

Collection Policy @ Woodruff Health Sciences Center Library

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Overview and Purpose

The collections of the Woodruff Health Sciences Center (WHSC) Library support the mission of the Library, which is “to optimize research, education, and patient care processes with reliable and sustainable access to data and information.” The Library provides access to authoritative information resources including books, journals, databases, indexing/abstracting tools, and reference sources, that reflect the current state of knowledge and support teaching, research, and clinical practice at Emory University.

This policy provides a framework for building a balanced collection, ensures currency and relevancy of the collection, provides a rationale for selection decisions, and provides a basis for long-term planning. As a “living document” this policy must remain flexible to adapt to changes in publishing trends, budgeting, new research initiatives and technologies, and an increasing emphasis on interdisciplinary research. The Emory Libraries, including the WHSC Library, adhere to a set of [Best Practices](#) that guide our collection development.

Emory is recognized as one of the nation's leading research universities, with areas of strength including Alzheimer’s disease and brain health, infectious diseases, cancer (Winship Cancer Center), transplantation, cardiology, HIV treatment and vaccines, global health, ophthalmology, orthopedics, and the neurosciences. This collection development policy builds upon these existing strengths.

Priority is placed on obtaining the most current record of advances in knowledge. Scholarly, peer-reviewed, English language journals, in electronic format, are the primary source of information acquired. With a few exceptions, electronic resources are licensed for Emory University and can be accessed on-campus and remotely. In fiscal year 2023, approximately 99% of the library’s collection budget supported electronic resources, with about 74% of the budget allocated to electronic journals.

The selection of library materials is an ongoing process and is the shared responsibility of the Head of Collection Services, the Library Director and Informationists, who are responsible for selecting and assessing resources in defined subject areas. Faculty participation in the selection process is encouraged and their recommendations are carefully considered.

Brief History

The WHSC Library was established in 1923 as the A.W. Calhoun Medical Library through a \$10,000 gift from F. Phinizy Calhoun, and the official opening was January 1, 1924. The Library initially supported the work of students and faculty at the Emory University School of Medicine. Beginning in 1944, the Library collected materials to support the Emory University School of Dentistry; since the school's closure in 1987, the Library now retains only materials related to the history of that institution. The Library's support for programs at the school of Nursing began early in the 20th century, as the programs progressed from a training program to a four-year degree, to a Bachelor of Science in Nursing in 1952, Master's Degree in 1954, and then a PhD in Nursing in 1999.

Clientele

The primary audience for the WHSC Library's collections includes the students, faculty, and staff of the following schools/programs.

The School of Medicine

In addition to the MD program, the School of Medicine also offers a variety of dual degree programs (MD/PhD, MD/MPH, MD/MA in bioethics, MMSC/MBA) in collaboration with the Graduate Division of Biological and Biomedical Sciences, The Rollins School of Public Health, the Emory Business School and the Emory University Laney Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. MD/PhD students also participate in a joint program in Biomedical Engineering with the Georgia Institute of Technology. The school is home to the Physician Assistant (PA) program and offers a DPT (Doctor of Physical Therapy). Centers associated with the School of Medicine include The Atlanta Clinical & Translational Science Institute, The Emory Vaccine Center, and The Transplant Center. See a listing of Emory Research Centers [here](#).

The School of Nursing

The School of Nursing offers a Bachelor of Science in Nursing, Master of Science in Nursing, a Doctor of Nursing Practice, a PhD in Nursing, BSN, and DNP distance education programs, as well as a dual master's degree with the Rollins School of Public Health and a dual master's degree in bioethics with the Laney Graduate School. The master's programs focus on advanced practice skills in midwifery, emergency nursing, public health, acute care, and doctoral programs focus on conducting clinical research, community-based participatory research with vulnerable populations, integrative treatment systems for cancer patients, health policy and ethics. The School of Nursing is also home to The Lillian Carter Center for Global Health & Social Responsibility.

