

Collection Policy for History (British & Western Europe)

This policy describes in general terms the purpose and scope of Oxford's collection relating to the History of Britain and Western Europe and the constituencies served.

Separate policies exist for related collections, e.g. US History, Eastern Europe, African & Commonwealth studies, History of Art and History of Science & Medicine and Special Collections Western Manuscripts.

1. Overview

1.1 General coverage of subject in OULS

Collections in Oxford for the study of the history of the British Isles and Western Europe are one the second finest and most extensive in the UK, after those held by the British Library. They provide remarkably rich resources for staff and students of the University as well as many researchers from worldwide.

The Bodleian Library is the central research library of the University and offers access to in-depth research level collections for British and Western European History on a reference-only basis. Researchers benefit from almost unparalleled access to manuscripts, archives (medieval to modern), early printed works, newspapers, maps, microforms collections, and modern printed monographs and journals.

Related research collections are also held elsewhere in Oxford, most notably in the Taylor Institution Library, the library of the Maison Française d'Oxford and in some college libraries.

The research collections are supplemented by the lending and teaching collections held primarily at the History Faculty Library (HFL). The HFL is funded to serve the substantial student population of the History Faculty, which is one of the largest in the country with an unparalleled range and choice of over 100 courses. Emphasis in the degree course is on British and Western European history and history of specific areas (India, Southern Africa, US, Russia, etc.). World and comparative history is increasingly taught as well as contemporary history, trends which the HFL collection follows, funds permitting. The Faculty also places much importance on the use of primary source material within the undergraduate degree.

Related teaching materials are also held on the open shelves (but for reference only) in the Upper Camera Reading Room, Bodleian Library, and in the Social Science Library (SSL). The SSL is a lending library whose holdings of 20th-century political and social history and history of political thought are of particular interest to historians.

SOLO is Oxford's discovery tool to locate the vast collections of books and journals in the OULS libraries. A small proportion of the HFL's primary sources collection is not recorded on the online library catalogue. A separate card catalogue is available in the Library.

1.1 Legal Deposit

The Bodleian Library's extraordinary strength in British History, in both breadth and depth of the printed collections, derives primarily from the workings of the legal deposit privilege which the Library has enjoyed since 1610.

Early printed books published in England and received by the Bodleian Library since 1610 serve as primary sources for the modern historian. Critical monographic works, modern printed source material but also popular titles on British History are received substantially through Legal Deposit.

Modern Legal Deposit titles are, to a large extent, placed in the Bodleian Library's bookstack. Wherever possible, titles important for the Honour School of Modern History degree are placed on open shelves in the Upper Camera, Bodleian Library, and those important for research on the open shelves in the Upper Reading Room, Bodleian Library.

UK titles published within the last 2 years are actively claimed, wherever possible, by the staff in the Bodleian's Copyright Receipt Office. If despite a claim a title fails to arrive and the claim is signed off, then generally the title will be purchased in order to complete the collections. However, delays, often of some months, in the receipt of UK publications may occur.

1.3 Electronic resources

The range of electronic resources available to historians of all periods is increasing ever more. They provide historians with 24/7 remote access to research and teaching materials (unique or alternatives in print) and with a range of discovery tools. Resources are typically bibliographical databases, collections of primary source materials, electronic alternatives to journals and/or books or research aids for biographical or reference research. There is good coverage for all periods, medieval to modern. The use of full-text searchable text opens up new avenues of research for historians, who are traditionally text based. For instance, electronic resources increasingly embed additional useful information, such as textual comments or geo-spatial information.

The History Faculty is more and more keen to use electronic resources for both teaching and research purposes. Therefore the policy is actively to expand an already impressive list of online subscriptions, to compile useful lists of open-access resources and to support digitisation projects.

Digital mapping facilities in the Map Department, Bodleian Library, enable historians to produce their own maps. As well as using personal research data, users can use historic mapping data from electronic resources such as UKBorders and Digimap.

Electronic resources (databases and electronic journals) are accessed through OxLIP+, the interface for electronic resources, and OU E-Journals portal, which provides access to e-journals.

