ucl library services



# Collection Management Policy

## 1. Introduction

1.1 This collection management policy sets out the principles according to which Library Services acquires, maintains, stores and makes accessible the collections it holds. It applies to material in all formats: printed, electronic, audio-visual or other. It is subject to regular review by UCL Library Committee. Where appropriate this policy will provide a basis for cooperation with other libraries in respect of collaborative collection management.

1.2 In addition to this general collection management policy, detailed statements for individual subject and site collections have been developed and should be read in conjunction with this document. Each statement sets out the purpose of the collection, its approximate size, a breakdown of the subjects it includes, the level of material collected, where the collection is stored and how it is reviewed, and relations with other collections in UCL and elsewhere. These statements are regularly reviewed by Departmental, Site or Faculty library committees as appropriate

1.3 There is a separate [UCL Special Collections Collection Development Policy](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/library/sites/library/files/special_collections_collection_development_policy.pdf) which details the collection development and management policies applied by the Special Collections department to the rare materials for which it is responsible.

1.4 There is a separate [Digital Curation Strategy](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/library/about-us/policies/digitisation-policy) which details the collection management policies applied to the digital materials curated by UCL Library Services.

1.5 The effectiveness of this policy is dependent on the timely provision of appropriate information by UCL Schools and Departments about teaching and research activities and needs and student numbers

1.6 This policy supersedes all previous acquisition and retention policies. It should be read in conjunction with Library Services’ Preservation and Admission policies. A Donations Policy is appended.

## 2. The purpose of the collections

2.1The mission statement of UCL Library Services declares that it is “committed to supporting the excellence of teaching, learning, research and clinical practice by providing a high quality, integrated and innovative service.” In relation to the collections its mission is:

* to provide, preserve, develop and promote collections in the most appropriate formats and to act as a gateway to both printed and electronic resources in an integrated way;
* to collaborate with other institutions at local, regional, national and international levels for mutually beneficial resource sharing and access provision whilst fulfilling the Library's role in areas of specialisation.

2.2 The primary users of the collections held by UCL Library Services are UCL staff and students and staff of the associated NHS trusts, and collection management policy is determined by their needs.

2.3 Some collections also support the work of learned societies associated with UCL and those societies often contribute important materials to those collections. Funding for site medical libraries is also recieved from the NHS London (Strategic Health Authority) through the MPET levy, and from NHS Trusts associated with UCL. There are also Service Level Agreements with a number of NHS funders.

2.4 UCL is one of the highest-rated universities in the world both for its teaching and for its research, and the quality of the collections is an important factor in this success. The collections are also recognised nationally as having a broader role in supporting academic research in the UK; this role has been acknowledged in recent years by the award of special funding under the government-funded Follett and Research Support Libraries Programme initiatives.

## 3. Description and holdings

3.1 The printed collections held by UCL total over two million volumes and are housed on 16 sites, including the Library Store at Wickford. Manuscript and archive material is held at the Library’s Special Collections store in Hampstead Road and at some of the specialist site libraries. Together the holdings of UCL form a research collection of national significance. Certain individual collections stand out for their ability to attract researchers from all over the world. These include the site libraries of the Institute of Archaeology and School of Slavonic and East European Studies, and the Dutch, Scandinavian and Hebrew and Jewish Studies collections. Other significant collections include the combined holdings in biomedicine and the unique archive and manuscript holdings of the Library’s Special Collections.

3.2 In recent years the printed collections have been enhanced by a wide range of material in other formats. Library Services now subscribes to approximately 16,000 ejournals and provides access to them as widely as the licences allow. Collections of audio-visual material are maintained where appropriate to support teaching and research.

## 4. Readership and access

Staff and students of UCL and staff of the associated NHS Trusts have access to all collections of printed material held by UCL Library Services. Conditions for readership and access by non-members of UCL are set out from time to time in the Library’s Admissions Policy, which is reviewed and approved by UCL Library Committee. Where special conditions restricting access to an individual collection are in place for any reason they are set out in the policy for that collection. In the case of electronic publications conditions for access are usually set by the publisher and the licences sometimes exclude access by non-members of UCL.