The School of Public Health

The School of Public Health's degree programs include a Master of Public Health, as well as PhDs in Behavioral Sciences and Health Education, Biostatistics, Epidemiology, Environmental Health Sciences, Health Services Research and Health Policy, and Nutrition and Health Sciences. A leader in interdisciplinary studies, the school grants eleven dual degrees with medicine, nursing, physical therapy, the physician assistant program, business, theology, law, the Graduate Division of Biology and Biomedical Sciences, and the Laney Graduate School. A distance-based master's program, the Executive MPH, allows professionals to pursue a degree while they are employed. The Rollins School of Public Health is also home to several centers, including the Center for AIDS Research at Emory (CFAR), the Center for Public Health Preparedness and Research, and the Center for Global Safe Water. Other centers associated with the School of Public Health can be found [here](#).

The Graduate Division of Biology and Biomedical Sciences (GDBBS)

The Division grants degrees in eight interdisciplinary PhD programs: Biochemistry, Cell & Developmental Biology, Cancer Biology, Genetics and Molecular Biology, Immunology and Molecular Pathogenesis, Microbiology and Molecular Genetics, Molecular and Systems Pharmacology, Neuroscience, Population Biology, Ecology and Evolution.

The Emory National Primate Research Center

The oldest of seven National Primate Research centers funded by the National Institutes of Health, the Emory National Primate Research Center conducts essential basic science and translational research to advance scientific understanding and to improve the health and well-being of humans and nonhuman primates. Key research areas include vaccine development, transplant medicine, neurodegenerative diseases and evolutionary links between biology and behavior.

Emory Winship Cancer Institute

The Institute is Georgia's first and only Comprehensive Cancer Center designated by the National Cancer Institute. It serves as a coordinating center for cancer research, education and care throughout Emory, with faculty from the schools of medicine, public health, nursing and Emory College. Winship has the largest unit in Georgia for phase 1 clinical trials, and physicians provide care at Emory Healthcare facilities.

Emory Healthcare

The WHSC Library supports four clinical branch libraries at Emory University Hospital, Emory University Hospital Midtown, Grady Hospital, and Emory Saint Joseph's Hospital, as well as Emory Healthcare clinicians at The Emory Clinic, Emory University Hospital, Emory Rehabilitation Hospital, Emory University Hospital Midtown, Emory University Orthopedics & Spine Hospital, Emory University Hospital at Wesley Woods, Emory Saint Joseph's Hospital, and Emory Johns Creek Hospital. In fiscal year 2022 Emory Healthcare's annual hospital admissions

were 102,564 and outpatient visits were 5.95 million. A list of centers, programs, and services offered by Emory Healthcare can be found [here](#).

Diversity Statement

The Libraries at Emory University, including the Woodruff Health Sciences Center Library, commit to the building, maintenance, and assessment of collections that align with the teaching and research needs of Emory. These collections should represent and respect the diverse and multiple experiences of our ever-changing communities, as expressed in the [ALA Cultural Competency Standards \(Standard 4\)](#). As noted in *Diverse Collections: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights*, “a diverse collection should contain content by and about a wide array of people and cultures to authentically reflect a variety of ideas, information, stories, and experiences.”

Emory Libraries’ collections should address diversity of thought and experience and represent a wide range of perspectives and viewpoints. We acknowledge that intentional and deliberate attention to the values of social justice requires frequent and continuous re-evaluation of this collection to ensure the inclusion of historically marginalized perspectives. We recognize the need to provide an inclusive, equitable and accessible experience to our communities. We strive to address the systemic inequities and hierarchies that have traditionally been part of academic library collecting. We embrace and support alternative methods, such as [open access](#), and support engaging with alternative suppliers and vendors, when possible.

