

Library Services
Aston University
Library Resources Management Policy

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1. Introduction

Library Services (LS) provides access to print and online resources to support the current academic activities of the University. This policy sets out the key features of how Library Services purchases, maintains and provides access to its resources and it is intended to inform and assist both Library Services and academic staff in the planning and decision making regarding Library resources.

Library Services delivers resources in both print and electronic formats, using a blend of owned, subscribed, open access and 'borrowed' methods.

To ensure best value from the funds available, we work in consultation with each School, seek feedback from students, and make use of usage statistics.

In a library where much of the content is electronic rather than physical the systems to support discovery and delivery of those resources are a crucial part of the library services and for many, notably our academic staff and distance learners, these systems are their Library.

2. Library Budget

2.1 Library and Information Resources (LIR) Budget

The LIR budget is used to purchase the general and specialised resources required to support the work of the University. This includes subscriptions to journals, databases, e-book collections and standing orders for book series, plus purchases of single book titles (print and electronic) and Inter-library Loans (ILLs).

Any change in the purchasing power of LS' resources budget, relative to the size of the University, will impact on LS' ability to support the academic activities of the University and hence on satisfaction levels.

To indicate the level of budget needed to ensure continuity of provision, LS will provide the University with annual budget projections that will inform budgetary decisions at a university level. This will take into account changing modes of delivery of information resources and differential inflation rates across different types of resource (e.g. books compared to journals).

Journals and databases are made available in such a way that their accessibility is not significantly affected by changes in the size of the user population but resourcing for each of these needs to increase year on year by the level of inflation that is anticipated for each category. Inflation on journals in particular has historically been higher than the RPI inflation rate. The prices for journals and databases are typically based on the size of the institution and often defined in bands. Growth in student numbers will periodically result in a step change in costs in addition to inflationary rises.

Books and ILL need to be made available to each individual user and budgets should therefore be increased by the relevant inflation rate and adjusted by the change in size of the student (in the case of books) or staff (in the case of ILLs) population.

The decisions on spending of the LIR budget are made in consultation with Schools and are planned to facilitate an equitable division of resources and transparency in decision making.

2.2 LIR Model for allocating budget to journals, books and other resources

The model outlined below was introduced for 2014/15 and recognises that many journals are provided by multidisciplinary publisher packages. The model provides a stable level of funding to each School for additional specialised journals, databases etc. and then re-allocates funds for books annually based on Schools' needs:

- Core resources are top sliced (see Appendix A for a list of resources)
- Funds are allocated to each School for current levels of subscriptions to journals and databases
- A contingency book budget is set aside
- The remaining budget is allocated to Schools for books and ILLs. The budget is weighted according to:
 - Student numbers per School (December figures from the previous academic year)
 - Average book prices for each School (based on our own purchases from the previous year)
 - Levels of usage of print and e-books (based on loans and usage data from the previous year).
- The model is re-run annually

An example of the budget model is available in Appendix B.

2.3 School and Group Level expenditure

Once each School has been allocated their annual books budget, this budget will then be split further according to the Groups within each School. Each Group will be allocated an amount of the School's budget by LS, in consultation with each School, based on student numbers and book usage. Schools may choose to add additional funds to support expenditure on resources in their area.

All journal and database subscriptions are recorded against a specific School or Group. This ensures clarity about who LS is supporting with each purchase. Subscriptions will be reviewed with their attributed Schools/Groups at the time when decisions regarding renewal are made – this is usually the summer, although the actual subscription year is normally January-December. Subscriptions can be cancelled and replaced with new ones of equivalent value, and LS will co-ordinate the decision making. In some circumstances it may be possible to negotiate access to trial versions of resources, and LS will co-ordinate this where possible.

LS maintains data on subscriptions, titles, costs, and the Schools/Groups to which they are attributed. This information will be provided to each group to support the budget and resource selection process. For e-resources, usage statistics can usually be provided, although it is not possible to break these down to School level, and for some smaller publishers they may not be available at all.

2.4 Balancing provision for teaching/research

Many resources, particularly journals, will be used for both teaching and research. However, with a constrained budget there may at times be tension between the two.

For books, priority will be given to those on reading lists. Book purchases are often generated through the Reading List System; LS is notified of any changes to lists, will check for new editions and through knowledge of student numbers will order print and e-books accordingly. Requests can also come directly from academic staff, researchers or students by email or through the online book request form.

