

Summary of re-opening measures in Hong Kong academic libraries

Compiled by HKLA

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Academic libraries had different responses to the situation. Some had to follow campus facility closure, some could open partially or intermittently since the outbreak in late January. For example:

- Some have been closed since Lunar New Year; and staying closed until end of May tentatively
- Some opened the main library and keep branches closed
- Some kept the building closed but provide book retrieval/pickup service

Different campuses have different policies on access control:

- In some institutions, only staff providing emergency/essential services are allowed to enter the campuses. Other staff have to work from home.
- In some institutions, schools and departments need to complete a Campus Entry Form listing the staff required to return to campus. Staff authorized to return to the campuses are required to fill in a Travel and Health Declaration Form and have their temperature check at the campus checkpoint.

We are still in the middle of a pandemic and libraries need to be prepared to make quick response to the development of the outbreak and adjust their service levels accordingly. In Hong Kong, libraries had experienced intermittent shutdowns and reopening in the past few months amid the pandemic. We have to stay vigilant and keep up with the hygiene measures.

Measures for re-opening

1. What measures are being taken concerning library users in order to keep them and staff safe?

General measures include:

- a. Require all users to take temperature when entering libraries;
- b. All users must wear masks inside libraries;
- c. Adhere to social distancing in public areas and staff areas
- d. Reduce seating capacity by removing and spacing out chairs
- e. Provide masks to staff in office

- f. Some universities provide masks to students
- g. Apply antiseptic spray on furniture, counters, keyboards, etc.
- h. Frequent sanitizing and cleaning of facilities in public areas
- i. Provide hand-sanitizer at service counters
- j. Provide hand-sanitizer in staff offices

2. What measures are being taken concerning library materials (books, other materials)?

- Some libraries where materials are RFID enabled provide self-service circulation faculties
- Some libraries provide temporary online book request service during campus closure to allow staff and students to request circulating materials. Library staff deliver the requested items to the requesters at the library entrance or a campus checkpoint.
- some libraries provide book sanitizer for use by users and library staff.

3. What measures are being taken concerning library equipment (computers, other equipment)?

- Some libraries have strict sanitizing procedures of facilities/equipments in public areas
- Sanitizing wipes are made available for users to clean the equipment if needed

4. To what extent are special provisions (for example, online access, cancelling fines, extending deadlines for returning books) being continued?

Various academic libraries have provided the following measures during closure:

- Extension of due date before book request service introduced
- Unlimited number of renewals
- Waiver of overdue fines
- A Libguide compiled to present the library support services for remote learning, which also includes a consolidated list of free resources during COVID-19 pandemic

5. What measures are being taken concerning library staff in terms of returning to work?

Not all libraries have been closed in March and April; and those stayed closed may not have set re-opening schedule yet. Depending on the pandemic situation,

government advice and university decisions for re-opening, some libraries may put staff in roster to reduce the number of people in offices. Almost all facilities require temperature check at entrances; and travel and health declaration will remain in place. Face masks, gloves, sanitizing materials are likely to be provided; library materials, facilities, furniture and equipment are cleaned frequently.