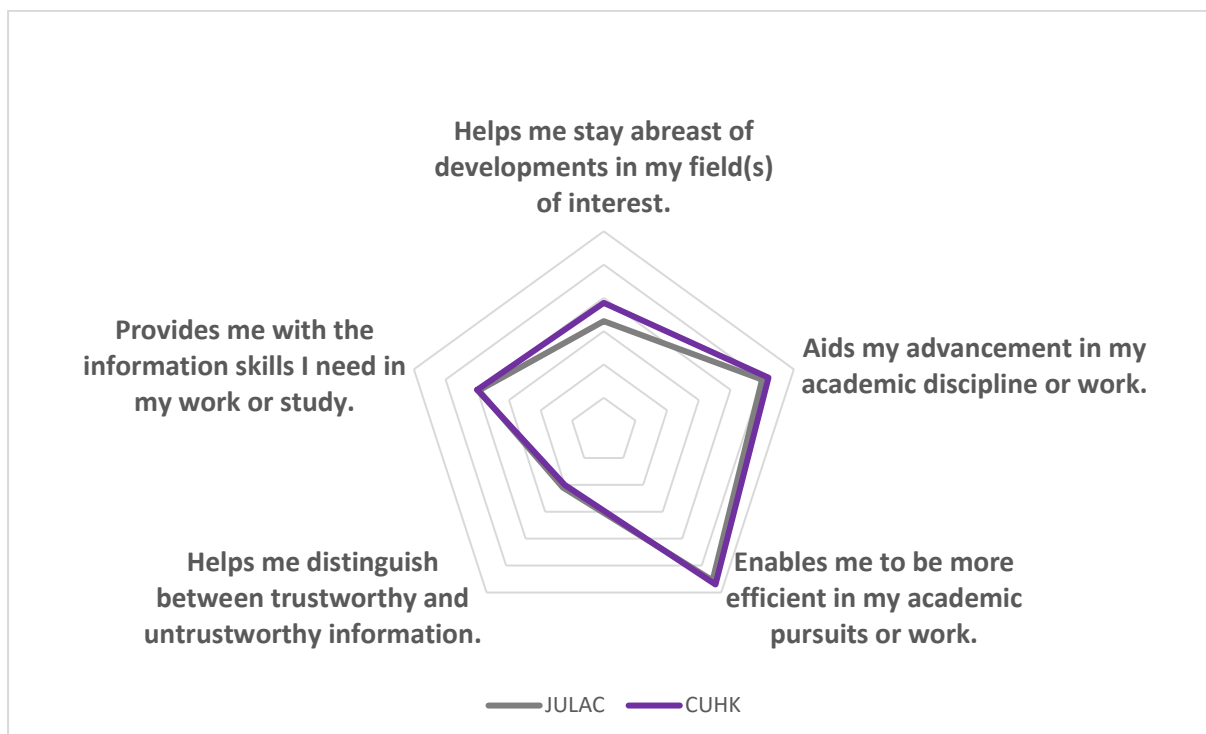
**Figure 12. General Satisfaction Questions – JULAC and CUHK Library**



### 7.4 Information Literacy Outcomes

Users rated JULAC libraries and CUHK library similarly for the five questions related to information literacy, with CUHK scoring slightly higher for the question “The Library helps me stay abreast of developments in my field(s) of interest”.

**Figure 13: Information Literacy Outcomes – JULAC and CUHK Library**





## **8. Comments**

There were 1,123 written comments providing valuable feedback through the comment box.

The Library wishes to thank all CUHK members who made this a meaningful and representative survey.