



Gender equality and representation
within and beyond the University
of the Highlands and Islands

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Gender Studies: Library provision and support via a Gender Studies 'Libguide'

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Abstract

Library provision for Gender Studies varies across universities. This book chapter is designed to show how a 'Libguide' – in this case a collection of Electronic Resources (eResources) in the subject area of Gender Studies, can be compiled from existing eResources held by or available to the University, when a Gender Studies course does not formally exist in the University.

Keywords: eResources, electronic resources, library, eBooks; eJournals, gender studies

Background

The Gender Studies libguide (<https://tinyurl.com/yrnsvz6p>) and this eBook chapter are the outputs from the author's presentation at the University's International Women's Day event in March 2021. The organisers of the International Women's Day event wished to show how the University Library Service could support colleagues in addressing the theme chosen by UHI: Gender in the curriculum. The presentation given by the author, the University's Electronic Resources (eResources) Manager, focused on library provision and support for 'Gender Studies' in the current university curriculum, showcasing the materials in the newly developed libguide as examples. The author demonstrated some of the library and freely available content already available to colleagues and showed how some simple search strategies could be used to source appropriate materials for teaching and learning and research.

The topic of Gender Studies was chosen by the author of the libguide as 'Gender Studies' is a broad term which

covers many interdisciplinary fields, as noted by Woodward and Woodward (2015). Even though the University does not have a specific Gender Studies course the guide's author felt that a Gender Studies libguide would highlight the interdisciplinary nature of the topic. The author hoped the guide might encourage the University to embed elements of gender studies in modules across the University curriculum, more so than may already be happening. The guide was developed by the author of this chapter, the University's eResources Manager, who has nearly 25 years of experience (as of 2021) in supporting students, researchers and academic staff in finding and using materials appropriate for their subject areas.

The university library service

The university library service provides and facilitates access to materials including: print and electronic books (eBooks), electronic journals (eJournals), and electronic content (eContent) e.g. reports, maps and audio-visual materials. It does so, in the first instance, via the web pages

of the University library service <https://tinyurl.com/p4keassr> via a variety of routes including Libguides' - <https://tinyurl.com/ym932jwx> a tool which is used to create and manage web pages.

Gender Studies Libguide

What is a Libguide?

A Libguide is a third-party tool that can be used to curate and share information via web pages - in this case via a subject guide on 'Gender Studies'.

The tool makes web pages easy to create in a user-friendly format and can be adapted to any subject area. A libguide is a useful tool for libraries and institutions because using the libguides tool to create content does not require staff to have an in-depth knowledge of HTML to create information pages. Libguides are flexible – for example web links can be added, links can be drawn from other guides already created, videos can be embedded, and the layout can be easily changed to suit the university style or to produce a

coherent style across different guides. They can be created to appeal to different learning styles and can be more visually appealing than a standard reading list or web page.

A libguide is a useful tool for getting gender into the curriculum because it is created as a series of short web pages, with content that acts as a starting point for discussion about gender studies and the topics this subject area covers. Students are not faced with a long reading list or left wondering where to start looking for information on the subject. Students and staff have their attention drawn to resources that already exist in this subject area and the libguide can promote engagement with subscribed and freely available resources in this subject area. This is important as staff as well as students are often not aware of the resources available to them in subject areas, and the guide, or sections of the guide, can act as an aide memoire to the subject area. The guide could also be used to encourage users to think about entrenched attitudes in the subject area, by pointing out materials that could challenge those entrenched attitudes.

The guide can be easily adapted to accommodate more pages, or different content, meaning academic staff can work with library staff to source appropriate materials to appear on the guide. The creation of the guide can therefore be an iterative process between the academic staff and the librarian, responding quickly to changes made by academic staff to their modules, to the overall course design or to the inclusion or removal of new materials as they become available or discontinue. Academic staff can embed links from the guide into the modules or weekly learning in the Virtual Learning Environment, as well as easily refer students to materials in the libguide in their lectures or assignment notes.

In creating a libguide designers should think about the course level(s) of the students they are aiming at, as well as the topic and subject areas that the guide might be used in. The guide should be visually appealing and have a layout that is easy to follow. It should contain a mix of copyright cleared content e.g. books, journals, websites, images and audio-visual material. Libguide authors and

their collaborators should think about the format, and formatting of the guide and the number and types of resources per page on the guide. There can be links from the guide to other pages of the library website where appropriate e.g. general information about accessing eBooks or eJournals, or borrowing rights for print books. It is important to keep the information as succinct as possible to encourage the user to explore different pages of the guide.

