



Queensland Public Library Standards and Guidelines

Library Collections Standard August 2013

6. Library Collections Standard

Revised August 2013

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6.1 Objective and framework

To provide standards and guidelines for the development and management of library collections which meet the information, education, recreation and cultural needs of the community, and support the development of lifelong learning.

These standards are intended for use by Queensland public libraries responsible for purchasing their own collections with the assistance of cash grants distributed by the State Library of Queensland. Libraries participating in Rural Libraries Queensland (RLQ) and Indigenous Knowledge Centres (IKCs) receive their book stock on a rotational basis from the State Library. While these libraries may purchase a small amount of stock directly, the standards will generally not apply to them.

6.2 Library Collections Standard

6.2.1 Standard for library resources

Collections support the library's important roles in lifelong learning and the documentation and preservation of cultural memory, and their development is based on sound principles of intellectual freedom. Public library collections should represent the widest possible coverage of subjects, formats and genres to cater for the diverse needs of the whole community, while adapting to emerging trends and formats as appropriate.

Electronic formats including ebooks are growing significantly in number and popularity, and a large variety of licensing, download arrangements and cost structures occurs in their supply to libraries. The [Australian Library and Information Association](#) is working with ebook publishers and other industry representatives to achieve more consistency for libraries in this field. The proportion of electronic resources in library collections will vary according to client demand and community acceptance.

6.2.2 Standard for Collection Development Policy

Each library service should have a Collection Development Policy to guide the development and maintenance of library collections and access to resources. The Policy should be informed by analysis of statistical and demographic data, including information about community members, both library users and non-users. It should be endorsed by the library's Council, aligned to the Strategic Plan and updated every 2 to 4 years. The Policy should include statements on clients served, purpose and parameters of the collections, budgets, selection and procurement, collection evaluation, discards, donations, resource sharing and asset management. It should

also include strategies such as collection analysis and stocktakes to ensure ongoing accuracy and integrity of the library's catalogue.

The Collection Development Policy should identify the library's role in collecting and preserving local material and, where possible, make it more widely accessible via the web. Where relevant, it should refer to any preservation and disaster recovery plans. The principles outlined in the State Library of Queensland Content Strategy provide a framework for the development of these statements. State and national cultural organisations provide opportunities to contribute records to distributed collections of local historical significance. See 6.3.1 for more information on contribution to distributed collections.

6.2.3 Standard for collection size

Every library's collection should be large enough to meet its community's requirements. The size of collections will vary depending on population catchments served, numbers of branches and frequency of stock rotation. In general, smaller libraries should have a higher number of resources per capita, to ensure the collection's viability and comprehensiveness.

Collection Size (including ebooks)	
Minimum collection size is 2,500 items.	
Populations under 50,000	3 items per capita
Populations over 50,000	2 - 3 items per capita
Populations over 100,000	1.5 – 2 items per capita

The proportion of a library's collection for adults in relation to that for young people will vary depending on the demographics of the community. Generally, two thirds of the collection will comprise adult materials and one third for children and young adults.

6.2.4 Standard for stock rotation

Library services with multiple branches and/or mobile libraries must have adequate provision of resources for each service point and stock should be refreshed through a program of regular rotation or exchanges. This is particularly important if the acquisition level in a branch is below 0.175 items per capita per annum. Regular exchange of stock between branches ensures that collections remain current and that clients have access to an increased range of resources. The appropriate size and frequency of exchanges should be determined by the library service to ensure local needs are met.

Libraries should offer delivery services for items requested between branches. Where library services employ the concept of floating collections (where items remain at the branch at which they are returned), care should be taken to ensure collections continue to be responsive to local community needs and usage. While electronic resources improve ease of access across branches, their use should be guided by the level of their acceptance by clients as a preferred format.

6.2.5 Standard for acquisitions

Library collections require adequate and regular inflow of new titles to ensure their currency and appeal, and to assist in meeting changing community interests and

demands. While acquisition rates for various formats may vary over time depending on local priorities, price fluctuations and other factors, the recommended annual acquisition rates for collections are as follows:

Acquisitions per capita per annum (including ebooks)	
Populations under 25,000	0.3 items
Populations 25,000 – 100,000	0.25 items
Populations over 100,000	0.2 items

6.2.6 Standard for collection evaluation

Library collections, whether print, non-print or electronic, lending or non-lending, should be evaluated regularly by suitably experienced staff to ensure their currency, accuracy, quality and appeal, as well as their continued ability to meet new client demands. Stock usage and turnover should be analysed as appropriate, whether for the library collection as a whole or for specific collections.

Worn, incomplete and outdated material should be discarded as part of a regular evaluation program. Discard practices and policies also need to account for out-of-print and last copy requirements of the library. Age, levels of use, turnover of stock and condition are all useful indicators for collection evaluation. While evaluation is ideally a continuous task, each item should be assessed at least once every 3 years.

Evaluation of eresources should include consideration of a number of issues in addition to the above criteria. These include access periods, platforms, licensing arrangements and ability to download to a wide range of devices.