Special Collections

Historical Collection

The Historical Collection contains non-circulating monographs related to the history of medicine and nursing, including 18th and 19th-century works on human anatomy, pathology, surgery, midwifery, and alternative medical practices, works published in the southeastern United States, as well as works by Georgia authors. This collection includes notable Civil War era books related to the practice of medicine and surgery in the South during this period. The collection also includes archival materials related to the history of the schools and programs that the library supports, such as medical school annual reports and bulletins.

Rare and historical resources are generally acquired through donations. Current items about the history of the health sciences are purchased selectively for the circulating Tye Collection.

Tye Collection: The Tye Collection, named for librarian Mary Myrtle Tye, who founded Emory's Medical Library in 1923, contains circulating monographs related to the history of the health sciences. The collection is periodically reviewed, and materials deemed too rare to circulate are moved to the Historical Collection.

Guidelines for Selection

The Library collects current scholarly information in the broad subject areas of medicine, biomedicine and allied health, public health, nursing, and graduate biological sciences. For selecting resources in interdisciplinary disciplines like anthropology, environmental sciences, and psychology, the WHSC Library collaborates with the relevant subject librarians at the Woodruff Library.

Collection Levels (Depth)

Definitions for collection depth are based on the nationally accepted descriptions formulated by the Research Libraries Group. The Health Sciences Library collects primarily within the following collection levels:

Instructional Support: a collection which is adequate to support the course work of advanced undergraduate and master's degree programs. It includes a wide range of basic monographs, major reference works and relevant journals.

Research: a collection which includes the major published source materials needed to support doctoral level and faculty research, including emerging areas of research.

In general, undergraduate level materials are acquired only to support the undergraduate Nursing School program.

See Appendix A for an overview of collection levels by NLM call number range.

Selection Criteria

When considering a new resource, it should first fall within the scope of the collection and support the information needs of our defined user populations. Since not all criteria apply to every resource, it is the role of the selector to analyze potential selections carefully and apply these criteria judiciously.

Quality - Consider the reputation and authority of the author, editor, publisher and provider, the publication's professional society affiliation, the currency and validity of material, comprehensiveness, and accuracy of content.

Need - Is the resource requested by members of the Emory community, does it fill a gap in our collection, is it frequently published in or cited by Emory authors, does it provide coverage for new or emerging programs?

Cost - Do we anticipate that the resource will be cost effective (cost per use); and can the library sustain the cost for at least two years?

Electronic Resources: Additional Criteria

As noted earlier, the Library prefers electronic format when appropriate, as it provides wider and more immediate access with more timely updates. In addition to the general selection criteria noted above, criteria used to assess electronic content include:

- **Cost**
- **Ease of Use** - Intuitive interface with easily identified help documentation, basic and guided advanced search capabilities, minimal limitations on printing, downloading
- **Quality of Content** - The authoring process, currency, updating schedule, level and nature of evidence, hyperlinking capabilities, quality and availability of full images, tables and figures, PDF format option
- **Access** - IP authentication and EZproxy compatibility strongly preferred
- **Vendor services** - Network capacity: support for unlimited access preferred, availability of COUNTER compliant usage statistics and quality MARC records (or Alma community zone records)

The Emory Libraries follow the established licensed terms on fair use, privacy, and transparency as elucidated in [ASERL licensing principles](#), and WHSCL licenses are negotiated by the Emory Libraries Licensing Coordinator.

Formats and Publication Types

Monographs

In the Health Sciences Library eBooks are preferred over print, and the preference is for non-DRM titles with unlimited simultaneous access if available and affordable.

The Library may maintain a duplicate print copy if the electronic version has a publication time lag, the content or subject matter is better suited to print, or book is considered a “classic” or core book in the subject area. eBooks may be purchased individually with the library’s approval plan (via GOBI), or in packages. Emory Libraries’ best practices for eBook purchases are available in a [separate document](#).

