Collection Policies for research and taught-course collections in the Bodleian Libraries

Commonwealth Studies

1. Overview

1.1 General coverage

Commonwealth studies, both teaching and research, is covered primarily by five libraries within the Bodleian Libraries: the Weston Library, the Oriental Institute Library (OIL), the Bodleian Law Library (BLL), the Bodleian Social Science Library (SSL) and the Bodleian History Faculty Library (HFL). Additional collections of interest are held in the English Faculty Library (EFL); the Radcliffe Science Library (RSL) and the Taylor Institution Library (TIL).

Extensive research collections are held on the history and political, economic and social development of the Commonwealth and sub-Saharan Africa. All historical periods are covered, although the greatest emphasis is on the colonial and post-colonial periods. The most heavily used monographs and journals are held on the open shelves in the David Reading Room and Reference Area in the Weston Library, along with reference material and bibliographies, and relevant archive collections are consulted there. Other publications are stored at the Book Storage Facility from where they can be ordered to a number of reading rooms.

The Bodleian South Asian collections include research materials on the Indian sub-continent regardless of language or of place of publication. The collection covers the history and culture of the region, with strengths in language, literature, religion and politics. The Bodleian shares coverage of Sri Lanka with BLCAS. Manuscripts in South Asian languages as well as Western manuscripts can be consulted in the Bodleian’s Special Collections Reading Rooms. Books on India and Sri Lanka included on reading lists for taught courses in history, politics and post-colonial literature are on open shelves in the OIL or the Upper Camera.

The BLL covers primary and secondary material for the major member nations of the Commonwealth. The primary material includes legislation, law reports, treaties, and parliamentary papers.

The SSL houses material on development and international relations, some of which will be of interest to Commonwealth Studies. The Library also contains substantial statistical runs, reports and series from international organisations such as the World Bank and IMF, and general methodological, economic and social science works.

The HFL provides lending material on the historical treatment of most Commonwealth countries in support of the teaching activities of the History Faculty. The emphasis is primarily on colonial and post-colonial history of Commonwealth countries.

The EFL houses African and post-colonial literature in English as well as English-language films from Commonwealth countries; the RSL covers the disciplines of agriculture, the environment, geography and medicine as they relate to Commonwealth countries; and the TIL houses African literature in French and Portuguese, and African feature films.

SOLO is the online catalogue which lists most books and journals in the Bodleian Libraries teaching, learning and research collections.

All members of the University are encouraged to recommend items for purchase. An online suggestions form is available.
1.2 Legal deposit

Key legal deposit material relating to the history and current affairs – political, economic and social – of the Commonwealth is selected for the open shelves in the David Reading Room and Reference Area. Other legal deposit titles are housed at the Book Storage Facility (BSF) from where they can be requested to the Bodleian Reading Rooms and main research libraries including SSL. The Bodleian is a selective legal deposit library for Canadian Official Papers. Legal deposit materials relating to India and Sri Lanka are mostly held at the BSF, from where they can be requested to numerous libraries and reading rooms, though some material is held at SSL. The BLL houses the legal deposit material relating to Commonwealth legislation.

Works on development and post-1990s social science material on global political economy and social science methodology are housed in the SSL.

At midnight on 5/6 April 2013, new legislation came into force allowing the Bodleian Libraries and the other Legal Deposit Libraries in the UK and Ireland, to access electronic books, articles, web pages and other electronic documents published in the UK. The 2013 Regulations will be implemented gradually over several years, as the Legal Deposit Libraries agree collectively to accept electronic versions from each UK publisher.

1.3 Electronic resources

Where possible and if desirable, resources for Commonwealth Studies are made available online in preference to, or as a supplement to, printed versions.

Over 50,000 electronic journals are available, and can be accessed from any site in the University, or outside Oxford using Single-Sign-On. All major publishers are included in Oxford’s portfolio of e-journal packages (which often includes the complete back files), and additional e-journal titles are subscribed to on an individual basis if deemed cost-effective.

There is also a growing collection of ebooks and online reference works (including Oxford Bibliographies Online (OBO) – African Studies). The Bodleian Libraries provide access to more than 500,000 online books across many subjects, and subscribes to three major platforms: EBL, EBSCO and Ebrary.

A selection of relevant databases is listed under the Commonwealth Studies section on OxLIP+. These include links to law databases for Australia, Canada, Africa and India; Aluka; statistical databases; Empire on-Line (Colonial History); and India, Raj and Empire.

The Bodleian Law Library has research guides available through its web pages which provide key entry points into the collections held in the Law Library, both in paper and online. See the LibGuides for Africa, Australasia and the Americas for key Commonwealth legal resources.

