

**Forsyth Library
Fort Hays State University
Reference Collection Development & Deselection Policy**

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a guideline for the acquisition, development, maintenance, and evaluation of reference materials in the Forsyth Library Reference Collection (hereafter known as “the Library”). It also presents information regarding the selection, evaluation, deselection, replacement, and retention of reference materials as well as other factors related to collection development such as selection responsibility, budget, scope and restrictions, gifts, and general guidelines.

Goals

The primary goal of the Library’s Reference Collection is to provide on campus and off campus reference resources that are necessary to support Fort Hays State University’s academic community (hereafter known as “the University”). The secondary goal is to furnish reference materials that will meet the need for general information. If both of these goals are accomplished, the right information will be provided to the right reader at the right time.

Objectives

- To acquire books, indexes, electronic resources, and other reference materials that support the curriculum or the need for general information
- To purchase reference sources which will supply answers to specific questions as well as assist users with more extensive research projects
- To procure reference materials that will provide essential tools that librarians can use to answer reference questions
- To obtain reference sources which generally cannot be borrowed from other libraries and are needed to answer questions
- To purchase reference materials that will support current as well as future academic programs or needs for general information
- To acquire reference resources that support instruction and creative activity as well as research
- To provide appropriate current and/or historical information for all Library of Congress classification major subject areas.

Selection Responsibility

The Reference Department Coordinator is responsible for recommending materials for the Reference Collection. In order to complete this task, the Coordinator examines the Reference Collection for titles that need to be continued or updated, resources that need to be acquired to balance or strengthen the collection, and items that should be received on standing order. The Coordinator also evaluates newly published reference materials as well as online sources, collects suggestions made by the University and Library's faculty, staff, and patrons for future reference purchases, and then recommends titles for purchase. After the Reference staff views these recommendations and the Library Director gives final approval for purchase, the Coordinator submits the purchase requests to the Acquisitions Manager by completing online Library Book Request forms that are available on Lotus Notes.

Budget

The budget for Reference materials is allocated by the Director of Forsyth Library when funds become available.

Scope and Restrictions

The Reference Collection must provide resources to answer inquiries related to the University's curriculum, graduate and faculty research needs, as well as the need for basic general information. Off-campus faculty, staff, and students must also have access to as many reference sources as possible.

This collection excludes or has minimal resources for the following:

- Textbooks
- Travel guides
- How-to books
- Self-help manuals
- Paper college catalogs
- Paper corporate reports
- Auto mechanic manuals
- University records and/or archival material
- Vertical file material (such as pamphlets, brochures, etc.)
- Sources for collectibles such as coins, stamps, antiques, etc.
- Information on hobbies and/or crafts unless it would be useful for our Art Department

General Collection Guidelines for the Reference Collection

- Language
Although English is the primary language of the Reference Collection, a few foreign language reference sources are purchased to support the curriculum or the need for general information.

- **Geographical Area**
Materials in the Reference Collection are not limited to a geographic area. However, most of the sources collected are published in the United States and emphasis has been placed on selecting titles that pertain to the United States, North America, and Western Europe. Geographic areas chosen for Reference must support the curriculum or the need for general information.
- **Chronological Periods**
Although current information is usually requested when new materials are ordered, out-of-print or older publications are only acquired if deemed necessary. Chronological periods within the collection will vary according to discipline. Some disciplines, such as the humanities, will require some older publications while others, such as the social sciences, will require more current information. In some cases, older titles or publications within the collection are kept for historical purposes or unique reference value. Works are also sometimes retained if they have a long-standing reputation or are regarded as one of the most authoritative within its field. In other cases, titles have been placed on standing order or are automatically withdrawn or transferred to the General Collection in order to keep the collection current.
- **Level or Treatment of Subject**
Reference materials are available for all Library of Congress classification major subject areas and range in degree of difficulty from high school to research level. Although scholarly and authoritative information is normally purchased, popular treatment of a needed topic is acquired only when scholarly and/or authoritative information is not available. A few reference materials for the Juvenile and Harsh Collection are also available in the Reference Collection.
- **Formats**
Although Reference materials may be selected in any format, electronic resources have become increasingly important to off-campus as well as on-campus faculty, staff, and students. Some of the current electronic resources available for Reference include Credo Reference, Oxford Reference Online, Britannica Online, World Book Encyclopedia Online, and Net Library. Reference also has a wide variety of databases and other electronic resources which supplement various collections within the Library. Materials on microform are purchased if that information is not available in print or electronic format, and the microfiche that is currently available in the Reference Collection should be periodically reviewed to determine if retention is necessary. Amount of use, availability and ease of access, cost, storage space, staff commitment, and equipment requirements are a few of the factors to consider when choosing formats.
- **Duplicates**
One copy of a title is usually acquired. Although duplicate copies may be purchased for high-demand items and titles may be acquired in both print and

