

Working the room: a case study of staff perspectives on roving in a university library

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Abstract

The activity of library staff roving for the purpose of helping users is becoming more prevalent within a changing UK university sector. As universities become more business-oriented and students expect a service quality that justifies their tuition fees, institutions find themselves under increasing scrutiny to meet user wants and needs. From a library services perspective, roving is a tool to provide customer service that students-as-consumers have come to expect (Wheatcroft, 2015).

This study investigates roving, the practice of circulating library spaces and offering assistance, at Anglia Ruskin University (ARU). It sets out to establish how this frontline service is currently practised and how staff feel about it. There is a specific focus on staff perspectives through a mixed methods approach to research in a workplace setting. This includes a survey of 23 Library Support Advisers (LSA) and two unstructured interviews with staff who contribute towards the operational management and strategic direction of roving at the university.

A review of internal documentation pertaining to roving at ARU and a critical analysis of literature feed into research design and provide a basis for this inductive case study. Aspects of the service evident in the results include visibility and uniform, approachability and comfort zones, technology, behaviour management and stress.

Results imply that LSAs understand the purpose of roving but there are divergent opinions as to how it should be practised as well as evidence of staff discomfort when it comes to undertaking practical elements of the current service. A Senior Management perspective brings the notion of library spaces to the fore, and points to further research in order to manage transitional change. This study concludes with recommendations for operational improvements and further research that could shape the future development of roving in a university library environment.

[Insert Declaration page here]

Contents

Abstract.....	i
Declaration.....	ii
Figures and tables	vii
Glossary	viii
Acknowledgements.....	ix
1. Introduction.....	1
1.1. Customer service in libraries	2
1.2. What is roving?.....	2
1.2.1. Definitions of roving	
1.2.2. Clarification of terminology	
1.3. ARU Library roving: a case study	3
1.3.1. A time of change	
1.3.2. Frontline services	
1.3.3. New Service Delivery Model	
1.3.4. Customer care and managing space	
1.3.5. Roving at ARU	
1.3.6. The establishment of roving	
1.3.7. Pilot review and consolidation	
1.3.8. Roving uniform	
1.3.9. Timetabling roving	
1.3.10. Roving statistics	
1.3.11. Policing and other tasks	
1.3.12. Summary	
1.4. Aims and objectives.....	13
1.4.1. Aim	
1.4.2. Objectives	
1.4.3. Establishing research questions	
2. Literature review	15
2.1. Introduction.....	15
2.2. History of roving.....	15
2.2.1. Origins	
2.2.2. Phases of the literature	
2.3. Roving logistics	17
2.3.1. 'Barriers' and comfort zones	

2.3.2. Three approaches to roving	
2.3.3. Scheduling and staffing roving	
2.3.4. Policing and security	
2.4. Identifying rovers.....	19
2.4.1. Roving uniform	
2.4.2. Possible effect on staff	
2.4.3. Visibility	
2.5. A recent focus on technology	21
2.5.1. Introducing the iPad	
2.5.2. Technological innovation	
2.5.3. Implementation of technology	
2.6. Staff compatibility and training	22
2.6.1. Personality types	
2.6.2. Interpersonal skills	
2.7. Change and stress.....	23
2.7.1. Change management	
2.7.2. Workplace stress	
2.8. Customer service and innovation.....	25
2.8.1. Opposition	
3. Methodology	27
3.1. Research methods	27
3.1.1. The single-site case study	
3.1.2. Distinction between research <i>design</i> and research <i>methods</i>	
3.1.3. Mixed methods	
3.1.4. Triangulation	
3.2. Justification for research methods	28
3.2.1. Documents as sources of data	
3.2.2. Literature review	
3.2.3. Quantitative research	
3.2.4. Qualitative research	
3.3. Work-based study	31
3.3.1. Bias and neutrality	
3.3.2. Ethical considerations	
3.3.3. Informed consent	
3.4. Limitations	33
3.5. Literature search strategy.....	33
3.6. Method: roving survey.....	34
3.6.1. General questions	

3.6.2. Likert scale	
3.6.3. Ranking activities and services	
3.6.4. Word selection	
3.6.5. Free-text comments	
3.7. Method: interviews	40
3.7.1. Interviewee selection and preparation	
4. Results	41
4.1. Roving survey	41
4.1.1. Questions 1–5 (General questions)	
4.1.2. Question 6 (Likert scale)	
4.1.3. Questions 7–8 (Ranking activities and services)	
4.1.4. Question 9 (Word selection)	
4.1.5. Question 10 (Free-text comments)	
4.2. Interviews.....	53
4.2.1. Interview 1: coding and key themes	
4.2.2. Interview 2: coding and key themes	
4.2.3. Comparison of key themes	
5. Discussion.....	58
5.1. LSA responses	58
5.1.1. Roving experience	
5.1.2. Emotional responses	
5.1.3. Roving behaviour	
5.1.4. Behaviour management and stress	
5.2. The purpose of roving at ARU.....	60
5.2.1. Staff interpretations	
5.3. Combining roving with other tasks	61
5.4. Staff discomfort	61
5.4.1. Approaching users	
5.4.2. Comfort zones	
5.4.3. Personality types	
5.5. Enhancing the service	63
5.5.1. Technology	
5.5.2. Uniform	
5.5.3. Campus comparisons	
5.6. Senior Management perspective	64
5.6.1. Critical assessment	
5.6.2. Library spaces	

6. Conclusion	66
6.1. Summary of findings: aims and objectives	66
6.1.1. Aim	
6.1.2. Objectives	
6.2. Research design and methods	69
6.3. Limitations of the study	69
6.3.1. Comparative studies	
6.3.2. User perspective	
6.4. Reflections on conducting work-based research.....	70
6.5. Recommendations.....	71
Bibliography	75
Anglia Ruskin University internal documents	84
Appendices	87
Appendix A – ARU: Our standards for presentation and behaviour	87
Appendix B – LSA job description (extracts).....	88
Appendix C – ARU roving timeline	89
Appendix D – ARU roving clothing timeline	90
Appendix E – LSA timetables	91
Appendix F – Email to survey participants	93
Appendix G – Interview consent forms	94
Appendix H – Literature search terms	96
Appendix I – Roving survey	97
Appendix J – Advance interview summaries	100
Appendix K – Roving survey results	101
Appendix L – Word clouds	109
Appendix M – Interview 1: coded transcript (extracts)	111
Appendix N – Interview 2: coded transcript (extracts)	114

Figures and tables

Fig. 01 – Campus library maps	4
Fig. 02 – CSD organisation chart (May 2015).....	5
Fig. 03 – ARU Mission and Values	6
Fig. 04 – Library roving posters	8
Fig. 05 – Cambridge roving statistics (May 2014-15)	11
Fig. 06 – Chelmsford roving statistics (May 2014-15).....	11
Fig. 07 – Roving and Help Desk enquiries (May 2014-15).....	11
Fig. 08 – Survey Q1	41
Fig. 09 – Survey Q2	41
Fig. 10 – Survey Q3	41
Fig. 11 – Survey Q4	42
Fig. 12 – Survey Q5a	42
Fig. 13 – Survey Q5b	42
Fig. 14 – Survey Q6, statements 1–6	43
Fig. 15 – Survey Q6, statements 7–12	44
Fig. 16 – Survey Q6, statements 13–19	45
Fig. 17 – Survey Q6, statements 20–25	46
Fig. 18 – Survey Q6, statements 26–29	46–47
Fig. 19 – Survey Q6, statements 30–32	47
Fig. 20 – Statements by agreement	49
Fig. 21 – Survey Q7	50
Fig. 22 – Survey Q8	50
Fig. 23 – Survey Q9	52
Fig. 24 – Survey Q10	53
Fig. 25 – Interview 1 spider diagram	54
Fig. 26 – Interview 2 spider diagram	55
Tab. 01 – Anglia Ruskin University key facts (2013/14)	4
Tab. 02 – Roving logistics (May 2015)	7
Tab. 03 – Roving documentation (2010)	9
Tab. 04 – Advantages and disadvantages of a work-based study	30
Tab. 05 – Aspects of qualitative research	31
Tab. 06 – SurveyMonkey settings	35
Tab. 07 – Coding Likert scale statements	36
Tab. 08 – Statement aims	36–37
Tab. 09 – Ranking aims	38
Tab. 10 – Coding ranking questions	38
Tab. 11 – Word selection categories	39
Tab. 12 – Interviewees	40
Tab. 13 – General Qs: campus comparison	42
Tab. 14 – Statement comparison (agreement)	48
Tab. 15 – Statement comparison (disagreement).....	48
Tab. 16 – Comparing campuses	51
Tab. 17 – Interviews: key themes	56–57

Glossary

AD	Assistant Director
ARU	Anglia Ruskin University
CAM	Cambridge campus (ARU)
CHE	Chelmsford campus (ARU)
CSD	Customer Services Division
CSM	Customer Services Manager
CSMT	Customer Services Management Team
CSS	Customer Services Supervisor
DIS	Department of Information Studies (Aberystwyth University)
DOAJ	Directory of Open Access Journals
ITSA	Information Technology Support Adviser
LISA	Library and Information Science Abstracts
LISTA	Library, Information Science and Technology Abstracts
LSA	Library Support Adviser
OPAC	Online Public Access Catalogue
PET	Peterborough campus (ARU)
RFID	Radio Frequency Identification
SDM	Service Delivery Model
SMT	Senior Management Team
SSA	Study Space Assistant

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1. Introduction

Academic libraries have entered a period of gross mutability, a state of constant change, productive and powerful chaos, hybrid strategies, and essential creativity in advancing their individual and collective visions.

(Neal *in* Walter and Williams, 2010, p. v)

The UK university sector has been through significant change in recent years. The introduction and increase in tuition fees has transformed universities into more overtly business-like, market-driven organisations. Within this new paradigm, institutions are obliged to be more accountable, with library services looking to foster in a culture of 'value', constant innovation and adaptation (Brown, Sulz and Pow, 2011; Schmidt, 2011). University library infrastructure and space have come under increasing scrutiny, with a focus on investment to increase library space functionality and flexibility to meet the changing needs of users (McDonald *in* McKnight, 2010, pp. 38–39).

Wheatcroft (2015) states that “the word consumers is never going to be a particularly attractive one when applied to education” but the circumstances above have firmly established the idea of students-as-consumers in UK higher education. Significantly, Wheatcroft (*ibid.*) notes that students are likely to see themselves as consumers; essentially customers entitled to a certain quality of service.

The activity of staff roving for the purpose of helping users has been gaining a foothold in academic libraries in recent years (Courtois and Liriano, 1999). This correlates with a trend towards self-service adoption, 24-hour access (McDonald *in* McKnight, 2010) and the scaling back of information desks in a library environment (Welford, 2008; Widdows, 2011). It is also indicative of libraries looking to the retail sector for innovation and development in 'customer' services (Woodward 2004; 2009).

This chapter provides an introduction to roving including definitions and terminology. It includes a case study of roving at Anglia Ruskin University (ARU), the institution at which research takes place, incorporating extracts from internal documents. Finally, it states aims, objectives and preliminary research questions.

1.1. Customer service in libraries

Notions of ‘customer service’ are concomitant with the environment that university libraries now operate in. Fritch and Mandernack (2001, p. 299) suggest that “good customer service [in libraries] is about listening to users, establishing good communication, and building relationships.” They emphasise the importance of conveying professionalism and a personal touch when interacting with users:

Some users recognize the inherent value of personal, face-to-face communication and the unanticipated richness that results. If librarians become more skilled at flexible communication with users, users will continue to flock to libraries. Our ability to define and promote the library as a social space characterized by professional expertise will determine whether libraries eventually become empty shells or thriving research, educational, and entertainment centers in their communities.

(Fritch and Mandernack, 2001, p. 298)

1.2. What is roving?

1.2.1. Definitions of roving

It is not easy to provide a clear definition of the practice of roving:

The term ‘roaming’ reference has never been clearly defined. Generally, it has been used to describe services provided in a non-traditional manner: roving, outpost, offsite and point of need reference services. In essence, it is anything occurring away from the confines of the reference desk. Although this type of service has been reported in the literature throughout the last three decades, we treat its existence like a covert operation, mainly because we are still struggling with its meaning, provision and effectiveness.

(McCabe and MacDonald, 2011, p. 2)

The related concept of embedding/embedded librarianship can have a multitude of meanings, dependent upon context, which complicates the construction of such a definition. Brown, Sulz and Pow (2011, p. 3) state that roving and embedding are “two terms [that] are sometimes confusingly used interchangeably” and suggest that roving is distinct from embedding in that this “involves relocating to a location outside the library to assist users where they work, live or gather.” Orphan (2003) and Wong and O’Shea (2004) also conflate these terms. Sharman (2012; 2014) discusses embedded librarianship practice using the moniker of roving. Although the idea of subject specialists venturing outside the library walls to engage with users is a commendable endeavour, this dissertation will focus on roving *within* the library walls only.

Courtois and Liriano (1999, p. 2) give a definition that is prevalent in the literature:

Roving is the act of a library employee circulating within the reference area or other parts of the library to offer assistance to users. A roving librarian approaches the user, rather than waiting for the user to come to the reference desk.

Reaffirming this, Gill and Newton (2002, p. 43) call the roving concept “beautifully simple” and Welford (2008) offers a more colloquial description of roving practice. In their extensive study, Pitney and Slote (2007, p. 57) use terms such as “point of need” and “point of puzzlement” which serve as an elaboration to the definition above, as they profile specific roving behaviour and rover/user contact.

1.2.2. Clarification of terminology

Before reviewing the literature, it is necessary to establish terms associated with roving. ‘Roving’, ‘roving’, ‘roaming’, ‘roving reference’, etc. seem interchangeable. This study shall use ‘roving’, not only because it is used at ARU, but it seems to be most prevalent in texts that form the basis of the literature review. Each ARU library site has a single ‘Help Desk’, so this will be used to refer to fixed enquiry points. The term ‘library patrons’ frequents the literature, but this study will use ‘students’ and/or ‘users’, in keeping with the vernacular of the university. Staff who undertake roving have been given a number of monikers, from ‘roving support’ to ‘student peer roving assistants’; this dissertation will use ‘rovers’ or ‘roving staff’. It becomes clear that there are subtle differences in the scope of roving, and these are sometimes reflected in the names assigned to individuals who rove.

1.3. ARU Library roving: a case study

This study of roving conducts its research at ARU, where the researcher is currently employed. This section profiles roving and the customer service landscape at the university. *Department of Information Studies: Ethics policy for research* section 4: ‘Collecting workplace data for research’ (Urquhart and Rogers, 2003) has been adhered to throughout. Information is intended to be presented impartially and to serve as an evidential base for further research.

1.3.1. A time of change

The University Library and Customer Services Division (CSD), has recently been through a period of change (ARU, 2012a; 2014g). Notably:

- Staff restructure
- Library refurbishment, reconfigured layouts
- Introduction of Radio Frequency Identification (RFID)
- Fulbourn site library closed (April 2014).
- Many Library Support Advisers (LSAs) employed for under three years
- New Assistant Director (AD)

Tab. 01 shows the comparative size and logistics of each ARU campus library – Cambridge (CAM), Chelmsford (CHE) and Peterborough (PET):

KEY FACTS	CAM	CHE	PET	ALL
Total area of each library (m ²)	2,867	3,578	293	6,837
Hours open per semester week	137.5	137.5	59.5	334.5
Total study places	550	833	67	1,450
Study places with PCs (library only)	192	300	22	514
Stock (inc. audio visual materials)	154,738	119,168	10,807	284,713
Electronic journal subscriptions	-	-	-	30,874
Electronic books	-	-	-	103,305
Databases	-	-	-	164
Visits	847,721	371,709	43,994	1,263,424
Items borrowed	111,367	66,152	9,160	186,679
Library staff hours training users	-	-	-	1,672
Number of users in library on sample days	256	186	30	472
Enquiries in sample semester weeks	1,659	892	54	3,146

Tab. 01 – Anglia Ruskin University key facts (2013/14)

This study is limited to investigating libraries that timetable roving (CHE, CAM). Formal roving is not undertaken at PET due to size and staff numbers.



Fig. 01 – Campus library maps

Enquiry desks on upper floors were decommissioned in 2012. A merged Library and IT Help Desk (ground floor), staffed by an LSA and IT Support Adviser (ITSA), became the sole physical enquiry point. In autumn 2014, semester Help Desk staffing was adjusted to two LSAs and an ITSA in a back office if needed.

1.3.2. Frontline services

Each library has a Reception Desk at its entrance, traditionally staffed by an LSA. Since November 2014, it has been manned by a security guard (semester) or an LSA (vacation). LSAs are currently responsible for five frontline services:

1. Help Desk, including ‘LibAnswers’ online enquiry service
2. Phone support, including ‘LibAnswers’
3. Roving (excluding summer vacation)
4. ‘LibChat’ (online ‘chat’ enquiry service, semester time)
5. Back-up to Help Desk (including back office work)

The timetabling of duties varies across campuses.

1.3.3. New Service Delivery Model

The New Service Delivery Model (SDM) paper was presented to staff by the University Librarian in May 2012. This gave notice of a restructure and the removal or convergence of enquiry points. The following structure is now in place:

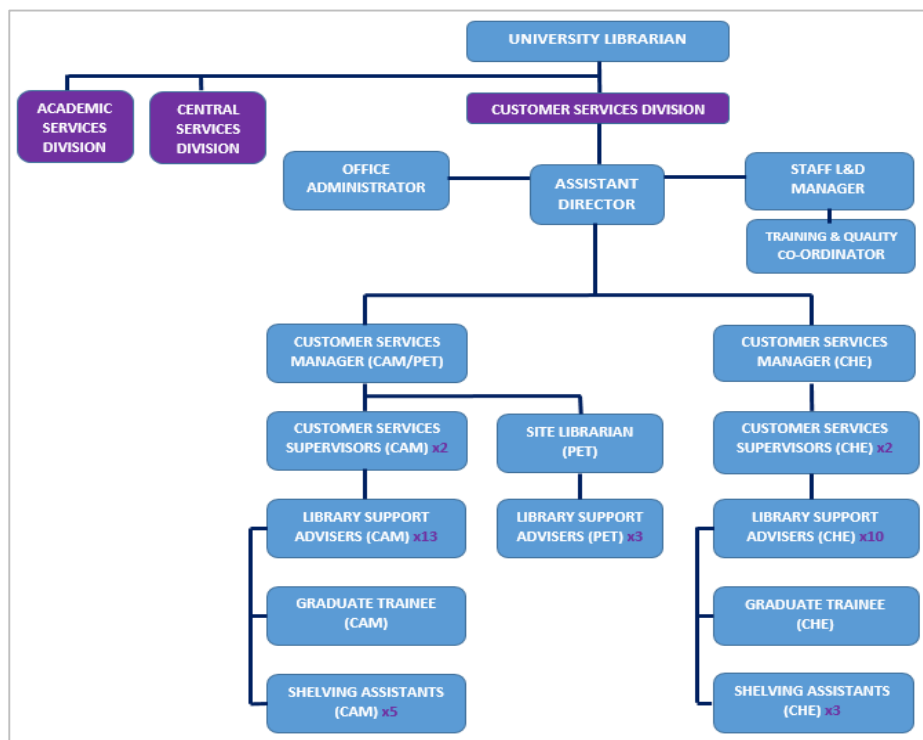


Fig. 02 – CSD organisation chart (May 2015)

The paper (ARU, 2012a) proposed:

- Library Assistants (renamed LSAs) should “play a much greater role in supporting our students.”
- To “increase roving and enhance the role so that we can provide more support around the library, particularly at busy times. A full programme of training and support will be put in place to prepare Library Assistants for this.”

The *REPLY* training programme featured roving and included a dedicated training document to accompany sessions (ARU, 2012f).

1.3.4. Customer care and managing space

An emphasis on ‘customer care’ and the challenges of managing library spaces are evidenced in the following:

- Operational documentation and publicity material (library website)
- *Our standards for presentation and behaviour* (ARU, 2014e) (Appendix A)
- Library Mission and Values:



Fig. 03 – ARU Mission and Values

- LSA job description – although roving is not mentioned, customer care and space management are prominent (Appendix B)
- Website – ‘Our commitments’ and ‘Feedback’ suggest that library space challenges (‘Zones and noise’) are high on the customer care agenda.

The library runs a biannual Association of Research Libraries LibQUAL survey. Information related to roving includes:

2014 results

- The highest number of comments related to noise and provision of well-monitored, quiet study zones.
- “... staff will continue to walk around all our study spaces regularly to offer help to users and to encourage appropriate behaviour.”

2014 internal action plan

- “... ensure that library staff continue with regular roving of each site as a priority, with particular emphasis on managing behaviour at assessment times, and are well-trained and supported in carrying out this duty” (ARU, 2014g).

2012 actions

- Similar feedback regarding noise and space (implies ongoing issue).

1.3.5. Roving at ARU

Roving began with a pilot in September 2010 and was extended in 2012. See Appendix C for roving timeline. Roving is currently undertaken by LSAs only:

Aspect of service	CAM		CHE	
No. of LSAs	13*		10	
	7 (f/t)	6 (p/t)	6 (f/t)	4 (p/t)
Timetabled by CSSs	09:00–17:00		09:30–16:00	
Evening roving	Timetabled		Not timetabled	
Roving uniform	Blue ‘AskUs’ jacket		Blue ‘AskUs’ polo-shirt	
Equipment	Roving phone (text-a-talker)		Roving phone (text-a-talker)	
	iPad available		iPad available	
Roving champions	0		2	

Tab. 02 – Roving logistics (May 2015)

**Excludes researcher*

1.3.6. The establishment of roving

The commencement of roving pre-dates SDM/staff restructure by nearly two years. The SDM paper suggested that increased roving would help ameliorate removal of upper-floor enquiry desks. Since, rovers have become the primary point of contact for users on upper floors.

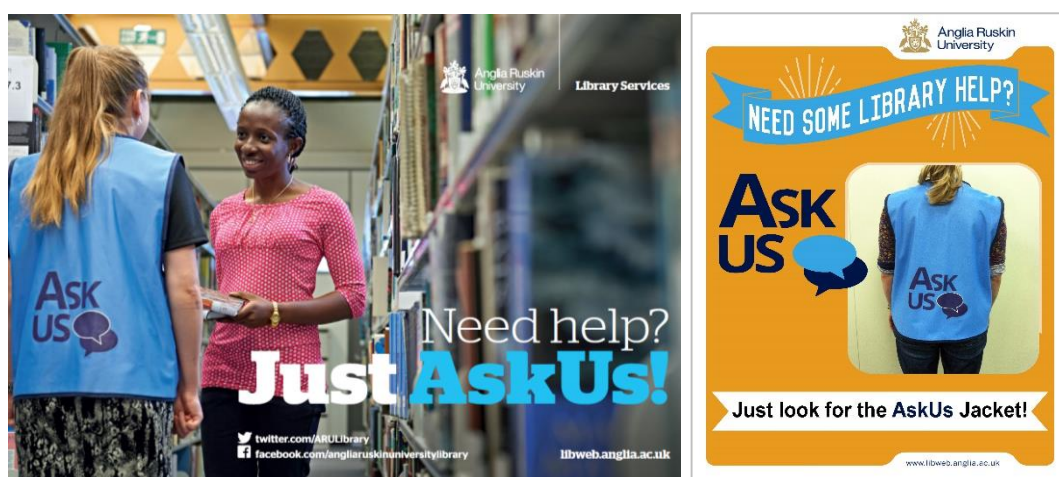


Fig. 04 – Library roving posters

The pilot was established as follows:

- Customer Services Supervisor (CSS) and graduate trainee (at CHE) investigated roving as service development
- Numerous proposal documents produced (e.g. ‘Roving with a purpose.’)
- Involved staff volunteers and CSSs (pre-determined route, 12–2pm)
- Proposal (ARU, 2010a): “Roving staff will only be responsible for roving – they will not be undertaking any other duties while roving.”

Documents explored roving rationale, logistics and concerns. For example:

Why rove this way?

- Proactive services to be part of an explicit commitment to quality
- Provide a presence in the library
- Even if not asked any questions – showing that available to help
- People do not always ask for help at desks

(ARU, 2010a)

Roving focus	Comments
Purpose	Pilot project leader: “empower staff to offer that bit more support and being fully customer-oriented not just task-oriented” (ARU, 2010c).
Emphasis	Staff willingness and approachability – using ‘radar’ and awareness of need.
Who?	“Staff who like people – don’t put those unwilling or unsuitable on rota”, with the appendage that “all staff members should enforce rules and assist students as necessary” (ARU, 2010b).
	CSSs should regularly rove, “as this will give them a hands-on experience of the issues current in the library” (ARU, 2010c).
Concerns	Staff acceptance: “...downplay that it is a new thing, as have been doing already but not in a structured manner – basically the Reception Desk on legs – Staff need to feel and be supported” (ARU, 2010a).
Training	Ideas profiles

Tab. 03 – Roving documentation (2010)

1.3.7. Pilot review and consolidation

The pilot was reviewed in autumn 2010, with discussion forums and a survey. Cambridge Customer Services Management Team (CSMT) (ARU, 2010f) deemed the exercise a success: “well worth doing ... the Library Assistants have enjoyed participating.” It was agreed that CSSs would “cut back” on roving due to other commitments.

