

# MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

## REFERENCE COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

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I. This directive replaces 5.111-1 dated 1/13/87.

II. The basic objective of the Reference Area is to provide users with information and/or access to information via print, microform, and electronic sources. To achieve this end, staff will undertake all possible tasks needed to satisfy the informational needs of both present and future users. In this context, the term "information" is interpreted in its broadest sense, regardless of packaging or source. The phrase "access to information" includes such activities as instruction in and interpretation of the use of the Library and its services. The goals of Reference are as follows:

1. Provide MSU students, faculty, and staff and users in the University Service Region with necessary information and/or access to information.
2. Maintain a dynamic, up-to-date reference collection.
3. Use the most effective of traditional and innovative techniques in providing service and/or information.
4. Instruct user at all levels in the use of the collection, the Library, and its services.
5. Maintain knowledge and expertise in the Reference staff.

### III. OBJECTIVES OF THE REFERENCE COLLECTION POLICY

1. Establish guidelines for both the subject scope of the reference collection and the types of materials included in it.
2. Set procedures for acquiring new materials and for weeding the collection to ensure the development and maintenance of a complete, current, and convenient reference collection.

### IV. SUBJECT SCOPE OF THE COLLECTION

1. The Reference Area provides basic and/or in-depth information sources to support the curriculum of the University. the reference collection also provides basic selective coverage of subjects not directly related to the curriculum, but necessary to support the mission of the University.
2. The Reference Area collects in all areas, and minimally in those covered by special areas in the Library; for example, Minnesota Room, Music, Maps, and ERC.

### V. TYPES OF MATERIALS INCLUDED IN THE REFERENCE COLLECTION

1. Almanacs and Yearbooks. The Reference Department collects current editions of major publications for the United States and selected foreign countries.

2. Bibliographies. Normally, bibliographies with narrow subject scope, such as single-author bibliographies, are kept in the general collection. Usually, the more general bibliographies on broad topics and of a continuing nature are included in the reference collection. Reference also collects guides to the literature for appropriate special areas.
3. Biographies. The Reference department collects comprehensive works dealing with professional, national, and international biography, including both retrospectives and current biography.
4. Dictionaries. The Reference Department provides unilingual, bilingual, and polyglot dictionaries in major languages. Bilingual dictionaries are provided for as many languages as possible. The Reference Department also provides specialized dictionaries; for example, covering slang, idiomatic expressions, historical aspects of language, and specific subject areas.
5. Directories. The reference collection includes a current edition of major directories in selected subject fields.
6. Encyclopedias. The reference collection includes major general encyclopedias in the English language, both single-volume and multi-volume. Reference has several major foreign language encyclopedias. In addition to the general encyclopedias, reference collects authoritative encyclopedias in specialized subject areas.
7. Geographical sources. The reference collection provides a limited collection of selected atlases. Most geographical sources are housed in the Map Room.
8. Handbooks. Reference attempts to collect current and authoritative handbooks in all major subject fields.
9. Indexes and Abstracts. Reference provides as many indexing and abstracting services as possible in all fields of knowledge.
10. Style Manuals. The Reference Department attempts to include all major style manuals.
11. Other Collections.
  - Telephone Directories. Reference has a comprehensive paper copy collection of Minnesota telephone directories, as well as directories on microfiche for major cities of the United States.
  - College Catalogs. Reference has paper copies of catalogs of colleges in Minnesota and surrounding states. Catalogs from other states are on microfiche.
  - Corporate Annual Reports. Reference has paper and microfiche copies of annual reports.
  - Career Information. Reference has books and pamphlets on careers.

## VI. FORMATS FOR MATERIALS INCLUDED IN THE REFERENCE COLLECTION

1. Print (the primary format). In most cases materials will be purchased in print format to provide easy access to the majority of users.
2. Microform. Reference materials will be acquired in microforms by using the following considerations.
  - It is the only form in which the source is available.
  - Space.
  - Cost versus use.
3. Electronic. Reference provides other information access through electronic formats as available and appropriate.

VII. The following principles, not in order of importance, serve as guidelines in deciding which titles will be ordered.

1. Judged usefulness of the publication, considering the existing collection.
2. Strengths and weaknesses of the existing collection related to current needs of the University.

3. Favorable reviews or inclusion in basic reference collection guidelines.
4. Reputation of the author.
5. Currency of the topic.
6. Date of publication.
7. Price of the publication.
8. Language of the publication (less emphasis will be given to languages as a negative factor in building the reference collection than in the general collection).

#### VIII. WEEDING THE REFERENCE COLLECTION

1. The Reference collection will be weeded as necessary. All regular reference staff will be involved in the weeding process, and as materials are identified for discard, all reference staff will review the materials.
2. Librarians or teaching faculty with special expertise may be asked to evaluate certain areas of the collection. After items are identified as no longer appropriate for the collection, other areas in the library will have the opportunity to examine material before it is withdrawn from the library.
3. Any weeding project should also identify titles that should be added, as well as areas of weakness in the collection.

#### IX. REFERENCE WEEDING CRITERIA

1. The following criteria relate to content and are used as guidelines for Reference staff involved in the weeding process. The guidelines are flexible, and it is expected that there will be justifiable expectations.
  - Significance of the publication and/or appropriateness for the collection.
  - Age of the publication and accuracy of the contents.
  - Availability of later and/or improved edition.
  - Duplication of contents in other publications.
  - Stability of the subject matter. Some academic disciplines, such as applied sciences, medicine, and technology, date more than others, such as literature, history, and philosophy.
2. The following criteria are more specific and relate to conditions other than content. It is expected that there will be justifiable expectations based on the above criteria.
  - Physical condition.
  - Second copies. Second copies will not be retained unless actual or potential demand exists.
  - In any event, no more than three copies of any book will be retained.
  - Only the two most recent editions will be kept, unless the earlier editions have content that is not duplicated or are standard references in the field. In some cases, only the current edition will be retained.
  - Bibliographies will be kept unless the contents are superseded by other publications.
  - Sets or series will be retained intact. Broken or partial runs be discarded unless the present material is useful and meets the criteria defined in Section 1.
  - Major biographical directories will be retained. Others will be retained on a selective basis.
  - Only the two most recent editions of directories of companies, services, organizations, etc. will be retained unless there will be a need for the older editions.

- Only the two most recent editions of directories of audiovisual and computer products will be retained unless there is substantial educational value in previous editions.
- The basic general almanacs will be retained.

X. INVENTORY OF THE REFERENCE COLLECTION

1. The Reference Department takes a periodic inventory of the Reference collection.
2. Missing items will be considered for replacement.

XI. This policy shall be reviewed periodically, preferably yearly, by the reference librarians.