

The University of Manchester Library is one of the great libraries of the world. It sits at the heart of England's first and most eminent civic university, welcoming millions of students, researchers and visits every year to its 8 sites, which include The John Rylands Research Institute and Library, home to one of the most remarkable university Special Collections in the world.

Our history

- **1851** The library of Owens College is established, made up of collections brought together from the Manchester Mechanics' Institute, the Manchester Medical Society and the Manchester Royal Infirmary
- **1904** Owens College becomes Victoria University of Manchester by royal charter and the Library becomes the Manchester University Library
- **1972** The Library is merged with the John Rylands Library to become the John Rylands University Library of Manchester
- **1983** Becomes one of the founding members of Research Libraries UK
- **2004** Victoria University of Manchester merges with the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology; the libraries merge to form the John Rylands University Library
- **2008** Library designated as one of five National Research Libraries, the only one in the North of England
- **2012** The library changes its name to The University of Manchester Library to differentiate it from The John Rylands Library in the city centre

Our spaces

- **9** Library sites across the University
 - Main Library
 - John Rylands Research Institute and Library (Deansgate)
 - Alan Gilbert Learning Common
 - Art and Archaeology Library
 - Eddie Davies Library (Alliance Manchester Business School)
 - Lenagan Library (Music and Drama)
 - Stopford Library (Medical and Human Sciences)

- Ahmed Iqbal Ullah RACE Centre (at Central Library)

- **5,680** individual study spaces
- **792** workstations
- **56,327** square metres of floor space

The John Rylands Research Institute and Library (Deansgate)

- **1900** The dramatic neo-gothic cathedral to learning opened after 10 years of construction overseen by Enriqueta Rylands. The Library honours her late husband John Rylands, a wealthy Manchester textile merchant
- **1972** Combined with The University of Manchester as the home of one of the most remarkable university special collections libraries in the world
- **1994** Awarded Grade I listed status
- **2007** The John Rylands Library reopens to the public with a new entrance and new Reading Room and conservation facilities after a three-year transformation to preserve and unlock the building and its collections
- **2013** The John Rylands Research Institute founded to open up the Special Collections to all
- **2021** The Rylands is renamed as the John Rylands Research Institute and Library, signifying a much closer collaboration between researchers and Library staff

Our resources

- Largest academic digital collections in Britain
- **1,414,714** e-books (excluding free books)
- **2,009,895** catalogued physical items
- **37,981** paid-for serial titles (includes journals, periodicals, annuals, newspapers and conference proceedings)
- Over **700** databases
- **6,421** metres of archives and manuscripts
- **122** laptops and iPads available for loan
- **3,452** items were purchased through our student-facing Order A Book scheme

- Our eTextbook Programme provided students on **1,048** course units with access to their own personal copy of their 'core reading' as a downloadable interactive eTextbook. Over **121,732 copies** were provided, reaching over **33,756** students (2022/23 data)
- **Smallest book** The *Alphabet Book* which measures 2.5mm high
- **Over 90,000** Special Collections items digitised and freely available online via our **digital collections**

Our learning support

- **11,500+** student attendances at workshops and events run by My Learning Essentials, the Library's award-winning skills programme (total attendance)
- **3,800+** student attendances at events run by My Research Essentials, the Library's researcher developer programme (total attendance)
- **1,300+** attendances at events and appointments run by Specialist Library Support, the Library's expert support programme for students, staff and researchers (total attendance)
- Our open online resources were accessed around **100,000** times, and our subject guides over **400,000** times

Our expenditure

- Over **£11.5 million** spent on information provision and access

Special Collections

- **6.75 million** items spanning nearly 5,000 years, written in more than 50 languages and written on virtually every medium ever employed, from clay tablets to email
- **Oldest items** Cuneiform tablets from Mesopotamia (Iraq) dating from 3rd millennium BC
- **Most famous item** Fragment of John's Gospel, widely regarded as the earliest part of any New Testament writing in existence
- **Biggest book** *Birds of America* by John James Audubon
- **Heaviest book** A giant *Qur'an* made in Egypt in the late 14th century, weight 52kgs