The Roving Task and Finish Group (ARU, 2011a) final summary of the initiative considered roving ‘embedded’ in normal service. It gave notice of:

- measures to address reservations about the sash (see 1.3.8. Roving uniform)
- further training as “it has been proven through experience that there are more enquiries when staff are proactive in approaching users. However, it is accepted that some staff are more confident in doing this than others.”

Notes from a cross-site CSMT meeting (ARU, 2011c) mentioned:

- roving as an achievement
- expanding the service
- avoiding ‘futile’ roving (“when the queries dry up”)
- “ongoing challenge of getting students to comply with zone requirements.”

1.3.8. Roving uniform

Underlying the roving project since inception has been an awareness that rovers should be identifiable and visible. A roving uniform was introduced as follows:

- Staff carried clipboards and wore regular ID lanyards during pilot
- Progression to purchase of large sash
- Summary of CAM pilot (ARU, 2010f) noted: “a lot of opposition about wearing the sashes and most staff feel that wearing their lanyards is enough to identify them.”
- In reaction, staff recorded queries received with/without sash – results saw sash being retained (ARU, 2010h)
- Concerns and reluctance were addressed by replacing sash with thinner, shoulder-to-hip lanyard (featuring ‘AskUs’ branding)
- Larger lanyards could be used elsewhere, e.g. on “Zone Management patrols” (ARU, 2011a)
- In 2013, rovers were asked for preferences on new garment – CAM and CHE chose different options (see Appendix D for roving clothing timeline)
- During consultation period LSAs emailed Customer Services Managers (CSMs). Some voiced reluctance to wear ‘uniform’ and gave opinions related to visibility (ARU, 2013a).

1.3.9. Timetabling roving

In October 2012, roving was expanded “based on the successes of the service we have been offering and demand from customers.” This extension proposal (ARU, 2012c) highlighted an “increased need to police the zones” and that the new SDM and removal of upper-floor enquiry desks created greater need for staff on upper floors. Roving has now developed into an all-day activity for LSAs, timetabled by CSSs. The researcher was given access to timetables (January–May 2015) (ARU, 2015a) (Appendix E). These highlight the ongoing challenge CSSs face in maintaining consistent roving. Gaps in staffing caused by vacancies, sickness absence, leave and training compound the challenge, as it would not be acceptable to leave the Help Desk or telephone lines unstaffed to maintain roving.

1.3.10. Roving statistics

Figs. 05–06 show a year of roving transactions. Fig. 07 gives a comparison between Help Desk and roving enquiries.

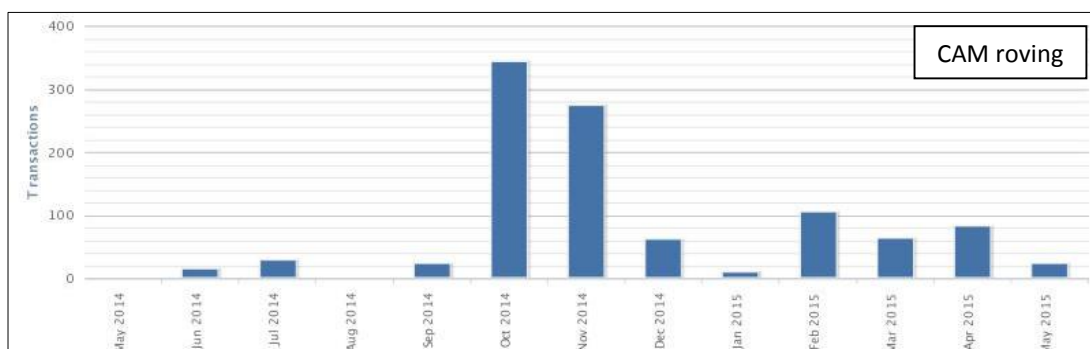


Fig. 05 – Cambridge roving statistics (May 2014-15)

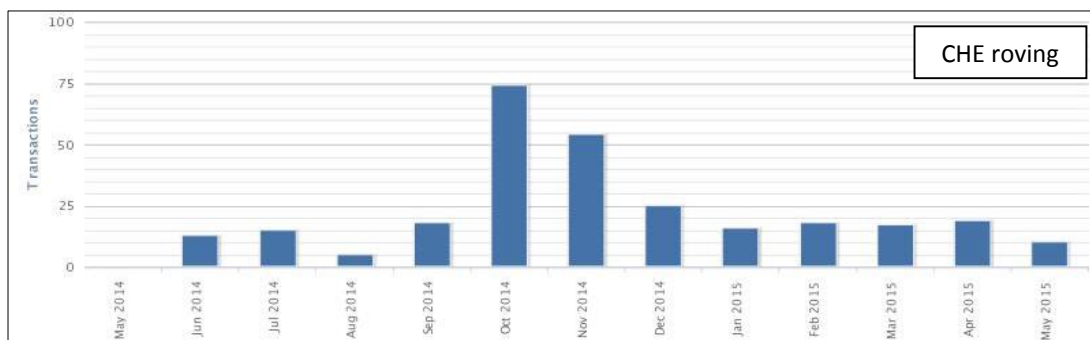


Fig. 06 – Chelmsford roving statistics (May 2014-15)

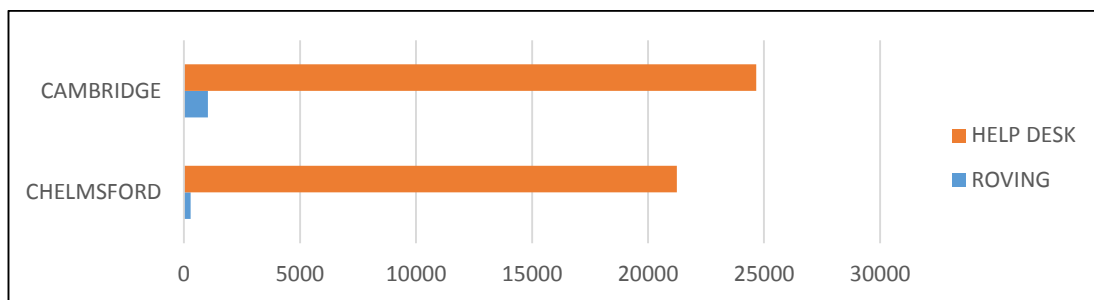


Fig. 07 – Roving and Help Desk enquiries (May 2014-15)

The researcher was allowed access to statistics recorded in LibAnswers ‘Reference Analytics’ (30 May 2014–29 May 2015). Rovers can use the iPad to record:

- day/time
- length of enquiry
- enquiry type (dozens of categories)
- retrospective statistics.

The researcher experienced challenges assessing the accuracy and reliability of statistics, as some part-timers recorded far more queries than their full-time counterparts; the implication being that some full-timers are not recording all queries or are using the system in error. Crump and Freund (2012, p. 23) affirm:

However, the human problem still persists. How well do librarians manage to record statistics for queries that are answered in so many formats and venues and how motivated are they to log into databases to do so? Unfortunately, the busy times ... are precisely when the staff is least likely to record.

1.3.11. Policing and other tasks

Since 2012, roving has naturally expanded to ‘policing’ library zones and enforcing rules. This has been formalised by actions arising from the LibQUAL 2014 survey:

- “... ensure that library staff continue with regular roving of each site as a priority, with particular emphasis on managing behaviour at assessment times” (ARU, 2014g).

A Frontline Services Delivery Working Group meeting reinforced this:

- “it is important for the roving service to remain as a high priority on the LSA rotas and the level of roving staff to be maintained, and if possible increased, at key service times” (ARU, 2014d).

CSD meeting notes from 2013 onwards revealed:

- Cambridge have periodic discussions around roving
- Roving is a standing item on Chelmsford’s team meeting agendas
- Cambridge (ARU, 2013c): “... we need to be more proactive in asking people if they need help rather than us waiting to be asked for help.”
- LSAs suggest they should be given another task to do when roving (due to perception that shelvers, etc. are approached more frequently)
- Cross-site CSMT meeting (ARU, 2015c) discussed giving rovers additional tasks but concluded: “...frontline staff felt the role was too heavy on ‘policing’ [but] it was agreed that the role is in place for staff to enforce rules through being a visible presence, and that additional tasks would detract from this.”

1.3.12. Summary

Internal information is not intended to form a comprehensive analysis of roving and CSD operations. It provides an introduction to this investigative study, and will be revisited in light of primary data collected. It is evident that significant effort has been made to introduce and embed roving. Pros and cons have been openly debated, and on the surface, the role seems to have become normalised. Arguably, it is transforming to fit the changing needs of students and CSD.

There is one additional document that acts as a catalyst to this study – a Padlet.com training exercise facilitated by the Training and Quality Co-ordinator with LSAs entitled, *'Roving metaphors and thoughts – Rove rage and how to re-think it!'* (ARU, 2014c). This session revealed that staff can feel a sense of frustration, boredom and stress while roving. The session conclusion suggested: “a balance to be struck between policing and helping and also walking round and round not doing anything vs. too active shelving, tidying, etc. Perhaps we need to give ourselves permission to do nothing and await an opportunity.”

1.4. Aims and objectives

1.4.1. Aim

This study will evaluate current roving practice in a university library with the aim of contributing towards a re-evaluation of the service using staff perspectives as its base. It will conclude with recommendations for operational improvements and further research. Askew (2015, p. 32) supports the validity of this aim:

There are always two sides to every story. In addition to gathering data from our patrons, there is also a need to gather data from roaming librarians (staff) in a more formal way ... In order to accomplish this in a comprehensive fashion necessitates using assessment methods and measures looking from the outside in, by obtaining data not only about the patron, but also about the librarian to capture and reveal the true story.

As well as serving as an academic research study, it may be of practical use to ARU and other libraries who plan to introduce or reassess roving.

1.4.2. Objectives

In order to achieve this aim, the following objectives will be met:

1. Identify and measure existing roving practice at ARU
2. Compare current practice with existing roving literature
3. Identify and examine staff perspectives of roving
4. Provide a critical evaluation of roving in light of research conducted
5. Recommend operational changes to the roving service at ARU as informed by past developments and current context.

1.4.3. Establishing research questions

This dissertation has adopted a case study approach. It is inductive in tone and “concentrates on one thing, looking at it in detail, not seeking to generalise from it” (Thomas, 2011b, p. 3). Thomas (2011b) advocates the establishment of a *prima facie* question(s) before determining research design and methods. Questions need not be fixed, and should have the flexibility to change over the course of research. Informal questions were established following a preliminary review of internal documents. They sought to be open-ended, in part to counter unconscious bias arising from the researcher’s status as a roving employee.

***Prima facie* questions**

- How is roving currently practised at ARU?
- How do staff feel about roving?

The following chapter, 2. Literature review, includes an evaluation of roving-related literature incorporating history, logistical elements and issues related to visibility and technology. It also explores staff compatibility, stress, change, innovation in customer service and a possible backlash to the ideas behind roving.

2. Literature review

2.1. Introduction

Roving is the act of a library employee circulating within the reference area or other parts of the library to offer assistance to users. A roving librarian approaches the user, rather than waiting for the user to come to the reference desk.

(Courtois and Liriano, 1999, p. 2)

This literature review will explore roving developments and concerns in order for such issues to be considered in the context of ARU. Roving is not yet quotidian in contemporary library settings, but overall the literature suggests that it is an established, varied, yet still growing practice. This review will identify gaps in the literature for further discussion, and will explore the rationale of various roving activities, identified through different models and trends. The literature search strategy is profiled in 3. Methodology.

2.2. History of roving

Kramer (1996 p. 68) notes that literature on roving “rolls by in waves.” An examination of material published in subsequent years reflects this. Courtois and Liriano (1999), Lorenzen (1997), McCabe and McDonald (2011) and particularly Kramer (1996) give an introduction to roving-related literature that pre-dates the 1990s, negating the need for detailed analysis here. Ramirez (1994) was used as a cut-off date for roving-specific literature.

2.2.1. Origins

Kramer (1996) and Courtois and Liriano (1999) emphasise the value in providing a roving service under the terms of customer service provision, highlighting the “point of use” assistance given at OPAC/CD-ROM terminals and PCs. Gill and Newton (2002) and Lorenzen (1997) describe library roving as having origins in the business/commercial sector philosophy of “Management by Wandering Around” – a technique used to keep managers and employees in physical contact. Much of this early wave makes little connection with long-established retail sector practice such as store greeters and floor-walking. Further investigation of business, leisure and

retail academic databases, suggests that floor-walking is not a direct equivalent of roving but implies checking the tidiness and merchandising of a shop floor, rather than focussing on assisting customers. Schmidt (2011, p. 18) alludes to the fears some librarians have of roving (with these commercial connotations) as being an “aggressive, crass retail approach.”

2.2.2. Phases of the literature

Following Kramer’s assertion, it could be said that there are two phases of literature post-Kramer, which is arguably blending into a third. The first phase (which appears to flourish after Courtois and Liriano’s seminal work (1999, 2000)) adopts a focus on ‘value’. The theme is an implementation of roving with the aim of helping users (and identifying those in need) in a pro-active manner. It occurs *throughout* the library environment. Gill and Newton (2002), Smith and Pietraszewski (2004) and Pitney and Slote (2007) reinforce and promote this ethos with profiles of roving pilots and implementations that were launched at their respective institutions.

The second phase provides a focus on technology – namely testing and adoption of tablets/smartphones as a roving aid. This proliferated in the wake of the Apple iPad first release (3rd April 2010), as reflected in Brown, Sulz and Pow (2011), Lotts and Graves (2011), Penner (2011), Widdows (2011) and Alcock and Lee (2013). Interest in mobile technology for roving purposes pre-dates the more recent explosion of tablet/smartphone ownership, as displayed by Smith and Pietraszewski (2004) and Hibner (2005). See 2.5. A recent focus on technology.

A perceived third phase returns to the original ethos of roving, where it is discussed in general terms, rather than through piloting and launches. It makes subtle connections between roving and customer service/‘innovation’, through a return to ideas of adding ‘value’. It introduces notions of personalisation and ‘boutique’ service (Priestner and Tilley, 2010; 2012), also exemplified by Brown, Sulz and Pow (2011, p. 3) who talk of “personalizing the reference encounter.” This reflects a shift toward a more market-driven/retail-style outlook.

2.3. Roving logistics

The core purpose of roving is to provide an immediate service to library users; “to lend assistance where patrons need it rather than having them come to the desk” (Balas, 2007, p. 27).

2.3.1. ‘Barriers’ and comfort zones

Some place an emphasis on the notion of desks as barriers (Pitney and Slote, 2007; Welford, 2008) and how roving is a service innovation that can ameliorate this issue:

The emphases of roving reference are on providing point-of-need instruction, discovering reference questions that otherwise might never be asked, and on building relationships with users. Roving also breaks down barriers and limitations imposed by physical and mental reference “desks”.

(Fritch and Mandernack, 2001, p. 302)

Penner (2011) riffs on the notion of barriers and the urge to “unchain” librarians from Help Desks. Others refer to staff moving away from the comfort of desks into open spaces (Smith and Pietraszewski, 2004; Pitney and Slote, 2007).

2.3.2. Three approaches to roving

With barriers real and perceived duly overcome, and staff facing the challenge of moving (or being placed) outside of their comfort zones, Courtois and Liriano (2000, p. 290) identify three approaches to roving:

In *passive* roving, the rover doesn’t make the first step in approaching users, but merely walks around the reference area and waits to be summoned for assistance. In the *broadcast* method, the rover announces an offer of assistance to a group of users ... We feel the *individual* approach is the most effective. Approach each user and offer assistance with lines such as, “Are you finding what you need?” “Can I help you with anything?”

Pitney and Slote (2007) advocate the *individual* approach, which is also evident in 1.3. ARU Library roving: a case study. However, at ARU, the *individual* approach seems to run in tandem with the *passive* approach – enhanced by efforts to increase the visibility of rovers. At ARU, the *broadcast* approach has occasionally been employed during busy times, when rovers act as ‘queue-busters’ to ease congestion at the Help Desk.

Others highlight the intuition and thought required for rovers to execute their roles to maximise effectiveness:

Doing it successfully requires ‘artfulness’ such as: using your own natural style of friendliness and approachability, showing discretion, sensitivity, keen observation (to determine which customers look like they would like some guidance), and good judgement and common sense. It is also a ‘science’ involving certain laws of communication and psychology, with proven methods, most useful approaches and best practices all of which generate positive responses from customers more often. For these reasons, training in the best professional roving practices is essential to success.

(Giannone, 2015, p. 2)

These different approaches warrant further investigation, as the literature offers scant evidence regarding the approach rovers take when circulating the library – at least after initial training and when roving is considered business-as-usual.

2.3.3. Scheduling and staffing roving

Many suggest that roving should be scheduled at the busiest times of day (Courtois and Liriano, 2000; Gill and Newton, 2002; Penner, 2011). There is a lack of clarity as to how to deploy rovers when they are most needed and little discussion as to how users may benefit from roving during perceived quieter times. Lorenzen (1997, p. 56) suggests that “it may prove impossible to rove at peak times.” Whereas a Help Desk must always be staffed, there could be a perception that a rover who does not take any enquiries is wasting time (Woodward, 2009, p. 153).

There are differing views as to who are the most suitable staff to undertake roving. The pilot described by Gill and Newton (2002, p. 45) involved staff from several areas of the library. They recommend this approach in their “top tips for rovers”. In contrast, Clark and Clark-Webster (2009) began roving with support staff (Library Assistants, Senior Library Assistants) – comparable to the ARU pilot.

Other pilots asked for volunteers but were met with reluctance, which indicates a struggle towards successful implementation: “... the roving reference service concept received varying levels of acceptance from the entire reference services group” (Smith and Pietraszewski, 2004, p. 254). Others have sought to employ student-peers as rovers. Tairi, et al. (2008), Lawrence and White (2010) and Conyers (2010) advocate this approach as there may be increased empathy and understanding if users were helped by other students. Some institutions have developed a sophisticated service that incorporates uniform, technology and observation research

undertaken by student employees – for example, Virginia Tech’s (2015) “Student Peer Roving Assistants” for example. Courtois and Liriano (1999; 2000) disagree with using students, suggesting that roving should be valued as a professional task that is part of the vocation of librarianship, and one not best suited to itinerant staff.

2.3.4. Policing and security

Pitney and Slote (2007, p. 55) “discovered that roving staff regularly attended to behaviour and security issues.” Coupling this issue of ‘policing’ with the use of student assistants, some institutions employ trained students to patrol the library with the sole purpose of enforcing rules and providing security during evening and weekend opening (Morrissett, 1994). Another example that reflects policing/behaviour issues is the establishment of Study Space Assistants (SSAs) at Royal Holloway (Sadlowski, 2012). This patrolling role was not necessarily introduced with the enquiry-based ethos of roving in mind, but uses ideas of visibility awareness and mobility to address desk-hogging and behaviour during pressurised exam periods.

2.4. Identifying rovers

There is a mixed response as to whether rovers should wear a uniform to increase visibility, whether a staff badge/lanyard would suffice, or if any identifier is needed.

2.4.1. Roving uniform

Courtois and Liriano (2000) and Welford (2008) refer to roving identifiers such as badges, lanyards and clipboards, while Lawrence and White (2010) and Virginia Tech (2015) advocate the same branded clothing approach adopted by ARU. Others disagree with the use of uniforms. Penner (2011) suggests that a low profile may conversely make a rover appear more approachable to shy users. Smith and Pietraszewski (2004, p. 253) note that their choice of university-branded colour scrub coat may have caused confusion:

The project team was not sure if the roving librarian was viewed by our student patrons as someone they could ask help from or if this wandering individual was serving as a monitor, policing the building. It was also thought that the students might have viewed the roving librarian as merely a technician testing the wireless network.

There seem to be no instances in the literature where roving uniforms have been discussed through the prism of staff ‘comfort zones’. It seems a given during the myriad pilots that identifiable clothing is beneficial in terms of visibility to users. However, mixed messages may be sent out, especially if policing/monitoring is part of a roving remit.

2.4.2. Possible effect on staff

Branded clothing could be viewed as another marker of the increasing resemblance of libraries to retail/leisure operations. LSAs may feel unsettled by being asked to wear something other than standard work attire. It would be pertinent to explore whether this discombobulates staff (consciously or unconsciously) and has a negative impact on attitudes and habits when roving. No author seems to triangulate the intentions/objectives of roving, the (arguable) need for visibility through clothing, and within this the crucial consideration of staff attitudes to and feelings of exposure. This gap in the literature, coupled with ARU’s ‘AskUs’ roving jackets/polo-shirts make this an area worthy of investigation.

2.4.3. Visibility

To date there has been no investigation that considers clothing for visibility purposes and how that relates to the approach adopted (*passive, broadcast, individual*), either as dictated by the organisation or determined by rovers. Staff who feel uncomfortable wearing a uniform may adopt a passive (even avoiding) approach because of said discomfort. Or they may conclude that a uniform automatically increases visibility which reduces the need to practise the *individual* approach. However, as Mellon’s (1986) work on students’ library anxiety shows, all aspects of library services have a role in fostering a more welcoming and service-oriented environment. Roving is an explicit embodiment of a personalised, pro-active service that could combat library anxiety and reach out to occasional/reticent users (Radford, 1998). However, if staff feel uncomfortable with roving and the sense of change it embodies, then a breakdown in the original objectives and effectiveness of the service could occur.

2.5. A recent focus on technology

In recent years, a significant body of literature has discussed the use of mobile electronic devices to enhance roving provision.

2.5.1. Introducing the iPad

Brown, Sulz & Pow (2011), Lotts and Graves (2011) and Widdows (2011) all place the Apple iPad at the centre of their respective studies, while Penner (2011) explores using the Apple iPod Touch. These articles were published in the year following the release of the 1st generation iPad (April 2010). Despite the likes of Smith and Pietraszewski (2004) exploring tablet use previously, this marquee release seems to have piqued the interest of those administering or planning roving. Ease of connectivity (in theory), user-friendliness and relative affordability meant that this was an innovation that many could experiment with without expending too much time or money.

2.5.2. Technological innovation

The adoption of iPads is the latest in a long line of technological advancement in libraries that could convey a willingness to update and improve services (Brown, Sulz and Pow, 2011, p. 4; VanDuinkerken and Arant-Kaspar, 2015, pp. 73–74). Self-service machines and RFID tagging also embody this innovation in library services. Relevant literature alludes to iPads as cutting-edge; adding gravitas to rovers and the wider library service from a marketing/promotional perspective. Schmidt (2011, p. 18) suggests that “these devices signal cultural relevance, and we shouldn’t ignore the benefits of using tools that impress patrons.” iPads (and other tablets/devices) have quickly reached a critical mass. Consequently, rovers no longer stand out by having a device in hand. As seen in 2.3.1. ‘Barriers’ and comfort zones, approaches taken and ‘comfort’ levels may have more of an impact than any ‘gadgets’ adopted.

2.5.3. Implementation of technology

Articles that explore utilising iPads do not attempt to conceal the challenges associated with piloting and implementing new technology. Themes within sources identify issues such as Wi-Fi connectivity and a perceived ‘clunkiness’ in accessing information via a tablet-sized screen. Nevertheless, there seems to be a type of

technological determinism that runs through this strand of literature – one that exposes some as having a preoccupation with technology and its adoption as the main driver of change/improvement in the service environment. Widdows (2011) and Lotts and Graves (2011) are particularly susceptible to this. There seems to be scant thought given to the viewpoints of rovers on the advent of mobile technology adoption, beyond a cursory training session. It would be useful to explore how staff experience using technology after the novelty factor has worn off.

There is a dissenting voice that provides a fuller exposition of the issues surrounding staff attitudes to roving and various ‘add-ons’ that institutions try:

In November 2011 we conducted our first review, which showed that the majority of staff had quickly given up using them [iPads]. Why? Access to all our support services simply wasn’t available via the web browser so to address this we decided to try a remote desktop App to allow us to remote control a PC ... Staff loved the idea, and we reviewed again in January 2012, but this time we did a full review of the roving process as well as the iPad’s role in it. We found that after an initial explosion of enthusiasm, iPads were once more not being used.

(Williamson, 2012a)

2.6. Staff compatibility and training

Lorenzen (1997), Pitney and Slote (2007) and Brown, Sulz and Pow (2011) emphasise that staff compatibility is crucial to the effectiveness of roving, especially considering not only the *individual* approach (Courtois and Liriano, 2000) but more general aspects of roving. Although many stress the importance of training and support, there are varying opinions as to whether compatibility means the inherent personalities of participating staff, or whether the skills required can be cultivated. Courtois and Liriano (1999, p. 4) state pithily to “put your best people on the front line”, with the appendage “a lack of quality, on-going training can result in incomplete service.” It is not clear as to what they consider as “best people.”

2.6.1. Personality types

Pitney and Slote (2007) and Brown, Sulz and Pow (2011) allude to the notion of introverted/extroverted personalities. Pitney and Slote (2007, p. 57) found some took to the “pleasure of working with the public” with ease, while others had difficulty in being pushed out of their comfort zone. Woodward (2009, p. 160) talks of the perils

to a whole service if introverted staff “don’t enjoy working with customers” and use avoidance tactics in order to “minimize contact with the public.” This is reflected to an extent in the ARU documentation, where it was acknowledged that some staff rove more confidently than others. Training was arranged to address this.