Examples of some important resources are as follows:

Bibliographical databases

- Historical Abstracts; America: History & Life
- Royal Historical Society Bibliography
- International Medieval Bibliography

Primary or Full-text databases

- Medieval SourcesOnline
- Early English Books Online (EEBO)
- Eighteenth Century Collections Online (ECCO)
- Making of the Modern World, 1450-1850 (MOMW)
- State Papers Online I: The Tudors (Domestic)
- House of Commons Parliamentary Papers, 1801-1900
- Macmillan Cabinet Papers, 1957-1963

Biographical databases
 World Biographical Information System (WBIS)
 Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (DNB)
Newspaper databases
 Times Digital Archive, 1785-1985
 19th century UK newspapers
Electronic journals
 JSTOR
 Oxford Journals Online
 Cambridge Journals Online
Electronic books
 ACLS Humanities eBooks
 NetLibrary

1.4 Notes about particular formats or collections

Thanks largely to Legal Deposit, of particular note are collections of historical British newspapers (good national, regional and local coverage), historical trade directories (good regional coverage), historical statistics and Official Publications. Also of note are important microform collections, such as the Thomason Tracts.

1.5 Languages

Dating back to the early 17th century, Sir Thomas Bodley's interest in the Continent established the Bodleian Library's tradition of purchasing extensively in many languages.

Current selection criteria focus largely on German, French and Italian publications, and, resources permitting, also on the Benelux, Spanish, Portuguese and Scandinavian publications. Titles intended for research are usually bought in the original language.

Secondary material for teaching purposes is largely in the English language. However, most primary source material purchased for the HFL will be in the original language. These are mostly the principal Western European languages but also include Russian and Latin. Where authoritative translations of sources exist, they are actively selected for the teaching collections in both the Bodleian Library and the HFL.

Occasionally, Faculty will provide their own translations of sources which are included in e.g. Document Packs (c.f. 2.2.2).

2. Teaching collections

The History Faculty Library (HFL) holds the great majority of the borrowable teaching collections for History of Britain and Western Europe, as well as those of other areas. They are all available on open shelves and for lending to staff and students of the University.

Additionally, undergraduates make extensive use the Bodleian's collections, which are held to a smaller degree on the open shelves in the Upper Camera, Bodleian Library, and otherwise in the Bodleian Library's bookstack.

2.1 Textbooks

In the selection of textbooks, the HFL is first and foremost guided by the Faculty's reading lists and degree programmes.

Generally speaking and subject to funding, the HFL aims to purchase as many titles as possible on reading lists, unless, particularly in the case of

interdisciplinary topics or substantial reading lists, the books are completely unrelated to History. Reading lists can be over 50 pages long and a degree of informed selection is therefore necessary. Where appropriate and necessary, staff will liaise with other libraries over selection and provision.

The Faculty also expects the HFL to remain alert to trends in historical scholarship and to keep abreast of shifts in the way history is being taught. Therefore the Library will actively buy newly published critical monographs on History, provided they are suitable for undergraduate and postgraduate level.

In the Bodleian Library, most textbook material arrives via Legal Deposit and any missing titles are bought separately.

2.1.1 Levels of provision (undergraduate)

If a textbook from a reading list is selected for purchase, then normally one lending copy will be bought in the first instance. If the title is for a highly subscribed course or should evidence from enquiries, circulation and reservation activities indicate high use, then additional copies will be bought, sometimes over time, to support the higher demand. Provisions and usage of titles in other OULS libraries will also inform a decision about how many copies to purchase. As a matter of preference, the Library will try to secure an electronic copy first before buying duplicates in print.

Every attempt is made to buy multiple copies of out-of-print titles if they are needed for a course. However, there may be delays in receipt as sourcing these is unpredictable.

Reading lists as well as book fetching statistics are used in the Upper Camera as a means of updating the open-shelf collection according to need and use.

2.1.2 Levels of provision (taught)

Resources permitting, the HFL always hopes to make the same level of provision for taught course graduates as for undergraduates.

2.2 Primary source materials

The study of primary sources is the main purpose for historians and the Oxford degree course places much emphasis on teaching students how to interpret and understand the sources.

In addition to the vast collections of the Bodleian Library, the HFL attempts to buy for the lending collection as many relevant modern and affordably priced editions of source material as possible.

Volumes in long running major series and more costly items, as well as copies of sources in high demand, will be placed in the reference collection. A collection of sources primarily for British history is maintained and added to on a regular basis while a collection of sources for other western European countries (France, Germany, Italy) are occasionally purchased.

Increasingly undergraduates requiring material for their dissertation make use of the Bodleian Library's vast collection of primary source material (printed or archival).

