

Northwestern University Library Collection Development Policy Statement

Reference
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I. Brief overview of the collection

A. History of the collection

Not applicable

B. Broad subject areas emphasized or de-emphasized

We collect broadly throughout the social sciences and humanities in all areas for which there are research or curricular interests at Northwestern University, including professional studies in Management, Journalism, Speech, and Education. We also purchase those general bibliographical tools that are indispensable to any research library and are used by all disciplines. Subjects that are exceptions to this general rule include music, Africana, and transportation, which for which there are separate reference collections. Coverage of these areas, as of the natural and applied sciences, is limited to a few basic reference works.

C. Collection locations

In its most basic sense the Reference Collection is the collection in the Reference Room. As more and more reference sources become available electronically, however, this definition becomes less and less tenable, and it has always been problematic. Though we attempt to make available within the Reference Room the full range of reference resources students and scholars are likely to need, there are limits to what the room can effectively hold. Superseded editions of standard reference works are generally sent to the stacks, unless old editions must be retained because continuity of coverage is important. Similarly, the current volumes only for most annuals are kept in Reference, with the exception of indexes and annual bibliographies, with older years in the stacks. For a few selected sets, however, it is important to keep the entire run, or at least a substantial portion of the full run. Decisions must be made on an individual basis. In addition, some highly specialized reference sources will be purchased for the stacks (though not usually with Reference funds). The many reference sources outside the Reference Room may be thought of as an extended reference collection, to be called upon as needed.

II. Purpose or objectives

The Reference Collection intends to provide as fully as possible those reference resources needed for the work of students and scholars in the social sciences and humanities. We serve the entire population of the University: undergraduate and graduate students, faculty and staff, who have needs from very general reference sources to specialized research tools. In addition to the important roles of finding facts and providing background information and summaries of research, the collection provides the bibliographic tools to unlock the resources of this library and of the world of scholarship beyond it. Our collection is used by all the schools of the University, but most heavily by the Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences, the School of Speech, the Medill School of Journalism, the Kellogg Graduate School of Management, the School of Education and Social Policy, University College, and the Graduate School. In addition, visiting scholars, participants in most university-sponsored seminars and programs, alumni, and community members make use of our resources and services

III. Library unit or title of the selector responsible for this collection

Reference Collection Management Librarian

IV. Scope of the subject coverage

A. Language

Material in English is collected most intensively, but reference materials in the major Romance, Germanic and Slavic languages are also collected, extensively in the humanities and history and selectively in social sciences. Major monolingual reference works, or other representative

reference sources, are collected in Chinese, Japanese, Arabic, and Hebrew, and in the lesser Romance, Germanic and Slavic languages as funds and space permit. Materials in other languages, with a very few exceptions, are generally limited to bilingual dictionaries. African language materials are collected in Africana.

B. *Geographical scope*

Extensive coverage of the United States, Canada, the major Western European countries and Russia. More selected coverage of Asian and Latin American nations. African materials collected in Africana.

C. *Chronological scope*

From pre-history to the present.

D. *Publication dates collected*

Primarily 20th century materials, with an emphasis on currency, particularly in management and the social sciences. A number of reference works of continuing importance are held from the 19th century, with a handful of still older items. Retrospective buying is relatively rare, though we will purchase older items of value if they become available, and funds and space permit

E. *Formats and genres*

1. *Inclusions*

Almanacs

Complete representative sets for U.S., England, and international; latest volume of other reputable U.S. titles and for selected countries.

Annual Reviews/Years Work

Major surveys of broad areas of current research in the social sciences and humanities will be collected. For those collected, the full run will be in the Reference Room.

Atlases

The latest major standard English language international atlases are collected in addition to the latest major standard atlases for the U.S. and selected atlases of other countries as the budget permits. Historical atlases and other thematic atlases (economic, political, social, religious, etc.) are collected in western languages, with an emphasis on U.S. and general international coverage, and for other countries as the budget allows. Linguistic atlases, with the exception of a few general international works, are housed in the main stacks rather than the Reference Collection. National official atlases have historically been collected in the Map collection.

