



Maynooth University Library

Collection Development Policy



*“A collection development policy can help
bring order out of chaos”¹*

¹ Akewukereke, M.A. and Olajo, P.O. (2006) ‘Collection Development Policies: Ground Rules for Planning University Libraries’, *Library Philosophy and Practice*, 9 (1).

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1. Introduction

Collection development and management can be seen as a broad array of actions, including selection, evaluation, deselection, replacement, retention and preservation of library material.

This document serves as a statement of library aims and aspirations in this area – for both staff and users of the Library. It will further act as a guide to those responsible for collection development, offering a framework which can be translated into consistent development of the collection, in order to support research, teaching and learning.

By having a policy the Library offers a rationale for collection development and a context which ties this activity with broader Library and University activities. It also takes into account the mission and goals of the University while being responsive to the changing needs of a dynamic institution.

While the Library aspires to offer a comprehensive array of collections to its user body, it must be noted that fulfilling such an aspiration is contingent upon a variety of enablers, not least funding, expertise, and physical and technical infrastructure.

Finally, it should be noted that reference in this document to “collections” encompasses all library information resources, whether owned, donated, subscribed or borrowed; physical or electronic.

2. Context

The Library provides services to Maynooth University (MU) and St. Patrick’s College Maynooth (SPCM). As of 2015, Maynooth University has over 10,000 students and almost 900 staff, while St. Patrick’s College has 652 registered students and 31 staff.

There are two main library buildings on campus – the recently extended John Paul II Library, which houses the main circulating print collections and the unique and distinctive collections of Maynooth University and the Russell Library, which houses the historical library of St. Patrick’s College. The holdings of both sites are complemented by the Library’s electronic collections which total over 50% of the overall collection and serves as a key (and heavily used) suite of resources for library users. A critical enabler in the provision of electronic resources has been the [IRel](#) (Irish Research eLibrary) initiative, which has allowed the Library dramatically enhance its holdings over the last 10 years and has, since its inception been of key strategic importance.

The Library also manages the Office of Public Works Maynooth University Archive and Research Centre (OMARC) at nearby Castletown House, in collaboration with the Office of Public Works (OPW) and university colleagues. While the library service at the Kilkenny Outreach Campus is managed by the MU Department of Adult and Community Education, it receives practical support and guidance from the MU Library.

3. Library Collection Development Goals

The Library Strategic Plan for 2016-2018 cites as one of its key goals:

“Goal 3: To develop, curate and open access to collections that meet and anticipate the needs of the academy”²

Further to this, the Library can be said to collect, manage and preserve an increasing range of collection formats; with a view to achieving several key aims:

- Provision of access to these collections using all appropriate technologies
- Facilitating the use of library resources by our various users
- Preservation of these collections and the information contained in them for current and future generations

4. Updating

Due to developments in the format, selection and acquisition of library materials to suit changing user needs, this Policy is intended to be dynamic and it will be updated to reflect changing practices in both the provision of library resources and especially in the light of rapidly evolving user behaviour. For this and other reasons this Policy will serve as a guide, and should not be seen as a rigid set of rules. Further details on review can be found under section 10 [Policy Review](#).

5. Audience

Maynooth University Library’s collections are available for the study and research purposes of students and staff of both Maynooth University and St. Patrick’s College Maynooth. Beyond this however the Library recognises that its collections are of interest and use to a broader cohort, such as academics and students from other educational institutions (both nationally and internationally) and interested parties from the general public. This ethos is noted in the University Strategic Plan which seeks to:

“...build upon the existing strong sense of community on campus, with specific initiatives to enhance internal communication and discourse, and to strengthen the intellectual, collegial, cultural, political, sporting and social life of the campus.”³

For the Library, such engagement with our world class collections is embraced wholeheartedly and indeed is echoed in the MU Library Strategic Plan 2016-2018, specifically in Goals 1, 2 and 3. It must be noted however that the need of the campus community will always be prioritised.

6. Responsibility Statement

While ultimately the responsibility of the University Librarian, collection development and management is a deeply collaborative and inclusive process, and staff responsibilities reflect this.

