

Collection Development Policy 2023

1. Introduction

This document describes the general principles by which Birkbeck Library Services acquires and manages its collections and provides a framework for their development in the coming years. By 'collections' we mean all our physical and digital information resources, including printed books and journals, DVDs, archives, e-books and electronic journals, databases, and other digital objects. It is a working document and will be reviewed and updated regularly.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that we continue to provide information resources which successfully support the teaching and research needs of Birkbeck, and that our decision-making is transparent. However, this will necessarily take place in the context of limited physical space (floorspace and shelving), finite budgets, and the continued rise of digital formats. In particular, our printed holdings are currently housed in the main Birkbeck building as well as onsite stores, which are full. In recent years we have reduced the overall size of our printed collection and we aim to continually monitor usage and make changes in response to this and our circumstances.

All decisions made by Library staff relating to the acquisition and management of our collections are evidence-based and we will continue to develop our systems, and work with content providers, to ensure that we have the data necessary to do this.

2. Budget

Each year, the Library submits a proposal for expenditure on information resources which is considered as part of Birkbeck's budget setting process. The annual grant we then receive provides our core funding for the purchase of information resources to support learning, teaching, and research at Birkbeck. This includes Birkbeck's contribution to maintaining the Senate House Library.

Senior College managers set the Library budget each year, and the Library Director reallocates it. When not under tight fiscal constraints an agreed formula will be used. The method of allocating the budget will be responsive to both external higher education digital resources landscape and the needs of the academic units. These allocated funds are then managed by the subject librarians. Academic units are welcome to contribute additional funds.

The Library participates in partnerships and purchasing consortia to ensure we obtain the best value for money when purchasing resources.

3. Accessibility

The Library will always try to acquire information resources in accessible formats. However, where this is not possible, we will endeavour to arrange for the provision of alternative, accessible versions of material for students registered with Birkbeck's Disability and Dyslexia Service, where these can be supplied by publishers.

4. Selection of new material including databases

4.1. Books

The Library's Subject Librarians select books to purchase, spending their budget allocation in the way that best meets the teaching and research needs of each department. The selection of material to support teaching is based primarily on the reading lists we receive from academic staff. It is the Library's aim to provide sufficient copies of, or electronic access to, all items of essential reading included in student reading lists and, where funds permit, background reading. Whenever possible, the Library will provide electronic access to essential teaching material in preference to print copies. The preferred format is e-books without Digital Rights Management (Digital Rights Management (DRM)) restrictions. However, the purchase decision between print and e-book may depend on a number of factors including availability, accessibility, cost, usability and value for money. At least one copy of an item for essential reading will be provided (in print or electronic format); up to one copy per

ten students of essential textbooks.

The Library provides a digitisation and e-journal linking service, enabling teaching staff to make key readings available to students in the virtual learning environment (Moodle). This service includes the scanning of items under the Copyright Licensing Agency (CLA) Licence.

Recommendations for purchases which reflect the research interests of academic staff are also welcomed. Where there are insufficient funds, the item is unavailable, or deemed too expensive to purchase, the requester will be informed, and alternative options will be suggested. The Library will not be able to purchase all recommended digital resources due to budgetary constraints.

4.2. Journals

Due to the ever-increasing cost of individual journal titles and packages, subscriptions will continue to be reviewed on a regular basis and may be cancelled due to unaffordable cost, insufficient usage or unfavourable licencing terms and conditions. The Library will consult with academic staff regarding journal subscriptions but will make the final decision as to whether there are sufficient funds available to maintain current subscriptions or take on new ones. To support the transition to open access (Plan S) when budgets allow, the library has signed up to a small but growing number of Transformative Agreements. We will continue to monitor the availability of these and as and when we can afford to sign up to others as they represent value for money, the library will do so.

We will also make greater use of our interlibrary loans service which can quickly and efficiently deliver electronic journal articles straight to a user's desktop.

4.3. Archives

The Library holds a small but significant range of [archives and special collections](#). Additional archives will only be considered for acquisition if they relate to the intellectual life of Birkbeck and if the resources can be found to catalogue and house

them.

4.4. Other material

We will purchase AV material if a physical format has additional value e.g., commentary when online access is not available.

5. Management of our printed collections

The Library reviews its printed holdings on an ongoing basis in order to maintain the currency and relevance of its collections, to make room for new material and to create space for other facilities. Withdrawn material is safely discarded or offered to charitable organisations.

5.1. Books

The following items will be considered for withdrawal or relegation to the Store:

- Items that no longer support Birkbeck's current research, teaching, and learning needs
- Superseded editions and outdated material
- Duplicate items
- Items in poor condition
- Items not in circulation for an extended period, specific to the discipline
- Items with an available electronic version.

The final decision about whether to withdraw or relegate material will be made by the relevant Subject Librarian who will also consider the overall integrity and balance of the collection and will consult with academic staff when appropriate. Individual Subject Librarians may develop and publish subject-specific retention policies which will be added as appendices to this document.

Decisions about retention of print items will also be determined by whether these are held by other libraries in proximity to Birkbeck, and we will use resources such as the Jisc Hub Compare Tool and, when it is available, the JISC National Bibliographic

Knowledgebase (NBK).

5.2. Journals

Our journal holdings and subscriptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure that they support the research, teaching, and learning needs of the university and represent value for money. Print journals will not be retained.

6. Stores

The Library has two onsite storage areas: in the basement of the Malet Street building and at 28 Russell Square. These spaces contain relegated books along with our collection of Birkbeck theses. The stores are actively managed and the material within the stores considered along with the items in the main sequence in relation to stock editing.

7. Institutional repositories

The institutional repository ([BIROn](#)) contains bibliographic records, and, in many cases, full-text files of research outputs published by Birkbeck researchers. The majority of full-text outputs are post-peer review 'Authors' Accepted Manuscripts' of journal articles. These are easier to secure permissions for and fall into the scope of the REF Open Access policy. There are also Gold Open Access 'Versions of Record' which we legally reuse (usually under Creative Commons licences). Where full text is not immediately available due to publisher embargoes, we enable users to ask authors for a single copy under the terms of fair dealing.

The Library manages one additional repository, [BiRD](#), for research data, along with [BiROn](#) for research outputs and theses produced by PhD (and equivalent level) researchers.

8. Donations

Although donations are well-intentioned, there is a cost to the library in accepting donated items, both in terms of the work required to make them shelf-ready, and

the space they take up. Generally, we do not accept donations, therefore potential donors are strongly encouraged to provide a list of titles including the name, dates, and general condition of the material so that we can assess their suitability.

Large gifts are accepted in exceptional circumstances and only when accompanied by special funding to meet high handling and processing costs and there is space available. If gifts are accepted, Birkbeck Library Services becomes the owner of the material and, as such, reserves the right to determine its retention, location, cataloguing treatment, and other considerations related to its use, maintenance, or removal.

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