

**Bishop Library**  
**Lebanon Valley College**

**Reference Collection  
Development  
Policy**

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# Overview of the Reference Collection

## Definition

Reference books are often defined as a “books containing authoritative information not meant to be read cover to cover, such as dictionaries, handbooks, and encyclopedias, shelved together by call number in a special section of the library called the reference stacks. Their location and circulation status is usually indicated by the symbol "Ref" preceding the call number in the catalog record and on the spine label.” (Online Dictionary for Library and Information Science).

## Purpose

The purpose of the reference collection is to provide facts, statistics, and background information to students, staff, and faculty of Lebanon Valley College. The collection will support not only the curriculum, but will also provide information for users' basic needs.

## Objectives of the Reference Collection Policy

- To establish guidelines for the reference collection: the primary users, languages, material formats, and types of materials found within the reference collection.
- To establish procedures for the acquisition of new reference materials which will provide comprehensive, up-to-date, relevant, and convenient sources of information.
- To establish procedures for the de-selection of reference materials.

## Primary Users

Primary users of the reference collection are the graduate and undergraduate students of Lebanon Valley College. Staff and faculty are also primary users of the collection, as well as guests of the college, which may include visiting professors or lecturers, alumni, or camp participants. Users of the collection may also include community members from Annville, Lebanon County and the surrounding counties, as well as students, faculty, and staff from ACLCP colleges.

## Languages

Materials primarily in English will be collected. Exceptions include encyclopedias in foreign languages, and foreign-language-to-English dictionaries.

## **Format of Materials**

The Library currently emphasizes the online electronic format to maximize accessibility and space utilization.

## **Types of Materials**

### **Almanacs, Annuals, and Yearbooks**

Bishop Library collects current editions of major publications for the United States and subjects as determined by the curriculum. Some core almanacs are retained in their entirety in the reference collection, i.e. the *World Almanac*. More often, however, current editions will be retained in the reference collection and previous editions will be moved to the circulating collection or withdrawn.

### **Bibliographies**

Critical bibliographies of major authors may be included in the reference section. Subject bibliographies which may be in high demand shall be included in the reference section; all other subject bibliographies shall be placed in the regular circulating collection.

### **Biographical Materials**

Both national and international core biographical works will be collected in the reference section.

### **Career Information**

The reference collection will include core works such as the *Occupational Outlook Handbook*. Cover letter and resume books shall be included in the regular circulating collection.

### **Concordances**

Concordances for major authors and works are included in the reference collection.

### **Dictionaries**

The reference collection will include core English and non-English dictionaries. Specialized dictionaries covering slang, idiomatic expressions, word origin, and historical aspects of language will be collected in the reference collection. Subject specific dictionaries relevant to the curriculum will also be collected.

### **Directories**

Directory information will most often be available electronically. The library will selectively collect print directories which support the curriculum and are not readily available in electronic format.

### **Encyclopedias**

Bishop Library's reference collection will include major general English language encyclopedias. Encyclopedias in languages taught at Lebanon Valley College shall also be included in the reference section. In support of the curriculum, the reference collection will also include authoritative encyclopedias in specialized subject areas.

### **Gazetteers, Atlases, Maps**

The reference section will provide atlases and gazetteers for all areas of the world, and in subjects relevant to the curriculum. Gazetteers/atlas of Pennsylvania and surrounding states will be collected.

### **Genealogical Sources**

Few genealogical sources will be collected.

### **Legal Materials**

The reference collection will contain general legal dictionaries and encyclopedias, materials on the constitution, the US Supreme court, and guides to finding legal information.

### **Literary Criticism**

Comprehensive sets of literary criticism will be included in the reference collection. Literary criticism of an individual author's works will be placed in the circulating collection.

### **Quotation and Proverb Books**

Selected quotation and proverb materials will be included in the reference collection.

### **Sacred Works**

Various versions of the *Bible* and concordances for the *Bible* and other sacred books will be collected.

### **Statistical Sources**

Core Pennsylvania, U. S., and international government statistical sources will be collected.

### **Style Manuals**

Current editions of any style manual currently being used by academic departments (MLA, ACS, AMA, CSE, APA, ASA, Chicago, Turabian) shall be shelved in the reference collection.

## **Tests and Measurements**

Reference materials covering tests and measurements (*Mental Measurements Yearbook, Tests, Tests in Print, Test Critiques*) shall be collected

## **Selection**

### **Selection Responsibility**

All librarians share responsibility for the selection and maintenance of the reference collection. Faculty are encouraged to participate in the collection process and may recommend titles for inclusion in the collection.

