

Library Collections Policy

Section 1 - Introduction

(1) The Library is essential for the accessibility, dissemination, use, creative engagement with and management of collections aligned to the UOW mission and purpose. As a digital-first Library we strive to lead and advance open, equitable and inclusive digital access models for information and knowledge for a university that is research-intensive, highly networked and global in its outlook.

(2) The Library aims to:

- a. deliver timely, comprehensive, equitable access to information resources across multiple national and transnational UOW locations;
- b. prioritise the digital delivery of content wherever possible making collections increasingly available to mobile and remote users;
- c. foster diversity and inclusion by collecting materials authored by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and members of diverse communities; and
- d. deliver best value, affordability and sustainability of access.

(3) The approach to Library collections is based on a model of renewal that is, focussed on meeting the current and future needs of research and teaching programs. Collections are, therefore, regularly evaluated for relevance and value.

Section 2 - Purpose of Policy

(4) This Policy provides a framework for the development and maintenance of Library collections for the University of Wollongong (UOW). It reflects the Library's vision and purpose to support research, scholarship and teaching at UOW by outlining the agreed means of acquiring and providing access to relevant collections and scholarly content.

(5) The purpose of this Policy is to:

- a. guide selection, acquisition, coordination, maintenance and provision of access to information resources and scholarly content to meet the research, teaching and learning needs of staff and students;
- b. inform and guide Library and academic staff in the selection and management of resources;
- c. guide ethical and culturally safe practices for collection management; and
- d. achieve optimal value for money.

Section 3 - Application and Scope - Exclusions or Special Conditions

(6) This Policy applies to all University of Wollongong Libraries and Library collections.

Section 4 - Policy Principles

- (7) Alignment to current and future needs of UOW research and teaching programs.
- (8) Culturally safe and inclusive collection management.
- (9) Electronic or digital formats preferred.
- (10) Equity of access to collections.
- (11) Collection renewal and relevance.
- (12) Communication and consultation with the University community on significant change to the collections.

Section 5 - Approach

(13) The Library provides access to information resources across multiple UOW national and transnational locations and in line with requirements outlined in the [Higher Education Support Act 2003](#).

(14) Information resources are acquired in electronic or digital format where available rather than in hard copy to facilitate access regardless of time and location, with the exception of the University Archives where formats are dependent on the nature of materials.

(15) The primary language of the Library collections is English. In certain areas content will be purchased in other languages to support the curriculum.

(16) The Library strives to provide equitable access to resources for staff and students including procurement pathways for alternative formats that meet diverse needs wherever possible.

(17) The Library prioritises vendors who offer:

- a. unlimited or flexible user access models;
- b. institution-wide licences;
- c. access/useability via a range of devices;
- d. compliance with accessibility standards;
- e. cost-effective models for perpetual access;
- f. access without Digital Rights Management (DRM) restrictions; and
- g. affordable, sustainable models for Open Access Content.

(18) The Library participates in resource sharing consortia and networks, nationally and internationally, to support access to academic material not held. Due to budget and space requirements, resource sharing services may be more cost-effective than purchase for the collection in some circumstances.

(19) The Library general collections are in a constant state of renewal. Intake of new print material must be offset with deselection of print resources.

(20) The Library seeks to be mindful of Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property (ICIP) and restricted cultural materials and encourages informed and ethical use of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural knowledges in consultation with knowledge holders at UOW.

(21) The University Archives comply with the [State Records Act 1998](#) and The Museums of History Act 2022 to collect

and preserve the historic record of UOW and the Illawarra region. These materials form part of the cultural record of NSW.

(22) Whilst the Library consults with the UOW community on the acquisition of resources, the final decision on resource selection and deselection is the responsibility of the Director, Library Services.

Section 6 - Intellectual Freedom

(23) Aligned with the Australian library and information association's statement on free access to information the Library does not exercise censorship in acquiring or providing access to resources which may be considered controversial. Due to ethical or commercial sensitivities, access to some Higher Degree Research theses may be limited by the author.

Section 7 - Selection Criteria

(24) Selection requests must support UOW teaching, learning and research priorities. The Library will purchase digital versions of material in preference to physical in order to support changing staff and student needs, 24/7 access and delivery across multiple locations. Where a digital version is not available or not suitable for particular discipline areas we will consider acquiring in physical format. Refer to section 10 of this Policy regarding selection of material for special collections including the University Archives.

(25) The Library applies some or all of the following criteria to inform selection decisions for the purchase of scholarly information depending on the type of material being considered and current and available resources:

- a. relevance to UOW teaching and research priorities;
- b. cost and value for money. Where better priced alternatives exist, the Library will pursue this alternative;
- c. access and ease of use, particularly for digital material;
- d. currency;
- e. number of potential users;
- f. usage analysis; and
- g. the Library does not purchase applications software, subscriptions or teaching and learning content such as online supplementary content that entail restricted licences for access by individuals or groups.

