

Content Development Policy

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Introduction

This Content Development Policy sets out the Library's current strategic thinking on the acquisition of materials and information content to support teaching, learning and research at The University of Manchester.

It has been developed to respond both to the needs of the University and to changes in the environment in which we operate. The policy is, therefore, designed to be flexible and will be reviewed regularly to ensure its continuing relevance to our mission.

It is also designed to underlay a suite of policies which are being produced at the School / Discipline level to tailor content development to current research and teaching requirements. A separate Collection Management Policy details how the Library acquires, processes, and manages its collections.

Recent changes in the areas of information production and acquisition have been profound. The initial trickle of electronic resources has turned into a flood as the majority of databases, then journals and now, increasingly, books are being made available in digital format. Within the Library a Digitization Strategy is being developed for the in-house conversion to digital of important teaching and learning resources.

An area where change has been less apparent is the ever-present phenomenon of inflation in the costs of library materials – typically these increase at a faster rate than the national rate of inflation and certainly at a rate faster than the University can reasonably afford.

The effects of this inflation have been aggravated by the exponential growth in the amount of material published year-on-year. Publishers lists lengthen and new journal titles are continually being brought to our attention. There is no possibility that the Library can acquire anything but a small fraction of this output.

Within the University, constraints including the need to control the size of the university estate mean the library is operating in a zero-growth environment. There is no realistic prospect of new library buildings. The Learning Commons, due to open in Spring 2012, will undoubtedly help by reducing some of the pressure on the Library to provide space for IT services and group study, but it will not contribute significantly to relieving our current space shortages for the storage and display of printed materials. The library is now effectively full.

These three factors, digitization, costs and space, have largely determined the overall thrust of the policy.

We must plan to move to a position where there is no further overall expansion in the physical stock of the Library. At the same time, our holdings cannot ossify. We must continue to acquire new material to be able to meet the strategic aims of the University. This dilemma can be partly resolved by making best use of electronic sources where they are available and moving away from the concept of being a physical repository of materials to one of being a provider of access to information which we do not necessarily hold within the building or indeed own.

For the foreseeable future we will continue to acquire printed materials. "Hardcopy" books are still a favoured format for many students and researchers. To accommodate them we will take a critical look at our existing holdings and assess their value against current and future needs of the University. In order to develop our collections, we must make space on the open shelves

for the continued acquisition of printed materials by relegating lesser-used materials to stores and disposing of those items which are no longer required and are of no academic importance. Criteria and arrangements for withdrawal are contained in the Collection Management Policy.

Future development of our collections will also have to be more tightly monitored than has been the case in the past. This will necessitate closer liaison between the Library and teaching and research staff to ensure that our acquisitions meet academic imperatives as precisely and efficiently as possible.

This policy does not seek to promote a radical new role for the Library: our aim is still to serve the needs of the University. What is different is that we aim to deliver this service by new methods which combine exploitation of digital media with greater attention to the appropriateness of our holdings for the needs of our users. In this way, we hope to ensure that the Library continues to make its vital contribution to the intellectual life of the University.

General Principals

The Library will deliver world-class library and information services that meet the needs of members of the University, of the international scholarly community, and of local and regional communities. To achieve this aim:

- It will provide tailored support for research and learning within the University of Manchester, working with academic colleagues to select necessary resources.
- In consultation with academic colleagues Library staff will draw up School and/or Discipline level Content Development Policies that will evaluate existing collections and define areas for collecting.
- The Library will monitor patterns of expenditure to ensure an appropriate balance between subscription and non-subscription resources, and between the needs of research and scholarship on the one hand and those of learning and teaching on the other.
- JRUL is moving toward retaining only those printed materials which are either relevant to the teaching and research interests of the university or are of lasting cultural importance and value.
- Electronic, in particular web-based, provision of information and materials is preferred to print where it is appropriate and advantageous to our customers.
- The Library will acquire materials in other media but only in formats which are accessible, sustainable and supportable.*
- JRUL will collaborate with other libraries and organizations through its Document Supply and Inter-Library Loans Service to provide access to resources not available locally.

- The Library will develop its world class Special Collections for the benefit of the national and international research communities and the wider public.

*For instance, DVDs and CDs are currently acceptable formats, but videos and vinyl records are not. Microforms – because they are difficult to use – will only be acquired when other more suitable formats are not available.

Books

The acquisition of books, print and electronic, will support both research and learning within the University of Manchester.

