

Music and Performing Arts Library

Annual Report

July 1, 2020—June 30, 2021

Prepared by Kirstin Johnson with significant contributions from Kate Lambaria

I. Unit Narrative

Challenges and Changes

The Music and Performing Arts Library (MPAL) serves one large school (Music) and two smaller departments (Dance and Theatre), all three of which are actively engaged in scholarship, creation, and performance. We serve an estimated 1,000 students and 150 faculty as our core constituents, in addition to the numerous individuals on and off campus who regularly use our collections and services for scholarship and enjoyment. The departments we serve had a hybrid approach to instruction during the 2020-2021 academic year, with some instruction and ensembles occurring on campus and some happening virtually, which made it especially challenging to meet patron needs.

MPAL was closed to the public from mid-March 2020 through June 13, 2021 and almost all our services shifted to virtual, while some were handled on site, and a few were ceased temporarily. Staff had hybrid remote/on site schedules to meet the steady patron demand for materials and to process incoming materials, and librarians were on site as needed, on average one day per week. However, the inability for patrons to be on site and for staff to work on site fully for most of the fiscal year drastically affected much of our work, including our ability to complete projects, provide service, and therefore our statistics. Staff and librarians were fully back on site as of mid-May 2021 and MPAL reopened to in-person patrons on June 14th, 2021. To address the challenges faced by remote work, the Head conducted biweekly one-on-one Zoom meetings with each staff member and in alternate weeks held all-staff meetings. MPAL also began using Microsoft Teams heavily for staff communication surrounding fulfillment, Alma implementation, and reference work.

We had several staffing changes this year. The Head of the unit was on sabbatical until August 16, 2020, which impacted the unit's other librarian and staff significantly for the first several months of the pandemic. This was especially true in terms of planning and leadership but also in the amount of day-to-day work that others had to take on in her absence. However, the Music and Performing Arts Librarian and MPAL staff are to be commended for taking everything in stride and keeping everything running smoothly. In other changes, one full-time civil service staff position is vacant due to a retirement at the end of May 2020, and one civil service staff member retired on June 30, 2021, both of which required preparation and training to shift duties to other staff members. We also did not hire any student workers this year in part because we were closed to the public and in part because we were under the impression that we were discouraged from doing so due to the pandemic and the budget situation. Had we hired even one or two we could have made more progress on some of our ongoing projects such as inventory and shifting. Planning for staffing and service changes in response to entering the state's Phase 5 and for the return of students in summer and fall took much effort and discussion during spring and summer given the limited student budget we have to work with and the loss of two staff members.

MPAL's work was also greatly changed this year due to the Library-wide adoption of Alma and

Primo and in the major shifts in fulfillment duties necessitated by the pandemic. Many librarian and staff hours were spent preparing for Alma/Primo, working with other units to set up our collection locations and policies, addressing issues with our holdings so they displayed properly in the catalog, correcting fulfillment notes for items that have multiple parts to be checked upon circulation and return, troubleshooting issues with our materials to make sure the loan policies functioned properly during fulfillment (there were many, many issues to fix), and creating new teaching and training materials for staff and patrons. Additionally, the pandemic required a complete change in how fulfillment was handled, which demanded a significant amount of additional time from librarians, staff, and GAs to meet patron needs. This ranged from working to meet the e-preferred fulfillment strategy by checking all requests for electronic holdings or purchasing options, pulling items to send to lockers at Main and Grainger for pickup, communicating with numerous patrons about fulfillment requests and preferences, communicating with Library admin about the numerous requests for exceptions to circulate physical items held in HathiTrust ETAS (as music scores are predominantly needed in physical form), assisting DDS by performing our own DocExpress scanning, and all members of our staff (GAs, staff, and librarians) filling shifts at the Marshall Gallery to assist patrons with picking up holds.

Other changes in services and in workflows have been listed in the next section.

Activities, Accomplishments, and Contributions

Collection Development, Management, and Assessment

As a result of the Library's **e-preferred strategy** during the remote phase of the pandemic, our purchasing efforts changed significantly, especially for books. This included purchasing duplicate titles in electronic format for courses and for individual requests, which required a significant portion of our firm order funds to accommodate. While MPAL has historically prioritized print over electronic based on patron preference and material use needs, many new titles were purchased only in electronic format. MPAL librarians also collaborated with other Arts & Humanities librarians to acquire interdisciplinary e-book packages. In addition, we worked with the Electronic Resources librarian to trial several **new electric resources** for scores and recordings, and eventually procured some of them, which required further work with ACS staff.

