

The Catholic University of America Libraries Collection Development Policy

Executive Summary

The mission of The Catholic University of America Libraries (the Library) is to support and enrich the instructional, research, and service programs of the University by means of its resources and services, including the Library collections that are indispensable to the University's teaching and research.

The purpose of the collection development policy of the Library is to guide the selection of library materials in monographic, serial, database, electronic and other formats. The collection development policy of the Library seeks to implement the first and second goals of the five-point University Strategic Plan, namely: "Strengthening graduate studies at The Catholic University of America," and "Enhancing The Catholic University of America undergraduate experience." The Library is mindful of its responsibilities to develop the library collections in a balanced manner and to maintain and strengthen those subject collections critical to the mission of the University. It is also mindful of its broader responsibility to share resources with the Catholic Church, the scholarly community, and the Washington Research Library Consortium (WRLC).

The collections, which are funded primarily by an annual appropriation from the University to the Library, are developed by the librarians in consultation with the faculty, acting through School or departmental liaisons. Subject selectors manage library funds for the purchase of monographs in their subjects and participate in collective recommendations to a coordinating committee on the purchase or cancellation of journals and online databases. Since each subscription represents an ongoing financial commitment that increases annually with inflation and enrollment growth, librarians regularly review each title based on its scholarly value relative to its cost and usage statistics.

Electronic resources have become an integral part of academic research at all levels, although the availability of electronic formats varies by subject area. Journals are acquired in digital format when available. Print subscriptions to journals that are available in electronic databases have been cancelled, except in rare instances.

The Library participates in national cooperative efforts through Interlibrary Loan and is an active participant in two local consortia, the Washington Research Library Consortium and the Washington Theological Consortium, which facilitate access to a wide range of information resources.

University History and Mission

The Catholic University of America, founded and sponsored by the bishops of the United States with the approval of the Holy See, opened its doors in 1889 as the national university of the Catholic Church. Established as a center for graduate study, it has evolved into a modern American university, committed not only to graduate but also to undergraduate and professional education and to the cultivation of the arts. At every level, it is dedicated to the advancement of learning and particularly to the development of knowledge in the light of Christian revelation, convinced that faith is consistent with reason and that theology and other religious studies profit from the broader context of critical inquiry, experimentation and reflection (from the University's Statement of Goals).

The mission of the Library is to support and enrich the instructional, research, and service programs of the University by means of its resources and services. It cooperates with the faculty and students in the teaching, learning and research process. In recognition of the University's position as a Catholic institution of higher education, the Library has the responsibility for sharing resources and services with both the Catholic Church and the scholarly community (from the Library's Mission Statement).

The Library's collection development policy is informed by these documents:

[Mission Statement of the University, accompanied by Statements of Aims and Goals](#)
[Library Mission Statement](#)
[University Strategic Plan](#)
[CUA Statement on Academic Freedom](#)
[American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights](#)

Purpose of Collection Development Policy

The Library's collection development philosophy is grounded in the missions of the University and of the Library. The primary purpose of collection development is to provide the information resources necessary to carry out the University's teaching programs and to support the research of its students and faculty. In doing so, the collection development policy of the Library seeks to implement the first and second goals of the five-point University Strategic Plan, namely: "Strengthening graduate studies at The Catholic University of America," and "Enhancing The Catholic University of America undergraduate experience." The Library is mindful of its responsibilities to develop the library collections in a balanced manner and to maintain and strengthen those subject collections critical to the mission of the University. It is also mindful of its broader responsibility to share resources with the Catholic Church, the scholarly community, and the Washington Research Library Consortium (WRLC).

The Collection Development Policy guides the selection of materials to be added to the collections, whether by purchases or gifts. It has been written with several purposes in mind:

- It advises library staff and members of the university community regarding processes and policies for the selection of materials and for the development of the Library's collections.
- It is a plan for the long-term growth of the collections and a tool for delineating collecting priorities.
- It is a guide for those librarians charged with the responsibility for selecting materials.
- It serves as a basis for the development of specialized subject-specific collection development policies.

