

University Reading List Policy

Contents

University Reading List Policy	1
1. Purpose and scope of the Policy.....	1
2. Roles of Programme Teams/Programme Directors	1
3. Role of Library Services	3
4. Submission deadlines	3
University Reading List Guidance	4
1. What is a reading list?.....	4
2. Reading List Content	4
3. How the Library purchases materials	6

1. Purpose and scope of the Policy

The policy outlines the institutional approach to the provision of reading list materials for students, and for the effective management of reading lists to ensure that Library Services can meet the information needs of Aston programmes aligning to the [Education Strategy](#).

The policy applies specifically to reading lists for all taught modules and the library's procurement of items on those reading lists.

The Library acknowledges that there are many modules which run across programmes, Schools and Colleges and therefore flexibility and discussion is a key element to the implementation of this policy. While a one-size fits all approach shouldn't be taken, this policy applies to many Aston modules.

The management of taught module Reading Lists is the main method that the Library employs for resource acquisition for these modules, and therefore **all lists should be comprehensive and up-to-date** in order to make certain that **items are purchased or subscribed to and made available to users** in time for teaching and learning.

2. Roles of Programme Teams/Programme Directors

It is expected that programme teams, led by an accountable **named module leader or year lead** (as defined in the Module Lead role descriptor) and with the backing of Programme Directors or Heads of Schools/Departments, will work with the Library through their Information Specialists at the earliest possible stage to identify the resources required. It is their responsibility to ensure that

essential reading was available in an appropriate format to meet the module's delivery mode and ensure all items on the list were made accessible through the library. This collaboration will ensure that these resources can be obtained by discussing availability of items and also identifying relevant open access publications and open educational resources.

Programme teams have ownership of reading lists and take responsibility for ensuring resource planning is an integral part of programme development. Reading list development should be an element of programme or module approval. For new programmes and revalidations of programmes, reading list development should feature in First Filter forms.

2.1 Responsibilities of programme teams

Programme teams will:

- **Work in partnership** with Library Services during the planning and development of new programmes and modules ensuring **early consultation with the relevant Information Specialist** about resource requirements.
 - **Add all appropriate reading list items** to the University reading list system for review by the Library and to ensure reading lists are linked to the relevant Blackboard module. Consideration is given to non-standard resources which are integrated directly into Blackboard, such as links to additional publisher textbook content that require a login.
 - **All lists to be reviewed annually** at least.
 - Ensure each **module list is republished every year**, even if there are no updates to the list.
 - Non-engagement in reading list updates will be discussed between the Library and the module leader.
 - **Review and update reading lists** in advance of each teaching period/block and submit to the Library in line with strict agreed deadlines (see below), recognising that failure to meet them may result in your requested items not being available when you require them.
 - Consider the student experience by ensuring reading lists are **structured and organised** to guide student reading, with items categorised by importance to inform library purchasing:
 - **Essential** – 1-5 titles that will be referred to extensively throughout the programme of study, digital copies (ebooks) purchased as a priority
 - **Recommended** – up to 25 titles that develop further knowledge of the subject
 - **Further** – no suggested limit on titles that provide a wider and deeper understanding of a subject
- See [guidance document](#) for further details.
- Give due attention to the provision of content that is **accessible and inclusive**, in alignment with the University's commitment to EDI.
 - Select reading list material that is **readily available** to all students ensuring that essential reading items are available in an appropriate format for the mode of delivery. It is important that students are able to access all list items, so consideration needs to be given to:
 - What is already available in the Library (already in the library catalogue)
 - Currency of items requested (for example, is it out of print?)
 - Appropriate licencing of digital content (please consult the Library for details)
 - Select items available in **digital formats** where possible, including the use of open educational resources, media content, and Open Access publications
 - **Provide feedback** on reading lists shared through module evaluation or via programme reviews

- **Analyse data** supplied on overall resource use when reviewing reading list content as part of the annual review process.
- Understand their responsibilities with regards to **copyright and licences** via training and guidance provided by the library

3. Role of Library Services

Library Services manage reading lists on Talis Aspire, the University reading list system. The Library reviews these lists, purchases newly added items (following Aston's [Procurement Policy](#)) and manages access arrangements for all reading list materials.