About the university 'Gender Studies' guide

The Libguide concentrates on highlighting gender studies materials within sociology and science, along with examples from other topics. Sociology and Science were chosen by the author of the libguide for reasons of intellectual curiosity on the part of the author. The author is aware that the University has several courses and modules in these areas and wished to demonstrate to university staff and students how resources incorporating gender studies could be used within these two subject areas. These

subject areas are also broad enough to allow the library to highlight individual items and collections covering gender studies and to show where there might be gaps in provision.

The Libguide, as it has been developed up until the date of the presentation, is designed to be a starting point for the University to highlight eContent which could be used to embed Gender Studies into the curriculum in different subject areas. The guide is considered a 'work in progress' and the eResources Manager welcomes collaboration with University staff in the continued development of the guide, or any guides that may develop as a result.

Structure of the guide

The guide is split into 5 main web pages: 'Home', Gender Studies: Science, Gender Studies: Sociology; eCollections and 'Other Resources'.

- 'Home' – the home page of the guide where an explanation is provided for the reason(s) this guide was created.

Gender Studies: Science and Gender Studies: Sociology are pages created with subpages – for eBooks and eJournals.

- The eBooks and eJournals sections are split into two sections: individual items (eBooks/eJournals) and collections of said material, that specifically cover Gender studies in either Science or Sociology.
- eCollections
There are three subpages: eBooks Collections, eCollections and eJournals. The eBook and eJournal collections contain materials which are in full text but are not specifically tied down to their Gender Studies collections. They are designed to provide examples of resources held by the university, or available via open access, that might hold materials which could be used to research the topic of Gender Studies.

- 'Other Resources'

This page is a mix of reports, videos, societies', links to government websites, that could be included in the field of gender studies. As with the other pages it is not intended to be exhaustive.

Curating the guide

Throughout the guide there are materials highlighted which are focussed on particular topics within Gender Studies, but there are others that cover gender studies in broader aspects and could be used irrespective of specific modules.

The geographical focus of the content is not limited to examples from the UK alone, or only from UK publishing houses. In the Science web pages materials highlighted include content on medicine, sexual violence and psychology to reflect some of the topic areas where gender studies materials exist. In the Sociology web pages some of the materials highlighted were chosen to reflect the roles and challenges of women from the UK and elsewhere in the

world. For example, women directors in China and India, taxation as it relates to women in Australia, the journal 'Gender and Research'- a non-English interdisciplinary journal of gender studies and feminist theory. Journals were not confined to the English language, as there are free translation tools that can be used (to varying degrees of success), to read journal articles not in the English language.

The gender focus of the materials recognised that the Libguide has been developed for International Women's Day, and as such much of the highlighted content focuses on women and their roles, struggles and successes in society. However, given that women live alongside men and that men have roles, struggles and successes in society, there is content in the guide that relates to the male experience of aspects of life, and the support they can provide women in their lives. For example there is an eBook on male survivors of wartime sexual violence, and there are links to societies that support men and women experiencing domestic abuse. There are also links to

journals that investigate topics linked to gender studies where the journals topics are not gender specific.

Alongside general internet searches the author investigated the public facing libguides from other institutions that have been created to support Gender Studies. For example, eCollections held by institutions that were the same as those held by the University and that are already used by staff and students in their modules. The author did not copy any guide in its entirety as the guides are specific to their own institutions. The author also gratefully acknowledges the support of University non-academic colleagues in pointing the author in the direction of websites that were subsequently used in the guide. Further, the author found that the University's staff training module, 'Gender Based Violence', was useful in providing suggestions to the author on the subject areas and topics that the guide might cover.

Although the university library service has academic collections that are subject specific e.g. Sociology, Crime, Psychology, Education, Medicine as well as generic

collections the library service has no eResources collections that specifically focus on Gender Studies. The author felt that searching subject specific collections would suggest to users that these were the only ones that could assist them in their research and provide a narrow focus for their research. The author used generic collections to highlight the 'hidden content' could be found through them that researchers might not be aware of. The collections that were investigated included both subscribed to and open access collections.

Curating the content: searching for and highlighting the materials

The author identified resources for the Libguide using a mix of 'keyword' and 'subject' searches on the eResources platforms then modifying the searches from the results.

