



ROYAL IRISH ACADEMY LIBRARY

COLLECTION POLICY

1. Background description of the library's existing collections

- 1.1 The library of the Royal Irish Academy is a research library best known for its holdings of Irish manuscripts and special collections of pamphlets and early printed books, principally of Irish interest, and its collections of early scientific publications.
- 1.2 Scholarly publications on Irish natural history, the history of Irish science, Irish archaeology, Irish history and the Irish language form major elements of the library's holdings, as well as such other works as the Librarian considers appropriate.
- 1.3 The library is an important Irish repository for periodicals and serial publications in the sciences and humanities (18th-20th centuries), formerly received on exchange, from academies and libraries worldwide.

2. Objectives of collection policy

- 2.1 The objective of this collection policy is to facilitate the best use of available resources to strengthen the library's holdings in its fields of special interest to support the work of the Academy and the research community it serves.

3. Acquisitions criteria

- 3.1 Material selected for purchase, in print or electronic media as appropriate, should provide appropriate reference and bibliographical tools, and secondary literature, to meet the needs of researchers using the Library's primary collections, and to support the work of the Academy including its current research projects.
- 3.2 Selection should be guided by relevance and academic quality.
- 3.3 Cost should not necessarily take precedence over relevance to research needs.
- 3.4 Duplication of stock is avoided.
- 3.5 Where appropriate, the acquisition of specialist low-use materials which would duplicate the holdings of other Dublin research libraries is avoided.
- 3.6 Revision of collection policy may be necessary to take account of changes in the work of the Academy and the research community it serves, and changes in the publishing environment.

4. Acquisitions priorities

The library seeks to acquire material in the following areas:

- 4.1 Scholarly publications on Irish archaeology and Irish history, including political, social and economic history, academic local history and biography.
- 4.2 Selected relevant historical and archaeological publications from the wider 'Celtic' world, of high academic standard.
- 4.3 Scholarly publications on Irish language and linguistics, and critical works on literature in the Irish language. Selected scholarly publications on related Celtic languages.
- 4.4 Selected scholarly publications relating to the Irish abroad.
- 4.5 Scholarly publications on Irish natural history, and on the history of Irish science.
- 4.6 Significant publications of Academy members, books about Academy members, and other publications directly relevant to the work of the Academy, past and present. Only in exceptional circumstances will donations of works associated with Academy members by provenance or in other ways (e.g. inscribed copies of author's work, etc.), be accepted. Informed decisions will be made by the Librarian on a case by case basis.
- 4.7 Antiquarian books, pamphlets and journals pertinent to the core collections.
- 4.8 Catalogues and bibliographies of manuscripts and printed works relevant to the library's research collections.

5. Donations and Deposit

5.1–5.6 Donations

Donations of particular manuscripts, antiquarian books or journal runs are accepted on condition that they meet the following criteria:

- 5.1 The item or collection should meet the general acquisitions criteria outlined at 3 *supra*.
- 5.2 Donations must have a demonstrated provenance and the donor must show that they have legal authority to transfer the material to the Academy.
- 5.3 The Library should either be accorded first refusal on items from the collection, or, be authorised to dispose of books or journals which are already held, and which do not constitute unique material.
- 5.4 Transfer to the Academy of ownership and rights in the collection must be signed off in a Donation agreement.
- 5.5 In the case of exceptionally large collections and depending on circumstances, the donor may be asked to contribute towards cataloguing and/or conservation costs.
- 5.6 Collections in a poor state of preservation may not be accepted if their condition would endanger other collections, especially if funding is not available to enable their conservation.

5.7–5.8 Deposit

- 5.7 In general, short-term deposits are not encouraged. Items/collections are not accepted on long-term or permanent loan. The Library cannot undertake to commit resources to the cataloguing and maintenance of such items. In exceptional circumstances, short-term loans may be accepted, e.g. for exhibition purposes or to facilitate greater engagement with a collection already *in situ*.
- 5.8 For operational reasons or project-related reasons, items may be deposited temporarily. In such cases, a short-term loan protocol must be adhered to and the owner must insure the item/s for the duration of the loan. This protocol, together with guidelines, receipt templates, etc. are available to heads of function and projects.

5.9–5.12 Bequests

- 5.9 In general, bequests of papers and of smaller monograph collections are welcomed, provided that these are germane to the Academy's core collections and accord with the Collection Policy.
- 5.10 Within the bounds of practicality, prospective bequests of papers, books or other material should be discussed in advance. If it is not possible to list a printed collection in advance, the prospective bequeather should accord the Library the right to dispose of monographs or journals already held by dispersal to other collections upon receipt, or if this proves impractical, by sale in support of the Library acquisition fund. Unpublished papers would be retained.
- 5.11 Offers of papers should always be highlighted in advance of a formal bequest being made.
- 5.12 In the case of bequests of material not within the Academy's scope, the Academy should be accorded the right to exercise a legal waiver to the bequest.

6. Periodicals and serial publications acquired by exchange

- 6.1 The Academy accepts selected publications of a limited number of academies and learned societies, provided that the publications received are of particular relevance to the Academy, and are not held elsewhere in Dublin.
- A very limited number of current titles held in other Dublin libraries may be accepted at the discretion of the library committee.
- 6.2 Termination of an exchange is made with due regard to the holdings of other Dublin libraries.
- 6.3 New exchange arrangements are not recommended.
- 6.4 Existing exchange agreements are subject to periodic review.

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