Library policy for the purchase of reading list books

Introduction

The purpose of the purchasing policy is to ensure the Library is able to make informed purchasing decisions with regards to reading list books. This will allow us to effectively focus the use of our budget whilst ensuring we are able to fully support the learning and teaching needs of our students and teaching staff by providing equitable and consistent access to reading list materials. The policy includes an agreed set of terms to describe reading list items for the purpose of library purchase and a set of business rules to ensure the timely provision of content in sufficient quantities and in the most accessible and cost-effective format.

We will monitor the efficacy of our purchasing policy on an annual basis and adjust where necessary.

Purchasing guidelines and parameters

In order to ensure that students have ready access to books on their reading lists and for the Library to make informed decisions about how many copies and in what format to purchase items, we need to understand how important the resources are for those taking the course. Wherever possible, acquisition of reading list books will be based on the guidelines and parameters specified in table 1 below.

Reading list terminology for the purpose of Library purchase	Maximum length of reading list (for Library purchase)	Standard purchasing formula
Core: A textbook which students are required to use extensively throughout the course	**1 title per course unit**	Where possible, electronic provision for each student within the specified course via the Library's eTextbook Programme
Essential: All students should read this text/one of these texts	**Up to 10 titles** **1-5**: Will be purchased using the formula for Essential texts **More than 5**: Will be purchased using the formula for Recommended texts	**eBook available**: 1 eBook and 2 print books per 100 students **No eBook available**: 1 print copy per 10 students (max 40 copies). We will also endeavour to supply through our eTextbook Demand-Driven Access (DDA) scheme
Recommended: Students should read this/these texts (in addition to any Essential reading) in order to gain a better understanding for a seminar or essay	**Up to 25 titles** **1-25**: Will be bought using the formula for Recommended texts **More than 25**: Where an eBook is available items will be made available via one of our DDA schemes (as for Further reading), where no eBook is available, a reduced number of print copies will be purchased.	**eBook available**: 1 eBook plus 1 print copy **No eBook available**: 1 print copy per 20 students (max 20 copies)

Further reading: Students should read these texts for a wider and deeper understanding	No limit	eBook available: Items will be made available via one of our DDA schemes wherever possible; where there is sufficient usage a purchase will consequently be triggered. eBook not available: 1 print copy will be purchased

Table 1 – Purchasing guidelines and parameters

Reading list terminology with regard to library purchase

When ordering reading list books for the Library, teaching staff should indicate whether the books are for Core, Essential, Recommended or Further reading as this will enable us to apply the purchasing formula outlined in table 1 above.

All books defined as Core will be considered as candidates for the Library's eTextbook Programme, providing a copy for each student within a specific course. The library will purchase the newest available edition unless teaching staff state that a specific edition is required for pedagogical reasons. Items listed as Core textbooks that are unavailable for supply via the programme will be treated as Essential texts, and alternative Core title will be considered. Core eTextbooks will not be supplemented with print allocation unless they appear on another reading list. The Library will continue to work with suppliers to secure purchasing models that offer best value for money.

The usage of Core eTextbooks supplied will be monitored by the Teaching Collections team and the data will be shared with relevant teaching staff on a regular basis. Teaching staff can also track and monitor student usage through course specific Learning Analytics dashboards. Usage data will help inform purchasing decisions each academic year.

Books defined as Essential will be purchased as standard eBooks where possible. If standard eBooks are not available or are prohibitively expensive through our usual suppliers, we will endeavour to purchase these through our eTextbook DDA scheme which provides individual student access to their own copy.

Maximum length of reading list for library purchase

In order to trigger library purchases without delay we recommend that teaching staff adhere to the guidelines in Table 1 and consider the number of items listed as Core, Essential or Recommended.

Standard purchasing formula

Library acquisition of reading list items will be based on the formulae specified in the 'Purchasing guidelines and parameters' table above. For Essential and Recommended reading, the Library will monitor usage and increase provision based on demand whenever possible.

