



## REVIEW ARTICLE

### LIBRARY WEEDING OUT POLICY: WHAT IT IS AND WHY WE DO IT

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#### ABSTRACT

Weeding is a necessary, ongoing part of maintaining collections in libraries. Taking out materials from the library that are outdated, unused, or damaged on a permanent basis is essential for maintaining the health and viability of the collections. Weeding enhances collections' functionality, guaranteeing they meet the educational and research needs of students, faculty, and staff at the library. Moreover, the procedure creates room on shelves for newly obtained items. The Library's mission of collecting, organizing, and providing access to information resources is upheld through guidance from the Collection Development Policy in weeding decisions.

## INTRODUCTION

Culling library collections is a crucial aspect of building a beneficial and well-maintained collection. The process involves regularly evaluating and removing titles that are no longer beneficial to library users or are damaged. Weeding helps to optimize the collection's value and ensure it meets the needs of university students, faculty, and staff for instruction and research. Furthermore, it creates available shelf space for newly obtained items. The policy for developing the collection influences decisions to remove items, aligning with the library's goal of acquiring, arranging, and offering access to information materials. According to the library committee of the University Grants Commission (UGC), it is important to weed out materials as many lose value within twenty-five years. By that point, their thinking might turn out to be incorrect. Keeping outdated, low-quality books in a service library serves no purpose and just takes up shelf space. The correct approach is to regularly remove old versions; they should be replaced by newer versions.]

**Meaning and Purpose:** Policy on weeding out materials is a crucial part of the collection development policy. Getting rid of documents involves eliminating documents that have been deemed un-useful or obsolete from the library collection.

Documents that are taken out of the library may be thrown away if they are no longer useful, given to another library, or stored in a designated area known as a dormitory library. The term "weeding out policy" refers to a policy statement about:

- What materials are to be weeded out?
- When to weed out?
- Who should weed out?
- How to weed out?
- What to do with weeded out materials?

Weeding also known as de-selection, is a process of removing library materials from collections based on certain criteria. Weeding is a necessary process that libraries continuously perform. When weeding considers factors such as age of materials, last circulation date, number of circulations, condition of materials, if the systems have other copies of the book or if the books is a part of series this is similar to the MUSTLE (Misleading, Ugly, Superseded, Trivial, Irrelevant and Elsewhere).

**Why library weeding important?:** Weeding-out outdated collections is very necessary to keep library up to date. It is a necessary process that libraries continuously perform. Weeding is vital because it saves shelfspace (by removing over stuffed shelves and creating room for new books), makes it easier to browse the collection, remove outdated unused, damaged, makes the collection more appealing.

**Criteria for Weeding:** Library materials of all types may be candidates for weeding based on the following criteria:

**Currency:** The content of library materials should be accurate and up to date. Materials that are superseded by newer, revised, or updated editions may be weeded. The library takes into consideration faculty and students whose scholarship and teaching require the use of historical texts in areas such as psychology, mathematics, and physics.

**Usage:** Low or no usage may be a factor in weeding decisions. Library personnel may consult circulation statistics or other reports to determine viable candidates for weeding.

**Physical Condition:** Materials that are badly deteriorated or damaged and beyond reasonable preservation efforts will be weeded. Consideration for replacement will be made on a case-by-case basis.

**Duplicates:** Due to space limitations, the library may weed duplicate copies of library materials. Library staff will take into consideration the need to have more than one copy of a title on hand, especially for materials that are heavily used or are a part of a college-wide program.

**Completeness:** Materials that are part of a multi-volume set of which the library does not have all volumes may be weeded.

**Uniqueness:** The library will not weed materials that are considered unique.

**Format Obsolescence:** Materials in obsolete formats may be weeded if the content is available elsewhere or if the material is in poor condition.

### Formats and Material Types

**Books:** If physical copies are worn and the library has the same title in eBook form, these copies will be candidates for withdrawal. Additionally, for new acquisitions, the eBook format is starting to overtake print in many areas. Thus, even though eBooks are not visible on the shelves, many subject areas of the libraries are covered by this format. The library in charge and librarians will work with relevant teaching faculty to determine the need to retain print copies in addition to electronic versions for research and/or instructional purposes.

**Journals and Other Recurring Publications:** Although electronic access is the preferred format for serials, journals, and newspapers, the library still houses many titles in print formats. If a journal title is available in databases, the library may opt to weed the print issues.

**Media Materials:** Media formats may be weeded based on any of the criteria listed in the previous section of these guidelines.

**Maps:** Federal depository maps must follow weeding guidelines published by the depository program. Purchased maps may be weeded based on any of the criteria listed in the previous section of these guidelines.

**Federal Documents:** The library must follow the weeding guidelines that are in place at the federal level for government documents.

**Reference Materials:** Reference materials may be weeded based on any of the criteria listed in the previous section of these guidelines. Print materials may be weeded based on their availability online.

**Weeding Out Policy, Some Steps:** Following some guide line to weed-out collection, this policy is different form writing off the books with due permission by the authority:-

- From the competent authority of the university will form a committee consist of a faculty member from each specialization area, members of the library committee and the library in charge or librarian?
- Library staff will assist the committee and the library staff in preparing the list of outdated documents/books no more in circulation or the books having two or more editions that are more recent already in the library.
- For core textbook/book bank books, whenever any new edition is procured for all students or if a course is discontinued then after two-year gestation period, all such books will be included in the weed-out list by the library staff.
- For subjects where new policies or rules changes every year. i.e., taxation, old editions for more than two years will also be included in the list.
- Book which was torn off, whose pages were teared off, or which were mutilated, all such books will also be included in the weed-out list by the library staff.
- For areas like Computer/Information technology, all books related to obsoletetechnologies/software/hardware will also be included in the list after a gap of three years.
- A compiled list by the library staff with details of the books. Cost, number of copies available in the library, year, accession number and reasons for inclusion in the weed- out list. This list put before the weed-out committee members.
- Weed-out committee will deliberate upon the list and check if there are chances of such books use again in future or if any of these books may be used in other program of the institute if any committee will also look into the aspect that no book termed as classic or needed for research purpose for posterity is included in the list.
- Committee will also verify physical availability of such books to avoid inclusion of books stolen form the library in this list. Faculty member of each specialization area deputed in the committee will endorse weeding out books related to there are a specialization.
- Once committee is satisfied, committee members will recommend weeding-out of the collection form the library to the authority. Authority has full discretion to accept/reject fully or partially committee recommendations keeping the institute interest in mind. Once the higher authority approves the committee recommendations in writing, library will initiate process of weeding out that collection from the library and update entries in the accession register and in library automation software mentioning reasons and date of weeding out of any books.
- Printed magazines/journals, which serve only immediate requirements, may also be included for weeding-out to create space for future issues in the periodical's shelves. Library need to maintain all magazines/journals issues for a minimum period of two year before including any magazine/journals for weeding out consideration.

- The weeded-out collection may either be donated to some other needy library or may be disposed as per the standard policy of the institute.

## CONCLUSION

Weeding guidelines will be reviewed regularly by the practicing librarians in collaboration with the library in charge and other library personnel. Weeding or deselecting, is the removed of library materials that are no longer useful, no longer appropriate, or rarely used. An overcrowded library collection with outdated and irrelevant materials can make it difficult for users to find the resources they need. It is not a mechanical process, there is emotion involved, there is thought involved, and it takes the same amount of skill to build a collection as it does to cull one.

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