

Subject: Reference Collection Management

Title: Reference Collection Management Procedure

Operational Procedure – Date Adopted by the Library Services Faculty: April 5, 2007

Administrative Procedure – Date Issued by Administration:

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Introduction:

The Reference collection supports the in-depth research requirements and ready reference needs of the campus community. The Reference Collection provides access to print and electronic reference materials in all subject areas of the curriculum and in general fields of knowledge.

I. Objectives of the Reference Collection Management Procedure

1. To establish guidelines for the subject scope, breadth, depth and type of materials included in the reference collection.
2. To establish criteria for systematic collection assessment and for coordination of the acquisition and withdrawal of material.
3. To aid in planning for collection development and fund allocation.
4. To provide a vehicle for the department to communicate its collection procedure and rationales to other ALS units and to the University community.
5. To enhance coordination between the reference collection and other collections of ALS.
6. To act as an effective orientation device for new reference staff, administrators, and other interested individuals.

II. General Selection Criteria

A. The following factors are considered in the selection of new materials:

1. Curriculum, teaching and/or research needs. General informational needs of the university and the community will also be supported, as funds allow.
2. Perceived usefulness of the item.
3. Strengths and weaknesses of the existing collection related to current needs of the University and its representation of diverse groups, including historically marginalized groups, in the University and local community populations.
Favorable reviews or inclusion in basic reference collection guides.
4. Reputation of the author and publisher.
5. Currency of the topic.
6. Format of the item.
7. Date of the item.

8. Price of the item.
9. Language of the item.

B. Procedures for requesting new materials:

Purchase requests and any supporting information are submitted to the Reference Collection Management Coordinator, who reviews the need for the item, the cost, and the relative expenditures anticipated and already made during the current budget year for the relevant discipline.

Items recommended by the Reference Collection Management Coordinator are reviewed by the Head of Reference and submitted to the Acquisitions Department.

III. Scope of the Collection

A. Language

Materials are collected primarily in English. Foreign language encyclopedias and other major reference works are selectively acquired.

B. Currency

No limitation, but in many areas only the most up-to-date materials are retained in the reference collection. Older standard reference works of historical and scholarly interest are selectively retained. Superseded editions may be transferred to the stacks, if the material is of potential historical value or if a circulating copy is deemed useful.

C. Format

The reference collection includes a variety of formats, including print, electronic databases (both subscription and free), and Internet resources. The decision to format will be based on careful assessment, including a review of the anticipated and actual demand for a product, cost, space, ease of use including enhanced searching and linking capability, authority, accuracy, reliability of access, frequency of updating, system support, remote access capability, usage restrictions, preservation, distance education applicability, and durability.

Within these guidelines, web-based access is preferred. For some titles, the Reference Department may require both print and electronic formats.

D. Second Copies/Replacements/New Editions

Multiple copies of reference books are purchased occasionally if the title is heavily used (Example: thesauri, style manuals, dictionaries). The same material may be purchased and/or accessed in different formats based on the search capabilities offered by the additional format, the need for an archival copy, the demand for the material, and the availability of access from outside the library.

Replacements may be purchased if a book has been lost, stolen, or defaced beyond repair and it is of continuing value to the collection.

New editions will be considered for purchase if the title continues to fall within reference collection development guidelines and funds are available. Purchasing decisions will take into account the need for more current information, the extent to which an edition varies from the older edition already in the collection, and cost. For example, an annual publication may be purchased every other year, rather than every year.

E. Duplication

Duplication of materials between Reference and other ALS collections should be limited. Exceptions are titles for which there is evidence of heavy use in the Reference area (e.g., North Carolina Manual).

F. Collection Depth

When considering materials for selection, inclusion, or retention in the Reference

Collection, the following factors influence the decision:

1. research patterns of faculty and students in the discipline;
2. type of degree offered (Bachelors, Masters, Doctorate);
3. number of students;
4. Reference Collection usage patterns; and
5. subject area librarian input and discipline-specific collection guidelines.

In general, the Joyner Library Research and Instructional Services will maintain a basic level of materials in medicine and music, deferring to Laupus and the Music Library for most materials in these subject areas. The intent is to minimize duplication of materials and services.

Any library staff member or patron may recommend moving items between the circulating stacks and the Reference Collection. The location decision will rest with the Reference Collection Development Coordinator in conjunction with the subject librarian and the Head of Reference.

G. Reference Compact Shelves

The Reference Compact Shelves house materials that are still part of the working reference collection. The Compact Shelving area serves as an archive for reference materials that may be duplicated in another format or may have lower usage than the resources in the Reference Collection. The Compact Shelves are a “middle ground”: materials housed in this location are neither ready to become part of the circulating collection nor suitable for immediate disposal, although these choices are future options for materials in Compact Shelving.

IV. Specific Types of Reference Materials - Criteria for Selection

A. Almanacs, Annuals and Yearbooks

Both general and subject almanacs, annuals, and yearbooks are acquired. For the most part, only current editions are located in reference; however, encyclopedia yearbooks and key annual reviews are retained in reference.

B. Bibliographies

Major international, national and trade bibliographies of general interest or relevance to academic programs are collected. Major guides to the literature of a particular discipline or field are also collected.