How We Collect

The Library's general monograph collections are developed by the librarians through approval plans, firm orders, recommendations by the Library's users, and gifts. Serials and databases are managed through a collaborative process coordinated by a Continuations and Electronic Resources Team (CERT).

Responsibility for collection development

The development of library collections in all subject areas is the responsibility of the librarians, in consultation with the faculty. The goal is to develop the collection in a balanced manner, in support of the teaching and research needs of the disciplines within the overall University mission and objectives.

The Library administration appoints the Coordinator of Collection Development, who oversees the collection development process for monographs (about 20% of the Library acquisitions budget). The administration also appoints the [Continuations and Electronic Resources Team \(CERT\)](#), which coordinates the collection development process for serials and databases (about 80% of the Library acquisitions budget). The role of CERT is to coordinate strategy to maximize the effectiveness of library funds spent for serials and databases, in a way that will also provide the greatest access to materials to the university community.

To do this, subject librarians (selectors) are organized into a Selectors Group, consisting of all the selectors and the Coordinator of Collection Development. The Selectors Group reviews subscription titles according to the schedule established by CERT, using the data CERT provides, and submits recommendations regarding the selection, cancellation and management of serials and databases to CERT and the Coordinator of Collection Development. It also suggests responses to collection development issues identified by CERT, for discussion with CERT and the Library administration.

In recent years, collection development issues addressed by CERT and the Selectors Group have included how best to manage the transition from print to digital resources, permanent archiving

and future access/loss of access to digital resources if there are funding cuts, the additional costs vs. increased access of digital resources, publisher restrictions on consortial sharing of licensed e-publications, and the substitution of document delivery for expensive journal subscriptions in some fields.

Subject librarians and faculty liaisons

Subject librarians serve as library liaisons or designated library contacts for the various Schools and departments. As subject specialists they are responsible for research and instructional assistance in their assigned subject areas. As subject selectors they are responsible for collection development services for their assigned subject areas. Schools and departments may designate a faculty member as a liaison to the library.

Subject selectors manage library funds for the purchase of monographs in their areas and participate in collective recommendations on the purchase or cancellation of journals and online databases. These recommendations are also informed by faculty expertise and desires and are limited by the budgetary resources available from year to year. A list of subject librarians is available at <http://libraries.cua.edu/about/subjlibs.cfm>.

Approval plans

Many of the print books acquired by the Library are received through a monographic approval plan via a major plan vendor, [YBP Book Services](#). Approval plans help to assure the greatest possible representation of current materials to support academic programs. The Library receives English language monographs automatically as they are published by major North American university and trade publishers in a broad range of academic subjects that are being taught and researched at the University. Publisher output is matched against an individualized library approval plan profile completed annually by subject librarians and updated continuously throughout the year. Books are received and reviewed by subject librarians and may be returned if, upon inspection, they do not meet the Library's criteria for acquisition.

Smaller approval plans are established when appropriate. These specialized buying plans typically focus on subject or language coverage not provided by the general approval plan.

Firm orders

Books are also ordered on a title-by-title basis based on subject librarian judgment as to potential research value and general scholarly use, as informed by faculty and user recommendations, subject knowledge, reviews, publisher sources, curriculum scans, and current events.

User recommendations

Library users are encouraged to recommend potential acquisitions to the appropriate subject librarian via the contact form <http://libraries.cua.edu/form/contact.cfm>.

A list of new monographs acquired during the previous two months in the various subject areas may be viewed at <http://libraries.cua.edu/newbook/index.cfm>.

Gifts

The Library's collections are enriched by the donations made by our patrons in support of scholarly teaching and research at the University. Donations are reviewed by the appropriate subject librarian and are accepted only if they meet the standards outlined in the collection development policy for purchases made in that subject area. For more information on types of materials accepted, please see our [Gifts Policy](#).

