

Law

Collecting policy

User profile

This collection statement covers provision for the staff and students of the School of Law. Students transferring under the UK Transfer Degree Programme and on the International Foundation Programme for Law also use this collection, as do students from other departments and schools taking law and related modules. Principal areas of interdisciplinary interest are business, construction engineering and management, politics and international relations, and real estate and planning.

There is occasional use of the law collection by local solicitors, students from other higher education institutions and members of the public.

Research interests

The School's research is organised around several main themes and areas:

- Global law at Reading
- Family, gender and sexuality
- Justice, rights and legal theory
- Legal history
- Property, transactions & markets
- Public policy

Many researchers have homes in more than one theme, but they provide a framework for collaborations, for events and for the support of critical engagement. A pluralistic approach is taken to legal research, with members of the School actively engaged in individual and collaborative research spanning a wide range of methodologies and research traditions.

Greater detail on research activities is provided on the School's website at www.reading.ac.uk/law/research/law-research.aspx.

Details of individual academic's research interests are maintained on relevant staff profile pages at <http://www.reading.ac.uk/law/about/law-staff.aspx>.

Dimensions of teaching and learning

The School provides qualifying taught undergraduate LLB courses in Law, and Law with Legal Studies in Europe, plus a non-qualifying degree in Legal Studies. In addition, through participation in the UK Transfer Programme, some undergraduate law students may transfer to Reading from Brickfields Asia College for Part 2 and/or Part 3.

The School delivers taught postgraduate courses for a range of LLM and MSc programmes and the Certificate or Diploma in Law. The LLM Oil and Gas and LLM International Corporate Law programmes are available for study by distance learning. Research courses are provided at LLM, MRes, MA (Res), MPhil and PhD levels. These postgraduate qualifications may be taken part-time.

Academic members of staff teach law in other schools, for example elements of business law and property law.

A full list of undergraduate programmes available is provided on the School's website at <https://www.reading.ac.uk/law/ug/law-ug-courses.aspx>, with postgraduate programmes detailed at <https://www.reading.ac.uk/law/pg-taught/law-pgt-courses.aspx>.

Current holdings

Most collection material falls within the 340 section of classification. Other significant areas include Parliament (328), criminology (364), and medical ethics (174.2). More detail on relevant Call Number ranges is set out in the Books section of the dedicated subject guide at libguides.reading.ac.uk/law.

Book, e-books and official documents

The Library holds a large print collection of volumes at the 340s, consisting principally of scholarly works on the laws of England and Wales, common law jurisdictions and European Union, and international law (private and public). A smaller, discrete subject collection of volumes is contained in the Criminology section. Print books required for teaching and current research projects are held on open access. A number of lesser-used, research level monographs relating to law are housed in Closed Access or in the Off-site Store.

In addition to printed monographs, a large number of law e-books, predominantly research monographs rather than textbooks, are available via the Library's catalogue and electronic databases. Access is provided to the law e-book content of the Oxford Scholarship Online service. Individual e-book copies of in-demand titles are made available on aggregators such as MyiLibrary and EBL and on the e-book platforms of particular publishers, notably Cambridge University Press and Taylor & Francis.

The European Documentation Centre (EDC) in the Library includes not only the Official journal - now online only - but also periodicals and statistics. Monographs published and donated by the European Union are in the main collection. An institutional shift towards free online provision is reducing the breadth and value of EDC print items to legal study.

Periodicals

Ongoing print and/or online subscriptions are taken out to selected individual periodicals, including law report series, shelved with a wider legacy collection of print title holdings. A single journal title is jointly funded with Real Estate and Planning.

Extensive online access to the full-text of domestic and international legal journals and law reports series is provided through subscriptions to the databases LexisLibrary, HeinOnline and Westlaw UK. The subscription cost of the last two of these databases is largely paid for directly by the School. Other e-journals are made available through publisher packages, on archival services like JSTOR, and specialist legal databases such Family Law Online and OGEL. The Collected Courses of the Hague Academy of International Law are available in their entirety digitally on BrillOnline, through a dedicated subscription.

Subscriptions are maintained to the official bound volumes of The Public General Acts and Measures and Statutory Instruments of the UK Parliament, with individual Acts also received as they are published. Access to updated versions of legislation is provided on the Westlaw UK and LexisLibrary databases.

The full-text of contemporary content in major national and regional UK newspapers is accessible on the ProQuest Newsstand and LexisLibrary databases. Additionally, full archival access is available for The Financial Times, The Guardian and The Times.

Reference/bibliographic

The 4th Floor Reference 340 section contains a range of legal service directories, encyclopedias, bibliographies and dictionaries for reference use. Other volumes of legal dictionaries/glossaries and bibliographies are available for loan in the 340s.