## 5. Relationships with other collections outside UCL

5.1 UCL’s location in Bloomsbury opens up one of the greatest concentrations of research libraries in the world to its staff and students, and the existence of these collections, whether they are part of the University of London or not, is taken into account when assessing the research material available to UCL staff and students.The special access arrangements agreed between libraries within the University of London and the arrangements for access to the British Library for UCL students are both very valuable in enhancing the range of resources available to UCL staff and students.

5.2 At a regional and national level Library Services is playing a leading role in the development of collaborative collection management schemes, with bilateral and multilateral agreements beginning to take effect. Details of particular agreements are given in the relevant collection-level statements. As it becomes increasingly apparent that no university library can be entirely self-sufficient in research provision we will hope to see these schemes providing an expansion in the range of research materials available nationally, accompanied by the possibility of economies at a local level, both financially and in the use of scarce space. This can only be achieved by formal collaborative collection management agreements with appropriate safeguards that reflect local academic priorities.

5.3 UCL is a partner in the UK Centre for Medical Research and Innovation (UKCMRI) and Library Services will work jointly with the other partners towards identifying and supporting the Centre's information needs.

## 6 Acquisition

### 6.1 Responsibility for selection

Day-to-day responsibility for selection of materials lies with the relevant Subject Librarian, or, where appropriate, the Site Librarian. Their experience and expertise is a vital factor in ensuring the long-term coherence of the collections*,* although this can only be achieved with active cooperation from academic departments. Information about current and future teaching and research is crucial in ensuring that the collections meet immediate and longer-term academic needs. Suggestions for purchase are welcome from all users of the Library. Ultimate responsibility for collection management lies with the Pro-Vice-Provost (UCL Library Services).

### 6.2 Subjects collected and criteria for acquisition

6.2.1 The range of subjects covered by the collections is very wide and reflects the teaching and research carried out in UCL since its foundation. The collections therefore cover most aspects of the humanities, social and historical sciences, pure and applied sciences, and clinical sciences. Current acquisition policy for particular subject areas will adapt both to changes in the academic priorities of departments, and to strategic priorities established by UCL’s Learning and Teaching Strategy and its Research Strategy. Only material at undergraduate level or above is normally acquired. Where new research or teaching areas are set up Library Services will make every effort to support them; this will include seeking new funding where needed to build up new collections.

6.2.2 The first priority of UCL’s acquisition policy will be to provide for the needs of its taught-course students. All recommended texts will be bought if they are in print and every effort will be made to acquire out of print books if they are needed for taught courses.

6.2.3 Multiple copies of items which are identified as core textbooks will be bought wherever possible and the use of e-versions of core textbooks as a viable alternative to print copies will be investigated. Multiple copies will be acquired using the following formula based on the number of students on the course, unit or programme for which the title is required as a guide.

1 copy for courses with 11-20 students

2 copies for courses with 21-30 students

3 copies for courses with 31-50 students

4 copies for courses with 51-70 students

5 copies for courses with 71-90 students

6 copies for courses with 91-110 students

7 copies for courses with 111-130 students

8 copies for courses with 131-150 students

9 copies for courses with 151-180 students

10 copies for courses with 181-210 students

6.2.4 The holdings of other libraries to which UCL students have easy access will be taken into account when considering how best to provide journal articles cited on reading lists if UCL does not hold the relevant journal. Digital course readings are regularly used to provide access to core readings thereby supplementing the number of copies of required reading held by the Library.

6.2.5 The second priority of the acquisition policy is to maintain and build on the strengths of UCL’s research collections, many of which attract scholars from all over the world and enhance the reputation of the institution. Like most academic libraries, UCL cannot aim to collect comprehensively at research level, but as far as resources allow the Library will strive to maintain and enhance its status as a high-quality research collection. In buying research material preference is given to titles which strengthen existing collections and support well-established and active research programmes in UCL. Where high rates of inflation for academic journals make new journal subscriptions prohibitively expensive it might be necessary to consider the cancellation of other titles to the same value. Any cancellations of journal subscriptions will take place only after consultation with relevant academic staff.