Books (including texts and recommended readings)

(26) The Library will acquire recently published books that support UOW research and teaching programs. The Library will not acquire ebooks that require users to purchase specific, proprietary technology to access content.

(27) The Library aims to provide access to a minimum number of one copy of each prescribed text and recommended reading at the campus Library or access centre where the subject is taught. Electronic versions are purchased in preference to print where available. Ebook access and pricing models vary from single user to unlimited concurrent access and at the time of purchase enrolment numbers guide the selection of the most appropriate ebook access model.

(28) Where student numbers are large or a title is in heavy demand, additional copies may be purchased as follows for prescribed texts:

- a. Ebooks – a maximum of 2 'copies' per access model. For example, where the model is 3 concurrent users, a maximum of two purchases, enabling 6 'copies' for access and circulation; and
- b. Print – Textbooks: 1 copy per 25 students to a maximum of 4 'copies; recommended readings: 1 copy per 25

students to a maximum of 3 copies.

Subscription Services (including journals and databases)

(29) Journal and database subscriptions represent a significant recurring cost from the Library's Information Resources Fund. More than 80% of Library subscriptions are acquired in foreign currency resulting in significant exposure to fluctuations in the currency exchange market. The Library engages a number of strategies to minimise financial risk and optimal budget management.

(30) The following principles and activities guide the management of subscriptions:

- a. decisions on titles to be subscribed, maintained or cancelled are made in consultation with faculties or on the basis of budget availability, usage and continued relevance to teaching and research. It may be necessary for the Library to cancel a subscription of similar value from the same subject area to fund a new subscription;
- b. the Library participates in the Council of Australian University Librarians (CAUL) purchasing consortium, where appropriate, to take advantage of reduced pricing achieved through collective negotiations and economies of scale;
- c. digital content subscriptions are preferred to ensure user access at any place and any time;
- d. print titles that are also available electronically are not generally maintained. Any considerations for retaining print titles will be made on a case by case basis; and
- e. trials of new products and demonstrations by vendors may be provided to academic staff and postgraduates. Feedback may be sought to determine relevance, ease of use and value before committing to purchase.

Donations

(31) Donations of published materials are not accepted. Depending on the subject and material, donors may be referred to UOW Used Books (formerly the Alumni Bookshop), or in the case of rare, unique or significant donations, to the UOW Archives.

Section 8 - Subject Readings

(32) The Subject Readings service facilitates access to essential readings for subjects delivered by UOW at all locations. Usage of electronic or digital content is preferred. Library staff ensure that availability of all subject readings complies with the Australian [Copyright Act 1968](#).

Section 9 - Borrowing from Other Libraries

(33) The Library takes part in resource sharing arrangements with other institutions to support academic activity at UOW. Resource sharing services are generally provided free of charge to UOW staff and students.

Section 10 - University Archives and Special Collections

Special Collections

(34) The Library's Special Collections consist of published and unpublished material in print, audio-visual and digital formats, including content associated with or published by UOW and its predecessor institutions.

(35) The Library's Special Collections include:

- a. archival collections documenting the corporate and social history of UOW;
- b. UOW and other archival research collections;
- c. Illawarra historical collections;
- d. UOW Higher Degree Research theses;
- e. UOW research outputs, journals and conferences, research data;
- f. digital archival and cultural materials including digital-born content and materials that have been digitised by the Library;
- g. publications including monographs of cultural and historical value and gifts to the UOW Executive; and
- h. rare books collection.

University Archives

(36) The University Archives primary role is to:

- a. identify, collect and help preserve archival collections, documenting the corporate and social history of UOW, contributing towards efficient and effective knowledge management; and
- b. facilitate access to UOW and other archival collections supporting UOW's present and future research, teaching and learning needs.

(37) The University Archives is administered by UOW Library. Material for inclusion for the Archives is acquired by purchase or gift or bequest in accordance with the UOW [Philanthropic, Fundraising and Gift Acceptance Policy](#).

(38) The University Archives holds certain important, unique and fragile items which require careful treatment, handling and storage to ensure they are preserved for future access. The University Archives reserves the right to refuse, dispose of, or relocate materials that on appraisal by Library and Archives staff do not meet selection criteria.

(39) Selection of material for inclusion in the University Archives is based on the following criteria which apply to both hard copy and born-digital content:

- a. archival materials that are related to UOW and potential enduring historical value;
- b. UOW and other archival collections that support UOW research, teaching and learning needs;
- c. local and Illawarra heritage collections aligned to current collection strengths;
- d. available space capacity and suitable methods of storage;
- e. condition of material and preservation and conservation resourcing required; and
- f. access conditions, e.g. no or limited restrictions imposed by a donor or copyright requirements.

(40) A small collection of rare books, pamphlets and ephemera dating from 1582 to the present is housed in the Archives reading room. Material included in the rare books collection is based on uniqueness, rarity and value.

