



Collection Management Policy: Circulating, Reference, Periodicals, and Electronic Resources

Gamble Library Policy

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1. Introductory material

1) The Union Theological College Mission and Vision Statements

Union Theological College “welcomes students from all backgrounds to study Christian Theology in a community of faith and research-led scholarship to prepare them for life, work and service in both local and global contexts.” The College’s vision is to equip students with a “theological literacy that will enable them to flourish as individuals, and contribute positively to society and culture.” The College aims to “train effective ministers to lead Christ’s church in fulfilling its calling in the world” and to “resource all in the Church by providing a hub for learning and research.”

2) The Gamble Library Mission Statement

The Gamble Library exists to support the work of the Union Theological College as outlined above. “This is achieved by supplying Union College staff, students, alumni, Presbyterian ministers, church workers, and if appropriate, the wider community, with the relevant academic, practical and historical resources, containing the timely, accurate and quality-assured information, they require. The Library facilitates the teaching, learning, research, personal and professional development of its members through the organisation, management and development of suitable collections, in any appropriate media, access to worldwide information sources and information literacy instruction.”

3) Purpose of the Collection Management Policy

The Policy has been created to guide the Librarian in the selection of information resources, which will support the achievement of Union Theological College’s vision and mission. The Policy is the Library’s plan for building and maintaining its collection. The Policy informs the Union Theological College community of the criteria used in making collection development decisions. It was developed in consultation with the Education Committee, and has approval from Faculty.

4) Users served

The Gamble Library’s collection primarily exists to meet the information needs of Union Theological College’s staff and students, followed by its alumni, especially Presbyterian ministers, Deaconesses, Auxiliary Ministers, Accredited Preachers, and other church workers. The Library also serves the wider church and community through its annual and research membership offer, and by permitting access to the general public during its staffed opening hours. Students and staff of other institutions also use the Library’s resources via reciprocal interlibrary loan arrangements.

5) Background to the Collection

The Gamble Library was established in 1873 by Caroline Anne Gamble in memory of her late husband, Rev Henry Gamble. The initial stock, plus the 2,500 books funded by Mrs Caroline Anne Gamble, grew thanks to several notable donations, from, among others, Rev Dr W. Fleming Stevenson, President W. D. Killen, and Principal F. J. Paul. The Library of Magee Theological College was associated with the Library of the Assembly’s College, Belfast in 1971. A mezzanine floor and rolling stacks were installed to house the collection of rare books in 2002. A computer suite was also created off the main reading room. Today the Library holds over 64,000 books, 20,000 pamphlets and receives over 50 journals and periodicals annually. Staff and student members also have access to a range of electronic resources such as ATLA databases and EBSCO eBooks. The Library’s special collections include the Magee and Assembly’s Colleges pamphlet collections, the Rare Books Collection, Presbyterian Mission Archive, Irish and Scottish Collection. A review



of the Gamble Library's collection strengths can be found in appendix 1 of the full version of this policy (circulating stock only).

6) Responsibility for Collection Development

The Librarian is responsible for the acquisition of Library resources within the designated budget. Purchase recommendations are welcomed and especially valued from Faculty and lecturing staff, as well as students and members, if they comply with the selection criteria. Recommendations giving clear bibliographical details should be emailed or given to the Librarian.

The Librarian will regularly liaise with Faculty to understand their information needs and those of their students. The Librarian will consult a wide range of publisher's websites and catalogues, including University and Academic Press catalogues as well as book reviews to stay informed about new publications and their quality or suitability for purchase. (See appendix 2). Email alerts from these sources will assist in this process. The Librarian will share emails listing possible purchases with Faculty. She will seek clarification from Faculty if she is uncertain about a resource purchase.

2. Selection criteria

The Gamble Library will acquire resources which:

- Are relevant to the postgraduate and the undergraduate degree programmes and other courses, delivered in the College and online, by Faculty and Recognised Teachers. Module outlines and related reading lists will direct purchases.
- Support the research interests of Faculty and students.
- Assist in training for the ordained ministry and other practical pastoral roles, e.g., Deaconesses.
- Maintain the observed strengths of the current collection or correspond to subjects which are acquisition priorities. (See full policy appendix 1). The distinct Presbyterian and Reformed identity of Union Theological College within the Irish church context should be reflected in the collection.
- Are academically valuable works, written by respected authors and published by reputable publishers.
- Are within budget.
- Collected materials will primarily be in English, but resources in ancient, and occasionally, some modern languages supporting courses and research will be obtained.

