

Policy Title: Collection Development Policy
Policy Number: LIB.2600.07
Policy Owner: Library Director
Responsible Office: NAU Library
Revision Date: 02/18/2026



1. Purpose and Scope

Collection development is an essential function of the library, and the purpose of this Collection Development Policy is to provide a clear, consistent framework for building, maintaining, and evaluating the NAU Library's collections. This policy guides the ongoing development and stewardship of the library's collections in alignment with the mission of NAU, and supports the teaching, learning, and research needs of its diverse users. The strength and relevance of the NAU Library collection depend on shared engagement among faculty, students, and staff, and the financial commitment of the university. This policy ensures that collection decisions are transparent, thoughtful, and sustainable, supporting equitable access to information for the entire university community.

2. Policy

The Library Director, in consultation with the Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs and the Chairs of the academic departments, holds primary responsibility for developing the library's collection. The library welcomes purchase recommendations from students, faculty, and staff, and all requests are reviewed in accordance with the established selection criteria and other relevant considerations. When requested materials meet the criteria outlined in this policy and funding is available, the library will proceed with acquisition.

Final authority for purchase decisions rests with the Library Director and the Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs.

General Criteria for Selection of Materials

In selecting materials for the collection, the library considers a range of qualitative and practical factors to ensure that resources effectively support the academic mission of the university. Key criteria include:

- Relevance to the curriculum
- Recency of publication, particularly in fields where currency is essential
- Immediate and long-term value to teaching, learning, and research
- Quality of scholarship or literary merit, as demonstrated through authoritative content
- Reviews from reputable, subject-specific, or standard library reviewing sources
- Appropriateness of reading level for university students and faculty
- Suitability of size, physical format, and durability for sustained library use
- Usability and accessibility, including compliance with accessibility standards

- Depth and balance of existing holdings in the relevant subject area
- Anticipated demand, including frequency of recommendations or requests
- Cost and overall value, relative to available funds
- Availability in various formats, such as print and electronic

The library does not assume responsibility for purchasing textbooks, software, or other supplemental materials required for individual coursework. While resources that support specific classes may be acquired, such purchases will only be made when the materials provide broader benefit to the majority of the student population and meet the selection criteria outlined in this policy. All materials acquired by the library will be housed within the library.

As funding permits, the Library Director may select outstanding, classic, or “professional standard” works in disciplines not directly represented in the curriculum when such materials enhance the overall strength and balance of the collection. However, materials intended solely to support individual research projects, whether for advanced students, faculty, or staff, are generally not acquired.

Formats of Materials Collected

Print and electronic formats are both considered in the library’s purchasing and access decisions. Electronic resources are prioritized because they offer extended availability beyond the library’s physical operating hours, support distance education students, and provide broader and more flexible coverage across subject areas. Cooperative licensing or shared access to electronic resources may be pursued when feasible, subject to funding and partnership opportunities.

The library collects materials primarily in the English language. Exceptions include:

- a) foreign-language resources that support introductory language courses, and
- b) donated or gifted materials in non-English languages, provided the subject matter aligns with the university’s core academic disciplines.

Duplicates will be purchased only when there is a clear and demonstrable need, such as anticipated high demand or sustained usage that warrants additional copies.

Out-of-print materials are rarely purchased, as the library’s primary focus is on acquiring current publications. The library recognizes, however, that out-of-print titles may occasionally be needed, most often to replace heavily used items that have been lost or withdrawn due to physical condition. Given the difficulty, limited availability, and often higher cost associated with locating rare, out-of-print, or reprinted materials, priority will continue to be placed on acquiring current publications with lasting value.

The Reserve Collection supports the instructional program by providing access to library resources directly related to current course offerings. Reserve materials are supplied by individual instructors for the purpose of supporting instruction in a specific class. Faculty members are responsible for obtaining any required copyright permissions before placing materials on reserve. The library does not select or purchase materials specifically for the Reserve Collection.

Faculty members and instructors are encouraged to place appropriate materials on the course reserve to support their instructional needs. Items on Reserve may include books (personal copies or titles already owned by the library), handouts, articles, audiovisual materials, and other course-related resources. Faculty should contact the Library Director to coordinate the following:

- The materials to be placed on Reserve
- The length of time the items should remain on Reserve
- Any special instructions regarding use
- Whether items should be clearly labeled with the instructor's name

Most Reserve items are expected to remain in the library and follow the usage and circulation guidelines outlined in **Circulation Policy (LIB.2600.02)**. Exceptions may be granted at the discretion of the Library Director.