(41) Archival and special collections exist within a broader environment of other special collections on campus including the UOW art collection, the Worner geological mineral collection and the Janet Cosh herbarium, which are administered separately to the Library. Where appropriate, the University Archives and Special Collections are developed in a complementary manner with other collecting areas of UOW.

Digital Collections

(42) The Library's investment in digital archival content is facilitated through the Library's digitisation program.

(43) Growth of digitised collections is guided by the Library's digitisation plan that outlines the key projects and resourcing to be included in the program. The University Archives collections are the primary focus of digitisation projects to enable broad and open access to unique content held. Projects are assessed for inclusion in the digitisation

plan based on the following criteria:

- a. constitutes official records of UOW;
- b. increases public access to unique special collections;
- c. is at risk of being lost due to poor condition or obsolete media format;
- d. is of institutional significance or regional value;
- e. aligns with current UOW research, teaching and learning priorities;
- f. provides a strategic opportunity for institutional distinctiveness, innovation, collaboration or community engagement;
- g. is a non-duplication effort;
- h. available staff and financial resources and appropriate delivery system is in place to provide access; and
- i. copyright permissions.

Access

(44) Archival collections are held in a secure area. Physical access to these collections requires approval of Archives staff or Director, Library Services. To facilitate access to these collections the Library will:

- a. make information about special collections available through the Library's website and through discovery tools including relevant national and international databases and online search engines where appropriate;
- b. provide open access to digital collections where copyright and/or access directions permit; and
- c. promote awareness and use of special collections through web pages, digital collections, collaborative community-based projects and special events.

Section 11 - Collection Management

Budget

(45) Information resource funds are allocated to:

- a. journal and database subscriptions (recurrent expenditure), focusing on research strengths and current undergraduate and postgraduate student needs; and
- b. monographs, which include texts, recommended readings, academic and Library selections, student suggestions, new course and revised subject requirements.

Value and Depreciation

(46) Collection valuation and depreciation reporting is undertaken to meet the requirements of Australian Accounting Standard AAS29 "Financial Reporting by Government Departments". This process recognises the collection as a valuable and measurable University asset.

Deselection

(47) Deselection takes place across all national UOW locations to ensure continued relevance, currency and condition of the collection and to provide sufficient space for the addition of new material.

(48) Criteria for deselection include:

- a. material which no longer meets the learning, teaching and research needs of UOW;
- b. outdated or incorrect material, e.g. incorrect or outdated medical or IT information;

- c. multiple copies of previous editions where the newer edition is held;
- d. material in an obsolete format or for which the access equipment is unavailable;
- e. material in poor physical condition and beyond repair;
- f. material held in the University Archives under [State Records legislation](#) for which the retention period has expired. In consultation with the Information Compliance Unit (ICU), an appropriate method of disposal is employed for this material, e.g. either via secure disposal or transfer to another institution.

Section 12 - Roles and Responsibilities

(49) The Library is responsible for the state and content of the UOW libraries and Library collections.

(50) The Library actively engages with the academic community in developing the collection to ensure it reflects changing research, teaching and learning needs. Relevant Library staff work closely with academic staff to advise on reading lists and select resources that support their particular discipline and research. General works and reference resources, as well as those that support multidisciplinary studies are predominantly selected by Library staff.

(51) Decisions pertaining to archival collections should be directed to the Manager Archives.

(52) The ICU is the custodian of records management at UOW, including records management compliance and best practice. The UOW Archives work with the ICU as required in relation to the archiving, management and disposal of UOW state records.

Section 13 - Definitions

Word/Term	Definition (with examples if required)
Access directions	An access direction is a direction detailing the early access to or the closing of State records to public access under the State Records Act 1998 .
Archival collections	The non-current records of an organisation, institution or individual that have been appraised and selected for preservation because they have continuing or permanent value. In the case of the University, this value may be for administrative, legal, scientific, research and/or historical use. Archival collections may comprise a range of formats – paper, audiovisual, digital, artefacts etc.
Collection management	Collection development is the process by which the Library assesses, selects and deselects information resources.
Library collections	Library collections include information and knowledge materials aligned to current research, teaching and learning needs. Collections are comprised of materials in various formats, both physical and electronic and include (though not exhaustive): books, journals, databases, newspapers, reference materials (e.g. dictionaries, thesauri, indexes, encyclopedias), video and streaming services, subject readings, statistics and data publications, theses and special collections.
Special collections	Collections of materials in various formats that receive special treatment in terms of storage, description and access.
State archive	A state record that State Records NSW has control of under the State Records Act 1998 .
State record	Any record, made and kept, or received and kept, by any person in the course of the exercise of official functions in a public office, or for any purpose of a public office, or for the use of a public office.
University archives	The administrative unit of the University Library responsible for managing archival collections.

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