Although eResources collections vary in aspects of their design there were some general rules applied for limiting or expanding the results from the searches. A 'basic' search was done in the main search box of each collection. When

the results were obtained the author reviewed the search expanders and limiters that are on either side of the screen. These included, but were not limited to, subject areas, publication years, languages, geographical locations, available (owned, subscribed or Open Access) or unowned. The author viewed the abstracts of the (un)available content to briefly review it and assess whether it might be worthwhile adding it to the libguide or highlighting it in the presentation. The author demonstrated these search strategies as part of the presentation.

Using the 'Advanced Search' allowed the author to be more specific from the start, as limiters and expanders are provided on that page, although not necessary to the extent that they appear once the search had been undertaken.

The results of the searches were assisted, or otherwise, by the quality of information that was available in the records that are being searched. The more information there was in the searchable fields about the content of the item, the

more likely it was that potentially useful items for the libguide were highlighted.

Using the 'Keyword' search, the author searched through the title, source and contents information of the item to produce results.

For eBooks the author investigated collections that consisted solely of eBooks, for example Oxford Scholarship Online, and also investigated collections that consisted of a mix of eBooks and eJournals. The author wanted to highlight that individual eCollections combining eBooks and eJournals could be used to search for eBooks as well as eJournals. For example, the author searched the Science Direct collection, a subscribed collection that is typically thought of as being predominantly eJournals using the phrase 'gender studies'. The author combined 'Gender Studies' with the subject 'Sociology' from the choice of subjects provide and narrowed the resources to eBooks, which provided just over 1900 full text and abstract eBook chapters. These results were available because the

institution is currently subscribing to an eBooks collection on Science Direct. A link to this search is contained in the guide in 'Sociology -eBook Subject Collections' page.

A similar type of search was done with eJournals, where the author searched for eJournals in eJournal only collections. The eJournal collections investigated for the guide are a mix of full text, full text and abstracts, and abstracts collections. For example in the Science web page the author highlighted BioMed Central, an open access platform, where the search was structured around the terms 'women and gender', producing over 99k articles as well as searching in collections that included eBooks and eJournals combined.

The 'keyword' search could produce many results, but not all of them were necessarily relevant to the topic being investigated. The author highlighted the results of searches and also highlighted individual items in the guide which the author felt would draw attention to interdisciplinary areas covered by 'gender studies'. Using the 'Advanced Search'

to combine search terms in the keyword search or to use the Subject Search allowed the author to narrow results. The author also used other terms to search for materials e.g. gender identity, gender expression, women's studies, men's studies, feminism, gender equality, transgender, women and health.

The author searched collections that were a mixture of full text and abstracts to highlight appropriate resources that could be found via both types of materials and to point out that subject terms, or keywords that might need to be used, could differ between collections. The author highlighted particular resources in the libguide to show how it is possible to narrow collections down to searches within particular publications, publication years, content type e.g. conference paper, video segment, reference work, if they are available in the collection, as well as searching through the more standard article or book content type and to highlight the availability of unowned, but potentially useful, content.

For example, using the term, Gender Studies, in the Springer eBooks and eJournals collection held by the university, and ordering by 'relevance' as opposed to date of publication, approximately 781,000 results were found by the author, including preview articles. These was narrowed down by content type e.g. articles, taking the results to approximately 495,100. The author then narrowed it by discipline e.g. Medicine & Public Health, taking the results down to approximately 271,900 articles. Then by sub-discipline e.g. Public Health, to approximately 42,200 articles and then by language e.g. English, taking the results down to approximately 41,800 articles. Searching for gender studies and sociology, and using the same limiters as previous, brought the search down to approximately 7900 articles.

The author created stable links for these 'micro-collections' (collections within collections) either by using the stable link provided for the result or modifying the link in the browser. The author chose individual items from within these collections, eBooks and eJournals, to highlight the

interdisciplinarity of the subject, 'Gender Studies', and to inform researchers of possible topics for debate in their research.

The author decided to highlight the diversity of eResource materials of different media e.g. images, videos, reports, organisations that are available to users in this subject area – both freely available on the internet and via subscribed collections. Assessing the quality of materials from these sites was done by investigating the publishers of the materials. The author considered possible biases and legitimacy of the publishers, cross checking them against sources containing more information about them and checking them, as far as was possible and reasonably practicable, for accuracy and content availability. With any of the freely available resources on the internet the author was aware of the need to read any Terms and Conditions and Privacy Statements for these resources before the decision was taken to highlight them. If the author was not comfortable with the terms and conditions the resources were not highlighted.