Certain selection criteria are directly related to the format of resources.

1) Print Books

Books will remain an essential component of academic library collections for the foreseeable future, hence the collection strategy for the Gamble Library will remain committed to this format. Library staff purchase the majority of books online. Having checked a range of UK-based sellers and/or publishers, the most competitive price will be paid. New copies are purchased rather than used. However, if the book is out of print, or unnecessarily expensive, the Librarian will aim to find a copy in 'like new' or 'very good' condition at a reasonable price.

The Librarian will purchase books which are newly or recently published. Exceptions are made if an older title seems necessary or relevant to the collection, or a Faculty member requests an older title. An older title may also be purchased to replace a missing item or one which is in poor condition.



Generally, one copy of a title will be purchased, unless the title is expected to be in high demand since it is on a course reading list. In this case the number of copies purchased will be determined in consultation with Faculty and/or Recognised Teachers depending on expected student user numbers.

New editions of titles will be purchased where substantial content has been added or updated. Newer editions will usually replace older editions except where it is important to trace the development of a subject, or the thought of a scholarly author.

Paperback editions will be purchased instead of hardbound whenever possible to reduce costs.

Several book series are of special interest and should be regularly reviewed and acquired, if relevant and within budget. (See appendix 3).

The non-circulating reference collection contains atlases, Bibles, bibliographies, dictionaries, encyclopaedias, citation style guides and Hebrew and Greek grammars. New reference books will be purchased as and when required. A second copy of a reference book which may have been acquired through a donation to the library should be moved to the circulating collection.

Items which relate to the Province's and Ireland's Churches, their history and key individuals from them, will be added to the Irish collection as the budget allows. Books which relate to Ireland's political history will also be considered. An effort will be made to add to the congregational histories of the Presbyterian Church.

Similarly, books which focus on the history of the Scottish Church and key characters from it should be added to the Scottish collection as the budget permits.

2) eBooks

The eBook collection supplements and expands the print collection. Additionally, it offers 24/7 access to library members based at a distance from, as well as those in, the College. Also, eBook text can be easily searched and offers many additional features. Depending on the purchase model, some eBooks permit multiple users to read the text simultaneously.

The Gamble Library currently pays for access to over 920 EBSCO eBooks. Virtually all of these are titles which feature on course reading lists, usually duplicating our hardcopy holdings. Occasionally an eBook is purchased instead of a print book as it is more competitively priced or the hardcopy cannot be sourced.

The Resource List Policy: BA(Hons) Theology guides the purchase of eBooks for titles on all undergraduate reading lists. For all other modules, Faculty should inform Library staff of titles which they would ideally like to be available as eBooks. It may not be possible to fulfil all requests. If a title is not available as an EBSCO eBook at the time of searching, the Librarian will submit a title request for it to EBSCO staff. It may subsequently be made available. The Librarian will examine reading lists to identify any other titles available as eBooks and will inform the lecturer of these, so priority eBook purchases can be made. She will then in the first instance, purchase a one user copy of an eBook, if it is reasonably priced, i.e. below \$140. When several users try to access a one user eBook simultaneously the Librarian will receive turnaway notifications. Usually, an upgrade to a three user or unlimited user copy will then be purchased, if reasonably priced. If these are not available, another one user copy will be purchased.



A small number of titles are on the Library's DDA list and have not been triggered for outright purchase yet after at least four years.

Links to copyright free eBooks available at archive.org and other websites are also catalogued so members can find these when searching the Library's online catalogue. Those which are on reading lists are catalogued as a priority. All others are catalogued when time allows.

3) Databases

The Gamble Library currently subscribes to four databases, which have been selected primarily to support staff delivering, and students participating in, Union College's courses of study. All library users can access these databases on a dedicated computer while in the Gamble Library. Staff and students can access them off campus.

ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials PLUS provides access to a wide range of peer-reviewed journal articles, book reviews, records for books, recordings and other resources. The subscription rate is reduced through the Gamble Library's membership of ABTAPL (The Association of British Theological and Philosophical Libraries). ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials PLUS may be accessed via the VLE (OpenAthens authentication) and a shared URL and User ID.

