

Let's talk Libraries: decolonising LJMU Library, diversifying collections, and reducing barriers to access.

LJMU Library is committed to supporting and enhancing a vibrant community for learning and knowledge where library staff work in partnership with our students, staff and other stakeholders to provide first-class, people-centred learning and research environments, services and collections.

We recognise that libraries are not neutral and that the contents of our collections and the way we manage and provide access to them shape how knowledge is discovered and understood, and therefore has an impact on our users and on wider society.

As many of our current processes have been historically shaped by colonial ideas and power structures, LJMU Library is committed to an **ongoing process** of review, reflection and development and to **working with our users** towards decolonising the Library, diversifying our collections, and reducing barriers to access to our holdings and services.

This document shares our current practices and will be updated on an annual basis:

Collection Development

We add new material to our holdings based on course reading lists and user requests. We work with users and suppliers to ensure our collections meet our users' needs and are diverse and accessible.

Cataloguing

We use the Dewey Decimal Classification system to organise our holdings and Library of Congress Subject Headings to index material. We recognise the terminology, classification system and subject terms we use for describing our collections are not objective and we aim to minimise the impact of this by being transparent about our processes, identifying where alternative approaches can be implemented, and making changes accordingly.

Academic and Information Literacy Skills Development

We provide advice and training sessions to support students with their studies and to ensure our users are confident in finding, evaluating, and using a wide variety of resources. We include a range of examples in our training materials and deliver content in a variety of formats to promote accessibility.

Research Support

We provide advice and training on research skills development to LJMU students and staff and promote collaborative working and sharing research methodologies, data, and outputs through open research practices. We include a range of examples in our training materials and deliver content in a variety of formats to promote accessibility.

User Experience

We offer a variety of services, spaces and collections to support our users and we regularly seek feedback and review how these can be enhanced to ensure welcoming, inclusive and high-quality experiences for all.

Engagement and Outreach

A key part of the Library's work is engaging with our users and encouraging interaction with our spaces, services and collections. We aim to collaborate with our communities to develop activities (for example talks, exhibitions and reading groups) that present a range of viewpoints and promote inclusivity and the exchange of ideas.

Special Collections and Archives

The Library's Special Collections and Archives hold rare, unique and/or distinctive books, and archive materials relating to LJMU's history and alumni, cultural activities in Liverpool, and pop and counterculture in the UK. We acquire material for these collections through gifts, bequests, purchases, and long-term loans. The holdings are documented, safeguarded, and made accessible to LJMU students, staff and the wider public for learning, research, enjoyment and inspiration. We aim to highlight the diversity of our collections through our approaches to cataloguing, digitisation, engagement, and outreach, and to broaden the range of viewpoints they contain through targeted acquisitions.

Staff Development / Enablers

Decolonising the Library is an ongoing process which challenges current practices across Library Services. We will support our staff to undertake this work, foster collaboration, and monitor progress, through support for staff development, existing working groups, and operational planning processes.

Published: January 2024

Review date: January 2025