Library and Digital Learning Resources Policy

Section 1 - Key Information

Policy Type and Approval Body	Academic – Academic Board
Accountable Executive – Policy	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)
Responsible Manager – Policy	Executive Director, Library and University Librarian
Review Date	4 December 2027

Section 2 - Purpose

(1) This Policy outlines La Trobe University's approach to the provision of library and digital learning resources for students in accordance with the Higher Education Standards Framework (2021), and more broadly for all teaching, learning and research activities of the University community.

Section 3 - Scope

(2) This Policy applies to:

a. all students of the University, including short course participants;
b. all staff and unpaid members of the University such as Emeritus and Adjunct appointments;
c. for the purpose of access to Library resources, alumni and other authorised users designated under contractual agreements with the University;
d. resources for the teaching, learning and research activities of the University community provided by:
    i. the University Library (the Library);
    ii. Education Services, specifically the Learning Management System (LMS);

(3) The University's approach to the provision, management and assurance of other learning and research resources is outlined in the following policies:

a. for learning spaces see the Space Allocation and Use Policy and the Timetabling of Learning and Teaching Spaces Policy;
b. for learning resources provided by the schools of the University (such as specialist software, notes and creative works) see the Course Design Policy and the Course and Subject Management Policy.

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Section 4 - Key Decisions

Key Decisions	Role
Approval of information resources expenditure from the Library Collections budget	Executive Director, Library and University Librarian

Section 5 - Policy Statement

(4) La Trobe University provides materials to support the learning, teaching and research activities of the University community through the Library and the LMS.

(5) The Library collection comprises material in physical and digital formats that have been bought, subscribed to, donated or otherwise acquired, stored or made accessible by the Library. The Library provides resources related to specific courses or fields of education or research and more general resources, including those that support the development of study skills and English language proficiency.

(6) The Library acts as the custodian for the La Trobe Institutional Repository and stores the research outputs of its staff and graduate researchers in accordance with the Research Authorship and Outputs Policy and the Graduate Research Examinations Procedure - Thesis Requirements, Submission and Retention.

(7) The Library negotiates access to digital information resources for all staff and students and makes every effort to ensure that such resources are only used in compliance with licence conditions expressed in agreements between the University and information providers. This means that digital information resources licensed by La Trobe University Library are accessible only to:

a. La Trobe University staff and students (as defined in the La Trobe University Act 2009 and Statutes);
b. certain other authorised users as may be defined in contractual agreements specific to particular information resources.

(8) The University strives to ensure that all staff and students, including those with special needs and those who study or work off-campus, have equitable access to learning and research resources. This means that:

a. the Library employs a ‘digital first’ strategy, and seeks to provide unrestricted electronic access to as many prescribed resources as possible at no cost and when needed by students or staff;
b. students and staff are informed of the opportunity to request alternative formats for research and learning resources and such requests are supported expeditiously.

(9) While the Library makes every effort to minimise the likelihood of students having to purchase any resources to support learning and/or research training students are advised upon enrolment of the possibility that costs associated with their course may change.

(10) The Library acquires resources that are specified or recommended by academic staff for a course of study, including courses that include a research component, on the understanding that they are appropriate for the course. This means that resources:

a. relate directly to the learning or research outcomes of the relevant subjects and course;
b. are appropriate to the level of study;
c. are up to date and regularly reviewed.

(11) The Library acquires, makes available and retains resources to support the University's research and research

training activities. This process is guided by:

a. recommendations and requests from the University's research community;
b. the Library's Collection Development Framework and procedures.

(12) In addition to materials available directly through the Library the University uses the LMS to deliver course content to coursework students and to provide access to online course learning resources. Where learning resources are part of the LMS, all authorised users have timely access to the system and training is available in use of the system.

Section 6 - Procedures

Part A - Development and Maintenance of the Library Collection

(13) The development of the Library Collection is guided by the Library's Collection Development Framework which outlines the principles, strategies and guidelines for the content and growth of Library collections and information resources. The Framework is reviewed annually by the Library Leadership Team. Library acquisitions are guided by selection criteria outlined in the Framework.

(14) Library management has broad oversight of the selection of library materials through the processes referred to in the Framework. The final decision on the expenditure of the information resources budget rests with the University Librarian.

