

Leeds Beckett University

Library and Learning Services

Information Resources Plan 2025/26

1. Introduction

1.a. The purpose of this plan is to describe how, in collaboration with the Schools, a relevant, accessible, easily discoverable and high quality range of learning resources are acquired and made available to support the University's teaching, learning and research, including: books, journals, databases, streamed content, newspapers, articles, theses, maps, computer games and reference material. This plan supports our key strategic theme to empower information discovery and research success, outlined in "Building our Future Library: Library and Learning Services Plan 2026-2030".

2. Resource Acquisition and Selection

2.a. The selection of learning resources is driven by requests from the University community, primarily through resources being added to reading lists for teaching and requested directly to support research. In managing the budget for learning resources, Library and Learning Services (LLS) aims to achieve a balance of affordability and value for money, while providing a breadth of subject resources which are relevant, current and of high quality. Whilst we aim to provide as many resources as are requested; where necessary, we prioritise the following resources:

- Multidisciplinary and relevant across several subjects, or unique critical resources
- Marked "Essential" on reading lists
- High usage, and good value cost per use (cost divided by number of accesses), using data from the reading list system and supplier usage reports
- Meet accessibility requirements
- Required for specific reasons relating to a course, such as for PSRBs and distance learning
- Value factors such as resources requested by School Academic or Library Committee/ equivalent, best practice Jisc educational licence, non-restrictive access policy, minimum downtime, responsible procurement accreditation.

2.b. Further information on how LLS acquires and manages access to these resources is available in section 6 below.

2.1 Digital and Print Resources

LLS takes a digital-first approach to the provision of resources, supplemented by appropriate print acquisitions. Though the cost may sometimes be higher, digital resources offer advantages over print, including:

- 24/7 access from both on and off campus which supports all delivery modes of a course: online, blended, distance, hybrid, and face to face
- Enhanced search and navigation functionality enabling users to quickly identify and access content within the item
- Faster availability of items from the point of ordering and faster circulation of items, without the need for them to be reserved, physically returned or re-shelved
- Improved accessibility and conversion options of digital text for students with visual impairments and to support students' learning preferences
- Improved user functionality: downloading, annotating, highlighting, reference exporting
- Capture of detailed usage data to assess the use and effectiveness of resources, promoting effective use of budgets
- Increased flexibility to set access and borrowing periods at individual title rather than group level for digital texts
- No risk of loss, damage, or deterioration over time or due to fire, flood etc.

3. Resources for Teaching and Learning

3.a. Most resource acquisition is driven by teaching requirements, presented via the online reading lists which are created by academic staff delivering a module. To balance providing the widest possible range of curriculum resources against budgetary and inflation pressures, provision is tailored to resource importance and anticipated user numbers. Academic staff indicate resource importance on the reading list system by categorising an item as:

- **“Essential”** - denotes key resources all students on the course are required to study.
- **“Recommended”** - denotes titles which supplement the “essential” resources, and which are recommended rather than mandatory for study.

Any items not assigned a categorisation are treated as recommended.

3.b. To support students with the rising cost of living, texts should not be recommended for student purchase, except in rare circumstances when this may be appropriate, for example if the text is required on a long-term basis for students' work or study. Academic staff are asked to flag any critical titles via a reading list note so that their Academic Librarians can discuss the specific requirements to enable the most appropriate provision. Resources are not provided on a 1 book to 1 student basis; if it is essential that all students have their own copy this is the responsibility of the School. The Information Resources Fund pays for the acquisition of learning resources on behalf of the entire University, so a resource must be available to any University student or staff member to be eligible and not restricted to a specific course, cohort, or group.

3.c. Courseware or other self-directed digital learning materials is not in scope for Library purchase.

3.d. Print and digital reservations and usage are monitored regularly through the year to ensure provision matches demand. A significant number of reservations for a book triggers the acquisition of additional e-licence or print copies, where possible. Publishers frequently withdraw titles from sale meaning that additional print copies and / or digital licences can no longer be acquired, resulting in limited items to meet users' needs. To maximise access in such cases the loan periods for both digital and print books are reduced so that they can circulate faster; print copies may also be designated as reference only. If materials are discovered to be unobtainable (out of print or not licensed for sale in the UK) or the licensing terms constrain usage, the relevant course team is advised, to facilitate alternative arrangements or resources.

3.e. See section 7 for provision of learning resources to students with a disability.

