

Churchill College Library: Collection Policy

1. Purpose of the policy

The purpose of the collection policy is to provide a framework for the maintenance and development of the Library's collections, to indicate priorities and to establish selection criteria.

The policy is a statement of aims, not a description of the collections which have built up in the past. It is intended to give guidance to Library staff and to provide information about the principles on which Library stock is acquired.

2. Purpose of the collection

The primary purpose of the Library is to support the teaching needs of the University. It is a working undergraduate library, particularly for courses taken by large numbers of undergraduates in the first two years, rather than the more recondite requirements of Part II and Part III students, who are expected to make greater use of the University Library, the Scientific Periodicals Library and Faculty/Department Libraries. The main focus of attention of the College Library should be in satisfying this function. It is not a research library. (It does include a very small number of collections which reflect the broader interests and experiences of the College, but these must remain severely limited for reasons of space: see para 6 below.) The responsibility of the Library includes not only providing material for current teaching but also anticipating future requirements such as new teaching programmes, including those for Part III and postgraduate students. The Library also provides a General Reference section containing encyclopaedias, dictionaries, atlases and other general reference works, and a selection of books on student welfare. The latter section includes books on common health problems (mental and physical), job opportunities, how to write reports and dissertations, etc. etc. and is designed to complement the welfare and advisory service provided by the College.

3. Recommendation and selection

There are several procedures whereby material is selected for purchase for the Library:

- i. Departmental and Faculty booklists. These arrive annually during the summer months. Titles which college librarians are urged to acquire in multiple copies for their libraries because of anticipated heavy demand are marked as such by the Department/Faculty concerned. Such titles are purchased immediately. Other titles are purchased as funds permit. If any list is excessively long, it is passed to the relevant Director of Studies for priority marking. If any title is excessively costly it is passed to the relevant Director of Studies for endorsement.
- ii. Recommendations from Directors of Studies.
- iii. Recommendations from students. These are passed to the relevant Director of Studies for endorsement before purchase. Recommendations from students reading for the M.Phil and other postgraduate degrees are similarly treated.
- iv. Standing orders are placed for certain series only when it is clear that every volume, or almost every volume, in the series will be appropriate to the Library stock and would otherwise be ordered individually

Material purchased by the Library is not restricted to printed texts. Compact discs, video and cassette tapes, microfiche, and models such as skeletons are also acquired.

4. Periodicals

Most periodical titles likely to be of use to undergraduates are held by the University Library, the Scientific Periodicals Library, the Squire Law Library or various Faculty/Departmental libraries. Apart from laws reports, the College Library does not in general subscribe to new periodicals titles because each new subscription involves a continuing and constantly increasing commitment in terms of both finance and space.

5. Electronic information

Information distributed electronically involves intricate negotiation regarding license agreements for multi-user use. The University Library negotiates license agreements for an increasing number of electronic datasets and journals, which are then made available via the University Library's web pages. The College Library does not engage in such negotiations. Other web sites afford free access to reference works such as the Oxford English Dictionary and the Encyclopaedia Britannica.

6. Donations

[See the Policy on Books Donated to the College Library, compiled by Mary Kendall, Matthew Kramer and Mark Tester, 9th September 1999, endorsed by College Council, 2nd November 1999]

7. Disposal

It is impossible for the Library to retain indefinitely all the material it acquires. The following categories of material are most likely to be discarded:

- i. Superseded editions. The previous edition of a text is automatically discarded when a new edition is published and acquired by the Library. This is a vital element in the maintenance of Library stock, particularly in the case of updated science texts, where an out-of-date text could be positively misleading.
- ii. Duplicate copies of texts which are seldom used.
- iii. Books arriving as part of a donated collection which have no relevance for the Library (see the Draft policy on books donated to the College Library).

Directors of Studies are urged to be diligent in going through the books in their subject to withdraw 'dead wood'. The Librarian is able to assist in this procedure by supplying relevant lists ordered by date of publication, so that the oldest books can readily be identified, as can frequently borrowed material.

Books which are withdrawn from Library stock are disposed of through a dealer, the proceeds being reinvested in Library funds.

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