The Library subscribes to Early English Books Online, a database of over 146,000 titles, from the first book published in English through to the end of the seventeenth century. The Library also subscribes to Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (ODNB), and Oxford English Dictionary (OED). ODNB is a database of 60,000 biographies and 11,000 portraits of influential people who shaped British history. OED contains 600,000 words, from the past and present, used across the English-speaking world. It is widely regarded as the accepted authority on the English language. These databases can be accessed through the VLE (OpenAthens authentication). Our membership of JISC (band 10 Affiliate Membership for electronic resources) mean the subscription costs for ODNB and OED are much reduced.

4) E-journals

The Gamble Library subscribes to six Sage journals which can also be accessed via their electronic platform, if students, staff and alumni register to do so. (These journals are: *Currents in Biblical Research*, *The Expository Times*, *Interpretation*, *Irish Theological Quarterly*, *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, and *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*). Electronic access comes at no extra cost: subscription to the print journals also entitles students, staff and alumni to electronic access to these journals from the year 1999 or 2002 onwards. These can be searched.

The archive of five journals can be searched off campus through the VLE (OpenAthens authentication), or while in the College via links on the Library's online catalogue. (*Huntington Library Quarterly*, *Scottish Journal of Theology*, *Reformation and Renaissance Review*, *Scottish Church History* and *The Journal of Theological Studies*). Access to the electronic archive of all but *Huntington Library Quarterly* come at no, or little, extra cost to the print journal. The Library subscribes to the *Huntington Library Quarterly* in electronic format only. Our subscription began in 2022 in response to the resource needs of several courses delivered by the Department of Theology.

The hardcopy back issues of all but one of these e-journals may be found in the Library's periodicals room.



Usage statistics for eBooks, databases and e-journals will be collected monthly, and collated, for publication in the Library's Annual Report. The Librarian will seek to identify additional and/or alternative sources of electronic resources, in consultation with Faculty, to meet the evolving needs of staff and students.

5) Scans held on the Digital Content Store

The Library pays for a CLA Higher Education Licence, the cost of which is determined annually by our full time equivalent number of students. The Digital Content Store (DCS) is included in the cost of the Licence. Library staff are permitted to scan extracts from certain books and journals from items within the Gamble Library's hardcopy collection and make these available to students on particular courses, by generating links to scans held in the DCS repository. These links can be hyperlinked on the VLE or emailed to students. The Gamble Library must hold the book or journal which is scanned.

Scanning permissions for books and journals can be checked using the [CLA Higher Education Check Permissions tool](#) or on the DCS administrative dashboard. For permitted books up to a chapter or 10% can be scanned and uploaded to the DCS repository. For permitted journals, as much as an article or 10% of a journal issue, can be scanned and uploaded to the DCS repository. It is possible to purchase second extract permissions to scan an extra chapter, article, or a further 10%. For those books and journals for which scanning is not permitted, it may be necessary to purchase bespoke permission to scan from them. The cost is determined by the publisher.

6) Periodicals

The Gamble Library regularly receives fifty-one hardcopy journals and periodicals, including several denominational publications. (See appendix 4). Scholarly journals, in particular, are an important component in academic library collections since they report on current research in various disciplines. Since release of journal issues on electronic databases is often behind the hardcopy publication, subscribing to the print version means Library members can access up-to-date research. Periodicals are reference only and back runs of hundreds of journals and periodicals are located in the Library's periodicals room and store. Unlike the Library's book purchases, subscriptions to periodicals represent an ongoing budgetary commitment, with renewals usually involving price increases. Thus, continued subscription to periodicals should be reviewed annually through a survey of Faculty, the results of which will be shared with Faculty, along with the Librarian's recommendations, for approval.

7) Pamphlets

The Gamble Library pays for a selection of Grove pamphlets on standing order. (For example, *Grove pastoral series*, *Grove youth series*). The Library collects pamphlets and ephemera which relate to: the Presbyterian Church in Ireland or the other main denominations in Ireland; events of historical significance locally; which are authored by individuals from the Province who write about theological topics; or are from the Reformed perspective.

8) PhD theses

Once examiners have decided to award a degree, PhD students must submit one copy of their thesis to the Gamble Library. This should be bound and a completed copy of the *Thesis Deposit Form* should be inserted inside the front cover. Theses are stored in the Gamble Library's special collections to preserve the evolution of ideas over time and to provide useful examples of students' work. They may be consulted in the Library's main reading room during our public opening hours.



