

Information Resources Policy

The information resources policy covers the acquisition and withdrawal of materials for UH library collections held in the University's Campus Learning Resources Centres (LRCs), the provision of information databases, digital sources and electronic information services and access to document delivery services. It embodies the key principle of providing access to materials and information, rather than physical collection building. Learning and Information Services (LIS) are responsible for the implementation of this policy and for the development and management of the University's library collections.

Key: UH – University of Hertfordshire, LRC – Learning Resources Centre, LIS – Learning and Information Services

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1 - A demand-led policy

LIS aims “to provide and enable easy, reliable and timely access to relevant information resources” “to support the achievement of excellence in learning, teaching and research across the University”.

LIS will:

- reflect the priorities of the UH, as expressed in the Strategic Plan and other related policy and strategy statements

- target resources where the use is greatest
- provide fast document delivery systems to complement UH collections
- operate efficient systems to ensure maximum availability and accessibility of resources
- facilitate suggestions, recommendations and complaints from staff.

This requires individual academic staff and those representing Departments/ Faculties to:

- communicate their own and students' information needs
- accept responsibility for directing student learning in ways which make effective use of available and obtainable resources.

The following sections show how these principles are applied. When there are conflicting demands and resource limitations, decisions will normally be made on the basis of the use of materials.

2 - Format of materials

LIS obtains and/or provides access to information regardless of format - book, journal, video, CDROM, learning package, Internet file, online/networked database, multimedia. Where feasible, arrangements are also made for use of all these materials outside the LRCs, on and off campus, either by loan or by on-line networked access. It is anticipated that materials developed by UH staff in various formats eg course readers, TVI, multimedia, will increasingly be held in UH collections. Throughout the policy document, 'materials' applies to any of these formats.

2.1 - Electronic information

LIS will increasingly deliver information in electronic form in accordance with the UH Information Strategy, where it:

- provides faster access
- provides wider availability
- provides multi user access
- provides access from outside the LRCs
- provides more sophisticated searching tools
- reduces paper output in accordance with UH environmental policies
- is less vulnerable to damage and theft.

2.2 - Electronic full text versus electronic indexing services + hard copy full text.

LIS aims to purchase and/or subscribe to full text holdings in digital format of newspapers, journals, books, encyclopaedias and standards as well as financial data and other relevant

component, product and scientific data, where at least one of the following applies and resources allow:

- there is a digital option available (a policy of preference for the e-journal applies)
- there is demand for multi-user and wide availability
- the cost benefit equation justifies the purchase of the material and any associated equipment
- the nature of the use of the content (eg sophisticated searching rather than sequential reading) warrants it
- the ability to use the source in digital form is a skill needed by students
- there are considerable physical space savings to be made from use of digital sources
- the information is more up to date than in other formats
- the use which will be made of the content is such that its provision in digital form has advantages for transfer to or integration with other media

2.3 - Multimedia

It is anticipated that information will be produced increasingly in multimedia format both commercially for purchase and developed by UH staff for teaching. LIS will purchase multimedia resources in accordance with other aspects of this policy and provide equipment on which to use these resources.

3 - Supporting different user needs

3.1 – Learning and teaching

LIS develops UH collections and obtains materials through document supply services to meet the breadth and depth of information searching and reference needs of UH learning and teaching. It does not buy multiple copies sufficient to offer an essential set-textbook loan service for all students. Students are expected to buy essential texts as recommended by lecturers. However, LIS does buy multiple copies of set textbooks for UH library collections and these are made available for use within the LRCs and/or for loan.

3.1.1 - Materials on reading lists

- Lecturers are expected to supply a copy of every reading list to LIS.
- In drawing up reading lists, lecturers are requested to distinguish:
 1. Textbooks and/or course readers which are essential for student purchase, (ie those books which the student would either expect to use regularly throughout the year, or require sustained use of for more than 8 weeks).
 2. Recommended background reading.

LIS will add to UH collections at least one copy of every essential item on a reading list notified to the Information Consultant. Normally up to 3 copies will be bought per 50 students and the acquisition of additional copies over and above this level will be considered when triggered by evidence of greater levels of demand.

3.1.2 – Background reading and non-essential reading list materials to support learning and teaching

Materials are added to UH collections as recommended by lecturers and/or selected by Information Consultants, to support learning and teaching according to the following guidelines

- up to 3 copies per 50 students of materials relevant to a specific course
- 1 copy of items bought for subject building/gap filling
- 1 copy of items bought to encourage study of a wide range of subject-discipline related materials
- 1 copy of items bought to assist staff in keeping pace with developments in subjects they teach.

In all cases, the need for additional copies will be reviewed according to demand.