Bibliography: National

An attempt is made for comprehensive coverage at the national level for North America, for Western Europe (excluding very small countries), Russia, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Israel, India, Australia, New Zealand, and the major Latin American nations. Expensive items from these countries, however, will be considered on a case-by-case base. Occasional items from other countries may be acquired if of interest to the Northwestern community. Regional bibliographies are acquired most extensively for the United States, and in some cases for other areas where interest at Northwestern is clear. As funds permit national bibliographies will be acquired in database form. Print subscriptions for these will be continued only if need for selection activities.

Bibliography: Subject and Personal

We attempt to purchase all bibliographies of value within our collecting scope, except for bibliographies on extremely narrow topics, which may be referred to other selectors to purchase for the main stacks. Author bibliographies are collected for canonical authors, and other personal bibliographies for major figures in their field, but comprehensively for U. S.

Presidents and British Prime Ministers. Older bibliographies will often be transferred to the main stacks, except for major bibliographies covering broad subject areas, and bibliographies in areas where older writings are routinely consulted. Even these will be transferred to the main stacks if clearly superseded by another work.

Biographical Dictionaries

Major international biographical sets, and the major biographical sets and current "who's who" for most European, North American, and Latin American Countries, and for major Asian and Pacific countries. State biographical dictionaries are collected for the United States, but comparable regional (subnational) foreign titles are not housed in the Reference Collection. Reference has been attempting to purchase the important but expensive Biographical Archives, issued by K.G. Saur in microfiche format and comprising entries from hundreds of biographical dictionaries, as funds permit, beginning with those areas of the world most within our collecting scope. A few standard national biographical sets have been acquired in electronic format.

More specialized topical and thematic biographical dictionaries are purchased if likely to be within the scope or research and curricular interests and Northwestern. Collective biographies that profile selected individuals within a particular class of persons, rather than attempting to comprehensively treat the most important individuals in that class, will generally not be purchased for the Reference Collections. Preference will also be given to works with significant bibliographic apparatus, except in the case of current works of the Who's Who variety.

Book Auction Catalogs

Selected American and British sets.

Books-in-print

All available in western languages.

Chronologies

Chronologies have become an increasingly common form of reference publication in recent years. Those that cover a broad and significant area of activity are purchased selectively if within the collection scope. Chronologies of the lives of single individuals are not purchased for the Reference Collection.

Collections

Types of collections in Reference may include anthologies of documents on current topics of national and international importance; collections of historical documents; collections of court cases, treaties or laws; and poetry anthologies. Materials of this type are collected on a highly selective basis to provide ready access to documents that may be requested frequently. The advent of full-text databases and the Internet has greatly decreased the collection of materials of this type in print.

Concordances

These are collected for the Bible (English & Vulgate), and for a very few authors of core importance, where frequent reference can be expected.

Databases

Databases are discussed in various sections of this document. They may be purchased for a remote access, or for networked or local CD-ROM, or (occasionally) on a floppy disc or tape-

loaded. They may be purchased with Reference funds, with Electronic Collection Committee funds, with the funds of another selector, or with a combination of these. On occasion the funds of a unit outside of the library have been involved. Databases are particularly the format of preference for indexes and other bibliographic works where flexibility of searching is a primary desideratum. Databases, however, have expanded the kind of materials traditionally considered reference materials. Reference funds have been used for significant full-text news databases such as Lexis-Nexis and Dow-Jones News Retrieval, since the added value of having these materials in database format, updated daily, adds a considerable reference value.

Dictionaries

Monolingual, bilingual and multilingual dictionaries of quality are collected comprehensively within defined language scope, including etymological, dialect, jargon, abbreviations, phrases and word use. Authoritative subject dictionaries in the social sciences and humanities are collected if relevant to the research and curricular interests at Northwestern, primarily in English and, more selectively, in other European languages. A few are purchased in databases format where potential use seems justified, and as funds permit.

Directories

Major current directories in all fields within scope, especially corporate & industry directories; directories of publishers, libraries & archives; and biographical directories of scholarly associations. The number of special industry directories is particularly voluminous and must be collected selectively. Directories may also be purchased in database format.

Encyclopedias

Over a period of six years new editions of Encyclopaedia Britannica, Collier's Encyclopedia, World Book and Encyclopedia Americana are purchased. Selected major general foreign encyclopedias will also be collected as funds permit. Subject encyclopedias are acquired extensively, as funds permit, when within our subject and language scope, including selected basic works in the sciences. Major encyclopedias may also be purchased in electronic funds, as the budget permits. Encyclopedias appearing only in electronic form will be considered on the same basis as print publications.

