

Underwood Law Library

# Collection Development Policy

Southern Methodist University Dedman School of Law

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# Collection development policy

The mission of the Underwood Law Library is to foster a collaborative learning environment through robust access to legal resources, expert research knowledge, and operational excellence.

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# Guiding Principles

## **Our Core Mission – Meeting the Needs of Our Patrons**

The Underwood Law Library's primary mission is to support the learning and research needs of Dedman School of Law students, faculty, and staff, as well as Dedman Law Centers and Clinics and journals published by the law school. The law library and its collection will evolve to reflect changes in the law school's curriculum, faculty and student research needs, and technological advances.

Secondarily, the law library will assist other non-law SMU students, faculty, and staff in finding sources within the law library's collection and on the open web. The law library will also participate in certain joint purchases or subscriptions with other SMU libraries when such purchases meet the law library's collection needs.

While the law library is open to practicing attorneys and the public, their use will not affect the law library's collection decisions and materials will not be collected solely for these groups. Some exceptions may be made.

Underwood Law Library will also participate, as able, with broader efforts by consortia and the legal scholarship community in promoting the long-term preservation of legal materials, in both print and digital formats. The law library will also maintain interlibrary loan relationships with other law libraries and selected university libraries to obtain access to materials unavailable at SMU and make our local collection accessible to other researchers outside of SMU, licensing permitting.

This document is intended to guide the library collection's purchases as well as the maintenance and retention of materials. These principles and the following guidelines are not intended to be proscriptive. Materials that fall outside of the guidelines below may be collected in some cases. This document is intended to allow for a degree of flexibility and discretion.

## Policies for Specific Formats

The following section covers format and language guidelines for new and ongoing purchases. See *Specific Collections* for further information, including retention policies.

### Online Format (Preferred Format)

Online materials are preferred when they meet at least one of the following criteria:

- Purchased from a vendor with perpetual access rights and/or provision of the full text of titles with a physical backup of the digital copy
- Licensed content from a stable and reliable vendor (such as HeinOnline, JSTOR)
- Titles available in databases that will be used for the foreseeable future (such as Westlaw and Lexis) and which are published by that database provider and not simply licensed from a third party

### Print Materials

Print materials may be purchased with priority and consideration given to the following:

- Texas primary and secondary sources
- Scholarly monographs not available in one of the library's e-book packages or other platforms, or considered vital to the long-term collection
- Selected study aids
- Heavily used treatises best suited to print use
- Titles that are prohibitively expensive or not available in online format
- Titles requested to remain in print by a law school faculty member
- Selected titles purchased using endowment or gift funds
- Selected print periodicals

### Multiple Formats

Multiple formats for the same title will not be purchased, with the following possible exceptions:

- Texas primary and secondary source materials
- Selected study aids
- SMU publications and titles authored by SMU law school faculty
- Selected titles considered seminal works in the legal field
- Requested by a law school faculty member
- Antiquarian or rare publications

## Microforms

Microforms are no longer purchased or collected, except as a last resort. Microforms already in the library's collection may be retained if no other access is available.

## Materials in Foreign Languages

Non-English titles will not be purchased or collected, with the following possible exceptions:

- Requested by a law school faculty member
- The information is not available in English and otherwise meets the collection development criteria.
- Historical non-English titles may be retained

# Policies for specific collections

## Primary Legal Materials

**Policy:** The library collects U.S. primary legal materials mainly in reliable online formats, with selected print materials collected and retained when online use is impractical and when long-term preservation is necessary.

### U.S. Primary Legal Materials

This collection consists of primary documents fundamental to U.S. legal research, including federal and U.S. state codes, court decisions, and administrative law materials. Many are available in Westlaw or Lexis or have other reliable online access.

Selected titles are still actively collected in print. These include:

- Titles related to Texas, including *Texas Cases*, *Southwestern Reporter*, *Vernon's Texas Statutes and Code*, Texas session laws, and the Texas Administrative Code
- Titles not easily usable online

### Foreign and International Primary Legal Materials

- Foreign primary materials will not be collected, unless needed to support the curriculum or requested by a faculty member.
- International primary materials, including UN materials and treaty collections, are now primarily available online or on the open web and are not collected in print.