Exit strategies should be developed for specific formats as they become obsolete, superseded or little used. Strategies should consider factors such as evidence that demand is minimal or non-existent, availability of supporting devices or hardware, and length of time since last purchased.

While collection evaluation activity will vary with circumstances such as relocation of libraries or focused redevelopment of specific collections, the following recommended standards apply:

Discard rate per annum
0.125 items per capita
Age of collection
50% of the collection should be purchased within the last 5 years (excluding periodicals, electronic databases and local history resources).
Turnover of stock (Total loans divided by total number of collection items)
5 loans per item

6.3 Guidelines

6.3.1 Guidelines for library resources

Public library resources should be of high quality, covering a wide range of popular topics, interests and formats. They should express a variety of viewpoints and cultural understandings and represent a diversity of people, places, events, issues and ideas. Both standard works and recent publications should be included.

The library should provide equity of access to a comprehensive range of resources for clients of all ages and backgrounds, including those with differing abilities. Collections should be current and should meet community needs across multiple formats. Wherever possible, electronic and multimedia resources should be supported by a suitable range of equipment to facilitate their use within the library. While the composition of collections will vary between libraries to suit local needs, every library should be expected to include the following essential resources:

- fiction and non-fiction across all age groups
- current reference material
- digital resources, including ebooks, online databases and downloaded music
- audio-visual and multimedia resources
- large print, talking books and downloaded audio books
- periodicals and newspapers
- literacy material and LOTE resources
- local history materials

For more detail on specialised resources, refer to the [Specialist Service Standards](#).

Each library should offer a good range of electronic resources to suit the needs of its community, with due consideration given to the sustainability and popularity of new formats. Resources such as databases, ebooks and electronic journals provide the most current information available and lend themselves well to remote client access. As a general guide, libraries should consider dedicating 10-15% of their collection budget to the purchase of these resources, in addition to electronic resources provided on a statewide basis.

To facilitate availability of current information, the library should provide access to government information, legislation, educational and business material, either directly or via links from the library's website.

The library should consider the benefits of including community sourced data in its collections, provided it is moderated closely and meets general criteria for inclusion under library and Council policies. Examples include self-published material, blogs, streaming services, tweets and tags added to the library website by clients. All crowd-sourced content should satisfy Council website security requirements and should be evaluated regularly for quality, suitability and accuracy.

To support the library's role in recording and providing access to the cultural memory of the community, local history resources should be actively collected and housed in a manner to ensure their preservation. Given the unique value of these items, libraries are strongly encouraged, wherever possible, to pursue digitisation of local history resources and to collaborate with state and national digitisation projects to share resources and improve accessibility to them. Advice and assistance regarding

digitisation and sharing of local history resources can be provided to libraries by the State Library of Queensland.

6.3.2 Guidelines for resource budgets

All library services should have a dedicated library resource budget. The cash grant received from the State Library of Queensland helps to support this essential library function. In addition to this grant and local government funding, other funding sources may include local sponsorship, library support groups, local service clubs, and arts or cultural services funding sources. Depending on the size of the library service, its resource budget should generally represent approximately 10% to 20% of its total operating budget.

6.3.3 Guidelines for selection

Selection of library resources should be undertaken by suitably qualified and experienced staff. A range of selection tools should be used, including professionally recognised review sources and the analysis of available data such as collection usage patterns. Mechanisms should be in place to regularly engage with community groups and encourage client suggestions for purchases. As far as possible, purchasing should be undertaken throughout the year to ensure a steady flow of new materials. Selection of pre-published material and appropriate use of standing orders will help to ensure timely delivery of new titles.

Where supplier assisted selection is utilised, this should be undertaken within pre-determined and agreed guidelines which in turn are derived from the Collection Development Policy, customer demand and analysis of collection usage patterns. It should be supplemented by staff selection where necessary.

Libraries may opt to develop selection profiles with suppliers, setting out parameters within which the suppliers will select for a set period. These may include lists of specific genres, authors or series as well as preferred publishers or formats. Wherever used, selection profiles should be reviewed frequently and the supplier's performance against specific criteria measured at agreed intervals and at least annually. See 6.3.4 for information on supplier assisted procurement.

Resources selected should reflect the diversity of the community, aiming to meet its many varied needs. Selection should always embrace the principle of free access to ideas, with resources representing divergent viewpoints as far as possible. Staff should take care not to exclude material solely because of its potentially controversial nature. For further information, refer to the **Australian Library and Information Association's [Statement on Free Access to Information](#).**

6.3.4 Guidelines for procurement

The procurement of library resources is managed in accordance with the Council's purchasing policy and is governed by requirements of state and federal legislation. Library services use a variety of models for the procurement of materials. The choice of model should be made with local priorities, cost-effectiveness and timeliness of delivery to users in mind.

Many Australian library services use a shelf-ready model for procurement. Under this model, materials can be acquired and processed by nominated suppliers according to the library's specifications, delivered to specific service points, with associated

records downloaded directly into the library's catalogue. Libraries should consider the [Resource Description Standard](#) and its processing guidelines in developing their specifications.