Library Services provide advice and guidance on available material, liaise with publishers and suppliers, and manage licence agreements for resources. Library Services should be viewed as the primary point of contact for all licencing and procurement of books, ebooks, journals, etc. from publishers and agents.

3.1 Responsibilities of Library Services

The Library will:

- **Work in partnership** with course teams to **advise on available resources** during programme development, providing costs and sourcing alternative materials where appropriate. **Not all resources are available in the formats and licences that will be required therefore this collaboration is key** to ensure all required resources are in place in time.
- **Provide access** to reading list materials and learning resources through the reading list system.
- **Review all lists** submitted and **provide feedback** to module teams via Information Specialists.
- Maintain and **develop the reading list system** and ensure it integrates effectively with Blackboard and other university learning systems as appropriate.
- Make resources available in the most **appropriate format** and in **appropriate numbers** of copies/licences subject to budget. Resource provision is often subject to student numbers therefore timely discussions between Programme teams and the Library is vital.
- Provide [advice and guidance on copyright](#) clearance and digitisation options.
- Offer **guidance on accessibility issues** and support best practice in ensuring recommended reading and learning resources are inclusive and equitable.
- **Provide support for students** to access reading list material and support the development of digital and information literacy, including searching skills, through curriculum teaching.
- Support programme teams with the review of reading lists by **supplying data on resource use** where available.
- Deliver training and **provide guidance for academic staff** on the use of the reading list system.
- **Provide available reports** and other evidence on request to support the adherence to this policy.

4. Submission deadlines

- Programme leads and relevant academic colleagues will be informed of submission deadlines at the start of each academic year (by Information Specialists to Programme Directors and via email and on library webpages) and reminded periodically at relevant boards and committees (via Information Specialists).
 - Consideration is given to modules which
 - are not taught across the academic year (TP1 and TP2), for example a 120 credit

- Medicine programme
 - are structured in such a way that leads them to have different commencement dates
- Reading lists may be reviewed and updated at any time during the year but all lists should be reviewed by the following deadlines to allow time for purchase, digitisation where required, and for the set-up of digital resources.

Teaching Block 1	tbc (module approval date)
Teaching Block 2	tbc (module approval dates)
Other teaching modules	tbc (module approval dates where possible)

University Reading List Guidance

1. What is a reading list?

A reading list on Talis Aspire should be selected readings that students are required or are recommended to read. A well-structured and well thought through reading list not only supports the student experience but will align to appropriate elements of the Education Strategy.

Additionally, reading lists may contain items which define them as bibliographies and not structured reading lists. These are also known as indicative reading lists and are designed to guide the student. Indicative reading lists should be flagged with the library and do not have the specified requirements outlined below.

In both cases, a reading list should be up-to-date, relevant and at the correct academic level for the students' needs. It should contain a well-rounded selection of viewpoints, expertise and perspectives from across the subject area. All books, chapters, articles and/or database content should be listed. Unless reading list items are to be embedded on Blackboard, all items should be added to Talis Aspire (and not, for example, exclusively listed on lecture slides – reading lists on Talis should be sign-posted on lecture slides, etc). This is to ensure that all required readings are acquired by the library and made available to the students. If items are not on Talis, this may negatively affect the student experience. It also affords the monitoring of resources budget attributed to reading lists across Colleges.

Reading lists on Talis Aspire can be regularly updated if required.

