



Curtin University

CURTIN UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

# COLLECTION PRINCIPLES



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## Introduction

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Curtin University is an international university with over 38,000 full time equivalent students and 3,200 staff.<sup>1</sup> Courses are delivered at locations in Australia and overseas, as well as through international partner institutions. The majority of Curtin's courses are also available through online delivery.

The University Library is the primary provider of scholarly information resources for the Curtin community and has responsibility for the physical collections at the Robertson Library, WA School of Mines Kalgoorlie Library, Curtin Graduate School of Business Library and the John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library, as well as for delivering electronic resources to all Curtin clients regardless of location.

Physical collections at Curtin's other campuses and at Curtin partner institutions are developed independently of the University Library.

This document provides the Curtin University community with an overview of the principles that are used in developing and maintaining the Library collection.

The University Library:

- Supports learning and teaching through the provision of appropriate learning resources
- Supports the University's strategic directions in research by facilitating access to published and unpublished research materials
- Reflects the requirements of Library clients through a process of formal and informal client consultation
- Ensures that resources are available in the most appropriate format for use by clients.

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## The Collection

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The Library collection has been developed since the foundation of the Western Australian Institute of Technology in 1966.

In December 2015 the Collection consisted of approximately:

- 570,000 print books
- 320,000 ebooks
- 15,000 audio-visual items
- 12,000 streamed videos
- 150,000 journal subscriptions
- 600 electronic databases
- 42,000 institutional repository records (including Curtin theses)
- 784 linear metres of archival material

The primary purpose of the Library collection is to support the University's learning, teaching and research. Its current subject content thus reflects both present and past teaching and research interests.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Curtin University Statistics: <http://planning.curtin.edu.au/stats/>

In particular, the Library collects resources to support Curtin University's areas of research focus:

- Minerals and Energy
- ICT and Emerging Technologies
- Health
- Sustainable Development.

### **Special Collections**

The Library holds discrete collections of archival and published resources relating to specific research projects or initiatives at Curtin University. In particular, the John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library contains a significant collection of primary records, in various formats, that focus on the life and times of John Curtin. The Library adds value to these Special Collections by providing access to their resources through indexing, cataloguing, digitisation and by making selected content freely available online.

The Library's Special Collections currently comprise:

- **Carmen Lawrence Collection**  
Papers of former Western Australian Premier Carmen Lawrence
- **Elizabeth Jolley Research Collection**  
Online bibliography listing works by and about Western Australian novelist Elizabeth Jolley
- **Geoff Gallop Collection**  
Papers of former Western Australian Premier Geoff Gallop
- **Hazel Hawke Collection**  
Papers of Hazel Hawke, wife of former Australian Prime Minister Bob Hawke
- **John Curtin Prime Ministerial Archive**  
Archival and published documents relating to the life and times of John Curtin, Prime Minister of Australia 1941-45
- **Jules Black Sexology Collection**  
Significant collection of published works on sexology
- **Project Endeavour: John Sanders' Triple Circumnavigation of the World Collection**  
Documents relating to Jon Sanders' voyage on the yacht Parry Endeavour, 1986-88
- **Western Australian Folklore Collection**  
Archive of the Western Australian folklore tradition
- **Women's Health Collection**  
Books and pamphlets focussing on issues in women's health

## **Teaching Resources**

The Library maintains a specialised collection of teaching resources designed for classroom use from early childhood education through to secondary school. This collection comprises fiction and non-fiction books, big books, kits, posters, puzzles, games, puppets and audio-visual material, and is intended to support the study of the current Western Australian educational curriculum and also its practical application during professional experience placements.

## **Publications by Curtin Authors**

The Library actively collects books published by staff during their employment at Curtin. Staff members are encouraged to notify the Library of any eligible publications.

The Library also maintains Curtin University's institutional repository, espace – an open access digital collection containing the research output of Curtin staff and students. This includes digital theses, journal articles, conference papers, books, book chapters and other types of research output.

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## **Access to the Collection**

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The Library makes the Collection available to the University community by providing electronic access to resources and by placing physical collections on open shelving.

Access to the Library's electronic resources is normally restricted to current Curtin students and staff. Some of these resources may also be available to Curtin alumni and other client groups. Access for Curtin clients is available regardless of their location.

Anyone may access the Library's physical collections on site. Members of the public may also use selected electronic resources on site after registration with the Library. Eligible Library clients can borrow and/or request most physical items in the Collection at any Library location.

The Library uses a postal service to provide access to physical resources for eligible off-campus staff and postgraduate students, and clients with special needs.