² MU Library Strategic Plan 2016 – 2018, p. 2

³ National University of Ireland Maynooth Strategic Plan 2012–2017, 4.1 p26

Notwithstanding this, in the area of collection development, several key staff roles merit specific mention:

- Senior Librarian Collection Management Services: overall strategic direction in relation to collections and the functions which underpin collection management
- Senior Librarian Learning and Research Information Services: overall strategic direction in facilitating the use of library collections as supports for both teaching and learning and research
- Assistant Librarian with responsibility for Special Collections & Archives: curatorial, (including acquisition, promotion, advocacy and operational responsibility) for unique, distinctive and rare collections
- Assistant Librarian with responsibility for Digital and Electronic collections: curatorial, (including acquisition, promotion, advocacy and operational responsibility) for online digital and electronic collections
- Assistant Librarian with responsibility for General Collections: curatorial, (including acquisition, promotion, advocacy and operational responsibility) for all physical, circulating collections
- Archivists: responsibility for development of the unique archival collections in conjunction with Assistant Librarian, Special Collections & Archives
- Subject librarians: broad expertise of relevant subject related and inter-disciplinary collections, advisory in relevant acquisitions and advocacy for the use of collections as supports for teaching, learning and research in specific subject related and inter-disciplinary areas

7. Collection Profiles

The Library's collections have developed over several centuries and as such have historical strengths dating from the formation of the National Seminary in 1795 and its strong contemporary curriculum in subject areas such as the Humanities (History, Classics, English, Irish and Modern Languages), Natural Philosophy (including Mathematics and Experimental Sciences) and other areas such as Sacred Music, Philosophy, Theology and Canon Law.

The library collections have evolved in concert with the teaching and research interests of both institutions and such historical fortes have been augmented with more recent strengths in areas such as Sociology, Anthropology and more.

The legacy of this great history is most keenly felt in the area of *'Unique and Distinctive Collections'*⁴ - in which Maynooth has holdings of international standing. Examples of this include subject areas such as:

⁴ A recent RLUK report emphasizes the need to understand our rare collections as broader than simply rare books or manuscripts. As such it adopts the term 'Unique and Distinctive Collections' (UDC) which it defines as 'a collection that, regardless of format or location within an institution, derives significance from its interest to research, teaching or society through its association with a person, place or topic, such as to distinguish the constituent items from similar items which may exist elsewhere'. UDCs encompass, but are broader than traditional special collections, potentially covering collections in all formats and at all locations.

- Theology
- Literature and literary figures
- Irish country houses and estates
- Archives of religious and teaching bodies
- Exiles – the Irish in Europe and beyond
- Military history

There is however an increasing focus on broad thematic areas which support the current teaching and research aims of academic colleagues. An example of this would be the idea of ‘The Outsider’ which can be said to be a multidisciplinary theme, encompassing figures from various backgrounds, who were either marginalised or viewed as existing on the fringes of contemporary society, but whose impact in areas such as literature, history, or social movements is considerable. The adoption of such thematic areas is informed by the research themes of the University (both distinct and interdisciplinary) and the unique research heritage of both Maynooth institutions.

7.1 General Collections

General Collections comprise the core circulating collection of the Library, containing fundamental teaching, learning and research material for staff and students of the University. Typically these resources will be open access and available for loan, (with the exception of some reference only material) and constitute a variety of formats including: books (print and some electronic), journals and newspapers, audio visual material, maps, microform, official publications, reference and theses (doctoral and research masters).

7.1.1 Selection criteria and methodology

Purchase

The Library allocates funding to each Department and Institute (see section 9 [Financial Management](#) below for further details) for the purchase of General Collections and recommendations for purchase are made as appropriate by Academic Staff, the Student Body and Library Staff. Relevant factors which influence the selection of material in this collection include:

- The relevance of the item to supporting either teaching, learning or research
- The benefit or merit of a print or electronic version. Where available, consideration is given to the purchase of, or replacement by electronic format in preference to other formats
- Upgrading of the format to ensure or enhance accessibility

Where the purchase option is not available or recommended, the Library endeavours to acquire required material on loan from another library.

Retention/deselection

- Criteria for retention/deselection include relevance, electronic availability, provenance, age of publication, edition, duplication, physical condition, usage and accordance with the aspirations set out in this document

- Library staff consult with relevant academic departments during any deselection process
- Deselected material is disposed of responsibly and any earnings are donated to the Student Assistance Fund

Donations, Gifts and Bequests

- Donations and exchanges in keeping with the retention criteria set out above are welcomed
- Typically, a catalogue or list of potential donations is requested to assist in the assessment of the material
- Upon receipt, donated material becomes the property of the University and as such, the Library reserves the right to determine its retention/deselection, access and maintenance
- In order to maintain the Library's commitment to access to our General Collections, donors are asked not to place restrictions on the gifts they provide

Legal Deposit

The Library is a deposit library under the terms of the [Irish Copyright and Related Rights Act, 2000](#)

