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AIT Library Strategic Plan: The Path to 2023







Athlone Institute of Technology launched its Strategic Plan *A Technological University for the Region 2020-2023*. The library plays a key role in the support of students, staff, developers of content, and researchers. This strategic plan outlines the initiatives for the library to support the Institutes strategic plan. The library is undergoing significant change and development, it is repositioning from a front desk service provider to an active supporter and collaborator within the AIT community.

AIT Library represents a “Third Space” for students, staff and researchers. This positioning places the library alongside the lecture hall and home as the collaborative community space. It is a safe neutral space where the students are enabled to develop critical thinking and knowledge evaluation skills.

Working in consultation with our academic partners, we provide the print and electronic resources to support students in completing assignments, learning about their subject areas of interest and to explore beyond the reading list. Librarians are communicators and facilitators of communication. The library is comprised of a team of information professionals who are engaged in the application of best practice for information support, etc. The AIT Repository is the cornerstone of research monitoring, engagement and promotion for our institution.

Underpinning the AIT Strategic Plan’s themes and priorities are three key enablers which have been identified as crucially important for the implementation of our strategic initiatives. These enablers encompass the development of people, infrastructure and operational frameworks. These will strengthen our institute’s academic and professional support staff, clearly delineating a future path to success. Our enablers will act as a vehicle for our success; strengthening our vision for the future.

- Developing People: Library staff to upgrade professional knowledge in all areas of library work.
- Developing Infrastructure: The AIT Strategic Plan identifies the requirement for a new library - this will be developed as best in class aligning with requirements of all key stakeholders.
- Developing Operational Frameworks: AIT will focus on developing exceptional operational systems and frameworks to ensure that our decision-making is data driven and informed, facilitating better decisions. This will ensure our institute is agile and adaptable, capable of making dynamic course corrections and revisions as and when needed. The development of these operational frameworks will ensure we are operating as a unified organisation, capable of sharing information and using data across faculties, departments and units rather than in silos. Ultimately, the net result will be an efficient, world-class service that is stakeholder-focused.

Alignment

The Library Strategic Plan is in alignment with the overall AIT Strategic Plan and embraces these themes. This alignment is highlighted in the table below:

Mission

To provide support to AIT to inspire engagement and learning, to enable use of the library to promote research and innovation, and to contribute to the development of our students at all levels. As partners in education and research and leaders in developing, managing library collections and providing information services, we will leverage technology and staff expertise to ensure AIT’s success in achievement of its mission and objectives.

AIT Strategic Plan	The Library Alignment
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Engagement2. Diversity & Inclusion3. Provision4. Learner Experience5. Research & Innovation	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Active engagement with Academic Partners – embedding information skills into curriculum.2. Engage in meeting the diverse requirements of our users and to ensure inclusion of access information literacy in various forms is available to all.3. Support for all levels & stages of provision4. Develop a range of information & digital literacy initiatives.5. Research development, collaboration & scholarly engagement.



Vision

A world class library with a global presence that provides a welcoming and inclusive environment for learning, collaboration, knowledge creation and community.

Values

The Library embraces AIT's values of:

- Excellence in teaching and applied research.
- Transparency and accountability.
- Partnership in collaboration and teamwork.
- Inclusive focus of people and society.
- Professionalism, integrity, truth and collegiality.

We value our students, faculty, staff and visitors. This is demonstrated by:

- Providing a welcoming physical and online environment.
- Responding flexibly and empathetically to changing circumstances and emerging needs.
- Treating all with dignity and respect and with consistency and impartiality, assuring equity of access to services and facilities.
- Being open and accountable in all that we do.
- Working smarter together to actively build local, regional and national partnerships to achieve service levels and access to resources for our community that may otherwise be unobtainable.
- To be advocates for the library and the library profession nationally and internationally.
- A recognition that as professional library staff we need to continuously develop our skills and knowledge. This will underpin the continuing success of the Library and the AIT strategic objectives.