Gazetteers and place-name dictionaries

Major authoritative current editions and selected historical types for U.S. and international coverage, with selected representative titles for major countries. Historically, foreign gazetteers have been collected in the Map Collection; however, as the nature of that collection has changed in recent years, Reference has been increasing its coverage in this area. Place-name dictionaries important for literary or historical allusions are also collected.

Genealogy & Heraldry

Reference collects only basic handbooks and guides to resources likely to be of use to general historians. Sources in this field are available in quantity and depth at the historical society libraries and Newberry Library.

Government Publications

U.S. and international documents are primarily collected by the Government Publications and Maps Department. For these materials, Reference acquires a few duplicates of important yearbooks and statistical sources. A run of the Statistical Abstract of the United States back to the year 1900 is maintained. The Reference Department has primary responsibility for

collecting foreign government reference works. We attempt to collect the principal statistical annual for every country of the world, and significant historical summary works. For major countries of the world Reference collects administrative annuals, yearbooks of economic statistics, and, more selectively, guides to and lists of documents published. General reference works on foreign documents are also collected.

Handbooks

Authoritative titles which attempt to systematically survey a major field in the social sciences or humanities, such as the Handbook of Social Psychology or Handbook of American Popular Culture, are purchased for Reference in areas of strong interest. International surveys of the political, educational or social welfare systems, country-by-country, are selectively purchased, as are a few surveys of management practice in significant fields.

Incunabula Catalogs

Important national catalogs and international databases.

Indexes, Abstracts and other Serial Bibliographies

An attempt is made to collect all that support the research and curricular interest at Northwestern. Electronic format is preferred for this material; both print and electronic subscriptions are not maintained for the same item unless the print contains important material or access points not in the electronic version, or unless the print is significantly more current, or unless we are required to maintain the print subscription to obtain the electronic.

Library Catalogs

Catalogs of significant collections may be purchased for Reference particularly if the contents are not readily available in OCLC and similar resources. Catalogs of national libraries are purchased whenever possible, within the geographic and language scope of our collections. This is an area of greatly declining publishing activity; most recent acquisitions have been for catalogs of significant historical collections, or catalogs which include references to periodical articles, or of highly focused special collections. Increasingly these purchases may be in database format.

Manuscript Catalogs/Archival Guides

Reference collects modern catalogs of, and other guides to, the Latin medieval manuscript codex, as well as national and significant regional guides to archives, and topical guides to archival resources if of reasonably strong interest to the Northwestern community. Reference purchases guides to specific archival collections only for national archives of major countries and for other collections of central interest. Guides to the personal papers of the U. S. presidents, and other individuals of strong interest to Northwestern, may occasionally also be purchased for Reference. Guides to manuscripts and archives judged too specialized for Reference will be referred to an appropriate selector to consider for purchase for the main stacks.

News services

The most important services covering the U.S., the world at large, or significant world regions. We are beginning to acquire some titles in electronic format.

Microforms

Reference material appearing on fiche, which are otherwise within the collection scope of Reference, will be housed in the Reference Room. There are no facilities for view microfilm,

however, and Reference materials are not acquired in that format unless no other alternative exists.

Plot summaries

Selected representative collections.

Quotation Books

Selective general and thematic quotation books with scope. Preference given to well-indexed volumes and volumes which make clear references to the origin of the quotation. Books of proverbs are collected as well. We have begun to acquire material of this type in database format.

Research guides and handbooks

Comprehensive within scope.

Reference Histories

A few major sets in the area of general and literary history, e.g. Cambridge Modern History or the New Cambridge History of English Literature, if adaptable to reference use, with good analytical indexes and format designed for easy use.

Sacred Books

Representative versions of the bible in the English language. Important annotated versions of the Bible and Koran, and other sacred books as space permits.

Style Manuals

Current editions of styles in common use.

Theses and Dissertations: Lists and Abstracts

National lists of dissertations are acquired within our geographic and language scopes and as budget allows. Subject lists are purchased when they do not simply reproduce what is readily available in Dissertation Abstracts International.

Travel Guidebooks

Selected authoritative guidebooks for the major countries and major cities of the world. The aim of this material is more to document cultural and historical resources that to facilitate travel planning.