2.6.2. Interpersonal skills

Lorenzen (1997, p. 55) highlights the impact uncommitted roving can have: “Patrons approached by disinterested or untactful librarians are not going to feel comfortable. Roving by uninterested or unfriendly librarians will damage the reputation of a library.” Pressley, Dale and Kellam (*in* Pagowsky and Rigby, 2014, p. 224) even suggest that duties could be assigned or chosen by staff based on persona, without gaps in services opening up; the implication being that library staff have a wide range of professional interests and that job-‘hogging’ and task avoidance are essentially myths. This view neglects considerations of generic job descriptions and timetabling challenges, seen in the ARU documentation and supported by Lorenzen (1997, p. 56). Schmidt (2011, p. 18) displays a more pragmatic approach, advocating that interpersonal skills required can be nurtured through training, regardless of staff sensibilities or personality:

Just the way librarians develop a command of information resources, they should also develop a greater understanding of people. Though some people are naturals, it is possible to develop the skills it takes to know whether a patron wants to be approached and how to engage a variety of patrons.

2.7. Change and stress

Many profiles of roving launches emphasise the importance of how it is introduced to staff. Pitney and Slote (2007) and Clark and Clark-Webster (2009, p. 84) stress the importance of initial training and a tactful introduction to the ideas of roving with Q&A sessions and voluntary piloting “to achieve a group of willing and enthusiastic volunteers.” Gill and Newton (2002, p. 45) state: “be prepared to fail and learn!” Farley, Broady-Preston and Hayward (1998, p. 151) note that “change has permeated through every aspect of work in academic libraries.” They highlight the significance of the *quantity* of change and the pace at which it occurs. Broady-Preston and Preston (2010, Unit 6, p. 58) suggest that different types of change can be identified

– “continuous” (or incremental) and “discontinuous”, which could be interpreted as ‘disruptive’ and potentially risky for staff/organisations if not handled properly:

Change is perhaps better ‘cultivated’ rather than ‘managed’. Cultivation of change will allow adaptations to be more easily accommodated and enable the differences (or competition and conflict) between individuals to be channelled into new possibilities rather than create deadlocks.

2.7.1. Change management

Using incremental change tactics to launch and perform roving is prominent in the literature. Pitney and Slote (2007, p. 59) acknowledge that roving creates an enormous change for staff, but advocate “setting small goals is a tried-and-true method for developing new behaviours”, with the objective of achieving successful, long-term change. Line (2004, p. 231) suggests that whatever the change management strategies used, “the absorption of change into the culture will be slow.” Penner (2011, p. 32) modifies this by suggesting that roving is not a change as such and can be ‘sold’ as a subtle addition or modification to an existing service – an “added value project.” Brown, Sulz and Pow (2011, p. 13) conclude that roving requires sustained commitment and that “a continuous process of innovation and adaptation” is the key to successful implementation.

Farley, Broady-Preston and Hayward (1998, p. 155) pull discussions of change back to a ‘human’ focus; a crucial element that is often overlooked in roving discussions:

Particular attention must be paid to the people who are expected to carry out any changes, and to those who will be affected ... People must be given support if they are to respond positively to the idea of change.

They identify four areas to address for successful change management; “communication and information sharing, staff involvement and participation, training and development, and job design” – with “involvement and participation” being the key focus for successful change implementation (Farley, Broady-Preston and Hayward, 1998, p. 156).

2.7.2. Workplace stress

Asking reticent or introverted staff to rove, no matter how deftly introduced, could be seen as a stress-inducer. Others may view new customer service initiatives with suspicion as “the latest top-down management whim, designed to make everyone’s life miserable” (Todaro and Smith, 2006, p. 102). Fears and needs of staff must be

considered if change implementation is to avoid problems for the organisation (Farley, Broady-Preston and Hayward, 1998). Fears and needs should be considered at every stage of implementing change – not just at the beginning.

Farler and Broady-Preston's (2012, p. 231) study on workplace stress in libraries does not mention roving, but their findings are significant in light of issues identified at ARU. They found that noise levels, the need to maintain control, and policing student behaviour were prevalent causes of stress. Occasionally, some felt inadequacy due to an inability to control student behaviour. Elsewhere, aforementioned issues of change were cited as stressors in the working environment (2012, p. 232), with the resultant stress manifested by a lack of motivation, ill health and poor employee performance at work ("presenteeism") (2012, p. 228).

2.8 Customer service and innovation

More recent literature on customer service and innovation in librarianship flows seamlessly with the key material reviewed here. Woodward (2004; 2009) sees roving as a feature that would reflect a more customer-driven library hinterland. She talks of "building on the bookstore model" (2004) and adopting sales floor service techniques displayed by "high-end retail stores" (2009, p. 105). Priestner and Tilley (2010; 2012) look to the hospitality sector – specifically the 'boutique' hotel model – to develop a service culture of collaboration and personalisation. These ideas are evident in the core ethos of roving, with the "interpersonal dynamics" highlighted by Courtois and Liriano (2000, p. 315) and the notion of roving "changing the nature of the relationship between library staff and students" (Welford, 2008, p. 4). Conyers (2010) suggests that roving is a new role that can be a powerful marketing tool. Notions of collaboration are not new in library service provision and user interaction, as Fritch and Mandernack (2001, p. 299) state, "the librarian should be open to a mutual learning experience with the user." However, ideas of "building brands" and user-centred marketing (Thompson *in* Priestner and Tilley, 2012, p. 152) are more recent developments in library services that link to the commercial sector. These emerging trends have been viewed with hostility by some areas of the profession.

2.8.1. Opposition

Academic libraries are operating in a more marketised, income-driven environment, in no small part due to the increasing fee structure linked to UK universities, with students arguably seeing themselves as consumers (Temple and Callender, 2015; Wheatcroft, 2015). In turn, library operations look to the commercial sector for innovation and ways to advertise services to remain competitive. Temple and Callender (2015) feel that the rise of a student-as-consumer scenario has meant a risk to the appropriateness of services provided and quality of education received, as “the emphasis has come to be on student wants rather than their needs.” According to Havergal (2014, p. 13) some senior university staff feel marketisation has created waste, and that ‘charters’ and other service commitment documents are infantilising students and degrading mutual trust.

The move towards a customer-oriented service culture (with roving as a manifestation of this) represents a paradigm shift in how libraries operate. This change has disturbed some professionals, to the extent that a possible schism could be materialising. On one hand, there is the notion of “personalisation” (Priestner and Tilley, 2012), the consumer-driven bookstore model ideas of Woodward (2004; 2009) and the pervasive use of business-minded phraseology, such as Brown, Sulz and Pow’s (2011, p. 13) “... continuous process of innovation and adaptation to meet new challenges and contexts.” On the other hand, Wylie (2012) rails against roving and essentially mocks the “commercialised” language of customer engagement, “adding value” through roving and the increasing focus on user experience. The Radical Librarians Collective (2015) has taken this further, framing the increasing customer focus and related vernacular within the realms of political opposition:

Neo-liberal and managerialist attitudes are now prevalent within the library and information workplaces. Their pervasiveness has threatened the stability of library and information services, the very nature of organisations and employment within these.

The following chapter, 3. Methodology, outlines the research methods used. There is a justification and evaluation of selected methods followed by considerations when conducting a work-based study. It describes methods followed when conducting the search strategy and research. Research design is informed by the evaluation of roving at ARU, as well as more general issues pertaining to roving.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research methods

3.1.1. The single-site case study

This dissertation adopts a case study approach in its investigation of staff perspectives on roving. Bryman (2012, p. 709) defines a case study as “a research design that entails the detailed and intensive analysis of a single case. The term is sometimes extended to include the study of just two or three cases for comparative purposes.” Farler and Broady-Preston (2012) note the value of single-case, small scale research and reference Payne and Payne (2005) in asserting that a single case can be studied and presented in its own right, without any credibility being lost if a comparative exercise is not performed. In support, Gorman and Clayton (2005, p. 47) suggest that a single-site case “is in no way inferior to ... more complex techniques, for it requires a depth of investigation that is both rigorous and thorough.” Despite the absence of an explicitly comparative approach (with roving at another institution), intra-site comparisons have been possible between campuses, as well as the two levels of staff interviewed.

3.1.2. Distinction between research *design* and research *methods*

A case study approach does not serve as a research method in its own right but rather a framework to be adopted. As Bryman (2012, p. 45) affirms, there is often confusion here:

The case study approach is very often referred to as a method. As we shall see, a case study entails the detailed exploration of a specific case, which could be a community, organization, or person. But, once a case has been selected, a research method or research methods are needed to collect data.

In taking an inductive approach, the following data collection methods were used:

- Collection and analysis of internal material
- Literature review
- Survey
- Interviews

Each is detailed in 3.2. Justification for research methods.

3.1.3. Mixed methods

This study adopts a mixed methods approach. There has been an increasing trend in the blurring of traditional quantitative and qualitative methodologies (Bryman, 2012). “Quantitative research usually emphasizes quantification” (Bryman, 2012, p. 716). It “focuses more on numerical and statistical data collection and analysis” (Gorman and Clayton, 2005, p. 3). Qualitative research “usually emphasizes words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data” (Bryman, 2012, p. 715). It “focuses on social constructs that are complex and always evolving, making them less amenable to precise measurement or numerical interpretation” (Glense, 1999 *in* Gorman and Clayton, 2005, p. 3). This blurring is reflected to some extent in the quasi-quantification of some of the data collected and the inherent nature of basic thematic analysis techniques applied to unstructured interviews.

3.1.4. Triangulation

The purpose of adopting a mixed methods approach was twofold; both to traverse the practical limitations of work-based study and to achieve a degree of triangulation. The objective of which is the corroboration of data in order to inform discussion.

Triangulation or greater validity – refers to the traditional view that quantitative and qualitative research might be combined to triangulate findings in order that they may be mutually corroborated.

(Bryman, 2012, p. 45)

3.2. Justification for research methods

3.2.1. Documents as sources of data

A benefit of conducting a study at the researcher’s workplace is the potential to access information that would not be afforded to an external researcher. Senior CSD staff were generous in sharing internal information including:

- documentation on development of roving
- CSD meeting minutes
- LSA timetables
- roving statistics.

Bryman (2012, p. 543) suggests that one advantage of using “non-reactive” internal documents is that “they have not been created specifically for the purposes of social research” and can therefore be discounted as a limitation on validity. Bryman cites Scott (1990 *in* Bryman, 2012, p. 544) in his recommended four criteria to use when assessing documentation: *authenticity*, *credibility*, *representativeness* and *meaning*. The aforementioned ‘internal’ advantage could cause complacency in assuming documents automatically meet the four criteria. *Authenticity*, *credibility* and (literal) *meaning* come secondary to notions of *representativeness* in this respect. Although some documents give a comprehensive account of roving, this does not guarantee that all relevant information was shared. The author’s intention should be considered when negotiating information, which one “should not necessarily accept at face value” (Pickard, 2013, p. 252). Despite documents not being intended for external consumption, bias and agenda can cloud their meaning and interpretation.

Pickard (2013, p. 252) states the dual value of an initial review of documents:

In addition to drawing on documents for background information, it is possible to integrate the use of sources of this type into the main phases of data collection and analysis within a project ... [the researcher may] explore appropriate documentary material when seeking to verify data elicited directly from the participants and thereby enhance the study’s trustworthiness by providing a measure of triangulation.

3.2.2. Literature review

There was an initial interest in grounded theory. Traditionally under this research framework, a literature review is not performed prior to primary data collection. Nevertheless, there is an ongoing debate about the place of the literature review in grounded research (Dunne, 2011). It seemed appropriate to adopt a more orthodox approach to the literature (prior to primary data collection) – the main reason being the practicalities of conducting work-based study. A wider context was required *prior* to primary data collection to inform the direction and robustness of these methods. Pickard (2013, p. 25) suggests that “literature reviews can take on two roles, one is as a research method in itself and the other as preparation for further empirical data” – as is the case in this study. Pickard notes that a literature review should act as a runway that provides a foundation of subject knowledge.

3.2.3. Quantitative research

An online survey was selected as the primary research method to elicit data from rovers. Bryman (2012) lists advantages and disadvantages of using a survey in quantitative research; it was felt that many of the disadvantages could be combatted by the advantage of conducting a study in one’s workplace:

Advantages	Disadvantages
Immediate access to survey population	“low response rate” (pp. 676–677)
Ability to send email reminders and mention in meetings	“requires motivation” (pp. 676–677)
Survey potentially more attractive due to researcher’s status as a colleague	Researcher may not know if respondents have requisite knowledge to answer a question (p. 179)
Researcher has first-hand knowledge and experience of roving at the university – a more bespoke and insightful survey	Reliance on quantitative methods can expose disconnect between data and context of everyday life in which any given phenomena or trend occurs
Analysis of internal documents as a strong basis for survey construction	
Data collection can achieve more depth and clarity than if conducted at an unfamiliar institution	

Tab. 04 – Advantages and disadvantages of a work-based study

3.2.4. Qualitative research

Gorman and Clayton (2005, p. 59) suggest that the accuracy and validity of findings can be increased by employing an additional method of inquiry. Interviews were selected to supplement survey data:

- i. to explore roving in more depth and from a different perspective
- ii. to corroborate themes and facilitate the possible emergence of ‘effective surprise’, where one’s preconceptions are overturned and prior expectations challenged through research undertaken.

Interviewees were management staff who do not actively rove, but are involved in its administration. Practical aspects were considered, with time required for conducting and transcribing interviews, as well as the risk of taking up colleagues’ time during a busy period. Following advice from Bryman (2012) and Gorman and Clayton

(2005), a purposive sampling approach was utilised in determining who to interview.

Two interviewees were selected:

1. CSS at Chelmsford (instrumental in development of roving)
 - To provide views on supervising roving – operational and tactical aspects
2. AD of CSD (commenced post July 2014)
 - To bring a fresh perspective on strategic direction of roving

The nature of unstructured interviewing would enable any aspect of roving to be explored by either interviewee. The approach developed around the following aspects of qualitative research:

Aspect of research	Explanation / Action	Source(s)
Style	Unstructured to semi-structured	
Preparation	Interview guides emailed to participants in advance	Patton (1990), Pickard (2013)
Transcript	Open-coded to draw out identifiable themes	
	Careful not to develop and retain too many codes or overcomplicate the coding process	Bryman (2012, p. 577)
Narrative analysis	Initially considered as a method sensitive to interviewing colleagues and discussing working practice – to reduce the risk of skewing sentiments conveyed in interviews and “plucking chunks of text out of the context within which they appeared”	Bryman (2012, p. 578)
Thematic approach	Adopted approach to interview data	
	Limited quantification can help combat anecdotalism and fragmentation habits which are often levelled as criticisms of qualitative research analysis.	Bryman (2012)

Tab. 05 – Aspects of qualitative research

3.3. Work-based study

3.3.1. Bias and neutrality

Central to the methodology is the consideration that this study has taken place in the researcher’s workplace. The researcher is an LSA who undertakes roving. Consequently, the site of research is not neutral, and there could be a danger that

personal preconceptions, bias (unintentional or otherwise) and lack of objectivity could cloud the study. There is balance to be struck in conducting work-based research:

Where you are already intimately familiar with the setting or data sources, there may be significant in-built biases of which you are unaware. But a trade-off here is that you already have ready entry to the environment and do not need to develop rapport with the subjects ... The issue then becomes one of how well you can use your existing relationships to facilitate access, while at the same time not allowing these relationships to colour perceptions during the investigation. If you can put personal preconceptions aside, and collect data *as if* from an unknown site, then the site can be viewed as neutral.

(Gorman and Clayton, 2005, p. 68)

3.3.2. Ethical considerations

Aberystwyth University's *DIS: Ethics policy for research* (Urquhart and Rogers, 2003) was followed throughout. It influenced research conduct, and the collation and interpretation of documents. The following actions were taken:

- confidentiality and anonymity sought to improve data quality and maintain individual and organisational trust
- senior staff consulted to maintain goodwill
- permission obtained to reproduce internal documents, images, etc.
- proposal approved by Library Senior Management Team (SMT) (will receive copy post-submission)
- progress not discussed with colleagues (may cause undue influence)
- interview recordings, transcripts, data stored away from workplace – to be destroyed in accordance with policy 4c. iv
- data/documentation censored to prevent identification of individuals
- links between survey questions and comments removed to ensure anonymity.

An initial interest in conducting ethnographic research (Bryant, 2009; Priestner, 2015) in a library setting was discarded due to ethical considerations of conducting workplace research and danger of observation being interpreted as 'spying'. An offer to use the library's premium SurveyMonkey account was declined so as not to compromise data security and anonymity.

3.3.3. Informed consent

Informed consent to participate was achieved through an introductory email sent out with the survey (Appendix F). This stated the purpose of the research, stressed anonymity and outlined how the data may be used. Informed consent statements were adapted from the *Research Ethics* section of Aberystwyth University DIS Blackboard. Interviewees signed consent forms (Appendix G).

3.4. Limitations

The researcher's employment status could be considered a disadvantage in terms of the inability to guarantee removal of bias as a result of association. The study is limited to measuring the current context of roving and relies on the perceptions of a relatively small populations to inform its findings. It draws upon the opinions of specific staff and, although relevant, does not collect data from others who may be indirectly involved in roving, either now or in the past. This study is conducted in isolation in that staff have been surveyed on only one frontline service. As a result the data gathered, whether positive or negative, could be construed as inflated in comparison to other duties. Another limitation is that this study does not draw upon investigations of roving at comparable institutions.

3.5 Literature search strategy

Biggam (2011, p. 42) informed the selection of topic questions, defining terms and setting boundaries for the literature search. Using his "I want to know" guidance, the following lines of inquiry were adopted:

- When roving started as a trend and why it was introduced.
- If (and how) other institutions have been undertaking roving.
- How roving has been critically assessed by those institutions.
- How participating staff practise roving and how they feel about it.
- Perceptions on the benefits of roving.

A list of keywords pertaining to roving were used to perform searches in the Library, Information Science and Technology Abstracts (LISTA) and Library and Information Science Abstracts (LISA) databases.

As the literature search progressed and an element of serendipity developed through citation chaining, so too did the strategy, as wider terms/themes emerged from the literature. Boolean operators and wildcards were used to expand and refine search terms (Appendix H). Additional databases (e.g. Emerald Insight, Directory of Open Access Journals), were consulted in a supporting capacity.

There was an initial assumption that roving was a niche, emerging trend, so contrary to Biggam's (2011) advice, no date, sector-specific or geographical boundaries were set in performing initial searches. The body of literature uncovered incorporated related material with a focus on the future of library enquiry desks, service development and innovation, and the adoption of mobile technology. Selection and analysis of literature followed Biggam's (2011, p. 43) mantra of "Relevant? Reliable? Recent?" and advice on critical evaluation provided by Pickard (2013). The intention was to restrict searching to academic library sector material spanning the previous ten years. However, after a scan of preliminary material, it emerged that key texts fell outside these parameters so such limitations were not enforced.

3.6. Method: roving survey

The survey consisted of ten questions and was sent to 23 LSAs via email on 6th May 2015 (deadline: 29th May). LSAs received a weekly email reminder and it was mentioned in staff meetings. See Appendix I for the final survey. SurveyMonkey (2015a) was used to host the survey in a free, familiar format that enabled anonymity and for responses to be processed upon submission. SurveyMonkey also allowed the option of compulsory question control. Question types were limited to:

- Multiple choice (one option): Q1–5a
- Multiple choice (more than one option): Q9
- Free text comments: Q5b, Q10
- Matrix/Rating scale: Q6–8

The survey commenced with a dictionary definition of 'rove' and Courtois and Liriano's (2000) definition of roving.

In accordance with advice given by Gorman and Clayton (2005) and SurveyMonkey (2015a), a pilot version was sent to the Training and Quality Coordinator and Staff Learning & Development Manager in confidence. Each was asked to complete and comment on this version to test its content and functionality. This had the dual purpose of piloting the survey as well as adhering to *DIS: Ethics Policy for Research* section 4 in the sense of keeping senior staff informed:

- ii. Professional colleagues are generous in welcoming students who are pursuing projects on professional subjects, and mutual trust is important to both parties.
- iii. If a student aims to include data/comments/responses collected in workplace conversation or interview or other method, then these must be checked for consent to use, anonymity, confidentiality and accuracy, at least.
(Urquhart and Rogers, 2003, p. 4)

The same exercise was undertaken with an individual unconnected to ARU or the library profession. Minor adjustments were made as a result of feedback. Test responses were deleted before the final survey was distributed. The following settings were applied (SurveyMonkey, 2015b):

SurveyMonkey setting	Reasons for applying setting
Allow multiple responses per computer	– to enable respondents to take the survey on a shared computer in a work environment (the most likely location for accessing the survey)
Edit responses	– to enable respondents to add/change answers before the deadline
Cut-off date	– deadline set for the survey to close (one month after the deadline)
Turn off IP collection	– not collecting IP addresses would increase the level of anonymity
Password protection	– not deemed necessary as survey distributed to small group

Tab. 06 – SurveyMonkey settings

3.6.1. General questions

Qs1–5 comprised of general questions to establish location, employment status, length of service and roving experience. This information would provide an overview of the collective group which could potentially be used to investigate patterns in responses and how these may be influenced by such factors.

3.6.2. Likert scale

Q6 included a 32-statement Likert scale. Respondents were asked to rank each statement from strongly agree to strongly disagree. A number (1–5) was allocated to each ranking in order to determine the mean value of each statement. Results were processed as below:

	Strongly agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neither ... nor ... (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	Total	Mean	SD +/-
Statement	10	8	6	4	2	30	3	1.49
	2	2	2	2	2	10		
Key for calculating data:								
Red row	number of respondents who selected each ranking							
Red total	number of respondents (10)							
Black row	number of respondents x number allocated to ranking (2 x 5 = 10)							
Black total	total score for the statement (10+8+6+4+2 = 30)							
Mean value (brackets)	total divided by respondents (30/10 = 3)							
Standard deviation	calculated to measure the spread for each statement (in Appendix K)							

Tab. 07 – Coding Likert scale statements

Tab. 08 shows statements grouped into four categories. These were randomised in the survey, but later categorised in order to identify patterns in responses:

Statements	Description	Aim
Emotional response to roving		
1	I enjoy roving.	Positive and negative statements related to roving.
2	Students benefit from my help while I rove.	
3	I tolerate roving.	
4	I feel uncomfortable roving.	
5	Roving is often boring.	
6	Roving is often stressful.	
Understanding the role		
7	Roving is an important aspect of our library service.	Importance and purpose of roving and the manner in which it should be done.
8	Roving at ARU is predominantly about policing.	
9	Roving at ARU is predominantly about taking enquiries.	
10	Approachability is the most important requirement of the role.	
		To understand how roving makes LSAs feel in general.
		To understand staff perceptions of roving as a service and their view of its relative importance within the wider library provision offered by the university. To explore views on how it should be done and whether LSAs

11	Roving should be undertaken in conjunction with other tasks.		feel they have received sufficient training to feel confident and competent in the role.
12	I feel highly trained on roving.		
Roving behaviour			
13	I mainly stay on the ground floor.	Location, routines and personal behaviours.	To highlight any patterns in roving routines and behaviours and to understand how comfortable LSAs feel when it comes to approaching students.
14	I mainly stay on the upper floor(s).		
15	If the library is quiet I will gravitate towards the Help Desk.		
16	I have a set routine when on roving duty.		
17	I try to ask as many people as I can if they need help.		
18	I find it easy to approach people and ask them if they need help.		
19	I find it easy to approach people to ask them to stop eating/talking/using a mobile phone in the quiet/silent zones.		
Personal preferences when roving			
20	I prefer working on the Help Desk to roving.	General Different roving environments and tasks performed in conjunction.	To understand whether there are patterns of preferences for roving in particular circumstances.
21	I prefer having another task to do (shelving, searching, etc.) whilst roving.		
22	I prefer roving when it is busy.		
23	I prefer roving when it is quiet.		
24	I prefer roving during the day.		
25	I prefer roving during the evening.	Technology Statements related to use of technology.	To establish how prevalently technology is welcomed, used and whether it enhances the roving process for staff.
26	I use the iPad to help with enquiries.		
27	I record all my roving statistics on the iPad.		
28	I don't think the iPad aids me in providing a good roving service.		
29	I think that the text-a-talker service works well.		
30	I like wearing the roving jacket/polo shirt.	Visibility and appearance Statements related to the roving jacket/polo shirt worn by rovers when on duty.	To explore LSA reactions to wearing roving clothing and how this affects staff.
31	I don't think the roving jacket/polo shirt adds anything to the roving service for staff or students.		
32	Sometimes I don't wear the jacket/polo shirt when roving.		

Tab. 08 – Statement aims

3.6.3. Ranking activities and services

Qs7–8 required participants to rank options from 1 to 5:

Q	Five options	Ranking criteria	Aim
7	Activities related to specific tasks, roving behaviours and discipline	Order of importance	To understand what staff perceive to be the relative importance of five key functions of the service.
8	Frontline services	Order of preference	To understand whether LSAs have a preference for a particular duty and to ascertain where roving features within this scale.

Tab. 09 – Ranking aims

For both questions each option was allocated a score depending on its position:

1st = 5, 2nd = 4, 3rd = 3, 4th = 2, 5th = 1

Results for each option were totalled to determine the overall ranking. The total was divided by the number of respondents to determine the mean. So, if Activity 1 achieved a score of 40 from 20 respondents the mean would be 2. Once means were calculated options were ranked from 1 to 5.

