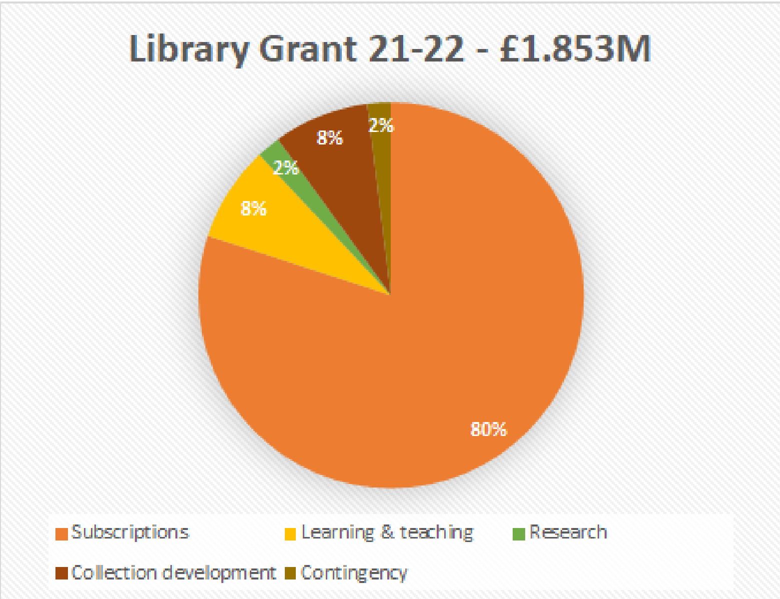
The Library Grant and how it is spent

The Library Grant is the annual budget allocated by the University for the provision of resources to support learning, teaching, and research. In 2021-2022, the Grant was £1.85 million. It is managed by the Library, and subdivided to support different activities. This paper outlines how and why it is spent.

Chart 1, below, shows the five categories of spending:

- Subscriptions (80%)
- Additional teaching and learning support (8%)
- Additional research support (2%)
- Collection development (8%)
- Contingency fund (2%)

Chart 1, The Library Grant 2021-2022

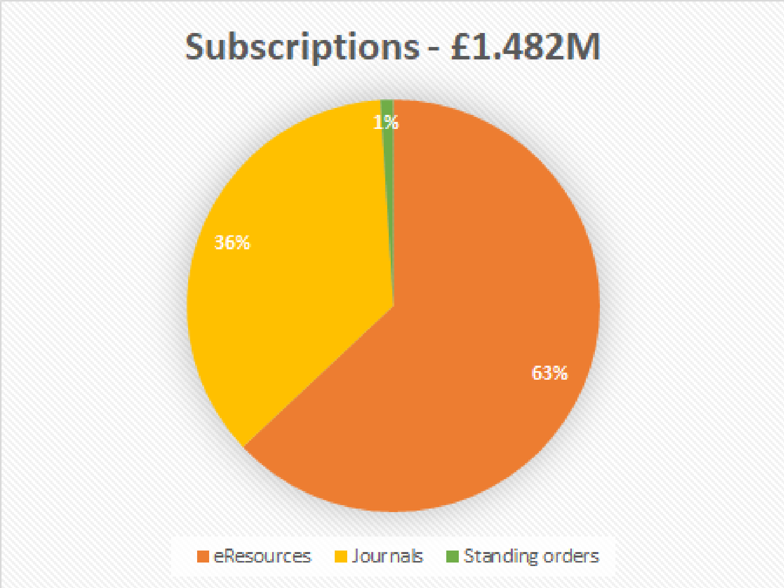


There are intersections between all the funds. In particular, the Subscriptions fund supports all areas of activity, with further provision made via additional, specific funding. For example, Subscriptions provide the greatest proportion of support for Research activity, and the Additional research fund is used for non-subscription research materials.

Subscriptions

In 2021-2022, the Subscriptions fund was £1.482 million. It has three subcategories: eResources, Journals, Standing orders and together these account for the greater part of the Grant, 80%.

Chart 2, Subscriptions fund.



eResources

Around two-thirds of the subscription fund is spent on eResources such as abstracts and indexes, online journals databases, and research tools. eResources subscriptions either are annual or multi-year contracts of between two and four years. Typically, Jisc undertakes national negotiations to achieve agreements that meet HE's needs and provide value-for-money. Historically, the inflation rates for databases and journal subscriptions have generally been several percentage points higher than CPI, anywhere between 2% and 10%. In such an environment, multi-year contracts give some cost certainty by fixing annual price increases at lower rates. BMJ Best Practice is an example of high price rises, having increased from £10,803 in 2019 to £17,527 in 2022. The largest year-on-year increase was 2020 to 2021 at 40%.