Uncataloged materials

Local telephone books. Northwestern University catalogs, class schedules, and directories.

Union catalogs and lists

These may be purchased where appropriate, but their publication has become increasingly rare.

Yearbooks

Aside from material discussed under Government Publications, reference will be acquired privately-produced statistical yearbooks for important countries (or for those countries where

official statistical yearbooks do not exist or are inadequate), and other type of yearbooks of significant reference value within our collecting scope.

2. *Exclusions*

Test preparation booklets; city criss-cross directories; most genealogical materials; most popular materials with no obvious relationship to research and curricular work at Northwestern.

V. ***Acquisitions procedures affecting collection policies***

A. *Standing Orders*

A very large percentage of the Reference Budget is consumed in standing orders. The percentage of the budget used for serial subscriptions is larger than the percentage in the general collection. And even on the monographic side, a large percentage of the budget is used to support standing order for reference sets issued over a period of years, and often decades. Indeed, at least two sets in reference have been in progress for a century. Commitments for new purchases in Reference often have an impact far beyond the current budget year.

B. *Approval plans and blanket orders*

Relatively few materials arrive on approval for Reference, though certainly some do. Most reference materials are not published by the university presses that dominate the U.S. approval plan. A great many reference books, particularly in the United States, are published by presses with somewhat uneven records, making it advisable to wait for reviews in many cases.

C. *Gifts and exchanges*

Only a few materials are acquired on exchange, primarily national bibliographies of smaller counties. Relatively few reference materials are acquired through gifts.

VI. ***Duplication with other NU library units***

Reference materials in the main Reference Department frequently overlap in interest with the following special collections or departmental libraries on the Evanston campus

Africana Collection

Music Library

Curriculum Collection

Science & Engineering Library (and other science libraries)

Government Publications & Maps

Transportation Library

Duplication of specific subject resources in these areas is limited to basic sources that can expect to be frequently used in the Reference Department. A certain amount of duplication occurs with Government Publication in basic works dealing with the U. S. government, the United Nations and other intergovernmental bodies, and in basic statistical sources.

In addition to these special subject collections, reference materials will sometimes be duplicated in Core. In rarer instances they may be duplicated in the main stacks, particularly for quasi-reference materials such as handbooks or collections. The Art Collection, though not maintaining a formal reference section, does duplicate a small number of very basic titles. Special Collections maintains a small collection of reference works on women's studies and may buy a reference work to support a specific collection: for example, an author bibliography or a reference work on the Siege and Commune of Paris. These will be duplicated if considered of sufficient importance. We have been much more willing to duplicate materials with the Chicago campus libraries, since most reference materials are not available through Interlibrary Loan and, in case, are often needed for quick consultation during the course of research. Duplication is probably the most significant with the Law Library, because legal interests often coincide with those of the social sciences. The Reference Department acquires basic legal periodical indexes, bibliographies of interest to social scientists, legal guides and dictionaries, and occasional selected case summaries. Government Publications and Maps also collects legal materials; except for a handful of core titles, we avoid duplicating their work in this area. Duplication with Galter, other than for a few medical dictionaries, is primarily in the areas of psychology, psychiatry, bioethics, medical administration, and the history of medicine.

VII. Expensive purchases

Expensive purchase must be made on a routine basis in all but the smallest reference collection if that collection is to serve its purpose. In a large research collection, there is never enough money to buy everything that would be useful. The reference budget is sufficient to buy the most important items in the \$2,000 to \$3,000 range, and occasionally more expensive items. But generally for the more expensive items, or for important but more specialized purchases above \$1000 or so, the Reference Department must rely on general discretionary funds, Board of Governor's purchases, or end-of-year surpluses in the serials budget, which are hard to forecast.

VIII. Interdisciplinary collections

The Reference collection is by its nature very interdisciplinary, and questions of whether a given item is appropriate for Reference for another collection tend to revolve around format rather than subject. In a few cases, however, certain distinctions do apply. Reference tools for teachers, children's literature and educational course content and development are concentrated in the Curriculum Collection, whereas materials for educational research at all levels are acquired by the Reference Department. The Reference Department buys almost no materials primarily devoted to Africa, but Reference tools basic to African-American Studies with primary emphasis on North America are collected in the Reference Department

IX. Purchases with endowed funds

Reference has in recent years used a substantial portion of the Lawley fund to support its acquisitions. Indeed, due to the large number of standing orders, this fund has been the source of a majority of new, one-time purchases. In addition, the Reference Collection has control of the small Class of 1880 fund.