This year the Head of MPAL shifted all score **standing orders** from our music serials fund to the appropriate vendors' approval plan funds. This required a considerable amount of research and communication and the assistance of individuals with each of the vendors as well as in the ACS unit. This move enables clearer reporting and tracking of expenditures and reduces the amount of inflation monies needed by the serials fund. The Head also worked to transfer our **media approval plan** to a new vendor after our existing vendor announced with less than a month's notice that they would no longer be offering such a service. In addition, various GA and practicum projects focused on **diversifying collections**, including a project focused on evaluating our current score and media collections for BIPOC composers and identifying new works to purchase. The Head also conducted a review of our score approval plans with an eye to further highlight historically excluded voices.

To **address increasingly critical space shortages** in our stacks and to accommodate the addition of almost 2,000 media items from both the Undergraduate Library and the Residence Hall Libraries, MPAL librarians and staff undertook several efforts. The first was to send all

remaining VHS holdings (about 750 items) to Oak Street, along with contributing almost 2,000 serial items to Oak Street for the **BTAA Shared Print Repository**, which allowed us to expand our media shelving area into space formerly occupied by periodicals. The Head also completed a **collection mapping exercise** begun by a former GA to determine how much space each discrete part of our collection requires (books, scores, periodicals, scores, reference materials, and playscripts) because each has its own shelving location and, in most cases, special shelving needs. We will continue conversations with CMS regarding transferring larger amounts of materials to Oak Street when possible and in the meantime are embarking on yet another deduplication project for deaccessioning.

This year the Head of MPAL had various conversations regarding **significant collections gifts** (significant either in size or importance, or both). This included facilitating and participating in conversations with SACAM, the School of Music, the Dance department, emeritus faculty, and alumni, among others, concerning the following acquired or potential gifts: Hermesdorf dance alumni archive, regimental band recordings, Richard Colwell (emeritus faculty) music education test archives, Nicholas Temperley's (emeritus faculty) Hymn Tune Index (HTI) office and personal library, Bruno Nettl's (emeritus faculty) personal library, Herb Kellman's (emeritus faculty) Renaissance Music Archive (RMA), and the personal collections of at least three faculty members who retired in 2021. MPAL took in many donated materials, including microform and facsimile additions to the HTI and RMA collections, as well as books, scores, and recordings from the other sources.

In FY21, we came close to completing the work to improve cataloging and reporting for the hundreds of manuscript and early printed editions of music housed in MPAL's **Special Collections** that are included in *RISM*, an international index of importance to music scholars around the world. We will next work to identify additional UIUC holdings to report to *RISM* and will work with RBML to transfer some of the oldest/rarest items to them for better physical stewardship. In addition, this year saw the completion of a project to **digitize** a six-volume set of broadsides (song sheets) from our Special Collections for inclusion in the Internet Archive. In the coming years we will plan and conduct digitization projects for unique *RISM* holdings and other significant Special Collections items.

In a new initiative, the Head worked with the School of Music's student chapter of the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) to create a collection in **IDEALS** for winners of their annual Choral Composition Competition <https://www.ideals.illinois.edu/handle/2142/109942>. We will be working with them each year to preserve and disseminate these works by emerging composers. In other **digital collection efforts**, MPAL staff members' work to expand both the School of Music Programs database [http://bibleaves.library.illinois.edu/catalog?f\[collection_facet\]\[\]=som](http://bibleaves.library.illinois.edu/catalog?f[collection_facet][]=som) and the Historic US Sheet Music Collection database [http://bibleaves.library.illinois.edu/catalog?f\[collection_facet\]\[\]=muxcat_hussm](http://bibleaves.library.illinois.edu/catalog?f[collection_facet][]=muxcat_hussm) were quite productive during the remote work portion of the pandemic.

