



The RACC Library Collection Development Policy

INTRODUCTION

The RACC Library of Reading Area Community College strives to build a community of learning that integrates informational resources, technological resources, and support services.

We strive for excellence in all our actions. We promote student learning and personal growth by providing

- the full range of informational needs for RACC students, both on-campus and remotely.
- instruction in accessing, evaluating, and using informational resources.
- mentoring opportunities for student staff members

We create welcoming and safe environments where intellectual curiosity and learning can flourish by providing

- a variety of spaces including active learning zones, quiet study zones, and group study rooms.
- policies and procedures that promote diversity, inclusion, and equity.

We value the diversity in our community and the richness it brings by providing

- library resources that represent many cultures and viewpoints
- displays and programs that celebrate our diversity

We connect students to resources within the College and the community at large that best meet their educational needs by providing

- the library's informational resources that include a variety of formats - print, film, music, and online databases as well as external resources through interlibrary loans.
- access to the Berks County public libraries through sharing a common library card and resources.

We are committed to lifelong learning both for students and ourselves by providing

- the full range of informational needs for RACC faculty and staff as well as for RACC students.
- instruction in accessing, evaluating, and using informational resources for RACC faculty and staff.

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to the library staff and the College community when selecting and deselecting resources for the library collection. It covers the selection, acquisition, processing, housing, weeding, retention, preservation, and discarding of all types of library materials with reference to specified levels of collection depth and breadth.

THE LIBRARY ENVIRONMENT

Reading Area Community College (RACC) is located in and sponsored by the County of Berks. A Census Bureau website with statistics on Berks County is available at <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/berkscountypennsylvania>

Reading Area Community College (RACC) is an accredited, comprehensive, open-enrollment education institution that provides the following: Associate degree, Certificate and Diploma Programs; career-focused training; transitional coursework; skills training for business and industry; personal enrichment programs and public service activities. Sponsored by Berks County, the College provides affordable access to meet identified community educational needs.

Students from every age, race, religion and many different countries throughout the world choose to study here. Those who are seeking degrees at the college are attracted to programs like nursing, respiratory care, criminal justice and business. Other people pursue individual courses to brush up on a skill or interest, or pursue certification in a variety of subjects. The Community Education/Workforce Development division offers programs like dental assisting, home health aide, veterinary assisting and GED preparation.

The College plays an important part in the business community as well. The Schmidt Training and Technology Center provides training in senior leadership, manufacturing technology, information technology, workplace readiness and workplace literacy. RACC also partners with other community organizations to enhance the economic vitality of the city and county.

The College is a [Hispanic Serving Institution \(HSI\)](#).

The RACC Library partners with most of the Berks County public libraries. They share a common catalog and integrated library system. Because the County of Berks provides a delivery system for member libraries, RACC students, staff, and faculty have access to most of the half-million items contained in the collections of the local public libraries.

THE CURRENT COLLECTION

There are approximately 30,000 physical items in the collection of The RACC Library, which includes about 20,000 books, 10,000 films, and 25 print periodicals. The library provides online databases and streaming services which provide access to hundreds of thousands of full-text periodicals, ebooks, music, and films. In addition, the common Berks County library card provides access to approximately half-million physical items in the Berks public libraries as well as eBooks and streaming media. The RACC Library has three special collections which it acquired through gifts – The Wes Fisher Music Score collection, the Schuylkill Navigation collection, and the Comic Book collection. The library has several special collections which support the curricula, including the College Archives and a children's book collection.

SELECTION RESPONSIBILITY

The collection development process is best achieved through a cooperative effort of teaching and librarian faculty. Teaching faculty are recognized as experts in their respective disciplines. The RACC Library actively solicits faculty recommendations and relies on faculty judgments to address the adequacy of collections in supporting the curricula.

All College students, staff, and faculty are invited to make purchase recommendations. There is an online form to make it easy to recommend purchases.

The library staff, working within budgetary limits, is responsible for the development of a strong basic collection. In addition, the library staff is responsible for the balance of the total collection. Because the library staff can best judge the balance of the total collection, final decisions concerning acquisitions rests with them. The Associate Dean of Library Services has overall responsibility for building and maintaining a balanced, useful library collection.

