

Subject: Reference Collection Management

Title: Reference Collection Management Procedure

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

Administrative Procedure – Date Issued by Administration:

Date Revised: December 6, 2018

Introduction:

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

Research and Instructional Services staff look upon the entire collection of ECU Libraries as a source for reference work. As such, the size of the physical reference collection is minimized. In most cases electronic formats are preferred.

I. Objectives of the Reference Collection Management Procedure

To establish guidelines for the subject scope, breadth, depth and type of materials included in the reference collection.

To establish criteria for systematic collection assessment and for coordination of the acquisition and withdrawal of material.

To aid in planning for collection development and fund allocation. To

provide a vehicle for the department to communicate its collection procedure and rationales to other ALS units and to the University community.

To enhance coordination between the reference collection and other collections of ALS.

To act as an effective orientation device for new ~~reference~~ Research and Instructional Services 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.
 4. Favorable reviews or inclusion in basic reference collection guides.
 5. Reputation of the author and publisher.
 6. Currency of the topic.
 7. Format of the item.
 8. Date of the item.
 9. Price of the item.
 10. 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 submitted to the Acquisitions Department.

III. Scope of the Collection

A. Language

Materials are collected primarily in English. Foreign language encyclopedias, dictionaries 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 general circulating 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 as 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. Electronic formats are preferred. For some titles, the Research and Instructional Services Department may, in special circumstances, 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~~ the reference collection and other ALS collections should be limited. Exceptions are titles for which there is evidence of heavy use in the ~~Reference~~ Research and Instructional Services area (e.g., ~~North Carolina Manual~~ Anchor Bible Dictionary).

F. Collection Depth

When considering materials for selection, inclusion, or retention in the ~~R~~ 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 Department will maintain a minimal number of materials in medicine and music, deferring to Laupus and the Music Library for most materials in these subject areas. The intent is to curtail 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 Research and Instructional Services.

G. Reference Compact Shelves 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 may be 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. Electronic formats are preferred.

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 selectively 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 selectively 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. Electronic formats are preferred.

D. Career Resources

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

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

E. Dictionaries

1. English Language

A variety of English-language dictionaries are selectively 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 for foreign languages studied and taught by the campus community.

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 selectively collected if they support the curriculum. Electronic formats are preferred.

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. Electronic formats are preferred.

G. Encyclopedias

1. General English Language

Major college and adult-level encyclopedias are selectively acquired. The 11th and 15th 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.

3. Subject

Reference collects current authoritative encyclopedias in subject areas of interest to the university community. Electronic formats are preferred.

H. Geographical Sources

1. Atlases

Authoritative international, national, regional, and state atlases (current and historical) are selectively 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 selectively collected, with coverage of both contemporary and historical place names.

I. Government Publications

Joyner Library is a selective Federal Depository Library and a full State Depository Library. Separate procedures govern collection management for the Federal Government 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 general circulating stacks. Selected handbooks and manuals are added to the Reference Collection 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. Electronic formats are preferred.

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. Electronic 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. Electronic formats are preferred.

M. 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.

N. Statistical Sources

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

O. 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).