7.1.2 Preservation

The Library endeavours to comply with best practice as regards the preservation of all collections. In the case of General Collections, several specific factors may be noted:

- Paperback formats are pre-strengthened prior to purchase
- The condition of existing material is monitored
- Decisions for binding, repair, replacement or deselection are based on the retention criteria set out above and the length of time an item may be out of circulation
- The Library will consider suitable cooperative print management schemes

7.1.3 Access (e.g. resource description)

The Library is committed to ensuring timely and user friendly access to General Collections and endeavours to make these resources available through [LibrarySearch](#) as soon as possible. To fulfil this aim, metadata is either outsourced from the most efficient and cost effective supplier, or created in house as appropriate. Quality, consistency and accuracy of metadata is monitored to ensure our collections can be searched and located easily.

7.2 Digital Collections

Digital collections can be said to comprise either collections which have been 'born digital' or which have been digitised from another form. Due to their accessibility, capacity for interaction and links to unique and distinctive material, digital collections are of increasing importance to the Library. Beyond the Library, digital objects and artefacts as well as institutional and research data are all being created in the University environment and the Library welcomes the opportunity to assist in

the dissemination, curation and preservation of such collections as part of our broader digital collection remit. Where appropriate, such collections would be viewed through the Digital Library, but can also be part of a wider, pan institutional collection, showcasing national or thematic collections.

7.2.1 Selection criteria and methodology

The growing prevalence of born digital collections ensures that their selection and ingestion into the Digital Library will be of increasing importance to the Library mission. Furthermore, the Library is custodian of a range of collections and material suitable for digitisation. Typically, digitisation will take place both for curatorial reasons such as preservation and for access.

Digital priorities for both born digital and digitised collections are influenced by factors such as cost, opportunity, demand and contractual obligation. As with other collections, the ability of a digital collection to be used to support teaching, learning or research themes will be a primary consideration. Digital collections are clearly linked to and enabled by technology and the Library will always consider developing digital collections with this in mind. Examples would include text encoding, or the curation of a collection of GIS exploitable material.

As a rule, digitised material created to fulfil a reprographic request, for exhibition, or other projects will be added to the collection.

Retention/deselection

As with physical collections, the Library will retain its digital collections based on appropriate criteria. All digital collections should be retained in the Library digital preservation system in perpetuity. Individual online exhibitions or websites highlighting aspects of these collections will be reviewed periodically to consider sustainability and archiving.

Donations, Gifts and Bequests

The Library has a formal procedure for digital deposit, where a donor will allow submission of a digital version of their physical collection. This is an activity that is increasing and allows the Library to provide online access to collections which otherwise may not be widely available. There are also opportunities for the Library to seek out and proactively engage with organisations that lack the capacity to develop digital projects on their own with a view to establishing partnerships.

7.2.2 Preservation

Digital Collections and their metadata will be preserved in perpetuity through our Digital Library.

7.2.3 Access (e.g. resource description)

Digital Collections will be described with high quality metadata in order to maximise accessibility and long term storage. The most suitable metadata for each item or collection will be chosen e.g. MARC, EAD or Dublin Core. In many cases this metadata will be inherited from other sections in the Library, or from other units on campus.

7.3 Electronic Collections and Institutional Repository

The transition from print to electronic has been a feature in the growth of the electronic collections since the 1990s, especially in the area of journals. The implementation of the Discovery Tool [LibrarySearch](#) has provided not only another avenue for accessing the material but has also provided data on the actual number of journal titles, books and databases available.

Electronic resources are generally more expensive than their print equivalents, will incur an ongoing annual maintenance fee and attract a higher rate of VAT; as such they constitute a large and ongoing commitment of the Library's resources. They are, however more easily accessible online and can be viewed on a variety of devices both on and off campus.

The Library [Institutional Repository](#) links very strongly into both electronic and digital collections as well as research support and Open Access advocacy. Maynooth University policy stipulates that all research and scholarly publications which arise in whole or in part from research carried out at the University should be made available through the Institutional Repository. This will always be subject to the copyright and archiving policies of the original publisher.

7.3.1 Selection criteria and methodology

Purchase

Electronic resources are purchased mainly from the Library's online budget. Several factors will influence the selection of an electronic resource including:

- Direct benefit to staff and students, preferably of more than one subject
- Demonstrable advantage over a printed equivalent (e.g. search functionality, seamless updating, enhanced access)
- Number of simultaneous users supported
- Usage statistics provided
- Technical support

The acquisition of material through the [IRel](#) (Irish Research eLibrary) initiative has been a major component in the growth of the collections. However, it should be noted that the cancellation of a resource from [IRel](#) will not always result in the Library funding a local subscription.