Purchasing principles

Price

To derive maximum value from the reading list budget we are applying a nominal cap of £165 for a print item and £495 for an eBook for a single copy of the title. Items costing in excess of this will require further discussion and may require an alternative title to be selected.

Format

Reading list books will be acquired on an electronic-first basis to ensure both equitable and timely access for all of our students. When electronic access cannot be provided, the Library will purchase print copies at a ratio determined by the importance of the text outlined in the table above. For Essential and Recommended texts, the Library will also purchase a specified number of print textbooks in order to supplement electronic provision outlined in the table above.

Digital availability

Titles are often unavailable for purchase and we may need to request an alternative title for a range of reasons outside of our control:

- Some eBooks are only available for purchase through a licence that the Library considers to be prohibitively expensive or that the Library does not believe offers adequate access or an acceptable user experience. In such cases we will look to purchase print or will seek to explore an alternative title
- Many books are not available electronically for individual Library purchase. This is determined by the publisher
- Some eBooks are not licensed for use in Higher Education, for example eBooks sold for Amazon Kindle
- Some publishers and authors choose to publish in print only or have not converted all their holdings to digital files (often determined by date of publication or demand)
- Some publishers limit the availability of eBook content to package deals, meaning we are unable to purchase as individual titles. If libraries purchase these packages, they pay for content that may not align with current research and teaching, to gain access to the small percentage of the collection which is needed
- Licences can be withdrawn or amended for a title already purchased, or upon publication of a new edition, thereby limiting additional purchasing options.
- New titles may be print only for several months, or made available only on a restrictive licence in the first instance.
- Some titles have rights restrictions depending on location of publication

For more information on the cost, affordability and availability of Core reading materials, please refer to JISC Briefing Paper for academic staff.

eBook Licence Types

The Library will endeavour to acquire eBooks that allow multi-user access across the institution, with the exception of Core texts, whereby electronic access may be provided to specific cohorts. Where access is only available on a single-user basis, titles will be purchased in appropriate quantities. In such cases to ensure provision is sustainable an upper limit will be applied.

Further information on eBook licences types which the Library may purchase can be found on our website.

New editions

The Library will purchase the latest available edition unless teaching staff state that a specific edition is required. We will monitor and update reading lists if a later edition of an item becomes available.

Digitised Readings

The Library offers a service to digitise book extracts, chapters and journal articles, when electronic copies are not available. Digitisation is supplied under the terms of our Higher Education Scanning Licence with the Copyright Licensing Agency (CLA). Requests for Digitisation should be submitted via the Library's reading list system.

Access to Streamed Video

The University subscribes to a number of video streaming services. Requests for streamed video material should be placed via the Access Streamed video request form on the Library website. In all cases the Library will, where available, supply from streaming sources already subscribed to before looking to purchase.

Accessibility

When selecting suppliers, the Library chooses those on the national framework agreement whose eBook platforms meet current Web Content Accessibility Guidelines and ASPIRE scoring at the desired level. We also perform in-house accessibility checks to ensure inclusive functionality on these platforms. Further information on platform accessibility functionality can be found on the Library website.

Non-Roman script material

Requests for purchase of material in non-Roman script should be directed to the relevant Engagement Librarian.

Out of print items

The Library will not purchase out of print material. If such items are included in reading lists, the Library will clearly indicate that the material may not be readily available.

High demand items

All items will be given standard loan status. Teaching staff requests for an item to be placed on High Demand will be considered by the Teaching Collections team and reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Version amendment history		
Version	Date	Reason for change
2.0	Nov 2018	Service changes
2.1	Jan 2021	Minor changes in service due to Covid-19
3.0	July 2021	Service changes
3.1	Feb 2024	Minor changes in service and pricing

Document control box	
Policy / Procedure title:	Reading List Purchasing Policy
Lead contact email:	olivia.walsby@manchester.ac.uk
Date updated:	March 2024
Approving body:	Library Leadership Team
Version:	3.1 March 2024
Supersedes:	3.0 July 2021
Previous review dates:	Nov 2018