electronic format, these types of decisions must be made on a case-by-case basis.

- **Replacements**
Books that are damaged or badly worn may be repaired, replaced, or withdrawn. Personnel in Interlibrary Loan may be able to request pages for items that have missing pages. Books declared missing or lost may also be replaced. However, factors such as availability, importance, use, and demand must be considered before an order for replacement is made.
- **Approval Plans**
Reference does not participate in any approval plans at the present time.

Definition of Reference Materials

Reference materials are not read from cover to cover and are useful for finding factual, background, and bibliographic information. A few examples of reference sources include dictionaries, encyclopedias, almanacs, atlases, directories, handbooks, manuals, bibliographies, and indexes. Although Reference books are generally not checked out, a Reference Librarian fills out a special permission form if an item is circulated.

Location of Reference Materials

The Reference Collection is housed on the main floor of the Library on the northwest side of the building. Paper reference books, paper indexes, microfiche, maps, globes, and other Reference materials are placed in this vicinity. Most of these materials are arranged by the Library of Congress Classification System. Ready reference materials are placed near the Reference Desk, and Reference Librarians provide assistance at this location. Online reference sources will continue to grow and some of the current ones that are accessible include Credo Reference, Oxford Reference Online, Britannica Online, World Book Encyclopedia Online, and NetLibrary.

Sources of Information for New Reference Materials

Whenever possible, reviews of reference materials should be located and read before individual titles are ordered. The following resources are examples of places that could be consulted for titles and/or reviews:

- Subject journals, bibliographies, and guides
- Conferences, meetings, and professional contacts
- Notification slips from approved vendors (e.g. Choice)
- Scholarly publishers' ads, brochures, leaflets, catalogs, and websites
- Yankee Book Peddler, Books in Print, and Resources for College Libraries
- Suggestions from the University or Library faculty and staff as well as patrons

- Current sources in the Reference Collection (e.g. American Reference Books Annual and Choice)
- Current library and information science titles in the Periodical Reading Room (e.g. College and Research Libraries, Reference and User Services Quarterly, American Libraries, Library Journal, and Booklist)
- Sources for retrospective titles (e.g. Bowker's Best Reference Books, Balay's Guide to Reference Books, O'Gorman's Reference Sources for Small and Medium-Sized Libraries, Reference Books Bulletin, and Walford's various Guides to Reference Material)

Types of Materials Selected

Print and nonprint resources are selected for all Library of Congress Classification subjects. Sources selected must support the University's curriculum or the need for general information. The types of materials that will be maintained include:

Almanacs, Annuals, and Yearbooks: General almanacs and a limited number of subject almanacs, annuals, and yearbooks are acquired.

Anthologies: A few anthologies are collected.

Atlases: Atlases, gazetteers, dictionaries of places names, maps, and other geographical sources are purchased as needed. An up-to-date world atlas, U.S. atlas, and U.S. road atlas should be acquired as well as some regional and thematic atlases. Although individual maps are not currently collected, several older maps are available in the Reference area. Another small collection no longer currently collected includes the maps for Kansas towns and cities as well as those for various states and large cities. Topographical and geographical maps are housed in Government Documents.

Bibles and Other Sacred Books: Although most of the Bibles are placed in the General Collection, Bibles that have special significance are placed in the Reference Collection. Concordances, commentaries, and other religious works are also selected.