Strategic Actions

1. Active engagement with Academic Partners

- Provide workshops, seminars, information guide programmes, and shared activities that create opportunities for students and faculty in all disciplines to develop and demonstrate their skills in information literacy, education, digital skills and research.
- Working with Academic Partners to further the Library's suite of Subject LibGuides. In consultation identify resources and instruments to help support student learning and understanding of subject areas.
- Collaborate with faculty and the broader Institute community to offer programmes and services emphasising the democratisation of access to makerspace tools and technology.
- Partner with Student Resource Centre and Students' Union to develop initiatives for institute-based student support.
- Structure Library Staff so that each Academic Department has a dedicated liaison person.

2. Lead in meeting the diverse requirements of our users, to ensure inclusion to access information, facilities and resources

- Leverage the high visibility and interest generated by the AIT Library to increase the Libraries' donor base and attract contributions.
- Continue development and promotion of the AIT Institutional repository
- Actively develop components of Open Educational Resources to support Scholarship such as course reading lists and library guides.
- Develop an evolving collections development policy to actively review and develop library holdings in support of teaching and learning.
- Emphasise diversity of all types in hiring, staff development opportunities, and public programming.
- Actively develop platforms and resources for the creation of Institutional Knowledge Management.
- The Library will continuously review the alignment of its collection resources with established and emerging educational and research programmes, identify gaps along with the levels of investment required to fill them.
- The Library will be involved in the development of Social & Cultural Engagement by Hosting/Facilitating events both within the Institute and the wider community.



3. Provide Support for all levels and stages of provision

- In collaboration with Student Resource Centre, Students' Union and Marketing Department create entrepreneurial projects such as hackathons to engage students in improvements to library services, access and designs that are student focused.
- Continue to actively support participation initiatives and to assist students—including international students—with their information literacy needs; identify requirements for innovative interactive learning spaces to support AIT's educational programmes, as well as spaces for students to engage in collaborative learning.
- Develop a range of coordinated outreach activities, exploring and articulating clearly the potential reach of the Library into the teaching, learning and research cycles of AIT.
- Integration of library learning support services into the modular curriculum.
- Continuous review and improvement of library online systems.
- Continuous improvement of Library spaces.
- Be involved in outreach and provide support to the wider community and individuals in the Midlands region. AIT library aims to develop and continue their support of the Midlands region by building on existing initiatives such as the Midlands PAL interlibrary framework and supporting other relevant outreach community initiatives.

4. Develop a range of information and digital literacy initiatives

- Use state-of-the-art technologies to enable discovery of information resources, held locally and remotely, in print or in digital formats.
- Have an active role in the development of graduate digital and information skills. This will be achieved by enabling students to develop the aptitudes and skills necessary to critically and ethically navigate the information environment, and to flourish in the rapidly evolving knowledge, information, digital and global societies.
- Contribute to a balanced education that equips AIT graduates for the challenges of 21st-century society.
- Develop and deploy a new framework of Library support for educational excellence, with particular emphasis on digital and information literacies by focusing on supporting students in stages of transition from undergraduate to postgraduate level.
- Further develop its eLearning options and support faculty in integrating online resources into their teaching, including citation and plagiarism, critical evaluation, new study skills support.
- Support the integration of research into the undergraduate curriculum to encourage higher order thinking skills, such as literature reviews, systematic reviews.

5. Research Development, collaboration and Scholarly engagement

- Advise and consult on research data management across all disciplines, with an emphasis on supporting institution and faculty efforts to meet research funding agency mandates.
- Collaborate with the Office of Research, and Academic Partners to contribute to the creation of a nationally recognised hub of excellence in data science and analytics.
- Apply the skills and capabilities of subject specialist librarians to work in a new model of research collaboration with faculty and researchers, focusing on data science and analytics, visualisation, the integration of digital tools into teaching and research, bibliometric and altmetric analysis.
- Building on the Library's initial successes to shape a comprehensive research support service across the breadth and depth of AIT's research areas and research methods to develop an intensified programme of outreach to the research community, to promote researcher understanding of data management plans as well as how to achieve Open Access compliance requirements.
- Improvements in Library supports and infrastructures for management of Open Access publications and research data; provision of innovative new supports for digital scholarship, understood as the use of digital source materials, data and evidence, digital infrastructures, computational methods, and digital media in addressing scholarly and research objectives and engaging in scholarly communications.
- Adoption of the LIBER FAIR Research Principles (<https://libereurope.eu/blog/2017/12/08/implementing-fair-data-principles-role-libraries/>).



50 years

Athlone Institute of Technology



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