9) Other Formats

The Gamble Library has a limited number of cassette tapes, videos, CDs, CDRoms, DVDs and MP3s in its circulating collection. Since audiovisual technology is constantly changing, active efforts are not being made to add to these, the exception being Hebrew and Greek language materials or materials produced by the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

The Library has a number of hymnbooks which include musical scores to assist ministry students and those engaged in Church-based ministry in preparation for worship. The Fleming Stevenson collection also contains a significant number of hymnbooks. Donations of hymnbooks are sometimes added to the collection, but the Library does not purchase hymnbooks.

3. Interlibrary Loans

Interlibrary loans and chapter or journal article scan requests provide Union Theological College staff and students with access to material beyond the Gamble Library. To source books, chapters from books, dissertations and journal articles, etc., the Librarian looks at the online catalogues of libraries which are part of the ABTAPL network. Those libraries in the UK are prioritized as they are most likely to lend the item or provide the scan. She then contacts a library which holds the item to request it. If no response is received, as a last resort the Librarian posts in online discussion groups (ABTAPL, Bibliothèques Européennes de Théologie BETH and ATLANTIS) to see if any library can provide the item. The Gamble Library has also supplied, and will supply, items to other libraries which participate in these networks.

All interlibrary loan requests should be emailed or given to the Librarian with detailed bibliographical information for the item required listed. Requests are dealt with on a case by case basis, thus it may not always be possible to find a supplier. All requested and supplied items are recorded and these records are used to determine if a book should be acquired by the Library, etc.

4. Donations

The Gamble Library accepts book, dissertation, periodical or pamphlet donations from its members or the general public. However, only those items which meet the selection criteria described above will be added to the collection. By agreeing to donate materials to the Gamble Library, donors accept the Library's right to do whatever is deemed appropriate with the materials. For those materials which fall outside the selection criteria the Gamble Library may: add these to the free distribution shelves for Library members to take; arrange for unwanted resources to be collected by Anybook.biz, Ziffit.com or Book Aid charity, or organise the disposal of unwanted materials. Anybook.biz and Ziffit.com sell suitable resources and reimburse the Gamble Library for any items they sell. In the event that Anybook.biz or Ziffit.com are unable to receive donated books, another scheme or means of selling donated books to generate funds for the Library will be used. Book Aid may send them to Christians in Africa, Asia and the Caribbean, or sell them in their Templepatrick bookshop.

Donors will receive an email or letter from the Librarian acknowledging their donation whenever possible. A donation book plate bearing the name of the donor will be attached to donated items and/or a non-public note will be added to donated items' accession record on the library management system. Donors may remain anonymous if they wish – library staff will ask them if they wish to be acknowledged when the donation is delivered to the Library or when it is offered to the Library.



5. Deselection

Deselecting or 'weeding' is the process of clearing the collections of print or digital materials which have outlived their usefulness. This is an important process as it: creates space; saves readers' time by lessening the number of items they need to go through to find relevant resources; ensures the collection is current and accessible and it guarantees the constant evaluation of library materials and their continued freshness and appeal. Regular weeding activities will be built into the Gamble Library's annual work calendar, especially outside of term time. Annually a minimum of 10% of the total hardcopy collection will be scrutinised for retention and deselection.

The Librarian is ultimately responsible for weeding though Faculty will be encouraged to participate in this process. This is because:

- They have specialist subject knowledge and expertise
- They have in-depth knowledge of present and likely future teaching and research-related use of the collection.

1) Circulating and reference collection

Since the Gamble Library is the main theological library in Northern Ireland it will seek to retain one copy of each theological work it acquires. Materials which no longer fit with the selection criteria outlined above will be considered for deselection. The 'MUSTIE' acronym will be used as a basic guide for assessing items:

M – Misleading. The resource contains factually inaccurate information.

U – Ugly. The item is worn, damaged, dirty, stained or torn. When a well-used, worn item should be retained, attempts will be made to find a replacement copy or to repair out-of-print copies. Unnecessary duplicates will be deselected with the copy in the best condition retained. (A duplicate to be deselected will have 'duplicate' written in pencil near the item's barcode).

S – Superseded. A new edition or a more up-to-date book on the subject renders the older edition obsolete. (An older edition of a book to be deselected will have 'superseded' written in pencil near the item's barcode). However, in some cases one copy of an older edition will be retained to trace changes in scholarly thinking over time.

T – Trivial. The material in the item was at one stage popular following a fad, but interest has now largely waned.

I – Irrelevant. The item's content is now irrelevant to the needs and interests of the Library's community.

E – Elsewhere. The material is easily obtained online or from another library via interlibrary loan arrangements.

