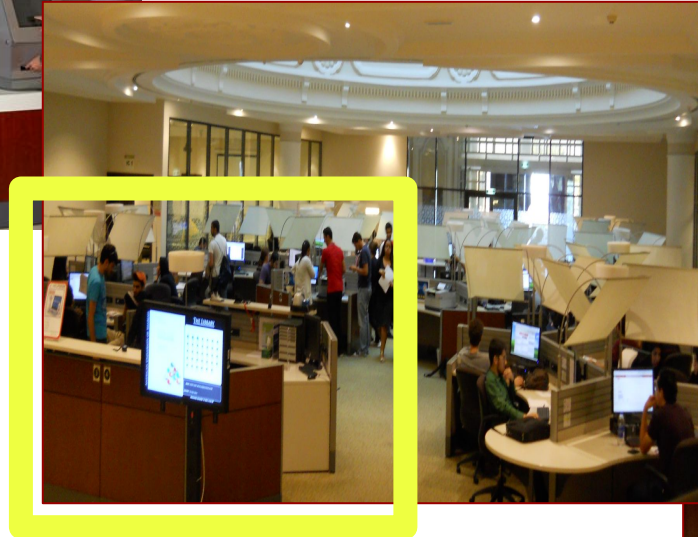
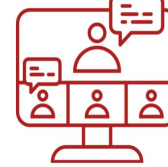


# Destination Help Desk

What students want –  
Exploring students' preferences  
for research support

Alanna Ross, [aross@aus.edu](mailto:aross@aus.edu): Associate University Librarian for Public Services (AUS)  
Christine Furno, [cfurno@aus.edu](mailto:cfurno@aus.edu): Engagement and Outreach Librarian (AUS)

# Circulation & Reserves



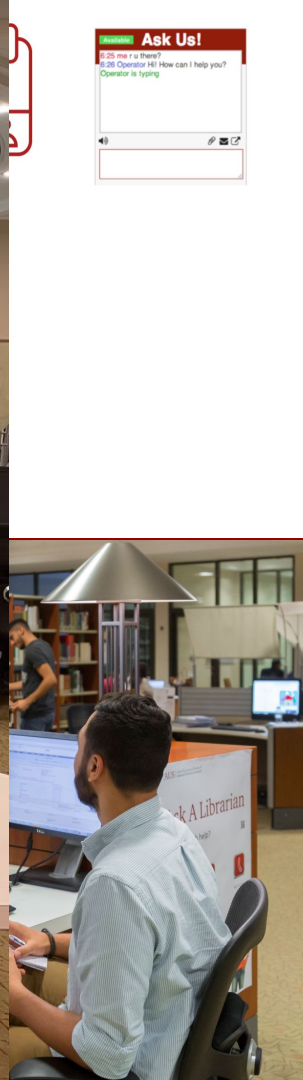
**Fall 2019 enrollment = 5,125**

**Fall 2019 gate count = 9800**

**Fall 2019 Help Desk Total = 692**

**Student assistants = 35**





**Ask Us!**

0:25 min r u there?  
0:26 Operator Hi! How can I help you?  
Operator is typing

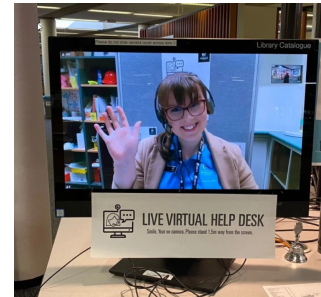
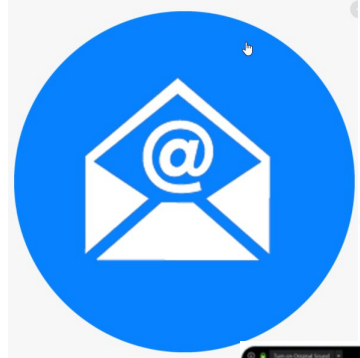
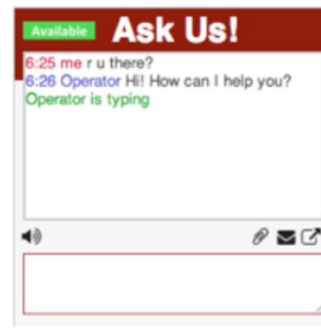
Fall 2019  
Fall 2019  
Fall 2019  
Student a

# Aims of this study

This research explored the values and assumptions that students assign to various models of library help desk support.