Links to freely available documents reports, societies, organisations, images and videos, from within Scotland and elsewhere were sourced with the intention of being examples and not exhaustive lists. They are intended to highlight work being done or issues being faced by women countries in different parts of the world either currently or historically, in rich and poor countries. The author recognises that these pages, along with others in the guide, are appropriate for further development.

For example, under 'Other Resources' the 'Government Departments/Organisations' page highlights organisations - the role of the Scottish Government, the European Parliament and the United Nations. The role that poverty can play in stifling women and children's access education and employment was explored in examples highlighted in documents in 'Other Countries-Reports and Articles' – again, taking examples from the UK and the wider world. Links in 'Other Countries, Societies and Organizations' where chosen, in part, to reflect the role played by men in supporting women in society and education, as well as

highlighting challenges faced by men and women who have suffered from or are suffering from gender-based violence.

In 'Other Resources – Videos' the author chose materials that reflected difficulties faced by women historically and currently. The author reviewed a University subscribed video collection, when reviewing possible audio-visual materials, linking to an example in the guide. This allowed the author to gain access to subscribed licenced materials, held by companies such as the BBC, that might not otherwise be available. Outside of the subscribed materials the author used a documentary from the BBC iPlayer to note to users the possible restrictions imposed by providers on access to their content – the BBC iPlayer only permitting access to materials if the user can evidence living in the United Kingdom. The author also sourced freely available videos via avenues including You Tube and news outlets - UK and/or international – to highlight current challenges faced by women in developed countries and in a war-torn country. Images were taken from sites requiring a username and password and from sites feely available to

researchers. The author acknowledges the lack of images in the guide – this was due to the author being unsure which images would be appropriate in a public facing guide.

How the content is/has been sourced

In so far as is financially practicable the University library eResources are sourced to suit the needs of the courses taught, and the research conducted, at the University. To achieve this the eResources Manager works with library colleagues, academic staff, the University Research office, and eResources suppliers to obtain knowledge of eResources required and to then obtain and provide access to appropriate eResources content. Examples of these eResources are highlighted in the guide.

Broadly speaking there are four main routes that eResources content is sourced: outright purchase, subscription, open access (<https://tinyurl.com/3pyrnzcf>) and freely available. The eResources Manager obtains materials for use by the University via the SHEDL purchasing consortium <https://tinyurl.com/52ck8kuv>, and

JISC Collections <https://tinyurl.com/hu2mwhsb>, with advice and guidance from APUC <https://tinyurl.com/493k592f> . Subscriptions and purchases are also made directly with University approved suppliers, where those suppliers do not provide the resources via SHEDL or JISC Collections.

As noted above the eResources Manager has also made use freely available resources, including reports and audio-visual materials, for this guide. As with any of the freely available resources on the internet the author was aware of the need to read any Terms and Conditions and Privacy Statements for these resources before the decision was taken to highlight them. If the author was not comfortable with the terms and conditions the resources were not highlighted.

The eBooks highlighted are provided by the University via two routes (regardless of whether or not they are Open Access) - aggregators and publisher direct, both as eBook collections and eBooks within journal collections. Aggregators provide access to content from multiple

publishers and publishers provide direct access from their own platforms. The eJournals and newspapers highlighted are made available in similar ways to eBooks, as either individual titles or collections e.g. via aggregators, direct from publishers or via Open Access channels. The primary source materials highlighted include collections that have memoirs, images, letters, maps and audio-visual materials, all obtained from a variety of locations. Other materials highlighted in the guide including freely available material such as newscasts, documentaries, reports and societies were chosen for the reasons as detailed above.

Conclusion

The author developed the Gender Studies libguide to show University staff and students some of the electronic resources that already exist for this topic in the areas of science and sociology. The contents of this libguide can be used to create reading lists for these subject areas and the author hopes the libguide will be a starting point for further discussion of this topic within the university. This book chapter is designed to act as an *aide memoire* for delegates

at the International Women's Day event held by the University who saw the author's presentation and explain to viewers of the libguide how the content was chosen. The author hopes for engagement from the University community in the further development of the guide.

Acknowledgements

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Author bio

With nearly 25 years of experience in working in Academic libraries the author has been the Electronic Resources Manager for the University since 2005. During her time at the University the author has represented the University on committees at a Scottish and national UK level, including

SHEDL and JISC Collections. Prior to that she worked as a librarian in further education. Her undergraduate degree (from the University of Edinburgh) is in Classics and Medieval History and she has a Masters in Information and Library Management from the University of Northumbria. Her professional interests include eCollections procurement and availability, along with open access publishing.

References

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