

SOAS Library Collection Development Policy

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Note: All policies must be read in conjunction with all other SOAS policy, procedure and guidance documents. Printed copies of policies may not be the most up to date, therefore please refer to the policy pages on the SOAS external website or intranet for the latest version.

1. Introduction / Purpose

The Collection Development Policy sets out principles for developing and maintaining the Library's collections of materials in all formats.

An internal library document to provide guidance to staff in the selection of resources, to assist with focus on user needs and to aid in the orientation of new staff.

A public document to provide information on existing collection strengths and future collecting activity to inform SOAS academics and students, the wider academic community, funding bodies and other libraries with an interest in Asia, Africa and the Middle East.

2. Scope of Policy

2.1. Strategic Context

The policy document is set within the context of the following strategic planning documents:

- SOAS Vision and Strategy
- Vision, Mission and Aims of the Library

The Collection Development Policy is influenced by a number of internal and external factors including that the Library is a UKRI funded National Research Library.

2.2. Collaborative Collecting

SOAS Library is a member of RLUK (Research Libraries UK) and participates in RLUK activities.

The Library's professional staff will engage with relevant professional networks including for example:

- China Library Group
- The European Association of Sinological Librarians
- European Association of Japanese Resource Specialists
- European Network of Korean Resource Specialists (ENKRS)
- FLARE: Foreign Law Research
- International Association of Music Librarians
- Japan Library Group
- London art history libraries forum
- MELCOM (Middle East Librarians Committee)
- National Committee for Information Resources on Asia
- SCOLMA the UK Libraries and Archives Group on Africa
- South Asia Archive & Library Group
- South East Asia Library Group
- UK Korea Library group

2.3. Access to Other Libraries

Access to physical collections held in other institutions is made possible and regulated by a number of reciprocal access and borrowing schemes, namely: SCONUL Access, University of London agreements and M25 Consortium Access Scheme.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1. Subject and Regional Librarians

Librarians are responsible for updating the subject statement for their subject and regional portfolio to ensure collection development supports SOAS Research and teaching strategies and is in line with SOAS Library's status as a national research library.

3.2. Changes to Subject Statements

Changes to subject statements are proposed initially by the subject or regional librarian who consults with their colleagues at the Access & Discovery team meeting. Proposed changes are referred to the Library Team Leaders group for approval.

4. Funding and Budget Model

The Library's information resources budget is awarded annually by the University.

The Library uses a weighting system to award percentages of its materials fund to the School's research departments and teaching commitments. An increasing proportion of these resources is based online. SOAS Library users must agree to abide by the terms of use of the resources made available to them.

5. Collecting and Selecting: Scope of the Collection

5.1. Selection Criteria

For details on individual regional and subject collections, see the Subject Statements.

5.2. Definition of Collecting Criteria

The conspectus model definitions of collecting levels (see below) have been used. The collections have been described by subject/regional librarians:

Level 0: Out of scope

The Library does not intentionally collect materials in any format for this subject.

Level 1: Minimal information

Collections that support minimal inquiries about this subject and include a very limited collection of general resources, including monographs and reference works. Periodicals directly dealing with this topic and in-depth electronic information resources are not collected.

The collection should be frequently and systematically reviewed for currency of information. Superseded editions and titles containing outdated information should be withdrawn. Classic or standard retrospective materials may be retained.

Level 2: Basic information

Collections that introduce and define a subject, indicate the varieties of information available elsewhere, and support the needs of general library users by:

- A limited collection of general monographs and reference tools
- A limited collection of representative general periodicals
- Defined access to a limited collection of owned or remotely-accessed electronic bibliographic tools, texts, data sets, journals, etc

The collection should be frequently and systematically reviewed for currency of information. Superseded editions and titles containing outdated information should be withdrawn. Classic or standard retrospective materials may be retained.

Level 3: Study or instructional support

Collections that provide information for study of a subject in a systematic way, but at a level of less than research intensity and support the needs of general library users by:

- An extensive collection of general monographs and reference works and selected specialized monographs and reference works
- An extensive collection of general periodicals and a representative collection of specialized periodicals
- Limited collections of appropriate materials in languages other than the primary language of the collection and the country, for example, materials to aid in learning a language for non-native speakers or literature in the original language, such as German poetry in German or Spanish history in Spanish
- Extensive collections of the works of well-known authors and selections from the works of lesser-known authors
- Defined access to a broad collection of owned or remotely-accessed electronic resources, including bibliographic tools, texts, data sets, journals, etc.

The collection will be systematically reviewed for currency of information and for assurance that essential and important information is retained, including retrospective materials.