Because of space limitations and the general commitment to an open stack circulating collection, subject bibliographies are acquired selectively. General subject bibliographies and those covering "hot topics" will be considered for reference. Criteria for selection include comprehensive and/or annotated coverage, timeliness, relevance for academic programs, importance of the individual work or subject within the field, and the extent of material available on the topic. Subject bibliographies will be reevaluated on a regular basis to ensure that their location in reference is warranted. Specialized bibliographies are generally not collected in reference.

C. Biographical Sources

Reference collects comprehensive works dealing with professional, national, and international biography, including both retrospective and current biography. Specialized sources are acquired when they relate to the curriculum and/or research interests of the university community.

D. Career Resources

Reference selectively collects general career resources in disciplines that reflect the curriculum.

Materials include profiles of careers, resume and interviewing handbooks, and directories. Career aptitude measurements are not collected.

E. Dictionaries

1. English Language

A variety of English-language dictionaries are collected, including abridged, unabridged and college editions of general dictionaries and specialized dictionaries on etymology, slang, pronunciation, and dialects. Thesauri and guides to usage are also collected.

2. English-Foreign Language

Reference collects current editions of bilingual dictionaries where English is one of the languages selected.

3. Foreign Language

Authoritative foreign language dictionaries are collected. The number and types of dictionaries vary from language to language depending on the linguistic or cultural importance of the language and their relevance to the curriculum.

4. Subject Dictionaries

Authoritative dictionaries covering the terminology of specialized subject areas are collected if they support the curriculum.

F. Directories

Current editions of major directories for subject areas in Reference, as well as those of general interest, are included in the reference collection. The latest print editions of telephone directories for Greenville are also acquired when possible. Internet resources are used to access telephone directory information for other localities.

G. Encyclopedias

1. General English Language

Major college and adult-level encyclopedias are acquired. In most cases, only the latest print edition is held in reference. The 11th and 14th editions of the Encyclopaedia Britannica are retained in Reference for their historical value.

2. General Foreign Language

Reference maintains general encyclopedias in French, German, Italian and Spanish.

New editions should be considered for purchase as they are published. Additional encyclopedias in languages or area studies taught at the university should also be considered for purchase as funds allow.

3. Subject

Reference collects current authoritative encyclopedias in subject areas of interest to the university community. Older editions of subject encyclopedias which retain substantial reference value are also kept in Reference.

H. Geographical Sources

1. Atlases

Authoritative international, national, regional, and state atlases (current and historical) are collected. Subject atlases (commercial, political, ethnic, etc.) that meet selection guidelines are collected if they support the curriculum.

2. Gazetteers

Major gazetteers of both national and international scope are collected, with coverage of both contemporary and historical place names.

3. Travel Guides

Reference selectively collects guides and directories for the most heavily traveled areas of the world and/or those areas in which the University offers study abroad and area studies programs.

I. Government Publications

Academic Library Services is a selective Federal Depository Library and a selective depository for the NC State Publications Clearinghouse. Separate procedures govern collection management for the Federal Documents Collection and the North Carolina Collection.

The Reference Collection includes reference works published by the federal government, as well as relevant reference works and finding aids to government

information published by commercial entities. Access to government web sites, subscription databases, and selected tangible electronic resources is also provided.

J. Handbooks

Handbooks and manuals are generally located in the stacks. Selected handbooks and manuals are added to Reference if they are within the subject scope of the collection, are sufficiently current to be considered authoritative, and present their information in an easily accessible manner.

K. Indexes, Abstracts and Full-Text Databases

Reference subscribes to, maintains and/or provides access to an extensive collection of general, specialized and interdisciplinary indexes, abstracts, and full-text databases that support the curricular and research needs of students and faculty. These materials are made available in a variety of formats. Web-based formats are preferred. Evaluation criteria for electronic resources are contained in the Electronic Resources Collection Development Procedure.

L. Legal Materials

Reference provides access to primary and secondary materials needed to research federal bills, statutes, regulations and case law, as well as case law from the fifty states.

M. Plot Summaries

Critical digests and plot summaries of novels, nonfiction works, plays, and films are acquired. Study aids or alternatives to research, such as Cliff Notes or Monarch Notes, are not collected.

N. Quotation Books

General English-language books of quotations are collected occasionally. Quotation books on specific subjects may be selected as funds permit.

O. Religious Texts

The reference collection includes sacred works significant to major world religions. A limited number of commentaries and concordances are selected for the reference collection to meet curricular needs.

P. Statistical Sources

An extensive collection of statistical reference materials is maintained in a variety of formats.

Q. Style Manuals

Current style manuals suited to the needs of the university community are collected. Multiple copies of heavily-used manuals may be acquired.

V. Evaluation and Deselection

A. Regular Evaluation

Using appropriate tools, titles are evaluated periodically to ensure that the collection continues to be a working collection of important materials. Careful, ongoing, and systematic deselection removes outdated works from the collection. Older volumes of many serial publications, such as directories and yearbooks, are automatically removed from the reference collection when newer editions are received.

B. Criteria for Deselection

Since each discipline covered by the reference collection requires different types of materials, it is impossible to establish absolute standards for evaluation.

However, criteria that will be considered include:

1. Significance of the publication.
2. Age and currency of the publication.
3. Availability of later editions.
4. Physical condition of the publication.
5. Duplication of the contents.
6. Language of the publication.
7. Use.
8. Appropriateness to the demonstrated needs of the University community (e.g., mission, curriculum, reference questions).