University of Limerick

Collection Development & Management Policy

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

This policy guides the development of the University's scholarly collections managed by the library.

A University Library Collection comprises peer or professionally reviewed informational and evidential resources, physical or digital items. Collections are obtained through various acquisition methods and made available for users to consult, access, or borrow.

Expertise in collection development and management resides within the library, where librarians and archivists use professional judgment and international best practices to manage collections. The library's collections are accessible to all University members, the public, and readers through reciprocal access schemes and external borrower arrangements. The collections support the UN Sustainable Development Goals of inclusivity, accessibility, and equitable quality education.

1.2 Scope

This policy governs the selection, creation, acquisition, description, organisation, transfer, withdrawal, preservation, and ongoing management of the University's library collections, aligning with the University's mission and evolving research emphases.

1.3 To whom does the policy apply?

This policy applies to all students and staff of the University of Limerick and potential suppliers and donors.

1.4 In what situations does the policy apply?

This policy applies to the development and management of the collections managed by the University Library.

1.5 Who is responsible for ensuring that the policy (and any associated procedure) is implemented and monitored?

The University Librarian, Director of Library & Information Services, is responsible for implementing this policy. It will be reviewed every three years. Library collections are highlighted in the Library's Risk Register, with protective mitigation strategies in place to provide alternative access in case of material loss.

1.6 Definitions

See Appendix 1

2 Context

2.1 Legal and Regulatory Context

The Library at UL manages the University's collections in line with statutes, regulations, and University procedures.

2.1.1 Statutory

- Copyright & Related Rights Act, 2000
- Copyright and Other Intellectual Property Law Provisions Act, 2019
- European Union (Copyright and Related Rights in the Digital Single Market) Regulations 2021
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

2.1.2 University regulations and procedures

- The Handbook of Academic Regulations and Procedures
- University Finance and Procurement Rules
- UL's Records Management Policy
- UL's Records Classification & Retention Schedule
- University Disciplinary Procedures
- Code of Conduct for Employees

2.1.3 Agreements

- Licensing agreements – contracts with vendors
- Consortial agreements e.g., IREL for research subscriptions
- Collaborative preservation initiatives with partner institutions e.g., CONUL
- Agreements and contracts with donors or funders

3 Policy Statements

3.1 Principles for Collection Development

3.1.1 Collection Formats

The library collects in various formats, including:

- Archival collections
- Audio and audio-visual material
- Academic journals and serials
- Books
- Datasets
- Maps

- Music scores
- UL research theses
- Visual media

3.1.2 Language

Priority is given to items published in English and Irish, while works in other languages are acquired as needed to support the curriculum and research.

3.2 Modern Collections

To enhance user experience and enable remote and simultaneous access, the library has an e-first policy for modern collections used primarily for teaching and learning. The library acquires ebooks where available and appropriate for the discipline through various acquisition methods and strives for perpetual access to titles.

3.3 Special Collections and Archives

The library is committed to maintaining and enhancing its Special Collections and Archives, which encompass unique materials such as archives, manuscripts, rare books, and early printed editions. These collections are integral to supporting the University's teaching and research objectives.

Material selection for these collections is guided by its relevance to the University's strategic plan and research interests. The criteria for collection, including specific priorities and exclusions, are outlined in Appendix 3 of this policy.

3.4 Selection

Items are selected for library collections to align with the academic priorities of departments, research centres, faculty members, and the University's strategic and regional commitments. In close collaboration with faculty, library staff select materials for scholarly collections based on established criteria. The library uses a combination of Reading Lists, Demand-Driven Acquisition, benchmarking tools such as Approval Plans and internationally established frameworks such as Conspectus Levels to measure collection strengths and set targets regarding collection development, subject to the usual limitations of budgetary resources and the selection criteria set out below.

3.4.1 Selection Criteria

The following criteria are the basis for most selection decisions and also guide the library's prioritisation of digitisation requests, and decision-making regarding offers of donations to the collections:

- Teaching, research, and archival value
- Cost (*purchase, subscription, operational*)
- Uniqueness/duplication
- Format
- Publisher reputation and quality
- Suitability for Special Collections and Archives

Other criteria include accessibility, completeness, copyright, condition, license type and provenance.

3.4.2 Responsibility for selection

Library staff collaborate with faculty to select resources supporting programmes and research. Faculty expertise guides collection development, while librarians and archivists evaluate and select materials.

3.5 Acquisition

The library determines the best acquisition method based on availability, cost, relevance, and other factors.

3.5.1 Purchase

The library purchases items within procurement frameworks using an annual budget. Purchased items are owned by the University. Missing or damaged items are replaced, usually in electronic format.

3.5.2 Consortial Purchase

As IReL members, the library collaborates with other Irish institutions to subscribe to scholarly material at a national level.

3.5.3 Subscription

The library manages subscriptions, renewals, and cancellations, consulting with faculty and using selection criteria (see 3.4.1).

3.5.4 Inter-Library Loan

This service provides access to international collections for faculty, researchers, and postgraduate students.