What We Collect

Materials are acquired or licensed by the Library in support of the research and instructional needs of the University's degree programs. Collection development priorities for the various subject areas are outlined in a separate section of this collection development policy.

Monographs

The following format guidelines apply to selection of monograph titles:

- Materials are collected primarily in the English language. Exceptions to this are the modern and ancient language subject areas, and other subject areas in which the Library collects in depth. The Library collects English translations of foreign works. Translations of works originally published in English are collected only if needed for comparative study or literary criticism.
- Materials are collected in cloth-bound editions to ensure longevity. Exceptions may be made when a cloth edition is not available, when the material is not being collected for long-term retention, or when the price differential between cloth and paperback editions is great. Paperback editions acquired for long-term retention may be bound. In a few subjects, e-books are preferred.
- The following categories of books are not collected, unless requested for a specific purpose: cartoons, classroom anthologies, cookbooks, curriculum guides, exam guides, field guides, instructors' manuals, interviews, lab manuals, periodical anthologies, personal narratives, programmed texts, study guides, travel guides, workbooks.
- Language audio materials and audio books are not collected.
- The content level of books selected is at a general academic or research level, or at a professional level. Some juvenile books are selected for the Library Science collection and Education. In general, books of a very popular nature are not collected.
- In general, textbooks are not collected except where they function as background or reference works for a subject.

- In general, the Library collects only one copy of a monograph. Exceptions may be made for high-demand titles, for faculty publications, or for important works where more than one copy is needed.

Serials

The Library currently subscribes to a large number of serials in both print and electronic formats in order to support the research and learning needs of the students and faculty of the University. Since each subscription represents an ongoing financial commitment that increases annually with inflation and enrollment growth, the librarians regularly review each title based on its scholarly value relative to its cost. In addition, usage statistics for both print and electronic serial publications inform retention and cancellation decisions. Due to funding constraints, new subscription requests purchased from the annual University appropriation must be reviewed by the Selectors Committee for recommendation to CERT. This frequently requires the cancellation of existing subscriptions.

Over the years, the Library has benefited from long-standing runs of print journals through gift and exchange programs established by publications housed at the University, notably the *Catholic Historical Review*, the *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, and *Old Testament Abstracts*. The Library depends on these gifts and exchanges for access to important journals. The Library Gift Policy states that donations of journals and serials are rarely added to the collection unless they provide a run of several years.

Standing orders

Standing orders ensure that certain sets of items are purchased as soon as they become available. Items for which standing orders are used include monographic series, regularly published supplements to existing works, indexes, and works that have regular or frequent editions, such as certain reference materials. Standing orders are selected for purchase and annually reviewed for continuation by the appropriate subject selector. They are covered under that subject's monograph budget.

Reference

Responsibility for developing the Library reference collections in subject areas is shared by all selectors. They are encouraged to purchase reference titles related to their assigned subject out of their monographic allocations. Sharing the cost between subject areas is also encouraged, particularly where titles are too expensive for a single fund line and where the title is interdisciplinary. User preference for electronic access to reference titles is recognized and accommodated whenever possible. This usually results in a higher cost than purchasing print.

An additional fund for general reference purchases is supported out of the University's appropriation to the Library. The majority of these funds are reserved for serials and continuations (annuals, in most cases) important for providing general reference service. These titles are reviewed by the selectors on an annual basis to determine their continuing value. Titles

are canceled, switched to less frequent purchase, or replaced by more relevant titles as appropriate. If Reference funds remain near the end of the fiscal year because some continuations were not received or were less expensive than anticipated, recommendations from selectors, collected over the course of the year, are reviewed, prioritized by the Coordinator of Collection Development in consultation with other members of the Selectors Group, and purchased.

