

# Geography and environmental science

## Collecting policy

## User profile

This collection statement covers provision for the Department of Geography and Environmental Science which falls within the School of Archaeology, Geography and Environmental Science (SAGES). The collections serve all students and staff in the department

## Research interests

Within the department there are two research groups

- The Earth Systems Science Research Group (ESSRG)  
[[www.reading.ac.uk/geographyandenvironmentalscience/Research/ges-ESSRG.aspx](http://www.reading.ac.uk/geographyandenvironmentalscience/Research/ges-ESSRG.aspx)]
- Human Environments Research Group (HERG)  
[[www.reading.ac.uk/geographyandenvironmentalscience/Research/ges-HERG.aspx](http://www.reading.ac.uk/geographyandenvironmentalscience/Research/ges-HERG.aspx)]

Also based in the department are the following research centres:

- Aquatic Environments Research Centre
- Centre for Past Climate Change
- Soil Research Centre

Further information on the Research done by the department can be found at:

[www.reading.ac.uk/geographyandenvironmentalscience/Research/ges-research.aspx](http://www.reading.ac.uk/geographyandenvironmentalscience/Research/ges-research.aspx)

## Dimensions of teaching and learning

The Department's undergraduate degree courses cover a range of world issues from landscape ecology to climatology and the global economy to work, employment and development. There is also an opportunity to study abroad for 3 months via the Erasmus Scheme. In 2013-14 there were 364 (FTE) undergraduates, relatively few taught postgraduates, but over 30 research postgraduates.

## Current holdings

Material supporting the teaching and research in such an interdisciplinary subject as geography and environmental science can be found in many areas of the Library, most notably: agriculture; architecture; biology; botany; development; real estate and planning; ecology; economics, especially relating to production and land; geology; history; politics; sociology; soil science; and is spread over several floors of the Main Library. Most of the physical geography and soil science items are located on the 2nd Floor, with human and economic geography on the 4th Floor.

For more detail see the Geography and Environment Science finding your way guide.

### Books and e-books

A number of individual E-books have been purchased where in demand titles have been identified and an e-book version is available. Both print and electronic should be purchased where there is heavy demand for titles from taught students but print may still be preferable for researchers. The number of e-books accessible has increased dramatically over recent years with a number of packages being subscribed to and a significant amount of material being acquired through various patron-driven and demand-driven models

### Journals and e-journals

Electronic access is preferable to print and most of the current periodical titles are available electronically, either individually or through packages such as JSTOR and ScienceDirect. Unicorn and the E-journals Finder give easy access to these.

New subscriptions to major journal packages (Wiley, Sage, Taylor & Francis) have dramatically increased the number of relevant journal titles available. There is now a very broad coverage of geography and environment titles.

Electronic only option will be preferred for new subscriptions.

### Reference materials (inc bibliographic databases)

The Library has a number of reference works located in the Reference Sections on the 2nd and 4th floors of the Main Library. Some geographical dictionaries can also be found on the main sequence shelves along with a now extensive collection of atlases.

Online access is available to *Encyclopedia of geography* (6 volumes)

Additional access to some useful reference works is provided through the online collections *Oxford Reference Online* and *Credo Reference*.

The Library subscribes to Geobase. It includes bibliographical references to books, conference proceedings, technical reports, and articles in over 2,000 periodicals in geography and related subjects.

### Related special collections

#### Maps

The map collection is a world-wide collection of about 70,000 maps, covering the whole world, but concentrating on Britain and Europe. The collection comprises topographic and thematic maps (including geology, soils and socio-economic maps) and also a large number of national and thematic atlases. Early maps are not collected, but the collection includes original and facsimile maps from medieval to modern times. A small aerial photograph

collection is held, now mainly of historic and research interest. Most of the collection is reference only, but a collection of about 2,500 folded 'field' maps is held; these maps are available for loan. The Map Librarian, who gives assistance with the materials and with the use of Digimap, is the main point of contact. Digimap is an online service which delivers map data of Great Britain. It includes four datasets, including contemporary Ordnance Survey maps; historical Ordnance Survey maps; geology maps; and environmental land cover maps. Maps can be printed out or data downloaded for use in a geographical information system.

## Strengths and exclusions and areas for development

### Strengths

There is a large collection of soil science books at undergraduate level. Subject strengths are in soil-environment interactions; soil-plant-atmosphere continuum (with ESSC, the Environmental Systems Science Centre); contaminated soils; soil-metal interactions; soil organic matter; tropical soil science; soil chemistry. Journal coverage on environmental sustainability and development has improved.

The Library's collection in Quaternary Science is relatively strong.

The map collection is especially strong in British maps, especially of Berkshire and Reading, but also has a very good European collection. Geology maps are a particular strength. Excluded materials are rolled and mounted wall maps and antiquarian and manuscript maps. A small collection of aerial photographs is held, which is particularly strong in coverage of Berkshire.

### Areas for development

To keep pace with the research interests of staff collections should be developed in the areas of climate change, sustainability and modern soil microbiology. Increasingly research is taking place in development, geographies of health, care and disability, cultural geography and interdisciplinary cultural studies, hydrology, water resources and environmental management. The collections should aim to reflect this.

Material to support new areas of teaching will need to be developed.

At undergraduate level the number of available copies of core text books has been highlighted. Use of e-books has helped with this issue.

## Collecting level

The book collections principally serve the teaching requirements of the undergraduate courses and are adequate for taught postgraduate needs. However with the development of new courses in new areas in the near future will require additional purchase of books to support these. Journal literature is much improved in recent years.

The provision of reference material is reasonable, with a good selection of gazetteers and modern atlases.

# Alternative access

## **Inter-library loans**

The department is a relatively low user of the Inter-library loans service.

## **Use of other libraries**

Academics and researchers use The Bodleian Library, Oxford University Forestry Library at Oxford; the Natural History Museum, London; London University Libraries e.g. Royal Holloway and Imperial College Library. Students may be recommended to use other libraries.

# Selection, acquisition and stock editing

See the General Collection Development Statement for general principles.

A budget allocation is made to the Geography and Environmental Science Department for the purchase of books and journals. Teaching staff are encouraged to provide up-to-date reading lists to the Liaison Librarian to facilitate liaison with the Library Representative and Module Conveners so that suitable library resources for teaching and learning are in place.

For undergraduate studies, texts in English are preferred. Research level materials may be acquired in other languages if appropriate.

If multiple copies of new editions are purchased earlier editions will be withdrawn, although in some cases the previous edition may be kept for Undergraduate use, where the information contained is not seen to have become dated.

Stock editing is the responsibility of the Liaison Librarian. Underused copies, and non-academic titles may be withdrawn, but any items of permanent value will be relegated to the closed access collection. Where an area of the discipline ceases to be researched or taught, the retention of material relating to it needs to be assessed.

A separate budget for maps and atlases is allocated, and selection is made by the map librarian. Older editions of maps may still be of value for research, so are considered carefully before withdrawal. Older editions of Ordnance Survey maps are not normally withdrawn. Field maps are withdrawn as they become damaged or dated, but are regularly replaced.

Teaching staff are encouraged to provide up-to-date reading lists to their Liaison Librarian to facilitate liaison with the Library Representative and Module Conveners so that suitable library resources for teaching and learning are in place.

*Policy written by Melvin Morbey, Geography and Environmental Science Liaison Librarian, October 2015*