

2025 Collection Development and Access Policy¹ of the Wright Learning and Information Center

Approved by the Library & Lifelong Learning Committee, October 1, 2025

1. Introduction

Collection development is the art of fitting the collection of academic information resources as closely as possible with the mission of Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary (the Seminary) and the information needs of students, faculty, and other library users. Thus, collection management takes into consideration the curricula of the Seminary, formats for information, trends in theological scholarship, and research needs. Collection management involves making judgments about the current and future needs of users. The library's collection development policy is reviewed for adequacy at least every three years.

This document sets down in writing a collection development policy for the Stitt Collection² of the Wright Learning and Information Center and explains the reasons for these choices. This document is properly used as a benchmark for those involved in evaluation and selection, a rationale explaining why the library staff makes specific choices, and a test of accountability for the library's stewardship of the financial resources entrusted to it.

The Stitt Collection and the collection of the Harrison Library (Seminary of the Southwest) are searchable via a shared catalog. Because of the joint catalog, users can easily discover materials held in either collection.

Because of changes in technology, many users utilize online resources (principally e-books and full-text databases) heavily, while still continuing to use the print resources in the library. Thus, reliable access to these resources is important. In this document, *access* is defined as the ability for authorized users to view online resources remotely and the ability to have physical access to print material in the Stitt Collection. Section six of this document discusses how the Wright Center staff ensure robust patron access to resources.

1.1 Definitions

Selector: Librarian role for deciding what to buy.

Stitt Collection: The permanent collection of the Wright Center.

2. Accountability for Collection Development and Access

The access & instruction librarian is the primary selector of collection materials, in consultation with the associate dean for library and learning services. The associate dean is accountable to the vice-president for academic affairs for all aspects of collection development and access and consults with the Library & Lifelong Learning Committee, as described in the Faculty Manual.

¹ This document is called a "collection development and access policy" because this is the terminology now used by ATS (standard 6.8). This document replaces the previous collection management policy, which was approved in 2022.

² The Stitt Collection refers to materials, exclusive of materials in the Archives at Austin Seminary, housed in the Mary and Robert J. Wright Learning and Information Center of Austin Seminary.

3. Context: Austin Seminary Programs and Library Users

3.1 Educational Programs Wright Center librarians shape services and resources to cohere with seminary degree programs and other educational offerings. Currently, the Seminary offers four master's-level degrees (MATS, MAR, MAYM, and MDiv) and the DMin. The Seminary also offers two online certificate programs. The academic catalogue describes these programs in detail.

3.2 Users The **primary users** of the Wright Center are students participating in Austin Seminary programs and Seminary faculty and staff. **Secondary users** are students and faculty of the Seminary of the Southwest (SSW) and The University of Texas at Austin. **Tertiary users** are Austin Seminary graduates³ and the general public, including many church professionals and students and faculty members of other seminaries. The Library also participates in the [Atla Reciprocal Borrowing Program](#) which allows students from other participating seminaries to have borrowing privileges at the Wright Center. Shaping library collections takes into account the requirements of these constituencies, especially primary users.

3.3 Shape of Collecting

The library staff provides access to materials:

- Needed by degree and certificate students to support their academic work
- Needed by faculty and staff to support teaching and research

Library materials are described and classified according to national and international standards and conventions. Adherence to these common protocols allows for participation in cooperative cataloging and sharing of bibliographic metadata among diverse institutions. Use of a given vocabulary term or classification does not indicate agreement with any ideological views that a user may perceive to be embedded in these systems.

4. Seminary-Produced Content

4.1 The Archives at Austin Seminary The third floor of the Wright Center houses the seminary archives, which serves as the repository for the documentation of Austin Seminary, including its general history, administrative activities, educational programs, and the Seminary's faculty, staff, and students.

In addition, the Archives collects materials documenting the Presbyterian Church in the Southwest, generally limiting its scope to churches, schools, and governing bodies in the general geographical areas of the Synod of the Sun, its presbyteries, and their historical antecedents. All forms of the Presbyterian and Reformed tradition are included. Interdenominational organizations are included only if they contain a strong southwestern Presbyterian presence.

