

Content Strategy



“A library empowers knowledge generation. We connect people with ideas and with each other—enabling our community to meet, read, think, research, share, create new ideas, and make new discoveries. Our library lies at the heart of a University of Bristol education, research, and civic endeavour.”

This strategy sets out the principles by which the Library will manage the provision of content for teaching and research, building on the values expressed in our [Divisional Plan](#) (PDF).

It describes how we will:

- Support teaching and learning by giving our students easy access to core readings, and the opportunity to explore rich archival and museum collections.
- Support our research communities by working with local and international partners to build a scholarly communications infrastructure characterised by openness, equity and integrity.
- Collaborate with students, teachers, and researchers to build and curate relevant, engaging and stimulating collections.

Our commitment to the principles of openness and equity of access informs all of our activities.

This strategy is in three sections, which address:

- how we select content
- the types of content we provide
- how we make that content available

How we select content

- We will work with partners across the HE sector to achieve more equitable access to content for all.
- Our approach to content selection will be user-focused, responsive to demand, and provide opportunities for our student, teaching and research communities to shape our collections.
- We will ensure, through liaison and subject-specific knowledge, that the content we select supports curricular and disciplinary needs.
- We will support transformative and progressive publishing models, which promote the values of [open research](#) and move towards sustainable pricing.
- We will use our knowledge of the academic publishing sector, its suppliers and market practices, to make informed and proactive acquisition decisions.
- We will take a collaborative approach to negotiations where possible, joining with other institutions and sector bodies to obtain value for money and drive change in publishing.
- Our approach to value for money will be open, transparent, and consultative.
- We will use data to inform our decision making, assessing usage and engagement as part of a conversation with teaching and research staff.
- We will advocate for environmental sustainability in our engagement with publishers and suppliers, and participate in local and national initiatives to reduce the climate impact of our online and physical collections.
- [Cultural Collections](#) select content according to their Collections Development Policies, which aim to rebalance, diversify and address systemic gaps in previous collecting activity.

The types of content we provide

- We will provide content using a variety of models, including open access, targeted purchases, and paid subscriptions. As new publishing models are developed, we will not always directly own the content that we provide to our communities.
- We are committed to providing access to diverse and inclusive collections. We will work collaboratively with staff and students to develop collections

that support work to decolonise the curriculum, and which include marginalised or underrepresented voices. We will advocate in this area on behalf of our community with publishers and suppliers.

- We recognise that Libraries are not neutral spaces. We support [academic freedom](#) as a means of fostering an inclusive environment for scholarly debate. The presence of challenging or controversial material in our collections does not imply an endorsement of it.
- We recognise our role in preservation. We will curate our own unique and distinctive collections in line with our [collection management principles](#) (PDF), and work collaboratively within the UK Higher Education sector to preserve and protect the wider cultural and scholarly record.
- We will use our budgets to support open infrastructure and community-led publishing initiatives as part of our commitment to [open research](#).

How we make content available

- We will take a digital-first approach to content provision, making exceptions where there are pedagogical, financial or accessibility requirements for other formats.
- We will create a seamless digital experience for users, providing resilient “any time, anywhere” access to collections, which integrate with institutional digital education tools and policies. We will prioritise accessibility, and align our selection with changing student behaviours and preferences.
- We will fund infrastructure and tools to promote the discovery of our resources, enabling the best educational, research, creative and civic outcomes.
- We will use our [reading list management service](#) to embed Library content in the surrounding curricula, and ensure ease of access and discoverability for learning.
- We recognise that it is impossible for the Library to own, or hold locally, all of the material that our communities may wish to use. We will therefore participate in partnerships and sectoral initiatives to build shared collections (such as the [UK Print Book Collection](#)), and to supplement our own collections with quick and convenient access to other institutions’ collections.

- [Inter-library loans and document delivery](#) will play a central role in providing access to the content that is not held locally. We will ensure that our teams are sufficiently resourced, and supported by automated procedures where possible, to meet user demand.
- Our [Cultural Collections](#) are open to all. We will use specialist expertise and thoughtful, targeted engagement with civic communities to explore, shape and challenge our collections and stories.