

## Serials Collection Management Policies & Procedures

NOTE: This policy will be reviewed and updated during calendar year 2020. There may be elements of this policy that are out of date and not current practice. If you have questions, please contact [Rebecca Lubas](#).

The Serials Unit manages the journals, newspapers, magazines and other periodicals that support Central's curricular needs and compliment the general monograph and reference collections. Most functions of serials collection management are housed in this unit from acquisition to shelving to withdrawal, excluding cataloging. Currently, the Serials Unit consists of one librarian and three para-professional staff members with a contingent of student workers assisting in all aspects of the workflow. Serials Unit employees provide patrons with assistance in using the serials collection and maintain the Periodicals Help Desk. Procedures for employees working this desk are included in the Periodicals Help Desk Handbook. The Handbook is updated on a quarterly basis.

The Serials Librarian is responsible for decision and policymaking concerning the serials collections. Collaborative development of these policies with the Library Unit Heads, Collection Development & Management Committee, and Library Council is expected.

The policies covered in this document are:

- Collection Development
- Circulation
- Current Holdings
- Long-term Holdings
- Deselection
- Canceled Titles – Issues Received After Cancel Date
- Policy Revision

### Collection Development

**Journals and Magazines:** The library normally acquires journals and other periodicals through subscription, but can also acquire volumes through donation. It is the intent to continue most subscriptions indefinitely. All formats, including print, non-print, and electronic, will be considered for purchase and/or access by CWU Libraries. Accompanying national trends, the libraries continue to transition journals to an electronic format when feasible. The main factors considered in selecting journals are the intellectual content and support for CWU curriculum, the inclusion of the title in indexing and abstracting services, the strength of demand, cost, and (in the case of donations) the lack of availability elsewhere.

Cost is a major influencing factor in selecting or maintaining subscriptions. The selection of serials requires a continuing commitment to the original cost of the title plus inflation over time, as well as the cost of maintenance, equipment, and storage space. The rapidly expanding and changing serials market requires that care be exercised in the purchase of journal titles for the collection. Due to limited funding, selection or retention consideration may be denied for titles that have a history of excessive annual subscription cost increases. Subscriptions may also be denied or discontinued when the Library does not receive funds to compensate for subscription cost increases. In some cases, it may be appropriate to occasionally purchase electronic access or document delivery services for articles within particular serials instead of obtaining them through subscription.

**Newspapers:** Selection priorities and criteria are similar to those outlined for journals and magazines, but limited funds and lack of space dictate an even more selective approach. There will be no emphasis on creating a comprehensive collection. The library will attempt to provide selected newspapers with both international and national news coverage. Some local and Washington State newspapers are obtained, as well as important national and major U.S. city newspapers. Preference is given to newspapers with a wide state or national audience and influence.

Brooks Library subscribes to a small selection of foreign newspapers, primarily to support our Foreign Language courses, International Studies programs and visiting foreign students. The library does not have the funds available to acquire newspapers from a wide variety of foreign countries. Subscription to electronic newspapers will be provided when funds permit, or when money is made available from the cancellation of paper copy subscriptions. A growing number of newspapers are providing free access to selected articles over the Internet. These include some foreign newspapers as well.

Several newspapers that are felt to have permanent research value for Central students and faculty will be collected in microform, unless an electronic version is archived on the Internet. Others may be acquired only for current awareness purposes.

**Microforms:** Microformats collected by Brooks Library include microfiche, microfilm, and micro-cards. Microforms may be selected not only for purposes of preservation and saving space, but also because a title or collection may not be available in any other format. Many newspaper backfiles are purchased on microfilm, as well as large series of primary, historical source materials.

Micro-cards are no longer acquired. Silver halide is generally preferred for microfiche and microfilm. The library maintains and supports equipment that will allow users to both view and make copies of all microformats.

**Electronic Formats:** Electronic resources can be considered as those that require computer access. CWU Libraries subscribe to various electronic products and recognize the importance of these in support of learning, teaching and research at the university. Primarily, these products are full text databases and indexes, but our subscriptions also include statistical resources, music collections and streaming video. The basic criterion for the selection of any electronic resource is: relevance to the curriculum, improvement of the overall library collection and/or enhancement of the patrons' access to information. Electronic resources stored on physical forms such as CD-ROMs are considered carefully, since supporting equipment must also be purchased and maintained.