3.5.5 Donations

Most typically, donations of items to the library will be considered for the Special Collections and Archives Department, not for the main library collections. Material is evaluated using selection criteria set out in 3.4.1 of this policy. The library may accept or decline donations and seeks to balance material value with processing costs. Donations require an agreement and become library property. The library typically does not accept material on loan.

The library does not generally accept donations of modern books, textbooks, drafts, preprints, newspaper clippings, active University records, or inactive records without value.

3.5.6 Deposits

Deposits differ from donations and include:

- Legal deposit under the Copyright and Related Rights Act, 2000
  The library's policy is one of selective rather than comprehensive acquisition of such material, with reference to the library's selection criteria. E-Legal deposit is a new and growing area, but still very much at a development stage.
- Deposits for the UL Digital Library
- UL Research output, including theses in the UL Research Repository

3.5.7 Digitisation

Material may be digitised, subject to copyright, to preserve or provide electronic access. Digitisation priorities are determined by the same criteria used for collection selection, see 3.4.1.

3.6 Principles for Collection Management

3.6.1 Organisation and Description

Collections are recorded in online catalogues by item or collection-level record. Physical holdings are on open shelves, in the Library Store, or in the Automated Reserve Collection (ARC), arranged by Dewey Decimal Classification and ISAD(G). Some collections are not for loan and must be accessed on-site.

Licensed electronic resources are accessible via the library website for all registered University members through online authentication. Open access content is increasingly available through the library's catalogue and infrastructure. The library provides access to digital cultural heritage material via the UL Digital Library and open access to UL research output via the UL Research Repository.

3.6.2 Collaborative Collection Management

The library supports regional, national, and international initiatives in collection development, collaborative storage, and consortial developments.

3.6.3 Preservation & Conservation

Professional preservation and conservation standards (BS4971:2017) are observed. Priorities are determined by selection criteria, use, rarity, repair/replacement cost, vulnerability, and retention period.

3.6.4 Security

The library follows best practices and industry standards (BS4971:2017) to protect collections. Security measures include controlled access, security-tagged books, and online authentication. Unique, rare, or valuable material is secured in the Special Collections & Archives Department, where use is supervised, and lending is not permitted.

Theft or damage is managed through University disciplinary procedures for students and the Code of Conduct for Employees for staff. Long-term access to e-resources is ensured through digital preservation services like Portico and CLOCKSS.

3.6.5 Transfer and Withdrawal

The library develops a core collection essential to the University's priorities. Transfer involves relocating items within the library; withdrawal involves removing items from collections. Material is assessed and managed by library staff. Generally, it is material from the Modern Collections that is transferred to the automated storage, but items may be withdrawn from any of the library collections based on the criteria set out below and following consultation as set out in 4.4.

3.6.5.1 Criteria for Transfer to automated storage

- Low-use print copies available electronically
- Older editions/superseded textbooks

- Low-use books and journals
- Material in non-currently taught/researched disciplines
- Material retained under obligations

3.6.5.2 Criteria for Withdrawal

- Poor condition, unlikely to be repaired
- Duplicates with lost currency
- Print journals available electronically, ceased publication/cancelled over five years ago
- Incomplete/short-run print journals without historical value
- Low-use material not relevant to the University's mission
- Outdated content/format (e.g., VHS, cassette tapes)
- Legal reasons (e.g., contested ownership/rights)
- Cancelled subscriptions due to funding restrictions

Withdrawn material is responsibly disposed of, offered to educational organisations, or recycled.

4 Related Procedures for Collection Development and Management

There are library procedures that support this policy, including the procedures for acquisition, digitisation, donations, transfers and withdrawals. These are updated regularly and are used by library staff in the execution of their collection development and management duties.

4.1 Reading Lists Procedures

Module leaders must notify the library about items required for module reading lists ahead of the start of teaching. The library acquires the essential readings, and these are linked via Leganto to the module leaders Brightspace site. The library acquires ebooks as a preference striving to ensure perpetual access to titles and consults with faculty regarding alternatives where access to a specific title is not possible. Contact ReadingLists@ul.ie for queries about module reading lists.

4.2 Library resources for new academic programmes

New academic programmes that have a library collection requirement must be notified to the library via the APRC Workflow. Preliminary costings can be prepared in advance for library resources for new programmes, contact libinfo@ul.ie

4.3 Research resources for library collections

Members of the University community can request or recommend items to be added to the library collections. Subject to available funds and the selection criteria outlined in this policy, the recommendations are considered. Email the details to libinfo@ul.ie.

4.4 Faculty consultations regarding loss or withdrawal

If the library loses or anticipates losing access to a resource or plans to withdraw items, staff will consult with relevant faculty in advance.