Retention/deselection

Monitoring and analysis of usage of electronic collections allows informed analysis of the 'cost per use' which is incurred by the University. This measurement together with critical input from Subject Librarians and academics will be used to inform retention and deselection decisions.

Donations, Gifts and Bequests

The donation of electronic resources is not normally a feature of this type of resource. However, when a donation is offered it will be assessed for its relevance to courses taught and research themes. This will be done in conjunction with the relevant Subject Librarians and academics.

Legal Deposit

The legal deposit of electronic resources under the [Irish Copyright and Related Rights Act, 2000](#) is not currently enforced but Irish publishers may send electronic copies of material to the Library and the Library looks forward to leveraging the benefits of the relevant legislation when enforced.

7.3.2 Preservation

Preservation of purchased material is managed by the vendor and not normally by the Library. As a member of the [Portico e-journal preservation service](#), subscribed content no longer available through the vendor's online platform may be deposited there. Other electronic material held locally by the Library will be preserved with due consideration to best practice.

7.3.3 Access (e.g. resource description)

The Library is committed to ensuring timely and useful access to electronic resources and endeavours to make these resources available through [LibrarySearch](#) within 48 hours of final purchase.

7.4 Special Collections and Archives

Special Collections and Archives acts as a repository for special collections material through the preservation and facilitation of access to rare books, manuscripts and archives. The various collections are typically rare or unique and of cultural significance, with some material dating back to the Babylonian period and printed works dating from the fifteenth century onwards. Material is located in both the Russell Library, which houses the historical collections of St Patrick's College Maynooth and the John Paul II Library, which houses the special collections of Maynooth University.

Special Collections and Archives seeks to develop, manage, preserve, organise and promote the archival, manuscript and special collection print materials of Maynooth University and St Patrick's College, Maynooth. Material is collected on a case by case basis in terms of contribution to cultural and historical heritage, research value and teaching merits.

7.4.1 Selection criteria and methodology

Preference is given to the acquisition of primary, unpublished materials and first and other significant editions of printed works in original bindings. This is achieved through resource acquisition, retention, access, preservation and advocacy at institutional level and beyond.

Material is acquired through donation, purchase (where funds allow) and bequest. In exceptional circumstances material may be considered for deposit on a long-term loan basis. The condition of material, including preservation and conservation implications and associated costs is an important factor in terms of resource acquisition.

Purchase

The Library has a limited acquisitions budget and selectively purchases special collections and archival collections to support the teaching, learning and research needs of the institution.

Print material

- Printed works are purchased to augment existing materials in Special Collections and Archives and to support the teaching, learning and research needs of the institution

- Printed works are generally not purchased if a copy exists in the collection. However, duplicate works with distinct provenance and binding characteristics may be considered for purchase
- Potential costs associated with conservation and preservation of printed works may influence decisions relating to purchase

Archival and manuscript material

- The Library seeks to acquire archival collections of significant research value or relating to existing collection strengths
- Potential costs associated with conservation and preservation of archival collections and/or individual archival works may influence decisions relating to purchase

Retention

- Material in Special Collections and Archives is typically retained indefinitely due to inherent characteristics such as rarity, value and condition
- Printed, archival and manuscript collections are retained according to conditions outlined in donation and loan agreements
- The Library may deselect material from these collections in exceptional circumstances and according to strict criteria

Donations, Gifts and Bequests

- The Library seeks to develop and enhance existing Special Collections and Archives through donation and bequest
- Private donations are subject to a formal deposit agreement and the transfer of ownership to the Library. Material may be considered on a long-term deposit basis in exceptional circumstances
- Costs associated with the preservation and conservation will influence any decision on donations
- Donations are only accepted from depositors where the legal ownership and provenance of the collections has been established
- The Library reserves the right to refuse donations in certain circumstances

Legal deposit

Some material acquired under the terms of the [Irish Copyright and Related Rights Act, 2000](#) may be added to Special Collections and Archives. Typically this would include limited print runs, works of artistic merit, and reference materials.