The library does not provide audiovisual equipment for playing DVDs, CDs, or computer-based programs. However, multiple computer workstations are available for patron use during normal operating hours.

Types of Materials Collected

- **Books**

Print books are collected in hardback editions unless the cost is significantly higher than a paperback edition or if the book is available only in the paperback format. A single copy of a title will be purchased unless the title has been identified by the selector as a high-demand item. Donated copies in good condition will also be considered for addition to the collection.

Electronic books (eBooks) are selected for their relevance to the university curriculum and student needs, appropriate style and reading level, reviews, and cost. eBooks may duplicate print resources in some circumstances. If a book is available in an electronic format, that format will be chosen unless there is a demonstrable high demand for a print copy.

- **Fiction**

Established literary works, literary prize winners, and new works receiving critical acclaim in the literary field are considered for purchase, particularly works that support the literature curriculum at the university.

- **Graded Readers**

Graded readers, sometimes called "easy readers", are also considered for purchase, particularly those that are published by established houses or authors. These special materials support the Gulf Language School activities by supporting English reading skills as well as providing recreational reading.

- **Reference Materials**

Reference materials support the research needs of NAU students, faculty, and staff. The reference collection contains, but is not limited to, encyclopedias, dictionaries, atlases,

directories, indexes, bibliographies, statistical compilations, handbooks, etc. Items in this collection tend to be general in nature, though there may be select titles that pertain to NAU's core disciplines. Items in the reference collection do not circulate. Reference materials are collected mainly in print formats, but other formats may be considered due to demand, cost, and/or accessibility.

The reference collection will be kept as current as possible to support the availability of accurate and reliable information. When superseded editions are withdrawn from the reference collection, they may be transferred to the circulating collection provided their content remains relevant and is not outdated or potentially misleading.

- **Textbooks**

The library does not assume responsibility for purchasing course textbooks. However, in exceptional circumstances, the library may purchase faculty-recommended textbooks with approval from the Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs. Electronic textbooks from designated vendors may be purchased upon faculty recommendation and with approval from the Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs. Faculty members and department heads are encouraged to provide print copies for the library's Course Reserves; however, these materials are not considered part of the library's permanent collection.

- **Periodicals (magazines, journals, newspapers)**

The NAU library discontinued subscriptions to print periodicals during the COVID-19 pandemic. Electronic periodicals may be added based on demonstrated demand and the availability of funding.

- **Serially Published Monographs**

Serial monographs are generally not purchased by the library.

- **Audiovisual Resources**

Audiovisual resources may be acquired to support the curriculum in standard formats compatible with the library's existing equipment and facilities. As technology evolves, the formats collected may also change or expand. Some audiovisual materials may circulate to patrons, subject to specific limitations, or remain in the library as Reference materials. Selection criteria for audiovisual resources will follow the same guidelines outlined in this policy for print materials.

- **Electronic Materials**

Electronic resources are prioritized over print materials because they provide access beyond the library's physical operating hours, support distance learners, and offer broader and more flexible coverage across subject areas. Selection criteria for electronic resources will follow the same guidelines established in this policy for print materials. These resources include, but are not limited to, licensed fee-based or subscription-based resources, databases, eBooks, and electronic periodicals. Cooperative licensing or shared access arrangements may be pursued when feasible, subject to funding and partnership opportunities.

- **Government Publications**

The library is not a federal or state depository and does not maintain a separate collection of government publications.

- **Archives**

Please refer **Archives Usage Policy (LIB.2600.01)** for more information.

Donations

The library accepts gifts and donations in-kind. All gifts are accepted by the Library Director. Guidelines on what books the library will or will not accept are as follows:

- **Acceptable:**

- Books in good, working condition
- Books without loose or missing pages and writing or highlighting in them
- Books that are not already in the library collection in print format or in the online eBook collection

- **NOT Acceptable:**

- Books having publication dates older than the past 10 years or with obsolete information
- Instructor's editions and manuals
- Student solution manuals, workbooks
- Test item files, Study guides
- Textbooks that are more than 5 years old or more than 2 editions behind
- Mass-market paperbacks (If not hard cover or 'trade' paperbacks)
- Books with yellowed, brittle, or damaged pages/bindings
- Books that are dirty, dusty, or stained
- General encyclopedia sets and other reference materials, such as maps, atlas, almanac, dictionary, thesaurus, etc.
- Magazines or journal issues
- Cookbooks or children's books
- Books in languages other than English, if the subject matter does not align with the university's core academic disciplines

The library may dispose of the donated materials as it sees fit and is not obliged to add material to the library's collection.