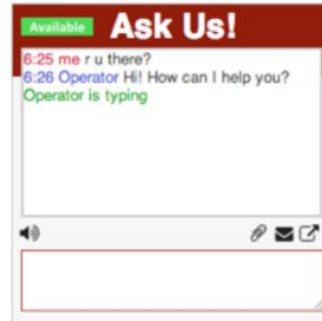
## Findings will:

- Help the AUS library understand the **key attributes** that characterize the help that students want from the library.
- Inform design of an environment that responds to the **social behavior** and **expectations** of library users in support of teaching, learning and research.
- Contribute to development of **evaluation criteria** that can be used to **assess** ongoing library help desk service provision.
- Help with **planning** a model of consolidated service delivery



12 sets of 3 x photograph combinations (elements)

- 1) In what way are any 2 of these photographs similar?
- 2) Why is the 3rd photograph different?



# Part 1: Constructs of Meaning

can check understanding	VS	cannot check understanding
Human interaction, a conversation	VS	structured interaction
familiar, comfortable	VS	unfamiliar, uncomfortable
less intimidating	VS	intimidating
user friendly, welcoming, approachable	VS	distant, static
formal	VS	informal
instant responses, immediacy of help	VS	time delay
always get the answers you need	VS	don't always get the answers you need
time efficient	VS	time consuming
personal assistance, one-on-one help	VS	less personalized help, depersonalized
informative	VS	less informative
can convey ideas	VS	cannot convey ideas very well
no planning needed	VS	planning needed
accessible, reachable	VS	less accessible, less reachable
easy to use	VS	difficult to use



# What students value when it comes to seeking help:

## 1. Immediacy of help

Students make decisions based on how quickly and efficiently answers to their questions and help can be both delivered and provided. Students value convenience and readiness of help at their individual point of need.

## 2. Conveying meaning and feeling understood

Important for students is finding a means of expression that they find comfortable to adequately convey and communicate personal meaning when articulating questions and asking for help; but also verifying that they are readily and initially understood. This is impacted by the context and format of support means and plays an important role in the decisions student make in choosing support options.

## 3. Personal Interaction

When consulting and communicating with staff, personalized, informal interactions are prioritized. Open communication channels are less intimidating and more familiar to students.

## 4. Value judgements

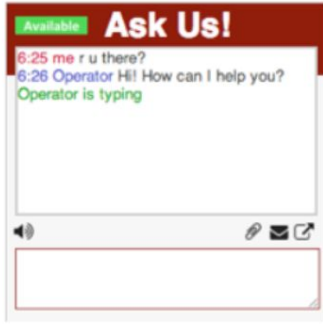
When seeking support or considering support options, students make decisions based on either prior experience or presumptions surrounding the type of help that will be received and the planning, or lack thereof, that is required.



## Part 2: Repertory Grids

	0	CIRC DESK	Phone	Email	SAs	Chat Box	Genius Bar	Touch Screen	Virtual meeting	brarian on-scre	1	
Personal	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	Impersonal	
When I'm struggling	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	When I'm not struggling	
Dedicated help	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	Ready help	
Being independent	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	Being less independent	
In-person interaction, can't hide	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	More anonymous interaction, can hide	
For direct, specific questions	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	For in-depth, extended questions	
Immediate, faster help	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	Time delay, will spend time waiting	
Context / format is important	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	Context / format is not important	
Familiar	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	Unfamiliar	
Easy	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	Not as easy	
Time efficient, will take less time	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	Less time efficient, will take some time	
Planning needed	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	No planning needed	
Confident I will get all I need	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	Less confident I will get all I need	





## Chat

Students positively indicated chat is **approachable** and **familiar, easy**, and **immediate** responses are expected.

### Issues raised:

- Difficult communication tool to clearly express yourself
- The experience can feel impersonal
- Referral may be needed

### Implications:

Online chat was launched during the Spring 2021 semester and marketed across the AUS academic community.

- Updated label for the chat button informs user aware that communication is with another human, rather than a chat bot.
- Continued training for library staff
- Enhanced marketing and outreach



## Student Assistants

Students acknowledge and recognize the importance and **familiarity of peer personal interactions, accessibility of on-site support** and **real-time responses received**.

### Issues raised:

Students make presumptions surrounding the type of help that Student Assistants can provide.

- Less complex queries.
- Onsite questions related to technology and print book retrieval only.
- Support may not be as concise and focused as required.
- Potential time delays for those students seeking more complex support or referral.

### Implications:

- Student Assistant (SA) training - a restructuring of current programming.
- Greater oversight, monitoring and peer mentorship
- The importance of referrals and promoting expert assistance
- Chat operation - getting SA's involved
- Retention / student assistant turn-over

# (Preliminary) Findings & Implications

Methodology - student testimonials - extending the study

Providing a range of support options through an integrated and centralized service desk

**Reconsidering Training - Access Services Staff and Student Assistants - mentorship**

A focus on “personal interactions” & “immediacy of support” is vital

**Staffing & scheduling - balancing online and in-person support combined with uncertainty of on-campus opening hours**

Referrals - more seamless and timely

Promotion of services - extending our reach and emphasizing support goals

**Evaluation of ongoing service delivery based on derived service values**



Q & A

Thank you!