### Preservation and retention

- Texas-related primary titles will be preserved in print.
- Historical collections of session laws and state codes for all 50 states.
  - Pre-1900 materials (for states admitted before 1900)
  - Materials from early statehood (for states admitted after 1900)
- Some print foreign primary materials may be retained for long-term preservation, especially if few other U.S. libraries own that title or it is not easily available online. In lieu of retaining such titles, the library may opt to donate them to a group dedicated to the long-term preservation of legal materials or to a vendor for digitization purposes.

## Print Reference Collection

**Policy:** This collection is a small, focused set of titles that are primarily used for ready reference and statistical information.

### Details

Print reference materials will include:

- The latest editions of various Texas-related titles
- A small number of general ready reference and legal reference tools
- Other reference sources where the print version offers advantages over online versions

### Preservation and retention

- Texas-related titles will be transferred to the Texas Collection or Storage for long-term retention when the edition is replaced by a newer edition or becomes out-of-date.
- General reference materials will not be retained once the material is out-of-date, unless needed for historical purposes.

## Reserve collection

**Policy:** The reserve collection contains the most popular print materials, ensuring that high-demand resources are available for short-term loan or in-house library use, including:

- The latest editions of study aids
- *O'Connor's* titles
- Federal and state court rules deskbooks
- *Texas Pattern Jury Charges*
- *Restatements of the Law*
- Legal citation manuals
- Materials put on reserve for classes by law school faculty members

### Preservation and retention

- Texas-related titles: transferred to the Texas Collection or Storage for long-term retention when replaced by a newer edition or out-of-date.
- Older editions of study aids: transferred to the circulating collection and retained until/unless replaced by an online version
- Restatements of the law: retained in the Reserve collection

## Texas collection

**Policy:** The library collects and maintains a near-comprehensive collection of Texas legal materials in print, both current and historical. Multiple formats may be collected for titles in this collection.

### Details

Texas legal materials include:

- Primary source materials related to Texas



- State Bar of Texas materials, particularly those that the State Bar provides at no cost to law schools
  - Note: State Bar of Texas materials that cover federal topics are housed in the main circulating collection
- Practitioner materials related to Texas
- Legal treatises and scholarly monographs related to Texas
- *Texas Jurisprudence*
- *Texas Digest*
- *Vernon's Texas Statutes and Codes*
- Selected continuing legal education (CLE) publications related to Texas
- Historical and superseded editions of the above materials

### Preservation and retention

- One print copy of Texas primary materials will be preserved.
- One print copy of most secondary source materials related to Texas will also be preserved in print, except for works considered ephemeral.
- Materials may be moved to Storage, if space is an issue in the Texas Collection.

## Periodicals

**Policy:** access to periodicals will be through online formats. Periodicals will no longer be collected or maintained in print, except as noted below.

### Details

Print periodicals will be collected only when they meet one or more of the following criteria:

- SMU Dedman School of Law journals and other periodical publications
- Titles not available in a reliable online format and relevant to faculty research
- Titles held by a small number of U.S. libraries and not available in reliable online format
- Titles that the law library has committed to retain for consortial print archival projects (e.g., WEST)

### Preservation and retention

Only titles that meet the criteria above will be retained.

## Legal Treatises and Scholarly Monographs

**Policy:** The library collects legal treatises and scholarly monographs in either print or online formats, with an increasing emphasis on reliable online access. Collection priorities focus on subject areas that support the law school's curriculum and core strengths.

### Details

- Access to most legal treatises will be through online sources.
- Scholarly monographs may be collected in either print or online format, but with the intent that most purchases of scholarly monographs will increasingly transition to purchases in a reliable online format.
- Most of these materials are housed in the library's main circulating collection.

### Preservation and retention

The following categories will be preserved in print:

- Treatises still updated in print and for which the library maintains a current print subscription
- Historical treatises and scholarly monographs not available in a reliable online format
- Recently purchased monographs, regardless of online availability
- Print materials that have circulated in recent years, regardless of online availability
- Legal books held by few U.S. libraries and not available in reliable online format, unless considered ephemeral. In lieu of retaining little-held titles, the library may opt to donate them to a group dedicated to long-term preservation of legal materials or to a vendor for digitization.
- Materials requested for retention by current SMU law school faculty
- Books authored or co-authored by SMU Law School faculty, past or present
- Selected book copies containing unique features (signed by author, etc.)
- Books from the McKnight Antiquarian Book Collection transferred to the circulating collection
- Titles the law library has committed to retain for consortial print archival projects, such as WEST
- Annual publications received in print.
  - If each volume contains new/different material, past volumes are retained.
  - If content is simply updated annually or semi-annually, retention is determined on a case-by-case basis.