³ Because of provisions in most licensing agreements, Austin Seminary graduates do not have the ability to use many databases remotely. Seminary graduates can access the AtlaSerials PLUS database and a growing collection of e-books and open-source resources through the library using their alumni e-mail address.

The Archives supports researchers by providing physical, digital and intellectual access to the collection. This is achieved through appraisal, acquisition, arrangement, description, preservation, cataloging, and reference service.

Space constraints in the archives repository currently require prudence when considering the acquisition of new materials.

4.2 Digital Collections at Austin Seminary Video and audio recordings of faculty chapel sermons and other special events were originally stored on DVD, CD, and cassette. Since fall 2019, new content is made available via the Digital Collections at Austin Seminary (<https://www.austinseminarydigital.org/>). Existing copies stored on physical media have been retained. Making content available digitally improves accessibility for students, alums, and non-local members of the Austin Seminary community.

Content initially made available on physical media is being added to the library's digital collection as staff time allows. This includes the digitization of legacy cassette tapes.

Digital archival materials, and digitized versions of physical archival materials are also regularly uploaded to the Digital Collections.

The files housed in the digital collections are considered an access copy, and a digital master copy is retained in institutional Sharepoint storage.

4.3 DMin Final Doctoral Projects The Seminary acquires one copy of each approved final Doctor of Ministry project, which is shelved in the library stacks. A digital copy of the project is made accessible through ProQuest Dissertations & Theses and a digital master copy is stored on the library Sharepoint. Copies of doctoral projects completed prior to 2013 may be ordered through the Theological Resource Exchange Network.

5. Collecting Rationale

This section outlines why the library spends funds to purchase or provide access to resources in specific fields. This rationale guides the librarians in allocating the acquisitions budget and in determining weeding priorities.

5.1 Languages The primary language of materials collected is English. Spanish language materials are acquired as needed to support the Certificado program and in response to faculty requests. Within the constraints of the budget, primary source documents are collected in such ancient languages as Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek, and Latin. Materials may be purchased in modern world languages to support faculty research.

5.2 Collecting Patterns Because of the needs of the Seminary's curricula, the collection is strongest in the following Library of Congress classification categories:

BJ 1188-1278 Christian Ethics	BS Bible and Exegesis
BL Religions, Mythology, Rationalism	BT Doctrinal Theology
BR Christianity	BV Practical Theology
	BX Denominations and Sects

The collection holds fewer materials in Philosophy and Psychology (B-BJ), Judaism (BM), Islam, Baha'ism, and Theosophy (BP), and Buddhism (BQ), but supports teaching needs in these fields. The collection holds even fewer materials in other disciplines.

The Wright Center may receive donations of books. Donated books will be reviewed for condition, suitability, and overlap with existing collections. Donations that are not incorporated into the collection will be offered to library patrons on free book carts in the library or discarded.

Librarians cooperate with the staff of the Harrison Library (SSW) when managing resources. Appendix 1 contains the text of the current cooperative agreement.

5.3 Format of Library Materials The library staff seeks to provide users with needed information, regardless of format. The associate dean of library & lifelong learning encourages faculty members to recommend materials that have a direct bearing on seminary courses, represent high quality work in their field, or pertain to their research interests.

Because instruction in the MAYM, DMin and certificate courses is conducted partially or entirely online, and because students in those programs are not in the Austin area most of the time, the librarians acquire materials that support these programs as electronic resources whenever possible.

In general, books on the required or recommended reading lists submitted by faculty for master's-level and DMin classes are purchased as both print and ebook editions, when available. Print and e-book copies of faculty publications are also purchased, when available. The library purchases e-book titles from reading lists at the highest available level of access consistent with budget constraints. For details of e-book purchasing guidelines, see appendix 4.

In many classes, professors require students to read most or all of a book and professors expect students to purchase individual copies of such books. While the Wright Center purchases copies of books named in faculty syllabi, the library copy is not intended to replace the level of access provided by ownership of one's own textbook.

