



Royal Conservatoire
of Scotland

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Whittaker Library Collection Management Policy

Document Revision History

Version No.	Version Date	Prepared By	Approved By	Summary
1.1	August 2012	Caroline Cochrane	Caroline Cochrane	RCS Library Collection Management Policy
1.2	June 2015		Caroline Cochrane	Inclusion of Heritage Collection
1.3	April 2016		Caroline Cochrane	Inclusion of Scottish Print Retention agreement
1.4	Aug 2017	Karen McAulay	Caroline Cochrane	Job title updates, donations update
1.5	Aug 2018	Caroline Cochrane	Caroline Cochrane	Foreign language texts
1.6	Aug 2022	Caroline Cochrane	Caroline Cochrane	Inclusion of collection statement
1.7	Aug 2024	Catherine Small	Caroline Cochrane	Inclusion of Zines, Open Access, EDI additions, Digitisation and Sustainability



Whittaker Library Collection Management Policy

Introduction

This policy is designed as a guidance document to inform and direct the nature and extent of the Library collections of Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. The increasing electronic information environment, decreasing budgets 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 Royal Conservatoire 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 information resource support for the performing arts
- The richness and depth of collections built over the years
- The need to preserve such material, reflecting the national and international significance of our holdings
- The need to develop, in line with course development and curricula needs
- The need to develop dynamically given increasing access to electronic material and new methods of scholarly communication

General Selection Criteria

In practice, resource selection is a partnership between the library staff, academic staff and students. Underpinning this partnership is continuous liaison between Performing Arts Librarians and departmental staff. Recommendations for purchase are actively encouraged from all Library members. The criteria for selecting Library materials include:

- Relevance to the Royal Conservatoire curriculum
- Enhancement of the established collection
- 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)
- Duration of need
- Availability through other sources
- Currency (as appropriate)

The Performing Arts Librarians seek to ensure that the collection contains content which is diverse and reflects a range of global perspectives. We do however acknowledge that there will be unconscious bias when library staff are selecting materials.

Formats

The Library will purchase and retain material in the following formats:

- Paper

- Electronic
- Audiovisual

The library's preference will be to purchase e-content in the first instance, whilst considering the selection criteria listed above, and balancing the need between holdings and access. Only one format will be acquired unless there is a particularly strong case to do otherwise. We will consider foreign language texts to support specific curriculum needs, but the standard will be English language-based textbooks.

In conjunction with the general selection criteria, the criteria for evaluating potential resources will take into account the following:

- Quality and reliability
- Suitability and relevance to curriculum
- Authority and reputation of author
- Existing strength of collection in the same or related area
- Availability in accessible format where a known need exists

Retention and Withdrawal

It is the responsibility of the Performing Arts Librarians to make decisions regarding retention and withdrawal of material based on the following criteria:

- Relevance to the Royal Conservatoire curriculum
- Physical condition of material
- Usage
- Special significance of material, e.g. works of historical or cultural value, rare works
- Value of the work in the context of the collection as a whole
- Availability of alternative access formats
- Availability of material elsewhere
- Equality, diversity and inclusion considerations

Heritage Collection

We recognise that some materials have particular significance and require to be kept in the library collection, even if little used. These include such categories as: -

- LPs and other older formats where a digital version may never be available.
- Items of institutional, local, national or international significance, e.g. a recording, composition or playscript by an RCS alumnus; by a former or current staff-member; or by an individual or group of local, regional or national importance. The same would apply to, for example, a volume gifted to RCS on account of a previous owner's relationship with the institution, their musical annotations, or a handwritten dedication. (Such items might ultimately, but not necessarily, be directed to the RCS Archive.)

- Reference books (e.g. bibliographies of composers or instrumental repertoire, BBC Music Library catalogues, etc) which may never be available digitally.
- Works of particular Scottish interest (either material published in Scotland, or by Scots, or about Scots, or relating to Scotland, to any aspect of Scottish life or culture), in line with the Scottish Collaborative Print Retention agreement.

We also recognise that library staff knowledge of the importance of particular items may reside with individual members of staff, and that this knowledge could be lost when individuals retire or move to other jobs, with the resultant risk of stock being withdrawn without realising its significance.

To future-proof such material, it is recommended that items should be labelled (physically and in the catalogue) as HERITAGE COLLECTION. This means that if stock is moved around, reference and lending stock inter-shelved, or at a later date stock-weeding is carried out, then library staff will be alerted to the potential significance of such an item. HERITAGE COLLECTION material will probably be restricted to library use, as with the present reference book collection. The bibliographic record should have a 500 field note, and a note should also be added to the holdings record.