The WHSC library has an e-preferred slip approval plan with GOBI for the purchase of individual monographs, and Informationists select current books in their assigned subject areas as described in Appendix A. Older material may be selected to support new programs or at the request of faculty. The library subscribes selectively to monographic series, continuations, and a few directories, and adds eBook packages as one-time purchases or as subscriptions. Many eBooks are also contained in subscribed databases like AccessMedicine and ClinicalKey.

The library selectively collects textbooks supporting the professional education of Emory students, as they may document the history and/or summarize the current state of knowledge in a specific field. Texts primarily designed as study guides or quick reference, however, are not collected.

The library does not generally acquire fiction, examination review books, laboratory manuals or loose-leaf/spiral bound publications. Subject areas that are out of scope include undergraduate biology, chiropractic medicine, dentistry and patient education (unless by an Emory author).

Electronic Journals

Since 2009 the Library has been collecting journals in electronic format only, with a few exceptions. The library maintains a small collection of print journals (about 20) that are considered “core” titles in their field or have no reliable online access.

Electronic journals are collected individually, usually through EBSCO, our subscription vendor, or as part of publisher packages. Packages are evaluated for their overall value and cost-effectiveness as compared to subscriptions to individual titles. In addition to the general and electronic selection criteria, the library also considers the availability of reliable backfiles for years not covered by the journal subscription period. Rather than deaccessioning print journal volumes, the library is now moving all print journal volumes to the Library Service Center (move should be completed by May 2023).

Databases

The Library collects bibliographic databases in the health sciences, clinical decision-making tools, evidence-based practice databases, and research data discovery and pathway analysis tools. The library also subscribes to medical and health-related databases comprised of collected texts, electronic journals, medical news, patient education and more.

The Library initiates trials for new databases only after a general review of the database has occurred and pricing is available. The Library only conducts a trial if the database meets the selection criteria and can be added in the current budget year.

Since databases are more complex than single books or eJournals and much more expensive, the Library develops a unique set of selection criteria for each database being considered for selection.

Audiovisual and Streaming Video

The WHSC Library no longer actively collects sound recordings, microforms, microfiche, films, or video recordings. Such formats are now housed in the Woodruff Music & Media Library, except for a few historical items. Streaming videos are selectively purchased and hosted by the Woodruff Library on the appropriate streaming platform, dependent on the rights and use of the specific title.

Methods of Acquisition

Duplication

In general, the Library does not purchase duplicate copies of materials, either within or across Emory libraries. The library may purchase some core books and journals both in print and electronic formats to ensure archival access, or when the print is requested or offers added value.

Gift Policy

The Library accepts book donations for health sciences works published within the past five years, or books of historical significance, in good physical condition, and without excessive marking. Selection criteria for gift materials are the same as those for purchased materials. The Library reserves the right to add to our collections only those items that meet our current needs. Gifts not added to our collection will be, at the library's discretion, donated to other institutions or recycled. In most cases, duplicate items are not added to the collection.

Resources most suitable for donation include current editions of relevant health sciences texts, books authored by Emory faculty and rare or historical health sciences materials.

Journal volumes are accepted only to fill gaps in the collection. Donors are required to submit a list of items they wish to donate to facilitate the selection and processing of materials and for gift acknowledgement purposes.

Cooperative Agreements

The WHSC Library collaborates with the Woodruff Library on the selection, review, and acquisition of eBooks and eJournals packages and Health Sciences is a member of the Emory

Collections Steering Committee which identifies strategies for Emory Libraries collections and develops best practices for purchasing and licensing collections.

The Library Service Center (**LSC**), a high-density storage facility, is a partnership between the Emory Libraries and the Georgia Tech Library. Shared physical materials can be identified and requested online through the library's online catalog. Journal articles are delivered electronically to Emory faculty, students and staff, and print items are delivered to the Library within two working days.

The Library has reciprocal Interlibrary Loan borrowing agreements with the Atlanta Regional Council for Higher Education (ARCHE), The Consortium of Biomedical Libraries in the South (CONBLS), and cooperative agreements with the Northeast Research Libraries Consortium (NERL).