Deselection (Weeding)

The library will regularly carry out deselection, or weeding, of library materials to maintain a relevant and academically useful library collection. Systematic deselection ensures that library resources remain accurate, accessible, and aligned with the teaching, learning, and research needs of the university community. It also supports effective space management and promotes the discoverability of current materials.

Materials may be considered for removal based on one or more of the following criteria:

- Resources containing obsolete, misleading, or inaccurate information.
- Outdated or superseded editions.
- Items that are worn, damaged, moldy, heavily marked, or otherwise unsuitable for circulation or long-term retention.
- Items with missing pages, broken bindings, or other deteriorations that make use impractical.
- Materials with low or no circulation within a reasonable time period. Classic works in certain fields, however, have long-term value and should be kept in the collection.
- Resources no longer aligned with the university's academic programs, accreditation requirements, or strategic initiatives.
- Duplicates or multiple copies that exceed current demand.
- Materials readily and reliably available through licensed electronic resources.
- Outdated or unsupported audiovisual or digital formats that the library can no longer access or maintain.

Faculty and department chairs may be consulted before withdrawing significant or sensitive resources. However, final responsibility for deselection decisions rests with the Library Director or designated library staff.

- **Special Considerations for Electronic Resources**

Deselection of electronic resources may include:

- Subscriptions or licenses no longer supporting curricular or research needs.
- Titles with declining usage, poor cost-per-use metrics, or unsustainable pricing models.
- Resources rendered duplicative by newer, more comprehensive platforms.

- **Withdrawal and Disposition**

Withdrawn items deemed appropriate for disposal may be

- Donated, sold, recycled, offered at no cost to library patrons, or otherwise responsibly disposed of.

- Relocated to storage or special collections when historically or institutionally valuable.

Records of deselected items will be maintained to ensure transparency and accountability.

- **Replacement of Materials**

Replacement decisions for lost, damaged, missing, or deteriorated items will be guided by the following considerations:

- Alignment of the title with the library's collection development priorities.
- Documented or anticipated demand for the item.
- Whether the item is heavily used or included on a faculty-recommended reading list.
- Availability of alternative formats that may better support accessibility or instructional needs.
- Whether the content of the item is more effectively covered by another resource.
- Availability of an electronic edition that would enhance access for users, including remote learners.

Standards

The NAU Library supports the statements on collection development contained within the *Standards for Libraries in Higher Education (SLHE)*, which were approved and adopted by the American Library Association's Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) in 2011 and revised again in 2018.

Intellectual Freedom

The NAU Library supports the American Library Association's [*Library Bill of Rights, Intellectual Library Bill of Rights, Intellectual Freedom Principles for Academic Libraries: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights, Freedom to Read Statement, and Access to Digital Resources and Services: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights*](#).

An individual or group questioning the appropriateness of material within the collection will be referred to the Library Director. An individual may register a complaint in writing to the Library Director concerning material that he or she considers objectionable. The Library Director is responsible for reviewing the material in question, following the current collection development policy.

The Library Director, after reviewing the material in question, will forward a recommendation to the Provost/VP of Academic Affairs. The complainant will receive a reply from the Provost/VP of Academic Affairs indicating the library's position and action planned or taken.

Copyright

The NAU Library complies fully with all of the provisions of the [U.S. Copyright Law \(17 U.S.C.\)](#) and its amendments. The library supports the *Fair Use section of the Copyright Law (17 U.S.C. 107)*, which permits and protects citizens' rights to reproduce and make other uses of copyrighted works for the purposes of teaching, scholarship, and research.

Interlibrary Loan

The NAU Library does not currently offer interlibrary loan services. The library will consider adopting such services in the future if they become financially and logistically viable.

3. Procedures

The library staff will follow the Collection Development Policy to develop and maintain the collection of the NAU Library.

4. Who Should Read This Policy

- Students
- Faculty
- Staff

5. History

- Revision Date: 01/03/2020
- Revision Date: 02/18/2026

6. Policy Approval

Revision Editor

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Date

Assoc. Dean for Inst. Effectiveness & Planning

02/18/2026

Date

Provost, VP for Academic Affairs

02/18/2026

Date