- Book selection is the responsibility of both Library and academic staff. Recommendations are welcomed but final decisions lie with Faculty Team Librarians as budget holders.
- Costs are allocated according to the school or discipline of the recommender.
- In order to make best use of bookfunds, a single copy of a title only is usually purchased unless it is required for teaching purposes.
- All materials are subject to the Library's borrowing regulations and can be consulted or borrowed by all members of the University.
- Cost, availability and level of demand will be considered in determining preference between printed and electronic books.
- Printed books are located according to demand, relevance to the current research and teaching needs of the university, and availability of space.
- Our subsidized Document Supply Service is the normal route of provision for older and out-of-print books which are not in stock, and for in-print items which fall outside the scope of individual bookfund collecting policies.

Databases

Bibliographic and full-text databases, image collections, datasets, and other electronic databases are provided to support both the research and learning needs of the university.

- For the present, web-based services are preferred to other electronic formats for reasons of accessibility and ease of provision.
- Recommendations for new subscriptions are welcomed and should be made to a School's Faculty Team Librarian in the first instance.

Exam papers

A link to current and recent copies of examination papers will be provided from the Library web pages while a historic print collection is kept in the University Archives.

Journals

Current subscriptions and the Library's historic journal holdings will support the research and learning requirements of the University of Manchester.

- Electronic versions of journals are normally preferred to print unless there are special reasons*.
- Digital backfiles will be purchased where available and when funds allow.
- Duplication of print titles will be avoided whenever possible.
- Current journal titles taken in print will normally be located on open shelves in the relevant collection.
- Journal articles not available from the Library's resources will be provided by our subsidized Document Supply Service.
- Print copies of journals will be retained only where no secure electronic equivalent is available, unless there are special reasons,** or where required by agreement with the UK Research Reserve.***
- Recommendations for new subscriptions are welcomed and should be made to a School's Faculty Team Librarian in the first instance. ****

* Exceptions may be made for a variety of reasons, for example, where an electronic version cannot provide illustrative or photographic reproduction at an acceptable level.

**Special reasons include cultural value, importance by association, or where the printed copy contains material not reproduced in the electronic version.

*** UK Research Reserve is a collaborative collection, holding print copies of important research journals, which is managed and stored through a partnership between the British Library and Higher Education. At least three copies of journals that fall into a "low use" category are maintained within the UK. Access to the collection is underpinned by the BL Document Supply Service, which can deliver a document electronically to the desktop within 24 hours.

****Funds allowing, recommendations for new subscriptions will be assessed twice a year in May and November.

Manchester e-Scholar

Manchester e-Scholar will be developed as a digital repository to manage and disseminate the intellectual outputs of the university.

Maps

The Library will develop its map collection, in particular its coverage of the local area, in analogue and digital forms.

Newspapers

JRUL will acquire newspaper collections in digital format where possible to add to its existing significant holdings.

Official Publications

The Library will maintain a complete collection of Parliamentary Papers and will acquire selectively non-Parliamentary papers as required.

Reading Lists

The Library aims to provide access to all items that appear on reading lists and will endeavour to deliver core readings to all students on time. To achieve this:

- Schools are expected to provide their Faculty Team Librarian with Semester 1 reading lists by 1 July and Semester 2 reading lists by 1 November.
- Electronic texts will be preferred to printed books where appropriate.
- The availability of print materials will be optimized by adjusting loan periods and the use of our High Demand Collection.
- Digitized copies of book chapters and journal articles will be provided when licences can be obtained.
- Easy access to electronic journal articles and digitized materials will be provided by the Library's reading list service, *Link2Lists*.

Special Collections

The Library's Special Collections are designated as being of outstanding national importance. Materials are acquired for Special Collections in order to:

- Support research and learning within the University of Manchester;
- Enhance the reputations of the Library and University as world-class institutions, and to reinforce our standing as a National Research Library;
- Support the wider academic community and researchers outside the HE sector;
- Enrich the experience of Library visitors;
- Preserve a record of the past and present;

Enhance existing collections.

Theses

- The Library will retain an archival copy of all University of Manchester research theses and other dissertations of academic value.
- From 2010 all University of Manchester theses and dissertations, submitted in electronic form, will be deposited in Manchester eScholar.
- Doctoral theses from other UK universities are normally provided digitally through EThOS, while non-UK theses are usually supplied by the Document Supply Service.