Collection Assessment

Collection assessment is a continuous process and is critical in maintaining the effectiveness and currency of the collection. Ongoing assessment also identifies gaps in the collection and aligns budget allocations with the University and Library's strategic initiatives.

Renewal/Cancellation

Renewal decisions for all formats are based on the same guidelines and criteria used for selection. The library will usually decide to renew subscriptions to electronic journals or databases if all the relevant selection criteria are still being met, the resource continues to be cost-effective, and the library has gathered at least two years of usage statistics that are above the predefined cutoff value for the subject area.

The library considers the following factors when evaluating electronic journals or databases for cancellation:

- Low usage numbers; below the predefined cutoff for the subject area
- Cost effectiveness (cost per use)
- Content duplication
- A new resource better meets users' information needs.
- Change in Emory's research priorities, addition of new programs.

Ongoing Assessment

The library conducts on-going reviews of select subject areas and/or publisher packages. The data gathered and reviewed during these assessments includes:

- Library survey data
- Vendor and Ezproxy usage data
- Cost per use
- Subject rankings data, including ISI Impact Factor and Scopus SJR
- Citation Analysis
- Core Lists or Subject Bibliographies
- User feedback, including patrons and Informationists
- Environmental scan; identify and assess needs of new programs, faculty, research initiatives.

APPENDIX A - Collection Levels

WHSCS Collection Levels by Subject		
Subject	Collection Level	Class (LC then NLM)
Human Anatomy	Instructional	QS
Physiology	Instructional	QT
Biochemistry, Cell Biology and Genetics	Research	QU
Pharmacology	Instructional	QV
Microbiology & Immunology	Research	QW
Parasitology	Instructional	QX
Clinical Pathology	Research	QY
Pathology	Research	QZ
Animal Culture	Instructional	SF
Veterinary Medicine	Instructional	SF 600-1100
Medicine & Related Subjects		
General Medicine; Health Professions	Minimal	W
Public Health	Research	WA
Bioinformatics	Research	WA 900-950
Community Health	Instructional	WA 525-590
Environmental Health	Research	WA 30.5
Epidemiology	Research	WA 105
Health Problems of Special Populations	Research	WA 300-395
Global Health	Research	WA 530
Health Economics	Basic	W 74-80
Health Education & Policy	Instructional	WA 590
Occupational Health	Instructional	WA 400-495
Reproductive Health (Women's health)	Instructional	WA 309-310
Practice of Medicine	Instructional	WB
Communicable Diseases	Research	WC
Disorders of Systemic, Metabolic or Environmental Origin, etc.	Instructional	WD
Musculoskeletal System	Instructional	WE

Respiratory Disease	Research	WF
Cardiovascular Disease	Research	WG
Hemic and Lymphatic Systems	Research	WH
Digestive System	Instructional	WI
Urogenital System	Research	WJ
Endocrine System	Research	WK
Nervous System	Research	WL
Psychiatry	Research	WM
Radiology; Diagnostic Imaging	Instructional	WN
Surgery	Research	WO
Surgical Procedures	Instructional	WO 500-517
Plastic & Reconstructive	Instructional	WO 600-640
Transplantation	Research	WO 660-690
Trauma/ Surgical Critical Care	Instructional	WO 700-820
Gynecology	Research	WP
Obstetrics	Research	WQ
Dermatology	Instructional	WR
Pediatrics	Research	WS
Geriatrics: Chronic Diseases	Research	WT
Dentistry: Oral Surgery	Basic	WU
Otolaryngology	Instructional	WV
Ophthalmology	Instructional	WW
Nursing	Instructional	WY
Nursing Research	Research	WY 20.5
Nursing Theory	Instructional	WY 86
Public Health Nursing	Instructional	WY 108
Nurse Practitioner	Instructional	WY 128
History of Medicine	Instructional	WZ