As of the fall of 2025, subject-relevant academic books are not widely available as audiobooks. The library may acquire individual titles, as available, in the case of a specific need and will continue to explore options for future acquisition.

5.4 Rationale The philosophy governing the selection of materials for the Stitt Collection is summarized below in the *Statement on Library Materials*, which was approved by the faculty of Austin Seminary on December 14, 1994.⁴

⁴ The document that the faculty approved in 1994 used the phrase "Stitt Library." The text here substitutes, as appropriate, words like "Stitt Collection" to convey the same commitments.

Statement on Library Materials

1. The librarians of Austin Seminary are committed to freedom of inquiry.
2. A plurality of viewpoints is essential in theological inquiry in this age of globalization. Thus, many viewpoints are expressed in library holdings.
3. Possession of an item in the Stitt Collection does not imply endorsement of its religious, philosophical, or political viewpoint, acceptance of its scholarship, or express a judgment about artistic merit.
4. Decisions about adding materials to the Stitt Collection shall be made on the basis of their value to the library's mission and not on the basis of their perceived acceptability.

5.5 De-accessioning Materials Librarians remove materials from the collection for a variety of reasons, including the issuance of updated editions and deterioration of physical objects. Appendix 2 contains de-accession guidelines.

5.6 Evaluation Collection evaluation means measuring the extent to which the collection fits its overall goals. That is, evaluators seek to measure the fit between user needs and library materials by asking users and by keeping in mind the learning outcomes of degree programs.

Librarians regularly survey professors and students about the usefulness of the collection and report results to the vice-president for academic affairs and faculty.

6. Patron Access to Collections

Publisher-restricted web-based resources are accessible to the seminary's primary users who have signed in with their seminary credentials and visitors who are using a computer in the library building. Patrons have access to read and borrow print materials during hours of public service, as posted on the library website. In addition, Austin Seminary students have 24/7 access to print reserve materials. Following standard archival practice, researchers use print material in the Archives at Austin Seminary on site by making an appointment with the archivist. Researchers may also request scans of archival materials through the archivist and may access selected digitized archival materials through the Austin Seminary Digital Collections page. Print materials can be mailed to enrolled students and alums.

The Wright Center uses inter-library loan to augment our collections and to make our collections available to colleagues at other institutions. In some instances, the library will purchase limited on-demand access to resources we are otherwise unable to obtain.

7. Challenges to the Appropriateness of Materials

7.1 Austin Seminary Librarians collect materials reflecting a wide range of worldviews, theologies, and lifestyles since Austin Seminary is committed to train persons who can interpret the Christian gospel in relation to the broad scope of human life. In addition, diversity in the content of library materials is required by both external accrediting agencies of Austin Seminary, the Association of Theological Schools and Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges.⁵ The philosophy governing this policy is summarized in the *Statement on Library Materials* (see section 5.4).

7.2 Challenges to Materials Library users may object to certain items being part of the collection. This section outlines procedures that will be used in such cases.

Handling Patron Concerns

1) If a library user challenges the appropriateness of an item in the library, staff are to listen courteously to the complaint. Staff should refer the patron to the associate dean for library & learning services.

2) The associate dean will explain to the patron the library's reasons for documenting many viewpoints in the collection.

3) If a patron wishes to make a formal request for review of a particular book, the associate dean and the patron shall fill out a *Library Materials Review Form* completely. Appendix 3 contains the form.

4) The associate dean shall explain the review process and answer any questions that the patron may have.

Process for Committee Review The director will give a copy of a completed review form to all members of the Library & Lifelong Learning Committee before its next scheduled meeting. The director will also give members a descriptive summary of the contents of the challenged item. Members may examine the item under review themselves.

The committee will discuss the questioned item's appropriateness under the *Statement on Library Materials* (see section 5.4). The result of this discussion shall be recorded in the official minutes of the meeting. The person who requested that the item in question be reviewed shall be informed, in writing, of the committee's judgment.

8. Review of this Policy

The Library & Lifelong Learning Committee reviews the collection development and access policy at least every three years for its adequacy and reports changes to the faculty. This policy will be reviewed no later than the fall of 2028.

