The Society of College, National and University Libraries (SCONUL) represents all university libraries in the UK and Ireland, as well as national libraries and many of the UK’s colleges of higher education.

SCONUL Access is a scheme which allows many university library users to borrow or use books and journals at other libraries which belong to the scheme. The scheme covers most of the university libraries in the UK and Ireland.

Who can join?

Sconul Access allows:

• a part-time, distance learning and placement student

• a full-time postgraduate

• a postgraduate research student registered for a PhD, MPhil or similar qualification

• an academic on an open or fixed term contract

to borrow from other college or university libraries.

Sconul Access does not offer borrowing privileges to full time undergraduate students. However, some institutions offer reference only access. Please check with the institution for more information or the check the SCONUL Access website.

How do I join?

• To qualify for SCONUL Access you must be fully registered as a Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU) student. In order to create your CCCU account you will require the CCCU Student ID number sent to you via email/mail. Create your CCCU account by selecting the blue ‘Create my account’ button on http://www.canterbury.ac.uk/welcome and by completing the pre-registration pages, including uploading a photo for your CCCU student ID smartcard. Contact a member of the Library or the i-zone (CCCU’s student helpdesk) on 01227 782 222 if you require help.

• Apply online by completing the SCONUL Access on-line application form on http://www.sconul.ac.uk/sconul-access.

• Once your application has been processed you will receive an email (from CCCU library) which will confirm your membership. You must take a copy of this email to the library you are visiting within 3 weeks of receiving it, along with your CCCU student ID smartcard.

What can Sconul offer?

• SCONUL Access users may apply to borrow books from the host library's general lending stock. You should expect that the host library will restrict the number and the range of materials that you can borrow. For example, a host library may limit the number of books you can borrow and will not permit you to borrow from the short (restricted) loan or DVD collections. Be prepared to abide by the rules of the library you wish to use. You will be responsible for any fines or replacement costs incurred.
• SCONUL Access does not provide automatic rights to access computer facilities: this includes access to electronic journals and databases to which the host library subscribes. Many members do however provide some electronic access - check their websites for details.

For more information please see the SCONUL Access scheme - General user guide.
Access Scheme - General user guide

Once you have applied:

Once you have filled in the on-line application form, and your application is approved by CCCU Library, they will send you an email confirming this and welcoming you to the access scheme. This email can be printed and used as an introduction to any of the libraries shown in your "Find a library" search. Please note that you can use the same email to apply to different libraries; you do not have to submit an online application each time you want to join a new host library.

You should take a copy of that e-mail with you when you go to the library you want to visit, along with your ID card or library card from your home institution. This will allow other libraries to identify you as a bona fide member of the scheme.

You should check the website of the library you want to visit for their opening hours and other local conditions. For example, at some libraries, new tickets may only be issued during office hours, or not on the day of first visit or you may need to supply a passport sized photograph).

When you get there, you will be issued with a library card and will be able to borrow or use this host library until your SCONUL Access membership expires. The membership can be valid for up to three years or until your course or contract ends if earlier.

To qualify for SCONUL Access you must be registered as a library user in good standing (i.e. having no debts at your home library and not having seriously infringed their rules)

Other things to consider:

The scheme is there to help library users, but it does not confer any rights, since admission to libraries is always at the discretion of the university or college concerned. Library users who abuse their SCONUL Access privileges could lose all access to the scheme and would be subject to sanctions in their home institution.

Some SCONUL Access users may apply to borrow books from the library. You should expect that the host library will restrict the number and the range of materials that you can borrow. For example, a host library may limit the number of books you can borrow and will not permit you to borrow from the short (restricted) loan or DVD collections. Be prepared to abide by the rules of the library you wish to use. You will be responsible for any fines or replacement costs incurred.

Some member libraries will allow full time undergraduates to have reference access. Home Libraries may issue a reference card which allows the user reference access to member libraries, but no borrowing rights.

SCONUL Access does not provide automatic rights to computer facilities: this includes access to electronic journals and databases to which the host library subscribes. Many members do however provide some electronic access.

All higher education libraries operate on the basis that your home library will provide training in the use of library services. If you do need help, you are strongly recommended to seek advice from your home library first (for example if you need to consult material on a particular subject, or if you have a disability for which you need specific support). If you need special help at the library you are visiting, you must phone for advice and if necessary, book an appointment. Local contacts and their phone numbers and email addresses are shown in the information provided when you register.