	Data	Mean	Ranking
[Activity 1]	40	2	4
[Activity 2]	60	3	2
[Activity 3]	20	1	5
[Activity 4]	45	2.25	3
[Activity 5]	70	3.5	1

Tab. 10 – Coding ranking questions

3.6.4. Word selection

Q9 listed 49 words/phrases associated with roving. Participants were asked to select 5–10 words that come to mind when they think of roving and were given the opportunity to add their own words/phrases. Results were used to create a word cloud. The list included an equal number of perceived positive and negative words, as well as neutral words/phrases related to different aspects of the service. The complete list could be categorised as follows:

TYPE		WORD/PHRASE	No.
POSITIVE		ACTIVE, COMFORTABLE, CONFIDENT, ENJOYABLE, FUN, HAPPY, PRODUCTIVE, RELAXING, REWARDING	9
NEGATIVE		BORING, CONFUSED, DRAG, EMBARRASSED, POINTLESS, REPETITIVE, RUDE, STRESSFUL, UNCOMFORTABLE	9
NEUTRAL	GENERAL	ADDING VALUE, CHALLENGE, CUSTOMER SERVICE, DISCIPLINE, FRONTLINE, PATROLLING, VARIETY	7
	CLOTHING	'ASKUS' JACKET, POLO SHIRT	2
	TECHNOLOGY	IPAD, PHONES, TEXT-A-TALKER	3
	LIBRARY SERVICES	BOOKS, CATALOGUE, ENQUIRIES, HELP DESK, SEARCHING FOR BOOKS, SELF-SERVICE MACHINE, SHELVING	7
	ENVIRONMENT	BUSY, CIRCUIT, COLD, DRINK, FOOD, HOT, QUIET, ROUTINE, TALKING, UNATTENDED PROPERTY, WALKING, WANDERING	12

Tab. 11 – Word selection categories

A word cloud is a way of representing lexical data in one infographic. There are two questions in the survey where the data would be conducive to forming word clouds with. The relative size of each word corresponds with its frequency in the word list or text, so most frequent words appear largest (Thomas, 2011a, p. 73). Ennis (2010, p. 2) suggests that word clouds serve a purpose for being “eye-catching, novel and for presenting key points in a quick, effective way”, while also noting their limitations and perceived potential to distort context and representativeness.

The idea for a word selection exercise was borne from the desire to present different ways of eliciting opinions. Benedek and Miner’s (2002, p. 1) research on usability testing developed a similar word card exercise. While acknowledging limitations, they put forth that the method would be quick to administer and that resulting data would be easy to analyse. Using Q10 free-text comments to form a word cloud would arguably be more vulnerable to weakness, but would still provide a useful visual representation of the sentiments conveyed in extensive comments.

3.6.5. Free-text comments

The last question gave participants a final opportunity to reflect:

What do you think roving adds to the library user experience at ARU?

Participants were invited to add any comments about roving, including those related to experience. A complete transcript of free-text comments was used to make a second word cloud. Firstly, all articles, prepositions, conjunctions and pronouns

were removed from the text. The following words (and variations from word families) were also removed: *library, roving, student, user, staff*. Although these were most frequent; their dominance skewed the presentation of other, less obvious yet significant words/phrases that it seemed more pertinent to draw attention to. There is an inherent danger in the quasi-quantification of qualitative data such as free-text comments in that words can be taken out of context when presented in this format. Nevertheless, this was deemed a useful exercise in illustrating staff opinions without resorting to narrative repetition (Bryman, 2012).

A separate email was sent to CSSs at both campuses, and the two ‘Roving Champions’ (LSAs, Chelmsford); asking for any (additional) viewpoints. The intention being to target staff who may have a different standpoint due to their distinct roles in the provision of the service. Confidentiality was stressed yet no responses were received.

3.7. Method: interviews

The other research method involved two interviews with members of senior staff. Once interviews were transcribed they were open-coded to bring out key themes. Interview data was presented in spider diagrams (see 4.2. Interviews).

3.7.1. Interviewee selection and preparation

	Interviewee 1	Interviewee 2
Job title	Customer Service Supervisor	Assistant Director of CSD
Based	Chelmsford	Cambridge
Time in post	5 years	1 year
Preparation	One week in advance each participant received: - a guide containing a summary of topics/areas for discussion (Appendix J) - a draft version of roving timeline These were intended to give an overview of topics to be explored and to offer prompts that may help in preparation for unstructured interviews	

Tab. 12 – Interviewees

The following chapter, 4. Results, presents data from the two primary research methods conducted. A focus on clarity and consistency in the presentation of results is intended to enable easy absorption of information. Although results are presented as a complete data set, campus comparisons of potential interest are included.

4. Results

4.1. Roving survey

All 23 LSAs participated in the survey thus no sampling of results was necessary. All completed the survey with the following exceptions: respondent #2 (Q1–6), respondent #23 (Q1–5). See Appendix K for results data. The results below include collective responses, regardless of location. Where relevant, any key differences between campuses are illustrated.

4.1.1. Questions 1–5 (General questions)

The first five questions collect general information. 57% work at Cambridge and 43% at Chelmsford. 57% are employed on a full-time basis and 43% work part-time.

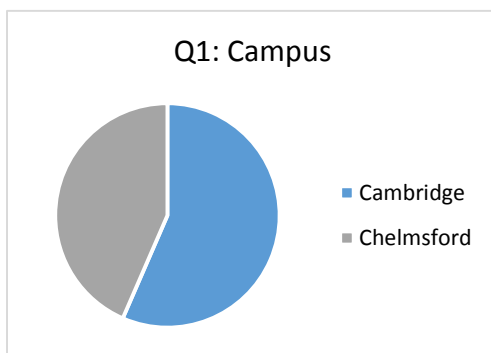


Fig. 08 – Survey Q1

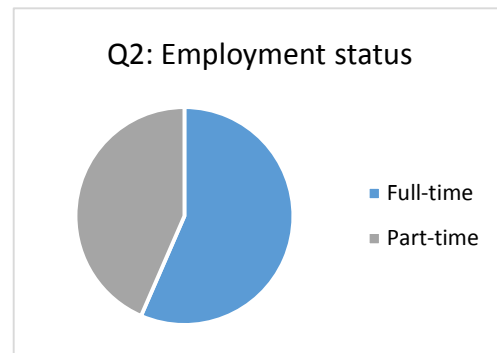


Fig. 09 – Survey Q2

70% of participants have been employed as an LSA at ARU for 0–3 years (35% for less than a year, 35% for 1–3 years). 22% have been in the role for 10 years or more. Only 8% have been employed for 4–9 years (4% for 4–6 years, 4% for 7–9 years).

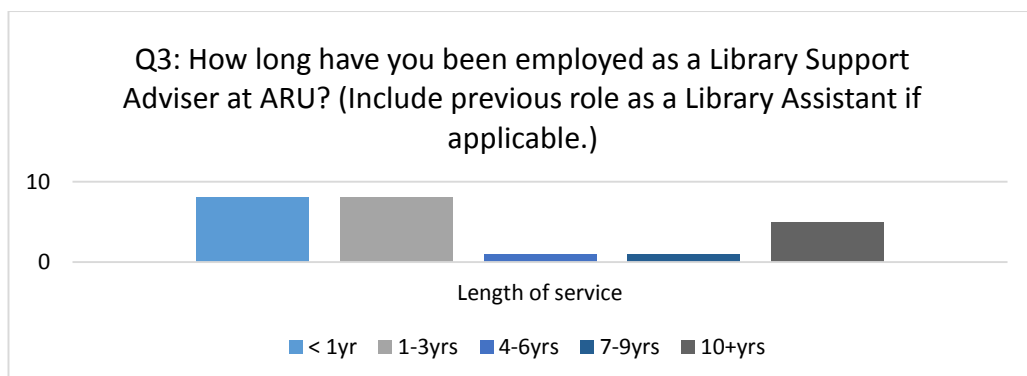


Fig. 10 – Survey Q3

All LSAs rove on a weekly basis as a scheduled task. 70% perceive that they rove for up to 5 hours per week and 30% for 6–10 hours. However, it is important to acknowledge that is an individual’s estimation and may not reflect reality.

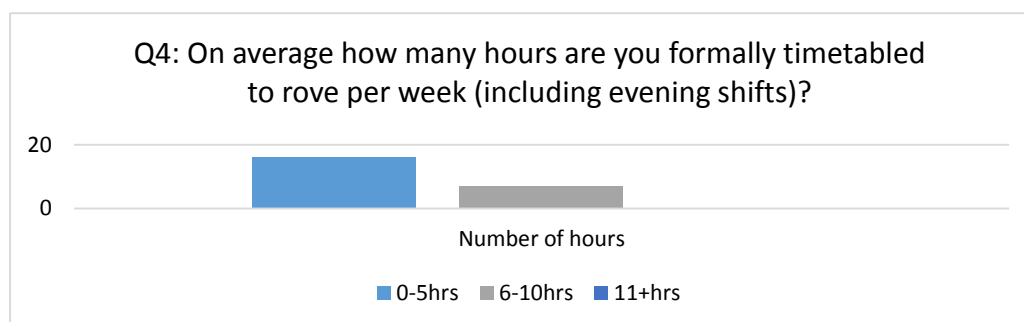


Fig. 11 – Survey Q4

35% have previously participated in roving. Fig. 13 shows the various roles where roving occurred.

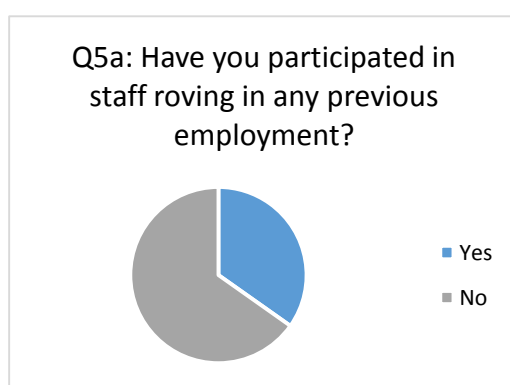


Fig. 12 – Survey Q5a

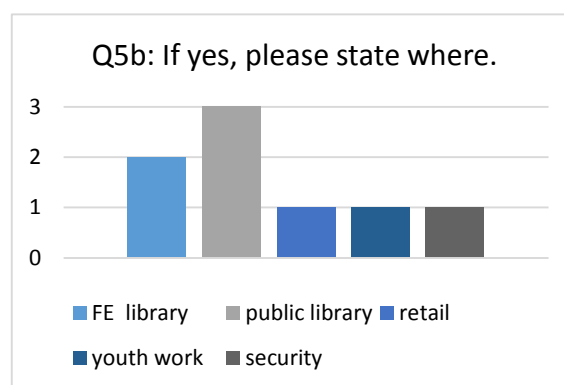


Fig. 13 – Survey Q5b

Notable differences between campuses

A comparison between campuses illustrates that trends are similar for Qs2–5. At Chelmsford there is a higher proportion of newer staff and more LSAs state that they are formally timetabled to rove for 0–5 hours per week:

Q		CAM	CHE
2	Full time staff	54%	60%
3	Employed for 0–3 years	62%	80%
3	Employed for 10 years or more	23%	20%
4	Roving for 0–5 hours per week	62%	80%
5a	Previously participated in roving	31%	40%

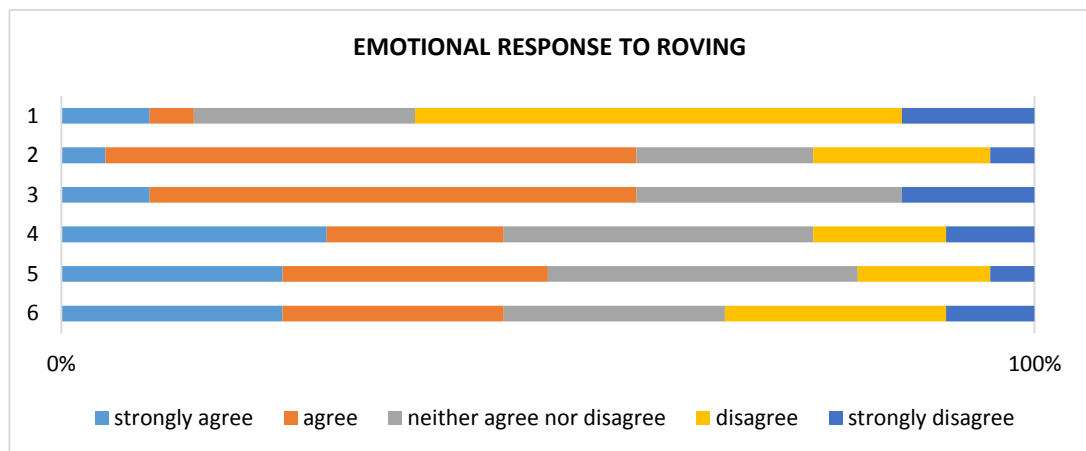
Tab. 13 – General Qs: campus comparison

4.1.2. Question 6 (Likert scale)

Q6 is a 32-statement Likert scale. 22 respondents completed this question. In the survey, statements were randomised but have been presented here in groups. Figs. 14–19 show the distribution of level of agreement for each group of statements and how results compare.

Q6: Please rate each statement using the scale below. Consider each statement in the context of your own experience or preferences whilst roving. There are also some general statements about roving.

Statements 1–6: Emotional response to roving

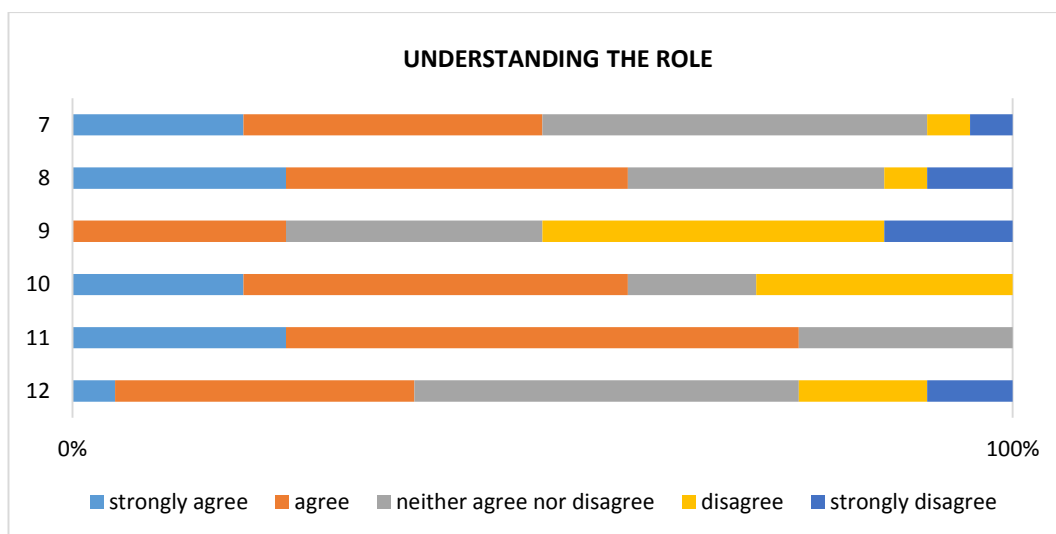


1	I enjoy roving.
2	Students benefit from my help while I rove.
3	I tolerate roving.
4	I feel uncomfortable roving.
5	Roving is often boring.
6	Roving is often stressful.

Fig. 14 – Survey Q6, statements 1–6

- Statements 1–6 include positive and negative emotional responses to roving.
- ‘*I enjoy roving*’ provokes a negative reaction. 64% of respondents disagree/strongly disagree whereas only 14% agree/strongly agree.
- Generally, LSAs agree that students benefit from their help when they rove, as 55% agree with statement 2 whereas only 18% disagree.
- Participants generally agree with ‘*I tolerate roving*’, yet those who do not agree, disagree strongly.
- Although statements 5 and 6 have similar results, LSAs are slightly more in agreement that roving is boring than it is stressful.

Statements 7–12: Understanding the role

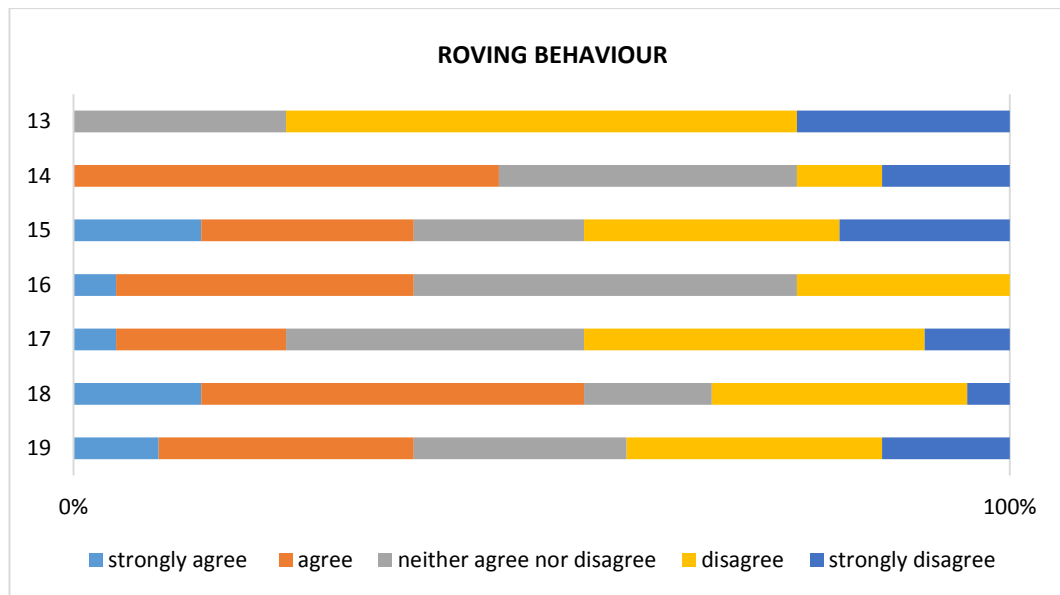


7	Roving is an important aspect of our library service.
8	Roving at ARU is predominantly about policing.
9	Roving at ARU is predominantly about taking enquiries.
10	Approachability is the most important requirement of the role.
11	Roving should be undertaken in conjunction with other tasks.
12	I feel highly trained on roving.

Fig. 15 – Survey Q6, statements 7–12

- Statements 7–12 are related to understanding of the role.
- Only 9% of respondents disagree/strongly disagree that ‘*Roving is an important aspect of our library service*’. However, over 40% respond neutrally.
- 59% agree/strongly agree that roving is predominantly about policing, whereas only 23% state that roving is predominantly about taking enquiries.
- 41% agree that ‘*Approachability is the most important requirement of the role*’ compared to 27% who disagree.
- No one disagrees that roving should be undertaken in conjunction with other tasks. 77% of respondents agree/strongly agree with this statement.
- 41% remain neutral in response to feeling highly trained on roving. 23% disagree/strongly disagree.

Statements 13–19: Roving behaviour

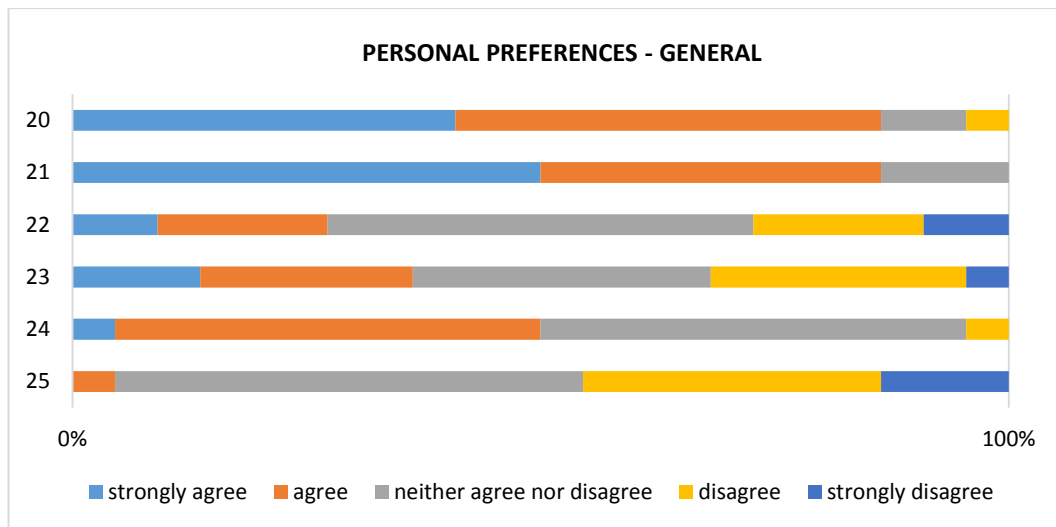


13	I mainly stay on the ground floor.
14	I mainly stay on the upper floor(s).
15	If the library is quiet I will gravitate towards the Help Desk.
16	I have a set routine when on roving duty.
17	I try to ask as many people as I can if they need help.
18	I find it easy to approach people and ask them if they need help.
19	I find it easy to approach people to ask them to stop eating/talking/using a mobile phone in the quiet/silent zones.

Fig. 16 – Survey Q6, statements 13–19

- Statements 13–19 illustrate roving behaviour.
- 45% agree that they mainly stay on the upper floor(s).
- The statement ‘*If the library is quiet I will gravitate towards the Help Desk*’ gives a fairly even spread of level of agreement.
- The majority of LSAs remain neutral that they have a set routine when roving.
- Only 23% agree/strongly agree that they try to ask as many people as they can if they need help. 45% disagree/strongly disagree.
- 55% agree/strongly agree that they find it easy to approach people to ask them if they need help.
- In comparison, only 36% agree/strongly agree that they find it easy to approach people to enforce rules.

Statements 20–25: Personal Preferences (general)

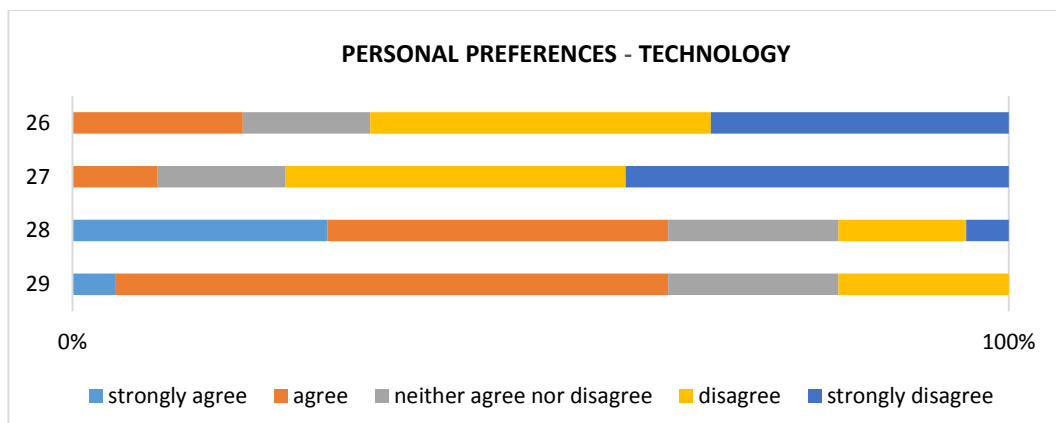


20	I prefer working on the Help Desk to roving.
21	I prefer having another task to do (shelving, searching, etc.) whilst roving.
22	I prefer roving when it is busy.
23	I prefer roving when it is quiet.
24	I prefer roving during the day.
25	I prefer roving during the evening.

Fig. 17 – Survey Q6, statements 20–25

- The remaining statements are based on personal preferences.
- The majority of LSAs prefer working on the Help Desk to roving, as 86% of participants agree/strongly agree with statement 20.
- 86% prefer having another task to do in conjunction.
- LSAs tend to prefer roving when it is quiet and during the day rather than busy and during the evening.

Statements 26–29: Personal preferences (technology)

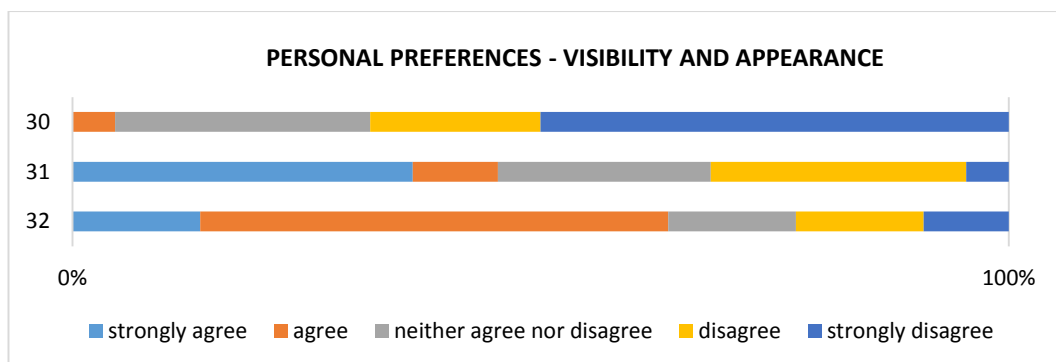


26	I use the iPad to help with enquiries.
27	I record all my roving statistics on the iPad.
28	I don't think the iPad aids me in providing a good roving service.
29	I think that the text-a-talker service works well.