Bibliographies: Some national, subject, author, and trade bibliographies as well as national library catalogs and union catalogs are presently available in the Reference Collection. General bibliographies on broad subjects may be included in the Reference Collection. However, those with a narrow scope are generally not placed in this collection unless it is for a person or topic that is in great demand or of current interest.

Biographical Sources: A number of major international and national biographical works and indexes are collected. Specialized sources by race, sex, occupation, region, etc. may be obtained if needed. Although some retrospective "who's who" biographies are available in the Reference Collection, the most current editions are available online through CREDO Reference.

Book Review Sources: Book Review Digest and Book Review Index are acquired as well as a few other sources. Older issues of Index to Book Reviews in the Humanities are maintained for historical research.

Company and Business Information: Although the Reference Department depends heavily on a variety of databases and corporate websites for annual reports as well as company and business information, paper sources are also acquired. Paper annual reports are not collected, and some older annual reports on microfiche are presently available for business and economic research.

Career Guides and Resources: The Reference Collection collects a few reference sources and encyclopedias regarding careers. Other information regarding cover letters, resumes, internet sources for jobs, and related topics are acquired as needed.

Chronologies and Calendars: Some chronologies and calendars are collected. Although most of these are for historical purposes, Chase's Calendar of Events and other titles of a current nature may need to be updated.

City Directories: The Polk City Directory for Hays, Kansas is the only city directory that is collected.

College and University Catalogs: Paper catalogs are no longer collected.

Current Issues: Several sources are needed for this type of information. Paper copies of titles for Opposing Viewpoints are currently acquired, while older issues of Taking Sides, Pro/Con, and Information Plus are still available.

Dissertations and Masters Theses: Both Dissertations Abstracts International and Masters Abstracts International are acquired.

Dictionaries: General, etymological, and specialized English language dictionaries regarding dialects, acronyms, synonyms, abbreviations, slang, and related topics are collected as needed. Although a large collection of foreign language dictionaries is maintained in the Reference Collection, a few foreign language dictionaries for languages taught at the University or spoken in the University community may need to be updated. The Reference Department also relies upon the online databases of Credo Reference and Oxford Reference Online for current English, bilingual, and specialized dictionaries.

Directories: Directories for business, education, health, associations, organizations, and publications as well as other subjects are updated on a selective basis

Electronic Information Retrieval Services: A variety of bibliographic, numeric, and full-text online reference sources must be provided. For example, the Reference Department depends on the databases Credo Reference and Oxford Reference Online for reference sources which support all major subjects taught on campus.

Encyclopedias: A wide variety of specialized encyclopedias are purchased. Online sources must also be provided for both general and specialized encyclopedias. At the present time, Encyclopedia Britannica, World Book, CREDO Reference, and Oxford Reference Online are available.

Funding Sources: Since the University has access to a Grants Office and a Kansas Small Business Development Center, only a few sources are selected for grants, foundations, and related subjects. The Reference Department also relies on the online Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance which is one of the major sources for grants.

Genealogy: Very few items are collected for genealogy, and census records on microfilm are currently housed in the Periodicals Reading Room.

Globes: The Reference Collection should have at least one globe for ready reference purposes.

Government Documents: Although a few Government Documents are housed in the Reference Collection, they are generally not collected. The Reference Department relies heavily on documents that are online or in the Government Documents collection.

Guides to Undergraduate and Graduate Study: Some undergraduate and graduate guides are acquired for the Reference Collection.

Handbooks: The CRC Handbook of Chemistry and Physics and other scholarly sources are acquired when needed.

Heraldry: Very few materials are collected for heraldry.

Indexes and Abstracts: Multi-disciplinary, national, subject, and narrowly focused indexes and abstracts are collected as needed for teaching, research, and informational needs. Since many databases include full-text for materials that are indexed, online versions are usually preferred. Some of the older paper indexes and abstracts may be retained in the Reference Collection and Index Area for historical use.

Legal Materials: Some legal dictionaries and encyclopedias are collected as well as some legal sources for specific subjects such as business, copyright, and education. The Reference Department depends on electronic sources as well as the Government Documents Collection for more specialized legal research tools.