Traditionally, subscription fees were paid to provide access to journals for reading purposes. Now, the focus is on creating 'transformative agreements' or 'read and publish agreements' that shift the basis of payments to facilitating OA (Open Access) publishing in a controlled manner that constrains costs. This is in line with the Plan S initiative for OA publishing, and aligns with the OA objectives of major research funders such as UKRI (UK Research and Innovation) and Wellcome Trust.

Hosting fees

Accounting for just 1% of the total Library Grant, circa £25,000, hosting fees do not appear in the pie charts, but they play a critical role in supporting research, teaching, and collection development. The modest annual sums provide continuing access to resources previously invested in, by either the Library or Jisc. They contribute to the maintenance of the provider's platform to ensure the underlying technology is kept current, and accessibility and digital preservation standards continue to be met.

For example, in 2014, the Library purchased the Guardian and Observer Archive, 1791-2003 for a price equivalent to four years of subscription fees. The hosting fee is 2% of the purchase cost. This approach gives certainty of access, and is cheaper than maintaining a subscription.

Jisc invests in a wide range of eResources and makes them available to higher education in return for only a hosting fee. This allows the Library to provide access to resources it otherwise could not afford. For example, circa. £1,600 per year gives access to an archive collection of primary sources from the 1600s to the twenty-first century, including: early book collections; government papers; historical periodicals; 18th, 19th, and 20th century House of Commons Parliamentary Papers; British periodicals collections I and II; Periodicals Archive Online; Early European Books 1-IV; and the Vogue Archive.

Journals

Subscriptions to individual journal titles are typically annual, allowing flexibility in provision. For example, if a title becomes available via one of the Library's databases it may be cost-effective to cancel the individual subscription, and reallocate the associated funds.

Additional teaching and learning fund

There is not a chart for the Teaching and learning fund. Instead, please refer to Chart 1.

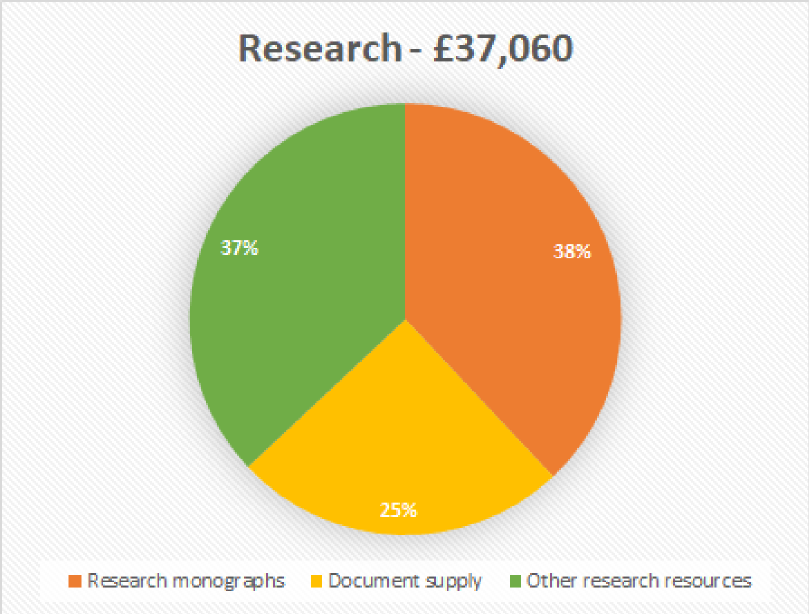
This fund supports the purchase of eBooks, books, and physical resources such as DVDs, for ReadingLists@Hull. Teaching colleagues add their resource preferences to the module list in line with the University's policy to ensure equitable access for all students.

Where available, Essential reading list items are bought outright. However, purchasing is not always the most cost-effective way to provide access, and where appropriate the Library uses other options. See Collection development for more information.

Additional research fund

As noted elsewhere, most research support is provided from the Subscriptions budget, and so is not represented here. In 2021-2022, the additional fund was £37,060. It is subdivided in to three: Research monographs, Document supply, and Other.

Chart 3, Additional research fund.



Monographs

All researchers, including at level 7, can request purchases of a range of formats including print, eBooks, maps, and AV materials. Although initially purchased to support specific research activity, some of these resources are subsequently used in teaching.