Fig. 18 – Survey Q6, statements 26–29

- Statements 26–29 are related to technology.
- 68% disagree/strongly disagree that they use the iPad to help with enquiries.
- 77% disagree/strongly disagree that they record all roving statistics on the iPad.
- 27% strongly agree with ‘*I don't think the iPad aids me in providing a good roving service.*’
- 59% agree that the text-a-talker service works well. No one strongly disagrees.

Statements 30–32: Personal Preferences (visibility and appearance)



30	I like wearing the roving jacket/polo shirt.
31	I don't think the roving jacket/polo shirt adds anything to the roving service for staff or students.
32	Sometimes I don't wear the jacket/polo shirt when roving.

Fig. 19 – Survey Q6, statements 30–32

- Statements 30–32 are linked to visibility and appearance.
- There is a clear dislike for wearing the roving jacket/polo shirt as 68% agree/strongly disagree with statement 30. 27% remain neutral and only 5% agree.
- 36% strongly agree with ‘*I don't think the roving jacket/polo shirt adds to the roving service ...*’ and 64% agree/strongly agree that they sometimes don't wear it when roving.

Notable differences between campuses

Generally, results from individual campuses replicate those above. However, there are some notable differences.

Tab. 14 illustrates the percentage of respondents who either **agree** or **strongly agree** with the following statements:

No.	Statement	CAM	CHE
1	I enjoy roving.	23%	0%
17	I try to ask as many people as I can if they need help.	38%	0%
18	I find it easy to approach people and ask them if they need help.	69%	33%
20	I prefer working on the Help Desk to roving.	77%	100%
26	I use the iPad to help with enquiries.	8%	33%
29	I think that the text-a-talker service works well.	46%	89%
30	I like wearing the roving jacket/polo shirt.	8%	0%

Tab. 14 – Statement comparison (agreement)

Tab. 15 illustrates the percentage of respondents who either **disagree** or **strongly disagree** with the following statements:

No.	Statement	CAM	CHE
5	Roving is often boring.	31%	0%
8	Roving at ARU is predominantly about policing.	23%	0%
12	I feel highly trained on roving.	8%	44%

Tab. 15 – Statement comparison (disagreement)

Fig. 20 on the following page presents an alternative way of visualising Likert scale data. This enables a comparison of all statements in relation to each other and in order of agreement rather than limiting this to the above categories.

The level of agreement (1.0 to 5.0) represents the overall mean value of the response to each statement (1.0 = strongly disagree to 5.0 = strongly agree).

STRONGLY AGREE				
4.9				
4.8				
4.7				
4.6				
4.5				
4.4				
4.3	21. I PREFER HAVING ANOTHER TASK TO DO WHILST ROVING.			
4.2	20. I PREFER WORKING ON THE HELP DESK TO ROVING.			
4.1				
	11. ROVING SHOULD BE UNDERTAKEN IN CONJUNCTION			AGREE
3.9				
3.8				
3.7				
3.6	28. I DON'T THINK THE IPAD AIDS ME ...			
3.5	8. ROVING ... IS PREDOMINANTLY ABOUT POLICING.	7. ROVING IS AN IMPORTANT ASPECT OF OUR LIBRARY		
	5. ROVING IS OFTEN BORING.	10. APPROACHABILITY IS THE MOST IMPORTANT	24. I PREFER ROVING DURING THE DAY.	29. I THINK THAT THE TEXT-TALKER SERVICE WORKS WELL.
3.4	31. I DON'T THINK THE ROVING JACKET/POLO SHIRT ...	32. SOMETIMES I DON'T WEAR THE JACKET/POLO SHIRT ...	3. I TOLERATE ROVING.	4. I FEEL UNCOMFORTABLE ROVING.
3.3	2. STUDENTS BENEFIT FROM MY HELP WHILE I ROVE.	18. I FIND IT EASY TO APPROACH PEOPLE ... HELP.		
3.2	6. ROVING IS OFTEN STRESSFUL.			
3.1	16. I HAVE A SET ROUTINE WHEN ON ROVING DUTY.	23. I PREFER ROVING WHEN IT IS QUIET.		
	12. I FEEL HIGHLY TRAINED ON ROVING.	14. I MAINLY STAY ON THE UPPER FLOOR(S).	22. I PREFER ROVING WHEN IT IS BUSY.	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE
2.9	19. I FIND IT EASY TO APPROACH PEOPLE ... EATING.			
2.8	15. IF THE LIBRARY IS QUIET ... TOWARDS THE HELP DESK.			
2.7	17. I TRY TO ASK AS MANY PEOPLE ... IF THEY NEED HELP.			
2.6				
2.5	9. ROVING ... IS PREDOMINANTLY ABOUT TAKING ENQUIRIES.			
2.4	1. I ENJOY ROVING.	25. I PREFER ROVING DURING THE EVENING.		
2.3				
2.2				
2.1	26. I USE THE IPAD TO HELP WITH ENQUIRIES.			
	13. I MAINLY STAY ON THE GROUND FLOOR.			DISAGREE
1.9	27. I RECORD ALL MY ROVING STATISTICS ON THE IPAD.			
1.8	30. I LIKE WEARING THE ROVING JACKET/POLO SHIRT.			
1.7				
1.6				
1.5				
1.4				
1.3				
1.2				
1.1				
				STRONGLY DISAGREE

Fig. 20 – Statements by agreement

4.1.3. Questions 7–8 (Ranking activities and services)

Respondents were asked to rank five statements in order of importance. 21 LSAs completed these questions. Figs. 21–22 illustrate the mean order of results. The pie charts show the distribution of data based on the ranking system outlined in 3.6.3. Ranking activities and services and the corresponding list shows the overall order of importance.

Q7: When roving which of the following activities do you consider to be most/least important? Reorder these statements (1=most important, 5=least important).

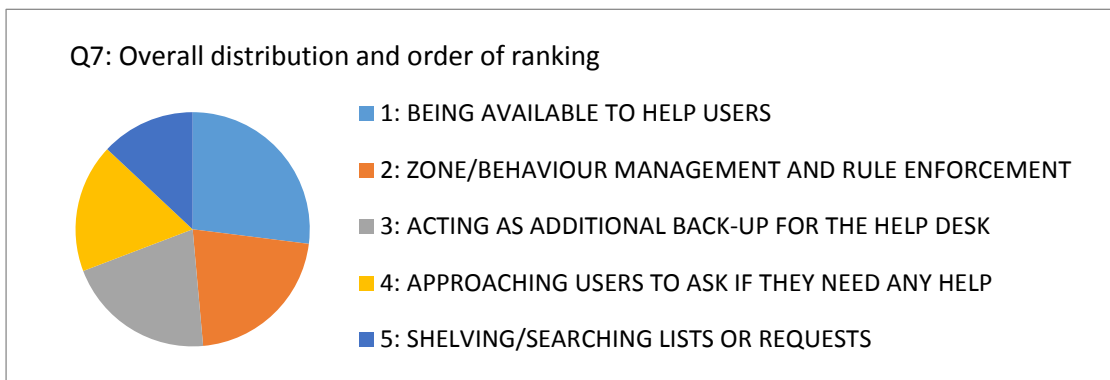


Fig. 21 – Survey Q7

Overall, LSAs consider *Being available to help users* as the most important activity from the five options above. *Approaching users to ask if they need any help* (one of the key objectives of roving as displayed in the literature) is ranked fourth.

Q8: Which of the following frontline services do you prefer doing? Reorder these statements (1=most like doing, 5=least like doing).

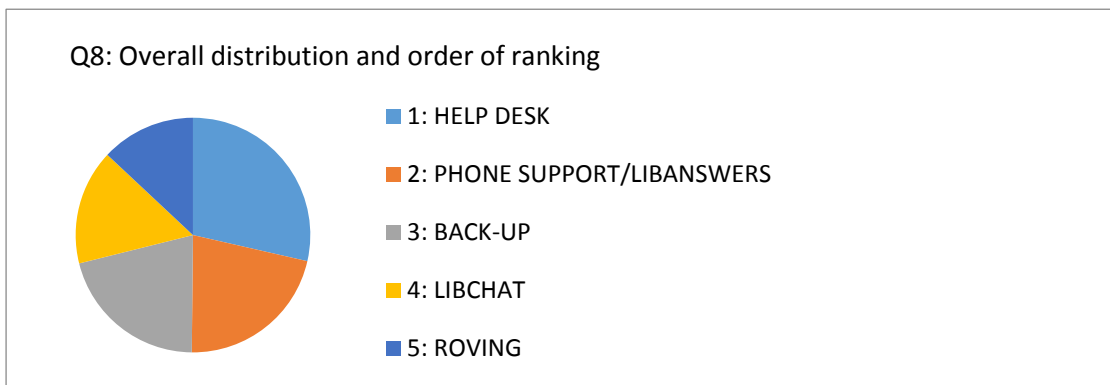


Fig. 22 – Survey Q8

Participants generally prefer working on the *Help Desk* out of the five frontline services above. *Roving* is ranked fifth overall. It is possible that respondents #9 and #20 have incorrectly interpreted this instruction as rankings attributed to activities and services do not necessarily correlate with their responses elsewhere. For example, respondent #9 neither agrees nor disagrees that they enjoy roving (Q6, statement 1) and has selected words such as *stressful* and *repetitive* (Q9) yet they rank roving as their most preferred frontline service. Secondary factors may have affected how respondents have interpreted and answered these questions. This could be attributed to limitations in the question-type templates in the free version of SurveyMonkey. Regardless, the researcher must take respondents' answers at face value when collating data.

Notable differences between campuses

Rankings for Qs7–8 vary slightly between campuses. For Q7, Cambridge LSAs rank *Approaching users* ... as the second most important activity whereas this is fourth overall. Chelmsford LSAs rank the same activity last (though CHE results for 4 and 5 were close). For Q8, Cambridge LSAs ranked *Roving* fourth, as opposed to fifth overall (results for 4 and 5 were close). Chelmsford LSAs rank *Phone support/LibAnswers* and *Back-up* equally in second place.

Question 7			
	OVERALL	CAM	CHE
1	AVAILABLE TO HELP USERS	AVAILABLE TO HELP USERS	AVAILABLE TO HELP USERS
2	ZONES/BEHAVIOUR	APPROACHING USERS ↑	ZONES/BEHAVIOUR
3	BACK-UP FOR HELP DESK	ZONES/BEHAVIOUR	BACK-UP FOR HELP DESK
4	APPROACHING USERS	BACK-UP FOR HELP DESK	SHELVING/SEARCHING
5	SHELVING/SEARCHING	SHELVING/SEARCHING	APPROACHING USERS ↓
Question 8			
	OVERALL	CAM	CHE
1	HELP DESK	HELP DESK	HELP DESK
2	PHONE/LIBANSWERS	PHONE/LIBANSWERS	PHONE/LIBANSWERS BACK-UP
3	BACK-UP	BACK-UP	
4	LIBCHAT	ROVING ↑	LIBCHAT
5	ROVING	LIBCHAT	ROVING

Tab. 16 – Comparing campuses

4.1.4. Question 9 (Word selection)

Q9 includes a list of 49 words/phrases related to roving. Respondents were asked to select 5–10 words they associate with roving (and could add their own words/phrases). 21 LSAs completed this question. See Fig. 23.

Q9: What comes to mind when you think about roving? Please select between 5 and 10 of the following words/phrases.



Fig. 23 – Survey Q9

4.1.5. Question 10 (Free-text comments)

Q10 includes an open-ended question:

Q10: What do you think roving adds to the library user experience at ARU? Please also use this space to add any other comments about roving or your experience of roving.

16 respondents answered this question (76% of those who completed the survey). Answers ranged from 5 to 705 words (average 157 words per comment). As justified in 3.6.5. Free-text comments, a selection of data is presented in Fig. 24.

Fig. 25 illustrates these themes and links any topics/phrases the interviewee discussed in relation. It shows the interdependent relationship between three of these themes, in that the policing aspect of roving impacts on staff comfort levels. This in turn arguably affects levels of visibility, which may have a detrimental impact on the presence of policing. Underlying this is the fourth key area that roving ultimately aims to enhance – the service offered to students.

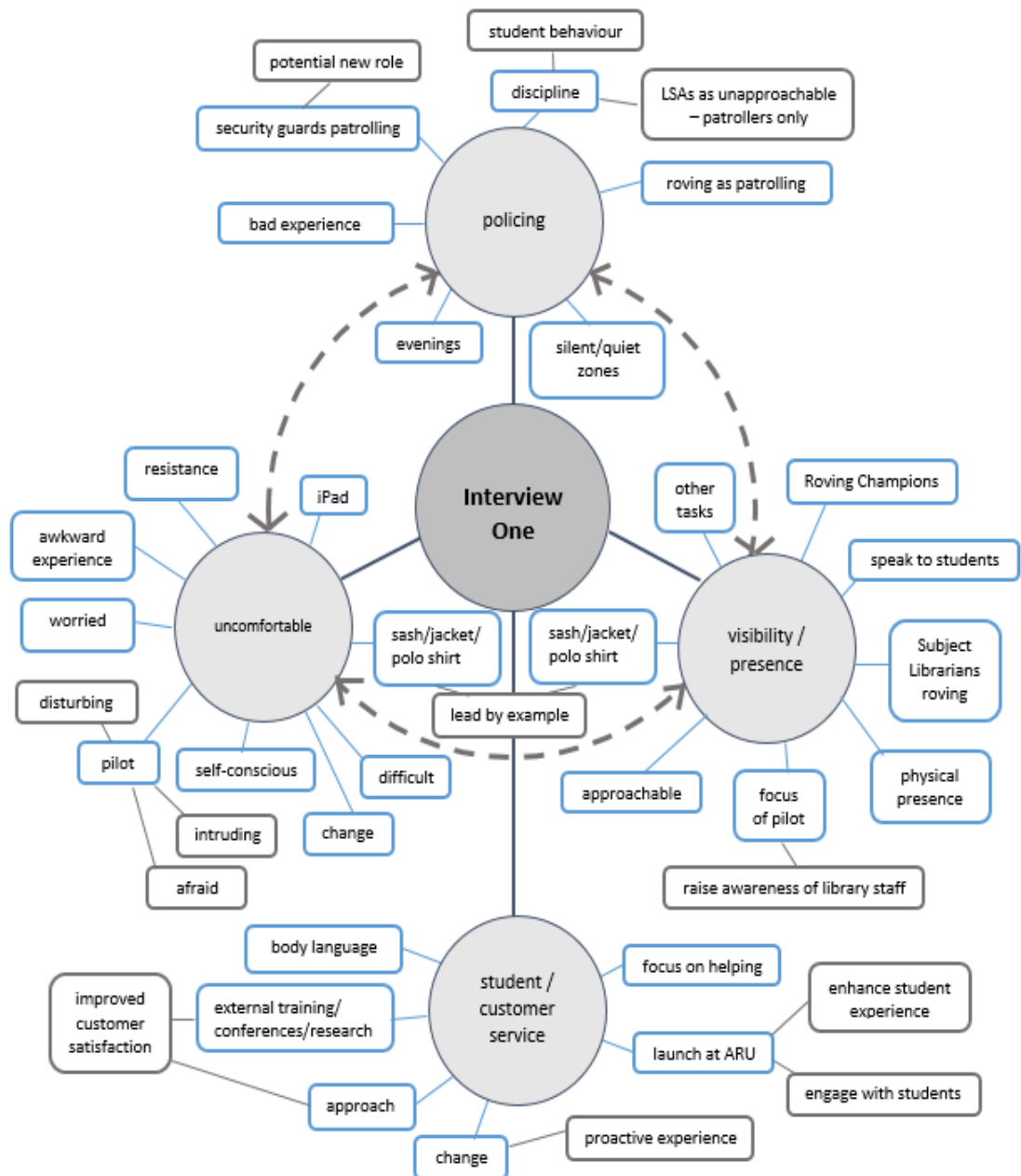


Fig. 25 – Interview 1 spider diagram

4.2.2. Interview 2: coding and key themes

The second interview took place on 7th July 2015 with the Assitant Director of CSD at the Cambridge campus and lasted 46 minutes. Post-interview, the transcript was open-coded and the following key themes were identified (Appendix N):

Roving as a service **'Transition period'/Change** **Research** **Challenge**

Fig. 26 below illustrates these themes and similarly links topics/phases from the transcript. It could be argued that all four themes are connected. Two important questions: 'What are we trying to achieve?' and 'Who is using roving as a service?' link 'Roving' with 'Research' and 'Change' respectively.



Fig. 26 – Interview 2 spider diagram

4.2.3. Comparison of key themes

Although interviews were conducted with staff at different levels and were not intended for direct comparison, similar areas were explored and consequently a number of corresponding themes emerged. Tab. 17 illustrates six key themes and the main points that each interviewee made in relation.

INTERVIEWEE 1 Customer Services Supervisor	KEY THEMES	INTERVIEWEE 2 Assistant Director
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substantial change initially • Pilot aimed to encourage visibility • Training introduced to help staff approach students with the aim to make roving a more proactive experience • Current role now more similar to original purpose (visibility and availability) • Roving now normalised • iPad enables more flexibility in helping at point of enquiry 	<p>THEME 1.</p> <p>The practice of roving at ARU and how the role has changed over time</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Library service must change to adapt to external pressures • Research required to understand current user base and different user expectations • Roving currently borders between core and non-core • It is an essential requirement at certain times of the year/day • An important role to play in/out of the library
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial staff worries/concerns • Considered by some as a waste of time in that other tasks should take priority • Now just part of the job • LSAs are not comfortable with policing aspect 	<p>THEME 2.</p> <p>How LSAs feel about roving</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Likely that some staff enjoy roving and others don't • Some concerns over how to fill time during scheduled roving shifts • Emotional challenges associated with the policing aspect of the role
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I would prefer it to be associated with someone who is there to help rather than to discipline students • Students experience lack of consistency in the patrolling aspect of the role from staff wearing the roving uniform 	<p>THEME 3.</p> <p>Patrolling vs. Roving – what students see when they see the jacket</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I suspect they see someone who is going to discipline them rather than help them • Library staff may be seen as people who instil discipline

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you don't feel comfortable you are not likely to want to approach students to help them • Some staff feel exceptionally uncomfortable roving • <i>Two options:</i> (i) coach staff to feel comfortable and confident (ii) allocate the role to those who are more outgoing and enjoy it • Help Desk is perhaps a barrier that is removed when roving 	<p>THEME 4.</p> <p>Balance of staff comfort and providing a good service</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roving as a concept tends to be problematic for many individuals • Internal challenges faced by staff who feel they have better things to do than discipline students • An area we need to keep revisiting
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff uncomfortable during pilot • Easier to approach people who are queuing at an enquiry desk • CSS and Roving Champions leading by example • Uniform an issue for staff 	<p>THEME 5.</p> <p>Staff 'comfort zones'</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to ensure consistency in staff delivery of roving
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Likely to continue to be undertaken by LSAs only • Potentially introduce new roving role – security/library assistant with main focus to patrol • LSA rovers can then focus only on helping people (as in original plan) • Influenced by budget/staff levels • Roving uniform could change 	<p>THEME 6.</p> <p>The future of roving</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LSAs have been upskilled to answer a broader range of queries when roving • All staff should address behaviour • Ongoing challenges: approachability and visibility • We need to explore how 'roving' may be delivered in future

Tab. 17 – Interviews: key themes

The following chapter, 5. Discussion, examines key findings from the results and relates these to the review of literature. It considers the significance of quantitative data and comments on significant points raised through qualitative research. It explores correlations or discrepancies between key points identified from the survey and interviews.

5. Discussion

This study has sought to investigate roving in a university library from a staff perspective. Two *prima facie* questions were raised at the outset:

- How is roving currently practised at ARU?
- How do staff feel about roving?

The survey, interviews and internal documents contribute towards a response to the first question. The survey informs the second question as LSAs voice their opinions on purpose, habit, policing and visibility. Issues raised were partially used to inform interview guides in order to gain different perspectives on staff concerns. Interview data corroborated survey data and the analysis of internal documentation in some cases, and elsewhere opened up new areas of research interest.

5.1. LSA responses

5.1.1. Roving experience

ARU's roving provision has become a well-established service since it began via pilot in 2010. 70% of survey respondents have been employed in the role for less than three years (Fig. 10) meaning staff who remember a time before roving at ARU are in the minority. Roving can still be considered as a relatively novel experience as only five LSAs have roved in previous library roles (three in non-library environments) (Figs. 12–13).

5.1.2. Emotional responses

Likert scale statements aimed to glean how LSAs understand roving, how they execute it and their emotional responses to the role. Other areas raised through the review of literature and internal documents were also investigated. The majority of LSAs do not perceive themselves to *enjoy* roving – more *tolerate* it. In the word cloud (Fig. 23), some of the most frequent words have negative connotations (*uncomfortable, pointless, boring*). Lorenzen (1997) and Woodward (2009) allude to dangers to the operation and reputation of a service if staff are uninterested and do not enjoy working in a customer-facing role. The literature review suggests that this interpersonal aspect of roving and how staff handle it is crucial to success. A

significant number of LSAs also find roving *boring* (i.e. “uninterested” (Lorenzen, *ibid.*)) and *stressful*.

5.1.3. Roving behaviour

Disparate elements of roving habits suggest that some staff feel a reduced sense of duty and urgency, through gravitating around the ground floor Help Desk when it is quiet (ARU, 2013c; 2014h). 64% agreed that they sometimes do not wear the roving uniform while on duty (Fig. 19). Elsewhere, on roving behaviour (statements 13–19) and approachability (statement 10), there is a spread of responses on what LSAs feel is important and what they do when they rove.

5.1.4. Behaviour management and stress

Likert scale statements related to understanding the role may reveal why LSAs feel negative. 59% agreed that roving is predominantly about policing compared to 23% who agreed it is mostly about taking enquiries (Fig. 15) – the original ethos of roving that Interviewee 1 seemed keen to return to. Courtois and Liriano (2000, p. 290) suggest: “Users are unlikely to confide in you and discuss their needs if they perceive you to be ‘policing’ the area; let that task be secondary to offering assistance.” However, at ARU, through a type of mission creep, rovers are now tasked with behaviour management in the library spaces. In both word clouds *food* is prominent, suggesting that roving is associated with rule-breaking and misbehaviour.

Results suggest that there is an awareness across the organisation that LSAs feel uncomfortable with the policing aspect. However, there is a more even spread of responses as to whether the LSAs find behaviour management *easy* (Fig. 16). Farler and Broady-Preston (2012) found that behaviour management (effective or otherwise) is a source of stress and feelings of inadequacy amongst library employees which can result in a lack of motivation and poor performance at work. Respondents confirm feelings of stress and boredom:

- “... I think they [library users] see us roving as a hindrance/bother just there to tell them not to do something. Stress for us, stress for them.”
(Respondent #22)

- “... the LSAs are the ones in the frontline who gets the stress/anxiety/attitude trying to enforce rules.” (Respondent #22)

5.2. The purpose of roving at ARU

All of the above cumulatively points towards a sense of confusion as to what roving is and how it should be performed. Internal documents (particularly pilot and training material) triangulate with the survey data towards this notion of confusion. Some documents suggest that LSAs should solely focus on the core ethos of roving (availability, approachability and helping users at their point of need) while others give a plethora of work tasks that could/should be done in addition. A CSMT meeting (ARU, 2011c) discussed ways to avoid ‘futile’ roving (“when the queries dry up”), but as it has incrementally developed partially into a policing role, CSMT (ARU, 2015c) would prefer staff not to undertake additional tasks, lest it detract from the role as a visible presence to enforce rules.

5.2.1. Staff interpretations

This sense of confusion is reflected in the survey comments:

- “Roving has become a policing role (maybe 90%) ... because we are policing I think people are less likely to feel they can ask library questions when they only see us enforcing our rules.” (Respondent #7)
- “It can be difficult to be seen as both approachable and assertive.” (Respondent #8)

However, results suggest that despite feelings of stress and boredom, LSAs do have a good understanding of roving as a customer service innovation, and how it can be of use (statement 2):

- “I think that roving, when employed effectively, can be an important addition to the service that we provide ...” (Respondent #16)
- “It gives an extra element of customer interaction ... allows for a much more flexible approach when assisting with inquiries [sic].” (Respondent #20)

Some staff show that roving gives them job satisfaction:

- “I find it very rewarding, it gives you the chance to give students a crash lesson on how the library system works and how they can get the most from it.” (Respondent #18)
- “Roving is GREAT. Love it!!” (Respondent #17)

Few disagree that it is important (statement 7) although it should be noted that 41% remained neutral here; an indifference perhaps borne through feelings of stress and boredom.

5.3. Combining roving with other tasks

LSAs generally acknowledge the importance of approachability (statement 10), a sharp contradiction is evident in that they are also firmly in favour of having another task to do alongside (statements 11, 21). 86% agree that they prefer to have another task to do whilst roving (Fig. 17). This is at odds with both the recent wishes of CSMT and the literature, which stresses the importance of eye contact, observation, interpersonal skills and body language which all display availability to help (Pitney and Slote, 2007; Giannone, 2015). Despite an indication that LSAs are aware of this, they presumably feel that they can multitask while still providing a high standard of roving. There could be a number of explanations for this response. It could be a tactic to alleviate boredom, a subconscious way of avoiding policing, or even avoiding the interpersonal duty of approaching users to ask if they need help (Woodward, 2009, p. 160).