Outreach and Engagement

Our renovated **player piano** continues to draw attention and this year we held **two live online public demonstrations** (with the Head as presenter and the Music and Performing Arts

Librarian as technical guru). These were very well-received and attended by over 150 people across the U.S. as well as by individuals in other countries. More information about the piano and our roll collection can be found here:

<https://www.library.illinois.edu/mpal/about/collections/specialcollections/steinway-duo-art-player-piano/>.

Under the direction of the Music and Performing Arts Librarian, Graduate assistants and practicum students developed three **digital exhibits** to help launch MPAL's Omeka S site: <https://omeka-s.library.illinois.edu/s/MPAL/page/exhibits>. These exhibits highlight unique materials in MPAL's collections, including an exhibit that ties together our recently digitized collection of **broadsides** (see above) with items from our Historic US Sheet Music collection by exploring the impact composers and social change had on music of the time, while the others provide detailed information about **MPAL's 75 years of history**, and on-demand access to information and recordings of the **player piano and roll collection**.

In efforts to keep **open lines of communication**, the Head of the Library convened the School of Music Library Committee twice during the fiscal year, and individually addressed Music, Dance, and Theatre faculty meetings. Each of these venues allowed for the collection of feedback from faculty and sharing of critical information about MPAL's operations. MPAL librarians also published the **MPAL Newsletter**, archiving it in IDEALS and distributing via various channels. <https://www.ideals.illinois.edu/handle/2142/101886>

MPAL librarians applied for and received a **Strategic Communications and Marketing Committee Grant** to print a series of postcards and information cards about MPAL's player piano and special collections. These materials will be used during in-person outreach events and postcards will be used to send to donors and other supporters. Designs are in progress and printing will be done by the end of 2021.

Reference and Instructional Services

The pandemic led to the launch of **MPAL's MediaSpace Channel** for tutorials and outreach materials created by the Music and Performing Arts Librarian, including a recording of our second virtual demonstration of the player piano and piano rolls. The channel currently has 6 subscribers, one event recording, and 9 instructional videos, although some videos have been removed over time because they were specific to services offered during the pandemic closure. The most viewed video, a tour of the MPAL website, received 330 plays in FY21. The second most viewed video, a tutorial on searching for books in the Primo catalog, received 213 plays in FY21 and has been used by librarians in other units.

Because so many courses were offered as strictly online or hybrid, many instructors requested the creation of **asynchronous video content** for their courses. These videos were integrated into several courses, including the graduate research methods section and undergraduate music history courses. Live instruction over Zoom was provided for 4 courses, reaching 72 students in dance, music, and theatre. A video response for student questions was developed for an additional graduate music course.

The Music and Performing Arts Librarian and GAs created and/or maintained 66 published

LibGuides over the year that saw over 37,000 views during this period. The most viewed guides include past exhibits, the course guide for the graduate research class, rap and hip-hop resources, and the theatre research guide.

In August of 2020, MPAL librarians, reference staff, and GAs participated in **chat reference services** for the first time in over a decade via a unit-specific widget embedded on the library's website. While the chat service did see activity, Desk Tracker reports show that most of our reference queries were answered via email primarily by MPAL librarians (80.7% of total transactions). However, as noted earlier, because in “normal times” most of our reference service provision centers around known-item transactions, especially for finding items in our physical collections, the total number of transactions is much lower than it has been in previous years and the remote situation meant that policies and services was the most frequent type of transaction—see the charts in the Appendix below for comparison.

Progress toward FY21 goals

SD1. Pro-active and trusted partners in scholarship, discovery, and innovation

- Continue efforts to identify rare and significant items from MPAL's Special Collections to digitize this is a multi-year endeavor [*in progress*]
- Work with ACS (and RBML) to identify resources to address needed improvements to existing catalog records for various subgroups of items in our collections [*done or ongoing*]
- Continue work on various collection assessment efforts, deduping, and transferring, etc. [*done or in progress*]
- Shelf-listing and inventory project in scores collection [*unable to continue during remote period*]
- Evaluate additional online content platforms for addition to our collection offerings. [*done*]
- Work with Library IT to help transition the online Hymn Tune Index database to a new platform and with the new keeper of the project to identify additional films and documents to accession into MPAL's Special Collections. [*in progress*]