Literary Criticism: Although a few works on literary criticism are selected, most of them are available online. Criticisms regarding individual works are usually placed in the General Collection. A few plot summaries or digests may be acquired; however, Cliff Notes or related study guides will not be collected.

Loose-Leaf Services: Loose-leaf pages are currently received in the Reference Department for titles that need to be updated. However, since it takes time and personnel to maintain these titles, loose-leaf services should be limited.

Medical Resources: A variety of major medical dictionaries, directories, guides, and multivolume sets are collected. Sources are also acquired for mental health, speech and hearing disorders, alternative medicine, and other issues which are needed to support the curriculum or meet the need for general information. When new medical sources are acquired, currency is an especially important factor to consider.

Microforms: Microforms are usually not purchased unless the desired information is not available in print or electronic format.

Quotations and Proverb Books: English language dictionaries for quotations and proverbs should occasionally be updated.

Ready Reference: A small number of materials within the Reference Collection that are frequently used are located near the Reference Desk. If duplicate copies are available, they may be placed in the Reference Collection or at the Reserve Desk.

Scholarship, Internship, and Fellowship Material: A few current sources are collected for the Reference Collection.

Standardized Examination Study Guides: A majority of the standardized examination study guides for tests given on campus should be available in the Reference Collection or at the Reserve Desk.

Statistical Sources: Statistical resources on a wide range of subjects are collected. Examples include demographic, social, and socioeconomic material; company, industry, and economic figures; voting records; and local, state, U.S., and world statistics. Statistics may have historical value for some subjects and should be retained.

Style Manuals: Style manuals that support the curriculum must be kept current. The most current copy is placed near the Reference Desk. If duplicate copies are purchased, they are placed in the Reference Collection or at the Reserve Desk.

Telephone Directories: Although paper telephone directories are not purchased, current ones that are received are kept in the Reference Collection. The Hays, University Campus, and Polk City Directories are kept near the Reference Desk for easy access.

Thesauri: Several thesauri are located in Reference and should be occasionally updated.

Travel Guides: Travel guides are not collected.

Criteria for the Selection of Reference Materials

The following criteria should be considered when selecting reference materials:

- Objectivity
- Priority of need
- Date of publication
- Availability of funds
- Currency of content
- Format of the material
- Language of the source
- Significance of the publication
- Comprehensiveness of the work
- Accessibility to off-campus patrons
- Addition of new degrees or programs
- Currency of material when appropriate
- Frequency of use as well as ease of use
- Accuracy of information, statistics, and data
- Answers frequently asked reference questions
- Availability of this type of information elsewhere
- Strengths and weaknesses of the existing collection
- Authority and reputation of the author and publisher
- Usefulness and quality of available Special Features
- Quality of the binding as well as durability of the physical material
- Historical and/or research value as well as permanence of the material
- Current cost as well as additional cost if the title is placed on standing order
- Recommendations that were made by University or Library faculty, staff, and/or patrons
- Material would support the curricula, curriculum-related research, or the need for general information
- Special features of the work such as quality illustrations, website sources, primary sources, etc.
- Availability of favorable reviews in reputable sources or recommendations in reference collection guides
- Priority must be given to standing order obligations. Titles may need to be continued, discontinued, updated, or changed. When a title is no longer published, an alternative title may need to be selected.

The above selection criteria should be considered when selecting electronic resources as well as the following factors:

- Ease of access
- User friendliness
- Relationship with Consortia
- Availability of a trial subscription
- Consideration regarding updates

- Hardware and software requirements
- Reputation and stability of the vendor
- Adequate library systems and IT support
- Training requirements for staff as well as patrons
- Licensing restrictions and/or contractual considerations
- Availability and quality of service provided by the vendor
- Staff who have the time and expertise to support the product

Deselection Policy for Reference Materials

Deselection of library materials, the process of removing items from the collection, is essential to keep the collection responsive to patrons' needs, to insure its vitality and usefulness, and to make room for newer materials. The process of deselecting materials requires as much care as the process of selecting materials. It takes skill, time, and knowledge of Reference library materials.

Deselection and/or collection evaluation must be an ongoing process. Individual items will eventually need to be repaired, replaced, relocated, preserved, or discarded. An ongoing and continued review of standing orders is also an important component of deselection. Reasons for cancelling standing orders should be identical to those for weeding other materials.

