

Reference
Information Access Policy
Clemson University Libraries

Suzanne Rook Schilf
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I. Purpose:

The Clemson University Libraries' reference collection exists to provide access to information resources that support the academic, research, public service and administrative programs of Clemson University. The primary users of the Reference Collection are librarians, students, faculty, administrators, and staff members as well as members of the local community.

II. Scope of Collection

R.M. Cooper Library houses the print reference collection, located on 4th floor West. Selected high-use reference materials are located at the Research Services Desk. Many reference materials are now available as ebooks, thus an adequate number of computers need to be available within the library for so that the public can access the collection.

A. Format Guidelines

1. Print Sources

Print materials will be selected for the collection if an electronic format is not available or cost prohibitive.

2. Online Sources

Emphasis is placed on purchasing material in electronic format that is web-based or web accessible. CD-ROMs are purchased only when they are the sole format or are the only reasonably priced format.

B. Language Guidelines

English is the primary language of the materials in the Reference Collection. Foreign language dictionaries are purchased to support the curriculum and the various languages of the student body.

C. Geographical Guidelines

Materials in the Reference Collection are not limited to geographic area.

D. Chronological Periods

Selection will focus on current, up-to date information, though there may be exceptions. Many key resources are received through standing orders. The Head of Reference is responsible for insuring that latest editions are available and obsolete material is withdrawn from the collection.

E. Publication Date Guidelines

The selector will purchase books published within the past two years. Exceptions may include books requested by librarians or books highly recommended in a review source.

F. Types of Material Selected

Reference materials are usually limited to resources which provide brief factual data or citations/other means of finding information published in another source.

Almanacs and Yearbooks – Current year almanacs may be included; Yearbooks will be shelved with the circulating collection.

Atlases – A selection of historical and current smaller sized atlases will be shelved with the collection; large format atlases will be located in the Oversize collection.

Bibliographies: National and broad subject. Specific subject bibliographies are purchased by subject liaisons for the circulating collection.

Biographies: Collective biographies may be purchased for the reference collection. Individual biographies are purchased by subject liaisons for the circulating collection.

Clemson University Information: Books pertaining to the history of Clemson University and alumni directories will be purchased for the Reference Collection; high use titles may be shelved at the Research Services desk.

Dictionaries & Thesauri: English and foreign language dictionaries and thesauri will be purchased for the collection.

Directories: Current directories may be purchased if relevant to the collection; directories two years out of date or older may be discarded.

Encyclopedias: New editions and new titles will be purchased; electronic editions are preferred. Older editions of encyclopedias may be retained in the circulating collection. Encyclopedias that are narrow in scope should be purchased for the circulating collection.

Handbooks and Manuals: Current, authoritative handbooks and manuals may be purchased. In some subject areas the handbook may be more of a treatise than a quick reference book; these books should be purchased by the subject liaisons for the circulating collection.

Indexes: the preferred format of indexes is online; most indexes will be maintained on standing order.

Style Manuals: two copies of current editions of APA, MLA, Chicago and Turabian style manuals will be purchased; one copy shelved at the Research Services desk; one copy shelved in Reference. Additional copies for the circulating collection should be purchased by the subject liaison. Other style manuals (ASA, Blue Book, etc) may be purchased for Reference at requests of liaisons.

III. Selection

A. Selection Criteria:

- Recommendations from subject liaisons
- Recommendations from faculty
- Reviews or citations in basic reference collection guides
- Publisher reputation
- Author reputation
- Currency of topics
- Date of publication
- Availability of digital format

B. Selection Tools

The Head of Reference is the primary selector for the reference collection. Requests received by reference librarians, faculty and staff will be given first priority. Selection tools include:

- Choice
- Review Sources
- Booklist
- College & Research Libraries
- Journal of Academic Librarianship
- RQ
- subject-specific journals
- annual lists of notable reference titles
- publisher catalogs

IV. Deselection (Weeding) Guidelines

The collection is weeded on a regular basis to maintain relevance and currency. General reference sources are weeded by the Head of Reference. Subject related reference titles are weeded by subject liaisons. Materials 5 years or older are evaluated as to the usefulness to the collection. Material that has not been used in five years is evaluated for relocation or discard.

Weeding of the Reference Collection fall into three categories:

- Relocate to stacks – must be designated circulating or non-circulating
- Relocate to storage collections (currently there are two storage areas: Room 104 in Cooper and an off-site remote storage facility)
- Discard

Much of the collection's maintenance is governed by retention schedules for serials. When a new item that is covered by the retention schedule is received, the cataloging unit is responsible for the removal of the earlier item.

Superseded items are automatically removed from the Reference Collection. This includes serials that are accumulated into annual bound volumes.

Other criteria used for removing items from reference include the following:

- Availability of newer edition
- Availability of electronic edition
- In-house use statistics
- Physical condition
- Duplicate copies
- Improving access for patrons by transferring to circulating collection
- Age and currency

Standing orders and retention schedules

Standing order titles and retention schedules should be evaluated on a regular basis, but at least every five years.

VII. Evaluation, Assessment, and Planning Tools

A. Bibliographies

B. Collection Analysis Resources

C. Ongoing class assignments that require heavy use of reference materials

D. Usage Statistics

Millennium can be used to check the use of specific titles, as well as analysis of various circulation usage reports. As items do not circulate, manual calculation of internal usage must be made, which can be labor intensive. Librarians should be consulted for their input on frequently used items.