1.4 Notes about particular formats or collections

The Bodleian Libraries hold a representative collection of Commonwealth newspapers, substantial microform collections, and extensive collections of government documents, including statistical series and annual departmental reports, both current and historic. Relevant working papers and other examples of grey literature, including large numbers of pamphlets, are also held, mainly housed at the Book Storage Facility.

The Bodleian South Asian collections include a representative collection of Indian newspapers and extensive collections of government documents, including statistical series and annual departmental reports, both current and historic.
The SSL holds key government statistical series, central bank statistics, and commodity and
industry statistics for a range of Commonwealth countries.

English-language films from Commonwealth countries are held at the EFL, and African
feature films are held at the Taylor Institution Library.

1.5 Languages

The majority of Commonwealth titles are in English but there is also material in Afrikaans,
French, German, Portuguese and other European languages and a few items in other African
languages. The Bodleian South Asian collections include the classical Indian languages,
Sanskrit, Prakrit and Pali as well as modern Indian languages. The Bodleian’s Oriental
section has a small collection of printed books in Burmese and Malay. The SSL and the HFL
both collect mainly English material.

1.6 Bodleian Libraries Collection Management

The Bodleian Libraries aim to support new research areas and taught courses as they arise,
and collection policies will be subject to amendment and continuous development in the
light of such changes in academic requirements, while having regard to
national/international provision in subject areas where the Bodleian Libraries have leading
collections.

The Bodleian Libraries have a range of Collection Management Policy Documents which
refer to all subjects and collections, particularly as regards location, retention, disposal and
transfer of library materials.

2. Teaching collections for Commonwealth Studies

The Social Science Library (SSL), History Faculty Library (HFL), English Faculty Library (EFL)
and Oriental Institute Library (OIL) provide the main lending collections for Commonwealth
Studies within the Bodleian Libraries.

The SSL collects English language material relating to Commonwealth countries within the
context of its support for the research and teaching activities of the Department of
International Development.

Lending and teaching collections relating to the history of the African and Commonwealth
are held primarily at the HFL, in support of the History Faculty’s teaching syllabus. The
emphasis is on colonial and post-colonial history. English-language teaching materials for
the history of the Indian sub-continent, including selections of source materials, are
particularly good.

The EFL collects works on post-colonial Indian and Pakistani English literature and works of
criticism on major South Asian authors writing in English to support the Faculty’s teaching
interests. It also has a large lending collection of African literature (based on a donation
from Queen Elizabeth House), and continues to acquire the works of important writers
mainly in support of teaching and research in postcolonial literature.

Lending and teaching collections relating to the languages and literature of the Indian sub-
continent are held primarily at the OIL, in support of the Oriental Faculty’s teaching syllabus.

2.1 Text books

Reference copies of Commonwealth Studies reading list material, providing it falls within the
main collecting areas, are held on the open shelves in the Weston Library.

The SSL provides lending copies of African and Commonwealth Studies reading list material
relevant to the social sciences and anthropology, and general and methodological works.
Global political and Western foreign policy works are also collected in support of the Department of Politics and International Relations.

In the selection of borrowable textbooks, the HFL is first and foremost guided by the Faculty’s reading lists and degree programmes. The Faculty also expects the HFL to remain alert to trends in historical scholarship and to keep abreast of shifts in the way African and Commonwealth history is being taught. Funding permitting, the Library will therefore actively buy newly published critical monographs on the history of Commonwealth countries, provided they are suitable for undergraduate and postgraduate level.

OIL lending and teaching collections relating to the languages and literature of the Indian sub-continent are selected in accordance with Faculty reading lists (where these exist) and otherwise on recommendation of Faculty teachers.

2.2 Journal articles

The majority of journals are available online. Any journal articles required for teaching that are unavailable in Oxford (online or print) will be obtained through inter-library loan. Providing the terms of the University’s licence agreement with the Copyright Licensing Agency are adhered to, academics may scan journal articles (and book chapters) for use via WebLearn or make the relevant number of multiple copies.

2.3 Levels of provision

Legal deposit titles and publications purchased for the open shelves in the Weston Library or to be held at the Book Storage Facility are for reference only.

The SSL will normally provide two lending copies of core readings and one lending copy of recommended readings, although provision in other Bodleian libraries will also be taken into consideration.

The HFL will normally buy one lending copy in the first instance, if a textbook from a reading list is selected for purchase. If a title is for a heavily subscribed course, then additional copies will be bought, sometimes over time to support the higher demand. Provisions and usage of titles in other Bodleian libraries will also inform a decision about how many copies to purchase.

3. Research collections for Commonwealth Studies

3.1 Research books

The Bodleian collects extensively on the history and current affairs – political, economic and social – of all Commonwealth countries, and selectively on anthropology and cultural studies.

