

Senate House Library Collection Development Policy

1.0 Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this Collection Development Policy is to establish a framework for how the Library acquires material across all formats and for the responsible weeding of the collections. The document also sets out the collecting priorities of the Library.

1.2 The policy is a public facing statement intended to inform stakeholders and users of Senate House Library of the purposes set out above and an internal document to guide collection development across the Library.

2.0 Governance

2.1 This document is ratified by the Academic Board of the University of London, which reports to the Board of Trustees.

2.2 The document is complemented by the Collection Strengths of Senate House Library document, the Archives Collection Development Policy and the Special Collections Development Policy.

3.0 Users

3.1 The Library primarily provides support and resources to the following groups:

- University of London students, including students attached to London Worldwide
- Member Institution students
- Researchers from the UK and international academic community
- Members of the public.

4.0 Stakeholders

4.1 Stakeholders of Senate House Library:

- University of London Academic Board and the Board of Trustees
- [SAS Institutes](#) and their Libraries – these libraries serve national communities and have specific collections policies governed by their unique status against the Research England remit.
- [Member Institution Libraries](#)
- The national and international research community.

5.0 Description of the collections

5.1 Senate House Library is a specialist national resource for the arts, humanities, and social sciences. The Library has over 2 million items, including 50 designated special collections and over 1800 archival collections. Across Senate House Library and the SAS institutes, 39% of the collections are held by 5 or fewer UK libraries. 70% of items held are not held by Member Institutions and 57% are not held by the British Library (data from Greenglass, Summer 2022). Priority collecting areas are detailed below and include languages, book and manuscript studies, English, history, and emerging disciplines such as environmental and digital humanities.

6.0 Selection decisions

6.1 Selection decisions in the Library are primarily made by the Academic Librarians, reporting to the Head of Collections, and in conjunction with the E-Resources Librarian, Curator of Rare Books and University Archivist. Decisions are made based on user suggestions, and to complement the collections at SAS Libraries and the Member Institutions, often in conjunction with librarians and academics at these institutions.

6.2 The Library provides a wide range of digital content to support the University of London's distance learning programmes (Worldwide), which are continually evolving and based on reading lists. The content provided for distance learning students includes disciplines that are not referred to in the below priority subject areas, such as business, finance, marketing, mathematics, and computing.

6.3 The Library is committed to maximising the diversity of voices and opportunities in our collections, and to ensuring inclusivity is at the heart of collection strategies and decision making.

7.0 Priority subject areas

7.1 The priority subject areas for collecting in the Library are:

- Book Studies
- Commonwealth Studies
- Digital Humanities
- English
- Environmental Humanities
- Exile, Migration and Cultural Memory
- French, Francophone, Spanish, Portuguese, Lusophone, and Italian
- Germanic
- History
- Latin American Studies
- Magic and the Paranormal
- Manuscript Studies and Palaeography
- United States Studies.

7.2 These areas reflect where the Library has an existing collection strength; subject areas where the library serves a SAS Institute and areas where the Library has a historical collection. The Library also collects in selected areas of certain disciplines as outlined in the collections descriptions.

8.0 Collection formats

8.1 Material will be acquired and retained in electronic format by preference. We will prioritise resources and platforms that are designed inclusively and meet or exceed legal accessibility standards.

8.2 Journals will be collected in electronic format by preference. Print runs will only be collected where no electronic version exists and there is a clear demand for the content that cannot reliably be met through inter-library loan and scanning services.

8.3 Existing runs of print journals will be retained only where there is a requirement to do so under our UK Research Reserve (UKRR- a national collaborative research collection) commitments to retain, or where there is a clear demand for the content that cannot be met through electronic resource provision or inter-library loan and scanning services.

8.4 The Library may acquire e-resources outside of our priority subject areas when pursuing consortial acquisition of resources due to our brokering role within the Federation.

8.5 The Library purchases e-resources to support University of London distance learning courses. Content is provided through a mixture of eBooks, e-journals and databases, and digitised extracts on students' learning platforms using the Copyright Licensing Agency HE Licence.

9.0 Donations

9.1 Any proposed donations or gifts need to support one of our areas of priority collecting; complement or extend existing special collection or archival strengths; or represent an emerging research area that the Library wishes to develop.

10.0 Disposals

10.1 The Library actively curates and manages its collections, and decisions about retention and withdrawal will be made according to the principles outlined in this policy.

10.2 Items may be weeded when they:

- are duplicate copies
- have been replaced with digital versions
- overlap with a SAS Library and Senate House Library works with them to de-duplicate the collections (art and history)
- historical collections where there will be no further acquisitions (classics)
- areas where the Library continues to collect in selected areas but not the entire discipline, of which further detail can be found in the Senate House Library Collection Descriptions document (history of science, music, philosophy, psychology, social sciences)
- are material considered out of date and with no research value
- are print journals as outlined in the previous section.

10.3 We aim to dispose responsibly and, where possible, work with organisations that are able to repurpose our withdrawn material. The Library is committed to being part of national collaborative research collection initiatives.

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