With high inflation levels on journal prices, if adequate funding is not available to fund actual price rises, the continued funding of these will be to the detriment of the books budgets (and teaching resources).

3. Library Purchasing

3.1 Introduction

LS procures relevant content in a format that best fits the needs of the institution. We are constantly looking for innovations to improve our workflows and speed of delivery. Outsourcing tasks such as processing (labelling) books and cataloguing book records help us to achieve this. We also take advantage of more cost-

effective modes of purchasing such as Patron-Driven Acquisition (PDA) which allows us to pay only for the e-books that are used.

3.2 Procurement

All procurement of library resources is carried out in line with Aston's financial regulations and relevant legal requirements. Wherever possible this will be by use of an approved supplier or by purchasing resources according to the terms of nationally negotiated agreements drawn up by recognised bodies. Books and journals are unique academic content so whilst it may be possible to purchase through alternative intermediary suppliers, where that isn't the case the procurement justification will be 'sole supplier'.

Aston University is part of the Midland Universities Academic Library (MUAL) Consortium who, through national tenders brokered by Southern Universities Purchasing Consortium (SUPC), have negotiated contracts for preferential discounts and timely supply of books and journals (print and electronic) with particular suppliers, all monitored by Service Level Agreements.

National bodies such as JISC Collections and Eduserv set up and maintain 'big deals' for publishers' journals, e-books and databases on behalf of the academic community, negotiating online journal content and licence terms.

If a resource is not available by either of these routes we will negotiate to achieve the best deal possible.

3.3 Book Selection and purchase

Book budgets are set annually in accordance with the LIR Model and are managed by the relevant Information Specialist. The priority for purchase will always be reading list items, but items may also be recommended for purchase by academic staff and students

3.3.1 Reading list material

Books, journals, and other materials required reading for a module, should be added to the Module Reading List System for that module by the module owner. Library Services will be alerted by the system to check our holdings and order stock as appropriate. We endeavour to get a copy of every item on the reading list where budgets allow, but the list should be seen as a starting point and not as a definitive list for each module. Preference is given to electronic versions where available. Student numbers and type (on-campus or distance learners) are also taken into consideration and inform purchasing decisions. Lecturers will be contacted in the event of any supply difficulties, and can contact their Information Specialist for advice as needed.

3.3.1.1 Scanned material: Book chapters and journal articles

There may be occasions when a single book chapter, case study or journal article is required as essential reading on a module, and the timeframe does not allow all the students to gain access to the copies held in the Library's collection. Where we hold an electronic version a link will be provided. Where we only hold a print version, under the terms of the current Copyright Licencing Agency HE Licence, we may be able to scan some institutionally-owned materials, and provide that scanned copy to (only) those students on a module where it is course reading. To ensure compliance with the licence, scans are provided and recorded by the Library and delivered through the VLE and Module Readings System. Requests can be made via the Module Reading List System, or via an Information Specialist.

3.3.2 Background reading

Academic staff and students may recommend resources for purchase at any time by contacting their Information Specialist in LS. Academic staff are responsible for recommending any research resources that they want LS to stock. Information Specialists are able to provide supporting information to help them identify suitable titles.

Where there is budget remaining after the purchasing of reading list items, LS may liaise with academic staff with regards to widening stock. Information Specialists may make stock selections themselves to supplement requests from lecturers, ordering material in subjects if they have identified gaps in provision, or where there are insufficient recommendations to maintain and develop a balanced collection of resources. A more significant contribution to collection development may be made by LS in new areas of interest to the University.

The library uses Patron-Driven Acquisition (PDA) in certain circumstances where it is deemed appropriate. PDA is a book-purchasing model whereby a number of e-book titles are added to the Library catalogue and are visible to library users without having yet been purchased. It is only when a library user accesses the book (for a time set by the supplier) that a purchase is triggered. This method is useful in growing some areas of library stock, ensuring its relevance to staff and / or students and improving the efficacy of stock selection.

3.3.3 Book formats (print/electronic)

Demand for print books remains high amongst our students, and we endeavour to supplement this demand with the purchase of e-books. Our aim is to provide popular books in both print and electronic format to ensure that as many people as possible are able to access the books that they need. E-books can be very useful for part-time students or those studying at a distance who are unable to make it to the Library very often. However, we understand that students have differing needs and many still want to borrow a print version, particularly if they're reading large chunks at a time.

