

Collection Development Policy

I. Introduction

The Collection Development Policy outlines the principles, responsibilities, and strategies that guide the development and management of library resources at Mount Saint Mary's University (MSMU). It ensures that the MSMU Libraries' collections support the University's mission, academic curriculum, and diverse community by providing relevant resources for teaching, learning, research, and service.

II. Mission and Purpose

The MSMU Libraries develop and maintain collections to advance the University's mission and embody the values of its founding Congregation of St. Joseph (CSJ) heritage. The collections are designed to:

- **Support academic programs and scholarship:** Provide resources for coursework, research, and academic study across all disciplines.
- **Serve a diverse community:** Meet the needs of MSMU's community of students, faculty, and staff.
- **Promote student success:** Ensure equitable access to scholarly and course-related materials that facilitate critical thinking, skill development, and career readiness.
- **Uphold CSJ heritage and the Catholic Intellectual Tradition:** Reflect the values and mission of the University's founders and promote a deep engagement with the world.
- **Advance institutional priorities:** Acquire materials that support the University's areas of distinction (e.g. innovative teaching and learning, global awareness, women's leadership, inclusive excellence, community engagement) and promote the University's strategic goals.

III. Guiding Principles

Collection decisions at MSMU Libraries are guided by the following principles:

- **Community Engagement:** Collections are developed in consultation with the MSMU community, encouraging faculty and student input to ensure responsiveness to user needs.
- **Curricular Integration:** Resources are prioritized based on their relevance to University courses, programs, and research needs.
- **Inclusive Excellence:** Selections reflect the University's diverse community and the CSJ commitment to social justice, striving for a collection that includes multiple perspectives and reduces bias.
- **Support for Scholarship:** The Libraries provide high-quality, authoritative academic resources that support critical thinking and scholarly engagement.
- **Accessibility:** Resources are offered in multiple formats and through accessible platforms, accommodating a variety of learning needs in partnership with Disability Services.

IV. Collection Scope and Accessibility

The MSMU Libraries maintain a robust, multidisciplinary collection to support academic excellence and lifelong learning. As an academic library serving a diverse community, the collection emphasizes a variety of voices and formats. The scope of the collection includes:

- **Curriculum-aligned scholarly resources:** Course textbooks and assigned or recommended readings, scholarly journals, databases, articles, and educational films that support the University's curriculum.
- **Teaching, learning, and research support:** Materials (in print and electronic formats) that underpin undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs, including resources for faculty and student research.
- **Lifelong learning and career readiness:** Reference works, study aids, career preparation materials, and general-interest books that promote ongoing learning and preparedness for employment.
- **MSMU mission and CSJ heritage:** Materials that uphold MSMU's core values and pillars of distinction (such as innovative teaching, women's leadership, global awareness, and community engagement) and that reflect the University's CSJ heritage.

- **Community-focused collections:** Popular reading collections, common reading titles, and items of local or regional interest that foster student engagement and community connection.

The Libraries provide resources in various formats to maximize accessibility:

- **Print materials:** The print collection includes general holdings, course reserves, popular reading, graphic novels, art and music books, poetry, and oversize items.
- **Electronic resources:** The electronic portfolio includes e-books, online course reserves, journals, newspapers, streaming films, and databases. Format selection considers factors such as accessibility, licensing, cost, and integration with learning platforms.
- **Accessibility:** The Libraries work with Disability Services to ensure that needed materials are available in alternative formats when possible, meeting the needs of all users.
- **Special Collections:** Unique and archival materials are governed by a separate policy. See the MSMU Libraries [Special Collections policy](#) for details.

V. Collection Development Strategy

The MSMU Libraries employ a strategic approach to building the collection, with attention to curriculum needs, budget, and mission. Key strategies include:

- **Just-in-Time acquisition:** The Libraries respond promptly to course and research needs by acquiring materials in a timely manner.
- **Faculty and student engagement:** Faculty and students are encouraged to recommend or request new materials through the library's purchase request form (see the [Library Services](#) page or the [suggest purchase form](#)). Subject specialists and liaison librarians collaborate with departments to ensure curricular needs are met.
- **Support for Open Access:** The Libraries promote open access to scholarship by supporting affordable learning materials, Open Educational Resources (OER), and sustainable publishing models. The Libraries participate in transformative open access agreements and encourage authors to publish

openly. For more information, see the [ALMI-OER LibGuide](#) and consult a librarian with questions about open access publishing.