The Reference Collection has a wide variety of materials which makes it difficult to establish absolute standards for deselection and evaluation. Subjects may include psychology, religion, history, social sciences, art, technology, science, and many others too numerous to mention. While some subjects or disciplines should favor current information, other subjects should offer more retrospective and historical material. Therefore, projected usage is a more important factor to consider than using in-house statistics which identifies items that have not been used within a certain period of time.

Criteria for deselection should include currency, use, format, uniqueness, and comprehensiveness in relationship to other materials available on the subject. Other guidelines or criteria will be:

- A Reference title should be retained if it is needed to answer reference questions.
- Robert Balay's Guide to Reference, Sheehy's Guide to Reference Books, Reference Sources for Small and Medium-Sized Libraries, American Reference Books Annual, or other standard reference bibliographies may be consulted before a reference title is withdrawn.
- Superseded editions are sometimes withdrawn or relocated to a more appropriate collection within the library. Titles which contain information that is not useful long term usually have automatic discard patterns established such as "Library keeps current 3 years," "Library retains 1 year," etc. The Library's Online

Catalog may be checked for this information. Also, if a revised edition is received, the previous edition is usually withdrawn. An exception is any new edition that supplements rather than replaces an older edition.

- Material may be withdrawn if the subject matter is no longer in the curriculum or taught at the University. However, if the subject is needed for informational content, the title should be retained or relocated to a more appropriate location.
- A title may be withdrawn if duplication of content is available in more recent works or in another format.
- Titles that are in the Reference Collection that are out-of-date, no longer accurate or useful, inappropriate, or incomplete should be weeded. Subjects such as science, medicine, technology, business, and law are quickly outdated. On the other hand, reference sources in the humanities, such as history and literature, are usually not withdrawn unless the information can be found online.
- Duplicate copies may be withdrawn, relocated, or retained depending upon anticipated use.
- Gift books housed in the Reference Collection that do not meet the criteria for the selection or deselection of Reference materials may be withdrawn or relocated to a more appropriate library collection.
- Although indexes, yearbooks, annuals, and similar resources are usually retained, paper reference sources may be relocated or withdrawn if they are available online. These decisions must be made on a case-by-case basis.
- Some titles may be relocated to the General Collection in order to improve patron access.
- Reference books that are worn or damaged should be repaired, withdrawn, or replaced. Materials should be replaced using the same criteria as for selection. Other considerations when deciding on replacements include copies of a title owned, new materials that are available on the subject, and importance of the work in its subject area. Also, sources must be available for purchase in the book trade industry and purchased when funds become available.
- Since some items are considered classic works or definitive works in their field and have long-term value, they should be kept in the Reference Collection despite lack of use. Historical or research value must also be considered. Some titles must be retained due to conservation or preservation concerns.
- Other factors to consider when weeding include availability of shelf space, availability of holdings which are accessible in other libraries, and likelihood of continued demand.

Although reference materials are disposed of at the discretion of the Forsyth Library Director, the Reference Department Coordinator and Public Services Coordinator are responsible for gathering materials for relocation or deselection. Faculty members from the University and other library personnel may be involved or consulted when appropriate.

Withdrawn materials may be discarded, distributed, donated, recycled, or sold at the Library's discretion.

Gifts

Both purchased and donated Reference materials must comply with the Criteria for the Selection of Reference Materials listed in the Reference Collection Development Policy. The Library will not make any commitments regarding the final disposition of gift materials. Please refer to Forsyth Library's Collection Development and Weeding Policy for more details regarding gifts.

Principles of Intellectual Freedom

Please refer to Appendix A in Forsyth Library's Collection Development and Weeding Policy for more details regarding the Library's support of Intellectual Freedom.

Review of Policy

In order to maintain currency and accuracy, this policy should be periodically updated.

Date Policy enacted: March 13, 2012

Written by: Judith Ann Salm, Forsyth Library Reference Department Coordinator

Policy Approved by Reference Staff: February 28, 2012

Policy Approved by Library Director: March 13, 2012