3.3.4 Models for e-book purchasing

E-books are procured as either:

- single, perpetual access titles
- part of a perpetual access package on an aggregated platform
- part of a subscription

E-books are made available to us under varying licence models (e.g. single user, multi-user, credit system etc.) and we aim to maintain access throughout the year for as many students as possible within the limits of our budget. E-books available as part of a subscription package may come and go from the collection according to publisher preference. Not all e-books are available to purchase for institutional access.

3.3.5 Book supply

Due to the complications of buying books at an institutional level, requests received less than four weeks before a module is taught may not necessarily be fulfilled in time. While e-books can often be made available within a week, we may be unable to supply some print books at all as publishers often have smaller print runs nowadays.

We have arrangements in place to obtain books urgently and in exceptional circumstances we can have a book available in a matter of days. However it is not cost effective for the majority of orders to be handled in this way, as apart from greater staff input, LS may incur additional charges as well as a loss of discount.

3.3.6 Multiple copies

Multiple copies of books will be purchased where there is a predicted or confirmed need and sufficient resource is available. Judgements for the purchase of multiple copies will be based upon academic staff recommendation, knowledge of student numbers and borrowing histories. The purchase of e-books, where possible, can relieve the pressure on demands for hard copies. Where possible, ISs purchase multi-user e-book licences or purchase several licences for the same title.

With a constrained budget, there is conflict between the requirement to buy multiple copies of books and the need to provide breadth in the collection. LS will work with Schools to identify the appropriate mix.

3.3.7 Donations

Library Services will add to stock any relevant donations that are in good condition. Any item that is donated and not required will be disposed of through our normal channels (see section 6.3). As part of the Go Green Initiative, Library Services also operate a Book Rescue scheme in the summer months. Students leaving the University can donate textbooks, which may either be added to stock or sold at a nominal price to students in the autumn term.

3.4 Journal selection and purchase

LS makes decisions about new journal subscriptions in collaboration with academic colleagues. Journals can be set up either as part of a large package (“big deal”) or as specific title subscriptions, and where electronic format is available, it is always the preferred option. Subscriptions will usually include access to the current year along with retrospective access to previous years. Access may also be set up for archival content, usually in the form of a one-off payment for a backfile. We also provide access to Open Access journal content to supplement the scope of our subscribed collections. These journals may be available as fully Open Access with all articles being freely available, or hybrid Open Access with only some articles being freely available. Both are accessible via Library searching and linking systems. The provision of Open Access journals means that we don’t always need to pay for a subscription to gain access to relevant content.

3.4.1 Big Deals

Big deals are typically packages of titles from a specific publisher and contain content of value to several or all Schools. LS makes most decisions regarding these subscriptions using our knowledge of academic interests and usage statistics. Where appropriate we will initiate explicit consultation with Schools.

Big deals give us access to a large number of journal titles at a reduced rate. Some publishers require us to maintain subscriptions to a small set of core titles within the deal and then give us access to a larger range of their titles for an extra fee.

Big deals are set up within calendar years rather than academic years. If we receive a request for a new title from one of the big deal publishers during the academic year, we may only be able to gain access to it at the beginning of the next calendar year when we’re permitted to make a small percentage of swaps to our core

title list. However, any new title subscriptions may be accommodated into the big deal or set up alongside the big deal as a separate subscription.

3.4.2 Single subscriptions

The selection and continuation of specific journal subscriptions is made closely with the relevant Schools with current subscriptions being reviewed annually. Any journal title requests that aren't available via a big deal may need to be funded by the cancellation of an existing subscription.

3.4.3 Backfiles

Backfiles are available for purchase either as a collection of titles or on a title by title basis. These are often charged on a one-off payment basis and are available to us in perpetuity as long as we maintain a small access fee for use of the publisher's platform. The security of such purchases allows us to confidently dispose of duplicate printed material from our Archive or Stores. Some backfile packages are offered free of charge via a nationally negotiated deal from JISC Collections.

3.5 Other subscriptions

3.5.1 Databases

LS subscribes to a number of databases, providing access to specialist data collections including newspaper articles, financial information, law collections and publication indexes.