Usage and age statistics will be compiled for those sections being weeded. For new classification items in reading room 1, those which have not been issued or had any usage logged in the past 10 years and show MUSTIE characteristics will be considered for weeding. (Relocation to the store, or withdrawal). For those items in the corps room or old classification, those which have not been issued or had any usage logged in the past 12 years and show MUSTIE characteristics will be considered for weeding. For those items in the



store, those which have not been issued or had any usage logged in the past 12 years and show MUSTIE characteristics will be considered for weeding.

Items from the Presbyterian Mission Archive, Rare Books Collection, Theses Collection, Magee and Assembly's Colleges Pamphlet Collections and Fleming Stevenson Hymnology Collection will not be reviewed for deselection.

Those hardcopy items identified for deselection will be available for Faculty to review. Faculty will be informed by email that these books are available for them to look at and select any which they deem necessary for retention. Faculty will also be emailed the list of books which the Librarian has recommended for withdrawal. Faculty will have a minimum of two weeks to review these items before they are permanently removed from the collection.

Hardcopy deselected items will be withdrawn from the library management system and stamped accordingly. Appropriate books will be collected by Anybook.biz, Ziffit.com, or similar organization for resale in order to maximise financial returns on withdrawn items. Other books will be collected by Book Aid, available on the free distribution shelves for a limited period, or discarded for recycling.

2) eBooks

The small number of eBooks added to the Library's DDA list in the past will be considered for removal from the DDA, budget depending. Items on the DDA will be evaluated on an annual basis.

3) Databases

Continued subscription to ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials PLUS, Early English Books Online, Oxford Dictionary of National Biography and Oxford English Dictionary will be subject to annual review in July or when renewal is due, through analysis of available content, license terms, usage statistics and affordability.

4) E-journals

Continued subscription to the six Sage journals and the archive of the other five electronic journals will be reviewed in July, or when renewal is due, using the same criteria. Results gathered from Faculty's annual journals survey will also determine future subscriptions.

5) Scans held on the Digital Content Store

All courses with scan links are reviewed annually in May when preparation for the DCS rollover takes place. Courses which have not run in the previous academic year are 'archived' and as a result scan links do not work. Any scan links the Library have had to pay for bespoke permission to use for a set time period are deleted. If courses are no longer running the course itself and all associated links will be deleted.

6) Periodicals

Subscriptions to periodicals will be reviewed annually. Faculty will be surveyed concerning their opinions and use of the journals currently subscribed to annually. Based on the results of this, the Librarian will recommend periodicals for ceasing subscription to and share this with Faculty to seek their approval. Availability for download of the periodical through the electronic databases Library members have access to (e.g., ATLASerials PLUS and Sage electronic journal platform) will be considered as part of this process.



Those hardcopy periodicals currently stored in the periodicals room and store will be considered for deselection if they no longer meet the selection criteria outlined above and:

- Are incomplete, short runs
- Are seldom or never used
- Are newsletters which contain information which quickly dates.

A list of hardcopy periodicals identified for deselection will be shared with Faculty. They should contact the Librarian within two weeks of the list being emailed out if they wish any periodical to be retained.

Deselected periodicals will be shared on the ABTAPL discussion list should any other theological library and/or list participant wish to add these to their collection and are willing to pay for the associated postage costs. If no one responds to this discussion post within two weeks, Book Aid will be emailed to ask if they will receive the issues. If they do not want them, they will be recycled.

7) Pamphlets

Pamphlets which have not been issued or consulted in the last 12 years and show several MUSTIE characteristics will be considered for deselection. The standing order to Grove pamphlets will be reviewed annually during the summer, based on borrowing statistics.

8) PhD theses

PhD theses belonging to former students of the College, PCI ministers and members, which cover topics which encompass our selection criteria will be retained indefinitely.

9) Other Formats

Cassette tapes and videos, technology which are no longer popular and in general use will be deselected if not directly related to the history of the College. Those which are directly related to the history of the College will be retained.

CDs, CDROMs and DVDs which were added to the collection more than 15 years ago and have not been borrowed will be considered for deselection, if not directly related to the history of the College or Presbyterian Church in Ireland. Those which no longer work will be deselected.

Hymnbooks which have not been borrowed or consulted within the last 12 years which also show MUSTIE characteristics will be considered for deselection.

6. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Librarian and shared with the Education Committee for approval. The Education Committee will then make a recommendation to Faculty regarding its adoption.