

A summary of the situation in France – key indicators

Student numbers, as a proportion of the population of the countries in this survey, have decreased very slightly (with marked disparities across countries). However, in absolute terms, the number of European students is still rising, especially in France (+11.9% over the 2013–2019 period). This trend makes the pressure on French academic library resources more acute.

Regarding “physical” libraries, France has benefited from building projects which have improved indicators on surface area per student for the public and places per student, placing France at the same level as (surface area) or above (places) the European average, even though these two indicators dropped slightly between 2018 and 2019. In France, the sharp increase of places for group work should also be noted.

Concerning opening hours, French libraries are open for significantly shorter periods than their European counterparts in hours per week and days per year. The Bibliothèques Ouvertes (“open libraries”) initiative seems to have shown progress since 2017. There has been a slight increase in the number of hours per week libraries are open but a slight decrease in the number of days per year they are open. The opening hours indicator would merit a more granular approach by factoring in the structure of library networks (number, library size).

The relative decrease in resources, when compared to the European average (that is, the average of the 15 countries’ indicators covered in the survey), is particularly manifest in the funding allocated to libraries (total expenditure, staff expenditure, materials expenditure) per student, bearing in mind that this funding has increased in absolute value.

One of the characteristics of French academic libraries (ALs) is that expenditure on materials is significantly lower than elsewhere compared to overall expenditure, the reasons for which have not yet been fully elucidated. (They are likely to depend on the editorial situation, labor costs and employment practices in each country).

The total wage bill is increasing, however the number of FTE positions per student is decreasing sharply and is lower than the European average. The decrease in expenditure on printed materials and other budget lines seems to compensate the increase in expenditure on electronic materials.

Activities in which France can show a proportionally more favorable position include user training per student (for the training programs provided by the libraries) and continuing training for staff per FTE position.

In terms of changes in usage, mixed trends characterize France’s situation: increase in the number of visits to libraries, decrease in the loan of printed materials per student, increase in the number of electronic journals and books used per student. These trends are however slightly less marked in France (there has even been a slight decrease in the number of electronic journal articles between 2016 and 2019).

French students may also be using electronic resources less than elsewhere – perhaps because they are used for research purposes, and written in English. Lastly, as was the case for the 2017-2018 survey, the responses merit an update in the coming years, by liaising with our European partners, and with more consistent or comprehensive indicators, to attempt a better assessment of libraries’ contribution to training and research. Indeed, throughout the pandemic, we have all been made very aware of how vital libraries are.

Annexes

Note: Some of the terms used here differ from those used in ISO 2789 and ISO 11620, to make it easier to understand how the various indicators are calculated. For example, the term “per student” is used here rather than “per capita”, as certain indicators are calculated on the basis of student numbers rather than on the number of all users, both members and non-members of the academic community.

Annex 1 : Translation of common data points

	Données communes retenues	Common data points considered
D0	Population du pays	Country's population
D1	Etudiants de l'Établissement	Students enrolled in the institution
D2	Enseignants-chercheurs et personnels académiques de l'Établissement	Academic staff members in the institution
D3	Prêts de documents sur support (hors prolongations / renouvellements)	Printed materials loaned (except extensions/renewals)
D4	Entrées (visites physiques) des usagers	User visits (physical visits)
D5	Visites du site / portail web de la bibliothèque	Library website /portal visits
D6	Articles de périodiques électroniques consultés	Electronic journal articles used
D7	Livres électroniques consultés	Electronic books used
D8	Usagers formés	Users trained
D9	Formations des usagers (heures dispensées)	User training (hours of training)
D10	Superficie totale (m2)	Total surface area (sqm)
D11	Superficie pour le public	Surface area for the public
D12	Places assises pour le public	Seated places for the public
D13	Places de travail en groupe	Places for group work
D14	Nb de postes informatiques pour le public	Number of computer workstations for the public

	Données communes retenues	Donnée ISO2789 associée ou approchante
D15	Heures d'ouverture hebdomadaire à la bibliothèque principale (période normale)	Hours open per week in main library (usual hours)
D16	Jours d'ouverture par an à la bibliothèque principale	Days open per year in main library
D17	Personnels des bibliothèques (ETP)	Library staff (FTE)
D18	Formation continue reçue par le personnel (jours dans l'année)	Continuous training for staff (days in the year)
D19	Titres de périodiques électroniques disponibles	Electronic journal titles available
D20	Titres de livres électroniques disponibles	Electronic book titles available
D21	Dépenses totales de l'établissement	Institution's total expenditure
D22	Dépenses totales des bibliothèques	Libraries' total expenditure
D23	Dépenses de personnel	Staff expenditure
D24	Dépenses documentaires totales de la Bibliothèque	Library's total materials expenditure
D25	Dépenses documentaires des documents numériques	Electronic materials expenditure
D26	Dépenses documentaires de Périodiques électroniques	Electronic journal expenditure
D27	Dépenses documentaires de Livres électroniques	Electronic book expenditure
D28	Recettes totales des bibliothèques	Libraries' total income
D29	Recettes issues de l'établissement ou de l'organisme de tutelle	Income derived from the institution or supervisory body
D30	Recettes internes, propres, locales des bibliothèques (hors subventions)	Libraries' internal, own and local income (except grants)

Annexe 2 : Links between the survey's common data and ISO11620 indicators

	Common data points considered	ISO2789 data
I0	Number of students (of the institutions in the survey) / Country's population (%)	N/A
I1	Surface area for the public / student	B1.3.1
I22	Total surface area / Number of students (non-priority)	-
I2	Number of students / Number of places	B1.3.3
I3	Number of staff (FTE) / 1,000 students	B1.4.1
I23	Number of public computer workstations / Number of places (non-priority users)	-
I24	Number of group places / Number of seats (non-priority users) (%)	-
I4	Number of physical visits to the library / Number of students	B2.2.1
I5	Number of virtual visits to the library (library website visits) / Number of students	-
I6	Number of students taking part in training programs / Number of students	B2.2.5
I7	Number of user training hours provided / Number of tens of students	-
I8	Number of printed materials loaned / Number of students	-
I9	Number of electronic journal articles used / Number of students and academic staff	-
I10	Number of electronic books used / Number of students and academic staff	-
I11	Total library expenditure (except wage bill) / Number of students	B3.4.1

	Common data points considered	ISO2789 data
I12	Total library expenditure (except wage bill) / Number of students and academic staff	B3.4.1
I13	Total library expenditure (including wage bill) / Number of students	B3.4.1
I14	Total library expenditure (including wage bill) / Number of students and academic staff	B3.4.1
I15	Total library expenditure / Total institution expenditure (%) (non-priority)	B4.3.2
I16	Staff expenditure / Number of students (non-priority)	-
I17	Materials expenditure / Number of students and academic staff	-
I18	Materials expenditure / Total library expenditure (including wage bill)	-
I25	Materials expenditure / Staff expenditure	B3.3.3
I19	Electronic materials expenditure / Materials expenditure	B4.1.1
I20	Number of professional training days / Number of staff (FTE)	B4.2.3
I21	Library budgets not related to the institution or the supervisory ministry (local authority grants, own resources, etc.) / Total library expenditure (including wage bill)	B4.3.1