INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED LEGAL STUDIES
LIBRARY COLLECTION AND RETENTION POLICY

Introduction

Mission statement

1. The role of the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies is to conduct research; to promote and facilitate, within London and nationally and internationally, research and scholarship at an advanced level across the whole field of law; to disseminate the results of such research and scholarship; and to provide to all those undertaking research in law a library facility with up to date technology, that is international in character and standing.

2. The Library supports this role by collecting, maintaining and developing extensive research collections of national, international and comparative legal research material to meet the present and future needs of the legal research community. It acquires such material in the most appropriate format and undertakes to retain it indefinitely.

Purpose of the policy

3. The policy serves three main purposes. It provides a general guide for the Library to the materials to be acquired, retained and preserved in order to ensure consistency and allow the Library to support fully the mission of the Institute. It is designed to inform the legal research community of the scope of the library's collections. It assists other libraries in forming their own collection strategies for research materials in law and it facilitates collaborative arrangements with other legal research libraries in the provision of access to resources.

4. The policy sets out the basic considerations affecting the Library's selection and retention decisions and describes in general terms the levels at which it aims to collect different jurisdictions and categories of material.

Responsibility and review

5. The Information Resources Manager is responsible for writing the policy with the Librarian in consultation with the Library Committee and the Acquisitions and Electronic Resources groups.

6. The policy is reviewed regularly to ensure that it continues to reflect the needs of the legal research community and the Library's relationship with other national and international research libraries.

Library users

7. The Institute's library serves a number of discrete constituencies.

8. Its primary user group is the national and overseas academic research community, in particular because it is so well equipped to support in-depth research into comparative law.
9. It provides for the research needs of the academic and postgraduate research community of the colleges and institutes of the University of London.

10. The Library also makes particular provision for taught course postgraduate students from a number of universities.

11. The library plays an important part in the administration of justice by making the print academic research collections available on a subscription basis to the practising profession, members of the judiciary, government departments, and a variety of commercial and charitable organisations. However, their needs do not drive the development of the collections.

12. Finally the Library plays a significant role in the professional development and support of law librarians both nationally and internationally

   See appendix I for details of special provision for particular groups of library users

General description of the Library’s holdings.

13. The collection contains over 286,000 volumes and more than 2,800 current print serial titles together with a wide range of electronic legal resources. The Library aims to collect widely across all law topics including those which reflect trends in legal scholarship such as socio-legal studies. However it does not collect subject areas more appropriately covered by other libraries within the University of London such as criminology. It monitors the development of new subject areas of interest to legal researchers to maintain a current collection relevant to the changing needs of legal research. Its main areas of strength are:

   Comprehensive collections from all UK jurisdictions; a large range of official publications, treaties and journals; good collections from most Western European countries, particularly strong for Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Switzerland and Scandinavia. (There are limited but developing collections for Central and Eastern Europe mainly in translation); very strong collections from the countries of the Commonwealth (excluding Pakistan and Bangladesh and there is limited federal material for India); a good collection for the United States, including a set of the US Code Annotated and the National Reporter System and over 200 current law reviews; a limited range of materials from Latin America focusing on Argentina and Brazil; a good public international law collection covering the legal aspects of many international organisations and the major treaty series; strong collections in comparative law, supporting the high level of research in this field, and in private international law; good collections in jurisprudence, war crimes, 19th century material, legal reference and bibliography and Roman-Dutch law; several special collections that include unique and unpublished material are integrated with the main collection; two archive collections: the Records of Legal Education and the archives of the Institute itself.

   See appendix II for further details and for a description of collecting levels by jurisdiction.

General collection development principles

Collaboration
14. As part of its role in supporting and promoting national and international legal research in the UK and overseas, the library is active in a number of partnerships with other libraries and organisations, both specialist and multi-disciplinary. These take the form of collaborative acquisitions of print and electronic resources and also taking the lead in various web-based initiatives such as the legal content of Intute, the Current legal research topics database and hosting the British and Irish Legal Information Institute.

15. The libraries within the University of London have always co-operated over acquisitions and access to avoid unnecessary overlap in their collections; to take account of particular specialisations and to ensure that researchers have access to all the resources they require. The library collaborates with non-academic libraries including the British Library and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Law Library over the provision of certain specialist categories of material. The Library also works with overseas partners: it is a charter member of LLMC-Digital, a US-based cooperative of libraries formed with the aim of preserving legal titles and government documents in microform and digital formats and making these available to legal research libraries at cost; and it is one of the first international affiliates of the North Eastern Law Library Consortium based in the US.

See appendix III for details of the Library’s collaborative partnerships.

**Permanent retention of scholarly resources**

16. The Library aims to acquire and retain permanently resources of lasting scholarly value in full text and in the most appropriate format. It also makes available resources designed for short-term use such as reference tools and finding aids.