6.2.6 For the clinical libraries collecting priorities reflect the teaching, research and clinical practice activities carried out on their hospital site. Clinical practice materials are collected where they contain up-do-date knowledge and guidelines for practitioners and for postgraduate and continuing medical education and the cross-site and cross-Faculty research carried out in partnership with UCL.

6.2.7 When selecting material the main criterion will be the academic content of the item, although value for money and space considerations will also be factors in some cases. Additional technical criteria apply to non-print material, those are detailed in the section on “format and medium”, below. See individual collection-level statements for details of categories of material excluded from the collections for academic reasons.

6.2.8 No consideration will be given to an author’s political or other opinions, race, nationality,religion*,* or sexual orientation when selecting an item for stock. Acquisition of an item does not imply endorsement of the author’s views by Library Services or by UCL.

### 6.3 Language

With the exception of the specialist language and area-studies collections, the usual language of the collections is English, although material is bought in the major West European languages where it is considered particularly important. See the individual collection-level statements for further details relating to particular collections.

### 6.4 Format and medium

Material is collected in print, electronic, audio-visual or other formats as appropriate. Where there is a choice of formats preference is given to electronic through subscriptions to or purchase of datasets, ejournals and ebook services. When selecting material in electronic formats, technical requirements, ease of use and access and the existence of appropriate licensing and archiving arrangements will all be taken into account to ensure a high-quality and reliable service. The challenge of supporting library users in a complex multi-site institution such as UCL means that electronic delivery, both on and off-site, is a strategic priority for Library Services.

### 6.5 Exchange and deposit arrangements

Some long-standing exchange and deposit arrangements are still in operation, but Library Services does not enter into new exchange or deposit agreements unless a particular agreement can be proved to be the most cost-effective and reliable method of acquiring the material on offer. See collection-level statements for details of particular arrangements.

## 7. Retention and relegation

### 7.1 Retention and disposal

There are significants costs inovolved in the long-term storage and preservation of the material collected by UCL Library Services. Accordingly all collections are regularly reviewed by the responsible Subject or Site Librarian and material that is no longer required is removed and disposed of. This policy deals with non-electronic materials. The retention of digital materials is dealt with by Library Services’ Digital Curation Strategy.

7.2 Retention and disposal will be informed by the further development of the UK Research Reserve (UKRR), a partnership with the British Library that is open to all UK HEIs. The aim is to provide both collaborative storage and long-term access that will enable participating institutions to de-duplicate material, thereby freeing up space locally. UCL is a member of UKRR

7.3 The following general criteria are used as a guide to inform decisions about retention and disposal of print materials. Wherever possible relevant academic units (departments, faculties or schools) will be consulted about the disposal of material:

7.3.1 Retention - Books and mongraphs will be retained where they are:

* Required for current teaching, learning or practice
* Support current school / faculty research profiles
* Reinforce existing heritage collections or areas of known strength
* Included in a contractual or collaborative agreement requiring retention by UCL
* Unique or rare and not available in legal deposit libraries in the UK
* Published before 1850
* Published before 1900 and contains colour plates
* 1st editions
* Part of a limited edition
* Have significant associations with UCL
* Have evidence of important ownership or association
* Items comprising collections of acknowledged national importance that should be retained as part of the national research collection
* Of importance to the community, locality or region
* Levels of future use are sufficiently uncertain to justify immediate deselection

7.3.2 Retention – Journals and periodicals will be retained where they are:

* Required for current and future teaching or research
* Titles which are not available electronically
* Titles where electronic access is not secure or where licence agreements do not guarantee access to archives if a subscription is cancelled
* Included in a contractual or collaborative agreement requiring retention by UCL

7.3.3 Disposal – Books and monographs will be disposed of where they are:

* Items no longer relevant to current teaching, learning or practice
* Items no longer support current school / faculty research profiles
* Duplicates (except where required for teaching)
* Superseded editions of textbooks and reference sources (except where of historic interest)
* Material outlining good governance or practice which no longer effects currents standards or practice
* Low use items which are in poor physical condition
* Available in electronic format
* Available in co-operative store
* Available in alternative preferred formats

7.3.4 Disposal – Journals and periodicals will be disposed of where they are:

* Print journals where access to electronic archives is secure via archiving services or adequate archiving arrangements exist with publishers
* Low use titles where access is available via British Library Document Supply services or other national initiatives such as the UK Research Reserve (UKRR)
* Abstract and Indexing services which are available electronically
* Ephemera and current awareness publications (unless identified as unique or otherwise of particular interest)

7.4 Additional retention and disposal criteria for particular collections are listed in the collection level statements which accompany this policy. Departments will be consulted on the application of retention and disposal criteria during major reviews of collections.

