

Agriculture, policy and development

Collecting policy

User profile

This collection statement covers Library provision for the School of Agriculture, Policy and Development.

Together with core subject areas: animal science, dairy , plant and crop science, marketing and economics, and development, there are a number of interdisciplinary areas shared with other Schools in the University such as Food Security, Climate Change, Cardiovascular and Metabolic Research, and Poverty, Exclusion and Access..

Research interests

Research is organised into four Research Divisions:

The Agri-Environment Division works on the dynamics of agro-ecosystems, and the services they provide (including food, fuel and fibre) in a changing environment.

The Crop Production Division works on the sustainable intensification of crop production systems.

The Agri-Food Economics and Social Sciences Division works on the links between agro-ecosystems, food production, the food consumer (in particular their health), rural livelihoods and wider society.

The Animal, Dairy and Food Chain Sciences Division works on the links between food, diet and health and includes understanding the environmental cost of using animals as food producers.

Research and research staff play key roles in the Centre for Food Security and Walker Institute, which are cross-campus communities of researchers working on food security and climate change respectively.

The collections serve all staff and students in the School, together with staff and students in related schools in the Faculty of Life Sciences notably Biological Sciences, as well as social science based units such as Economics and the Henley Business School.

Dimensions of Teaching and Learning

The School is a relatively large one. Student numbers 2013-14 are 355 undergraduates, 100 taught postgraduates and 90 Research postgraduates (fte)

There are currently no related distance learning courses although many courses offer an option of an industrial placement in the 2nd or 3rd year.

External users of the collection include academics and postgraduate students from other institutions, visitors to the School and short course students.

Current undergraduate and postgraduate programmes are detailed on the school website: www.reading.ac.uk/apd

Current holdings

Much of the printed material falls into the library classification 630-639, however, the interdisciplinary nature of the subject means that relevant material will be found at a variety of numbers in the Sciences and Social Sciences - see the Agriculture, Policy and Development finding your way guide. For more detail see the Agriculture, Policy and Development subject guide libguides.reading.ac.uk/agriculture

Books and e-books

The 630-639 section is a growing area, though a significant proportion of material is now being purchased as e-books. Much use is also made of the economics section, plus related materials in other areas, including marketing and other social sciences sections.

Budgetary pressures caused by journal price inflations have led to a relatively small departmental book budget - this, combined with pressure to support the undergraduate courses, has led to little research-level material being purchased. Pressure has been eased slightly by the continuing use of the Library's Course Support Fund to buy e-books, extra copies and new editions of course texts.

A significant historical collection of agricultural pamphlet material is also housed in the Library Store. This comprises over 75,000 items covering all aspects of agriculture and related subjects.

Journals and e-journals

Recent Library subscriptions to large journal packages, have resulted in many more APD-related titles becoming available online. This is in addition to a number of new discipline-specific subscriptions funded by the increase in the Library materials budget.

Reference materials – print and electronic

There is a wide range of APD-related titles in the Library's reference collection. These include major encyclopedias and dictionaries. A detailed list is available at:

www.reading.ac.uk/library/apd

Bibliographic databases

The Library subscribes to the following bibliographical sources relevant to agricultural science and agricultural economics and development:

- CAB Abstracts (especially for crop science, horticultural science and applied plant sciences)
- BIOSIS (Biological Abstracts)
- ISI Web of Knowledge (Science / Social Science Citation indexes)
- Business Source Complete
- ASSIA - Applied Social Science Index and Abstracts
- IBSS - International Bibliography of the Social Sciences

Strengths, exclusions and areas for development

The University Library collection is strong in the areas which are taught, or are relevant in non-taught, post-graduate education and in academic research. Areas of particular strength include:

- agricultural and applied economics
- crop production & crop protection
- horticultural science
- agricultural development
- soil science
- agricultural history
- international development and development studies
- rural education and communication
- environmental protection and development
- climate change
- applied econometrics
- Bayesian methodology and applied statistics

There are no key areas of agricultural science that would not be considered and the collection is very broad in its range and scope; although it's worth noting that current collection policies reflect the research and teaching practices within the School. However, the areas highlighted above are the ones considered to call for an increase in demand for resources.

The e-books collection is one to be further developed and promoted where possible in order to cater for the demand by undergraduates. We are also looking to expand the range of electronic reference sources available.

Collecting level

The collection supports the teaching requirements of the School. For research the aim is to support a wide range of topics in the subject from the published sources available. The School is responsible for selecting new acquisitions to support research. Given the multidisciplinary nature of the School, the sub-collections tend to have a mixture of teaching-related and more advanced texts which provide support for research. Most selection takes place in consultation with the Liaison Librarians who are able to monitor

usage and highlight areas needing to be strengthened. Extra copies and additional e-access is bought when appropriate.

Alternative access

Inter-library loans

Students are given the opportunity to make use of the Inter-Library Loans service to find information on topics not covered by the Library's collections. Undergraduate students require a tutor's authorisation to confirm requested items are required for study. Staff and research postgraduates order inter-library loans directly. Such items are often delivered electronically.

APD students, however, are relatively low users of the Inter Library Loan service. This may be due to the increasing number of articles available online via services such as ScienceDirect.

Use of other libraries

The Museum of English Rural Life is a Designated Museum with archival, library and object resources unique to Great Britain. These cover the history of the rural sector in general; dairying, agricultural engineering, rural life, industries and crafts, and the food industry in particular. MERL holds in the order of 1,600 archival accessions and 30,000 printed items.

The Herbarium in the School of Plant Sciences holds 200,000 plant specimens supported by a reprint collection, reference works, and Floras.

Selection, acquisition and stock editing

See the Collection Development Policy: General Statement for general principles.

The Library allocates funds to the school to select books, journals and licensed sources of information. It is possible to vire between book and journal funds. Selection is managed by The School's Library Representative and the Liaison Librarians in consultation with academic staff.

The School's aim in selecting materials is to build a collection that gives students an overview across the whole range of pharmacy related sciences. The book collection aims to provide students with the opportunity to understand the underlying principles of many different areas so that any investigation may be usefully furthered in specific topics by consulting the research journals. Books and e-books will be purchased to support the teaching directly, with multiple holdings of key texts plus the wider holding of more specialised books. Significant use is made of the Course Collection (6-hour loans) to ensure the widest possible circulation of print material amongst the large student numbers.

E-books and E-journals are purchased in preference to print when available. The use of e-books is increasingly important in the School to maximise access to material to the large number of undergraduates.

Donations relevant to the areas of teaching and research are accepted, but only if current.

Multiple copies of old editions are weeded without consultation. Older monographs are selected for relegation to closed access collections by the Liaison Librarians without

consultation. Items will be selected for withdrawal/relegation based on the guidelines in the General Collection Development Policy.

Withdrawal of unique monographs and periodicals will be carried out in consultation with the School. In areas of very rapid change some items may be withdrawn if they are more than ten years old.

Policy written by Tim Chapman, Agriculture, Policy and Development Liaison Librarian, August 2015