

**GENERAL REFERENCE COLLECTION  
COLEMAN LIBRARY**

**COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES**

**Objectives of the Reference Collection Development Guidelines**

The guidelines shall define the types of resources that will be collected by the Reference Department, as well as establish the subject scope of the collection.

**Subject Scope of the Collection**

The Reference collection will provide basic and in depth information sources. The collection consists of print, electronic, and microform materials. The preferred format is electronic.

**Size of the Collection**

The Reference collection has no absolute limit on size. Prevailing demand, fiscal restraint, curriculum changes, and student enrollment serve as guidelines to the relative size of subject areas within the collection.

The Head of the Reference Department has the primary responsibility for selecting resources to be included in the general reference collection. In addition to selecting resources for their assigned subject disciplines all subject specialists recommend titles for reference as well.

**Types of material in the collection**

The reference collection of the FAMU Libraries supports the academic needs of the university community. Collection intensity ranges from basic to minimal research level for programs that warrant these types of resources. The preferred format for the reference collection is electronic. The collection includes the following resources:

- **Almanacs and Yearbooks.** Reference collects editions of major publications for the United States and Canada and for select individual countries as determined from curricular interest.
- **Annual Reviews.** The collection includes those for major mission disciplines.
- **Bibliographies.** General bibliographies on broad topics in great demand or of considerable current interest are selected. Trade bibliographies include the entire collections of Cumulative Book Index, and American Book Publishing Records.
- **Biographies.** Comprehensive national and international biographies, including both retrospective and current biography are shelved in the reference collection.
- **Corporate and Annual Reports.** A file of corporate annual reports is maintained containing the latest two years available.

- **Dictionaries.** The reference collection provides unilingual, bilingual and polyglot dictionaries in major languages. The section also provides specialized dictionaries in major languages. The section also provides specialized dictionaries (for example, slang, idiomatic expressions and historical aspects of language) for English.
- **Directories.** The collection includes the current edition of major directories in all fields and may contain certain retrospective editions of directories based on demonstrated use.
- **Encyclopedias.** Major general encyclopedias, both single and multi-volume are included. The reference department will acquire revised editions of World Book and Encyclopedia Britannica, on a rotating basis, as funds permit.
- **Geographical Sources.** The reference collection provides authoritative atlases, maps and gazetteers covering all areas of the world. Current editions of relevant worldwide yearbooks are maintained; e.g., Europa, Countries of the World and Statesman Yearbook. Handbooks. Current and authoritative handbooks in all mission- related fields.
- **Indices and Abstracts.** The collection also provides basic indices to satisfy the general information-seeking needs of the university community. Indices that are in alternative formats, such as microforms and electronic databases are evaluated in the context of their function in the collection. Other factors that are considered for the inclusion of indices are frequency of use, subject coverage, cost, duplication and databases.
- **Legal Resources.** The reference collection will provide legal encyclopedias and dictionaries.
- **Plot Summaries.** The collection provides major comprehensive collections of plot summaries e.g. Magill's but not Cliff Notes.
- **Sacred Books.** The collection maintains a small collection of major translations of the Bible in English, and translations of sacred works significant to major world religions.
- **Statistics.** Basic ongoing statistical summary information is provided.
- **Style Manuals.** All major style manuals, such as MLA, APA and Turabian are included.

## **Selection of New Reference Resources**

The Head of reference has the responsibility for pursuing a systematic and continuous collection program for reference. All other members of the library professional staff are encouraged to provide input as their interest and time permit.

## **Reference Selection Criteria**

Reference librarians review relevant professional literature to ensure that important reference works that support the university mission and meet the demonstrated needs, of the reference, serials, micro media, and special collection units are selected for the collection. The literature review process consists primarily of (1) scanning reviews of professional journals (2) examining publishers leaflets and catalogs (3) reviewing

annual lists of reference books (4) comparing other authoritative reference bibliographies with the library's holdings and other appropriate lists conducive to the micro media, serials, and special collections areas. The following criteria should be met before submitting request to the Assistant Director of Collection Development:

- Authoritative sources
- Strengths and weaknesses of the existing reference collection.
- Importance of the topic to the University's curriculum.
- Currency and accuracy of the publication. In general older works with recent publication dates. (Exceptions are made if the publication is a standard reference work in its subject or if the older material is of current value to the collection).
- Duplication of the content in more recent works or in another format.
- The language of the publication. Works in English will be purchased in preference to those in other languages.

## **Reference Collection Review and Evaluation**

Evaluation of the reference collection is an on-going process. Searches will be conducted for book titles considered missing. The reference department head is responsible for determining the necessary replacement or withdrawal of missing items.

To protect the quality of the collection and overcrowded shelves with damaged or out-of-date resources, collection review, weeding and replacement are necessary adjuncts of the reference collection. Items are withdrawn or discarded that are badly worn or damaged and cannot be bound or mended. Older volumes of publications, particularly standing orders such as directories and yearbooks will be automatically removed from the collection. In conjunction with the review of older volumes, the entire reference collection will be evaluated through continuous reference review. A Government Documents Library since 1936, Coleman Library receives free of charge a selected proportion of the documents issued by the United States Government and some state governments. Selection is made to fulfill the curricular and informational needs, of students, faculty and staff of the University and its' community. The Monthly Catalog published by the GPO, (Government Printing Office) and selected government publications are used for selection purposes.

The Micro Media Librarian selects micro Media resources. Newspapers will be added to the collection to significantly supplement the quality of local, national or international news. Microfilm and microfiche will be purchased and evaluated on the same basis.

The Serials Librarian will periodically evaluate the serials collection and discontinue titles deemed least important. New titles will be added to support the university's curriculums to enrich the collection. Faculty and staff input will be sought and they will be notified of changes related to their area of specialization. Whenever a new title is selected a decision will be made concerning the retention of that serial, if it is to be retained indefinitely, or whether or not it should be bound or purchased in another format. Serials cannot be selected or dropped on an annual basis; a commitment must be made to support new serials on an on-going basis.

Resources for Special collections to include African American resources are selected by the Special Collections Librarians.

The Reference Services Librarians are responsible for the initial evaluation of and assigned subject notes recommendations such as; keep, replace, withdraw, etc. The reference department will meet as a group to discuss and decide upon each title for which some changes have been recommended. The list is then passed on to the Assistant Director of Collection Development for review. The Assistant Director for Collection Development submits decisions to the Director of University Libraries who makes the final decision on each title.

Replacement or withdrawing of missing resources will be attempted periodically. Replacement of resources will be based on demand for the specific item, number of copies held, existing coverage of the subject within the system, availability of newer or recommended materials on the subject, coverage of relevant subject matter in standard indexes and replace copy cost.

In general, the same criteria apply to the selection of all reference services resources. All staff are encouraged to submit recommended suggestions for titles to the Librarian in each of these service areas to avoid duplication and ensure that a quality collection based upon appropriate organizational standards are maintained.