Some items or collections are not placed on open shelving, owing to their fragile nature or vulnerability to theft or damage. These items are held at the John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library and can be retrieved on request. Low use items or items duplicated in electronic format may be transferred to the Library's Offsite Store. Items in Store may be retrieved on request.

Recognising the interdisciplinary nature of research and scholarship, in organising the physical collections the Library adopts an integrated approach so far as content is concerned, and does not create separate sub-collections for individual discipline groups. For reasons of practicality, separate shelving is used for specific formats of material (e.g. audio-visual material, large books).

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## **Responsibility for Selection**

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Library staff have primary responsibility for selecting resources to support learning, teaching and research at Curtin.

All Library clients and all Library staff are able to recommend the purchase of relevant scholarly resources.

Academic staff are encouraged to be involved in the selection of library resources, and to recommend those resources needed to support their research, and study units for which they are responsible.

Academic staff who are initiating new teaching developments or embarking on new areas of research are also strongly encouraged to meet with their Faculty Librarian to discuss the availability of relevant resources and ways in which the Library can provide support.

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## **Criteria for Selection**

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The following criteria may be used by the Library to evaluate and prioritise recommendations:

- Relevance to the existing or anticipated needs of the University's learning, teaching and research
- Nature and extent of the existing collection within a subject area
- Currency
- Quality
- Price
- Format
- Language
- Actual or expected demand
- Ongoing financial commitment and maintenance
- Availability of access via alternative methods (e.g. document delivery).

There are additional considerations in relation to the selection of electronic resources including:

- Access methods including authentication issues
- Licensing obligations
- Options for perpetual access and/or archival rights
- Reliability of electronic platforms
- Platform fees
- Higher cost relative to print equivalent
- Equity of access to all clients.

Library staff regularly consult with teaching and research staff across the University to ensure that the collection develops to meet the needs of the University community.

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## Preference for Electronic Resources

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In order to provide the broadest and most equitable access to the Library collection for Curtin students and staff, the Library will acquire resources in electronic format whenever possible.

In making this commitment, the Library is, however, governed by a number of factors that mean it may not be possible or appropriate to provide resources electronically in all circumstances. In these cases the Library may choose to acquire resources in physical format.

- *Availability.* Some resources are not currently available for purchase in electronic format.
- *Licensing.* Some electronic resources cannot be licensed for use in a shared university context.
- *Technical Infrastructure.* Some electronic resources are not available in a technical format which allows us to share them in a networked environment to all Curtin clients.
- *Price.* In some cases the pricing of electronic resources may be prohibitively expensive or disproportionate to anticipated use.
- *Suitability.* In some cases electronic versions of resources may not meet the needs of clients as effectively as the physical equivalents (e.g. if they contain high resolution graphics or other material not included in the electronic version).
- *Continuity of Access.* Access to some resources through electronic indexing services (aggregators) is subject to considerable fluctuation depending on the service providers' agreements with publishers. Where these resources are critical to Curtin learning, teaching or research the Library may choose to purchase physical as well as electronic formats.

### Journals

Although most of the Library's journals are available electronically, around 150 titles continue to be subscribed to in print (December 2015). The Library is progressively setting up electronic access to these remaining print titles where possible and funds allow.

### Books

New books for the collection are purchased in electronic format whenever possible. When recommending books Library clients are requested to specify if there are particular reasons why electronic format is not appropriate for the anticipated use. Required student reading may be purchased in both print and electronic format (if available).

### Video

The Library acquires streamed video both in subject based packages and as individual titles.

As a format, streamed video is relatively new, and the number of titles available is comparatively low. Individual streamed videos are normally only available on an annual subscription basis, and are thus relatively expensive. At present these are generally acquired (if available) only where usage is expected to be high or to support the specific needs of remote students, and streamed video subscriptions are closely monitored to ensure best return on investment. To ensure continuous access to content, and also because at present some clients may experience technical difficulties in accessing streamed video, if available, DVD versions are normally purchased in addition to individual titles in streamed video format.

The Library does not collect off-air recordings, though it does aim to provide access to broadcast content through subscribed services.

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## **Budget**

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The Library's acquisitions budget is determined as part of the University's annual budget process. For 2016 the University allocated \$10,125,793 for the purchase of library resources.

In allocating the acquisitions budget the Library gives priority to:

- Ongoing commitments and subscriptions
- Support for learning and teaching, and the acquisition of textbooks and recommended readings for all units taught at the University
- Resources that support the current research priorities of the University.

The Library normally allocates no more than eighty-five per cent of the acquisitions budget to ongoing commitments and subscriptions. The remainder is allocated to one-off purchases.

