Purpose

This policy provides guidelines for the selection, maintenance, evaluation and weeding of the reference collection in the Allyn and Betty Taylor Library.

Objectives and subject scope

The Reference collection in the Allyn and Betty Taylor Library serves faculty members, students and staff in the Faculties of Engineering Science, Health Science, Medicine and Dentistry and Science. The collection is intended to support research at all levels. It includes general and introductory resources; materials to support the curriculum in all sciences disciplines; health sciences information, and resources relevant to patrons in professional programs. It also includes resources which support masters, doctoral and faculty research.

Professional programs supported by the Taylor Library include Medicine, Dentistry, Nursing, Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy, Communication Sciences and Engineering (Civil and Environmental; Mechanical and Materials; Chemical and Biochemical: Electrical and Computer).

Departments and programs served and collection intensity are detailed in subject specific collections policies.

Formats Collected

Fast and convenient access to electronic information, improvement in servers and digital networks, and a change in attitudes towards information seeking, have created vast digital libraries available through the WWW. In accordance with Taylor Library’s commitment to maximize electronic access, reference is replacing print scientific indices, abstracts reference handbooks and data-books with comprehensive, web based resources. This has had a significant impact on the reference collection in the Taylor Library which has changed from being largely paper based to being largely Internet based as specialized print tools have been subsumed by electronic products.

Electronic product selection criteria for the Reference Collection include: subject coverage, ease of navigation, reliability of provider, currency, sophistication of search interface, availability in web interface. Items that are too expensive to be purchased as networked products are selected as standalone products as long as computers are available to permit access to these products from within the library.
All formats compatible with the library's infrastructure are collected. Duplication between print and electronic formats is discouraged as the library is attempting to provide the broadest coverage possible for the funds available.

The Taylor Library website serves as an extension of the reference collection. Electronic resources such as directories, dictionaries, abbreviation lists, scientific society resources, clinical practice guidelines etc. deemed useful to Taylor Library patrons are identified and linked and maintained by Taylor Library Reference staff.

**Collections Maintenance**

The print reference collection is kept up to date by the acquisition of new titles and editions of selected works and the withdrawal of titles which are outdated or infrequently used. Many reference materials such as directories, journal lists and fact books date very quickly. As the information becomes inaccurate or obsolete, these items are withdrawn from the collection. Printed indexing tools that have been superceded by electronic resources are removed from the reference collection and either withdrawn, relocated to compact shelving or housed in the periodicals collection.

Staff rely heavy on the Internet for email and street addresses, telephone numbers and fax numbers so that general directory information is rarely purchased. Some specialized and key directories are acquired but these types of resources are no longer purchased on a regular basis as biographical and factual information is also more up to date on the Internet. Few print dictionaries are required as excellent language and subject specific dictionaries abound on the Internet.

The WWW has also become the resource choice for statistics and government information generally such as toxicological profiles of chemicals, drug monographs, health statistics and environmental facts. Print resources that are replaced by electronic counterparts are linked in the library catalogue to provide patrons with easy access to these resources.

Superseded reference texts are either, incorporated into the regular collection, sent to storage or discarded. All reference staff actively participate in the selection of materials for this collection as they are best able to identify specific tools that are needed to respond to patron queries. Faculty input is also solicited especially in the selection of expensive, subject specific resources.

**Funds**

The Taylor Library reference fund code is used for the purchase of reference monographs and serials in both print and electronic format. Very expensive and/or multi-disciplinary database products although selected and evaluated by Taylor Library Reference, are referred to the Coordinator of Collections Management for purchase from library system funds.

**Selection criteria for print resources**

Taylor Library participates in an approval plan from Blackwells Book Services. There is no separate approval plan for the reference collection. Reference materials are incorporated into the individual subject profiles. The approval plan brings in very few reference items. Most reference
items selected for the collection are firm ordered by Taylor Library Reference and are identified through publishers catalogues, pre-publication announcements, faculty recommendations and review journals. Journals regularly scanned include, *Journal of Academic Librarianship, RQ, Reference Services Review* and *College and Research Libraries*.

**Decisions to order a title for reference are based on:**

- relevance to research or to curriculum
- scope and depth of coverage
- recommendations of reviews
- recommendations by faculty members
- reputation of author or publisher
- currency
- format
- language
- price
- availability of the information on the Internet
- intended length of use.

**Selection criteria for electronic sources include:**

- means of access
- anticipated use
- cost
- update frequency
- permanence of access including clear financial stability of the provider
- vendor provided domain restricted access
- site licencing which allows for unlimited simultaneous use of adequate number of simultaneous connections
- web-based graphic interface which does not require distribution of client software to a user’s desk top are selected with significant input from the Library Systems Department
- ease of use
- sophisticated search capabilities (boolean functionality, positional operators, field specific searching
- vendor responsiveness to problem resolution and commitment to ongoing development
- frequent updating
- inclusion of graphics, full text etc.

**Description of the existing types of resources included in the reference collection.** Resources are chosen in the format that will be most useful to the patrons, most up to date and affordable.

1. Almanacs and yearbooks
2. Atlases and Gazetteers - very limited collection
3. Biographical sources for the sciences including national, regional, professional and occupational
4. Diagnostic manuals
5. Encyclopedia: general and specialised
6. Guides to the literature and selection aids
7. Handbooks, data books, fact books and dictionaries: in fields of knowledge pertinent to the faculties served. Selected foreign language dictionaries are included as well as the best available English dictionaries, thesauri and synonym finders at the university level
8. Indexes and abstracting services in all areas of science, technology and medicine - networked electronic access preferred
9. Mathematical functions and formulae
10. Statistical compendia pertaining to science, technology or medicine
11. Spectra - various types
12. Taxonomic guides
13. Style manuals
14. Union lists
15. Verification tools such as abbreviation lists, serial sources
16. Subject bibliographies are not collected
17. Dissertation sources - not collected - networked

Exclusions

Items which fall into the area of general reference such as national bibliographies, general biographical dictionaries, foreign language dictionaries etc. are held in The D.B.Weldon Library. Field guides are included in the general collection.

Duplication

Some materials in the Taylor Library reference collection are duplicated at other libraries across campus in order to provide an adequate reference service at each site