

# Collection Development Policy 2019

## 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, 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 an on-site store and off-site store which are full, at a time when we are facing strong pressure to provide additional and varied study spaces for our students. In recent years we have reduced the overall size of our printed collection and we aim to maintain it at the current size whilst responding to change.

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 teaching that takes place at Stratford and also covers Birkbeck's contribution to maintaining the Senate House Library.

The sum we receive for information resources is then sub-divided by School and Department using a formula based on projected (FTE) student numbers and academic staff numbers, mediated by average

journal prices. Each departmental allocation must cover all expenditure on information resources for that subject area, including both books and journal subscriptions. Schools and Departments may add to their budgets. A percentage of the funding is top sliced to pay for resources that are used across disciplines (e.g. some large databases).

The amounts of material in off-site storage impacts on the cost, and the spend on this, and has possible implications on the money available for purchase of new resources.

The Library also spends the money it raises through book fines on information resources. This money is allocated by the Director of Library Services, in consultation with the Subject Librarians, and may be used to target subject areas or specific modules where there is lower than average student satisfaction with library resources, or to support new courses.

Wherever possible, the Library will participate in partnerships and purchasing consortia which ensure that we obtain the best value for money when we purchase information 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**

#### **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 (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 bought (in print or electronic format); up to one copy per ten students of essential textbooks. The Library also provides a digitisation and e-journal linking service which enables teaching staff to make key readings available to their students in the virtual learning environment (Moodle). This service includes the scanning of items under the 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.

#### **4.2 Journals**

Electronic journals are subscribed to in favour of print journals as they enhance access and maximize the availability of the material without requiring physical space. In the coming years, the Library will seek to replace its remaining printed journal collections, wherever appropriate and possible, with permanent electronic backfiles.

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 conditions and terms. 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. We will also look at options for subscribing to broader journal packages from the main journal publishers, through nationally negotiated deals. Where these packages can be afforded, they are likely to provide better value for money than the current selective model of individual subscriptions.

We will also encourage greater use of our interlibrary loans service which is free of charge and 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 other outdated material
- Duplicate items
- Items in poor physical condition
- Items which have not been in circulation for an extended period of time
- Items where there is an electronic version available.

The final decision about whether to withdraw or relegate material will be made by the relevant Subject Librarians 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**

Due to space constraints, print runs of journals will only be considered for retention where we do not have access in perpetuity to the electronic version or where the quality of visual is key to the research value. Digital back files of print journal collections will be identified and purchased subject to availability of funds.

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, and print journals of low relevance to the university's needs will not be retained.

## **6. Store**

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. We have access to an external store that holds Murray Bequest books, and print journals.

## **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 two additional repositories: [BiRD](#), for research data, and [ORBIT](#), for 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 is 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.

Presented to the Library Advisory Group, October 2019.