Essential titles are sought for ownership, and not just access. For this reason, CWU Libraries do not rely on aggregator databases to supply essential titles, but instead subscribe through electronic journal packages or individual subscriptions. To ensure our long term holding of these titles, resources are purchased in both print and online format if the license agreement does not allow for manageable methods of perpetual access to the full content purchased over time. Additionally, a number of free resources that are available on the World Wide Web are included in our online catalog and from our library website as a means of highlighting their availability for our patrons.

**Gifts:** Donations or gift subscriptions of periodicals will not be accepted unless they comply with regular selection criteria. The Gift Policy and Procedures form will be sent to the entity providing the gift (if known) for return signature and sent to the Library Administrative Offices for official tracking.

## Circulation

As a rule, neither current issues nor bound volumes circulate outside the libraries. Exceptions include special permission given to an instructor or for ILL purposes, upon approval of the Serials & Electronic Resources Librarian, or library staff at the Des Moines and Lynnwood Centers.

Current titles with heavy circulation or propensity to disappear are designated "red box" items and kept behind the Serials Help Desk in Brooks Library. These issues are circulated on a two-hour checkout within the building.

## Current Holdings

The length of time current issues of a title are kept before being bound, replaced by microfilm, or withdrawn is determined on a title-by-title basis with some general guidelines. When a department orders a new title, the length of time the library keeps a title is determined by the Serials & Electronic Resources Librarian and the library staff at the Lynnwood and Des Moines Centers.

Generally, current holdings are based on frequency, physical size, and "shelf life" of content. A weekly news magazine, for instance, will have a short holdings period (three to six months) due to the number of issues that will accumulate in that period and the relatively short shelf-life of its content. Titles replaced with microfilm are kept in

current status until the microfilm covering that time period is received.

Standard holdings periods are:

Three months

Six months

One Year

Three Years

Until Microfilm Arrives

Other holdings periods may be established for individual titles with characteristics that make the standard holdings periods inconvenient.

## Long-Term Holdings

Current print issues are eventually replaced with microfilm, bound, or withdrawn. Every attempt is made to not duplicate a title in multiple formats for long-term holding. For titles subscribed to in online format that do not allow perpetual access after cancelation, print copies are also subscribed to and retained in the Brooks Library's holdings.

Physical characteristics are the most important criteria for long-term storage format decisions. Some titles are larger than standard binding can allow, or have graphics that do not reproduce well on film (art titles) or contain graphs and formulas or other content not available in the electronic form (science and math titles, for example).

## Deselection

Current journal subscriptions are regularly evaluated for their relevancy and usefulness. Also, occasionally, space must be found for the ever-expanding collection. This can include bound volumes, either in general circulation or in storage, as well as the short shelf-life issues in our collection that are not selected for retention within our permanent holdings. Withdrawal of current issues occurs primarily due to content with a short shelf life. Newsletters, bulletins, and other such publications fall into this category. Electronic availability has recently become a factor in the withdrawal of current issues and is selected after the actual text content in the electronic version is verified as sufficient and perpetual access to the years of content to which we subscribed is offered by the publisher.

The following guidelines are used to determine if subscriptions should be canceled or if bound volumes are to be weeded from the collection:

**General Subscription Retention Guidelines:** In general, the print copy is retained and bound for those titles where the publisher does not offer perpetual access, where the print version is more complete than the online version, or where the print contains graphs or images in a better way than the online version. Titles that are in our JSTOR collections are retained only until the issue is available in JSTOR, or is listed in the 2009 Ithaka Weeding Guidelines, entitled: "What to Withdraw? Print Collections Management in the Wake of Digitization" as a title that may be safely removed from a library's holdings without fear that no one within the library community is collecting it.

However, CWU Libraries do subscribe to titles and specific formats that are not retained in the permanent collection. Determination of how long a title will be retained is the decision of the Serials & Electronic Resources Librarian, with consultation of library faculty and affected Academic Departments when required.

For example, newspapers that are retained in our holdings are kept in print form until microfilm arrives. Newspapers that are not retained in our holdings, and for which we are not procuring a microfilm version, are kept from one month to a year, depending on frequency and use for each title. Trade publications, catalogs or other materials that come as supplements to a subscription may also only be kept for one to five years, depending on how quickly the information seems to become outdated. Other serials are kept until the yearbook or hardbound copy arrives, or a new edition becomes available.

When a database is chosen for deselection, the Serials & Electronic Resource Librarian complies with cancellation procedures stated in the subscription license and notifies the CWU Office of Business Services & Contracts, the

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database vendor and/or the E-Resources Program Manager at Orbis Cascade (or other consortium). The Serials & Electronic Resource Librarian removes access to the database throughout the general website, informs the Cataloging for removal from the online catalog, and requests the Library Liaisons to remove the resource from their Research Guides.