Suppliers should be evaluated at least annually according to their performance against criteria set by the library. These may include ability to deliver resources according to agreed specifications or profiles, turnaround time, IT systems capacity and Quality Assurance systems. Where suppliers also undertake selection, satisfactory loan levels of resources selected should be included as a criterion. Regardless of the extent of outsourcing involved, the library should utilise procurement procedures that minimise order- to-shelf times of materials.

Contracts should be established with suppliers, detailing respective obligations. Contracts for most suppliers for Queensland public libraries can be managed through the Local Government Association of Queensland's Local Buy contract, if desired. See www.localbuy.net.au. Some library services also have contracts that are available for reciprocal agencies to use, through agreement with the contracted suppliers.

6.3.5 Guidelines for stock presentation

Library collections should be presented in an attractive manner with consideration given to functionality, aesthetics, building restrictions and promotion of resources. Collections should be arranged and displayed to optimise access and usage. Consideration should be given to the question of merging or separating collections such as junior and adult non-fiction as appropriate, given community preferences and usage patterns.

As appropriate, a range of special presentation techniques may be utilised, to highlight specific collections from time to time, or to showcase popular genres or topics. Examples include niche collections, specialist format collections and genrefication or boutiquing of collections where resources are arranged in genres or broad subjects using bookshop display principles. Genrefication may be of particular relevance in smaller libraries which have access to larger collections elsewhere.

6.3.6 Guidelines for resource sharing

Participation in library resource sharing initiatives can greatly enhance accessibility to a wider range of materials for clients. To supplement material available in local collections and to make materials widely available to others, libraries should actively participate in any regional, state or national resource sharing initiatives such as reciprocal borrowing or cooperative purchasing. For example, cooperative purchasing can facilitate subject specialisation between libraries and a larger purchasing base can attract greater discounts. Importantly, libraries should also consider adding their library holdings to [Libraries Australia](#).

All such initiatives should be supported by practices that ensure items are despatched and received in a timely manner and that collections in all libraries remain balanced and comprehensive. For further information, refer to the [Interlibrary Loans Standard](#).

6.4 Performance Indicators

- Effective current Collection Development Policy supported by a number of indicators including usage rates and overall client satisfaction with collections (measured by client feedback, surveys etc)
- Collection indicators including items per capita and acquisitions per capita
- Collection evaluation indicators including discards per capita, percentage of resources purchased in the last 5 years, and loans per item
- Resource sharing practices which meet agreed requirements
- Effective evaluation of suppliers against agreed criteria

6.5 Definitions

Blog: A website containing the writer's or group of writers' own experiences, observations or opinions, often including images and links to other websites.

Boutiquing collections: a method of collection presentation where resources are arranged in broad subject areas or fiction genres rather than a Dewey Decimal Classification or alphabetical arrangement. Display principles used in retailing are generally employed.

Collection development: activities related to the development of library collections including selection and de-selection, collection analysis, planning of resource sharing and collection management.

Ebook: a book published in electronic form.

Electronic resources: resources which are stored and accessed in an online form, including the internet, electronic databases and CD-ROMs.

Floating collection: a concept utilised by a library service with multiple service points, where resources do not belong in any particular location, but may be borrowed from any point either directly or via a delivery service, and are retained at the location at which they are returned until requested by a client or rotated to another service point.

Genrefication: a method of collection presentation where resources are arranged in broad subject areas or fiction genres rather than a Dewey Decimal Classification or alphabetical arrangement. Display principles used in retailing are generally employed.

Indigenous Knowledge Centre (IKC): a library and keeping place established in a Council, Aboriginal Council or the Torres Strait Island Regional Council, with shelf ready resources, training and support provided by the State Library of Queensland.

Library material(s) or resources: any book and non-book material including but not limited to books, videos, CDs, DVDs, audio books, computer games, magazines, newspapers, maps, plans, photographs and manuscripts.

Local Buy: Local Buy is the Local Government Association of Queensland's procurement services company. Under Local Buy contracts, library services are able to appoint library suppliers for the supply of library resources with no requirement to

tender. The list of library suppliers available under Local Buy can be found at www.localbuy.net.au

LOTE: Languages other than English.

Reciprocal borrowing: a cooperative arrangement between libraries in adjacent local governments, regions or states where clients may borrow materials from any library within the arrangement, and libraries lend requested materials between each other, usually free of charge.

Rural Libraries Queensland (RLQ): a scheme available to smaller Queensland local governments which provides library services with shelf ready resources, regular stock exchanges, training and support from the State Library of Queensland.

Streaming: Streaming media is video or audio content sent in compressed form over the internet and played immediately, rather than being saved to a computer's hard drive.

Tag: A tag is a keyword used to describe an article or website. Tags are often used in social bookmarking, social news and blog entries to help users search for relevant content.

Tweet: a very short message posted on the social media website Twitter.

6.6 References

Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA). [ALIA position statement on ebooks and elending](#). 2013.

ALIA. [Statement on Free Access to Information](#). 2007.

State Library of Queensland. [Content Strategy](#). 2012.



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