### **Selection Criteria**

The following criteria will be considered when selecting materials for the Reference Collection:

#### **Authoritativeness**

Author is authoritative; publisher is reputable.

#### **Coverage**

Information is not readily available in other reference resources.

#### **Cost**

Cost should be criteria; particularly if the cost of one format is prohibitively more expensive.

#### **Currency**

Information is up-to-date.

#### **Duplication**

Few materials will be duplicated; exceptions may include style guides, dictionaries and thesauri).

#### **Format**

Format of reference materials may be electronic or paper.

#### **Language**

With the exception of foreign language dictionaries and encyclopedias, materials primarily in English will be collected.

#### **Reviews**

Reviews in the professional literature should be favorable.

### **Significance and Usefulness**

Title supports the curriculum, and will be useful to LVC Library users.

### **Selection Criteria, Electronic Resources**

In addition to the above criteria for selection, the following considerations shall be taken into account for electronic reference materials:

#### **Access**

Must be accessible remotely, allow for proxying, and allow for multiple users.

#### **Cost**

Cost of electronic resources should not be prohibitively more than print.

#### **Ease of Use**

The resource should be accessible to the average user; extensive training and education should not be required.

#### **Equipment**

If the resource requires additional equipment (servers) there should be financial commitment from IT, as well as the availability of physical space.

#### **Full-Text**

Coverage should be full-text, and should not duplicate coverage of the same material which is owned by LVC in print format.

#### **Licensing**

The license must be acceptable to the Director of the Library and to the college's legal counsel.

#### **Search Interface**

Search interface should include basic search functions, including keyword searches, title searches, subject searches, and the use of boolean operators. Search interfaces should be intuitive.

#### **Records**

MARC records for the catalog should be included in the cost.

**Stability**

The Library prefers to purchase or subscribe to electronic files in a non-rolling format. Newer data should not delete previous data; all data should always be accessible.

**Use Statistics**

The Library will monitor the use of electronic resources; use statistics will play a major role in consideration of re-purchasing, or renewal.

**Vendor Reputability**

The vendor should have a history of reasonable and stable pricing and should provide adequate technical support.

Whenever possible, a trial should be arranged for evaluation of the resource.

**De-selection**

In order to maintain the usefulness of the Reference Collection, care must be taken to ensure that the collection is properly maintained. One important aspect of this process is the de-selection of materials that no longer support the mission or curriculum of the college or the purpose of the library's collections. De-selection is a process that involves the Bishop Library staff, faculty members and other parties as appropriate.

**De-selection Objectives****Effective Use of Shelf Space**

Shelving of library materials is inherently expensive. Sufficient stack space may be lacking in the near future. De-selection may be necessary to remove materials that are not needed and to provide space for new acquisitions

**Effective Utilization of Acquisitions Funds**

Cancellation of unnecessary standing orders frees acquisitions funds to acquire other titles that are more responsive to current teaching and research needs.

**Increase Existing Collections Relevance to Current Curricular Needs**

Removing dated or irrelevant titles from the shelves facilitates browsing by students and faculty, and paradoxically, also increases circulation of the remaining collection

**Maintenance of the Collection in Acceptable Physical Condition**

## **De-selection Criteria**

### **Infrequently Used**

Titles not used by current faculty and students or lent to other libraries via interlibrary loan may be de-selected.

### **Irrelevant to Current Curriculum**

Titles no longer relevant to current curricular or research needs may be removed from the collections or (in the case of standing orders) canceled.

### **Obsolescence**

Titles that contain obsolete information (e.g. legal or medical reference works) may be de-selected because the information they contain is out-of-date, invalid, inaccurate, or incomplete.

### **Poor Physical Condition**

Materials may be de-selected due to poor physical condition. Deteriorating reference books are evaluated for preservation and withdrawn if necessary. Replacement copies are sought as appropriate and if available.

### **Redundancy**

Copies or editions of titles may be de-selected to minimize redundancy of holdings. Individual titles containing information found elsewhere in the collection may also be deselected for this purpose.

### **Significance**

Significance of the material should be determined by checking for the listing of the title within core reference source lists. Reference materials listed in *Recommended Reference Books for Small and Medium-Sized Libraries and Media Centers*, as well as *Resources for College Libraries* should be considered significant, and should be retained. Appropriate subject faculty members should also be consulted during the reference de-selection process.

## **De-selection Frequency**

The Reference collection should be evaluated for de-selection periodically. Responsibility of reference de-selection shall be shared among all of the librarians.