SD2. Transformative learning experiences and SD3. Societal and global impact

- Offer virtual reference services (chat and online meetings) to MPAL patrons on a regular schedule. [*done*]
- MPAL history digital exhibit: use research completed for MPAL's 75th Anniversary exhibit to create a digital exhibit. Conduct an oral history with Don Krummel, Professor Emeritus in the iSchool, to capture the history of the Music and Performing Arts Library for inclusion in the exhibit. [*done*]
- Create a collection of online learning objects that encourage user participation and engagement and that can be deployed in multiple courses. [*done*]
- Develop a “performing special collections” event series that encourages dance, music, and theatre students as well as community members to engage with and learn from the unique materials in our Special Collections. [*unable to start due to pandemic*]
- Produce one or more virtual player piano demonstrations and lectures. [*done*]

SD4. Strategic investments for a sustainable library environment

- Collaborate with BTAA Music Librarians group to investigate potential subscription savings on online music platforms such as nkoda [**done**]
- iPads replacement exploration: we had to retire our popular but aging loanable iPads, which we've been offering since 2013 as the result of winning a University Library Innovation Grant [**in progress**]

FY22 Goals

MPAL Goal 1: Increase visibility of our collections by improving cataloging and creating/highlighting digital collections [*SD1. Pro-active and trusted partners in scholarship, discovery, and innovation; SD2. Transformative learning experiences*]

- Continue efforts to identify rare and significant items from MPAL's Special Collections to digitize; work with appropriate Library units to create digital collections
- Continue efforts to collaborate with ACS to prioritize and fund MPAL cataloging needs
- Process the large amounts of gift materials that have come in since July 1, 2021 so that they can be cataloged
- Continue efforts to promote collections through the creation, maintenance, and expansion of digital exhibits on the Omeka-S platform

MPAL Goal 2: Improve the diversity and usability of our collections, services, and spaces (as appropriate) [*SD1. Pro-active and trusted partners in scholarship, discovery, and innovation; and SD4. Strategic investments for a sustainable library environment*]

- Continue inventory, shelf-reading, and weeding work in collection
- Continue to improve representation of historically excluded voices in collections
- Collaborate with faculty and students (including members of the School of Music's Black Student Advisory Board) to improve collections, services, and spaces
- Explore needs and options for expanding technology offerings in MPAL such as media transfer stations and/or beat mixing stations, in coordination with other Library and campus units
- Explore and assess training programs and new service models that integrate undergraduate student assistants into the delivery of reference services (this is a direct outcome of MPAL having to develop new service models for FY22 due to understaffing; in addition, as we expect to receive at least one new staff member to fill one of our two vacancies, extensive orientation and training will be conducted for that individual).
- Continue to assess allocation of space to collections and patrons and ideal locations for each to make MPAL welcoming and usable; work with Facilities to explore options to improve MPAL spaces, especially keeping in mind the likely influx of patrons once UGL closes

MPAL Goal 3: Create new ways to engage students with MPAL collections [*SD2. Transformative learning experiences and SD3. Societal and global impact*]

- Develop a “performing special collections” event series that encourages dance, music, and theatre students as well as community members to engage with and learn from the unique materials in our Special Collections
- Continue to offer virtual player piano demonstrations as these were very successful in FY21

Unit Needs

To continue to provide a high level of service for our very high-touch, large collection in our large space, **MPAL needs more staff resources**. This includes filling at least one of our two civil service vacancies and the need for a larger student budget. Due to understaffing and an insufficient student budget, we have had to cut our opening hours by approximately 30% this year and this has a direct, negative impact on our patrons. It will be critical to expand our hours once UGL closes and we cannot do that without more staff. Furthermore, our budget had already been eroded in past years’ budget shortages, and critical work such as reshelving and so forth is shifted up the staff food chain, so to speak, reducing the capacity for higher level work by civil service staff and librarians in our unit. This limits our capacity to start new projects, regardless of how important or urgent they are, and in some cases, work has ceased completely on tasks like shelf-reading and inventory. Filling our vacant positions and/or expanding our student wage budget would mean being able to allocate staff and librarian time to projects such as catalog and stacks maintenance work, collection inventory and assessment, as well as the potential to offer new services.