### 7.5 Relegation to Store

Open access shelf space at most sites is very restricted and priority in allocating space on the open shelves will be given to items required to support taught courses for as long as they are required reading. Following that research material that is still in current use will be retained on the open shelves for as long as space allows. Material that is less heavily used but which has it has been decided to retain will be relegated to Store.

7.6 Along with other aspects of the work of Library Services all collections are reviewed from time to time as part of internal and external quality assurance procedures, to assess how well they are meeting their purpose.

## 8. Preservation

The Library’s collections are preserved according to the principles set down in the Preservation Policy, accessible on the web with all public policy statements from Library Services. The preservation of digital materials is dealt with by the Digital Curation Strategy.

## 9. Cultural Property

All UCL Library Services collections will be acquired, maintained and where appropriate disposed of in line with [UCL’s Cultural Property Policy](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/research/ethics/ucl-cultural-property-policy-guidelines).

January 2004

Revised July 2010

## Appendix 1.

### DONATIONS POLICY

Background

UCL Library Services is grateful to those who have made donations and who offer unsolicited material to the Library. Many of the items accepted, ranging from individual works presented by the author to substantial collections, would not otherwise be obtained by the Library and these make an important contribution to teaching, learning and research activities at UCL.

Conditions of acceptance

Space constraints and the amount of staffing resource required to record and process donations mean that the Library must be selective in what can be accepted. Once a collection of donated material has been received into the Library, the Library reserves the right to deal with it as it sees appropriate.

Potential donors should be aware that Library Services:

* can only consider material for inclusion if it falls within the scope of Library Services’ Collection Management Policy;
* can only consider material without restrictions on subsequent location, timescale for processing or disposal;
* does not normally accept material in poor physical condition;
* may be unable to accept substantial donations where funding cannot be identified in advance to pay for delivery to the Library and for subsequent cataloguing and processing;
* normally cannot accept duplicate items unless they constitute material identifiably in regular heavy demand, such as that on student reading lists; duplicates discovered after acceptance of collections may be compared with copies already in stock, and only the item in best condition retained;
* normally cannot accept back runs of periodicals that duplicate existing holdings or that are very incomplete;
* reserves the right to dispose of material, either at the time of receipt or subsequently;
* cannot guarantee to house donated items together;
* cannot guarantee to house donated items in a particular collection.

In addition, it may be necessary to decline donations of current periodical subscriptions paid for at the individual subscriber rate, where it is stated that issues are for personal use only and/or where electronic access may only be available to the individual subscriber

Offers

Offers of material to be added to Library stock will be considered by the appropriate Subject or Site Librarian, who may need to consult with the Team Leader or Group Manager over more substantial donations.

Potential donors are advised not to bring materials into the libraries unless acceptance has been agreed.

It is very helpful if a donor can provide a list of the material, so that it may be checked against the Library catalogue before acceptance, or if the Subject or Site Librarian can visit the collection, so that a professional decision may be reached regarding its relevance and value. If Library Services is unable to accept a donation more appropriate libraries may be suggested.

Cataloguing

Small numbers of items will be added to stock, catalogued and processed in the same way as purchased items. They can be fast-tracked through the system only if they are currently in demand. Items not in demand and more substantial collections may have to be stored offsite for an indefinite period, until staff are available to deal with them.

Bookplates

Bookplates giving brief details of the donor may be inserted at the discretion of Library Services, e.g. where the materials constitute a substantial donation of exceptional academic relevance.

Notes

* Special conditions apply to sites and collections with national collecting responsibilities. Potential donors should contact the relevant Subject or Site Librarian for guidance.
* Factors, such as special preservation and storage requirements, may have to be taken into consideration in the case of older/more fragile material.
* Library Services cannot advise on the value of donations, or of materials that might be candidates for donation.