BUDGET

The Associate Dean of Library Services maintains control of the library budget, and does not assign annual allocations to subject areas or academic divisions. This is done so that the library can maintain the necessary flexibility to meet unanticipated demands, such as new courses/programs or increased course enrollments, and take advantage of economical purchase opportunities. Faculty and/or Divisions planning new courses or programs should meet with the Associate Dean of Library Services in order to determine the level of library support required for such courses or programs.

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

The following criteria are utilized to measure the appropriateness of materials or resources which are recommended for addition to, or deletion from, the collection.

Acquisition Priorities

The library's first priority is to provide a teaching and learning environment for the College community in support of the curricula. Materials and resources which will receive first priority include

- those which are appropriate for the first two-years of the undergraduate curricula which are offered by the College
- those providing current reference sources
- those supporting the professional development of the College's faculty and staff
- those supporting the College's non-credit class offerings
- those meeting the cultural and recreational needs of the College community
- those which represent diverse cultures and viewpoints

Evaluation criteria

As part of the library's planning for annual goals, each year the library staff selects specific areas of the collection to evaluate and develop. The library staff encourages faculty members or divisions to recommend areas of the collection receiving this attention.

Items or resources for purchase will be evaluated using the following criteria:

- content which supports curricula
- appropriate content level
- quality of writing
- expected longevity in collection
- authority and reputation of the author and/or publisher
- accuracy of the information
- strength of the existing collection in that discipline
- provision of diverse viewpoints
- inclusion in standard bibliographies and indexes
- availability in another format
- availability at partnering Berks County public libraries as directed by the Board of Trustees Resolution E-91-4 (see Appendix A)
- need for multiple copies because of heavy demand
- meeting the need of students with differing levels of ability and learning styles
- meeting the need of remote and online students
- pricing

Format of materials

The library will select items or resources in the following formats:

- Print books – For their greater durability, hardback editions are generally the preferred format. Trade paperbacks are purchased for topics which change rapidly, for multiple copies, or when a hardback is unavailable or the paperback is a better value. The library does not bind trade paperbacks. Mass market paperbacks are bought only when that format is the only version available for a desired title.
- Ebooks – The library purchases ebooks for the general collection primarily through established interfaces. In addition, the library subscribes to online databases which contain versions of traditional reference sources such as general and subject encyclopedias, dictionaries, and handbooks as well as subjects in demand including literature and philosophy. The criteria for choosing online versions are the same as the print versions.
- Textbooks – Textbooks are selected when they provide a good, general introduction to a subject. The library does not purchase the specific edition of a textbook used in a College course. Faculty may place their own copies on reserve in the library. Workbooks and study guides are not purchased.
- Fiction – The library purchases bestseller fiction if there is demonstrated demand for the author from the College community. The library does collect fiction which reflects the diversity of our society. The library’s partnership with the Berks County Public Libraries provides the bulk of available fiction.
- Print Periodicals – The library subscribes to a limited number of popular magazines and local newspapers. If library statistics show little or no use of a print periodical, it will be considered for cancellation. Journals are no longer collected in print format, but may be acquired title-by-title if not available in a database to which the library already subscribes.
- Online periodical databases– The library subscribes to online databases for access to most of its magazines, newspapers, and journals. The criteria for choosing online periodical databases are the same as for other library materials. In addition, the database must be able to be used remotely, that is, off-campus.
- Microforms –The library no longer acquires microforms.
- Non-English language materials – The library collects non-English language instructional materials, but it does not collect foreign language fiction or non-fiction unless the items support a specific course. The library strives to collect feature films in languages other than English if they have English subtitles with the exception of operas.
- Government documents – The College collects government documents when they meet the same criteria as other library materials, and includes them in the appropriate library collection – reference, general, or periodical collection. The Reading Public Library, a RACC Library partner, is the local federal and state depository library.