2.2.1 Set Texts

The HFL holds a Reserve Collection of Set Texts. These are selected primary source materials which students are required to study in detail for the Honour School of Modern History (Gobbet papers). Some of the texts are in foreign languages, esp. German, French, Spanish, with some in Russian and Latin. The texts are mostly available as monographs, though are often out-of-print titles.

As a policy but subject to financial constraints, one confined and two lending copies are purchased. Additional copies will be purchased over time if high demand is evident. Preference will be given to securing an electronic copy first.

The Bodleian will additionally hold these more specialised titles in its bookstacks.

2.2.2 Document Packs

Selected sources are made available as photocopies to support a number of Optional, Further and Special Subjects. These Document Packs are compilations of copies of out-of-print, scarce or fragile source material, and some copyright-cleared material.

Copies are available for sale to students and provided free of charge to tutors. Bound sets are available in the HFL (2 lending sets and 1 reference set) and in the Upper Camera (1 reference set). It is planned to create and maintain this collection in digital format and make it available through the Faculty or HFL WebLearn space.

2.3 Reference collection

Both the HFL and Upper Camera maintain a small quick reference collection for students. The collections consist of language and historical dictionaries, biographical reference works and printed bibliographies.

The first copies of a major series of historical reference works, for instance *New Oxford History of England*, will normally be confined to the library with affordable lending copies purchased selectively over time.

Reference works are confined to the libraries. Increasingly they are also available electronically (e.g. *Oxford Reference Online*, *Cambridge Histories Online*, *Blackwell Reference Online*).

2.4 Journals

Reference-only sets of the most important British history journals are available on open shelves in both the HFL and either the Upper Camera or Upper Reading Room of the Bodleian Library. Use of, and subscriptions to, electronic journals is actively encouraged by library and Faculty staff.

2.5 Maps

The HFL has a small but useful collection of historical wall maps which are used for teaching purposes. The Library aims to buy maps if requested by convenors and provided funding is available.

2.6 Multimedia materials

Occasionally tutors include multimedia materials, e.g. video or DVD, on reading lists. For set texts, as opposed to reading list material, the policy is purchase one confined copy and two lending copies.

3. Research collections

The majority of the research collections relating to the History of Britain and Western Europe are held in the Central Bodleian Library reading rooms and bookstacks.

They are supplemented by holdings in other libraries in Oxford, most notably the Taylor Institution Library, which specialises in Western European literature & language and the Enlightenment, the Sackler Library, which has holdings on related subjects Archaeology and the Classics, and the library of the Maison Française d'Oxford and its holdings of French titles.

3.1 Research books

In recognition of the Bodleian Library's aims to be a "national and international scholarly resource", the policy is to select research material for British and Western European History as broadly and deeply as appropriate (in terms of period, geographical and thematic coverage) for the local research community in the first instance and the international research community, where funds permit it. Most material will be scholarly monographs or modern printed primary source material. While the benefits of Legal Deposit cannot be denied, the policy is, however, ultimately subject to sufficient funding for purchased material.

Research material on British legal history is collected and held by the Bodleian Law Library.

A degree of duplication between the Bodleian Library and the HFL is deliberately but selectively practised in order to support students and members of the Faculty in their work.

3.2 Monograph serials / standing orders

The Bodleian Library has standing orders for all major monographic series publications on History and its auxiliary subjects from German-speaking countries, France, Italy and, to a lesser degree, from Spain and the Benelux countries. The series may be publications of critical works or printed compilations of primary sources.

Major series of printed primary sources are generally placed on open shelf in the Upper Reading Room, Bodleian Library.

Also collected are printed inventories of national, selective regional and even local archives, whose holdings are of particular value to historians.

3.3 Journals

In addition to journals received under Legal Deposit, the Bodleian Library subscribes to all important general and specialist history journals. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, it is OULS policy to pay for only one subscription, though there may be an additional Legal Deposit set. The paid subscription may support electronic access or secure it at some point in the future.

Space permitting, major British history journals received under Legal Deposit are generally placed in the Upper Reading Room, as are all the purchased key journals for German, French and Italian history.

Use of, and subscriptions to, electronic journals is actively encouraged by library and Faculty staff.

3.4 Library & exhibition catalogues for History of the Book

In addition to the purchase of monographs and primary source material relevant to the study of bibliography and the history of the book, the Library also aims to acquire published library catalogues of other libraries and collections, where these are not available through legal deposit. Recent purchases of this sort have included catalogues of incunabula and other rare books held in the collections of continental libraries.