7.4.2 Preservation

- Special Collections and Archive material is preserved according to international standards
- Storage areas are monitored and (where possible) controlled to ensure optimum temperature and humidity
- Material will receive conservation treatment if required
- Material is preserved according to the Library's Preservation Policy
- Special Collections and Archive material may be exhibited according to the Library's Exhibition Policy

7.4.3 Access

- The Library endeavours to facilitate access to these collections as soon as possible and in accordance with best practice and international standards
- Collections are processed by the Library as and when resources allow
- Access is provided to fully processed collections, subject to security, conservation and legal restrictions
- The Library seeks to enhance access to Special Collections and Archives through cataloguing and outreach projects

8. Outreach and Advocacy

The Library is committed to ensuring that the collection is effectively utilised, actively promoted and continues to reflect the ongoing teaching, learning and research needs of the University. In order to achieve this, Subject Librarians and other key members of the Library team will play an active role in engaging our Academic Staff and Students with the Library and its related services. This includes supporting the development of the Library's collections, promoting and advocating their use and participating in exhibitions and events.

Collection Development and the Role of the Subject Librarian

Collection development is an activity which should involve close collaboration between the Library and Academic Departments and Faculties. Subject Librarians will play a key role in bringing collection related issues to the attention of academic staff via several formal and informal communication channels such as regular email updates and meetings, and appropriate committees.

The work of the Subject Librarian will involve active leadership in selecting library materials and anticipating demands. Subject Librarians will work with academic staff in:

- Initiating purchase orders and ensuring access to reading list material
- Arranging trial subscriptions for new resources
- Evaluating the collection by participating in thematic reviews of teaching, learning and research material
- Preparing desiderata lists
- Identifying materials for assessment
- Developing collections in support of new modules and programmes
- Highlighting underutilised and strategic collections

Promoting our collections

The Library is committed to ensuring that the collection is utilised effectively, appropriately and in a way that supports both teaching and research activities in the University.

Subject Librarians will play a key role in promoting key resources and providing training resources through several channels including:

- [Online subject guides](#)
- Raising awareness of key resources via the Library website and social media outlets

- Advocating the use of library resources to students, researchers and academics
- Online tutorials and videos
- [Library Information Skills Tutorials \(LIST\)](#)
- Library involvement in 'Critical Skills' modules for undergraduates
- Guest lectures and training sessions
- One-to-one consultations

The Library is also committed to promoting the use of our various collections by:

- Embedding the use of Digital and Special Collections material into teaching and learning practices
- Facilitating the interpretation of Special Collections for both the University and wider local communities through active participation in exhibitions and public presentations
- Utilising Special Collections materials in events and exhibitions to engage with new and existing library users

9. Financial Management

Funding for collection development and maintenance is managed via a Library Budget Committee which reviews spending over the course of the year. The Library's primary source of funding is the annual grant received from the University's central resources. During the reporting period 2010-2014 the grant received from the University was on average 16% less per annum than the annual grant received in 2007-2008. Crucially the link between increased student numbers and funding has now been broken. Moreover, other significant elements of library income are declining.

In an effort to alleviate this strain and ensure access to as broad a portfolio of resources as possible, the Library actively welcomes collaboration with academic departments to fund the purchase of expensive resources. It bears repeating also that collection donations (in any format), while not necessarily requiring an initial outlay of expenditure, do come with a cost as regards making them available.

The Library also recognises that some resources will require extraordinary funding and/or would constitute a significant departure in terms of our strategic or disciplinary focus. In these instances, decisions relating to funding are escalated to a Library Strategic Acquisitions Group, chaired by the Vice-President for Innovation, who acts as the Liaison to University Executive. This group which has a combination of standing members from Library and Faculty, also includes the discipline specialists who can best evaluate a collection under consideration

Limitations on funding are also ameliorated by the presence of the IReL initiative which has been in place since 2004 and has afforded researchers in Maynooth University access to a world-class electronic library service comparable to our peers nationally and beyond. However, there is now a clear reliance on the [IReL](#) initiative and despite the many benefits, it is still necessary for the Library to purchase resources locally to meet our e-resources needs. This is exacerbated by the fact that increasingly punitive funding constraints at [IReL](#) level now require the Library to maintain several key academic resources (previously acquired through [IReL](#)) locally at direct cost.

10. Policy Review

If the collections of Maynooth University are to continue to grow and develop in response to the needs of our community, it is essential that this collection development policy is flexible enough to guide them towards this growth. According to G.E. Gorman, “once formulated, a policy must *never* be regarded as fixed for eternity”⁵

This policy will be reviewed periodically in order to ensure that it reflects the needs of the University body, the communities we serve and the resources available to the Library itself. It has, furthermore been designed so as to allow change be made to sections without necessarily requiring an overall redraft. This would seem prudent given that certain collection types and collection related activities are likely to develop more rapidly than others.

Comment and feedback on this policy can be given to:

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⁵ Clayton, P. (2001) *Managing Information Resources in Libraries: Collection Management in Theory and Practice*. London: Library Association.