As a large proportion of expenditure is in foreign currency the Library works with University Financial Services to ensure that appropriate hedging mechanisms are in place to manage the risk of currency fluctuation.

In terms of expenditure on information resources Curtin falls in the top 30% relative to the other Australian and New Zealand university libraries. Curtin ranked 14th out of 49 institutions in 2014.

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## **Subscriptions**

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In allocating the subscriptions budget, priority is given to maintaining existing subscriptions.

The Library may subscribe to:

- Electronic journals
- Print journals
- Indexing and full-text databases
- Ebook and videostreaming items or collections
- Electronic reference resources.

Any request for a new subscription will be considered carefully because of the ongoing financial commitment, and because increases in subscription costs often exceed the annual inflation rate.

In some circumstances it may be necessary to cancel existing subscriptions. These circumstances may include:

- A substantial increase in subscription costs
- Budget constraints
- Changing needs of teaching and research staff in the University
- Changes in licensing agreements.

In considering cancellations, the Library will consult with stakeholders as appropriate.

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## **Multiple Copies**

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Wherever possible, the Library will provide electronic access for items in high demand. It should be noted, however, that textbooks are often unavailable in electronic format for Library use. If textbooks (essential readings) are available in both print and electronic versions, then both formats will normally be provided.

If a unit is taught at multiple locations (e.g. Bentley Campus and Kalgoorlie Campus) the textbooks (essential readings) and recommended readings for that unit will be available at each location.

The formula the Library follows for purchasing print textbooks is that for each unit taught, the Library will provide in the first instance:

- One copy of a textbook on the essential reading list for every thirty students, to a maximum of seven copies.
- One copy of each book on the recommended reading list for every thirty students to a maximum of five copies.

In addition, the Library will monitor usage, recalls and requests, and if required provide additional copies of high demand items. When purchasing new editions of high demand items the Library will take into account usage and number of copies of the earlier editions when determining how many copies to buy.

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## **Gratis Resources**

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### **Donations**

While the Library's collections are increasingly electronic, we recognise the benefit of donations of material that would otherwise be unavailable in enriching our collections to support the learning, teaching and research of the University.

Library staff will accept donations for inclusion in the collection on the basis of relevance to the University's teaching and research programs and in accordance with the Library's criteria for selection. Accepted donations will usually be incorporated into the Library's collection in the appropriate location.

Requests for special arrangements for donations (such as locating the donated items somewhere other than the Main Collection) will be considered and are subject to approval by the University Librarian.



The Library is a participating institution of the Cultural Gifts Program sponsored by the Ministry for the Arts.

The Library reserves the right to decline or dispose of donations.

### **Freely available online resources**

Library staff may select freely available, quality online resources for inclusion in the Library Catalogue. These are included on the basis of relevance to the University's learning, teaching and research programs and in accordance with the Library's criteria for selection.

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## **Resources Not Available in the Library Collection**

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The Library aims to hold a collection adequate to support undergraduate learning and teaching across the University. In order to support research, if resources cannot be purchased quickly for the Collection, the Library also meets the cost of supplying items through interlibrary loan and document delivery for staff and postgraduate students.

In addition, the Library has reciprocal borrowing arrangements for students and staff with other academic institutions in Australia and New Zealand.

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## **Collection Maintenance**

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### **Collection Valuation**

Regular valuations of the Library collections are conducted in compliance with the University's risk management requirements.

### **Preservation**

The Library will maintain the physical collection in good condition, with appropriate processes for replacement, binding and repair.

The Library will maintain reliable, ongoing access to electronic resources, by anticipating and planning for technological change.

### **Replacement**

If a copy of an item has been lost or has been damaged beyond repair, it may be replaced either electronically or in physical format. The following factors are used by the Library to prioritise replacements:

- Level of use by Library clients
- Availability of another copy to purchase
- Availability of access via alternative methods (e.g. document delivery)
- The option of scanning and adding to our collection (for out of print items).

### **Deselection and Storage**

Library staff are responsible for decisions on deselection and storage, and will consult with academic staff as appropriate.

The Library regularly withdraws multiple copies of items if these are no longer required. As a guiding principle, however, the Library will retain access to at least one copy, either print or electronic, of all significant resources catalogued into the

collection. The last copy may be deselected if the content and/or format are deemed to be inappropriate for the learning, teaching and research needs of the University.

In individual instances, decisions about the retention of print copies where there is an electronic equivalent will be based on considerations such as:

- Frequency of use
- Guaranteed access to an archived electronic copy which is the equivalent to print in terms of legibility, content and quality of graphic images
- Maintenance of equity of access.

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## **Document Review**

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The Collection Principles document is reviewed annually by the Manager, Collections.

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