

**Information Fluency for Staff and Research Students**

Staff at St. Martin's College work together with varied experiences; some individuals regularly undertake formal research activities while others have a greater engagement in the practical application of knowledge. The Information Fluency Framework extends to support high level Information Fluency skills that may be required by staff and research students for work and scholarly activities.

The changes in information access over the last few years have created new issues that everyone must be aware of, for both academic work and the support of students. Staff support at St Martin's will be provided in the form of:

- CDLT workshops on the transferable skills of Information Fluency
- CDLT workshops on specific library resources
- Open-access Blackboard resources to provide informal support via independent learning

This support will gradually increase over the next two years as the Information Fluency Framework gathers momentum. In the meantime tailored workshops and training sessions can be requested by schools or divisions on the topics of Information Fluency most relevant for faculty activities.

For further information about forthcoming workshops and group support for research and scholarship please contact Hannah Hough, Research Support Co-ordinator:

**Tel: 01524 38(4682)**  
**Email: [hough@ucsm.ac.uk](mailto:hough@ucsm.ac.uk)**

Library liaison representatives are also available to provide 1:1 research support for staff in all schools and divisions.

To find out who your library liaison representative is go to:  
<http://www.ucsm.ac.uk/library/libinfo/contacts/facultyliaison/index.php>

**Information Fluency and the Student Experience**

Students at St. Martin's arrive from a variety of backgrounds, with different life experiences and varying levels of key academic skills. The Information Fluency Framework recognises these differences and can provide crucial support in raising student confidence and their capacity for independent learning.

Students learn most effectively when they can clearly see how the subject being taught can be of real-world use to them. Information Fluency support should therefore be:

- Embedded into the curriculum and linked to the subject discipline
- Introduced at key points within a course
- Linked to assignments, dissertations and other exercises

The St. Martin's Information Fluency Framework proposes dynamic collaboration between academic and support staff and encourages co-teaching for the delivery of Information Fluency sessions. The toolkit of Information Fluency training materials can be used within face-to-face training sessions or for integration into Blackboard modules. This will allow academic staff to embed flexible support into their courses, tailored to the specific needs of their students.

Library liaison representatives are available to provide support for all schools and divisions.

If you are new to Information Fluency James Fraser, Learning Development Co-ordinator, can talk to you about how Information Fluency can be approached within your subject area:

**Tel: 01524 38(4496)**  
**Email: [JFraser@ucsm.ac.uk](mailto:JFraser@ucsm.ac.uk)**

**Information Fluency supports the following key aims from our Corporate Plan 2004-2009 :**

**Subsidiary Aim 2:**

To require and enable all academic colleagues to engage in scholarship that informs teaching and learning and to ensure that high quality research is focused in clearly identified areas and is supportive of knowledge transfer activity in making a contribution to regional, national and international developments.

**Subsidiary Aim 3:**

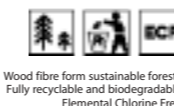
To develop and nurture in our students the key skills, cultural and intellectual capital necessary to maximise achievement, employability, delight in lifelong learning and the ability to make a meaningful contribution to society.

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# Information Fluency at St Martin's

Helping you to identify, locate, evaluate and utilise relevant information



# Information Fluency at St. Martin's

**Information Fluency (IF) is a term used to describe the skills required by an individual to identify, locate, evaluate and utilise appropriate information for a specific need.**

Information Fluency can support a wide spectrum of skills; from how to select relevant resources for an information need and complete a comprehensive literature search, to how to critically analyse, evaluate and reference the located information.

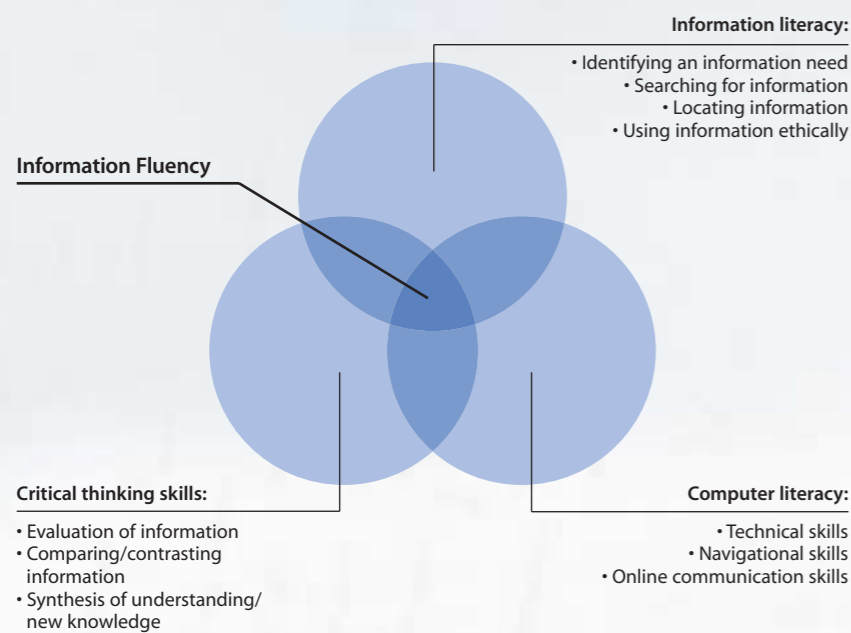
Information Fluency is more than just being able to use technology to find information. It is about making choices between the different kinds of information available and about being discerning and evaluative in the whole research process.