The Bodleian’s South Asian collections hold comprehensive research collections of printed material on the languages, history, culture and political, economic and social development of all of South Asia and the Himalayan countries of Inner Asia. It also holds research collections on Hindu and Jain temple architecture and archaeology.

The SSL collects comprehensively material in support of research in development studies. It also houses texts on research and survey methodology.

3.2 Monograph serials / standing-orders

The Bodleian has substantial numbers of standing orders for major monographic series in South and Inner Asian studies.
3.3 Journals

The Bodleian holds a substantial collection of journals, both current and non-current, received by legal deposit, subscription and donation.

The Bodleian’s collections and the Sackler’s Eastern Art Library both hold substantial collections of journals, both current and non-current, received by legal deposit, subscription and donation.

Core journals for development studies are held in the SSL.

3.4 Other

The English Faculty Library supports research in post-colonial literature including Africa.

4. Special Collections

The Bodleian Libraries’ special collections, housed in the Weston Library, hold substantial manuscript and archival collections relating to the Commonwealth, acquired under the auspices of the Oxford Colonial Records Project, its successor projects and individual donations. This is the largest holding (some 4,000 collections) of its kind in the country and is of national and international significance. It comprises principally the papers of individuals and organisations active in Commonwealth and other countries since the late 18th century through to the present day. In addition to written materials it includes oral archives, photographs, lantern slides, original artwork, and a small quantity of documentary film on video or DVD. Maps are available in the Bodleian’s map collections.

The principal organisations whose archives are held are the Africa Bureau, Anti-Apartheid Movement, Anti-Slavery Society, Fabian Colonial Bureau, the United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel and the Overseas Nursing Association.

Individuals whose papers are held include Cecil Rhodes, Lord Lugard, Dame Margery Perham, Arthur Creech Jones, Sir Roy Welensky, and Archbishop Trevor Huddleston.

The Bodleian holds an extensive collection of aerial photographs of many Commonwealth countries, dating from the 1940s-1980s.

The Bodleian also holds the Scicluna Collection of books, regarded as the most comprehensive collection on Malta outside that country, and the Trevor Hearl Collection of books and archive material on St. Helena.

The Bodleian’s Oriental Department has one of the most important collections of Mughal paintings in the world and is repository of some 8,700 Sanskrit manuscripts, the largest known collection of Sanskrit manuscripts outside the Indian sub-continent. The Bodleian also has collections of manuscripts in other Indic languages, though the holdings are small in relation to the Sanskrit collections, with some 200 Hindi manuscripts and with just over 100 manuscripts in Tamil, Prakrit, Marathi, and Pali respectively. The Bodleian only seeks to acquire new South Asian and South East Asian manuscripts, whether by purchase or donation, where the provenance is proven.

5. Core Research and Teaching areas for Commonwealth Studies

In addition to the legal deposit intake and general works, the Bodleian Libraries will purchase non-deposited material in the following specific subjects when related to Commonwealth countries:

In addition to its comprehensive collections on Commonwealth history, the Bodleian’s holdings cover general colonial and imperial history with a special interest in slavery, race relations and mission studies.
The SSL covers the following research subjects: AIDS, development economics (especially transition economics, informal sectors, income distribution, labour economics, microeconomics and microfinance, trade); governance and political development; refugees and forced migration; globalization; poverty; economic assistance, international organisations, international relief and aid; rural development; conflict, war and post-war reconstruction; gender and development; children and development; social science and ethnographic research methodology.

In addition to works on general history of most Commonwealth countries, the HFL will buy selectively works for individual countries on economic, social and political history; Imperial and colonial history; rural history; nationalism and intellectual history; historiography; historical geography; contemporary travel and description; theory of colonialism, nationalism and post-colonialism; religious and witchcraft history; slavery and race relations; oral testimonies, written sources.

6. Contacts

**Sarah Rhodes** (African and Commonwealth Subject Consultant, SSL)  
tel: +44 (0)1865 285998  
email: sarah.rhodes@bodleian.ox.ac.uk

**Lucy McCann** (Senior Archivist, Special Collections, Weston Library)  
tel: +44 (0)1865 270911  
email: lucy.mccann@bodleian.ox.ac.uk

**Isabel Holowaty** (History Librarian, Bodleian History Faculty Library)  
tel: +44 (0)1865 277294  
email: Isabel.holowaty@bodleian.ox.ac.uk

**Gillian Evison** (Head of Oriental Collections, OIL)  
tel: +44 (0)1865 277083  
email: gillian.evison@bodleian.ox.ac.uk

**Ruth Bird** (Librarian, Bodleian Law Library)  
tel: +44 (0)1865 271451  
email: ruth.bird@bodleian.ox.ac.uk

12 January 2015