

# UBC Library

## BC Integrated Research Library: Frequently Asked Questions

February 2013

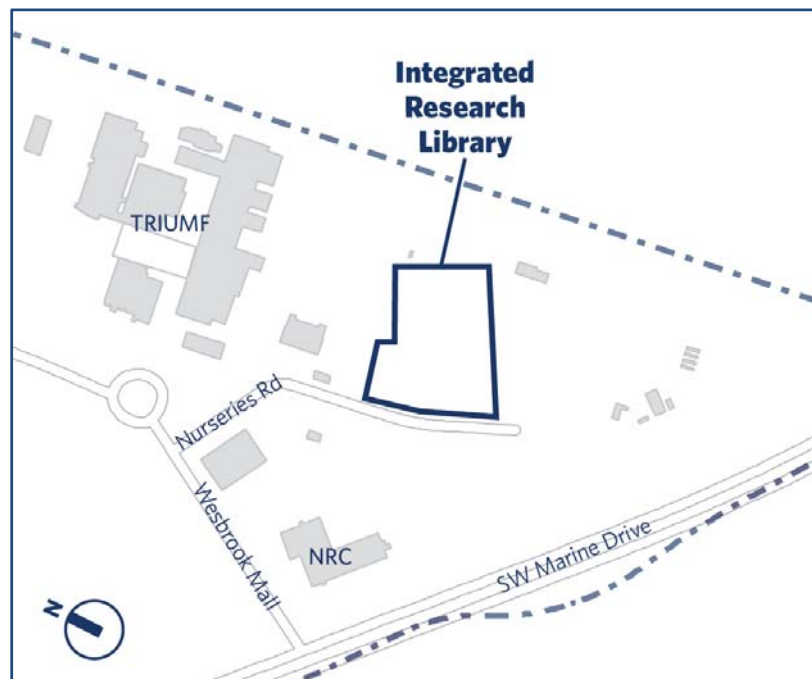
---

### Why is the IRL being built?

Even in a digital age, UBC Library's print collections continue to grow and require a long-term strategy for storage, access and preservation. Increasingly North American research libraries are using high-density storage facilities to address these needs, and UBC Library is expanding its on campus storage capacity with this project.

### Where is the IRL location on campus?

The IRL is located on Nurseries Road, near the National Research Centre, UBC Farm and TRIUMF.



### How was the location of the IRL selected?

A number of factors were considered when looking at potential locations for the IRL. The UBC Vancouver location was selected due to the following advantages:

- UBC already owns the land;
- Lower delivery cost and less carbon footprint for those visiting the facility on their existing commuting routes;
- Faster and more convenient access for users, including those from other local institutions who may likely use the facility;
- Having a south campus facility supports UBC's vision of a growing research precinct.

### Will students and researchers be able to access the IRL like any other UBC Library branch? Is the IRL open to non-UBC students and researchers?

All materials will be accessible to UBC students and researchers as well as students and scholars from elsewhere. In most cases, materials are ordered online and delivered electronically to the requestor, or to a campus branch for use or borrowing. In some cases (eg large sets of journals) materials may need to be used in the reading room, by pre-arrangement. Unlike other branches, the storage area can only be entered by trained staff.

**How quickly will items be retrieved?**

In most cases items are available the next business day after the request is placed.

**How will items be selected for the IRL?**

Typically only the lowest use collections are selected for storage. Librarians can monitor use to enable these selections. Faculty members are also being involved in shaping criteria for IRL storage through a consultative process being coordinated with the Senate Library Committee. The Library has developed plans to repurpose the various branch spaces for student and research use, including informal learning spaces, media labs, space for scholarly exchange and other user-based services.

**How large is the building and what are the design elements?**

There are two main parts of the building – a processing/administrative area and one long rectangular storage module for a combined area of just over 2000sm. The storage module will be the highest part of the building at 14m. There will be capacity on site to add 5 more storage modules as space demands rise.

Although the design was driven by operational requirements, the architecture has incorporated colour, folded metal, and honed concrete to respond to the forest setting. Natural landscaping elements surround the building and include swales and detention ponds with native wetland plants to control the release of stormwater. The project will respond to UBC's high sustainability requirements by seeking LEED Gold certification.

**How much does it cost to build the IRL?**

The IRL cost \$9.9M to build with the cost shared between the University and the Library.

**What about the Automated Storage and Retrieval System currently in the Irving K. Barber Learning Centre? Doesn't it do the same thing?**

The ASRS is nearly full and new collection growth space is needed. Phase 1 of the IRL will provide 2,280 square metres of new high density collection storage for about 1.6M volumes. More will be available in subsequent phases. The IRL is not a robotic system, but does use high-density shelving. Library staff fulfill requests by retrieving items from shelves with an order picker system. Storage facilities of this kind were first established at Harvard University in the 1980s. Approximately 40 such facilities exist in major universities across North America.

**What are the other benefits to having the IRL?**

The IRL has strict temperature and environmental controls, preserving and extending the life of books by hundreds of years. Keeping the lowest use books there also allows the Library to dedicate more space to group and individual study, new learning and research services, technology and other services.

**When will the IRL be completed?**

The project team was struck in Fall 2012 and construction is estimated to be completed by winter 2014/15.