3.1.3 - Suggestions for purchase

UH LIS

- Expects the majority of monographs to be selected for acquisition in response to lecturer recommendation
- Encourages student suggestions for purchase

3.1.4 - Journal Literature to support learning and teaching

Faculty and departmental representatives and LIS Faculty Information Consultants will jointly agree a core list of journal titles for each subject discipline area
These should be:

- titles **regularly** publishing articles which students are recommended to read by academic staff, or which contain articles relevant to assignments/coursework/student projects and
- titles **regularly** publishing articles read by staff for course development and keeping pace with advances in their subject areas.

In marginal cases, the following criteria will be used:

- data on the relative costs of the subscriptions, storage and of obtaining the predicted number of sought references from other sources
- the ready availability of the title through document supply services.

3.2 - Research

Information resources support for research is in accordance with the UH research policy and strategies. Resources are therefore targeted to support recognised areas of excellence as reflected through the UH Research Institutes. LIS recognises that research support will be reviewed in

response to the periodic Research Assessment Exercise and will therefore target its resources to on-demand support rather than long-term recurrent subscription commitments.

3.2.1 - Monographs to support research

LIS will buy or obtain through document supply services, books to meet the needs of research priorities as identified by the UH research strategy and the promotion of wider scholarship by UH staff

- to support UH research institutes
- to support areas designated for development
- to support development and innovation in learning and teaching

3.2.2 - Journals to support research

Journal subscriptions will be reviewed annually and selected on the basis primarily of learning and teaching requirements (see para. 3.1.4) Most journal requirements for research, not available through UH print and digital journal collections will be met through document supply services.

See sections 8 [document supply](#).

3.2.3 – Contract / applied research

Materials will be acquired to support research in areas in addition to 3.2.1 and 3.2.2 above where specific funds are built into the contract bid and into LIS Information Resources budgets.

3.3 - Short course provision

Materials to support short courses, including those delivered on clients' premises, will be bought where specific requirements are agreed with Faculty Information Consultants at the planning stage and subsequently incorporated into LIS Information Resources budgets.

3.4 - Franchised courses

It is expected that partner organisations running a UH course under franchise will be the Prime Provider of library and information services to students registered on the franchised programme. Arrangements for additional use of UH information resources collections may be negotiated to meet specific needs. All students following HE programmes at the University's Associate Colleges within the Hertfordshire Higher Education Consortium have the same privileges as students following programmes delivered directly by UH.

3.5 - Materials to support general educational and staff development aims

The University mission and aims, the General Educational Aims and the Investors in People programme emphasise the importance to students and staff of:

- freedom of enquiry and expression
- personal development
- stimulating an enquiring, analytical and creative approach
- encouraging independent judgement and critical self awareness

- appreciating ethical considerations
- environmental awareness
- awareness of interdisciplinary issues and approaches

Most of these needs will be met from materials in UH collections supporting learning, teaching and research.

Some additional provision will be made:

- by encouraging donations where space allows
- by additional purchases when overall budget allows.

3.6 - Materials to support international students

In addition to those materials bought to support UH language courses, some current issues of foreign language newspapers will be made available to support the needs of overseas students:

- where materials are donated and space allows
- where digital materials are freely available over the internet
- where materials do not represent political/religious factions
- by additional purchases when budgets allows.

Materials to support UH English language programmes will be selected for UH collections in conjunction with the relevant programme tutors.

4 - Information searching tools

LIS will purchase or provide access to publications and services which facilitate subject and bibliographic searching of UH collections and published information throughout the world, to meet the needs of learning, teaching and research at the UH. Most of these will be in electronic format and will include:

- print and digital information resources in UH collections (through the library catalogue and the managed learning environment)
 - catalogues of appropriate libraries throughout the world
 - indexing /abstracting services or full text sources with electronic searching facilities
 - publications/catalogues necessary for the functioning of LIS services eg acquisitions, document supply.
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5 - Collection management

In general, material is acquired and retained which is in regular use or likely to be so to support UH learning, teaching and research. However, there are the following additions:

- Material relating to the history of UH, including its archives (see section 6)
- Specific collections as agreed by the University.
- Material of interest to the wider institution, eg higher education issues, equal opportunities.

5.1 – General Reference Collections

- General reference collections will consist of an agreed ‘core list’ with specific materials held in a designated campus Learning Resources Centre.
- The list will be reviewed annually
- Other reference works of a general or multi-disciplinary nature appropriate to a large academic institution will be bought on an occasional basis, as budgets allow.

5.2 - Contentious material

Material of a controversial social, political, religious or other nature which may give offence to certain readers will be added to UH collections where:

- it is required reading for a course taught at the UH as recommended by the relevant UH faculty or department
- it is required under other parts of this Policy.

5.3 - Donations

- LIS encourages and actively seeks donations and sponsorships where they are in accordance with other aspects of this Policy.
- LIS would hope to receive free of charge a copy of publications by UH staff.
- Donated items are recognised by a donor’s book plate.
- Items not required for UH collections are disposed of either by transfer to other libraries or by sale, unless it has been previously agreed that such items will be returned to the donor.
- Items are subject to the same criteria for withdrawal as other materials in UH collections.