- Non-print media – The library considers non-print media an integral part of the overall collection, but does not collect physical formats except for DVDs including Blu-Rays. The library subscribes to streaming media services for access to most non-print media.
- Library of Things – the library acquires passes that offer free admission for patrons from Berks County and regional venues such as museums, sanctuaries, and zoos. In addition, the library collects physical items that relate to the College curriculum or enhance the student experience based on student, staff, and faculty input and demand.
- Replacements – The library does not automatically replace items in the collection because of loss or damage. Each item is reconsidered individually on the basis of demand, the availability of more recent publications, or other materials on the subject.
- Other materials – Art works, globes, and other similar items may be purchased to enhance the library collection and environment and that celebrate the diversity of the community.

COLLECTION MAINTENANCE

In order to keep the collection viable and useful, an active and continuing program of weeding will be maintained. Weeding, or the removal of obsolete, damaged, unneeded materials, is an integral part of the total effort to develop the library collection. The weeding process is as important to the library collection as the acquisition process.

Responsibility for selecting items for possible withdrawal from the collection lies with the entire College community. The library staff will coordinate the weeding process in consultation with appropriate members of the faculty. When subject areas of the collection are evaluated by the library staff, the faculty of that subject discipline will be notified, so that their input is included in the decision process. Although the faculty's recommendations will be integral to the process, the final decision to discard or retain individual items remains with the professional library staff.

Weeding Criteria

There are many criteria to consider when deciding whether or not to discard an item from the library collection. Weeding will not be done solely on the basis of circulation statistics. Criteria to be considered include:

- outdated or inaccurate information
- damage which cannot be repaired
- multiple copies of seldom-used titles
- periodicals replaced by online versions
- print periodicals not heavily used

- non-print formats replaced by newer formats unless demand still exists
- materials too juvenile or too advanced for the College community
- older editions which are superseded by newer editions.
- items which are considered classics (a book or film accepted as being exemplary or particularly noteworthy by a field or culture) will not be weeded
- items (other than in health-related subjects) which have not circulated in the last ten years unless the item is considered a classic work
- items in health-related subjects are weeded if they are older than five years unless the item is the latest edition available and still has useful information or is a classic work
- weeding shall not have the effect of biasing the collection in favor of one viewpoint
- consideration will be given to the amount of material in that subject area in the collection before weeding
- availability of similar materials in the Berks County Public Libraries

GIFTS

The RACC Library of Reading Area Community College welcomes gifts of books and other items that enhance learning and support instruction. The library accepts only unconditional donations having no special restrictions such as placement, treatment, or any other requirement. The library reserves the right to refuse gifts outright and to dispose of donated material according to its needs. The library does not return unwanted items to a donor. All donated materials will be reviewed by appropriate personnel and only those materials that meet the needs of the library and that are in good physical condition will be added to the collection. Library staff members are unable to estimate the value of any donation or provide a title list. Donors will be given an In-Kind Gift Form by the RACC Foundation. The College reserves the right to discard, give away, or sell any donated materials.

INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM

It is the responsibility of the library that all points of view relevant to the College mission are represented in the library collection.

Patrons with a complaint about an item in the collection should be referred to the Associate Dean of Library Services, who will ask them to submit their concerns in writing. A complainant must read/listen to/view the entire work in question before submitting a written complaint. The written complaint must include the name and address of the complainant, a description of the work in question and the nature of the complaint.

An ad hoc committee consisting of library staff and faculty members will examine the item in question. Published reviews will be examined; the item will be read/listened to/

viewed individually by members of the committee. After reviewing the material, a decision will be made to retain or discard the item. Decisions will be based upon the collection development policy as a whole. The complainant will receive a written response which contains the decision of the committee from the Associate Dean of Library Services.

POLICY DISSEMINATION

This policy will be included in the Academic Affairs Policies Manual.

This policy will appear on the library website.

REVISION SCHEDULE

This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis by the library staff.

APPENDIX A

Reading Area Community College Board of Trustees
December 5, 1991

Resolution E-91-4

RESOLVED, That Reading Area Community College's Board of Trustees directs the College staff to work cooperatively with the County and City Library Systems to bring about common access of collections through inter-Library loans, to include each other's collections in their catalog systems, to have joint staff development programs, and consider joint ventures in computer systems and collection management programs.

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