Whittaker Library Collections Statement

The RCS Whittaker Library is committed to counter contemporary and historic racism and inequality in our collections. We acknowledge that our collections contain materials which are historic in nature and may contain – either in their content or descriptions – terminology which is inappropriate, outdated, or offensive. This terminology is often not changed or updated in catalogues as it demonstrates the attitudes and language contemporary to the creation and description of the item. It does not reflect the current attitudes of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. In developing diversity within our collections, and alongside the general selection criteria, the library will also consider the cultural heritage, lived experience and evidence of critically informed peer review as appropriate, endeavouring to build inclusive collections, reflective of the global performing artist talent pool, and the RCS stance on anti-racism and injustice.

Course Support

The Library aims to support students by ensuring course Reading List/Prescribed Score material is stocked appropriately. Academic staff are responsible for ensuring that reading lists and any updates are supplied each year to the Librarians at the earliest opportunity. The Librarians will issue reminders in early Summer each year to this effect. We would also request that Library staff are notified of essay questions and any reading implications, before assignments and reading lists are handed out to students. It is the library's recommendation that reading lists be divided into Essential and Recommended reading. The library will endeavour to purchase at least one copy of all essential reading and will work with Academic staff to stock recommended reading as budgets allow. Students will be encouraged to buy all essential texts. The library policy on multiple copy purchase will be governed by the number of students needing the text at any one time and the available funds. However, the general library policy is NOT to purchase multiple copies. Circulation of heavy demand texts will be maximised by the Short Loan Collection, and it's the Academic Staff's responsibility to inform the Library of any short-loan text requirements.

The Library is also undertaking work to support academic staff to diversify their course materials by offering a service to analyse resource lists and provide support for any changes they make. This work also helps to shape our collections to include more diverse material.

Donations

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. Certain additional criteria also apply:-

- Donated materials should be in serviceable condition; fragile copies would only be accepted if they were deemed exceptionally rare and of historic value.
- We may not accept audio-visual materials in CD or DVD formats. We do not accept LPs, 78s or piano-rolls. However, RCS Archives would be consulted if such material was of institutional significance.
- We do not accept taped or CD copies of commercial recordings, and any photocopied music will immediately be discarded.
- Archival material e.g. manuscripts, playscripts, composers' or authors' own copies, would always be referred to RCS Archives for a decision on retention in the RCS Archives.

In respect of these constraints, a condition of donation is that if the work does not fulfil our selection criteria, the Library reserves the right to make items available to the staff and students of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. On occasion, regrettably, offers may have to be declined if they do not meet these criteria. Conditions of donation may be negotiated on a case-by-case basis.

NB. As of summer 2024, the Whittaker Library is currently not accepting any donations due to space constraints and backlogs of materials awaiting processing.

Zines

The library is creating a small zine collection to highlight diverse voices and perspectives. Our intention is to create a space for our student and staff community to see themselves within our collection. For the purposes of this collection we will define a Zine as small, independently produced publications with a DIY aesthetic.

The collection will include Zines focusing on the performing art disciplines as well as wider curricular areas such as equality, diversity and inclusion, climate change, discipline related sub-cultures, mental health and institutional specific content. This collection will not be lendable and can be accessed for use within the library.

As part of this collection, we will be accepting donations around the subject areas mentioned, however the library is ethically bound to ensure that our newly acquired collection does not contain material that might be deemed harmful to others. This includes homophobic, transphobic, racist, sexist, or general hate language. Any zine that reflects these viewpoints will be refused. Purchased zines will be sourced directly from authors and publishers with their agreement that they will be added to a library collection as stated in the [Zine Librarians Code of Ethics](#).

In order to donate a Zine or suggest a Zine purchase, please contact Librarians@rcs.ac.uk
The library will aim to preserve the zines in our collection but cannot be liable for any damage incurred or loss of the publication.

Open Access

The Library aims to promote open access (OA) materials within our Library catalogue to support OA publishing efforts and to enhance the traditional resources that we purchase and subscribe to. The Library also supports a number of Read and Publish journal agreements which repurpose some of the subscription costs to support OA publishing. We do not subsidise other open access models due to financial constraints and are not able to support individual OA initiatives that are not covered under our existing agreements.

Sustainability

The Library is committed to supporting the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#) which includes a commitment to providing access to information (Sustainable Development Goal Target 16.10). This includes developing our collection to include material about climate change, sustainability, and to support eco-performance practice. We will also endeavour to explore ways to reduce our environmental impact through practices such as bulk ordering print formats to reduce packaging and multiple deliveries, and working with suppliers who are also committed to sustainable practices.

Digitisation

The Library will undertake a process of digitisation across some of our collections. Collections will be selected for digitisation to maximise their visibility and use, or to conserve and preserve rare, unique or irreplaceable materials. Other material may be identified for digitisation that will support the curriculum and teaching, or because of an accessibility issue. Anything that is deemed too fragile will not be digitised and all digitised items will meet accessibility guidelines and comply with copyright law.