

Collection Development Policy: Special Collections

Purpose

The purpose of this Collection Development Policy is to establish a framework for how the Library acquires special collections (defined below) material across all formats. The document also sets out the collecting priorities for the Library.

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

Governance

This policy statement is intended to be read in conjunction with the Senate House Library Collections Development Policy and the Collection Strengths of Senate House Library Document

Special Collections

Special Collections at Senate House Library are defined as:

- Rare books – defined here by books with either an early date of production, a limited print run, a small number of surviving copies or particularly interesting provenance
- Distinctive modern collections
- The University of London art collection

Senate House Library is committed to protecting and developing the special collections of the Library in line with the current priority collecting areas, and to support teaching and research within the University of London, the Federal Member Institutions and the wider community.

Acquiring Special Collections Material

Special collections material is acquired by donation, bequest and purchase. The Library rarely accepts long term deposits. Books and manuscripts are purchased via bookseller's catalogues, direct offer and at auction where the use of a bidding agent is usually employed. Material is also transferred to Special Collections within the Library where appropriate.

Special Collections material is acquired by the Curator of Rare Books and University Art and the Manuscript and Book Studies Librarian, in conjunction with the Head of Collections.

Selecting Material

Material is selected in line with the collecting priorities of Senate House Library, as detailed in the Senate House Library Collections Development Policy. Alongside these priorities the Library also has several trust funds for which specific material is purchased.

- **Deller**
Books purchased "for the purpose of enabling the Library to buy rare or beautiful books and manuscripts".
- **Gridley**
Established in memory of John C. Gridley, initially for books related to business studies and now used to support the themes represented in the Goldsmith's Library.
- **Goldsmith's Library**

Books are collected 'for the study of the industrial, commercial, monetary, and financial history of the United Kingdom, as well as of the gradual development of economic science generally'.

- **Harry Price Library**
Books are collected in all areas pertaining to magic, the paranormal and the occult.
- **Seng Tee Lee**
Cultural studies and interdisciplinary works relating to major research themes of the Library.
- **Sterling Library**
First and fine editions of English literature, in particular, pre-1900 English literature, twentieth-century English literature, private press books, illustrated and extra-illustrated books and manuscripts.
- **Troup Horne**
For purchasing newly published short stories, modern authors not included in Library collections and antiquarian items related to short stories.

Material is selected on the following criteria:

- Research and teaching interest
- Relationship to other holdings and priority collecting areas of the Library
- Possibility of use in fundraising, outreach and teaching, exhibition and in digitisation projects
- Provenance or copy specific elements (for example, marginalia) related to strengths in the Special Collections
- Addressing gaps in the collection based on historical inequalities in collecting.

Considerations:

- Condition and completeness of the item or items is considered, minimal conservation intervention should be needed at point of acquisition
- Cataloguing and storage costs of the item or items
- Availability at other libraries, in particular the British Library
- Availability of e-surrogates
- Duplicate copies are not usually acquired unless copy specific elements relate directly to the collecting strengths represented in Special Collections.

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