

Ellender Memorial Library

Serials Policy

1.1

MISSION AND OVERVIEW

The mission of the Serials Department is to acquire and manage continuing resources to support the curriculum, the instructional, research, and public service programs of Nicholls State University. Materials in all formats are acquired and cataloged (or made accessible) in an accurate and timely manner, so that Serials staff and the Reference Department may maintain a high level of customer service. All students and faculty therefore will have access to information published in periodicals.

Because serials selection must be a carefully considered activity treated differently from book selection, as subscriptions represent long-term fiscal, logistical, and resource (both human and otherwise) commitments and annual price increases for serial materials in recent years have been high (approximately 10% per year), new serials subscriptions will be considered, and current subscriptions will be evaluated, once a year, between December and March. This practice will promote fairness across disciplines and allow the Serials Department to plan responsibly for the budget in any given year.

1.1.1

Serial Costs

Costs take into account not only subscription pricing, but also processing and binding fees, as well as microform replacement fees. Yearly inflation of about 10% will also warrant consideration. Foreign journals will receive special consideration because of constant currency adjustments. However, the cost of serials within a specific discipline will not be compared to and weighed against the costs in other disciplines; it is widely known that serials in the science and health areas are uniformly much more costly than those in the humanities and social sciences. Comparing the two areas, and weighing them against one another, would only serve to place undue strain on those fields in which serials are costly.

1.1.2

Access Versus Ownership

The Serials Department maintains a core collection of serials that are essential to the University's mission. Beyond this core collection, the addition of some materials may be approved by the Serials Department, based on the need for and access availability of the content. In other words, if a seldom used title is housed at an institution which freely participates in ILL with Nicholls, and the content of that title is therefore readily available on a limited use basis through ILL and / or document delivery, then the Serials Department will chose to prioritize access over ownership, and will not devote funds towards purchasing that title.

1.1.3

Gift Policy

The Serials Department reserves the right to accept, reject, or dispose of any gift at its discretion, based on how well the gift fits into the collection and addresses the needs of the University's programs. Selection criteria mentioned in Sections 1.2, 1.2.2, and 1.2.3 will be used to evaluate gift print subscriptions and donated serials.

1.2

SELECTION CRITERIA

Periodical titles are selected in light of their contributions towards meeting the needs of the university's programs. In this selection process, The Serials / Electronic Resources, after consulting with the Serials Staff and the faculty departmental liaisons, will make selection decisions that take into account each of the following factors:

1. existing resources already within the collection
2. funding limitations, which evolve with budget constraint issues
3. program priorities, including accreditation requirements
4. indexing factors, which determine the accessibility of the information
5. reputation of journal and publisher
6. level and scope of the periodical, in as much as these fit the mission of the university
7. availability of the periodical, both short-term and long-term
8. alternative access to the information, such as document delivery and ILL

1.2.1

Electronic Resources

The use of electronic full text formats, document delivery, and table of contents services are enhancing access to articles in periodicals. Because of the continuing evolution of journals, magazines, newsletters, newspapers, and other periodicals towards non-print formats, the Serials Department is transitioning from an entity formerly responsible for the management of serial print resources to a department that now manages both serial print and serial electronic resources. As part of this mission, the Serials / Electronic Resources Librarian, in conjunction with the Automation Librarian, will assure the provision of print and online indexes (databases), both on and off campus, with accurate access information. To this end, the Serials / Electronic Resources Librarian consults with departmental faculty liaisons, either directly or through librarians serving as subject liaisons, to select databases and electronic journals that specifically support the various programs at Nicholls. Access is guaranteed both on and off site to some 50 databases on nearly every discipline.

Electronic journal subscription requests are evaluated using the basic selection criteria identified in Section 1.2. In addition, the following criteria are also used:

1. reasonableness of cost in comparison to an available print version
2. archive availability, preferably via the web
3. archiving costs
4. availability and cost of viewing software needed
5. password requirements
6. copyright and licensing restrictions
7. coverage differences between electronic and print versions

1.2.2

Print Journals

In addition to the basic selection criteria stated in Section 1.2, the following guidelines are considered in the review of any print periodical subscription request:

1. electronic or print indexing available via the Library
2. limited retention issues
3. availability of the same information in electronic full text format
4. other alternative access, such as document delivery and / or ILL

1.2.3

The basic selection criteria identified in sections 1.2 and 1.2.2 are used to evaluate newspaper subscriptions. The following guidelines, specific to the format, are also considered:

1. scope, or whether the paper is local, national, or international
2. subject area, especially for special interest newspapers that support the curriculum
3. availability of microfilm backfiles (depending on need / usage)

The Serials Department, working with the Automation Department, provides access to over a thousand newspaper archives via fee-based databases such as LexisNexis and Academic Search Premier. As part of our mission, The Serials Department also tracks usage of our print newspapers, to insure that we continually provide print access to those newspapers used most frequently.

1.2.4

Interlibrary Loan Statistics

Our Interlibrary Loan Librarian provides important statistics about the demand for and use of journals which are not owned by Ellender Library. These are tabulated annually and sent to the Serials / Electronic Resources Librarian so that he / she may make informed purchasing decisions when it comes to adding new serials content to the Department's collection.