⁵ "The library curates and organizes a coherent collection of resources sufficient in quality, quantity, currency, and depth to support the school's courses and degree programs, to encourage research and exploration beyond the requirements of the academic program, and to enable interaction with a wide range of perspectives, including theological and cultural diversity and global voices." ATS Standard 6.7.

Appendix 1: Cooperation in Collection Management

Cooperative Library Agreement, Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary and The Seminary of the Southwest

Alison Poage, Director of the Harrison Library (SSW)
Kristy Sorensen, Associate Dean, Library & Learning Services, Wright Learning &
Information Center (APTS)

Reviewed Sept. 2016; Sept. 2019; Oct. 2022; Oct. 2025

The libraries of the Episcopal and Presbyterian seminaries of Austin cooperate closely with one another to provide library resources and services for the communities of our institutions. Cooperative arrangements include reciprocal borrowing privileges and cooperative reserve systems.

The libraries also share an integrated library catalog. Details of that arrangement are on file with the financial officers of each school.

This agreement supersedes the agreements last reviewed by both libraries in 2022. The agreement may be suspended or terminated by either of the parties upon formal written notice of at least six months.

Shared Library Privileges

Students and faculty of each seminary enjoy full borrowing privileges at both libraries. Students and faculty at Austin Seminary can use their Wright Center library account to borrow materials at the Harrison Library, and Seminary of the Southwest students and faculty can use their Harrison library account to borrow materials at the Wright Center. Students and faculty are issued borrowers' cards at no charge. They are expected to comply with all the regulations of the lending institution.

Cooperative Reserve System

Each library lends items needed by the other library for course reserves. These items are available to the borrowing institution for the entire semester.

Acquisitions

The Harrison Library and Wright Center support the degree programs of their respective institutions, implementing their individual formal acquisitions policies to meet the information needs of their core users. Duplicate purchases of materials that serve each school's curricula will not be avoided.

Appendix 2
De-accession (Weeding) Guidelines

August 19, 2014

Reviewed March 2016; Oct. 2019; Oct. 2022; Oct. 2025

In order to be good stewards of our limited shelving space and to ensure our collections are able to grow to meet the needs of our students, faculty, staff, and other patrons, library staff may remove items from the collection. Items considered for removal are assessed on the basis of use, relevance to the curriculum, relevance to faculty research, enduring significance, and availability online or in other libraries. The primary selector makes decisions on what materials should be de-accessioned. Books and other items removed from the collection are made freely available to members of the community.

Appendix 3
Library Materials Review Form

Form approved on Dec. 14, 1994;
Reviewed May 2007; Jan. 2011; Oct. 2016; Oct. 2019; Oct. 2022; Oct. 2025

Any person wishing to have an item reviewed for conformity to the *Statement on Library Materials* is invited to complete this form in full and return it to the library director.

Name:

Address:

Telephone Number:

E-mail:

Relationship to Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary (please check one):

___ student; ___ faculty or staff

___ other. If other, please explain:

ITEM YOU WISH TO HAVE REVIEWED:

Author:

Title:

I have read the Statement on Library Materials (page 2).

I wish to have the above item reviewed for its appropriateness because (*you may use the back of this sheet if you wish*):

I understand the review process (page 2) and have had the opportunity to ask questions about it.

SIGNATURE: _____ Date: _____

[form page 1]

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3. Possession of an item in the Stitt Collection does not imply endorsement of its religious, philosophical, or political viewpoint, acceptance of its scholarship, or express a judgment about artistic merit.
4. Decisions about adding materials to the Stitt Collection shall be made on the basis of their value to the library's mission and not on the basis of their perceived acceptability.