3.1 Ebook licencing and book provision

3.1.a. Publishers determine whether a book is released digitally and under what licence. Licensing varies in two key ways: duration (permanent versus annual licence), and in the number of permitted simultaneous users. Titles offered on an annual licence basis represent a recurring cost to the University and are therefore only subscribed to where is no reasonable alternative. Publishers are increasingly switching titles from permanent licences held in perpetuity to annual subscription licences, which increases pressure on provision. Simultaneous usage can vary from unlimited numbers of users (preferred), through specified numbers of simultaneous users to a single user licence. Where cost effective, the most generous licence in terms of user access is purchased. Where the publisher's licence limits simultaneous access to a specific number of users, multiple licences may be purchased, where affordable, to ensure demand is met.

4. Resources for Research

4.a. LLS aims to provide a wide range of print and online resources to support the University's research activities and works with Schools to provide the most relevant and high quality resources possible. Researchers can use the Request It! service to ask LLS to acquire a resource which is not in stock. Books, journal articles, book chapters and theses can be requested, and we will find the best way to provide access to the material required, either by acquiring the resource for the library or through inter-library loan.

4.b. LLS is not able to provide all resources required for externally funded systematic or literature reviews, as the cost of these can often be significant. We recommend that these costs are built into the funding bid and we are able to support researchers at this stage if required. We are then able to process requests as usual and charge the cost back to the externally funded research project. In order to fulfil requests effectively, advance knowledge that a systematic

review is taking place is helpful, as it means we can allocate staffing resources appropriately based on the anticipated number of requests and provide researchers with a realistic turnaround time for requests. Researchers should note that items required digitally are usually intended for individual use due to copyright restrictions. Should multiple individuals within the project require access, each person would need to be supplied with their own copy.

5. Access for Partner Institutions and Guests

5.a. Under the educational licences available, use of most digital resources is restricted to students and staff as authorised users of the University and requires authentication to verify that the user is a member of the University. Students studying with partner institutions may have limited access to some digital resources depending on the publisher licence, particularly in the areas of Law, Business and Construction. The Academic Librarians can help to confirm resource availability particularly if planning new courses or collaborative provision.

5.b. Physical information resources are not subject to the same licence and access restrictions. Guest User membership of the library is available, subject to approval, for non-Leeds Beckett Staff and students; this provides access to print but not digital resources. Full details of guest membership categories are available on the Library website.

6. Responsible, Sustainable Procurement and Management

6.a. LLS aims to maintain a representative and balanced collection which reflects:

- Quality and currency
- The needs of undergraduate, postgraduate and research communities
- Disability support
- Global experience
- The requirements of individual subject areas
- Different types of resources

6.b. Strategic development of the collections is informed by academic and student input, the use of management data and usage statistics; and through benchmarking data against that of comparator universities.

6.c. Information resources are subject to both annual above inflation price rises and VAT charges which create financial pressures. The scholarly publication landscape is transitioning from annual subscriptions to Open Access, and this is creating new complexities for access to large journal packages and payment of article processing charges (APCs).

6.d. To maintain a balance between book and journal provision Schools are encouraged to review their journal requirements annually – de-selecting less relevant or well-used resources in favour of new or more relevant titles. To support decision making, book and journal subscriptions with low usage statistics will be flagged with the course team/School, where such data is available. Journal subscriptions may be started at any time, but cancellations are best notified during the summer to comply with cancellation notice periods required by publishers.

6.e. The latest edition of a textbook is provided where possible, with automatic purchase of new editions of regularly updated essential titles. Where the difference between editions, both print and/or digital, is not significant, earlier editions may continue to be made available to increase provision. Paperbacks are purchased in preference to hardback copies as this format is more cost-effective.

6.f. LLS participates in both national and regional purchasing consortia agreements offering substantial discounts on retail prices to ensure that maximum value for money is achieved. The choice of supplier is defined by these agreements with participating suppliers providing an agreed discount and undertaking to meet defined service levels and current legislation e.g., ethical procurement, digital footprint, and modern anti-slavery legislation. Supplier performance, including supply times and quality of service, is monitored and reviewed twice a year.

6.g. Collections are reviewed regularly to ensure they remain relevant, current and of high quality. Items are considered obsolete and withdrawn from stock if they contain out of date information, are damaged beyond repair, are in obsolete formats, or are in a subject no longer taught or researched in the University and which is unlikely to be re-introduced. Withdrawn items are disposed of responsibly via a UK charity supporting literacy programmes worldwide, with any funds thus obtained becoming part of LLS's income.

