

Florida A&M University Libraries
GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS
COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

OBJECTIVE

The Government Documents Department of the University Libraries selects available materials reflecting the information needs of the University community and the general public. The Documents Collection provides access to: selected United States government documents; information on the policies and the programs of the Federal Government; and selected titles from state government and international agencies. The following parameters are considered in the selection process:

- The publications listed as the “basic collection” found in the Guidelines for the Depository Library Program (http://www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/fdlp/pubs/fdlm/guidelin.html).
- Instructional needs of students and faculty
- Basic course-related research needs of students and faculty
- Informational and research needs of the administration and professional staff
- General research and cultural needs of the University community
- Relevant indexes.

In addition, under its commitment to the Federal Depository Library Program, the Library serves the reference needs of the local communities within the parameters of its selection policy. It further serves the referral needs of the state of Florida and surrounding areas within the protocols established by the depository system.

DESCRIPTION

The Documents Collection includes over 400,000 items. The majority of the Collection consists of U.S. government publications with a small number of state government and Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) publications. The library was designated a selective depository for U.S. government publications in 1936 and selects about 40% of the item numbers available. Federal agencies that are strongly represented in the collection include Congress, its committees and agencies; the Bureau of the Census; and Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Defense, Education, Energy, Health and Human Services, Justice, Labor, State, and Treasury. Within the constraints of budget, staffing, space, and technical support, the Documents Department acquires, organizes, preserves, and makes available to the University community and the public: (1) U.S. government publications acquired on deposit, through purchases, and on complimentary basis; (2) state government and FAO publications through purchases and on complimentary basis; (3) reference materials that provide both bibliographic and content access to those publications; and (4) the equipment necessary to give optimum access to materials in the collections.

Depository materials are collected in various formats: paper, microform, machine-readable, and Web-based. Non-depository and commercially prepared reference tools are acquired in the same

formats. The Department receives monographs, periodicals and other serials, maps, and pamphlets in any format. Web-based materials are preferred but if the choice is between paper and microfilm paper is generally preferred.

ADMINISTRATION

The Documents Department, as part of the Reference Department, administers and develops the collection according to the requirements of the Depository Program, including Title 44 of the U.S. Code and guidelines issued by the Library Programs Service, Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office.

ACCESS

Access is provided to any member of the general public. Access is insured by:

1. Posting the depository logo on library entrances
2. Provision of reference service for government information by all reference desk staff in addition to the Documents staff.
3. The availability of indexing tools that identify the availability of government publications whether held or not.
4. Access to the collection during all hours of operation.
5. Arrangement of the collection by SuDocs number in a separate Department.
6. Records of depository collections in the on-line public catalog.
7. Availability of equipment such as microform readers, printers, computers, and copiers.
8. Interlibrary loans to other libraries and from other libraries, including the regional depository library.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR SELECTION/DESELECTION

Selection of Federal materials for the Library is done by the Documents Librarian in consultation with Collection Development administrator(s). Recommendations for selection are welcomed from faculty, librarians, administrators, professional staff, and the general public and are reviewed by the Documents Librarian to ascertain if they are in concert with the mission of the Library.

Deselection of Federal materials is done by Documents Librarian in consultation with Collection Development administrator(s).

CRITERIA FOR SELECT/DESELECTION

The Documents Librarian selects government documents materials, regardless of language or format, based upon the following criteria:

1. The undergraduate, graduate, and professional school curricula and faculty research.
2. Curricular and research trends and the development of new courses and programs at the University.
3. Representative trends developing in all fields of study and in support of a general liberal education.
4. Current and potential information needs of the people of the community.
5. Requests from patrons.
6. Compatibility with the Library's total collection.
7. Degree of technicality.
8. Potential frequency of use.
9. Actual use of publications as indicated by reference questions, circulation, in-house and interlibrary loan requests.
10. Amount of shelf space that will be required to house the material.

11. Although no geographical limitations are placed on the collection, materials relating to Florida and the southeast United States are emphasized along with materials which provide U.S., regional, or worlds summary information

Sometimes the Department corresponds with federal agencies, etc. to obtain complimentary copies of publications not available from the Government Printing Office (GPO). The Department acquires appropriate non-depository publications, finding aids, and equipment by requesting that the same be purchased with general library funds as needed. The Department also maintains a deposit account with GPO.

Out-of-print documents are not regularly obtained by the library. Those that are of lasting research value in support of the curricular needs of the University are obtained from the Federal and State exchange programs. The depository interlibrary cooperative/referral network is used to serve patrons needing out-of-print materials that the library is unable to obtain.

The Documents Librarian deselects Federal materials based upon the following criteria:

1. Lack of use.
2. Content quality of a title or a series as a whole which is does not support the curriculum.

EPHEMERAL MATERIAL

The Department does not retain materials that are ephemeral in nature or of minimal value: fliers and leaflets, workbooks, conference agenda and registration forms, chapter and article reprints, bumper stickers, posters, and all similar materials.

DUPLICATES

The Department does not obtain duplicate copies of material unless:

1. Needed in support of classroom assignments and expected to receive heavy use.
2. Expected to have heavy general use based on the subject content and developing trends.
3. Cost of materials is within the Library's materials budget limitations.

REPLACEMENTS

The Library seeks to replace damaged or lost materials when the replacement can be done within the limitations of the library's materials budget. Interlibrary referral and photo-copy services are utilized to serve patrons. In addition, replacement of a heavily used document may be achieved by interlibrary photo-copy, if the document is out-of-print, or through the national and state gifts and exchange programs.

RETENTION/COLLECTION MAINTENANCE

The Federal depository program requires the Library to retain non-ephemeral, non-superseded materials for a minimum of (5) years. The Department observes this retention schedule with the following exceptions:

1. Badly damaged and unsalvageable materials will be withdrawn ahead of schedule and replaced if possible.
2. Materials of lasting research value will be retained as long as there is demand for them.
3. Superseded issues will be discarded as listed on GPO's Superseded List.

LOCATION OF DOCUMENTS

The print depository collection is housed on the second floor of the Coleman Library Annex. The microforms and maps are housed in cabinets located on the second floor in the microforms area. However, materials may be located in an area of the Library which facilitates patron access and optimal use.

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1998 - Prepared by Mrs. Minnie B. Crump, Documents Department and Dr. Vivian Royster,
Acquisitions Department.

Sections of these guidelines were adapted from policies written by Larry Romans,
Vanderbilt; Diann Weatherly, University of Alabama at Birmingham; and Joyce Schaffer,
Montclair State University.

2005 – Revised by Jeannette Cox, Documents Librarian

2012 – Revised by Priscilla Henry/Elaine McCreary