Level 4: Research

Collections that contain the major published source materials required for doctoral study and independent research include:

- A very extensive collection of general and specialized monographs and reference works
- A very extensive collection of general and specialized periodicals
- Extensive collections of appropriate materials in languages other than the primary language of the country and collection.
- Extensive collections of the works of both well-known and lesser-known authors
- Defined access to a very extensive collection of owned or remotely accessed electronic resources, including bibliographic tools, texts, data sets, journals, etc
- Older material is retained and systematically preserved to serve the needs of historical research

Level 5: Comprehensive

Collections in a specifically defined field of knowledge that strive to be exhaustive as far as is reasonably possible i.e. "special collections"), in all applicable languages include:

- Exhaustive collections of published materials
- Very extensive manuscript collections
- Very extensive collections in all other pertinent formats
- Older material is retained and systematically preserved to serve the needs of historical research
- A comprehensive level collection may serve as a national or international resource

5.3. Languages

- The collections span the languages of Asia, Africa and the Middle East, European languages (primarily English) and Native American languages
- For details on specific languages, see the Subject Statements

5.4. Research

- The Library develops and maintains collections to support the University's current and anticipated research needs
- For details on individual collections, see the Subject Statements

5.5. Teaching

- The Library develops and maintains collections to support SOAS University of London's taught courses.
- For teaching material, electronic format is preferred.
- Unless the need is proven the Library does not acquire multiple copies of material.

5.6. National Research Library

- The Library performs a national role by virtue of its scope and specialisation.

5.7. Out of Print

- The Library endeavours to obtain out-of-print titles where appropriate.

5.8. Periodicals

- Periodicals are selected to support the current teaching, learning and research activities of SOAS University of London in the fields of Asian, African and Middle Eastern studies, including Asian and African cultures in the wider world and diasporas.
- As the UK National Research Library for Asian, African and Middle Eastern studies, the Library develops and maintains collections of print periodicals relating to Asia, Africa and the Middle East for posterity as well as current access.
- For information on electronic resources, see *Electronic Resources Policy*.

6. Collecting and Selecting: Approaches

6.1. Donation Policy

- The Library welcomes offers of material relating to Asia, Africa and the Middle East.
- The Library reserves the right to accept or decline donations.
- No restrictions by the donor are accepted.
- Donations become the property of the Library.
- The Library reserves the right to dispose of donations not required.
- The Library does not accept off prints of journal articles.
- The Library balances the value of the donation against the costs of cataloguing and storing it.
- The Library encourages all SOAS academic staff to donate a copy of their academic publications.
- For more details, see the *Donations Policy*.

6.2. Grants

- The Library welcomes offers of financial support for collection development.
- The Library submits applications for funding where appropriate.

6.3. Deposits

- The Library accepts deposited collections only in exceptional circumstances.
- Funding for deposited collections needs to be identified prior to any acceptance.
- SOAS Archives and Special Collections will consider deposits of material which falls within their remit. Contact Special Collections at special.collections@soas.ac.uk.

6.4. Specialist Staff

- The Library employs a team of Subject Librarians including specialists in the Humanities, Social Sciences and Languages & Cultures of Asia, Africa and the Middle East. They oversee the selection of materials.

6.5. Profiling

- Subject profiling is used to streamline the process of acquisitions.

6.6. Recommendations for Purchase

- The Library welcomes suggestions for purchases from staff, students and members of the public, see the [Recommendations Forms](#).

6.7. E-Resources

- The Library selects and purchases e-resources which support the current teaching and research activities of the School and its role as a UK National Research Library.
- For more details, see the [Electronic Resources Policy](#).

7. Online Repository

- SOAS Research Online is a free, publicly accessible repository of the research outputs of the University.
- The repository contains both full-text papers and descriptive records of research carried out by SOAS staff. For more details, see [SOAS Research Online Policies](#).

8. Preservation and Binding

- Books and periodicals comprising delicate or flimsy material and covering the regions of Asia, Africa and the Middle East are bound. The Library investigates digitization of materials in need of conservation which fall within copyright and within the areas of Africa, Asia and the Middle East. Content may be made available via [SOAS Digital Collections](#).

9. Stock Maintenance

- Selected Material will from time to time be moved to a secure storage area on campus, including rare and lesser used material.
- Material that doesn't relate to current research projects, current teaching programmes and hasn't been used but needs to be kept for posterity is moved to offsite storage.

9.1. Deselection

- The Library undertakes to deselect material from the collection on a regular basis.

9.2. Disposal

- Materials of a general nature, typically newspapers and damaged materials are recycled. Materials of a general nature, typically newspapers and damaged materials are recycled.
- Duplicate copies of monographs may be removed from the shelves and sold to students via an online honour system.
- Unsold items are sent to social enterprise.

9.3. Replacement of Lost and Damaged Items

- The Library replaces lost or damaged items as appropriate.
- Where a title is out of print the library acquires one copy where possible.
- Where titles on taught courses are unobtainable the Library requests alternatives from the course convenor.

9.4. Cancellation

- Cancellation of print subscriptions is considered when ownership of the electronic version or perpetual access can be guaranteed.
- Print subscriptions are retained in some cases where there are strong reasons for doing so, e.g. SOAS's responsibilities as a UK National Research Library.

9.5. Cancellation of E-resources

- Usage of e-resources is monitored and databases with low usage are cancelled.
- Price increases and changes of supplier or content may result in cancellation of electronic subscriptions.

10. Access

- The Library is open to the public, including members of the UK and international academic community and private researchers.
- For details on admission, fees and opening hours, see [Use the Library](#).