Purchase will be agreed in consultation with the Schools, and our continued access will be reviewed regularly by checking coverage and usage statistics.

3.5.2 E-book collections and standing orders

As well as purchasing individual titles, LS also provides access to books via subscriptions, either in print form (eg each update in a series or each update of a reference book) or increasingly in electronic form. E-book collections are set up both in subscription form or purchased in perpetuity from both publishers and aggregators (platforms that host content from many different publishers). These collections may be subject-based or cover a range of academic subjects. Content in aggregator collections may be added or removed on a regular basis according to publisher decisions so when we rely on these for reading list material, any titles that are removed may be purchased separately depending on availability from the publisher and availability of budget.

3.6 Material Outside of our Collection

The Library's collections are focused on key resources for the academic interests of the University but from time to time, staff or students will need access to books or journals that we do not stock. As well as our Inter-library Loan service and provision of Open Access material (see below), the Sconul Access scheme is available for our staff and students to visit other university libraries.

3.6.1 Document Supply and Inter-library Loans

While it is expected that taught course students and many researchers will find sufficient resources to meet their needs within Aston's electronic collection, Inter-library Loans (ILL) and Document Supply is a backup facility to enable occasional access to those books or journals that are not included. This service allows Library Services to borrow, or obtain, copies of materials from other libraries on behalf of our users. This may be a print book or journal volume on loan, or a copy of an electronic journal article or book chapter that can be kept by the user. Most requests are free to the user, however a cost may apply in some circumstances. The service is funded from the LIR budget from the money allocated by the books and ILL model and each request typically costs us somewhere in the range of £9 to £13. Information on this service for staff and students can be found [here](#).

Where possible and provided it is not detrimental to Aston staff and students, we also offer access to our print stock and some of our electronic subscriptions to the wider community.

3.6.2 Open Access material

Open access material supplements our subscribed resources and improves availability of information in areas beyond the scope of our 'collection'. It can be accessed via our online systems and our repository.

4. Stock Categories

4.1 Loan types

Print books are classed into 4 main loan types:

- 1-day Loan
- 7-day Loan
- Long Loan (8 weeks)
- Reference

All reading list items are automatically classed as 7-day Loan to maximise availability to these books for each student. Where multiple copies of a book have been purchased, LS will enable the best possible use of each copy through appropriate decision-making with regard to loan categories. Books in high demand will have a copy available for 1-day Loan and/or Reference in addition to 7-day Loan copies where possible. The default loan type for background reading material and books requested for research is Long Loan.

LS regularly review loan types, and stock can be switched to an alternative loan type at any time if judged to be appropriate. Students and staff can request the move of stock from one loan type to another by contacting LS.

4.2 Reference collection

Books in high demand, books of particularly high value, or reference-type books may be allocated to the reference-only loan category. These are generally non-standard books such as dictionaries, encyclopaedias, directories and reports, but may also be additional copies of high-demand reading list items. Reference books may only be used within the Library building.

4.3 Theses

UK doctoral theses (including Aston's) are available electronically via the British Library's Electronic Theses Online System (EThOS). Theses that have already been requested are immediately available to download as a PDF. Any new demands for theses will be digitized upon request although a charge may be applied at the discretion of the university who own the thesis.

4.4 Taught course projects and dissertations

Historically the Library has held a rolling three years of some Masters projects as agreed with Schools. These have been in printed form and Library Services and Schools need to determine the most appropriate methods for students to access past projects in electronic format taking into account the needs to protect copyright.

5. Stock Management

5.1 Introduction

Library Services develops its collections according to current needs while discarding materials that are no longer needed to deliver the most relevant and up to date material and maximize the use of its physical space.

5.2 Space utilisation

The physical space available in the Library building needs to be maximised to provide the best balance of well used printed resources alongside study and social learning environment for students. The acquisition of electronic resources is an important strand in achieving this, as is the relegation and weeding of lesser used print stock.

5.3 Weeding: books

Older editions of print and electronic books will be routinely discarded unless they are required for a specific purpose. For some subjects, more recent old editions will be retained if there is little change between editions and demand is high. LS staff will also make recommendations on which print and electronic books should be discarded based on their age, usage and relevance of the subject to the University. Relevant academic staff may then be consulted before a final decision is made to discard.