Document supply

The document supply service, also known as inter-library loan, provides access to materials that are not available via the Library's other access routes. Requests for book titles may be satisfied via the Collection development fund's PDA options, see below.

Document supply is a reciprocal service and therefore generates income for the Library when Hull can provide other libraries with copies of material requested by their users.

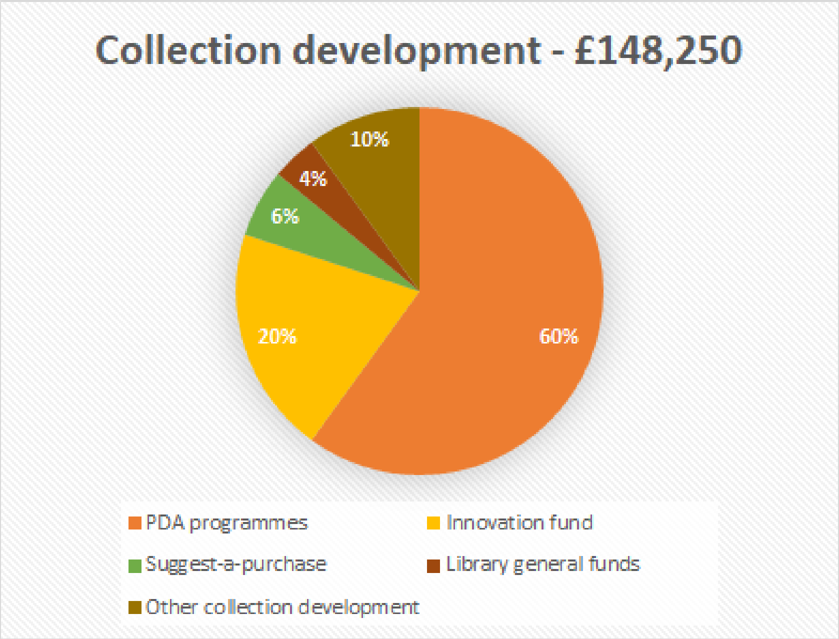
Other

This subcategory captures spending that does not readily fall into the other Research subcategories. For example, a proposal for a new research resource could be classified here.

Collection development

In 2021-2022, this fund was £148,250. It has five subcategories: PDA programmes, Innovation, Suggest-a-purchase, Library general funds, and Other.

Chart 4, Collection development fund.



PDA programmes

The largest proportion of the Collection development fund, 60%, provides eBook access via patron-driven acquisitions programmes. These are used for titles tagged as Recommended or Background in ReadingLists@Hull, the student Suggest-a-purchase service, Research monographs, document supply requests, and collection development objectives.

On receipt of a book order, the Library checks whether an eBook is available and, if so, whether the publisher permits its inclusion in a PDA. If it does, the eBook is made available via Library Search but not purchased until it is used.

Suggest-a-purchase

Students can propose titles they consider should be in the Library's collections. These may support their study and research beyond the module reading list, be for leisure, or help to decolonise and diversify the collections. Where appropriate, titles are provided via PDA, otherwise physical items are purchased.

Library General fund

The general fund is used to replace missing, damaged, or out-of-date reference works, to support general needs, such as study skills or research methodologies, and provide resources not related to teaching or research such as the Leisure Reading Collection, and the Reading Well Collection.

Innovation fund

The Library investigates novel resources, or associated services, to assess their relevance to the University's priorities, perhaps through a fixed-term subscription. Where there is a clear alignment to need, the future costs are reassigned to the appropriate fund. Examples of Innovation fund spending include: investigating various eTextbook licensing models;

supporting OA publishing opportunities, for example from the Royal Society, and Frontiers; and access to the Unsub service to aid analysis of publisher's 'big deals'.

Other

This covers spending that cannot be readily categorized elsewhere within the Collection development fund. A current priority is to support the University's strategies to decolonise, diversify, and support social justice.

Contingency fund

This is used to offset any over-spend in the other categories. For example, subscription costs may be higher than anticipated because of fluctuating foreign exchange rates. Most subscriptions are paid in sterling, but some are invoiced in US dollars or Euros.

VAT

In May 2020, VAT was removed from ePublications, such as eBooks and eJournals, bringing them in line with printed works. Not all the Library's eResources are classified as ePublications, for example Box of Broadcasts (BoB) is audio-visual content and subject to VAT. Other examples of payments attracting VAT are those for hosting fees, and the 'publish' element of read and publish agreements, both of which are classed as services.

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