Furthermore, catalogues of important exhibitions of manuscripts and books mounted in libraries, museums, and galleries in Europe, and in the US, are routinely bought by the Library, again where these are not acquired under Legal Deposit.

4. Special collections

Potentially all Special Collections materials are of fundamental value to historians of British and Western Europe. The Bodleian Library has been stimulating and supporting research for more than 400 years, and throughout this time it has been the rare books, manuscripts, archives, maps, music, and other primary research collections that have been at the forefront of this work.

There are too many excellent collections to name individually. However, particular strengths of the Bodleian Library's Special Collections are:

- medieval manuscripts & documents (British, Continental, Byzantine);
- incunabula (British & Continental), early printed and rare books;
- extensive 17th-century collections of manuscripts, including State Papers relating to the Civil War and Restoration in Britain and Ireland; and printed material including contemporary newsbooks and pamphlets;
- British antiquarian and topographical manuscripts;
- collections on the history of the University and town of Oxford, held in the Bodleian Library and University Archives;
- Thomason Tracts, a compendium of broadsides on the English Civil War printed between 1640 and 1661;
- a collection of printed ephemera (John Johnson Collection);
- early English newspapers 1672-1737 (John Nichols collection);
- Modern Political Papers, which are particularly rich for 19th- and 20th-century British political and diplomatic history.

The Bodleian Library holds one of the world's principal cartographic collections. Historians will therefore find the extensive map collections (historical & contemporary maps, maps representing statistical, social and economic information) valuable for their work as well as worthy a study in their own right.

For those researching popular cultural history, the Music Section of the Bodleian Library, the second largest music research library in Great Britain, holds substantial collections of British Music Hall songs, concert programmes, etc.

Finally, some Oxford college libraries, such as the libraries of Christ Church and All Souls', hold fine archival and rare book collections.

5. Subject coverage of selected purchased material

In addition to the legal deposit intake and general works, OULS will purchase non-deposited material in the following specific subjects:

Primary and Secondary material for	
Art history (see History of Art Policy)	Intellectual history; history of ideas
Byzantine history	Jewish history
Comparative history	Legal & constitutional history (selectively)
Ecclesiastical & church history	Local & regional history
Cultural history	Military & naval history (selectively)
Diplomatic & international history	Political history
Economic history	Social history
Genealogy (selectively); Heraldry	History of Science, Technology & Medicine (see History of STM Policy)
Historical geography (selectively)	Urban & rural history
History of the Book; Museum & library studies	Women & gender history
Imperial & colonial history	World history

Auxiliaries	
Specialised bibliographies & reference works	Inventories of relevant archives
Biographical or critical works of important historians	Oral history
Historiography, historical method	Philosophy of history
History and Computing	Palaeography & diplomatic

Period coverage	
Late Roman & Medieval (c. 300-1500)	Early Modern (1500-1789)
Modern (1789-contemporary)	

Formats	
Archival	Multimedia (video, DVD)
Electronic	Printed
Microform	

Within the subjects, some periods, historical problems, areas, etc. are collected more selectively than others.

6. Names of those responsible for the collections

Isabel D. Holowaty, OULS History Librarian	isabel.holowaty@ouls.ox.ac.uk
History Faculty Library	01865 (2)77263
Bodleian Library	01865 (2)77294
HFL Teaching Collections	
Valerie Lawrence, Deputy Librarian, HFL	valerie.lawrence@ouls.ox.ac.uk
History Faculty Library	01865 (2)77262
Manuscripts	
Martin Kauffmann (Medieval mss)	martin.kauffmann@ouls.ox.ac.uk
Dept. of SCWMSS, Bodleian Library	01865 (2)77155
Mike Webb (Early modern mss)	mike.webb@ouls.ox.ac.uk
Dept. of SCWMSS, Bodleian Library	01865 (2)77164
Helen Langley (Modern mss)	helen.langley@ouls.ox.ac.uk
Dept. of SCWMSS, Bodleian Library	01865 (2)77048
Rare Books	
Clive Hurst, Head of Rare Books	clive.hurst@ouls.ox.ac.uk
Dept. of SCWMSS, Bodleian Library	01865 (2)77023
History of the Book	
Alan Coates, Rare Books	alan.coates@ouls.ox.ac.uk
Dept. of SCWMSS, Bodleian Library	01865 2(7)77072
John Johnson Collection	
Julie Anne Lambert	julie-anne.lambert@ouls.ox.ac.uk
Dept. of SCWMSS, Bodleian Library	01865 (2)77047