**Comparative legal research**

17. The main aim of the Library’s collecting policies has always been to facilitate comparative legal research. To this end it purchases resources for a wide range of jurisdictions, including those which are not within its main focus. Such material is usually acquired in a Western European language.

**Primary legal material**

18. The Library gives priority to primary legal materials (legislation, law reports and their associated finding aids) over secondary materials especially for those jurisdictions that are not collected in any depth.

**Practitioner titles**

19. The Library does not purchase titles aimed at the legal practitioner, such as specialist practice handbooks, current awareness titles or reprinted primary material with no supporting scholarly commentary. However, many practitioner works are also the standard work on a particular subject and these are acquired. The Library also purchases the standard works on practice and procedure.

**Language**

20. The Library normally purchases materials in Western European languages. It acquires English translations of important material, particularly legislation, when available.
Legal history

21. The Library does not normally collect research material on ancient law, however it does maintain a small representative collection of standard textbooks on Roman law and editions of the Institutes and commentaries. It also purchases books by and about the great jurists dealing with their contribution to the development of law. The Library does not normally collect research material on medieval law (before the 17th century) although it does maintain subscriptions to the publications of the Selden and Stair Societies which essentially provide primary sources for the period. It does not normally collect customary or pre-colonial law for American, African and Asian jurisdictions. Ancient law is collected by the Institute of Classical Studies and University College London; Medieval and early English law is collected by the Institute of Historical Research and the Warburg Institute; customary and pre-colonial law for Africa and Asia is collected by the School of Oriental and African Studies.

Special types of material

Special Collections

22. The whole of the Institute Library is essentially a special collection in law and most volumes are available for consultation within the library only. The collection includes a number of rare and early printed volumes with the earliest dating to 1525. However, the library is also a working collection for legal scholars and its primary aim is to make research material available in the most effective manner. To this end all volumes are integrated within the collection. Older and more fragile material is kept in a secure closed basement, searchable in the web catalogue and available on demand.

Official publications

23. Government publications, including statistics, are collected if they are of legal significance and are integrated into the collection.

24. The Library does not attempt to collect government publications comprehensively for any jurisdiction even the UK. There are comprehensive collections of Parliamentary and official publications for the UK, the Commonwealth, the USA and most intergovernmental organisations within the University of London and the Library relies on these to provide access to material of peripheral interest to legal research.

See appendix IV for further details.

Theses

25. The Library holds one print copy of every University of London PhD thesis in law since 1949. The Library will also collect electronic versions of the dissertations graded II (i) and above from its own masters students and make these available in the IALS part of the SAS e-repository

Theses and dissertations for other degrees are collected by the individual colleges and schools and are not held at the Institute. PhD theses from other universities may also be acquired if they fall within the Library’s collection policy.
Archives

26. The Library holds two archive collections: the Records of Legal Education and the Institute’s own archives. Current lists of both collections are maintained on the Library’s website.

27. The Records of Legal Education archive contains material deposited by organisations and individuals prominent in the field of legal education. The Library does not actively seek to collect such material but may take in selected material for which there is no other suitable home and makes it available to researchers visiting the Institute. The material is conserved where necessary and detailed descriptions are put on the Institute’s website. Information about the archives is also available on the University of London Research Library Service and the AIM25 databases.

28. The Institute’s own archives are made available in the same way.

Methods of acquiring and providing access to materials

Multiple copies

29. The Library does not normally purchase multiple copies of titles. However, there are two exceptions to this: the most heavily used law reports for England and Wales together with a few important journals and the most heavily used treatises for students following an LLM programme with the University of London. The decision to purchase additional copies is based on recommendation, student numbers and actual demand. The Library will normally purchase two copies but up to four in cases of exceptional demand. See also appendix I (LLM students).

Format and duplication

30. The choice of format for material in the Library’s collections is influenced by the need to deliver information as efficiently as possible and to retain research material permanently.

31. The Library acquires material in electronic format when this is likely to meet the requirements of researchers for more efficient searching and for remote access. To this end, online services are preferred to CD ROM where possible. Over time, the proportion of material available in electronic format will increase as reliability and stability improves and the Library is actively assisting in the digitising of historic Commonwealth legal material which it holds.

32. Print and microform are the formats most suited for long term retention and most research material which is intended to be held permanently is acquired in print. Some older, low-use foreign primary material and legal bibliographies are acquired or replaced in microform as this allows for the most efficient use of space for low use and bulky material.

33. There is a certain amount of duplication of material in print and electronic where this is considered appropriate for heavily used resources such as the main series of UK legislation and law reports and major journals. This allows many more researchers to access the material and in some cases, permits a reduction in the number of print
sets. It also has the advantage of helping with the long term preservation of the print material.

