

Gulu University Librarians Benchmark Busitema University Library's Digital and Management Systems

A delegation from Gulu University Library visited Busitema University Library on Thursday, 16 July 2026, for a day-long benchmarking engagement focused on digital library services, staff management, electronic resources, content development and institutional performance systems.

The visit was held at the Busitema University Library E-Learning Centre from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. It brought together staff from the two university libraries to exchange experiences, examine existing systems and identify practical approaches that could strengthen service delivery at their respective institutions.

Welcoming the delegation, the Busitema University Librarian, Dr Fredrick Kiwuwa Lugya, gave an overview of Busitema University and the Library's operations across its seven campuses. He explained that coordinating services across geographically dispersed campuses requires clear planning, reliable reporting systems and close collaboration among the central Library, campus librarians, faculty leadership and university management.

Dr Lugya highlighted the Graduate Fellowship Programme as one of the approaches introduced to respond to staffing shortages while giving early-career professionals practical experience in academic librarianship. He noted that the programme has grown with support from the University's leadership and now contributes to the Library's daily operations and ongoing projects.

He also encouraged libraries to adopt open-source technologies when developing digital services, particularly where financial resources are limited. He explained that open-source platforms can provide practical alternatives to costly commercial systems while allowing institutions to adapt technologies to their own needs.

The visiting team was introduced to Busitema University Library's digital infrastructure, including its website, institutional repository, electronic resources and other online service platforms. Dr Lugya noted that the Library has made considerable progress in building its digital services, although internet bandwidth and connectivity continue to affect the speed and reliability of some systems.

Staff development and accountability were also central to the discussions. Busitema University Library uses an internal training model in which staff members with specialised skills train colleagues and library users. Many of these sessions are conducted virtually to reduce the travel and logistical costs associated with serving staff and users across multiple campuses.

The delegation also learned how the Library uses performance agreements, timesheets and task-tracking tools to plan work, monitor progress and strengthen accountability. Dr Lugya explained that staff members are expected to take responsibility for their assigned outputs, while campus librarians, faculty deans and supervisors support the monitoring of activities within their respective units.

Speaking on behalf of the visiting delegation, the Gulu University Librarian, Dr Clement Lutaaya Claire Nabutto, thanked Busitema University Library for receiving the team and openly sharing

its experiences. She explained that the visit was intended to promote learning and the exchange of practical ideas between the two institutions.

Dr Nabutto said the delegation was particularly impressed by the Busitema University Library website, digital infrastructure and the systems used to coordinate staff and services across seven campuses. She noted that the ideas shared during the engagement would support efforts to improve library services and digital infrastructure at Gulu University.

The programme featured several presentations from members of the Busitema University Library team. Eriya Ntaga, the Librarian in Charge of E-Resources, presented on electronic resources and digital library services, including the management and promotion of subscribed resources, support for researchers and the timing of user training. Godwin Malinde and Brian Arthur Mwarisi explained the technologies used to develop and support the Busitema University Library website and other digital platforms. Gerald Kisombo demonstrated the Task Tracker System and how it supports the allocation, monitoring and documentation of staff responsibilities, while Aaron Kalamya presented on content development and ongoing projects aimed at strengthening the Library's online visibility and digital communication.

The visit also included an interactive discussion in which participants asked questions, compared institutional experiences and reflected on common challenges facing university libraries. The Gulu University delegation toured the Library's facilities and service points, giving members an opportunity to observe some of the systems and practices discussed during the presentations.

The benchmarking engagement concluded with a review of the key lessons identified by both teams and closing remarks from representatives of Busitema University and Gulu University.

The visit strengthened professional collaboration between the two institutions and demonstrated the value of universities learning from one another. By sharing practical experiences in digital service development, staff accountability, content management, electronic resources and multi-campus coordination, the two libraries created a strong foundation for continued cooperation and improvement.