5 Related Documents

- UL's Records Management Policy
- University of Limerick Disciplinary Procedures

6 Document Control

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7 Appendices

Appendix 1 Definitions

Term	Definition
APRC	Academic Programme Review Committee at the University of Limerick
Archival Value	The Society of American Archivists defines archival value as '*the ongoing usefulness or significance of records, based on the administrative, legal, fiscal, evidential, or historical information they contain, justifying their continued preservation.'*
Automated Reserve Collection (ARC)	Automated Reserve Collection is the name given to the automated storage and retrieval system in the library that holds superseded and low use material from the library.
Binding	The practice of repairing books or binding a set of journals to ensure their long-term physical stability. This is a contracted service carried out off campus.
Born-digital	Born-digital items are materials that are created in a digital format. This includes for example websites, email, digital photographs, electronic records. Born-digital items are distinct from analog items that are subsequently digitised, such as paper manuscripts or photographs.
CLOCKSS	A digital preservation archives/services that ensures long-term access to digital content.
Conspectus Levels	Conspectus Levels are a guide for research libraries employing a numeric descriptor that guides collection development, ranging from 0 (Out of Scope) to 5 (Comprehensive Level). Conspectus can be used to measure collection strengths and set aspirational targets regarding collection development, subject to the usual limitations of budgetary resources.
CONUL	Consortium of National and University Libraries of which the University of Limerick is a member.
Digital Library	The Digital Library is the system that stores and makes available the digital cultural heritage material, typically from the University of Limerick's Special Collections and Archives.
Incunabula	Early printed books, especially those printed before 1501
Inter Library Loan	A service that enables patrons of one library to borrow physical materials and receive electronic documents that are held by another library.
IReL	Irish Research eLibrary, a purchasing consortium of which the University of Limerick is a member that negotiates, buys and manages electronic library research material at a national level on behalf of its members.

Term	Definition
Legal Deposit / E-Legal deposit	UL is a legal deposit library and as such is entitled to claim one copy of all printed items published in the Republic of Ireland. See Section 198 of the Copyright and Related Acts, 2000. Legal Deposit historically only covered printed items. New legislation came in to force in the UK in 2013 which extended legal deposit to electronic publications from UK publishers. This legislation extends to TCD but does not include other Irish libraries. The infrastructure necessary to support e-legal deposit is not in a mature state and e-Legal Deposit is not a common practice in Irish University libraries.
Leganto	Leganto is the software used to manage the library's online reading lists.
Open Access	Open Access (OA) is an international movement to make research publications freely available.
Preprints	A preprint is something that is printed in advance, especially a part of a work printed and issued to the author before general publication of that work.
Read and Publish Deals	Also known as 'Transformative Open Access Agreements' these are contracts between publishers and libraries/universities that have an annual subscription cost but give the institution access to the journal and a certain number of paid licences to cover the cost of publishing an article in the journal.
Reading Lists	The prescribed reading for modules on the UL curriculum; currently on the software platform known as Leganto.
UL Foundation	The University of Limerick's philanthropic fundraising body.
UL Research Repository	The University system that stores and makes available the research output of the University of Limerick.

Appendix 2 International Standards

The following international standards are used in the evaluation, organisation, description and care of library collections

- BS4971:2017 Conservation and care of archive and library collections
  IFLA Guidelines on collection evaluation
- Resource Description and Access (RDA)
- MARC21 (Machine Readable Cataloguing Standards)
- Dublin Core (DCMES - Dublin Core Metadata Element Set)
- MODS (Metadata Object Description Schema)
- ISAD(G) (General International Standard Archival Description)
- Subject headings that include Library of Congress, FAST, Irish Dictionary of Biography and VIAF (Virtual International Authority File)

- Thesauri e.g. Getty Art & Architecture Thesaurus

Appendix 3 Collecting Focus and Priorities for Special Collections and Archives

Special Collections and Archives prioritises collecting archival materials that align with the University's strategic plan and research interests. The University avoids collecting materials better suited to other organisations.

Special Collections and Archives aims to increase archival holdings in areas such as:

- Literary collections, especially by local and female authors
- Estate and family papers
- Irish Country House collections
- Architectural history materials
- Personal archival records (letters, diaries)
- Visual collections (photographs)
- Maps
- Irish dance company materials (audiovisual)
- Works by University of Limerick authors or those associated with the University
- Materials enhancing research resources and outreach activities
- Items fostering collaborations with national and international institutions

Special Collections and Archives also considers small or single donations of printed works, especially:

- Local publications with limited print runs
- Items published before 1851
- Items published before 1900 with coloured plates, maps, diagrams, photographs
- Incunabula
- Early modern printing and Irish typeface examples
- Rare books with annotations, marginalia, or unique bindings

Material Not Generally Accepted

Special Collections and Archives accepts certain materials only in specific circumstances, engaging in dialogue with donors about the archival/research value and impact. Examples include:

- Printed book collections
- Duplicates or photocopies
- Clippings from widely distributed newspapers, magazines, academic journals
- Drafts of published academic work
- Academic research files
- Large volumes of financial or administrative records without archival value
- Reproductions of materials from other archives
- Widely available publications

- Facsimiles of original materials
- Objects
- Artworks

Material Not Accepted

Special Collections and Archives does not accept materials that do not align with collection priorities or are better suited to other archives. In such cases, alternative archive services are suggested. Examples include:

- Collections without clear title or copyright
- Records requiring indefinite closure due to sensitive personal data
- Specialist records or those in obsolete formats
- Active and inactive university records (covered by UL's Records Management Policy)
- Datasets and research outputs (managed by UL's Research Repository)