Speaking of limited capacity, **MPAL needs the ability to transfer larger amounts of materials to the Oak Street Library Facility**. While we are addressing our mounting collections space crisis through deaccessioning duplicates and other means, this will not solve the problem. **Compact shelving** for some parts of the collection might be a longer-term solution if feasible and funding can be found.

On a related note, staff and patrons would very much benefit from a **reclassification of our DDC materials into LCC**, as both our scores and books collections are split, and we have thousands of items still in DDC. MPAL continues to have a very good working relationship with ACS to address our multitude of specialized cataloging needs for new materials, gifts, and under-processed collections. However, this will take additional resources, even if the portion needing reclassification is reduced by sending many of the items to Oak Street (see above).

MPAL and its patrons would benefit greatly from **technology improvements** including better options for overhead scanning of large materials (as music scores are often much larger than books) and our existing **overhead scanner** (a ScanSnap) has been out of commission for months and does not function well under the best of circumstances. A Bookeye scanner would be ideal. We also need funds to replace our **loanable iPads** (although we are still investigating patron needs and preferences and what we might want to replace them with) as they reached the end of their lifespan and could no longer be updated.

MPAL continues to lobby Facilities for **much-needed facilities improvements**, which include but aren’t limited to a new ceiling, new furniture, new flooring, and paint. With the anticipated

influx of students once UGL closes, this is more important than ever.

Unit GAs Head count/FTE and Funding Sources

- Two state-funded .25 FTE GAs
- One endowment funded .25 FTE grad hourly
- Two extra help hourly (limited term appointments in Summer 2021)

Contributions of Graduate Assistants, Hourlies, and Practicum students

Each graduate assistant spent 6 hours a week providing virtual reference services via the LibChat platform. During these shifts, GAs also assisted in checking patron requests for online availability as part of the library's e-preferred fulfillment strategy. In addition, each GA had special projects that they worked on during their other 4 hours per week, with major examples listed below. This list also includes the projects conducted by practicum students and extra help hourly employees.

Major Responsibilities

Collection Assessment and Development

Instruction and Outreach

Digital Projects

Examples

Collection assessment and related ordering (*scores and recordings by black composers; works by indigenous, black, and LGBTQ+ playwrights; Grammy Award winners*);
School of Music program review and workflow development;
Inventory of recently received player piano rolls;
Review of other donations;
Review of special collections holdings pre-dating 1800 for transfer to RBML.

Reading call numbers and finding materials in MPAL tutorial;
LibGuides maintenance and creation, especially related to Alma transition;
Social media account management.

Internet Archive metadata clean-up for digitized broadsides;
[Digital Exhibits in Omeka-S](#), including *Broadside Ballads: Influences of Composers and Social Change*, *History of the Music and Performing Arts Library*, and *MPAL's Player Piano*.

II. Statistical Profile

1. Facilities

- User seating counts
 - at tables--98 total (86 on first floor; 12 on 2nd floor)
 - at carrels--48 total (8 on first floor; 40 on second floor--incl. 8 listening carrels)
 - at public workstations--18
 - in group study rooms--24

- informal/other--17
- Number of hours open to the public per week
 - Summer II 2020 N/A
 - Fall 2020 N/A
 - Spring 2021 N/A
 - Summer I 2021 from June 14th on: 20

2. Personnel

Faculty

Kirstin Dougan Johnson (1.0 FTE) (on sabbatical 2/26/2020 until 8/15/2020)

Marek Sroka (acting unit head during Johnson sabbatical)

Kate Lambaria (1.0 FTE)

Staff

William Buss (1.0 FTE)

David Butler (1.0 FTE)

Josh Hankemeier (1.0 FTE)

Nancy Taylor (retired 6/30/2021) (1.0 FTE)

Vacant from 5/29/20 (1.0 FTE)

Graduate Assistants/Hourlies/Practicum Students

David Floyd (.25 FTE GA, state funded; .25 FTE Hourly, King endowment funded; extra help summer 2021)

Gabrielle LaBare (.25 FTE GA, state funded)

Rachel Whitman (100 hours, Spring 2021 practicum; extra help summer 2021)

Stephanie Tillman (100 hours, Summer 2021 practicum)

Lauren Vanderlinden (extra help summer 2021)

Student Assistants

Because we were not open to the public until June 14th, we did not employ student assistants until May 17, 2021 at which time we had two to three student assistants in any given week (for a total of approximately 1.0 FTE/week on average) until August 6th. During that time, they assisted with critical projects related to shifting our collections and accessioning media materials transferred from UGL. Additional student wages were spent on extra help hours during summer 2021 to complete cataloging and assessment projects.