When a title is chosen for deselection or regularly scheduled removal, it is processed through cataloging to remove it from the collection or sent to CWU Departments who have requested a need for the materials following our use of them (ex: foreign newspapers sent to the Foreign Languages Department). Materials not sent to other CWU Departments are then discarded by being sent to CWU Surplus Stores for official removal under State policy or made available to other libraries for their collections.

## Journal Deselection

Deselection of journals involves careful, regular evaluation of our current subscriptions to both print and electronic journal holdings. It also involves evaluation of our bound volumes of back issues for potential placement in storage or deselection, as well as scheduled removal of periodicals that are no longer required for inclusion within the permanent collection. The evaluation process includes communication with CWU faculty and library staff, as well as a title-by-title study of cost per use and other factors explained below.

**Timing:** Subscription payments are a commitment of funds for material to be published and supplied over time. Subscription cycles may vary, but the most common is a calendar year commitment beginning in January. In general, publishers and subscription agents each require at least eight weeks in advance of the beginning of the new subscription period to process renewal orders and cancellation requests. Brooks Library's practice is to make use of subscription agencies and the Orbis Cascade Alliance E-Resource Project Manager as intermediaries between the Library and the publishers and vendors of these materials to the fullest extent possible. The Serials & Electronic Resources Librarian needs adequate time to prepare instructions to our agents and the OCA Project Manager regarding cancellations. Typically, subscription agencies prefer to receive all instructions no later than the end of September. The OCA consortium renewals of various databases occur throughout the year. Once the cancellation deadline has passed it is unlikely that cancellation will take effect before the end of the next renewal period. For this reason, cancellation decisions are generally made early in each fiscal year, generally to be finalized by the beginning of September, although budget issues may create a need for mid-year subscription changes.

**Faculty Participation:** It is important for Library Liaisons to work with their faculty and the Serials & Electronic Resources Librarian to regularly review the current subscriptions to periodicals. This continuous review process is necessary to ensure the balance between monograph and periodical expenditures and to provide for subscription renewal. Title lists corresponding with each discipline will be sent on a frequent basis to respective departments for their feedback on or ranking of each title. It is through cancelling less important or low use material that new resources can be funded.

**Maintaining Print Holdings:** Our practice will be to remain sensitive to the needs of different disciplines while preferring electronic delivery of journals and discontinuing the subscription to print duplicate copies, wherever feasible. However, print copies of an electronic title may be maintained under certain conditions, such as where journal content cannot be accurately reproduced by standard printing processes, if electronic versions are incomplete, or the electronic version is technologically or financially unfeasible. Print + Online subscriptions should also be continued if the publisher does not offer perpetual access or if the mode of access requires storage and maintenance (archiving) on a library server.

## Journal Deselection Criteria

The General Deselection Policy & Guidelines should be consulted to evaluate titles recommended for cancellation. In addition, the Serials & Electronic Resources Librarian may consider the following:

**Cost and use:** On a biennial basis, spreadsheets showing use and cost of individual titles for the last. The spreadsheets will be analyzed for high cost per use titles, by seeking answers to the following questions:

- 1) What is the cost per use, both in-house and ILL, for the title?
- 2) Is the cost of the title high relative to other journals in the collection?

3) Is the use of the journal low relative to other journals in the collection?

**Support of Programs at CWU:** High cost per use titles will be further evaluated in terms of CWU faculty and library staff feedback to the following questions:

- 4) Is the title highly specialized or does it support a broad range of University research and educational activities?
- 5) Is the title of a multi-disciplinary nature? If so, have all academic departments concerned been consulted?
- 6) If part of a package, does the publisher permit cancelling individual titles in the package?
- 7) Is the publication up to date or is it delayed? Is it delayed more than a year?
- 8) When cancelling online access to a title does the license permit permanent archival access? If so, how is this access provided? Must we take possession of the files from the publisher? Are they available from a third party?

#### **General issues of quality, access and coverage:**

- 9) Is the title named on a recognized resource for "core" journals in that field of study? If so, preference may be given to retaining the title.
- 10) Is retaining a print subscription a prerequisite for receiving online access?
- 11) Is the title available more economically as part of a consortia package?
- 12) Is the title indexed in a database to which the Library subscribes?