5.4 - Duplication

LIS will buy multiple copies of textbooks as in [section 3](#) but will NOT normally:

- purchase subscriptions to print journals at more than one campus
- purchase or take out multiple subscriptions to duplicate digital sources.
- Purchase duplicate subscriptions for both print and digital journals, where these are not 'bundled' together as a publisher requirement of the subscription

5.5 – Collection maintenance and review

5.5.1 - Working collections

UH collections are managed as far as possible as working collections to support current UH learning, teaching and research. A programme of annual acquisitions and withdrawals in accordance with this policy aims to maintain the currency of the collections and respond to demand levels.

5.5.2 - Criteria for withdrawal from collections

Materials will be considered for withdrawal when:

- old editions are superseded by new ones
- there have been no loans over the last 5 years
- the text is seriously out of date
- the subject content is no longer relevant to learning, teaching or research at UH
- the series of which it forms a part has ceased publication or has been cancelled

5.5.3 - Procedures for withdrawal of materials from UH collections

- The above criteria will be applied by Faculty Information Consultants who will then consult with the relevant academic staff before the materials are withdrawn from UH collections
 - Written notice will be given to the appropriate Dean of faculty and other relevant staff of a review of materials.
 - The criteria will be relaxed to allow the retention of materials for archival purposes ([section 9](#)), for material in special collections ([section 6](#)) and in the rare cases where it is agreed that stock may be of future interest to UH.
 - Withdrawn materials will be disposed of by various means including transfer to other libraries, sale, discarding; it will not normally be deposited in UH faculties and departments or transferred to individual academic staff.
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6 - UH theses, archives and special collections

6.1 - Theses

- All PhD and MPhil theses from students registered at UH (including its predecessor institutions) will be archived by LIS. On occasion by agreement with the author or host department it may be a requirement that access to the thesis will be restricted for a limited period because of national security, competitive advantage in business or while a patent is pending.
- Other student dissertations will only be held in UH collections where the following conditions are all met:

- at the request of the department concerned
- with the agreement of the student concerned
- where the dissertations are agreed by the academic staff and the Faculty Information Consultant to be appropriate for UH collections
- with the understanding that they are withdrawn using the normal criteria and returned to the department
- where space permits

6.2 - University Archives

The archive is a repository only. Its scope is:

- historic material about UH and its precursors
- its annual reports and similar documents as well as those of its associated bodies
- committee papers
- prospectuses
- statistical publications
- public relations material
- audio-visual material, photographs, etc.
- materials published by UH

7 - Effective circulation of materials and demand assessment

7.1 - Loan statuses

The lending services operated by LIS provide a number of different loan periods which are allocated to materials according to the demand for them:

- reference
- short loan (morning, afternoon, or overnight/weekend)
- one week loan
- standard loan (available to academic staff for duration of current academic year and subject to recall).

Materials are allocated a loan period by Faculty Information Consultants according to anticipated demand. This may be changed to meet needs of student coursework, demonstrable demand from reservations, or to hold the material more securely. Loan periods are reviewed periodically. Loan periods of individual items are reviewed when alerted through the demand assessment procedures or by individual request. Fines are imposed on late return of loans to promote the effective circulation of materials, their availability to as many staff and students as

possible and to support a reliable reservations system.

7.2 - Demand assessment

- Reservations queue reports for materials with two or more reservations are used to monitor demand.
 - The Reserve Collections are reviewed annually to maintain the currency of their short loan high demand contents
 - Low use one-week-loans are periodically reviewed for conversion to standard loans, where resources permit.
 - Further use-monitoring mechanisms to improve demand assessment may be undertaken from time to time in response to specific service and management inquiries.
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8 - Document supply

Document supply or inter-library loans are terms used to refer to:

- borrowing items and
 - obtaining photocopies/faxed copies for retention
- from other libraries/document delivery services.

8.1 - Access strategy

It is anticipated that document supply will remain an important means of information supply, because of:

- the increasing volumes of published information
- greater awareness of published sources through use of digital bibliographic indexing and abstract services
- the range of research and individual project work at UH.

8.2 - Just in time delivery

UH LIS document supply services are available to staff and students on an on-line self-service request basis, with automated despatch to the British Library for prompt supply. The service is provided without charge or limitation on the individual user. LIS reserves the right to impose penalty charges for abuse of the service and Information Consultants will intervene in cases of high individual use of the service to ensure appropriate and effective use of resources.

9 - Co-operation with other libraries

Cooperative activities of two types are sought and supported:

1. Cooperation is reciprocal and broadly in balance
2. UH arrangements for access to other libraries or loan of materials, where special collections can better meet the research and project work of staff and students.

UH is a member of the major national HE reciprocal schemes, including SCONUL Research Extra and UK Libraries Plus.

10 - Local learning resources in UH departments

Learning & Information Services works with UH Faculties and Departments to clarify the availability of locally held resources and where appropriate to advise on their organisation and maintenance.

Information maintained by [LIS Admin Office](#)

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