Donations and Gifts

(15) The Library will accept donations that:

a. comply with the strategic direction of the Library and the University; and
b. address a gap in the Collection; and/or
c. are directly related to learning/teaching or research areas.

(16) In support of the Library's 'digital first' approach, donations of print material are generally not accepted into Library collections. Rare, unique, or significant donations are referred to the University Librarian for review.

Collection Review

(17) The Library reviews and updates the Collection on an ongoing basis to ensure the resources reflect the University's current and future learning, teaching, and research needs, and to ensure effective use of the Library budget. University staff and students can make suggestions for new purchases or subscriptions via Library staff, reading list functionality or the Library website.

(18) To ensure the relevance, subject balance, currency and depth of the Collection the Scholarly Collections Action and Review Group (SCARGO) consults with schools and research centres and provides recommendations to the Collection and Resource Management Advisory Committee (CARMAC). CARMAC provides overall direction for collection development and management including the annual review of subscriptions.

Resources to be Withdrawn

(19) The Library disposes of material in accordance with the University's delegation of authority for asset disposal, using the appropriate internal Library processes, with a focus on the sensitivities of the activity. Resources withdrawn from the Library's Collection are disposed of in an environmentally responsible and appropriate manner.

(20) The Library will review and deselect resources where:

a. their content is no longer relevant to the University's teaching or research needs, or no longer fits with the University's strategic direction;
b. they have low access or borrowing statistics;
c. they are in poor physical condition and beyond repair;
d. there are multiple copies of superseded editions;
e. printed or physical material is available via secure, perpetual access to a digital archive;
f. incomplete runs of ceased serials exist with little usage;
g. a case is made that the material is harmful, dangerous or inappropriate, and at the discretion of the University Librarian.

(21) Items considered core to the Collection may be retained: for example, materials of significance to the local regions, Indigenous authors, seminal works, culturally significant items, and classic texts. Damaged items may also be replaced with electronic copies. The last national copy of any title may be retained to meet potential research purposes. Format, subject/discipline requirements and physical condition are also considered.

(22) Items considered to have particular value to the history of La Trobe may be transferred to the University Archives.

Part B - Access to Library Resources

Format and Accessibility

(23) To ensure optimal access the Library purchases resources in digital format wherever possible, prioritising materials that are accessible to all users, including users with disabilities. Where digital format is not available or appropriate, the Library sources printed resources and makes any prescribed printed texts for courses available at relevant locations.

(24) When required resources are not held by, or able to be purchased by, the Library, or when requested by Subject Coordinators, relevant sections of texts are digitised within allowable copyright requirements using Optical Character Recognition (OCR). These resources are made available via the reading list platform.

(25) The Library manages a resource-sharing service that delivers articles, chapters and other required resources to students and researchers where the Library does not have its own subscription or physical/digital copy. Students or staff located more than 50km from a La Trobe campus, studying online or at select clinical schools may be eligible to have physical resources delivered free of charge.

(26) Where accessibility of a resource does not meet user needs, individual users and Subject Coordinators can request that the Library provide a resource in an alternative format (via the Request an alternative format resource form).

(27) The Library evaluates the request and may:

a. convert the text to an appropriate machine-readable format;
b. request an alternative format from the vendor; or
c. refer the query to Accessibility Services within the Student Experience & Employability team.

(28) The Library does not purchase resources that require specialised software and/or special readers, or items installed on a single workstation or other device for single/individual one-time use.

(29) Students and staff access online resources via the Library's third party authentication system through a single

sign on. Digital learning resources may be accessed from users' own devices or from computers available in the libraries. Users have free and unlimited access to Wi-Fi in the Library and throughout each University campus.

Licensing of Digital Resources

(30) Licensed digital resources must only be used by authorised users through the University network. Cohorts of authorised network users are maintained by the following custodians:

a. People & Culture is responsible for maintaining records of staff (including honorary appointments);
b. Student Administration is responsible for maintaining records of students;
c. the Graduate Research School is responsible for maintaining records of graduate research students;
d. the Alumni and Advancement Office is responsible for maintaining records of alumni.

(31) The Library cannot authorise access to users who do not meet the parameters set by the areas listed above unless by specific agreement (see below).

(32) Information Services (IS) is responsible for maintaining the authentication and authorisation mechanisms that control access to digital information resources based on the metadata outlined above.