5.4. Staff discomfort

5.4.1. Approaching users

The survey and Interview 1 suggest that some feel a pronounced discomfort with policing and approaching users for fear of disturbing them (and others). LSAs ranked *Approaching users* ... fourth out of five activities of importance, two places below *Zone/behaviour management* (Fig. 21), indicating that the main purpose of the role has changed over time. The *passive* approach is naturally favoured by staff – perhaps the legacy of the pilot as explained in Interview 1:

- “...the views we were getting is that they were finding it very uncomfortable, or they thought that they would find it uncomfortable, going up and approaching people to ask if they needed help ... the way we put it is that unless you’re absolutely certain that they look like they need help ... then don’t go up and approach them. If you’re walking about and you’re visible they’re more likely to approach you ...” (Interviewee 1)

5.4.2. Comfort zones

The *proactive* approach is a key part of the literature (Courtois and Liriano, 2000). It is advocated in the *Reply training manual 9* (ARU, 2012f) and various meeting minutes, yet has not been embraced by LSAs. This relates to the idea of ‘comfort zones’. Smith and Pietraszewski (2004), Pitney and Slote (2007) and Penner (2011) highlight roving as a way to ‘unchain’ staff from desks and workroom tasks, and push them outside perceived comfort zones. LSAs ranked *Roving* as their least preferred frontline service, with *Help Desk* ranked first (Fig. 22). This reinforces findings in the literature and is supported by Interviewee 1 in that working behind the Help Desk can be a comfort zone for staff.

5.4.3. Personality types

Survey data, comments, and Interview 1 triangulate to suggest that the policing aspect of roving is the primary cause of dislike for the duty. The most frequently selected word in the first word cloud (Fig. 23) was *patrolling*. However, results imply that LSAs have varying levels of comfort with and understanding of other aspects of roving too; not just the challenges associated with managing behaviour. Literature revealed the importance of interpersonal skills development and training (Lorenzen, 1997; Schmidt, 2011). Some went further in suggesting that successful and happy roving could be dependent on staff personality type (Pitney and Slote, 2007; Woodward, 2009; Brown, Sulz and Pow, 2011) or suggesting what roving represents in terms of a changing profession (Wylie, 2012). It felt ethically problematic to survey colleagues on what they perceive their personalities or politics are, and futile in the sense that how one conducts themselves at work would not necessarily be representative of their character.

5.5. Enhancing the service

Internal documents and Interview 1 show that ARU has made concerted efforts to follow the advice of Brown, Sulz and Pow (2011, p. 13) in adopting a “continuous process of innovation and adaptation”, exemplified through the introduction of technology, uniforms and in Chelmsford’s case, operational tweaks to address behavioural problems.

5.5.1. Technology

Logistical aspects were investigated, with results indicating that more recent service embellishments such as the iPad have not been embraced by staff. This is contrary to literature which pushes the transformative use of mobile technology (Lotts and Graves, 2011; Widdows, 2011) and reinforces the findings of Williamson (2012a) regarding rejection of iPads. Interviewee 1 acknowledged the benefits of the iPad’s flexibility, yet in the survey, using the iPad to help with enquiries and to record statistics were ranked overall as two of the closest statements to ‘strongly disagree’ (Fig. 20).

5.5.2. Uniform

Survey data and Interview 1 suggest that, despite the perceived benefits of visibility, the uniform is a widely unpopular development at ARU and may be compounding feelings of stress and discomfort. 68% disagreed that they like wearing the uniform (Fig. 19). LSAs and both interviewees reflect potential confusion as to what the uniform represents to users (Smith and Pietraszewski, 2004).

5.5.3. Campus comparisons

Chelmsford LSAs work in a library that includes two ‘Roving Champions’ (also LSAs), a security guard who could patrol hourly and team meeting agendas that include roving as a standing item (providing a regular platform to raise issues). It would be natural to suggest that Cambridge adopt the above to provide operational consistency and improve the experience for rovers. However, despite the perceived benefits of these enhancements, data revealed that not one Chelmsford-based LSA agreed that they enjoy roving (Tab. 14), despite this group working in a larger, relatively quieter library (Tab. 01). This indicates that discomfort and stress are not

necessarily location or circumstance dependent, but may point to something concerning the more fundamental aspects of roving practice, which staff seem unclear on and uncomfortable with.

5.6. Senior Management perspective

Interviewee 2 displayed a keen awareness of the challenges of student behaviour and issues LSAs experience.

5.6.1. Critical assessment

Being relatively new in post, the AD displayed a more objective and detached view of roving, implying that it should be critically assessed to maintain service standards:

- “I think that is probably a piece of work that we need to be working on at the moment because it feels like we’re in a transition where we need to understand, as a library, better what we are trying to achieve with this service.” (Interviewee 2)
- “It feels as if it’s been implemented successfully up to a certain point but I don’t think we really have the data and understanding of what it’s been successful at achieving. So, for example, how many of our users really recognise staff wearing the roving uniform?” (Interviewee 2)

5.6.2. Library spaces

The AD implied that customer service aspects of roving (including managing behaviour) should permeate the minds of all staff moving through the library space – not just LSAs. Interview 2 highlighted an aspect of roving customer service which was not afforded much attention in primary research – that of the physical spaces rovers operate in, and significantly, how students use and interact with that space. This opens up a need for further research and investigation of library spaces and user habits in the library environment:

- “... considering how users want to use the space when they’re carrying out their work or when they’re moving through the library ... So, trying to work a little bit more with the students’ union to understand the wider student perspective. Going forward we want to do a lot more research on our users and their expectations and needs so that we can try to deliver the right spaces for them ... It’s quite an ongoing and big picture thing in terms of thinking about how we can build library spaces as part of the learning community.”
(Interviewee 2)

One LSA briefly alluded to the theme of ‘space’:

- “I think if you want roving to work then you need to reclaim the library as a proper work/study space ... It’s too much of a hangout space for students.”
(Respondent #22)

The final chapter, 6. Conclusion, synthesises research findings, clarifies the extent to which aims and objectives have been met and relates findings back to original research questions. It includes reflections on undertaking a work-based study and recommendations for operational improvements and areas for further research.

6. Conclusion

The purpose of this research was to investigate current roving practice in a university library. Using a case study framework and mixed methods approach, this study has sought to fill gaps in roving research. It has aimed to re-evaluate roving as informed by the perspectives of frontline staff. Prior to data collection, the researcher undertook a review of literature and internal documentation regarding the establishment of roving at ARU. Primary data was obtained via an online survey distributed to the 23 LSAs (excluding researcher) – the survey's 100% response rate indicates the relevance of subject matter to staff. It was consciously conducted during a busy period in the academic year, so that thoughts surrounding roving would be foremost in respondents' minds. Survey data paints a detailed picture of staff perspectives on roving, particularly given that the majority of LSAs provided additional comments. After results were collated, two unstructured interviews were held with staff involved in the operational management and strategic direction of the service. Interviews provided triangulation for the survey findings, offered alternative perspectives and opened up new avenues of interest.

6.1. Summary of findings: aims and objectives

6.1.1. Aim

The aim of investigating current roving practice has been achieved. The primary focus was to examine staff perspectives, in order to fill a gap in the literature highlighted by Askew (2015), who advised that gaining a detailed perspective of staff would complement similar exercises conducted with library users, who are more frequently surveyed on library services. It is hoped that these staff perspectives will complement the existing body of literature and help to form a more complete picture of roving. They could also assist ARU and other library services in evaluating and managing how staff undertake roving. However, there are limitations to focussing solely on staff perspectives (see 6.3. Limitations of the study).

6.1.2. Objectives

1. Identify and measure existing roving practice at ARU

Internal documents, survey data and Interview 1 combine to provide a detailed account of roving at ARU. Internal documents illustrate how roving started (and how it fits within the customer service framework). Information illustrates how the service has morphed over time to meet changing needs of the library service, including the increased policing of the study environment. The research shows that staff have divergent habits and methods to when it comes to roving, and illustrates that the *proactive* approach advocated by Courtois and Liriano (2000) is not overwhelmingly evident or popular.

2. Compare current practice with existing roving literature

The literature review identified numerous facets and developments of roving across academic and public library sectors. ARU Library has taken something of a maximal approach in embellishing the service with visibility (uniforms, marketing) and technology (iPads, text-a-talker). Policing/behaviour management does not have a prominent place in roving literature, yet is of primary concern at ARU. There is no data on staff views and habits related to uniform and mobile technology which are established elements of the ARU service – something this study has attempted to address.

3. Identify and examine staff perspectives of roving

The survey found that on the whole, staff have not embraced roving and often feel uncomfortable practising it. This could be for one or a combination of reasons, but issues surrounding behaviour management/policing seem prominent, which could cause feelings of stress (Farler and Broady-Preston, 2012). Discomfort and stress (depending on the disposition of staff) may also result from the uniform, a perceived boredom of circulating the library and the core ethos of approaching users to offer help. Survey comments exemplify that LSAs have a good understanding of the ethos of roving, and the important role it can play in a library/customer service setting. Interviews illustrate that supervisory/management staff have a keen awareness of LSA issues/concerns and a willingness to address these to improve the service.

4. Provide a critical evaluation of roving in light of research conducted

Internal documents illustrate that substantial effort went into carefully introducing roving to staff. The pilot and ethos of roving was positively received by staff, but there have been many changes to staffing, organisational structure and physical spaces in the intervening years. Survey results suggest that newer staff also have a good understanding of the roving ethos (despite not being employed at the time of its introduction). As roving has been adapted to meet changing demands of the library service, confusion seems to have developed at all levels as to what roving is, its purpose and how it should be practised. Confusion is also evident through two recently employed LSAs who see roving as comparable to an equivalent service in previous employment (youth worker, bouncer). Here, roving is defined as an exercise in visibility rather than an enquiry-focussed service.

The overarching issue is of how roving is viewed and valued at ARU. The solo-working and interpersonal aspects of the service mean that staff will inevitably have different interpretations of how best to work. There are factors at play which may reinforce the idea that a quiet hour roving is a wasted hour (“avoiding futile roving when the queries dry up” (ARU, 2011c)), and results suggest that LSAs want another task to do in parallel. Despite the best efforts of CSSs when timetabling roving, frequent scheduling inconsistencies (Askew, 2015) may cause a subconscious message to percolate down to LSAs that roving is an occasional task/luxury, to be undertaken when all other essential frontline services are covered. Roving as a visible presence to deter misbehaviour (ARU, 2015c) and/or a means to show availability could be considered as a kind of ‘loss leader’ in the contemporary library customer service hinterland. It is clear that rovers and management feel some discomfort with this scenario, reinforced by the findings of Woodward (2009, p. 153).

5. Recommend operational changes to the roving service at ARU as informed by past developments and current context

See 6.5. Recommendations.

6.2. Research design and methods

The case study framework was appropriate for a workplace setting. After collection and interpretation of data, it can be concluded that research methods have been effective. This is illustrated by the survey response rate and breadth and depth of data, considering population size, survey length and timeframe. Interviews increased the validity of and corroborated survey data. The review of documents and literature provided a foundation for the study. In practice, an element of recursion emerged during the research as advocated by Thomas (2011a, p. 16), whereby the literature review, survey construction and results dissemination, and interview preparation all informed each other.

6.3. Limitations of the study

This study has taken an inductive approach to investigating staff perspectives of roving at ARU. The researcher's status and singular focus of this study has enabled a depth to research that may not have been possible if other frontline services were investigated in tandem. However, this singular focus means that this case study exists in relative isolation; not only from the other frontline services undertaken by LSAs at ARU, but also from comparable roving services at other institutions.

6.3.1. Comparative studies

A way of countering the isolated nature of this study could be to conduct a similar survey on staff perspectives of working on the Help Desk, or Telephone Support. Roving is clearly an emotive issue – anonymously surveying LSAs on one frontline duty may have caused negative feelings to be slightly inflated. Similar investigations of other services offered would increase the validity of these results, and would enable a more complete picture of staff perspectives on frontline services. With some adjustments and reconnaissance, the survey could be remodelled for use at another university and thus comparable data could be gathered across institutions. Caution should be exercised in making generalisations when comparing data from universities that may differ in terms of staffing, library size, task allocation and user demographics.

6.3.2. User perspective

Another limitation is that user views have not been incorporated into this study. This has been due to both practical and ethical considerations (see 6.4. Reflections on conducting work-based research). Future research could glean the views and habits of library users and how they interact with rovers (if at all). A particular point of interest was raised in both interviews and survey comments around what the uniform signifies for library users – is it someone who can help them (or can be approached), someone to police the library, or both?

6.4. Reflections on conducting work-based research

The advantages of access to information, availability of subjects for data collection and intimate knowledge of the site of study have been outlined in 3. Methodology. All are reliant on receptive colleagues and accommodating management staff in order to let the study progress in the working environment. The researcher has been fortunate in that all involved have been open, co-operative and supportive of having research conducted on a frontline service, even at the risk of contentious or disruptive results emerging. Perhaps this is illustrative of a strong customer service ethos and habit of staff participation in improving services. Showing willingness to change and acknowledging areas that need adjustment or improvement is a theme that permeates the literature. This is evident in ARU's willingness to have research conducted by a staff member, on what is clearly an emotive and timely issue for service delivery. Just prior to submission of this study, two open discussions on roving were held (as mentioned in Interview 2). Conclusions from this study should complement further discussions regarding future development.

As discussed in 3. Methodology, conducting work-based research is not without disadvantages. Prior knowledge of roving at ARU and close contact with participants can conversely be seen as disadvantages in terms of bias and objectivity. The researcher has made conscious attempts to maintain an exploratory tack in data collection, but an external researcher may have had more detachment and found other avenues of interest, especially at interview stage. Another risk relates to surveying colleagues (as subjects) and trust. Care was taken not to casually discuss

specifics of this research with colleagues. Participants were sent detailed information regarding consent, anonymity and the use of data collected. In accordance with *DIS: Ethics Policy for Research* section 4 (Urquhart and Rogers, 2003), mutual trust was maintained by keeping senior staff informed.

6.5. Recommendations

This study concludes with recommendations for operational improvements to the roving provision at ARU, including areas for further research:

- i.** Managing student behaviour and policing are high on the agenda, but LSAs dislike this aspect and have misgivings about its effectiveness. Before this can be addressed, meaningful statistical data should be gathered on behaviour management in the libraries. The LibAnswers Reference Analytics statistics log gives no explicit option to quickly log instances of talking in quiet/silent zones, consuming food or talking on phones in prohibited areas. There is a recently added option to record text-a-talker messages, but this is reliant on students using this service to alert rovers. Behaviour management analytics should be added to this system to give LSAs the means to accurately quantify their accounts of policing as seen in the survey results.

- ii.** CSSs and other senior staff at both sites should consider the resumption of themselves roving regularly, as occurred in the original pilot. This would foster a sense of empathy and solidarity with LSAs, especially in dealing with behaviour management, and would help to escalate issues if trends emerge. This would also emphasise the value of roving to the customer service ethos at ARU. “Zone Management patrols” were mentioned (ARU, 2011a) as a separate duty that pre-dated roving. Resuming patrols in some form should be considered.

A call for volunteers from the pool of Subject Librarians and ITSAs could also be of value. As seen in Interview 1, this occurred at Chelmsford due to severe staff shortages. Such staff could rove as an experimental exercise, to gain first

hand experience of enquiry-taking and how students use the library space. Experiences of volunteers and roving LSAs could then be compared.

- iii. Longer term, consideration should be given to employing another type of support staff, and separating out the explicit policing aspect of roving (as alluded to in Interview 1). Specific space/behaviour monitors were highlighted in 2. Literature review. If carefully trained and supervised, employing students as specialist rovers (even to complement the existing provision) is worthy of investigation, if only on a pilot basis.
- iv. Cambridge library could adopt some of the additional practices that Chelmsford have (roving champions; security patrols; agenda item) in order to make service delivery and working practices more consistent. However, such operational adjustments seem to have made little difference to negative staff perspectives of roving at Chelmsford, as compared to the more pared-back operation at Cambridge. Nevertheless, Cambridge could consider these embellishments to see if they have any marked difference on staff perspectives at the site.
- v. Pitney and Slote (2007, p. 59) provide practical, achievable suggestions on how to embed core aspects of roving in the minds of participating staff. The first is a long-term idea of incorporating roving into the staff review/appraisal process:

While scheduling models may help give structure and set parameters for roving, staff must be willing to monitor their own behavior and change it ... One effective tool is for supervisors and staff to sit down regularly to develop and review roving behaviors and goals ... setting small goals is a tried-and-true method for developing new behaviors.

Having a roving ‘moment of the week’ is an immediately achievable way to ensure staff raise and discuss issues surrounding roving – good, bad and surreal. For instance, while roving, this researcher once encountered a student eating a large cucumber in the manner of an apple. Sharing this anecdote with colleagues would highlight ongoing issues with food, and provided a humorous aside that may compel staff to watch closely for other odd behaviour. On another occasion, the researcher helped a student with a pronounced speech impediment who was very grateful for a discreet, one-to-one service where they could communicate at their own pace. This student mentioned their reluctance

to approach a busy Help Desk and signified that they would seek out rovers in future. Again, sharing this could be morale-boosting and demonstrate the practical value of core roving practice.

- vi.** The use of uniforms for roving needs to be reconsidered. Results suggest uniforms are widely unpopular and may be doing more harm than good to the service, in addition to staff negativity. The ‘AskUs’ branding may also be sending out a confused message to users, if roving staff are predominantly policing rather than taking enquiries. Further consultation should be held with LSAs to establish whether alternative clothing may be preferable. A compromise could be offered whereby the uniform would be discarded on the condition that staff increase their adoption of the more pro-active *individual* approach (for which further training should be organised) and undertake no other tasks in conjunction with roving. This recommendation runs contrary to the views expressed in the survey, but key areas of the literature stress that performing other tasks (including policing) decreases the message of availability and detracts from core aspects of roving theory.

- vii.** A similar review and consultation should occur with the use of iPads. Experimentation with and investment in lighter, smaller tablet devices (or smartphones) may make LSAs more inclined to carry them around the library. In any case, further investigation is needed as to why staff (especially Cambridge) do not see the iPad as a useful roving tool. Further research would act as a counter-balance to areas of the literature which have placed mobile technology adoption on something of a pedestal.

- viii.** The final recommendation would be practically possible at ARU, and potentially beneficial in more general further research into roving theory and practice. Roving does not exist in a vacuum and, as the AD stressed, further research is needed into how students are really using the library spaces, in order for roving to be applied and deployed more effectively. One way of doing this would be through the adoption of ethnographic research techniques, of which there is a growing vogue in librarianship (Priestner, 2015). Using both systematic observation (Applegate, 2009) or especially the ‘micro-

ethnographic' approach applied by Bryant (2009) could potentially move forward both the perspectives of rovers and the issues with behaviour management and enquiry-taking whilst circulating the library:

Any LIS researcher, be they academic or practitioner (or indeed both) can use ethnography to help them explore what users are actually *doing* in their library. It is simply necessary to find the time, and learn how to 'see' again, essentially to observe deliberately and carefully. These results can be surprising, and insightful.

(Bryant, 2009, p. 8)

With careful tuition rovers themselves could adopt ethnographic techniques, constructing a shared field diary in the manner of Bryant which could be contributed to by all, perhaps using communal note-taking software (Evernote, Padlet) while circulating the library with a suitable mobile device. It could be rewarding and empowering for LSAs to have an outlet to log the aforementioned good, bad and surreal of roving – ultimately feeding into service development. It may also focus their minds on the core aspects of roving, and nudge staff to more consistently adopt the roving 'radar'.

This avenue for further research would also dovetail with the latest University Library Strategy 2015–2018 (ARU, 2015g), in which *Strand 4, Engagement and enhancement* aims to “take an evidence-based approach to improving our users' experience of library provided space and services.” Alternatively, other staff or student researchers who are regular library users could conduct field observations, and then record the habits and interactions of rovers as well as students (akin to a 'mystery shopper' retail exercise, but more substantial). This could prove insightful, but would need consent from rovers and careful ethical consideration. Virginia Tech's Student Peer Roving Assistants (2015) are a real-world example of student staff conducting observational research to inform library decision making and direction.

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Appendix A – ARU: Our standards for presentation and behaviour

pp 0–1

Our standards for presentation and behaviour

All of us who work in the University Library have responsibility for implementing these standards. They apply to everyone that we come in contact with: University students and staff, suppliers, collaborative partners, visitors, external contacts and each other as co-workers.

What defines good customer care?

(from the *Anglia Ruskin Customer Care Handbook*)


- understanding our customers' needs
- meeting our customers' requirements
- exceeding our customers' expectations by exceeding our own standards
- knowing how to deal with our customers effectively, in all circumstances
- building strong positive relationships with our colleagues

Good customer care is not always about saying 'yes'. It is about dealing with our customers professionally and efficiently, while always treating them with respect.


Welcome and first impressions

We will:

- Work collectively to create a welcoming and pleasant atmosphere for study
- Ensure that our website is visually welcoming, accessible, accurate and up-to-date
- Ensure that the library entrance area is kept accessible and visually uncluttered
- Keep service desks clear and tidy by keeping only essential working tools visible
- Be clean and tidy in our appearance and approachable in our demeanour
- Wear staff ID in order that customers know who to ask for help



pp 2–3



Customer communications

We will:

- Put customer service at the heart of our communications
- Be attentive, helpful and professional in all of our interactions with customers and colleagues, and mindful of our intonation (eg. if we ask "Can I help you?" in a mechanical tone we miss an opportunity to give a friendly greeting)
- Recognise that everyone is individual and be sensitive to this
- Acknowledge customers with eye contact, a smile or a greeting when dealing with them face to face
- Acknowledge queues with eye contact and use of such phrases as 'I'll be with you shortly', 'I'll call out support', 'We're very busy, sorry for the wait'
- Use open body language to show that we are willing to help as we go about the library, informally enquiring of customers if they need assistance when appropriate
- Value and take ownership of all of our customer enquiries and any issues raised, referring on when appropriate
- Ensure we can advise on the full range of library services and facilities, online and physical
- Round off enquiries and transactions in a friendly and positive way by checking the customer is satisfied and acknowledging the end of the conversation (eg. 'Has that answered your query?' 'Have you got enough information to get started?' 'Please come back if there is anything else I can help you with')
- Use our University's standard telephone greeting 'Good morning/afternoon, Anglia Ruskin University Library - your name - how may I help you?' and round off calls and emails with phrases such as 'Is there anything else I can help with?' 'Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of further assistance'
- Apply our University's guidelines on written and online communications

Appendix B – LSA job description (extracts)



University Library Job Description

Job Title: Library Support Adviser

...

Principle Accountabilities:

1. Provide advice, guidance and support to students and other customers across a full range of University Library services, including online digital information resources, and relevant University-wide services, dealing effectively with both routine and more complex enquiries

...

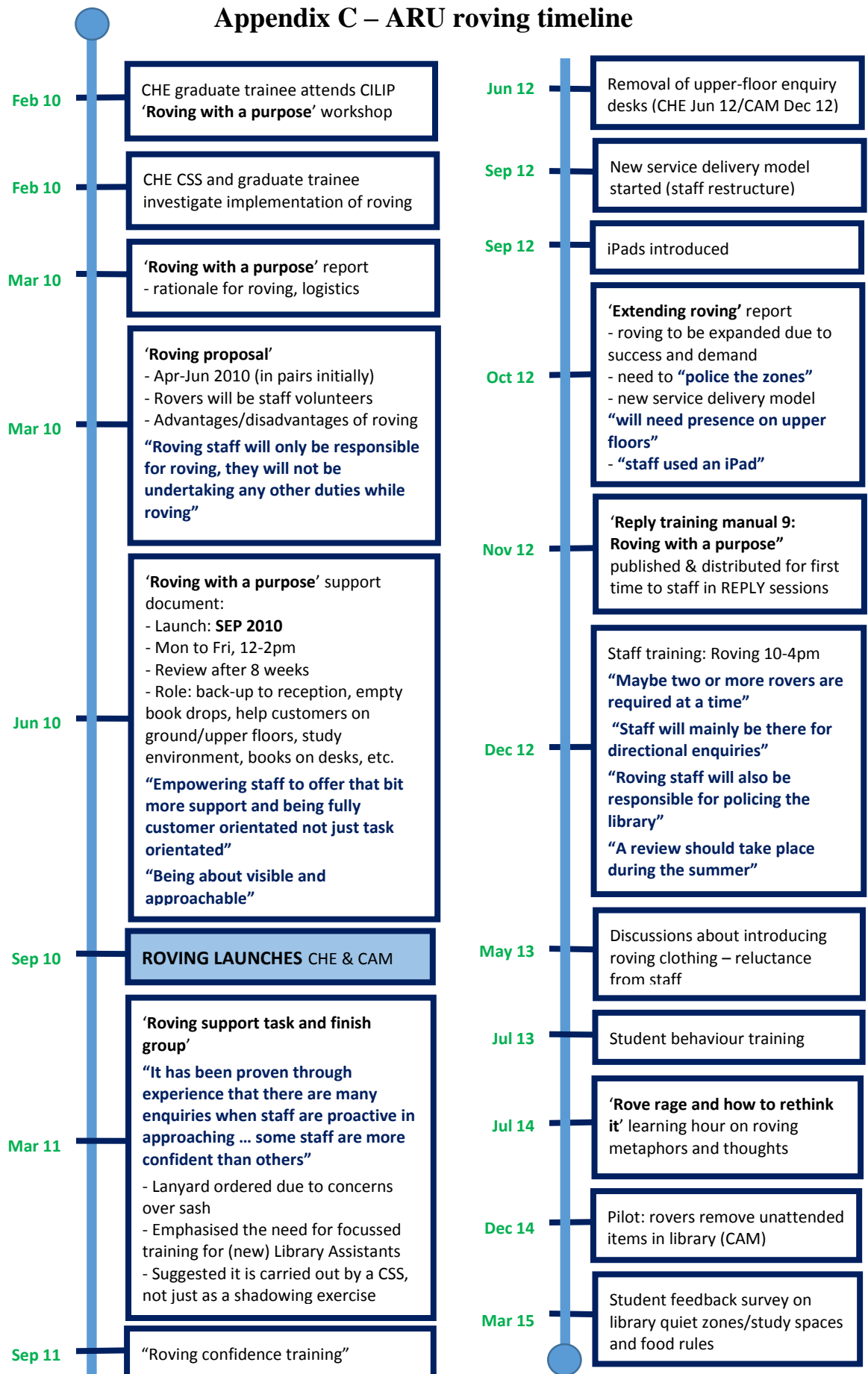
6. Take action to ensure appropriate use of library zones, play an active part in maintaining a safe and secure library environment, and in monitoring and reporting H&S issues

7. Monitor library space ...

8. Help customers with use of the full range of equipment and facilities in the library

...