Online access is provided to a number of individual political reference works, including:

- Elgar encyclopedia of comparative law
- Encyclopedia of transnational crime and justice
- The New Oxford companion to law

Online access is provided to a further range of legal dictionaries, encyclopedias, and handbooks within two electronic reference packages, Credo Reference and Oxford Reference Online. Halsbury's Laws of England is provided via LexisLibrary.

The Library subscribes to the electronic versions of ArticleFirst (1990-) and Legal Journals Index (1986- on Westlaw UK). On HeinOnline, the Index to Periodical Articles Related to Law is available from its beginning in 1908. The IBSS (International Bibliography of the Social Sciences) electronic database, with links to full-text articles, also includes articles and book chapters on legal topics in other social sciences journals or books.

Related special collections

The Stenton Library collection on English medieval history includes a body of legal works dating back to 1525.

Strengths, exclusions and areas for development

The Library book collections are strong in well-established continuing areas of teaching by the School at undergraduate and postgraduate level, with developing collections in new areas of teaching such as international economic law. The holdings of works on English legal history are a notable collection strength. Practitioner works are only bought selectively, where recognised authorities in areas of School teaching or research, for example Chitty on contracts (for contract law).

Weak areas identified for development to meet teaching needs are energy law, the law of finance (domestic and international), law and religion, restitution and legal aspects of the WTO.

Collecting level

The collection principally serves to support the teaching requirements of the School. Book stock is principally acquired to serve the resource needs of the School's undergraduate and postgraduate taught course modules. There are insufficient funds to systematically purchase monograph material for the needs of researchers, with such material acquired on a case-by-case basis with the express sanction of the Department's Library Representative.

Journal and law report provision is broad, swelled significantly by database content, and supports research use as well as teaching requirements. For reference materials, provision is good and maintained.

Alternative access

Inter-library loans

Staff and research postgraduates are able to order inter-library loans online, funded by the School. Authorisation for undergraduate requests is given on a case-by-case basis by the School. Inter-library loan vouchers are not routinely available to undergraduates, including for dissertations, as most of their research can be carried out using the Library's collections, both print and electronic.

Other information resources in the University

A small library in the School of Law holds a limited collection of print law report series and journal runs.

Use of other libraries

The SCONUL Access scheme permits access to most UK university libraries, typically with borrowing rights for staff, part-time and research students. Under this or local schemes, libraries in London that are regularly used are the British Library, IALS (Institute of Advanced Legal Studies), Law Society, LSE (London School of Economics) and University College. The Bodleian Law Library in Oxford is also frequented. The Institute of Historical Research and the Lambeth Palace libraries are used for research in legal history.

Selection, acquisition and stock editing

See the General Collection Development Policy for general principles.

The School's priorities are to acquire primary materials (law reports and legislation), academic legal journals and monographs, and student legal texts. Legal journal and law report access is considered on an on-going basis by the School, informed as appropriate by the Liaison Librarian, with a formal annual review by the School of title subscriptions.

The Liaison Librarian will order books on reading lists which are not in stock, unless very expensive, ordering extra copies for the Course Collection and 7-Day loan where there is evidence of need. A maximum of three print copies of core texts recommended for student purchase will usually be obtained from the School's allocated Library funds but student demand may justify extra copies. Further copies of texts listed as core or essential reading or in high demand may be obtained in electronic format (an e-book) where available and cost-effective.

Single copies of monographs not on reading lists containing research by current academic staff will be ordered. The Liaison Librarian may make additional suggestions for additional purchases, with the Library Representative's sanction required to order other items from the School's allocated Library funds. Reading list items adjudged by the Liaison Librarian to be very expensive will be referred to the Library Representative for approval for purchase.

Reference works will normally be selected by the Liaison Librarian, where deemed necessary in consultation with the School. The Library Liaison Team Manager may also be consulted.

The Liaison Librarian selects material for withdrawal and relegation. Many module textbooks are updated on a regular basis, with only the current edition kept. Older textbook editions and outdated editions of other books will be withdrawn subject to the following provisos:

- a copy of a work on legal or constitutional history may be retained
- old editions with important extracts, such as chapter in edited works, missing from a later edition may also be kept
- works of permanent or continuing research value, but little-used, and old editions of some major works will be relegated to Closed Access or the Off-site Store and available on request

Underused duplicate copies and little-used secondary material in foreign languages will be withdrawn. Other books which have not been loaned in the past 10 years are considered for relegation to the Off-site Store or withdrawal. Other departments may be consulted if it appears that material proposed for relegation or withdrawal could be of interest to them.

Policy written by Ross Connell, Law Liaison Librarian, August 2015