3. User Services

- Sweeps week gate count: N/A
- Circulation (from Alma circulation reports)

Music and Performing Arts Library	Media Collection	203
	New Books	1
	Periodicals Non-circulating	7
	Plays Collection	117

	Reference Non-circulating	9
	Reserves	12
	Special Collection	6
	Stacks	1,421
Music and Performing Arts Library Total		1,776

- DocExpress scans completed by MPAL staff: 81
- Reference interactions (from DeskTracker): 482—because the largest portion of our reference statistics deal with helping people in our space and find/use our collection and we were closed to the public this year this number is greatly reduced even though we participated in chat and email reference.
- Presentations (from the Instructional Statistics database)

What/where	Number of sessions	Number of participants
Player Piano virtual demonstrations	2	157
Online instruction	4	72
<i>Total</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>229</i>

4. Other Statistics

New Materials Added to Collection (4,117 total)

- DVDs 105
- Serials 480
- Books 800
- Scores 1284
- CDs 1448

Appendix: MPAL DeskTracker question types

- desk is Music & Performing Arts: 2nd Floor, Circulation 1, Circulation 2, OffCampus, Office, Reference Desk
- from 2020-07-01
- through 2021-06-30

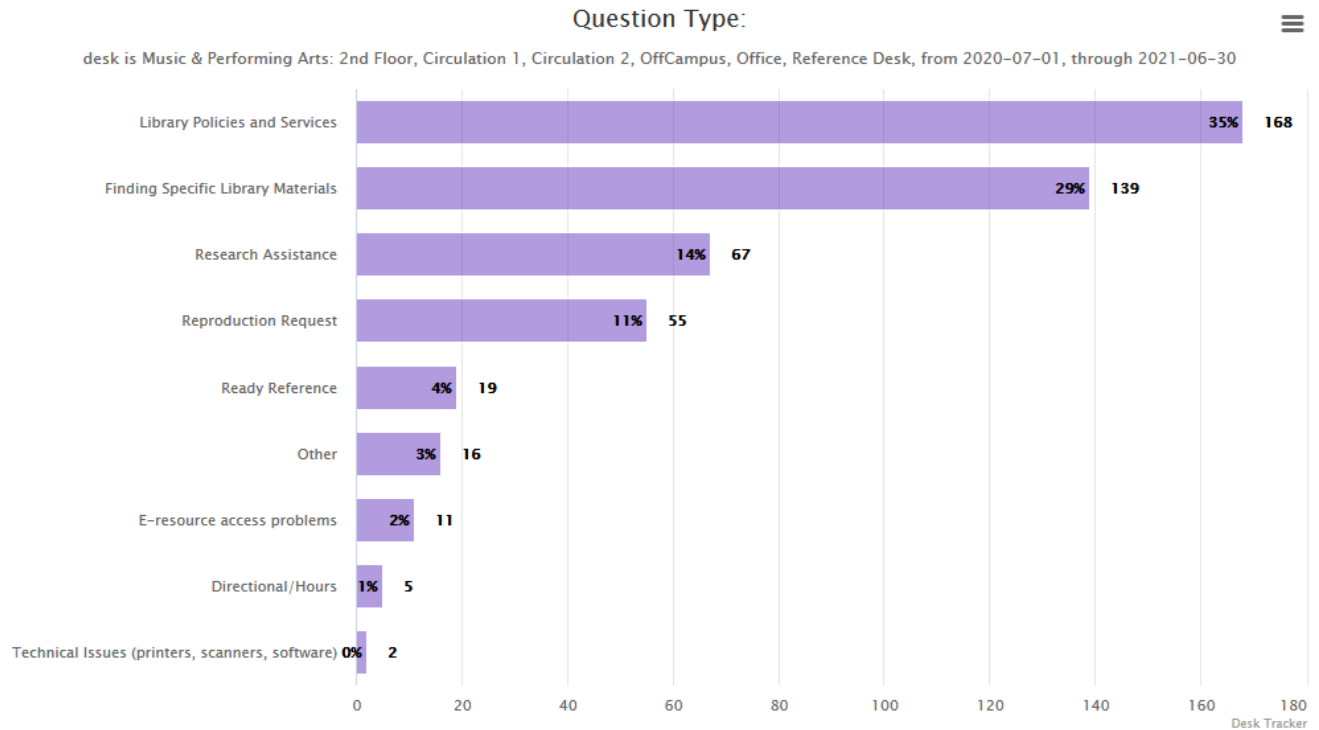


Figure 1 MPAL Question Types 2020-2021

- desk is Music & Performing Arts: 2nd Floor, Circulation 1, Circulation 2, OffCampus, Office, Reference Desk
- from 2019-07-01
- through 2020-06-30

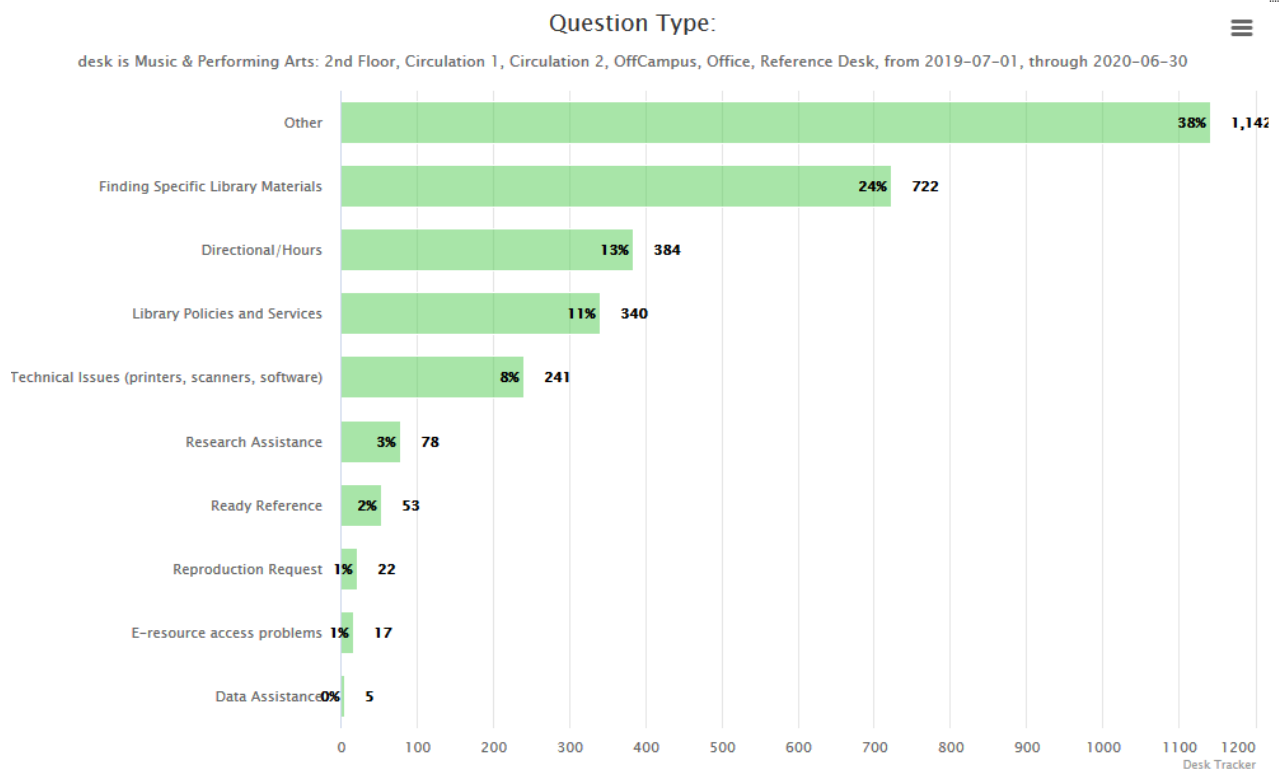


Figure 2 MPAL Question Type 2019-2020