Wherever possible, discarded printed books will either be sold (and income used to supplement LS' budget) or donated to overseas university libraries where LS is satisfied that there is a genuine need. Material that cannot be disposed of in any other way will be recycled.

5.4 Weeding and relegation of journals

The Library's print journals are held in one of three places according to their status:

- In the Library building
Journals with no corresponding electronic content that we perceive to be used frequently. These may be consulted at any time the Library building is open and borrowed when the Library Helpdesk is open.
- In the Library Store

Journals with no corresponding electronic content that are used infrequently. These can be consulted and borrowed by request.

- In the Library Archive

Journals with corresponding electronic content that isn't yet deemed secure enough to allow us to discard the print stock.

Usage of journal content in the Library Store is monitored to allow us to make informed decisions about disposal. Journal titles that are borrowed less than 3 times over a period of 2 years will be routinely discarded unless there is a specific reason to retain them. Content identified for disposal will be offered to Schools who will be given a one month consultation period to claim it. Any remaining content will be 'rehomed' or recycled.

5.5 Risk management

LS uses several approaches to ensure that access to our resources is delivered to and prioritised for our staff and students and that access is future proofed:

- The printed material that we keep in the Library is protected by the building's security system which ensures that books only leave the building when issued to someone.
- Access to all of our online material is protected by a layer of authentication provided by EduserV's Open Athens. This is linked in to Active Directory which contains data on all of Aston's staff and students. Many of our online subscriptions are covered by post-cancellation access agreements which ensure ongoing access to material we paid for during the subscription period.
- LS also subscribes to Portico. Portico is a not-for-profit service to help libraries preserve digital publications such as e-journals, e-books, and digitized historical collections. Content is 'dark archived' and made accessible to participating libraries if it becomes unavailable from the publisher or other sources.

6. Discovery and Access to Books and Journals

6.1 Discovery

The Library's Discovery Service is the route to all of our subscribed resources as well as material outside of our collections. Journal article data is provided by the Discovery Service's central index, and print and electronic book records are maintained within our Library catalogue which updates the Discovery Service on a daily basis.

6.2 Delivery

Access to the full-text of journal articles is either available within the Discovery Service or via a link resolver (branded Find it @ Aston) which links out to publisher and aggregator platforms. E-books link out to external platforms where users can read them online and often download them for a period of time. Print book availability is provided in the Discovery Service using a Real Time Availability Checker to ensure only the most up to date information is shown.

Information for each module's readings is embedded in the VLE and links out to information on availability or to the full-text.

Some specialist data isn't indexed by the Discovery Service and LS provides guidance on how to find this material through subject-specific guides.

Appendix A: Budget model

An example of the model for allocating the budget for books and ILL can be found [here](#) (2015-16).

Appendix B: Core resources

The following resources are top sliced to fund 'general' resources which are defined as those of use to three or more Schools:

- Books:
 - Library and general reference
 - Study and teaching skills
 - ebrary Academic Complete

- Journals:
 - Wiley
 - Science Direct
 - Sage
 - Taylor & Francis
 - Oxford University Press
 - Emerald
 - Springer
 - PsycArticles
 - Business Source Complete
 - Proquest Business database
 - Newspapers
 - Archive packages

- Databases:
 - Scopus
 - Web of Science
 - Nexis UK (newspapers)
 - Oxford Reference Online
 - JISC eCollections (JISC Journal Archives and JISC Mediahub)

- Inter-library Loans:
 - Non School ILLs

These will be monitored and may be subject to change over time

Appendix C: Procedure for ordering material

The following procedures are used by the Information Specialists when purchasing material:

- Items added to reading lists by academic staff will be purchased by the relevant Information Specialist. If it is not possible to obtain a reading list item (e.g. title is out of print), the Information Specialist will contact the academic to discuss alternative options.
- Items required for research purposes or background reading can be requested either through a recommendation form on the LS website, or by contacting the relevant Information Specialist directly. These items will be purchased if the Information Specialist assesses there to be enough money in the Group's budget.
- In the event of any budget remaining at the end of the financial year, the Information Specialists may contact academics for purchasing requests.
- If an Information Specialist is concerned about a lack of subject coverage in an area taught by their School, they will contact the relevant academic to discuss the purchase of material.
- Information Specialists will use their judgement to buy extra copies of books if they identify need to be greater than current supply. They may also contact the relevant academic in this case to discuss alternatives and widening resource availability.