6.h. In order to keep collections relevant to current University teaching and research activities, items offered for donation may not always be accepted. Accepting donated items has space and resource implications, even if the items themselves are free. Donations will be considered on a case by case basis, with preference given to items of interest to the Archive and Special Collections.

6.i. Print-only serials and those offering limited or unstable digital access are retained according to a retention schedule agreed with the relevant School(s). Journals are increasingly being published digitally but print editions continue to be popular in art and other subjects where image quality is important.

6.1 Just in time provision

6.1.a. No institution can provide access to every information resource that may potentially be required. Recognising this, LLS utilises other carefully selected external services to provide access on demand to resources not held in the institution.

6.1.b. As outlined above, staff and students may request non-reading list items not already in stock via the Request it! service. Requests for fiction and workbooks are out of scope.

6.1.c. In addition, LLS is a member of the SCONUL (Society of College, National and University Libraries) Access scheme which enables research students, full time postgraduate students, part time and distance learning students to borrow print materials from a selection of other academic libraries across the country. The scheme also grants full-time undergraduate students access to participating libraries to consult, but not borrow or print items. Staff and students at other institutions may access the Leeds Beckett Libraries on similar terms. Application is online via the SCONUL website <https://www.sconul.ac.uk/sconul-access>.

6.1.d. The University holds copyright and recording licences which enable compliant, limited digitisation of texts (for example book chapters and journal articles) and the recording and sharing of media. This enables simultaneous access of key texts by students. LLS's Copyright Advice Service can provide guidance on copyright and digital materials in relation to learning, teaching and research.

7. Accessible, Representative, and Inclusive Collections

7.a. Digital resources are assessed not only based on their content but also on accessibility, origin of content, functionality, technical considerations, such as authentication, as well as the terms and conditions under which the resources may be used. LLS's webpages and services are WCAG (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines) 2.2 compliant wherever possible and we lobby external suppliers to meet the current WCAG standard and to provide an accessibility statement for their platform or resource.

7.b. Students with a disability may require key course materials in an accessible format, usually digital. For these students, the text of a book is acquired in a suitable accessible digital format from a variety of sources, including already purchased Library ebooks, RNIB Bookshare and digital files directly from publishers. These books usually take the form of PDF files, which enable the student to view the resource on a computer and use assistive software to have it read aloud. The PDF files also enable the student to change aspects of the book such as text size, font style and colour.

7.c. Stock is acquired based on its relevance to teaching and / or research; some materials may be sensitive in nature, and some users may be offended by some content. Items within the Archives and Special Collections in particular may present historical perspectives that were prevalent at the time of their creation, but which are no longer acceptable within society. All such materials are provided for the purpose of objective study and the intent is to present a broad range of perspectives to encourage academic discussion. The materials do not represent

the views of the University, LLS, or course team. Students and staff are encouraged to recommend resources for addition to the collections and reading lists to ensure these remain current and reflect the lived experiences of the entire University community.

7.d. All items in the main collection may be searched for via LLS's search tool, Discover, which enables simultaneous searching across both digital and print resources. Discover uses globally shared records and subject headings, including Library of Congress Subject Headings, which are slow-moving in comparison to modern language development and can be both North American-centric, and sometimes outdated and therefore potentially offensive. To mitigate these concerns, LLS adds additional local terms that display first in response to searches. However, because we are using a shared catalogue system with thousands of libraries worldwide, we are unable to remove the global term, which may still appear in some circumstances. Instead, we work within the library sector to encourage development and adoption of updated terminology.

8. Collaborative Identification of Resources

8.a. The successful implementation of this plan is dependent upon collaboration between LLS, academic staff and students as set out below.

8.1 Library and Learning Services

8.1.a. LLS's Leadership Team is responsible for the implementation, review and updating of this plan.

8.1.b. Academic Librarians are the principal channels of communication between Schools and LLS. They are responsible for liaison with academic staff and students about new resource acquisitions and withdrawals.

8.2 Academic Staff

Academic staff are encouraged to engage with LLS in planning resources for new and current courses, to provide the service with module reading lists, and to recommend resources for addition to the collections for both teaching and research.

8.3 Students

Students are encouraged to recommend appropriate resources for addition to the library and to feedback on their experience of using the service, including the extent to which resources meet their needs. The LLS Leadership Team meets regularly with the Students' Union Officer Team to discuss issues important to students, whilst Academic Librarians attend School fora and committees to address any LLS issues which arise.

Library and Learning Services Leadership Team, September 2025

For review September 2026