X. Cooperation with other libraries

A. Other resources, including local, regional or national libraries

Reference material by its nature is needed for quick consultation. Bibliographic works are often used to point to works not at Northwestern, so that a good, comprehensive reference collection helps to expand the kind of work that students and scholars can undertake on this site. Requesting such materials through Interlibrary Loan (even if libraries can be found that will lend them), or travelling to other libraries, can be problematic. We certainly do rely on other libraries for many specialized or infrequently used materials, but in general, reference works need to be readily available to the users of this library. We do, however, rely heavily on the United Library for reference works in religion, since that library is on this campus. The Reference Department acquires only general reference material or core titles within the Christian tradition, minimizing specialized religious sources, with the possible exception of those that overlap significantly with the social sciences. Within non-Christian traditions, where United is much weaker, we collect more comprehensively

B. Consortia

Purchases through the Committee for Institutional Cooperation (CIC), particularly for expensive electronic resources, have become common in recent years. Though most of these purchases are generally beyond the range of the Reference Department's budget, Reference often makes a substantial contribution to their acquisition, and they do expand the electronic reference resources available to the Northwestern community. The CIC has begun a program to place older runs of infrequently-used reference serials in the Center for Research Library. We are planning to participate, but this will primarily impact the storage of older materials rather than the acquisition of new materials.

XI. Policies for purchasing journal article reprints or electronic files on demand

The Reference Department has a few funds available to conduct quick searches on Dialog when appropriate database sources are not available. However, with the expansion of database resources available to the Northwestern community, these searches have become rare.

XII. Other factor of local importance

Not applicable.

XIII. Collection levels

Reference collects across the full range of the classification schedule. Conspectus numbers are given only for those areas consisting primarily of reference materials

Encyclopedias	3F
General Reference Works	2F
Indexes	3F

AY – AY9999.9	Yearbooks, Almanacs, Directories	3F
Z1001- Z1121.9	Bibliography: General	3F
Z1201 – Z1212.9	National Bibliography: American	3F
Z1215 – Z1361.9	National Bibliography: United States	4F
Z1365 – Z1401.9	National Bibliography: Canada	3F
Z1411 – Z1945	National Bibliography: Mexico, C & SA	3W
Z2000 – Z 2959.9	National Biography: Europe	3W
Z5051 – Z5055.9	Subject & Personal Bibliography: Academies, Societies	3F
Z5056 – Z8999.9	Subject & Personal Bibliography: Other	3F

Notes:

AE1-AE9999.9: Purchase of foreign encyclopedias has been weak in recent years, though the collection does have historic strengths in this area and efforts have been made in the last couple of years to improve current acquisition in this area.

Z1201-Z1212.9: This category primarily covers bibliographies on native Americans. For North America we are very strong, certainly a 4, but much weaker for South American, particularly for Spanish-Language titles.

Z1215-Z1361.9: Current collecting in the area of regional U.S. bibliography is weaker than the historic collection level.

Z1365-Z1401.9: We collect fairly comprehensively except for regional bibliographies, other than Québec.

Z1411-Z1945.9: Collecting is weak in publications from Latin American, other than the principal serial and retrospective bibliographies of major countries and a few second-tier countries.

Z2000-Z2959.9: Probably at a 4 for Western Europe (excluding perhaps Portugal, Scandinavia, and the low countries), and at a 3 for major Slavic countries. Very little collecting for the Balkans, Hungary, Finland, and Baltic areas, other than major English language titles. Scandinavia stronger historically than in current collecting, though probably still a 3.

Z3001-Z4980.9: Very split collecting, even when Africana is not considered. Some collection from India, Australia, and New Zealand, but little from other areas, except for Western bibliographies, which are collected for all regions at a 3 or 4 level.

Z5051-Z5055.9: Probably at a 4 in areas of curricular and research interest, but much weaker in other subject areas.

Z5056-Z8999.9: Probably at a 4 in areas of curricular and research interest, but much weaker in other subject areas.