

Ebook/Book Collection Development Policy and Procedures for 2021/22

During lockdown, readers benefited from large additional contributions towards ebook purchases from the central University, from Colleges, and from Cambridge University Libraries (CUL). Many print collections were partially or fully inaccessible during this period, so an emphasis on large-scale ebook buying was vital.

Cambridge's print collections are expected to be able to play a far larger role in 21/22. Further University, College, and CUL contributions to support teaching and learning through ebook purchases have been provided for the new academic year, but at a lower level.

This document sets out how individual ebook titles and ebook packages will be acquired using this money by CUL, involving careful collaboration between library staff across the collegiate University. The document also contains a summary of CUL's approach to research-related collection development in 21/22.

Teaching and learning support

The 21/22 extra funding for ebooks will be divided into various funds.

One fund will be set aside to support ongoing subscriptions to ebook packages set up with 20/21 emergency funding, where usage and needs continue to be high.

The central ebooks@cambridge team will also set up subject-specific funds. The relevant school librarian will determine whether these funds should be kept at the school level and/or divided between specific departmental and faculty libraries. The division of the money will be led by student numbers. The use of these funds will be overseen by the relevant school/faculty/departmental library staff. The ebooks@cambridge team will provide these staff with regular reports on expenditure.

The subject-specific funds will be available for use for individual ebook purchases first and foremost but also for subscriptions to new ebook packages and etextbooks where these are vital and their use of the available funds (at the expense of individual purchases) judged to be appropriate by the relevant library staff.

There will also be a general fund, for individual title purchases which support a wide number of subjects.

Another fund will be created for the use of College librarians, who can request ebooks to support groups of students. The ebooks@cambridge team will help ensure good communication between College and faculty/departmental librarians with regard to purchases made from this fund. College library staff will make requests using a specific online spreadsheet that will be visible to all College librarians.

Faculty and departmental library staff will make requests directly to ebooks@lib.cam.ac.uk.

Students and teaching staff will make individual requests for ebooks to support teaching and learning through [a central form](#). The form divides requests by subject and by level of request; teaching and learning requests relate to the support of undergraduates and of Master's students for the taught component of their course. Teaching and learning requests will go directly to the relevant faculty/departmental library (FDL). FDLs will sign off each purchase (with titles costing \geq £200 to be confirmed by the relevant school librarian or by other local agreement) or will point the reader to other resources.

Purchases from the central subject funds will be made by the ebooks@cambridge team or by FDL staff set up to purchase ebooks directly.

Research support

Requests for research titles will go to the relevant team/specialist: chiefly the Collections and Academic Liaison (CAL) department of the main UL (or other UL language specialists) for most arts, humanities, and social sciences subjects, but to the Squire Law Library or the relevant STEMM library for law and STEMM requests respectively. CAL staff will help Squire and STEMM staff in the procurement of ebooks where needed.

Where only one chapter of a book is required, the reader will be pointed towards document delivery services. Where a research title is very expensive or was published more than 25 years ago, CAL will ask the reader to use the inter-library loans service.

Many research requests are bought as ebooks where available and unless unfeasibly expensive by comparison with print. Many books continue to be bought in print, however, especially any that are heavily illustrated.

Reader preferences with regard to e vs print will be taken into account where possible, but the decision ultimately rests with library staff. A research request that is likely to be used by students would, for example, be better bought as an ebook if possible, since it would be more easily accessed by a larger group. The main UL remains a single-copy library and will only duplicate ebook holdings with print copies or vice versa in rare cases.

Requests for 'proper' ebook or print versions of non-print legal deposit material (ebooks restricted to specific PCs in library premises) will be considered by CAL staff in collaboration with relevant faculty and departmental librarians, per [the policy here](#).

The UL aims to support all its readers. During our ongoing recovery from the Covid crisis, however, our budgets may need to continue to focus chiefly on material requested by current Cambridge staff and students.