Process for Review of Library Materials

Approved Dec. 14, 1994; reviewed May 2007; reviewed Oct.2016; Oct. 2019; Oct. 2022;
Oct. 2025

1. A person wishing to challenge the appropriateness of an item owned by the Library shall, with the associate dean for library & learning services, complete a *Library Materials Review Form*.
2. Copies of a completed request for review form shall be sent to all members of the Library & Lifelong Learning Committee before its next scheduled meeting.
3. The associate dean shall prepare a descriptive summary of the contents of the challenged item and give it to each committee member. Members may examine the item under review themselves.
4. The Library & Lifelong Learning Committee will discuss the questioned item's appropriateness under the Library's "Statement on Library Materials." The result of this discussion shall be recorded as an official minute of the meeting.
5. The person who requested that the item in question be reviewed shall be informed, in writing, of the committee's judgment.

[form page 2]

Appendix 4

E-book purchasing guidelines

Reviewed, August 2019; Oct. 2022; Oct. 2025

Individual e-books are usually purchased through GOBI. Occasionally, e-books may be purchased directly through another platform (like Credo) or subscribed to as a bulk collection (like the EBSCO Academic eBook Collection).

E-book purchases are driven by faculty booklists and readings, librarian selection, faculty publications, and individual requests. Factors including print book duplication, access level, and price need to be assessed when making a purchasing decision.

PURCHASING DECISIONS

Print vs. electronic:

To stay within our budget, we will not always be able to purchase both print and electronic copies of every title. In general, the library will choose to purchase a given title either in print or as an e-book based on price, anticipated use, and fiscal policy. The library generally will select e-books with the highest and widest allowed use subject to availability and budgetary considerations.

SELECTION DECISIONS

Librarian selection

- GOBI sends weekly lists of new e-books available from certain call number ranges and certain publishers for review. Talk to John if you want to be included in this list.
- Librarians select e-books based on subject matter; current holdings; anticipated use; appropriateness for MAYM, DMin, or certificate students; and other criteria. David Schmursal, the access and instruction librarian, is currently the primary selector of collection material.
- Depending on the publisher, e-book copies of new titles may not be available right away. Need to consider timing of use when deciding which format to purchase.
- Price: Inexpensive unlimited use e-books in our collecting areas are good prospects for purchasing.

Faculty booklists and readings

- When possible, we will purchase both print and electronic versions of required books from faculty booklists. Recommended books will also be purchased as print or e-books, if available.
- Faculty booklists are submitted to the Office of the Academic Dean or OMFAS and then shared with the library. Lists of faculty readings are sometimes submitted directly to a librarian.
- The access and instruction librarian will check each title on the list to determine if we already have an e-book copy or if one is available for purchase through GOBI and add notes to the booklist.

- If we have a limited use (1U or 3U) copy:
 - Check GOBI.
 - If a copy is available at a higher level of use, mark it for purchase.
 - **Note:** Notify John when purchasing a second copy of an e-book from a different vendor.
- If we do not own an e-book version of the text:
 - Check GOBI.
 - With an eye towards vendor preference (see below), find the copy available at the highest level of use and mark it for purchase.
- In general, we will purchase unlimited use copies of books from booklists and class readings. The access & instruction librarian will work with the Dean’s Office to update the booklist (following the established format) to include information on the access level and a permalink to the book and to have the finalized list published to the Seminary Community Resources page for students to access. Links for readings can be sent directly to the faculty member.

Faculty publications

- It is our policy to purchase both print and electronic copies of faculty publications.
- With an eye toward vendor preference (see below), we will purchase e-book copies of faculty publications at the highest level of access.

Individual requests

- Faculty, students, and staff may request that a particular e-book be purchased to support their research or work. In those cases, first check to make sure we don’t already have access to the title. Then search GOBI, following the same criteria as a librarian selected title. In general, a lower level of access is adequate for titles requested by an individual.

VENDOR PREFERENCE

With price and access levels being equal, the order of preference for e-book vendors is:

First Choice Tier (Alumni Access Included)	Project MUSE, , JSTOR
Second Choice Tier	EBSCO, De Gruyter, Oxford, Bloomsbury, Brill, Cambridge, Gale, Taylor & Francis, Wiley
Third	ProQuest*

*ProQuest will no longer sell perpetual access e-books after 2025, and we will only purchase books from them when no other alternative is available.