

COLLECTION MANAGEMENT POLICY

Library – Lending Collections

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Introduction

This policy is designed as a guidance document to inform and direct the nature and extent of the Library lending collections of the Royal College of Music. The increasing electronic information environment, budget constraints and limited space are all contributing factors in creating a collections management policy which is dynamic, and which reflects the unique approach to the provision of information resources that the College requires. This policy is intended to apply generally but exceptions may be necessary.

The Library Collection Management Policy takes into account the following:

- The unique nature of resources which support music
- The richness and depth of collections held in the library already
- The college's EDIB policies
- Course and repertoire development
- The need to develop dynamically given increasing access to electronic material and new methods of scholarly communication
- The need to preserve such material, reflecting the national and international significance of our holdings

General Selection Criteria

1. In practice, resource selection is a partnership between the library staff, professors, academic staff and students. Recommendations for purchase are actively encouraged from all members of the Library. The criteria for selecting Library materials include:
 - Development of repertoires to support the performance programme and curriculum
 - Development of repertoires to support wider College initiatives; eg the Equality, Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging policy.
 - Enhancement of the established collection, ie through contemporary music and modern editions of earlier repertoire.
 - Academic quality and intellectual level
 - Cost (expense may not preclude purchase where the need can be justified)

- Accessibility to users
- Format (taking into account access, licensing and space requirements)
- Availability through other sources
- Currency (as appropriate)

Formats

2. The Library will purchase and retain material in the following formats:
 - Printed material (books & scores)
 - Electronic (scores, music information and AV resources)
3. In the case of journals, music reference titles, journals and audiovisual material we will purchase electronic versions, unless none is available.
4. We prefer to purchase physical scores rather than pdfs, which need to be printed out.
5. For music text books we will purchase both physical and ebook versions, especially for popular titles. We will consider foreign language texts to support specific curriculum needs, but the standard will be English language based textbooks.

Retention and Withdrawal

6. It is the responsibility of the library team to make decisions regarding retention and withdrawal of material based on the following criteria:
 - Physical condition of material
 - Relevance to the curriculum
 - Access to the material in alternative formats (eg recordings via an e-resource)
7. With respect to the printed music collections, any stockwork on the collection will not affect the breadth of the music we hold for now and future groups of students. We will withdraw older editions of works where a modern edition exists but not the only edition of a work.
8. We will not employ usage data to make any decision on whether to keep items in the collection.
9. Works of historic or cultural value may be taken out of the lending collection and moved to the Special Collections. The acquisitions, retention and disposal of these collections are covered by a separate policy.

Challenges & Risks

10. Our ability to fulfil this policy is affected by the following challenges and risks:
 - We can only purchase published works (just because there is a recording doesn't mean a work is published)
 - Post Brexit delivery times have increased significantly for material coming into the UK
 - In the last few years, postage costs have increased substantially. Where possible we will bulk order titles from foreign publishers to reduce these. This will increase the time it will take to supply material
 - The library is not a copy shop so prefers to purchase physical scores rather than pdf copies

Donations

11. The Library welcomes donations and the collection has greatly benefited from them in the past. The same selection criteria are applied to donations as to general acquisitions. Issues of condition, space, format and teaching and research relevance are used to judge the value of all such material to the Library. The library retains the right to keep or dispose of any items that are offered. Any items which are not needed by the library will be passed onto students & staff of the RCM and this is made clear to any potential donors.
12. We have a couple of caveats:
 - The library no longer accepts CDs, LPs, cassettes or 78rpm discs
 - The library is unable to collect gifts so can only accept those which can be delivered to the college
 - Unless collections offered are of considerable historical significance, we are unable to keep them intact, but potential donors are welcome to get in touch to discuss their wishes or to receive suggestions as to possible alternative homes
13. Any donations of historic or culturally significant material, including composers' and musicians' archives, are covered by the separate Special Collections acquisitions policy.

Signatories and document history

Librarian

Peter Linnitt

September 2012

August 2025

Policy reviewed by

Collections Management Committee

February 2020, October 2025

Approved by

Council

October 2012, October 2020

Collections Committee

April 2020, December 2025