A reading list, therefore, should:

1. Ensure that the provision of library resources meets the teaching and learning requirements of students and academic colleagues
2. Ensure that the students, as a result, make use of acquired library resources which in turn provides value for money for Aston
3. Ensure that the students have the capacity to find and evaluate information
4. Ensure a positive student experience and should reflect the student body

2. Reading List Content

In order to make informed decisions about appropriate purchases and to manage the resources budget effectively, the Library requires information on the importance of items and resources on reading lists. Reading lists submitted without an importance category may be subject to a delay whilst further clarification is sought from the requester, and therefore Library Services cannot guarantee the item will be acquired in time for study to begin. Items added without their importance assigned should include a note of explanation for the Library (using the Talis Aspire edit function). The appropriate use of annotations and notes in Talis Aspire is beneficial to library staff, ensuring the correct item is added. It also provides a consistent student experience, guiding them to the correct reading.

The following categories provide guidance for library purchasing for 15 credit modules:

Essential

Reading that is essential and required of all students on the module. These readings will be referred to extensively throughout the programme of study.

The number of items categorised as essential should be limited to 1-5 items in most cases. Considering how students will manage the readings for the module, where the number of essential readings exceeds this (available via library reports), the relevant Information Specialist will contact the named module leader to discuss further. In most cases, these additional items should be placed in the Recommended category (which will also inform the purchase of items where relevant).

The Library will purchase appropriate digital copies (in the first instance we will look to purchase any eTextbook or ebook via our primary suppliers) where available and/or digitise articles or book chapter requests where licences permit. At least 1 print copy of essential readings will be purchased, budget permitting, to meet accessibility requirements.

Recommended

Desirable reading to develop further knowledge of the subject and to help students to complete selected assignments on module topics. These readings are aimed improving the students' understanding of a particular topic and should support seminars, assignments and assessments. It is suggested that up to 25 items should be added to this category. If more than 25 are shown in reports, this will trigger a conversation between the named module leader and the Information Specialist.

Digital items in this category will be made available via an evidence-driven purchasing model, meaning that they will be made available to students on Talis Aspire (and via SmartSearch), but will only be purchased with sufficient usage (in other words, the Library isn't charged for the ebooks until they are used). Print items will only be purchased if no digital copy is available or following negotiation with the Library. Requestor should state print copy is required in Talis Aspire notes field.

Further

Reading for a wider and deeper understanding of a subject, to provide context and background. No limits are prescribed, but it is advised that academic colleagues consider the student experience when adding items.

Digital items in this category will be added via an evidence-driven purchasing model. Print items will only be purchased after negotiation with the Information Specialist, and if budget allows.

Non 15 credit modules

For 30 credit modules, these should have a similar number of items to those outlined above appropriate to the subject and available budget. Discussions should take place with the Information Specialists where required.

For 120 credit modules, and particularly those which are thematic in approach, it is not appropriate for a multiplier of the above guidance to be applied. This would have significant ramifications for both cost and the student experience, especially those books and ebooks marked 'essential'. Module leaders should discuss their requirements with the Information Specialist based on individual module needs.

3. How the Library purchases materials

The following principles will guide the purchase of reading list materials.

Digital access - all reading list items will be purchased on a digital first basis (ebook, eTextbook, etc) prioritising unlimited or multi-user access models subject to budget as this is the most effective way of ensuring appropriate levels of access for students. Accessibility needs will be addressed and alternative formats provided where possible.

Note: some digital content may appear to be available to purchase (for example on a publisher website or commercial retailer) but is not available via a library licence (which is determined by the publisher) or may be prohibitively expensive. In such as case we will purchase print items or discuss alternative titles.

Please see the Jisc [Briefing for academic staff](#) for further information on availability of digital reading materials.

Book chapters – where only a single chapter is required from a text, this should be specified as essential or recommended reading. It will be digitised if permissible under the CLA licence or by agreement with the publisher.

New editions – the Library will order the new/latest edition of a title unless it is specified that a previous edition is required.

Out of print material – the Library doesn't routinely purchase out-of-print items, therefore these items will only be acquired by the Library after negotiation with the understanding that they meet all accessibility requirements. They will not be purchased automatically. Library services can work with academic colleagues on sourcing alternative materials.

Cost – in order to achieve maximum value for money and successfully manage the library resources budget there will be a nominal cap of £150 for print items and £300 for single digital items. Items costing above those values will be subject to negotiation.