Databases

Electronic databases have become an integral part of academic research at all levels. The Library subscribes to several general multi-subject databases as well as many subject-specific databases ranging in content from article citations to primary texts. Since these databases account for an ever-growing portion of the total library budget, new subscriptions must be evaluated carefully by the Selectors Group for recommendation to CERT. Existing database subscriptions are reviewed annually for retention based on usage statistics and relative value.

Print vs. electronic

In order to enhance accessibility and reduce library storage costs, the Library increasingly relies on electronic subscriptions to many journals previously held in print. When moving to an electronic subscription, the selectors consider the level of permanent access available. In rare cases, print subscriptions are retained alongside online access. The availability of electronic formats varies by subject area. Electronic formats, when available, are acquired for new subscriptions.

The Library also purchases some electronic books as a way to increase accessibility to materials. The decision to buy new books in print or electronic formats is made by the subject selector responsible for that area, and is informed by student and faculty preferences.

From the advent of databases and e-journals, the Library has carefully evaluated opportunities to adopt new technologies. When it became clear from industry trends that digital collections would be a major component of libraries, the Library pushed for electronic access to collections. The 2008 LibQUAL® data indicate that accessibility to e-resources is the highest priority for users. In light of this, the Library is committed to continuing to provide as much online content as possible. The Library cancels print journal subscriptions as online alternatives become available. In doing so, however, we may sacrifice permanent ownership of the content in exchange for increased accessibility. If database subscriptions are not maintained because of funding constraints, our access to some journal content is lost.

The Library has been forced to commit an ever-increasing percentage of its total budget to keep e-resources at the current level. Many database costs are determined by FTE. To prevent the e-resources from drawing further funds from other areas, increasing student enrollment must be balanced with increased funds, or resources will be lost. Additional funds also must be added each year to match normal increases in the cost of databases and e-journals, which have averaged 5 to 7% each year for the past 7 years. Annual increases in the current distressed economic

environment may or may not reach these levels, but will certainly rise because of increased University enrollment and an inflation factor.

In the absence of new funds, selectors review journal subscriptions and make recommendations about cancellations based on importance and usage. While maintaining access is a priority, the Library has canceled print subscriptions for serials to which we do not have full online access.

Faculty publications

The Library seeks to acquire all faculty monographs. Faculty members are welcome to inform the Library about their publications to ensure that the materials can be added in a timely manner. Faculty members are encouraged to donate copies of their publications as well.

Government Documents Depository Program

The Library, in partnership with the DuFour Law Library, is a selective depository for documents published by the [United States Government Publications Office](#). Documents that are relevant to the University's academic programs and meet the needs of the University community receive primary consideration for selection. A list of selected items is submitted to the Government Printing Office. When possible and appropriate, government documents are acquired in electronic format.

Special Collections

As articulated in its mission statement, the Library organizes, manages, and preserves unique materials that serve as records of our Catholic intellectual heritage and culture through special collections, including those in the American Catholic History Research Center and University Archives (ACUA), Rare Books and Special Collections (RBSC), and the Semitics Collections and the Institute of Christian Oriental Research (Semitics/ICOR Library). These special collections contribute to CUA's teaching and research missions and to the realization of goal number five of the University's Strategic Plan: "Raising The Catholic University of America's national and international visibility and reputation."

Serving as official depository for such organizations as the National Catholic Educational Association, Catholic Charities USA, the National Councils of Catholic Women and Men, and the United States Catholic Conference, the [American Catholic History Research Center and University Archives](#) is unrivaled as a source for the history of the American Church's central institutions in the twentieth century. The [Department of Rare Books and Special Collections](#) houses one of the nation's premiere historical canon law collections, with strengths as well in church history and theology, and a notable collection of 17th and 18th century materials surrounding the Jansenist controversy. Its collection of early printing, including especially the products of the Vatican presses, is supported with modern works on the book arts and history of the book. The holdings of the [Semitics/ICOR Library](#) reflect the University's interest in the

languages and thought of the Bible and in the study of the early Church. Valuable Coptic, Syriac, and Arabic collections document the Christian heritage in the Middle East.