While these factors all play a role in deselection decisions, a title's cost per use and essential usefulness to a department's curriculum usually weighs more heavily than other factors.

## **Database Deselection**

Deselection of databases involves careful, regular evaluation of our current subscriptions to electronic individual journal titles, electronic journal packages, databases containing full content from aggregated publishers (text, statistics, video, images, and music), as well as abstract & index databases. The evaluation process includes communication with CWU faculty and library staff, as well as a comprehensive study of cost per use and other factors explained below.

**Timing:** Subscription payments are a commitment of funds for material to be published and supplied over time. Subscription cycles vary, but the most common is a calendar year commitment with licensing covering one or multiple years. For each subscription, vendors and consortium personnel require approximately eight weeks in advance of the beginning of the new subscription period to process renewal orders and cancellation requests. License terms may also stipulate a specific date for notification of cancellation. Brooks Library's practice is to make use of the Orbis Cascade Alliance E-Resource Project Manager as an intermediary between the Library and the publishers or vendors of these materials to the fullest extent possible. The Library needs adequate time to prepare cancellation deadline has passed it is unlikely that cancellation will take effect before the end of the next renewal period. For this reason, cancellation decisions are generally made early in each fiscal year, generally to be finalized by the beginning of September, although budget issues may create a need for mid-year subscription changes. The Cooperative Library Program databases, funded mainly through state funds and purchased as a group with five other Washington State academic libraries, undergo a formal Request for Proposal process every three years and will be analyzed separately from this process.

**Faculty Participation:** It is important for Library Liaisons to work with their faculty and the Serials & Electronic Resources Librarian to regularly review the current subscriptions. Review is necessary to ensure a balance between monograph, serial and database expenditures that best supports the instruction and research efforts of the entire CWU community. Along with budgetary balance, holistic consideration of long-term goals is also necessary to promote stability in subscription renewal of serials and electronic resources. For this reason, review should be held once every four years, preferably following a review of serials. Cost per use information at the database level will be sent to faculty in appropriate disciplines for their feedback on or ranking of each database. This feedback will be collated and taken into consideration for reviewing the cancellation of a database.

## **Database Deselection Criteria**

The General De-selection Policy & Guidelines should be consulted to evaluate individual titles recommended for cancellation. In addition, the Serials & Electronic Resources Librarian may consider the following:

**Cost and use:** Every four years, spreadsheets showing cost and use at the database level for the previous three years will be created. The spreadsheets will be analyzed for high cost per use titles, by seeking answers to the following questions:

- 1) Is the cost of the title high relative to use of other databases to which CWU subscribes?
- 2) Is the use of the database low relative to other databases in the collection?
- 3) High cost per use titles will be further evaluated in terms of CWU faculty and library staff feedback to the following questions.

Support of programs at CWU:

- 4) Is the database highly specialized or does it support a broad range of University research and instruction activities?
- 5) Is the database still supplying quality content useful to current curriculum needs?

General issues of quality, access and coverage:

- 6) Is retaining a print subscription a prerequisite for receiving online access or vice versa? (ex: Westlaw database results in discounts toward monographic series by West publishing.)
- 7) Is the database considered a major source of content we offer to a discipline?
- 8) Is the database considered essential by a discipline and/or necessary for accreditation?

While these factors all play a role in deselection decisions, a title's cost per use and essential usefulness to a department's curriculum usually weighs more heavily than other factors.

## **Canceled Titles – Issues Received After Cancel Date**

Because of individual titles' unique frequencies and characteristics, only general guidelines for continued receipt of issues can be made. For example, the following procedure should be applied to titles that have been canceled. In any situation, at any time, if it is clear that no additional volumes will be received, close down the title and begin the Last Time Bind procedures, as documented in the Bindery Policy.

The basic guideline will be to wait long enough for an additional volume to be accumulated. When and if an additional volume has accumulated, bind it and close the title down. Volumes received beyond this point will be sent to Ebsco's Missing Copy Bank or Absolute Backorder Service. If additional volumes have been received not amounting to a complete volume, the decision will be made on a title-by-title basis to try to fill out the volume or not by the Serials & Electronic Resources Librarian.

## **Policy Revision**

The policies outlined in this document are intended to be reviewed often, annually if possible. Suggested changes should be proposed to at least one of the committees mentioned above. All efforts will be made to set policies that provide the widest reasonable access to the highest quality collection the CWU Libraries can assemble.

**Source URL:** <http://www.lib.cwu.edu/Serials-Collection-Management-Policies-Procedures>