Other User Groups - University Alumni and Affiliates

(33) The Library may negotiate expanded access to some licensed digital resources on behalf of members of alumni and other affiliated groups. This is usually at additional cost for each resource and involves additional administrative overhead for IS and the Library.

(34) For each such group the nature of the affiliation must be documented in a written Agreement with the University in a form approved by the University's Legal Services. This must include arrangements negotiated with IS and the Library for:

a. the provision of accurate and actively maintained metadata for members of the group to be made available in machine-readable form. This must occur through automated transfers that allow the metadata to be utilised by IS and the Library to manage access to the University network and to resources licensed for the group's use respectively;
b. specification of who is authorised to:
    i. request that the Library negotiate access to specified digital resources on behalf of the group;
    ii. commit funds for the provision of access to specified digital resources on behalf of the group;
c. billing arrangements for additional licence costs incurred in the course of their accessing digital information resources;
d. acceptance of the responsibility for ensuring members of the group:
    i. respect the access conditions for any digital resources they utilise;
    ii. observe the obligations of users of the University network.

Walk-in users

(35) Some license agreements allow individuals visiting a campus library in person to access selected digital resources at a designated Library workstation.

Part C - Specification and Review of Course Learning Resources

Resources for Teaching and Learning

(36) Undergraduate and postgraduate Subject and Course Coordinators are responsible for ensuring that specified or recommended learning resources relate directly to the course and subject's Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) in accordance with the Course Design Policy.

(37) Academic staff initiating new courses or subjects or undertaking subject or course reviews are encouraged to consult with Library staff about required course readings and other learning resources to support the course. School and discipline-specific Library staff meet with their designated schools at regular Learning and Teaching and other school meetings to understand impending changes to courses, to update academics on upcoming new or changed resources, and to provide input on suitable, high quality readings.

(38) The currency and suitability of learning resources is reviewed and assured through the following mechanisms:

a. regular Subject Monitoring and Annual Course Monitoring (see Course and Subject Management Procedure – Monitoring and Review);
b. student surveys, including the annual Student Experience Survey and the biennial 'Insync Library Survey'. These surveys seek feedback on general and specific library-related issues, including access to suitable high quality appropriate readings and learning resources.
c. regular liaison between the Library and schools and an annual review of subscriptions by internal Library committees as outlined in Part A of this Procedure.

(39) The reading list platform enables learning resources to be requested, uploaded and made available to students. Subject Coordinators review reading lists at the conclusion of each teaching period and updates may be made at any time for students to access from within the LMS.

(40) The Library will proactively purchase new editions of course readings as they become available.

Course Readings

(41) Readings are categorised as either prescribed, recommended, or pre-reading for a subject and are made available to students, in line with vendor licensing conditions, through La Trobe's authentication protocols and software via the LMS and the reading list platform.

(42) The Library seeks to hold or make available copies of all course readings. Priority is given to ensuring sufficient availability of prescribed readings.

Resources for Researcher Education

(43) The Library maintains standing orders for resources dedicated to the development of academic skills and the scholarship of research.

(44) The Senior Research Librarians, together with the Library committees outlined in Part A of this Procedure, ensure the currency and suitability of resources to support all researchers, including graduate researchers.

(45) Document Delivery and Inter Library Loan services are employed wherever the Library does not hold or subscribe to resources to support specific areas of research.

Cost of Resources

(46) The Library minimises costs for students through the following strategies:

a. procurement of digital and print resources based on expected student demand to minimise the likelihood of

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students having to purchase any prescribed readings;

b. promotion of free-to-use Open Access and Open Educational Resources (OER);
c. the publishing of open educational textbooks written by La Trobe authors to directly support La Trobe courses and students. These texts are available online at no cost to students.
d. the supply on request of print material held at a campus library to any other library in the La Trobe system, at no cost to the student. Returns can be made to any library in the system at the student's convenience.
e. the provision of Inter Library Loans for resources not held by La Trobe University Library with no charge to the user;
f. the default approval of all orders for prescribed readings unless they exceed the Library agreed price limit. Requests over the agreed price limit are referred to CARMAC who may recommend conditions of purchasing.

(47) In some cases students may be advised after their course has commenced that they are required to purchase a text or texts for specific subjects where these cannot be provided digitally or by any other means.