- **Access versus ownership:** The Libraries prioritize providing access to requested materials in the most feasible way. When purchasing an item is not possible, the Libraries arrange access through interlibrary loan, resource sharing, or other means whenever possible.
- **Student success:** Priority is given to resources that enhance student learning and success. The Libraries maintain a robust multidisciplinary collection, especially in electronic databases, while providing greater depth in disciplines that are central to the current curriculum.
- **Continuing resources:** The Collections team conducts an annual review of electronic resources (including databases and journals) to assess relevance, usage, and budget sustainability. Renewal decisions and cancellations are based on usage statistics and academic value. Faculty may request reports of electronic resource use for program review or accreditation purposes.
- **Licensing:** The Libraries acquire electronic resources under licenses that allow campus-wide access. Materials requiring individual subscriptions or that are not licensed for library use are generally not acquired.
- **Evidence-based decision-making:** The Libraries utilize usage data and other metrics to inform collection decisions and maintain a balanced portfolio of print and electronic resources.

VI. Selection Guidelines

Resources are selected based on criteria that ensure relevance and quality. The Libraries consider the following when acquiring or retaining materials:

- Relevance to MSMU's academic programs, curriculum, and research needs
- The research and study needs of the MSMU community (students, faculty, and staff)
- Quality, authority, and credibility of scholarship (e.g., publisher reputation, reviews, author credentials)
- Currency, accuracy, and suitability of content, as well as compliance with accessibility standards

- Alignment with the mission, values, and strategic priorities of Mount Saint Mary's University
- Support for university programs, initiatives, and student engagement
- Identification of gaps or weaknesses in the existing collection
- Preservation of the University's CSJ tradition and social justice values, ensuring representation of diverse perspectives

Selection decisions favor formats and editions that will provide long-term access to scholarly content.

VII. Collection Maintenance and Deselection

The Libraries conduct regular maintenance of the collection to ensure that it remains current, relevant, and useful. Key practices include:

- **Deselection criteria:** Materials may be withdrawn if they are outdated, damaged beyond repair, or superseded by newer editions (unless a work is historically significant). Duplicate copies with low usage may be removed. Scientific and technical materials are reviewed more frequently due to rapid obsolescence.
- **Retention of important items:** Items are retained if they are rare, historically significant, or part of a special collection. Materials with unique value to MSMU's history or CSJ heritage are preserved. Items under shared print agreements, e.g. SCELIC Shared Print, WEST (Western Regional Storage Trust), are generally exempt from withdrawal. Core or classic works used in instruction are also retained.
- **Deselection goals:** Regular deselection maintains a useful and accurate collection, frees space for new materials, improves accessibility, and identifies items for repair or replacement.
- **Consultation:** The Collections team consults with subject specialist librarians, academic departments, and faculty at different stages of the deselection process to ensure that weeding decisions support curriculum and academic needs.

Through careful weeding and retention, the Libraries balance the removal of obsolete materials with the preservation of resources that support learning, research, and institutional history.

VIII. Gifts

Donated books and materials are reviewed to determine their alignment with the Library's collection priorities. Donors are advised to consult the Libraries' Gift Policy (available on the [MSMU Libraries website](#)) for guidelines on acceptable gifts and the gift evaluation process.

IX. Assessment and Evaluation

The Libraries engage in ongoing assessment to evaluate the collection's effectiveness:

- The Collections team conducts an annual review of electronic resources, using usage data and feedback to guide renewal or cancellation decisions.
- Academic departments may request summaries of library resources to support program review, accreditation, or strategic planning. The Libraries provide relevant data and reports upon request.
- Usage statistics and user feedback are monitored and analyzed to inform future collection development and to demonstrate the Libraries' impact on teaching, learning, and research.

X. Governance and Responsibilities

Collection development is a collaborative process involving:

- **Library Administration and Collections Team:** The Director of Libraries, Associate Director of Collections, and reference librarians oversee and manage collection development, including selection, acquisition, and maintenance of resources.
- **Academic Departments:** Faculty and department chairs provide input on curricular needs and specialized resource requirements. Librarians work closely with departments to align the collection with academic programs.

- **Students and Faculty:** Members of the MSMU community are encouraged to recommend resources, suggest acquisitions, and participate in collection assessments. The Libraries facilitate this through purchase request forms and feedback mechanisms.

By involving these stakeholders, MSMU Libraries ensure that the collection meets the evolving needs of the University.

XI. Collection Disaster Response Plan

To protect library collections during emergencies, the MSMU Libraries maintain a *Collection Disaster Response Plan*. This plan outlines procedures for responding to events such as fire, flood, or other disasters to safeguard and recover library materials. The *Collection Disaster Response Plan* is available through the Libraries' administrative office.