34. Several categories of material are made available only in electronic form because they offer a more efficient way of identifying material than their print equivalents. These include finding aids such as digests, legal directories and article indexes. Electronic format may be selected as being more efficient than print when the latter requires a heavy investment in staff time to maintain currency with no provision for keeping old content. Some material which is useful but of less permanent research value, such as US law journals from the smaller law schools, is also made available electronically rather than in print.

   See appendix V for further details of the Library’s electronic resources policy.

Gifts

35. The Library welcomes outright donations of material that it does not already hold and which falls within its collection criteria. Collections of material are accepted provided that the Library can retain only those items it requires. The Library does not undertake to keep collections together but will integrate volumes into its collection in order to make the most efficient use of the material. Both current and superseded editions of monographs and current or closed runs of serials are welcomed. A book plate acknowledging the donation is normally inserted into monographs. Gifts that do not fit into the Library’s collection policy may be offered to another appropriate research library if it fits with that library’s collection profile.

Exchanges

36. The Library seeks to establish exchange agreements with other research libraries, particularly university libraries, where it would otherwise be difficult to obtain their publications. The exchange list is regularly reviewed and new partners are sought to enable the Library to improve its holdings of material which is otherwise difficult to obtain.

Management of the collections

Location

Print resources

37. The Library aims to make its print collections directly accessible to readers by shelving them on open access and on site. However, in order to make monograph material easier to use and to ensure that the most up to date editions are readily available, the material on the open shelves is reviewed regularly and items are selected for the reserve collection which is currently shelved on site on closed access and is available on demand. The Library’s intention is to remove the rare and fragile volumes from this collection and make the main part of the reserve material available separately and in classified order on site and on open access if suitable space can be found. Ideally complete sets of serial titles, excluding the rare and fragile material, should be shelved together on open access but currently space problems in the Russell Square building make it necessary to split sets and shelve earlier volumes on closed access.
38. Currently, in addition to shelving older material on closed access, the Institute Library has been forced to store some material off-site because shortage of space is such a serious problem in the existing Russell Square building. Such material is carefully selected according to strict guidelines.

See appendix VI for details of the guidelines used for the selection of material for closed access in Russell Square and off-site.

Electronic resources

39. User licences may restrict the availability of electronic resources to academic users. Wherever possible, these resources are made directly available to users within the library from any pc over the library network or over the internet. Increasingly, remote access is being made available to registered academic library users. Some titles are only available by password or via a stand-alone CD-ROM on designated pc's within the library and these must be requested at the Library Issue and Enquiry Desk.

See appendix V for further details on the provision of electronic resources.

Microform resources

40. Microfilm and microfiche resources are stored in cabinets on closed access and must be requested at the Library Issue and Enquiry desk. They are normally made available within 10 minutes of the request being made.

Retention

41. The Library retains permanently all material of value to legal researchers and to law librarians. It keeps one copy of each edition of all legal treatises and monographs and tries to acquire earlier editions of major works where these are not already in the collection. The library keeps one copy of all runs of serials of legal interest. Where appropriate, the Library will consider replacing print sets of foreign serial material with archival quality microform.

Withdrawal

42. The Library does not withdraw material unless it is a duplicate or of no permanent legal research value.

See appendix VII for further details of the Library’s policy on withdrawing material.

Disposal

43. The Library gives careful consideration to the most appropriate way to dispose of withdrawn material and will explore all possible options including donating volumes to appropriate libraries in the UK and overseas.

See appendix VIII for further details of the Library’s disposal policy

Conservation & preservation and disaster prevention & management
44. The Library takes an active approach to conservation and preservation. Although the Library has access to a large number of serials in electronic format, this cannot yet be regarded as a stable, long-term medium that would allow it to fulfil its policy of retaining permanent access to legal research material. Therefore the preservation of print resources is a high priority. The library has an active binding programme for new serials and for the rebinding of damaged and worn volumes.

45. The Library commissioned a professional preservation survey in 1999 and has put elements of it into practice as finances have allowed.

See appendix IX for details of the Library’s conservation and preservation procedures.

46. The Library has basic disaster management procedures in place; there is some equipment on site and the Library has an annual Priority User subscription with Harwell Document Restoration services which provides expertise and practical assistance when required. The Library is working on a detailed disaster management plan. The Institute’s Premises Manager carries out regular surveys of the building to identify and rectify potential problems quickly.

List of appendices

I Special provision for groups of library users
II The Library’s collections
III Collaborative partnerships
IV Official publications
V Electronic resources
VI Selection of print material for closed access
VII Categories of material to be withdrawn
VIII Disposal of withdrawn material
IX Conservation, preservation and disaster prevention & management