



Queensland Public Library Standards and Guidelines

Library Collections Standard

(June 2009)

6. Library Collections Standard

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- 6.1 Objective and framework
- 6.2 Standard
- 6.3 Guidelines
- 6.4 Performance Indicators
- 6.5 Definitions

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 the Country Lending Service (CLS) 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 soundly on 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.

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. 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. Where relevant, it should refer to any preservation and disaster recovery plans.

6.2.3 Standard for collection size

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

Collection Size	
Minimum collection size is 2,500 items.	
Populations under 50,000	3 items per capita
Populations over 50,000	2 - 3 items per capita

The proportion of a library's collection intended for adult clients 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 resources 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 remain balanced over time.

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 rapidly 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 general lending collections are as follows:

Acquisitions per capita per annum	
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.

Worn, incomplete and outdated material should be discarded as part of a regular evaluation program. Discard practices also need to account for out-of-print and last copy requirements of the library. Age, levels of use 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.

While discard rates 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 published within the last 5 years (excluding periodicals, electronic databases and local history resources).

In addition to collection evaluation, comprehensive stock-takes should be undertaken by each library at least every 3 years to ensure the integrity of the library catalogue and accountability for collection assets.

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 special needs. Collections should be current and well balanced. 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;
- audio-visual and multimedia resources;
- digital resources, including e-books and online databases;
- 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** <http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/info/publib/policy/guidelines/ten>.

Each library should offer a good range of electronic resources to suit the needs of its community. Resources such as databases, e-books 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 5% - 10% 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 web site.

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 to pursue digitisation of local history resources wherever possible, and to collaborate with any state and national digitisation projects to ensure wide access to content.

6.3.2 Guidelines for resource budgets

All library services should have a dedicated library resource budget. The cash grant received from the Library Board 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 or local service clubs. Depending on the size of the library service, its resources 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 engage with community groups and facilitate 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 will ensure timely delivery of new titles.

Where supplier assisted selection is utilised, selection by library staff should supplement this where necessary. See 6.3.4 for more 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** (www.alia.org.au/policies/free.access.html).

6.3.4 Guidelines for procurement

The procurement of library resources is managed in accordance with the Local Government'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 now 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** <http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/info/publib/policy/guidelines> and its processing guidelines in developing their specifications. If selection is also outsourced to suppliers, the library should prepare a selection profile and standing orders to be followed, based on an analysis of the existing collection as well as current and future needs of the community. These profiles and orders should be regularly reviewed.

Outsourcing of these processes, particularly the labour-intensive tasks of cataloguing and end processing, significantly reduces staff workloads, allowing more time for other activities such as client service. It may also offer more effective use of purchasing budgets and helps to ensure that resources are made available within the shortest possible timeframes.

Suppliers should be evaluated regularly according to their performance against criteria set by the library such as turnaround time, selection profiles, cataloguing and processing requirements and technology transfer capacity. 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.

For further information on supplier assisted procurement, refer to <http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/info/publib/coldev>.

6.3.5 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.

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. Importantly, libraries should also make their catalogues available on the Internet to facilitate effective resource sharing, and should consider adding their library holdings to **Libraries Australia**. <http://librariesaustralia.nla.gov.au>.

For further information, refer to the **Interlibrary Loans Standard** <http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/info/publib/policy/guidelines/seven>.

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 and percentage of resources published in the last 5 years
- Resource sharing practices which meet agreed requirements
- Effective evaluation of suppliers against agreed criteria

6.5 Definitions

Country Lending Service (CLS): 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.

E-book: 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.

Indigenous Knowledge Centre (IKC): a library and keeping place established in a Shire 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, talking books, computer games, magazines, newspapers, CDs, 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.

Stock-take: a procedure which involves checking a library's catalogue records against stock on loan or on shelf, to identify missing items and update records accordingly, ensuring accuracy of catalogues and operational statistics.