



Brand van Zyl Law Library Collection Development Guidelines

March 2020

The Brand van Zyl Law Library serves the research and teaching & learning needs of the UCT Faculty of Law and has arguably one of the country's best legal collections. In order to ensure its optimal curation, these guidelines assist in the acquisition, management, presentation and marketing of material in the Law Library. These guidelines supplement the broader [UCT Libraries collection development guidelines](#) and the [UCT Libraries donations guidelines](#).

1. SCOPE

In terms of local jurisdiction, the Law Library has at least one copy of or subscription to each item in the list of reports, journals, databases, statutes and texts set out by the Council on Higher Education during its national review of LLB programmes in 2016. In terms of foreign jurisdiction, the Law Library acquires legal material in Roman-Dutch, British, Commonwealth (Australia, Canada), European (Netherlands, Germany) and African law.

2. BENCHMARKS

The Law Library collection development guidelines are also benchmarked against the collection development policies set out by [Harvard Law School](#) and [Yale Law School](#).

3. ACQUISITIONS

The Law Library acquires most of its collections via purchases. Books and subscriptions have their own non-interchangeable budgets. The book budget (approximately R500,000 p.a.) is used to purchase monographs for both open shelf and short loan. The subscription budget (approximately R2.5m) is used to purchase law reports, journals and databases. The latter fund is ringfenced and academics can only subscribe to a new title by cancelling another of the same value, as per the UCT Libraries collection development guidelines.

The Law Library purchases all the new law titles from local publishers such as Juta, LexisNexis, Siber Ink and Oxford University Press SA, and selected titles from foreign publishers such as Wolters Kluwer, Hart, Edward Elgar, Informa and Sweet & Maxwell.

The Law Library relies upon academic and student recommendations for new purchases, in addition to purchasing new material as it deems fit in all the law subjects taught by the faculty.

The Law Library also develops its archival collection as represented by its inhouse store through weeding the older editions from its open shelves or through donations or bequests from legal luminaries.

4. REPLACEMENTS

The book budget may also be used to replace missing, lost or damaged hard copies of monographs.

5. DESELECTION

The Law Library deselected or weeds its collections in consultation with the faculty and its research and teaching needs. The Law Library had implicitly adopted an archivist approach in its collection development and generally deselected conservatively over the years. However, growing space constraints have made more rigorous deselection exercises imperative. Initial forays in deselection would be the low-hanging fruit of multiple copies of older editions of texts and ceased or cancelled long runs of print journals.

6. VISIBILITY

The Law Library collections are visible via the library catalogue and search platform Primo. The Law Library also sends a monthly email to the faculty and students listing its recent acquisitions.

7. VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

The Law Library acquires a free PDF version of selected texts from Juta or LexisNexis for the occasional visually impaired student.

8. OSALL

Organisation of South African Law Libraries (OSALL) is an essential support system for law libraries in the country. Law librarians request articles and cases from each other directly where they do not subscribe to these journals or reports.

9. FORMATS AND LOCATIONS

In terms of format of its collections, the Law Library prefers a hybrid model (print, online or both) for the faculty's research and teaching needs. Print is best when pagination/formatting of online varies from the standardised print, students do not have access to devices, and the online is not user-friendly. Online is best when most students in a course are off campus, damage to or theft of the print can be minimised, and online platforms are DRM (digital rights management) free.

In terms of print material, the paperback is preferred to the hardback due to lower costs.

9.1 CASE LAW

The Law Library has access to the South African Law Reports in both print and online (Jutastat and LexisNexis SA), as well as online access only to the case law for most of the other jurisdictions.

9.2 STATUTES/LEGISLATION

Most of the local statutes/legislation are accessed online. Hard copies are kept in the Government Publications department in the Chancellor Oppenheimer Library. The Law Library retains mainly material dating to the 1800s and early 1900s that are not available online.

9.3 MONOGRAPHS

Print monographs and legal treatises are usually found on the open shelf and in short loan. The Law Library orders one print copy for open shelf and multiple print copies for short loan (the latter invariably includes prescribed or recommended texts for undergraduates). However, the default option for open shelf is online unless the requestor asks for print. The trend is also to opt for a hybrid collection for short loan requests. Online orders usually arrive as a multiple, and seldom as a single, user option and sometimes costing not much more than a single print copy, hence the preference for online access, where feasible.

9.4 LOOSELEAF

The Law Library prefers loose leaf in online format as print is time-consuming and cumbersome to update, and students take apart the print when they scan or photocopy. However, where loose leaf titles are not available online, the print loose leaf is kept in short loan.

9.5 DATABASES

The Law Library deems its acquisitions of certain databases or platforms such as Jutastat, LexisNexis SA, LexisNexis Academic, HeinOnline and Westlaw to be core to its collection. These platforms are reviewed during the annual subscriptions exercise when usage statistics are scrutinised. Should there be low usage in certain titles, these can be proposed for cancellation in order to purchase new titles.

9.6 JOURNALS

The Law Library prefers journals in online format due to a quicker release date and speed of access. Academics order new titles by cancelling others to the same value and with the approval of academics in overlapping fields. UCT Libraries prefers not to subscribe to journal packages as this makes it difficult to unbundle the packages and cancel individual titles in order to purchase new titles from other publishers or vendors.

We have both print and online subscriptions to the core South African law journals.

9.7 SHORT LOAN

The Law Library houses its heavily used texts, particularly for undergraduates, in short loan. The library would request from academics their revised short loan book lists by year end in order to stock up for students in the first term. Short loan also houses the print loose leaf collection where there is no equivalent online version. Short loan also houses the expensive titles (such as shipping law) that are at risk of being stolen.

9.8 STORE

The Law Library has an inhouse store collection that comprises mainly older editions of open shelf and short loan books. This essentially constitutes the Law Library's archive collection that was primarily built from acquisition purchases over the years and is currently being consolidated from book donations to the library.

9.9 REFERENCE

The reference section was disestablished and material has been integrated with the open shelf collection. New acquisitions in reference material such as dictionaries are accessed online.

9.10 ANTIQUARIAN

The Law Library houses a unique antiquarian collection in the climate-controlled Van Zyl Room. This comprises 2,500 volumes mainly on Roman-Dutch Law and includes many 17th- and 18th-century

legal works. This collection was declared complete and closed in 2018. Acquisitions are no longer being added as the funding was transferred to create scholarships for health sciences research as per the terms of the Van Zyl bequest.

9.11 LEISURE

The Law Library has a legal 'lite' section that comprises leisure reading material (books on court cases) and DVDs (movies on legal dramas). A very small proportion of the law acquisitions book budget is spent on this.