Information Fluency enables all individuals to access and utilise a wealth of information from the College libraries and beyond for use in learning, teaching, scholarship and research.

St. Martin's Library Services is dedicated to the provision of high quality Information Fluency support for both students and staff. An Information Fluency Framework has been developed to define the skills an individual may require in order to use information in a critical way. This framework is based on the SCONUL "Information Skills Model" (SCONUL, 1999) that has been widely accepted by HE institutions in the UK.

Information Fluency is composed of three main topics: information literacy, computer literacy and critical thinking skills, each of which must be supported in order to facilitate effective and efficient use of information.

## An Overview of Information Fluency



**“Information technology has made information superficially much easier to access and use. By reducing all information to a standard format (increasingly the web page) it masks the differences in the way in which information is generated, and differences in the kind of information it is supplying.”**

SCONUL. (1999). *Information Skills in Higher Education: a SCONUL Position Paper* [Online]. London: Standing Conference of National and University Libraries. Available at [http://www.sconul.ac.uk/activities/inf\\_lit/papers/Seven\\_pillars2.pdf](http://www.sconul.ac.uk/activities/inf_lit/papers/Seven_pillars2.pdf) [Accessed 3 May 2005].

## The Information Fluency Framework

Information Fluency skills can be grouped into seven core topics that can all be addressed independently; however, when these concepts are linked together as progressive stages they provide a comprehensive overview of all the key issues relevant for information use. The diagram below illustrates the seven stages of Information Fluency that are to be supported across all sites of St. Martin's, via face to face training and self-directed learning.

Every individual in the College will have varying levels of experience in the different aspects of information use, whether they are a member of staff or a student; therefore support should be tailored to specific learning needs. The Information Fluency Framework provides a structured way of selecting the most appropriate aspects of Information Fluency for a given situation and allows these to be translated into tangible learning outcomes.

## The St. Martin's Seven Stages of Information Fluency

|                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1. Induction and orientation</b>            | An overview of the location and availability of services.                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>2. Identifying the required information</b> | Identifying exactly what information is required in a given situation.                                                                                                                         |
| <b>3. Overview of resources</b>                | Gaining an overview of the resources that will be relevant and useful for the specific information need.                                                                                       |
| <b>4. Searching skills</b>                     | Gaining a knowledge of the basic principles of searching and completing effective and efficient searches in relevant search tools.                                                             |
| <b>5. Evaluating information</b>               | Evaluating information on the basis of reliability, validity, accuracy, authority, timeliness and point of view or bias.                                                                       |
| <b>6. Using information appropriately</b>      | Organising and analysing information to identify key concepts and theories that can be integrated into the work of the individual, and referencing sources as appropriate to avoid plagiarism. |
| <b>7. Creating new information</b>             | Developing new information and ideas from research and current literature. Supporting new information with evidence and communicating it in an appropriate way.                                |

## The Information Fluency Toolkit

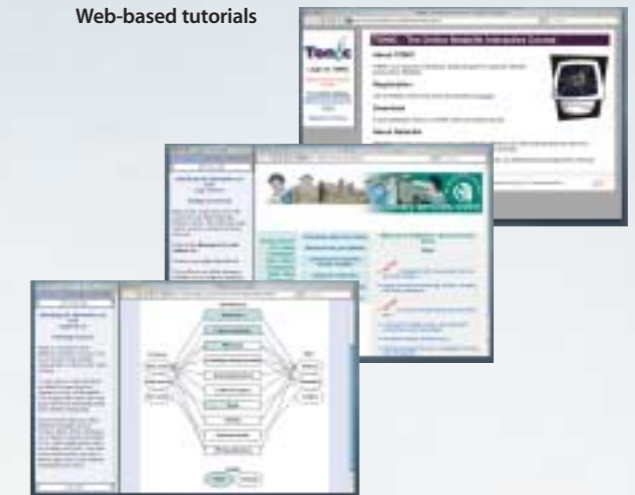
A toolkit of resources has been created to provide learning and teaching materials that can support one or more of the topics within the Information Fluency Framework. The resources have been developed in a variety of media to support a range of learning styles and can be selected by library staff and tutors to support specific learning needs.



Quizzes



Workbooks



Web-based tutorials

**“Accessing and using information resources is one of the ways in which students begin to act as independent learners, becoming involved in making choices, weighing evidence and coming to conclusions for themselves.”**

McDowell, L. (2002). "Electronic information resources in undergraduate education: an exploratory study of opportunities for student learning and independence." *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 33(3), 255-266.

**“Information literacy is a prerequisite for lifelong learning and is common to all disciplines, to all learning environments, and to all levels of education. It enables learners to engage with content and extend their investigations...”**

CAUL. (2001). *Information Literacy Standards, First Edition* [Online]. Australia: Council of Australian University Librarians. Available at <http://www.caul.edu.au/aul-doc/InfoLitStandards2001.doc> [Accessed 12 June 2005].