Part D - Learning Management System

(48) The LMS is the primary point of access for coursework students to course content and digital learning resources. The University ensures and manages access to the LMS through the following measures:

a. IS provides advice to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching) regarding the infrastructure requirements of the LMS and ensures that all La Trobe University campuses contain appropriate infrastructure to support its effective operation;
b. access to the LMS by authorised staff and students is available remotely via the La Trobe login portal and in on-campus learning spaces throughout the University;
c. students are enrolled into LMS subject spaces via the LMS Administration software based on the student's correct enrolment in the subject in the Student Information System;
d. the LMS Administration software (Manage My Subjects) controls the authorisation and access of materials to defined academic staff users;
e. any maintenance or IS-related work affecting the LMS is conducted at a time least likely to cause any disruption to students of staff. La Trobe has a pre-approved change window (excluding blackout periods for exams) for regular maintenance. When an unplanned LMS outage occurs an Unscheduled Outage Notification is sent to all staff and students.

(49) Appropriate and safe use of the LMS is managed through the following measures:

a. all users must accept and comply with La Trobe University policies as a condition of use (see Information Security Policy, Privacy Policy, Website and Intranet Policy);
b. guidance is provided to students and staff on online safety and security.

(50) Subject Coordinators are responsible for uploading content for their subjects in a timely way in accordance with the Course Design Policy and the Subject Coordinator Guidelines. The University employs a standard template to manage LMS design elements, ensuring consistency for staff and students. This template is informed by the Course Design Policy, the Course and Subject Management Procedure – Monitoring and Review and Web Accessibility Guidelines. These policies ensure that materials posted to the LMS are current and accessible to students in a timely way to support their learning.

(51) All staff and students have access to training on the use of the LMS which is supplied through IS support, AskEdTech support, FAQs and help guides.

(52) Subject Coordinators, academic teaching staff and AskEdTech staff are available on an as-needed basis to

address any technical or other support requirements students may have in relation to the LMS. Students are able to request support (log a ticket) via the internal AskEdTech system available on the La Trobe portal.

Part E - Reporting

(53) The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching) is responsible for coordinating the following reports to be provided to Education Committee on an annual basis:

a. the Student Experience Survey Report and the Annual Course Monitoring Annual Report. These documents analyse data from the Student Experience Survey and Student Feedback on Subjects, including data in relation to students' experience of learning resources provision and the LMS, and outline relevant action plans;
b. a Learning Resources Report detailing trends and issues in services and resources provided through the Library and LMS.

Part F - Complaints

(54) Complaints concerning material in the Collection should be addressed in writing to the University Librarian for resolution.

(55) Students who have any concerns about any aspect of the Library's operations may submit a complaint under the provisions in the Student Complaints Management Policy.

Section 7 - Definitions

(56) For the purpose of this policy and procedure:

a. CARMAC: Collection and Resource Management Advisory Committee;
b. deselect: the process of removing and disposal (weeding) of physical library material to keep collections up-to-date and allow for growth;
c. Learning Management System (LMS): a web-based technology that hosts materials and activities to support learning and teaching in subjects from La Trobe courses;
d. Open Access: resources that are freely available with no restrictions on access including paywalls, license access limitations, or licensing fees and that are reusable by others under conditions specified by a Creative Commons/open license;
e. Open Educational Resource: learning resources that are freely available via a Creative Commons/open license, and can therefore be reused or adapted by anyone;
f. pre-reading: resources that students are expected to read before a subject commences;
g. prescribed reading: reading that is considered essential and a primary resource used to complete a subject;
h. recommended reading: non-essential reading that will enhance depth of knowledge in a subject;
i. SCARGO: Scholarly Collections Action and Review Group.

Section 8 - Authority and Associated Information

(57) This Policy is made under the La Trobe University Act 2009.

(58) Associated information includes:

a. Collection Development Framework;

b. Web accessibility guidelines.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	4th December 2024
Review Date	4th December 2027
Approval Authority	Academic Board
Approval Date	4th December 2024
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Responsible Manager - Policy	David Groenewegen Executive Director, Library and University Librarian
Enquiries Contact	Library

Glossary Terms and Definitions

"student" - Student is defined in the La Trobe University Act 2009 as: (a) a person enrolled at the University in a course leading to a degree or other award; or (b) a person who is designated as a student or is of a class of persons designated as students by the Council.

"staff" - Staff means any person employed by the University as per the definition in the La Trobe University Act 2009 (Vic).

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