

Somerville Library and Archives Acquisitions Policy

Somerville College library and archives actively acquire materials to support their strategic aims. Other items are accepted as donations (according to the terms of the Donations Policy) where the donations support the aims of the library and archives or of the wider college.

The library

The library's principal concern is to serve the learning and study needs of undergraduate students and the teaching needs of academic staff. Other concerns, particularly those of graduate students, researchers and staff, and the history of the college and its collections, will also be taken into account. The library also preserves the published output of Somerville College alumni where possible, although no attempt is made to be comprehensive in this area, or to collect articles and books published online.

Selection criteria

To the above end the library acquires materials according to the following criteria:

- A selection of the texts listed in undergraduate reading lists;
- New editions of volumes already in the library;
- All texts recommended by tutors for student use;
- Requests from academics and staff for books for research and work purposes as permitted by the budget;
- The majority of book requests from students;
- Items from the university 'hotlists';
- New publications from all disciplines currently taught in the college;
- Items published by Somerville alumni (where possible these are donations rather than purchases);
- Items in subjects for which there are specific reserved funds, for example, the Gerrans Fund;
- Items to replace those already in the collection which are missing or damaged.

Acquisitions outside the scope of the above criteria will be at the discretion of the librarian, exercised pursuant to appropriate consultation with tutors in the relevant area.

Duplicates

The library purchases duplicate copies only for those texts in high use, such as core scientific textbooks, to a maximum of eight copies. Where possible the library avoids duplication of titles, including not buying printed copies of texts which are already offered as electronic titles by the university, unless there is a specific need for the print version of the text to be available in the library.

Electronic vs print

The library typically buys texts in print, but will consider the purchase of electronic versions of texts where practicable and affordable.

Older materials

The library does not actively purchase older materials, except where an item is required to fill a gap in the collection. Antiquarian texts and older materials are occasionally acquired as donations according to the library and archives donations policy.

Budgets

Each subject is allocated a guideline budget, which is a sum comprised of amounts from reserved funds and the general library budget. In the allocation of the sum note is made of the number of students on a given course, the number of fellows teaching that course, the average cost of individual volumes within that subject and the number of volumes typically bought in one year. The budget is for guidance only. The library encourages tutors to neither underspend nor significantly overspend their allocated budget, but some variance can usually be accommodated. Extra funds are available from a general reserve for any subject facing particularly high spending in one year, such as a syllabus change.

The archives

The archives record and preserve the history of the college, however that history be documented. The collection includes student records, the records of key departments within the college, and recollections (written and oral) and correspondence of or about Somervillians (whether students, Fellows or people otherwise associated with the college).

To this end the archives acquires materials according to the following criteria:

- All records pertaining to students in electronic format;
- Printed records from departments where they describe or illustrate the history of the college;
- Correspondence, both electronic and print, of key college officers;
- Oral histories from or about Somervillians, (whether students, Fellows or people otherwise associated with the college).

Acquisitions outside the scope of the above criteria are not actively sought, but will be accepted, if offered as donations, at the discretion of the archivist, exercised pursuant to appropriate consultation with tutors in the relevant area.

Special collections and chattels

Items to be added to the special collections or chattels are not actively sought and acquired, except in specific circumstances, but items may be accepted if offered as donations, in accordance with the criteria outlined in the library and archives donation policy.

The librarian reserves the right to decline offers of special collections and chattels which do not fulfil the strategic aims of the college. Decisions about the acquisition of special collections and chattels will be made in consultation with Somerville College Governing Body.