The selection, acquisition, and management of special collections materials are described in the collection development policies of these units:

[ACUA acquisitions policy](#)

[Rare Books and Special Collections](#)

[Semitics/ICOR draft collection development policy](#)

The special collections participate in the Library's effort to provide online access to its resources:

<http://libraries.cua.edu/achrcua/docuon.html>

<http://libraries.cua.edu/achrcua/exhibits.html>

<http://www.lib.byu.edu/dlib/cua/>

<http://www.hmml.org/vivarium/BethArke.htm>

The Library also houses the [Oliveira Lima Library](#), one of the finest collections in the world for the study of the history and culture of the Luso-Brazilian world. As there is no specialized collection in the United States that is of comparable depth, this library gives the University a prominent international profile in the fields of Latin American and early modern European studies. The Oliveira Lima Library reports directly to the Provost.

Funding

The Library's materials acquisitions are financed chiefly by an annual appropriation from the University. That funding is supplemented by a modicum of income from library endowments, gifts, and occasional grants.

The majority of the University appropriation (80%) is used to pay for subscriptions to print and electronic journals, databases, and general reference works. The remainder is allocated to monograph purchases in subject areas as identified in the University's curriculum. A formula developed by the University's Academic Senate Library Committee allocates monograph funds to each subject area based on factors including a basic allowance for each department, enrollment, including FTE undergraduate majors, FTE graduate majors, and semester credit hours, and centrality to the University's mission. Subject librarians use their allocations to purchase monographs and other "one time purchase" items in a variety of media, as well as to pay for continuations, e.g., annuals and ongoing monographic series, in their assigned subjects.

New Programs

When new majors or programs are introduced into the curriculum, the Library will endeavor to build a collection of sufficient depth to sustain course work and basic research. Building the collection is dependent on communication between the appropriate School or department area and the subject selector. In most instances this will call for a new source of funding or a reallocation of the existing subject area budget(s) to cover these costs.

Balance and Intellectual Freedom

As documented in its Statement on Academic Freedom, The Catholic University of America upholds academic freedom as a fundamental condition for research and dissemination of information following the tradition of the Roman Catholic Church, a tradition grounded on respect for truth, social responsibility, and individual rights. It is a tradition that posits freedom of inquiry, open discussion, and unrestricted exchange of ideas as essential to the pursuit of knowledge.

The Library is committed to providing a balanced collection which represents a diversity of perspectives. In developing our collection, we adhere to the principles expressed in the following statements from the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights:

Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.

Within the defined scope of our collections, we attempt to represent all points of view and to consider objectively all purchase requests.

WRLC and Other Consortial Ties

We believe that our worth should be defined not only by our collections but by our services and by our provision of access to information. To this end, we participate not only in national cooperative efforts (Interlibrary Loan), but also in two local consortia ([The Washington Research Library Consortium](#) and [The Washington Theological Consortium](#)) which, in effect, increase the holdings of the Library. Consortium affiliation permits easy online access to catalogs of the collections, rapid delivery of materials, and free circulation to member patrons. A goal of consortium libraries is cooperative collection development, which aims to increase the scope of

information resources available locally. However, it remains our priority to build strong collections in those areas which are central to the University's programs of teaching and research.

Collection Management and Weeding

In order to maintain the quality and currency of the collections, and to preserve space in the libraries, materials are regularly monitored for condition and relevance. Damaged items are repaired when possible. Many older items are sent to the offsite WRLC Storage Center as appropriate, and can be retrieved upon request. In some cases, items are released from the collections.

Policy Review and Revision

The collection development policy is regularly reviewed in order to assure that the Library's collections continue to serve the needs of the CUA community. Policies for individual academic areas are also reviewed and changed as needed by the appropriate subject librarians.