Appendix C – ARU roving timeline



Appendix D – ARU roving clothing timeline



Appendix E – LSA timetables

CAMBRIDGE LSA timetable (10.02.15) – *roving in blue*

Customer Services Timetable – Tuesday 10 th February.										
	8.30-9.00	9.00-10.00	10.00-11.00	11.00-12.00	12.00-1.00	1.00-2.00	2.00-3.00	3.00-4.00	4.00-5.00	
						Helpdesk and LibAnswers	Back-up / Reservations	3.00 – Head count/ Searching	Phone support and LibAnswers	
Newspapers		Roving	Helpdesk and LibAnswers	ILL	Helpdesk and LibAnswers	Lunch	Phone support and LibAnswers	ILL	Music	
		Helpdesk and LibAnswers	Roving	Mail and Transit boxes/Back-up / Reservations	Phone support and LibAnswers					
Tidy tables	Shelving		Roving	Phone support and LibAnswers	Helpdesk and LibAnswers	Lunch	LibChat	ILL	Back-up / Reservations	
						Meeting	Roving	Phone support and LibAnswers	Searching	Evening rota
						Phone support and LibAnswers	Reception desk	Searching	Helpdesk and LibAnswers	Roving
Helpdesk and LibAnswers	Box labelling		Phone support and LibAnswers	Roving/ 11.30 – Head count	Lunch	Roving	Helpdesk and LibAnswers		Helpdesk and LibAnswers	
Helpdesk and LibAnswers	Box labelling	Serials		Helpdesk and LibAnswers	Back-up/ Reservations	Lunch	Helpdesk and LibAnswers	Roving	Tidy tables	
						Helpdesk and LibAnswers	Serials shelving	LibChat	Shelving	
									Notices	Evening rota
										Evening rota
Empty book drops etc	Helpdesk and LibAnswers	Serials		11.00 – Library tour / Roving	Lunch	Back-up / Reservations	Banking	Helpdesk and LibAnswers	Serials	
		Mail and Transit boxes/Back-up / Reservations	Helpdesk and LibAnswers	Searching	Roving					
Phone support and LibAnswers	Phone support and LibAnswers	Mail and Transit boxes/Back-up/ Reservations		Helpdesk and LibAnswers	Lunch	LibChat	2.00 – Library tour /workroom tasks	Back-up / Reservations	Helpdesk and LibAnswers	

CHELMSFORD LSA timetable (10.02.15)

Tuesday 10 th February 2015										
	8.30 – 9.30	9.30 - 10.45	10.45 - 12.00	12.00- 1.00	1.00- 2.00	2.00- 3.00	3.00- 4.00	4.00- 5.00	5.00 – 9.00	
HelpDesk 1										
Helpdesk 2										
Reception Desk		Security	Security	Security	Security	Security		Security	Security	
Roving										
Chat & Libanswers										
Backup;Phone/Libanswers / Dropboxes/ processing / (Interlibrary Loans)										
Holds										Expired Hold Shelf / Pick From Shelf / Holds shelf processing
Floor Sweep										AM / PM (collect and shelve items left lying around in library, & computer suite/classroom, and wipe whiteboards)
Mending										
Serials Post (Am)										Deal with post and newspapers. Process and shelve new journals, pull off rolling titles for recycling, tidy shelf area.
Transit Boxes										(PM)
Shelf checks										In transit, technical migration, transit requests week or older (found in analytics)

CAMBRIDGE LSA timetable (18.02.15) – roving in blue

Customer Services Timetable - Wednesday 18 th February.										
8.30-9.00	9.00-10.00	10.00-11.00	11.00-12.00	12.00-1.00	1.00-2.00	2.00-3.00	3.00-4.00	4.00-5.00	Evening	
										Evening rota
Tidy tables	Helpdesk and LibAnswers	ILs	Workroom tasks	Phone support and LibAnswers	Lunch	Helpdesk and LibAnswers	Phone support and LibAnswers	Roving		
Helpdesk and LibAnswers	Mail and Transit boxes/ Back-Up / Reservations	Banking	Phone support and LibAnswers	Lunch	Helpdesk and LibAnswers	Roving	LibChat	Helpdesk and LibAnswers		
										Evening rota
Empty book drops etc.	Phone support and LibAnswers	Searching	Helpdesk and LibAnswers	Roving	Lunch	LibChat	Back-Up / Reservations	Helpdesk and LibAnswers		
Phone support and LibAnswers	Serials	Mail and Transit boxes/ Back-Up / Reservations	Helpdesk and LibAnswers	Lunch	Phone support and LibAnswers	Reception desk	Shelving	Helpdesk and LibAnswers	Tidy tables	
	Notices	Helpdesk and LibAnswers	Roving							
	Helpdesk and LibAnswers	Notices	LibChat	Back-Up / Reservations						
Helpdesk and LibAnswers	Searching	Roving	Serials	Lunch	Helpdesk and LibAnswers	Phone support and LibAnswers	Helpdesk and LibAnswers	Back-Up / Reservations		
	Roving	Helpdesk and LibAnswers	Mail and Transit boxes/ Back-Up / Reservations	Helpdesk and LibAnswers						
Newspapers	Workroom tasks	Phone support and LibAnswers	Searching	Helpdesk and LibAnswers	Lunch	Helpdesk and LibAnswers	Roving	Phone support and LibAnswers		

CHELMSFORD LSA timetable (18.02.15)

Wednesday 18 th February 2015										
	8.30 – 9.30	9.30 - 10.45	10.45 - 12.00	12.00- 1.00	1.00- 2.00	2.00- 3.00	3.00- 4.00	4.00- 5.00	5.00 – 9.00	
HelpDesk 1 Helpdesk 2										
Reception Desk	Security	Security	Security	Security	Security		Security	Security		
Roving										
Chat & Libanswers										
Backup;Phone/Libanswers / Dropboxes/ processing (interlibrary loans)										
Holds										Expired Hold Shelf / Pick From Shelf / Holds shelf processing
Floor Sweep										AM / PM (take up trollies, collect and shelve items left lying around in library, & computer suite/classroom, and wipe whiteboards)
Mending										See mending instructions in box
Serials Post (Am) Banking										Deal with post and newspapers. Process and shelve new journals, pull off rolling titles for recycling, tidy shelf area.
Transit Boxes										(PM)
Shelf checks										In transit, transit requests week or older (found in analytics)

NB: Individual names have been redacted

Appendix F – Email to survey participants

To: [Library Support Advisers]
Sent: 6 May 2015
Subject: LSA roving survey

Dear Cambridge and Chelmsford LSAs,

As you may know, I am currently undertaking a dissertation to complete an MSc in Information and Library Studies. The subject of my dissertation is staff perspectives of the roving duties we do here at ARU.

I would be super-grateful if you could take the survey I have constructed by **Friday 29th May**. The link to the survey is at the end of this email, but I would ask you to read the information below *before* you proceed. The survey has been specifically designed for staff who undertake regular LSA roving duties, so it shouldn't be filled in by or forwarded to anyone else. It should take no longer than 15 minutes, but obviously spend however long you like on it. It may be best to find a quiet moment to complete it (he says at the business end of Semester 2!), as it can't be saved and returned to later.

Here's the important stuff – this survey is anonymous. Although my dissertation is work-based and I am a fellow LSA, I am undertaking this research independently of my ARU employment. Library Senior Management Team will receive a copy of the finished work and I have been keeping [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] periodically updated of my progress and direction, simply as a matter of courtesy. Some anonymised data may be shared as part of a planned interview stage of the research. All data generated by this survey will be handled in accordance with relevant Aberystwyth University research ethics guidelines. Some of the questions are meant to be a bit thought-provoking, so I'm hoping that the anonymity will give you the freedom to answer as instinctively and honestly as you can.

Before you complete the survey, please note the following procedures about this study:-

- All the information you give will be treated confidentially.
- Any direct quotes included in the final report (quotes of the comments you may write in the survey), will be used selectively and anonymously (that is, no one will be able to attribute/link the words to you).
- The information will be kept securely, and for only as long as necessary to: a) analyse the research data and b) report on the research and its findings.

If you complete and submit the survey, then I will assume that you have given your consent to take part in this study. That is:-

- i. you have read and understood the information in this email.
- ii. you can contact me if you have any questions or concerns about the survey or the study.
- iii. you understand that participation in this study is voluntary and that you are free to not participate, without giving any reason.
- iv. you understand that your responses will be treated confidentially and in confidence.
- v. you understand that your responses will be treated anonymously.
- vi. you allow me to use your direct quotes (that is, statements you might write on the survey), anonymised in the final write-up.

There is space at the end of the survey to add any general comments about roving, or anything related to the survey questions, but please feel free to email me any further thoughts you have about roving, or anything else related to it. Any email communication will also be anonymous, unless you would specifically like your name attributed to any additional comments.

Please click on the following link to take the survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/F2BTBD3>

Many thanks in advance for your participation,

Ross Noon
Library Support Adviser
Cambridge Campus

Appendix G – Interview consent forms

Interviewee 1



Interview consent form




Title of study: MSc Dissertation (working title): *Staff service roving – perspectives on the changing face of frontline services in academic libraries*

Name of researcher: Ross Noon

Project authority: This study is being undertaken as part of an MSc in Information and Library Studies at Aberystwyth University

Please tick

1. I have received enough information about what my role in the study involves.
2. I understand that my decision to consent is entirely voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time without having to give a reason.

 Name of participant	 Signature	23/6/15 Date
ROSS NOON Name of researcher	 Signature	23/6/15 Date

Interviewee 2



Interview consent form

Title of study: MSc Dissertation (working title): *Staff service roving – perspectives on the changing face of frontline services in academic libraries*

Name of researcher: Ross Noon

Project authority: This study is being undertaken as part of an MSc in Information and Library Studies at Aberystwyth University

Please tick

1. I have received enough information about what my role in the study involves.
2. I understand that my decision to consent is entirely voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time without having to give a reason.

 Name of participant	 Signature	7/7/2015 Date
ROSS NOON Name of researcher	 Signature	7/7/2015 Date

Appendix H – Literature search terms

Roving

Rover

(Rov*)

Roaming

Roamer

(Roam*)

Roaming NOT data

Librar* AND rov*

Librar* AND roam*

“Floor walk”

Floor-walk

Floorwalk

“Roving reference”

“Roaming reference”

Patrol

Patrolling

Invigilat*

Noise

“Behaviour management”

“Behavior management”

Behavio*

“Library services” AND rov*

“Library services” AND roam*

“Academic librar* AND desk

“Academic librar* AND enquir*

Librar* AND “mobile technology”

Librar* AND “service delivery”

“Academic librar*” AND attitude* AND staff

“Academic librar*” AND change AND staff

“Academic librar*” AND change AND desk

Appendix I – Roving survey

Roving survey – Anglia Ruskin University

“rove *verb* travel constantly without a fixed destination; wander” (Oxford Dictionary of English, 2010).

“The basic idea behind roving is that the library employee circulates within the reference area to offer assistance to users. A roving librarian approaches the user, rather than waiting for the user to come to the [help] desk” (Courtois and Liriano, 2000, p. 289).

1. Campus

- Cambridge
- Chelmsford

2. Employment status

- Full-time
- Part-time

**3. How long have you been employed as a Library Support Adviser at ARU?
(Include previous role as a Library Assistant if applicable.)**

- < 1yr
- 1–3yrs
- 4–6yrs
- 7–9yrs
- 10+yrs

4. On average how many hours are you formally timetabled to rove per week (including evening shifts)?

- 0–5hrs
- 6–10hrs
- 11+hrs

5. Have you participated in staff roving in any previous employment?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please state where (e.g. academic library, public library, other library sector retail, hospitality/leisure, etc.).

6. Please rate each statement using the scale below. Consider each statement in the context of your own experience or preferences whilst roving. There are also some general statements about roving.

- I enjoy roving.
- I prefer working on the Help Desk to roving.
- Sometimes I don't wear the jacket/polo shirt when roving.
- Roving at ARU is predominantly about policing.
- I record all my roving statistics on the iPad.
- I try to ask as many people as I can if they need help.
- Roving is often stressful.
- I prefer roving when it is quiet.
- I think that the text-a-talker service works well.
- I mainly stay on the upper floor(s).
- Roving is often boring.
- I feel highly trained on roving.
- I find it easy to approach people to ask them to stop eating/talking/using a mobile phone in the quiet/silent zones.
- I like wearing the roving jacket/polo shirt.
- I prefer roving during the day.
- Roving at ARU is predominantly about taking enquiries.
- I tolerate roving.
- I don't think the iPad aids me in providing a good roving service.
- If the library is quiet I will gravitate towards the Help Desk.
- I prefer roving during the evening.
- Approachability is the most important requirement of the role.
- I mainly stay on the ground floor.
- I don't think the roving jacket/polo shirt adds anything to the roving service for staff or students.
- I prefer having another task to do (shelving, searching, etc.) whilst roving.
- I feel uncomfortable roving.
- I use the iPad to help with enquiries.
- I have a set routine when on roving duty.
- Roving is an important aspect of our library service.
- Students benefit from my help while I rove.
- I find it easy to approach people and ask them if they need help.
- I prefer roving when it is busy.
- Roving should be undertaken in conjunction with other tasks.

7. When roving which of the following activities do you consider to be most/least important?

Reorder these statements (1=most important, 5=least important).

- Shelving/searching lists or requests.
- Being available to help users.
- Zone/behaviour management and rule enforcement (includes text-a-talker and removing unattended property).
- Approaching users to ask if they need any help.
- Acting as additional back-up for the Help Desk.

8. Which of the following frontline services do you prefer doing?

Reorder these statements (1=most like doing, 5=least like doing).

- Help Desk
- Roving
- Phone support/LibAnswers
- LibChat
- Back-up

9. What comes to mind when you think about roving?

Please select between 5 and 10 of the following words/phrases.

- | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> fun | <input type="checkbox"/> drag | <input type="checkbox"/> books | <input type="checkbox"/> hot | <input type="checkbox"/> talking |
| <input type="checkbox"/> productive | <input type="checkbox"/> stressful | <input type="checkbox"/> wandering | <input type="checkbox"/> quiet | <input type="checkbox"/> circuit |
| <input type="checkbox"/> relaxing | <input type="checkbox"/> rude | <input type="checkbox"/> busy | <input type="checkbox"/> variety | <input type="checkbox"/> text-a-talker |
| <input type="checkbox"/> enjoyable | <input type="checkbox"/> boring | <input type="checkbox"/> iPad | <input type="checkbox"/> frontline | <input type="checkbox"/> phones |
| <input type="checkbox"/> rewarding | <input type="checkbox"/> repetitive | <input type="checkbox"/> polo shirt | <input type="checkbox"/> cold | <input type="checkbox"/> food |
| <input type="checkbox"/> happy | <input type="checkbox"/> uncomfortable | <input type="checkbox"/> walking | <input type="checkbox"/> adding value | <input type="checkbox"/> Help Desk |
| <input type="checkbox"/> active | <input type="checkbox"/> embarrassed | <input type="checkbox"/> challenging | <input type="checkbox"/> enquiries | <input type="checkbox"/> shelving |
| <input type="checkbox"/> comfortable | <input type="checkbox"/> confused | <input type="checkbox"/> drink | <input type="checkbox"/> catalogue | <input type="checkbox"/> discipline |
| <input type="checkbox"/> confident | <input type="checkbox"/> pointless | <input type="checkbox"/> 'Ask us' jacket | <input type="checkbox"/> routine | <input type="checkbox"/> searching for books |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> self-service machine | <input type="checkbox"/> patrolling property | <input type="checkbox"/> customer service |

Please list any other words/phrases you associate with roving below.

10. What do you think roving adds to the library user experience at ARU?

Please also use this space to add any other comments about roving or your experience of roving.

Appendix J – Advance interview summaries

Advance summary for Interview 1

- Cast your mind back to the pilot/start (use timeline to help) ...
- Your personal experiences of roving, if and when you did it
- “Roving champions”
- Roving as a standing item on your team meeting agendas
- Security guard patrolling at the start of each hour at Chelmsford?
- Subject Librarians recently helping out with roving at CHE? Success?
- Roving/patrolling (i.e. study space and behaviour management)
- Supervising reluctant LSAs
- Consistently timetabling roving

Advance summary for Interview 2

- Your experiences of/interactions with roving as a library practice, prior to arriving at ARU
- Your experiences of/interactions with roving *whilst* at ARU
- Your viewpoints generally on the practice of roving, as a contemporary trend in library services
- What do you think is the general ‘feel’ on the ground for roving amongst staff?
- How you think roving performs here and now at ARU, as it is currently implemented:
 - Do you perceive any differences in roving performance/delivery between CAM and CHE?
 - Is it a changing role, as other frontline service points are currently changing and evolving?
- How roving fits in to the wider strategic and operational outlook. To possibly include:
 - Customer service excellence
 - LibQual results and action plan
 - Study space survey
- Roving, patrolling, policing
- Getting the most out of the staff resource
 - Idea of “Putting your best people on the front line” (Courtois & Liriano, 1999 & 2000)?
- Taking staff out of their comfort zones (not necessarily just the LSAs)
- The future for roving at ARU

Appendix K – Roving survey results

Q1: Campus

Number of respondents for this question	23	100%
Cambridge	13	57%
Chelmsford	10	43%

Q2: Employment status

Number of respondents for this question	23	100%
Full-time	13	57%
Part-time	10	43%

Q3: How long have you been employed as a Library Support Adviser at ARU? (Include previous role as a Library Assistant if applicable.)

Number of respondents for this question	23	100%
< 1 year	8	35%
1–3 years	8	35%
4–6 years	1	4%
7–9 years	1	4%
10+ years	5	22%

Q4: On average how many hours are you formally timetabled to rove per week (including evening shifts)?

Number of respondents for this question	23	100%
0–5 hours	16	70%
6–10 hours	7	30%
11+ hours	0	0%

Q5a: Have you participated in staff roving in any previous employment?

Number of respondents for this question	23	100%
Yes	8	35%
No	15	65%

Q5b: If yes, where?

Number of respondents for this question	8 (see Q5a)
Further education college library	
Retail. I would tidy the shop floor whilst keeping an eye out for people who needed help.	
Further education library	
Public library	
Public library	
In the security industry (as a bouncer)	
As a youth worker I used to participate in detached work in various geographic locations	
In a public library, although each rove had a pod that they used as a fall back to point for dealing with queries if a computer was required. Also meant that customers knew where to potentially find a staff member if they couldn't clearly see one on the floor, that at some point a staff member would be back within the vicinity of the pod.	

Q6: Please rate each statement using the scale below. Consider each statement in the context of your own experience or preferences whilst roving. There are also some general statements about roving.

Number of respondents for this question		22					96%		
		Strongly agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neither ... nor ... (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly disagree (1)	TOTAL	MEAN	STANARD DEVIATION
EMOTIONAL RESPONSE TO ROVING									
1	I enjoy roving.	10	4	15	22	3	54	2.45	1.1
		2	1	5	11	3	22		
2	Students benefit from my help while I rove.	5	48	12	8	1	74	3.36	1.00
		1	12	4	4	1	22		
3	I tolerate roving.	10	44	18	0	3	75	3.41	1.14
		2	11	6	0	3	22		
4	I feel uncomfortable roving.	30	16	21	6	2	75	3.41	1.30
		6	4	7	3	2	22		
5	Roving is often boring.	25	24	21	6	1	77	3.50	1.14
		5	6	7	3	1	22		
6	Roving is often stressful.	25	20	15	10	2	72	3.27	1.32
		5	5	5	5	2	22		
UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE									
7	Roving is an important aspect of our library service.	20	28	27	2	1	78	3.55	1.01
		4	7	9	1	1	22		
8	Roving at ARU is predominantly about policing.	25	32	18	2	2	79	3.59	1.18
		5	8	6	1	2	22		
9	Roving at ARU is predominantly about taking enquiries.	0	20	18	16	3	57	2.59	1.01
		0	5	6	8	3	22		
10	Approachability is the most important requirement of the role.	20	36	9	12	0	77	3.50	1.10
		4	9	3	6	0	22		
11	Roving should be undertaken in conjunction with other tasks.	25	48	15	0	0	88	4.00	0.69
		5	12	5	0	0	22		
12	I feel highly trained on roving.	5	28	27	6	2	68	3.09	1.02
		1	7	9	3	2	22		
ROVING BEHAVIOUR									
13	I mainly stay on the ground floor.	0	0	15	24	5	44	2.00	0.69
		0	0	5	12	5	22		
14	I mainly stay on the upper floor(s).	0	40	21	4	3	68	3.09	1.06
		0	10	7	2	3	22		
15	If the library is quiet I will gravitate towards the Help Desk.	15	20	12	12	4	63	2.86	1.36
		3	5	4	6	4	22		
16	I have a set routine when on roving duty.	5	28	27	10	0	70	3.18	0.85
		1	7	9	5	0	22		
17	I try to ask as many people as I can if they need help.	5	16	21	16	2	60	2.73	1.03
		1	4	7	8	2	22		
18	I find it easy to approach people and ask them if they need help.	15	36	9	12	1	73	3.32	1.17
		3	9	3	6	1	22		
19	I find it easy to approach people to ask them to stop eating/talking/using a mobile phone in the quiet/silent zones.	10	24	15	12	3	64	2.91	1.23
		2	6	5	6	3	22		

PERSONAL PREFERENCES WHEN ROVING - GENERAL									
20	I prefer working on the Help Desk to roving.	45	40	6	2	0	93	4.23	0.81
		9	10	2	1	0	22		
21	I prefer having another task to do (shelving, searching, etc.) whilst roving.	55	32	9	0	0	96	4.36	0.73
		11	8	3	0	0	22		
22	I prefer roving when it is busy.	10	16	30	8	2	66	3.00	1.07
		2	4	10	4	2	22		
23	I prefer roving when it is quiet.	15	20	21	12	1	69	3.14	1.13
		3	5	7	6	1	22		
24	I prefer roving during the day.	5	40	30	2	0	77	3.50	0.67
		1	10	10	1	0	22		
25	I prefer roving during the evening.	0	4	33	14	3	54	2.45	0.80
		0	1	11	7	3	22		
PERSONAL PREFERENCES WHEN ROVING - TECHNOLOGY									
26	I use the iPad to help with enquiries.	0	16	9	16	7	48	2.18	1.10
		0	4	3	8	7	22		
27	I record all my roving statistics on the iPad.	0	8	9	16	9	42	1.91	0.97
		0	2	3	8	9	22		
28	I don't think the iPad aids me in providing a good roving service.	30	32	12	6	1	81	3.68	1.17
		6	8	4	3	1	22		
29	I think that the text-a-talker service works well.	5	52	12	8	0	77	3.50	0.86
		1	13	4	4	0	22		
PERSONAL PREFERENCES WHEN ROVING - VISIBILITY									
30	I like wearing the roving jacket/polo shirt.	0	4	18	8	11	41	1.86	0.99
		0	1	6	4	11	22		
31	I don't think the roving jacket/polo shirt adds anything to the roving service for staff or students.	40	8	15	12	1	76	3.45	1.37
		8	2	5	6	1	22		
32	Sometimes I don't wear the jacket/polo shirt when roving.	15	44	9	6	2	76	3.45	1.18
		3	11	3	3	2	22		

Q7: When roving which of the following activities do you consider to be most/least important? Reorder these statements (1=most important, 5=least important).

Number of respondents for this question	21		91%
	Data	Mean	Ranking
Shelving/searching lists or requests.	41	1.95	5
Being available to help users.	85	4.05	1
Zone/behaviour management and rule enforcement (includes text-a-talker and removing unattended property).	68	3.24	2
Approaching users to ask if they need any help.	56	2.67	4
Acting as additional back-up for the Help Desk.	65	3.10	3

Q8: Which of the following frontline services do you prefer doing? Reorder these statements (1=most like doing, 5=least like doing).

