

A visit to the new Susan Wakil Library at the University of Sydney

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Allow me to introduce myself to you. I am Rob Thomson, and I am the ALIA NSW State Manager. On 11 June 2021, just before the current Greater Sydney and then NSW-wide lockdown began, I had the opportunity to visit the new Susan Wakil Health Library Building at the University of Sydney. Located at Camperdown behind the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital and overlooking the University of Sydney oval, the new Susan Wakil Health Campus building is an impressive piece of architecture. This state-of-the-art new building brings together multiple health disciplines to work out of the same precinct. Working alongside each other in this new facility creates unique inter-professional learning programs and multi-disciplinary research opportunities. It places the students and staff at the forefront of health innovation, learning and policy.



Spread over 8 floors with views across the city, its facilities include:

- state-of-the-art clinical simulation teaching spaces
- formal and informal learning and contemporary research facilities
- a multi-service clinic serving research, teaching, industry and community outreach functions
- activity-based workspaces including a mix of open plan workstations, quiet spaces and social spaces designed to support different ways of working
- a 350-seat lecture theatre
- a rehabilitation gym.
- And, the Susan Wakil Health Library

You can read more about the building here: <https://www.sydney.edu.au/medicine-health/about/locations-and-facilities/susan-wakil-health-building.html>

I arrived early and had a look around the building and the Library space before meeting up with Elaine Tam for a guided tour of the Library and after that, the building.



The SWHB Library is spread across three levels, as well as a 24/7 zone, in the new Susan Wakil Health Building. Located on the Camperdown Campus near the Charles Perkins Centre and Royal Prince Alfred Hospital (RPAH), the building is situated in the University of Sydney's growing health precinct. The SWHB Library's physical collections support the education and research needs of the faculty of medicine and health with a focus on health sciences, nursing, and midwifery. The active print collection is further supported by the library's electronic resource collection which is available 24/7.

The Library brings together the collections previously housed in multiple library locations across the university campus together under one roof, although, in saying that, the physical collection is rather modest. As libraries have changed and adapted to providing access to online resources so the need for flexible and varied study spaces has increased and evolved how libraries respond to their community. At SWHB Library there are a number of options for students.

Training room

The training room seats 20 people and will be used to run library sessions such as systematic review and strategic publishing workshops. Designed with group work in mind, this space also allows participants to share their work by broadcasting content from their computers onto large digital screens around the room.

Reading room

Situated among the trees, the SWHB Library reading room offers a space for reflection and silent study.

Computer lab

Our computer lab has more than 30 study spaces with computers which can be used by University of Sydney students and staff.

Study rooms

The SWHB Library offers a range of bookable student meeting rooms which can be used for group study or collaborative work. All rooms are fitted with large screens and are Zoom-enabled for wireless screen sharing.

24/7 zone

The 24/7 space in SWHB is located on Level 1 and includes meeting rooms, group study spaces and vending machines.



CreateSpace

CreateSpace is a technology-rich engagement and collaborative learning space featuring future-focused technologies including VR, 3D printers, podcast studio (above) and video recording equipment with library staff to assist. Free to use for enrolled students and staff, CreateSpace is the perfect space to innovate, create and collaborate.

The physical space of the Library looks out onto trees and over the university oval and is a very pleasant place to be. The space is very inviting and while I was there, students were studying for their semester exams. The range of seating options is also very impressive.



Take a tour of the SWHB Library here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l8K8nGJpBNc>

For library staff the library can help build even stronger partnerships by embedding research support services within Faculty of Medicine and Health (FMH) processes and programs. This integration is enabled through a shared workspace where library staff will work alongside staff from the FMH throughout the building.

Elaine took me up to Level 8 which is a staff only area with kitchen facilities and outstanding views out over the City. Talk of running a future ALIA event in the space was mooted!



Further information on the Library can be found here:

<https://www.library.sydney.edu.au/libraries/swhb.html>