## Rare Book Collection

**Policy:** The Rare Book Collection preserves historical and rare legal materials, with a focus on early European and Western Hemisphere publications, rare and early Texas legal works, and unique or fragile items of scholarly and historical value.

### Details

The collection primarily consists of:

- European titles published before 1800
- U.S. titles published before 1880
- Texas publications published before 1900
- Later publications that are rare, fragile, signed, or associated with notable legal or historical figures
- The McKnight Antiquarian Book Collection

### Acquisition

- The library does not actively acquire rare books but will make highly selective purchases of older or rare legal materials when justified by scholarly or historical significance.

### Preservation and retention

- All volumes in this collection are permanently retained, including volumes in the McKnight Antiquarian Book Collection as well as McKnight Collection books that have been transferred to the circulating collection.

## Law School Archives

**Policy:** The library maintains the archives for the Dedman School of Law, preserving materials that document the history, activities, and scholarship of the school.

### Print Archives

The physical archives include:

- Law school publications
- Articles and other news sources about the law school
- Papers of selected faculty members
- Selected records of the law school
- Law school theses and dissertations
- Works authored by SMU faculty members
- Photos and videos
- Ephemera related to the law school (e.g., scrapbooks, portraits, blueprints, miscellaneous memorabilia)

## Digital Archives

- Digitization of archival materials is performed when feasible.

## Preservation and retention

### Print Archives

- Two copies will be preserved of:
  - All official law school publications (yearbooks, catalogs, graduation booklets, official publications such as *The Quad* and *The Brief*)
  - S.J.D. or other doctoral-level dissertations (one copy may be housed in the Reserve Collection or main circulating collection)
  - SMU Law Reviews and Journals (preserved as part of the library's periodical collection)
- All other law school archival materials will have one copy preserved.

## Digital Archives

- Digitized archives should be preserved in the institutional repository collections when the material is suitable for public access and fits the organizational capabilities of the institutional repository.
- Materials unsuitable for public access may be digitally preserved and stored in non-public storage

# Funding and Gifts

## General Materials Acquisitions Budget

Most materials are purchased out of the law library's general materials acquisitions budget, using funds allocated by the law school. Funds in this budget are allocated annually and may fluctuate from year to year and should therefore be used first.

## Endowment Funds

Underwood Law Library has several endowed funds which supplement the law library's general acquisitions budget. Appendix A contains a list of current endowed funds and any specified uses or restrictions on each fund.

Endowment funds can be used to purchase the following materials, provided the purchase meets the endowment's described uses:

- Print monographs, treatises and selected serials
- eBooks and selected other online resources

## Gifts

### Physical Gifts

Physical gifts of the following types may be accepted:

- Rare or unique legal items
- Materials not already owned by the law library that fill gaps in the collection and otherwise meet the current collection development criteria
- Other materials at the discretion of the law library director

### Monetary Gifts

On occasion, the library may accept monetary gifts that are used to purchase library materials, usually in honor or memory of a particular individual.

## Digital Preservation

Given that the law library will continue to transition over time from a primarily print-based collection to one that is online, digital preservation will become an increasingly important need. This is especially true of materials that are digitally purchased rather than simply licensed. We cannot always rely on vendors to provide long-term access to online materials, and the burden will start to fall more on the law library to ensure the long-term preservation of materials purchased in online format. This will be a long-term effort to build and sustain digital preservation of these materials.

Currently, the law library's primary focus for digital preservation is the following:

- Document online titles owned in Alma, at either the title level or the collection level.
- Provide safe storage for backup copies of digital titles that have been provided by the vendor on various types of media.
- When possible, make local digital backup copies to more stable media, especially backup copies received on digital media that are no longer heavily used, such as tapes and CD-ROMs.
- Encourage vendors to provide updates on their own long-term preservation strategies.
- Dedman School of Law publications in the local SMU Scholar Repository should be preserved for long-term access.

In the future, the law library should work toward having a more robust digital preservation strategy and this should be done in tandem with other SMU libraries, if possible.

# Appendix A

## Endowment Funds

# Appendix B

## Update history

### **August 19, 2025**

Collection Development Policy formally adopted.

### **September 24, 2025**

Minor formatting edits only.