Number of respondents for this question	21		91%
	Data	Mean	Ranking
Help Desk	90	4.29	1
Roving	41	1.95	5
Phone support/LibAnswers	68	3.24	2
LibChat	50	2.38	4
Back-up	66	3.14	3

Q9: What comes to mind when you think about roving? Please select between 5 and 10 of the following words/phrases.

Number of respondents for this question				21	91%
active	2	books	1	searching for books	3
comfortable	0	busy	0	self-service machine	0
confident	1	catalogue	2	shelving	4
enjoyable	1	challenging	5	talking	11
fun	0	circuit	4	text-a-talker	4
happy	1	cold	1	unattended property	3
productive	1	customer service	10	variety	1
relaxing	0	discipline	5	walking	4
rewarding	1	drink	1	wandering	6
boring	8	enquiries	5	awkward	1
confused	0	food	11	confrontational	1
drag	3	frontline	4	disturbing	1
embarrassed	3	Help Desk	2	hassle	1
pointless	8	hot	0	impossible	1
repetitive	7	iPad	0	ineffective	1
rude	4	patrolling	17	luck	1
stressful	6	phones	7	policing	1
uncomfortable	7	polo shirt	4	rubbish	1
adding value	2	quiet	1	troublemakers	1
'AskUs' jacket	7	routine	2	unclear	1

Q10: What do you think roving adds to the library user experience at ARU? Please also use this space to add any other comments about roving or your experience of roving.

Number of respondents for this question		16	70%
#1	I suppose it lets the user know that there is a presence in the library, but I think they ask anyone they see with a lanyard on anyway. I don't mind doing it, but it's seems we're making a big deal out of a little job.		
#2	<i>No response</i>		
#3	<p>In my experience, people do not like to be interrupted, they will ask if they need help. I do not see the point of wearing the roving shirt, students know who we are and will ask if they need anything. It makes me feel awkward and uncomfortable and less likely to go up to people and ask if they need help. Especially since the Ask Us speech bubble is at the bottom of the t shirt and looks like it is coming out of your bum!!!! It is stressful enough feeling that I have to monitor behaviour and confront groups of people talking who are around the same age/older than me without having to wear an embarrassing t shirt.</p> <p>I feel that we are just there to control behaviour/confiscate food, which contradicts us being friendly and helpful towards students. I understand the principle of us being available to help students but I will not interrupt people to see if they need help. I have had more people ask me for help when I have just been upstairs shelving or looking for books than when I am actively roving. I feel that it would be more effective to have security patrol the library more often to control the zones/no eating policy and to allow us to be available to help. I enjoy customer service and being on the frontline, but roving is easily the most stressful and dreaded part of the day for me.</p>		

#4	<i>No response</i>
#5	I don't usually approach students looking for books unless they ask for help as I think they should be encouraged to do it themselves!
#6	<p>I think roving is a good idea in theory, but we don't enforce it well. I imagine that, as a student, it's confusing when someone in a blue polo shirt is going round telling people off for whispering, then the next hour that same person is happily answering enquiries on the Help Desk.</p> <p>I feel that roving can be separated into two distinct sections - answering enquiries and policing/disciplining. In my opinion, these should be two separate roles - but again, it becomes a bit uncomfortable for students if someone who has previously confronted them is the only member of staff available. It may even dissuade them from asking for help.</p> <p>In my experience, I've rarely been asked for help while roving - and when I have been stopped, I'm always asked 'Do you work here?'. This shows that the polo shirt and tabard are ineffective. I've never used the iPad and think it would confuse matters further since I don't use one at home. Additionally, roving is really boring (although I prefer quiet hours because there is less confrontation and more opportunities to do something else) - I know that everyone does their best to get out of it by going to staff meetings, Learning Hours etc.</p> <p>The Text-A-Talker system is good in parts, but it frustrates students when they complain about a certain conversation or event, but we just miss it (or the students keep quiet) while we're roving. There isn't anything we can do apart from wander round; we can't exactly stand still in order to keep everyone quiet. However, I don't think students see it that way - they want actions and consequences immediately, which we often can't give.</p> <p>I think roving needs to be completely overhauled in order for it to have a positive impact at ARU. It needs to be made more appealing to staff (though I'm not sure how this could be implemented) and clearer to students. For Chelmsford, the Computer Suite is the main problem - it's huge, far too loud and can't really be patrolled in any way. I've roved around in that area before but don't do anything about the noise, simply because it's impossible to make a change - as soon as you leave, everyone starts shouting, eating and at times throwing things again. It is really frustrating and it's the main reason I dread roving.</p>
#7	<p>Roving has become a policing role (maybe 90%) and that's not right. We are seen as troublemakers ourselves by those that continue to break library rules. Because we are policing, I think people are less likely to feel they can ask library questions when they only see us enforcing our rules.</p> <p>When staff tasks are changing hourly, it is very difficult to re-check people that have already been spoken to once or twice. They are often warned by different staff members over and over again but there won't be action as it is impossible to communicate between staff. It's very hard to identify people when they move desks or go to different floors and repeatedly rule break.</p> <p>I make sure, as I make eye contact with students as I rove, that I acknowledge them and I feel this will encourage them to ask if they need help.</p>

	<p>I think the roving role has changed and is now very unclear and ineffective. LSAs have continued to report incidents but no action or improvements are ever seen. Evening duties on some nights are extremely difficult because of low staffing. Staffing is fine until there are issues with behaviour. I hope the roving role can be re-addressed and have spoken to managers to encourage discussion amongst LSAs with the view to improving the role and amending our rules. I hope this will lead to better staff well-being and happier students.</p> <p>I think we should allow eating in the library, as students are doing it anyway. It is highly stressful for us and seems pointless and irritating to our students. I feel the students would see this as a great improvement. We would have to pay for cleaners hourly but I think that would be well worth it. It would be great to return to our role of helping with library enquiries, as Library Support Advisers.</p>
#8	<p>Roving helps maintain a quiet and clean environment for people to work in, although often it appears that people resume talking etc. as soon as the LSA has left the floor. I think it is useful for people on the upper floors to be able to grab an LSA for help as they are walking by. At busy periods it is helpful when a roving LSA remains close to the helpdesk so they can help manage queues. I think roving is most effective when staff are also undertaking another task as people seem more likely to ask for help when the LSA is e.g. shelving as they are stationary.</p> <p>It can be difficult to be seen as both approachable and assertive. You want people to feel able to approach you and ask what they feel is a silly question, while at the same time knowing that they need to take note when you ask them to stop talking. I think this is possible, but not always easy.</p>
#9	<p>I think having a presence in the upper floors of the library adds positively to the user experience, but I don't think roving is always the most beneficial. There are times when walking past customers repeatedly feels like I'm the one being most disturbing, but at the same time I also feel like my presence deters some misbehaviour.</p>
#10	<p>Roving is useful during the busy periods of term to help students and also just to manage the students when they get carried away. When it is quiet it could be staggered to when it is required.</p>
#11	<p><i>No response</i></p>
#12	<p>Users don't have to go to the helpdesk to ask for help. Less noise/food issues.</p>
#13	<p>Identifying students who look like they may need help is something you learn - I do not think approaching students at random, let alone 'as many as possible' is what roving is about at all. I think that would be disruptive, irritating, and would make me feel uncomfortable as both student and staff.</p> <p>If it is quiet, I can easily rove for an hour without interacting with a student. However, this does not mean that I have not been both available to approach (and hopefully approachable) and looking for opportunities where I may be able to help someone. For this reason, I am almost always doing other tasks in addition to roving - taking books upstairs, searching for lists, etc. This also helps to clearly identify me as a member of staff and therefore someone who can be approached with a question.</p>

	<p>I have found roving enquires to be roughly split between 1) those you approach e.g. because they are looking puzzled 2) those who approach you because they have a pressing question at that moment e.g. where is room XYZ123 3) those who recognise you and take the opportunity to ask a question while you are there e.g. someone who could not work out how to do something in Word earlier, it was not pressing enough for them to go downstairs to the help desk or submit an enquiry about it, but now that a member of staff is walking by they will ask about it.</p> <p>I hate wearing roving jackets/shirts because they make me feel uncomfortable, can be a hassle to wear over your clothes or change into, and I think I make myself identifiable enough as a member of staff without them - I certainly still receive roving enquiries often enough. I dislike telling people to be quiet or stop eating, as I'm guessing most people do, but feel confident enough in doing it. I think it's an inevitable part of working in a library, and all staff should approach students about these issues if they happen to be passing them.</p>
#14	<i>No response</i>
#15	Saves them having to go to helpdesk for help, if rover happens to be passing.
#16	I think that roving, when employed effectively, can be an important addition to the service that we provide users at ARU. With the 24 hour environment there is a high possibility of anti-social/inappropriate behaviours occurring in the library and I think that protecting users from this adds to user experience. During that day I think that the jacket does help attract enquiries, though I am often asked for help when I am not wearing it or whilst completing other jobs.
#17	Roving is GREAT. Love It!!
#18	I find it very rewarding, it gives you the chance to give students a crash lesson on how the Library system works and how they can get the most from it, as they are often clueless.
#19	<i>No response</i>
#20	It gives an extra element of customer interaction by actively assisting users within the collection; this allows for a much more flexible approach when assisting with inquiries.
#21	<i>No response</i>
#22	<p>Roving is a love/hate aspect of the job. When you are dealing with a customer and truly helping them search, research and assist it can be great, rewarding even BUT it happens so very rarely that roving is predominantly all about policing spaces and areas of the library. Often when dealing with behavioural issues or food I have received a general lack of respect/grace or dignity when asking students to refrain from whatever it is that they are doing that goes against the rules.</p> <p>I have been swore at under breaths, ignored or been on the receiving end of blatant bad attitude. It is often very tiring dealing with person after person. Persistent problem makers are given three warnings before we are supposed to take card details, and then it takes another occasion of taking card details of the same problem maker for the Customer Services Manager to contact the students tutor and even then there is hardly any come back. I think we are a soft touch in the eyes of the students - because they see no evidence of any penalising for poor behaviour. There tends to be no negative comeback for a student to misbehave or flout rules.</p> <p>Unfortunately it's easy to see why colleagues don't rove as well as others,</p>

	<p>sometimes when I have been on other duties such as shelving or back up and on a floor that is being roved I have had to speak to groups of students about noise, talking in groups when there has been a fellow rover within the area of the said groups/individuals - so as a team some of us do the job and some avoid potential conflict. But can you blame them for wanting to stick about the helpdesk where there is strength in numbers. I think some colleagues, myself included, have had to give up a little these past weeks during hand ins and exams because the eating has been so prolific. Maybe a relaxation of food rules during this time?</p> <p>The ground floor is terrible area to rove, especially with the hidden pod areas, it is truly unruly and messy and the behaviour often on busy days/nights spreads from ground floor to upper floors. And what is it with that wall that hides Pods A, B, C and the walkthrough hole? I know this was a question about how does roving add to the library user experience I doubt it adds very much, I think they see us roving as a hindrance/bother just there to tell them not to do something. Stress for us, stress for them. I don't think there is enough signage about silence, quiet and food - or maybe the signs are focused on words as opposed to being clear graphical/infographic type signs. I think if you don't want people to eat, talk, make noise then a more zero tolerance approach would be better - none of this three strikes we take your card details and nothing happens for another three.</p> <p>I think if you want us to be food police then you team us up and we can confiscate food but telling people time and time again doesn't work. Unless...you decide to relax the rules about food, but then there is the issue of mess which there tends to be a lot of. I don't think the library as a working space works that well, it is an old building not designed for the amount of footfall/traffic we have. I think if you want roving to work then you need to reclaim the library as a proper work/study space where there is a clear delineation between other areas of the University – it's too much of a hangout space for students. I have spoken with students on several occasions who say they don't use the library because it's too noisy, especially after we all go home. I may have gone off on one but it's not often we are given the chance to focalise our opinions in such a manner. The library could be great, I know we all try but some things just don't seem to be working - and the LSAs are the ones on the frontline who get the stress/anxiety/attitude trying to enforce rules.</p>
#23	<i>No response</i>

Appendix L – Word clouds

Question 9



Appendix M – Interview 1: coded transcript (extracts)

Location: Chelmsford	Date: 23 June 2015	Time: 11:30 am	Duration: 38 mins
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Key themes: Student/customer service Visibility/presence Policing Uncomfortable

[on the launch of roving]

... We'd done a few introductory discussions with the staff beforehand and the views we were getting is that they were finding it very uncomfortable or they thought they would find it uncomfortable, going up and approaching people to ask if they needed help. They thought it was intruding and disturbing them. ...

... There was a lot discussed in the management team here, whether or not people were effectively afraid of losing that little bit of protection of a desk as opposed to just going up somebody when you're just laying yourself bare and if you get it wrong then there's a little bit of a judgement call. The way we put it is that unless you're absolutely certain that they look like they need help, and as you know, you can normally tell if somebody needs a bit of help, then don't go up and approach them. If you're walking about and you're visible they're more likely to approach you and that was the main benefit of it, was actually having a physical presence out in the library.

... Norman did quite a lot of work to try and change it and make it a more proactive experience rather than just being more visible as the initial change. And me and him did a lot of training courses here and at Cambridge just to try and kick-start it and give people a better understanding of how to go up and approach somebody if they look like they need help. However, we've gone back away from that now and it's changed back more like what it was originally.

[on measuring the success of the roving sash]

... It showed that people were approached more when they were actually visible. It was a huge sash that said 'Here to help' - you couldn't miss it. When moved down to having a smaller sash which, I will say, looked a lot more professional, a lot less like a 'Miss Universe' sash, the impact was possibly lessened which is one of the reasons why we eventually moved to t-shirts here and you've got the tabards or jackets at Cambridge. But that's again just to make it more visible. ...

[on staff attitudes (iPad, uniform)]

... I know some of the staff here were not comfortable and confident using the iPad and they found that very difficult initially. They were worried about going out roving anyway because they were still a little bit self-conscious of it, especially when they didn't like wearing the sashes and later on the t-shirts. Then to have an iPad, which they weren't 100% au fait using, was a big thing for them. After a little while we gave them a bit of training on the iPads, they got a lot more confident using them and that, I think, helped them. No one minds roving at all now, as you say it's normalised. People just expect to do it and no one worries about it and no one thinks about it. There was a lot of resistance to it to begin with.

[a CSSs view of attitudes to roving]

... Some people thought it was a waste of time and thought they were better off just going up and doing a list and they'd get asked questions anyway. And there's a part of that that's true. But if someone has got a t-shirt or a tabard on then they give the impressions that, even if they're busy, you can go up and ask them something. There's been a big thing that's still a bit of a thing amongst staff about roving. This is the only thing I'd say people are not alright with which is the policing aspect of it. ...

[on security and policing]

We do when it's term time. So the guard who sits on the reception desk, we try to relieve him, by linking it in with whoever is roving. We'd relieve him and then he'd go off and do a **patrol round** and then they'd continue with roving. So it takes a little bit of the pressure of **policing** out of it. ...

... It's been a reaction to **student behaviour problems** that we had. Which we'd noticed. It's, generally speaking, worse in the evenings anyway but we thought if we put on an enhanced security presence. And for the time we actually have a guard on the front desk we thought we might as well make the most of it.

[on roving champions wearing uniform]

... It was a huge thing to actually have **people who weren't afraid to go off and rove**. For example, when we got the t-shirts in there was a massive thing. People were saying **'we're refusing to wear them'**, 'we're not going to do it'. Myself, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] put the t-shirt on, went off all around the library and I wore mine for a few weeks to make sure that people knew that it's not too bad ...

[on roving as part of meeting agendas]

... As a way of actually making sure that people discuss it and keep it going. So each meeting it's mentioned: 'Has anyone got anything they'd like to add about roving or any observations they've had?' For example, at the most recent staff meeting, because this is the first year we've actually done it, over the summer – we haven't stopped it. Whereas normally there's not a need but we've kept doing it because we discussed it as a team and everyone said we've been doing it for a month through the summer so far and although we're not getting asked as many questions it was all agreed it was worthwhile to keep doing it ...

... And that was one of the things that started off the **guard patrolling**, for example. So it does crop up every so often but the general thing is it's just there and if there are any observations people will mention it. But it falls into the same category as the inter-library loans and serials.

[on Subject Librarians roving]

They did not wear the t-shirts. That was something where I thought, I'm not going to push that. But they did go out and make sure they were **visible** around the library. ...

[on Subject Librarians dealing with policing and behaviour]

Yes, they were. To best of my knowledge they did. I know some of them definitely did because they **found it difficult** because it's not something they're used to doing. But yes, they were meant to be doing that.

[on staff responsibilities for managing behaviour]

... I think it's more about getting everyone in the library on board because there are a lot of people in the library who work here, wear a lanyard or whatever and don't do that and then student's see that member of staff doesn't and this member of staff does. But I think a lot of members of staff think that's a customer services thing, they deal with it.

... I don't think you should be letting something go. We're actually lucky we've got [REDACTED] based here, the University Librarian. She's very good. If she sees somebody talking or eating she'll just tell them, she always does. But I know lots of other people who don't.

[on policing options for the future]

... rather than having a security guard as such, having, from the same provider, the equivalent of a Library Assistant but not really. They've got a special name but I've forgotten what they're called. But anyway it's like a cut down version of a Library Assistant but they pay less than the security guards because they haven't got security guard duties. Basically their main role would be roving. So you could employ somebody to effectively police the library.

... if we can get a couple of these guys, we've got one at the reception desk the entire time and the other one constantly patrolling round that means that the rovers would purely just be helping people. Which is what we wanted it to be in the first place. So, if we could get to that, that's great. ...

[on staff comfort and visibility]

... It's one of the things that's been discussed and I think it's a big point that if you're not feeling comfortable, you're not going to go out and ask somebody if they need help. You're not going to give off the body language of somebody's who's approachable because you're very conscious of how you look, how you're behaving and that instantly means that you close up. We've got certain people who say they very rarely get asked questions but I know they are the ones who are exceptionally uncomfortable roving. So, I know when they're going out roving and they're wearing the t-shirt, they really don't like it, they're not going to be as visible so there is definitely that balance to be struck. However, I think normally it's the people who are going to be very self-conscious whatever you give them to put on as part of the roving process. ...

[on who should rove]

... We came to the decision that it's best if everybody does it just as a fairness thing. But, from a purely theoretical side of things with roving, if you've got people who actually don't mind doing it and almost enjoying doing it then they're going to give a much better service, the whole body language is going to be 'I'm here to help you'. If I go out around the library and I'm wearing the t-shirt I get asked a load of questions but I'm enjoying that process because it's at a time that I can get off and do it.

[on the same approach for the Help Desk]

No. Everyone would have to do it.

Appendix N – Interview 2: coded transcript (extracts)

Location: Cambridge	Date: 7 July 2015	Time: 11:30 am	Duration: 46 mins
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Key themes: Roving as a service 'Transition period'/Change Research Challenge

[on formalised roving in libraries]

... The development of roving as a concept really grew at that period. I would say that most university libraries deliver roving in some context, whether they call it that or call it something else. But it tends to be business as usual now, so it doesn't tend to be discussed in the same way as it was discussed as something new maybe five years ago. It's quite difficult really to get a handle on what different places are now doing and again whether it's seen as a separate task or whether it's encompassed in just how people deliver their roles these days. ...

[on roving at ARU]

I suspect, having seen it working over the last year, it feels very much like we are in a transition period. It feels as if it's been implemented successfully up to a certain point but I don't think we really have the data and understanding of what it's being successful at achieving. So, for example, how many of our users really recognise staff wearing the roving uniform? Does that make a difference in terms of how our users perceive who they can ask for help? My perception, when I move around the two main library sites, is that they will ask anyone for help. They tend to identify library staff without the clothing and lanyards so if they're doing that then do we need to have designated rovers wearing designated clothing? What is the purpose of that?

[on roving and change]

Within the environment we're in at the moment those kind of incremental changes seem to be inevitable. So as we see our universities changing and adapting to meet different external pressures that the university is facing, then as a library service within, we're reacting both to the changes at university level but also the changes to our user base as well. There are so many big picture things going on in the higher education sector that have that trickledown effect. We have potentially different expectations coming in from our users, whether they expect more from us or whether they actually expect less from us or just something completely different. It's that ongoing research and trying to understand what they need. Trying to get those services developed so that we are meeting those needs.

[on library users]

... They probably quickly become quite comfortable with how to ask for help. They know their way around. Other students will only come in at certain points and it's being there and being approachable for those students so that they're not scared to come into the library. Which, as much as we think of ourselves as as welcoming and friendly as we can be, a lot of potential users will still think of the library as a scary place that they don't really want to engage with. So I think roving, both in and outside the library, has a really important part to play there.

[on managing a consistent service for staff and students]

I think that is probably a piece of work that we need to be working on at the moment because it feels like we may be that we're in a transition where we need to understand, as a library, better what we are trying to achieve with this service. I think that increased understanding will allow our CSSs to have a structure to prioritise roving at the key times. ...

[on how roving fits into wider strategic outlook of CSD]

... That's an interesting one. The most obvious way that it links in is that some of our students have an ongoing concern about the behaviour of other students and roving tends to be viewed as one of the key ways that we have staff around a library to contribute to managing that behaviour. Obviously, in an ideal context, our university library would reflect our university in terms of being a learning community. What we would like to achieve and we can take some steps to try to achieve is for our users to have that view of themselves as members of a community. And be considering how other users want to use the space when they're carrying out their work or when they're moving through the library. It's obviously a big challenge to do that and I think we've made some small steps this year. So, trying to work a little bit more with the student's union to understand the wider student perspective and going forward we want to do a lot more research on our users and their expectations and needs so that we can try to deliver the right spaces for them. In a way, the roving aspect is trying to fix a problem at one end and what we, from the strategic perspective, are trying to do is fix it from the other end. To try to mould and change attitudes towards study space and our library so that we don't have to step in and manage user behaviour. So it's quite an ongoing and big picture thing in terms of thinking about how we can build library spaces as part of the learning community.

[on managing behaviour]

... I think it's one of those things where it's inevitable that library staff in the library need to be carrying out that behaviour management. Whether we're wearing roving jackets or not, other users in the library know who we are quite a lot of the time. Either through our identification or they just get to know us. So if, as library staff, we're moving through the library and not managing behaviour our users really see that negatively. They see that as us disclaiming ownership and not helping them. From the user perspective, whether roving or not, I think all library staff need to be doing that. And that's where there's an interesting difference between sites because of where library staff are at each site. So in Cambridge the majority of library staff are on the ground floor and effectively, Library Support Advisers are the primary people who will be moving around the library space, whether in their roving duty or not. ...

[on the roving uniform as a symbol for policing or helping]

I suspect it's more of the former. I would like it to be much more of the latter. I think that really links back to what we were talking about previously about changing perceptions of what the library space is and what they can do and how their behaviour impacts upon other users. ...

[on how LSAs feel about roving]

I think we have a few people who really enjoy it and it is that aspect of going out and helping people. And we have more people probably who don't enjoy it. Who see the policing aspect in particular as a challenge and the perceptions that you've raised around 'If I'm just going round tell people off why on earth would they ask me for help?' which is a difficult one. Also, there's the aspect of what really should I be doing, especially when its rota'd in for perhaps a whole hour. The library might be quiet sometimes. It's like, 'OK roving, but what am supposed to do for the whole hour?' and it's that clarity on the kinds of things that people could be doing during that period that would add value. Alongside, as we mentioned earlier, the management perspective of when do we need to be doing roving so if it is very quiet in the library are people actually better placed doing something slightly different rather than being out in the library space all the time. I think in terms of those who are delivering roving as a concept there's quite a lot of challenges going on in terms of how people react to it, particularly on an emotional level. I think. In terms of this not being part of the job that they like. It's finding ways to address that from a management perspective that we need to look at.

[on putting the best people on the frontline]

... But once you have a bigger team of people and you have part-time as well as full-time staff managing the workload across a large team and long service hours is probably a step too far to offer that level of 'who is the expert and will go out and focus on certain things'. It sounds a tempting proposition from a management perspective but when you start thinking about how it could work in practice **there are an awful lot of challenges there.**

[on running sessions to discuss roving]

... I have it in my task list this summer to run some kind of informal sessions with Library Support Advisers because people have been saying they want something where they can just talk about the issues that they face, share experiences and tips on how to **deal with different things.** It's not a training session as such but just a kind of sharing and getting those **frustrations out and thinking of new ways of approaching it.** ...

... **Because as much as we're aware that we need to find out about our user experience, our frontline staff are the ones who are best placed to give us that input** so I think it is very ongoing in terms of supporting people.

[on Help Desks as a barrier]

... The Help Desks themselves, you will be aware of the difference **between the Cambridge and Chelmsford Help Desk in terms of what they look like.** And I think **that's an interesting aspect to look at as well.** So the height of the desk and how much of a physical barrier it does present to users. The height of the desk in Cambridge could be seen as a barrier, but then again it's also quite nice because you can prop yourself on it when you're asking questions. Whereas Chelmsford, as a user you're kind of looking down on staff. There's good and bad about each set up.

[on behaviour]

I strongly believe that all members of library staff should address behaviour as they see it when they're in the library space. And it's a question of 'When are they in the library space?' ...

[on the future of roving]

... I think generally in terms of the future of roving, it feels like there are still the key aspects of the role that will need to be done.

I think that tends to be done within what's called roving. Whether it's delivered in that way in the future is, I think, something that we'll need to look at. So, what's most appropriate for different people to do at different times? But all three of things are an aspect of being visible, to deliver those core services if you like.