

8.c. Weeding Library Policy

Subject	Learning Resource Centre	Effective From	Sep - 2011
Policy #	8.c.	Latest Revision	Feb - 2025
Title of The Policy	Weeding Library Policy	Next Review	Dec - 2025
Responsible Entity	Library Standing Committee	Policy Pages	3
Definitions	AAU: Al Ain University Collection: refers to books, periodicals, electronic resources available in the library. Collection Development: refers to the process of selecting, purchasing, and managing library collections. Weeding: refers to the process of removing items from library collection based on certain criteria. On-going Weeding: is a daily action taken to remove undesirable item from library collections. Systematic Weeding: is a long-term process to remove a large quantity of items from library collections. Shadow Title: refers to the titles that can be viewed by library staff but not the users. Shadow Item: refers to the items that can be viewed library staff but not the users		
Purpose	In compliance with the AAU Vision and Mission, it is necessary to establish a “Weeding Policy.” The purpose of this policy is to define a step-by-step procedure of item withdrawal accompanied by a list of criteria to assist in decision making. It also aims to provide justification for the permanent removal of materials from the library collection.		
Scope	This policy applies to all users of AAU Libraries in Abu Dhabi and Al Ain.		
Statement	For any type of library, the weeding or withdrawal process is an important part of its collection management. Regular withdrawal of damaged, outdated, duplicate materials or items in poor condition helps libraries maintain up-to-date, attractive looking collections, and save space and time for researchers and library staff alike. Weeding activities help reduce cluttered and over stacked shelves. For an academic library, whose main mission is to support its parent institution’s curriculum, it is important not only to purchase new materials, but also to get rid of publications that are out of date or are no longer required by the disciplines taught at the university. Relevancy and timeliness of information are especially vital for certain disciplines, such as health sciences and engineering. The AAU librarians in collaboration with colleges apply their expertise and knowledge to the evaluation of library materials and to the weeding decisions.		
Procedures	AAU Libraries use several methods for weeding materials: <u>On-going Weeding:</u> • This method provides weeding opportunities as a result of an immediate issue or problem with the material(s) in question such as: • New editions are purchased, selectors are prompted to make decisions about retaining or		

- withdrawing older editions.
- Items in poor condition or missing pieces that are returned to the Circulation Desk are routed to the Head of Technical Services for a decision about replacement, rebinding, repair or withdrawal, with input by subject specialists.
- Items that are declared lost (either through Circulation routines or stacks inventory) are routed to the Head of Technical Services for possible replacement, with input by subject specialists.

Systematic Weeding Projects:

- These methods require preliminary work from the library staff and typically involve larger amounts of materials from individual areas of the collection. Thus, these methods are project-level and are more likely to involve broader librarians and faculty involvement. Special formats may require additional consideration beyond the methods listed below.
- Multiple copies or multiple formats that are no longer necessary should be withdrawn. For instance, a project to weed duplicated materials, as well as individually weeding print book titles that have been replaced by an electronic book format. In addition, as formats for audiovisual materials change, the library may weed the older format (e.g. VHS videotapes weeded in favor of DVDs).
- Subject areas are examined by subject specialists for research value within the subject area. Typically, this type of weeding removes outdated, inaccurate or irrelevant material and is closely aligned with usage, age of publication, and checkout statistics. For example, it includes weeding in Law (LC Class #K), Social Sciences – General, Statistics, Economic Theory (LC Class #H-HB), and Psychology (LC Class #BF). More general subject area weeding occurs in Reference and Government Documents on an annual basis.
- Periodically, AAU libraries conduct serials review to make sure that the libraries are providing faculty and students with the materials that are needed for teaching, learning, and scientific research. While the purpose of this review is not strictly cancellation, it is important to make sure that resources for serials are devoted to materials that are essential to the university community. In cases of cancellation as part of a serials review, the libraries should traditionally withdraw retrospective print serial holdings from the collection.
- Back issues of periodicals will be bound and stored in open stacks. Issues are subject to withdrawal or removal to storage under the same conditions as other materials but will normally be retained. Newspapers will be retained for three months in their original printed form.
- Procedures for Systematic Weeding of Multiple Copies or in Subject Areas
- Preliminary work must typically be completed by library staff prior to removing titles from the collection. This work includes informing relevant college of the proposed project; gathering library statistics related to age, duplication, and/or circulation of items; and pinpointing titles in poor condition.
- Library Management System, Symphony, can be used to create lists that indicate multiple copies or publication dates, etc. Just about anything in the bibliographic and item records can be used to create a weeding list. The list can then be used in print or

	electronic format to guide the weeding project with call numbers, titles, etc. • Selecting a publication date cut-off as weeding criteria help library staff to avoid future issues (e.g. withdrawing older material that has just recently been added). Due to the commitment of the Library to purchasing titles for long-term scholarly pursuit, weeding should not include items published within the past ten years, with few exceptions. • Library staff should determine how s/he will mark or situate each item selected for weeding so that it can be reviewed by the concerned college. The staff will also need to indicate to the college representative how they may remove a title from the weeding project. • Librarians will have to determine the duration of college review for materials to be weeded. Typically, a large weeding project in a subject area should allow faculty at least one term for review. • After candidates for weeding are pinpointed, librarians should keep faculty informed about the schedule for the weeding project. • Once the weeding deadline has been met, librarian will notify Library Director or Supervisor regarding the approximate number of titles and copies that will be weeded (as a courtesy for workflow considerations). • The Library Director or supervisor will send the final report to the President for approval • In his turn, the President will discuss it in the Dean Council • Upon approval of the Dean Council, library staff will: Change item location to “Withdrawn from the Collection”, and select: ▪ “Shadow title” if the entire items under that title are withdrawn ▪ or “Shadow item” if an individual item is withdrawn, then ▪ Remove the materials from shelves. • All items withdrawn will be sent temporary to the library main store. Withdrawn materials may be demolished or distributed to other libraries, school libraries, individuals or institutions as gifts.
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