Charges to Library External Borrowers and University of Edinburgh Alumni

Description of paper
1. The paper proposes to reduce charges to (a) the public joining the Library as External Borrowers and (b) University of Edinburgh (UoE) Alumni joining as External Borrowers, in order to make Library charges comparable with other Russell Group libraries’ charges.

Action requested
2. The Library Committee is asked to consider the proposal for each category of member and endorse the charges.

Recommendation
3. Recommendation from the Library Management Team (LMT) is to reduce the charges to the public as shown in Table 1, and to Alumni as shown in Table 2.1; or to remove charges for Alumni as shown in Table 2.2 below:

Table 1. (a) Reduce charges to the public as External Borrowers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period of membership</th>
<th>Current charge</th>
<th>Proposed charge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 months</td>
<td>£75</td>
<td>£30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>£125</td>
<td>£55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 months</td>
<td>£200</td>
<td>£75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.1 (b) Option 1: Reduce charges to UoE Graduates as External Borrowers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period of membership</th>
<th>Current charge</th>
<th>Proposed charge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 months</td>
<td>£37.50</td>
<td>£15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>£62.50</td>
<td>£27.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 months</td>
<td>£100</td>
<td>£37.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.2 (b) Option 2: Remove charges to UoE Graduates as External Borrowers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period of membership</th>
<th>Current charge</th>
<th>Proposed charge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 months</td>
<td>£37.50</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>£62.50</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 months</td>
<td>£100</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The change in charging would take effect from 1 April 2015.

Background and context
4. Reference access to the University libraries is free for members of the public and Alumni, but charges apply for the privilege of borrowing from the general collections. Alumni are entitled to a 50% reduction in charges relative to charges that apply for the public.

6. Charges are made in order to make a small contribution to the cost of running circulation services and materials costs.

7. LMT is concerned that Edinburgh is charging too much to both groups of users, relative to other comparable libraries.

8. LMT is keen to strengthen public engagement with the Library and its collections, and also to support and develop a continuing relationship with our Alumni, through external borrowing. This is in accordance with the University Strategic Plan and the Strategic Theme of Lifelong Community.

Discussion
9. IS Help Services has conducted research into Russell Group libraries’ charges for external borrowing. Of the 14 libraries that offer a directly comparable service, Edinburgh charges more (£200 per annum) than any of them for external borrowing by the public; only 4 charge £100 or more per annum. The average charge is £77 per annum.

10. An annual charge of £75 as proposed in this Paper in Table 1 would position the Library below 5 libraries that charge, the same as 3, and more than 6.

11. Of the 12 libraries that offer a directly comparable service for their Alumni, Edinburgh charges more (£100 per annum) than any of them for external borrowing; only 2 charge more than £60 per annum. The average charge is £50 per annum; for example, this is the charge made by University College London. 7 libraries do not charge their graduates.

12. An annual charge of £37.50 as proposed in this Paper in Table 2.1 (Option 1) would position the Library below 8 libraries that charge, the same as 1, and more than 3.

13. Alternatively, removing charges as proposed in this Paper in Table 2.2 (Option 2) would bring the Library into line with 7 Russell Group libraries.

14. There are 200 members of the public who are registered as External Borrowers in 2014/15; 78 have borrowed items this Session, with 1 person billed for a lost item. 343 Alumni are registered currently as Library members, of whom 56 have borrowed items this Session and 3 have been billed for a lost item.

Resource implications
15. There would be a reduction in income from external memberships assuming a consistent rate of take up. In 2013/14 this income was £1100.
16. It is hoped that more members of the public would take up the opportunity to become external borrowers on the new rate of charging and use the lending collections.

17. The Library would work with the Alumni Services to promote the new charges to Alumni under Option 1, or to promote free borrowing to Alumni under Option 2.

**Risk Management**
18. There is a risk of a reduction in income to IS.

**Equality & Diversity**
19. An EqIA has been considered and is required before implementation of the change to the level of charges.

**Next steps/implications**
20. An EqIA will take place to ensure no detriment to the nine protected characteristics.

21. Information about External Borrower charges will be amended for 1 April 2015, for example the web site, and disseminated to Library staff.

22. Discussion will be had with Alumni Services to publicise the change to Alumni.

**Consultation**
23. This Paper has been reviewed and approved by LMT.

**Further information**
24. **Author**
   Barry Croucher
   Head of Help Services
   IS User Services
   16 February 2015

   **Presenter**
   Richard Battersby

**Freedom of Information**
25. This Paper is open.