

**Title:** Establishing a library service at Innopharma Education

**Theme:** Developmental

**Keywords:** Library, Online Learning

**Abstract:** Details the establishment of the Innopharma Library service, focusing particularly on the development of the systems infrastructure, resource building and integration into the wider Innopharma institution. The online library went live in September 2021 and by August 2022 had become an established part of the organisation with a range of guides and resources for our learners.

In October 2020, Innopharma Education succeeded in the first stage of QQI's assessment process for program validation and received approval for its institutional capability and quality control measures. Subsequently, in September 2021, the College received validation for its inaugural education and training program, which is a Level 6 Higher Certificate in Process Digitization on the National Framework of Qualifications. In between these events, in March 2021, a librarian was appointed to the College staff to establish a library service that would serve staff and students across its programmes. The library was initially made live in a limited form in September 2021 and was expanded and developed throughout the academic year.

Given that programmes at Innopharma Education are designed for delivery in a flexible, blended mode an online library - where resources and instructional material would be available on demand – was deemed the most suitable to support our learners. Having decided on this, the next step was to discover what Innopharma learners and staff required from a library. From discussions with both groups, three main wishes emerged:

1. Well organised and easily findable resources presented via a user-friendly interface.
2. Seamless off-site access to Library content
3. A wide range of resources

To achieve these three aims, a systems infrastructure first needed to be put in place, namely an Integrated Library System (ILS) and an authentication solution. The learner-facing online library also needed to be developed and resources sourced.

For the Integrated Library System, there was a wide range of options. Given that Innopharma Education has ambitious growth plans, scalability was an important consideration, as were user-friendliness and cost. Ultimately, KOHA, an Open-Source ILS was chosen. There were several reasons for this; positive feedback from current users, the fact that it could be implemented, hosted and supported by a local company (Interleaf, based in Bray Co. Wicklow) and cost- the Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) of KOHA was significantly lower than the alternatives considered.

To provide seamless and secure off-site access to library content an authentication solution was required. There are two major players in the library authentication field – EZproxy and OpenAthens. Ultimately OpenAthens was chosen – it is a newer technology, easier to use and significantly more flexible. As costs were similar the choice was clear. There were some challenges encountered in its implementation as it required more technical knowledge than KOHA – the Librarian worked with the Innopharma Education IT Manager Peter Jones and our software partner Inneall along with the OpenAthens implementation team. There was also some input required from our Ebook vendors to perfect access to certain resources.

The third major goal was to build a wide range of resources. Accounts were established with three major vendors - ProQuest, EBSCO and Browns Books - and a wide range of Open Access Resources were identified and made available via the library website.

As Innopharma Education had never previously had a library it was necessary to integrate it into the organisational structure. The library was given a seat on the Institution's Academic Council and gained representation on several working groups such as the Teaching & Learning Committee, the Academic Integrity Committee and the Innopharma Research Group. Representation in these groups enables the librarian to advocate for the library as well as share their knowledge and expertise across the college, ultimately ensuring a better service to staff and students.

By August 2022, the Innopharma Education library was fully up and running and an established part of the institution. From its launch in September 2021 to the end of August

2022, there were over 20,000 user sessions (The use of the library continues to grow with over 4,000 sessions in January 2023 alone). Today, the online library on Innoskills is well used by students and every incoming student is introduced to the library and the librarian. KOHA and Open Athens are functioning flawlessly with no technical issues to report thus far, and the range of guides and resources is continuously reviewed and updated. In May 2022 the author was [invited to present](#) at the CONUL (Consortium of National and University Libraries) Conference to speak on the library establishment and an [article on this project](#) was published in *An Leabharlann: The Irish Library* in March 2022.

The screenshot shows a user interface for the Innopharma Education Library. At the top, it says "Welcome to the Innopharma Education Library!" followed by a welcome message from Colm O'Connor, the librarian, and his contact information. Below this is an "Announcements" section. The main content area is a grid of 13 service tiles: Academic Integrity, Academic Writing, Find Books, Find Dissertations & Theses, Find Images, Find Journals, Find Past Exam Papers, Find Websites, Information Literacy, Institutional Repository, Presentations & Workshops, Referencing, Zotero, and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs). On the right side, there is a "Contact Your Librarian" section featuring a photo of Colm O'Connor, his name, title, email address, telephone number, and a note about Zoom chat availability.

*Colm O'Connor*

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