

**Shelving Policy of the Health Sciences Library  
University at Stony Brook**

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## I. Basic Considerations

### ***General Principles***

Ease of access for the Library's users shall be the guiding principle in developing shelving policy for the Health Sciences Library at the University at Stony Brook. Journal titles will be verified against standard sources as authorities for correct forms of titles. Shelving will be as consistent as possible, that is, follow a set of practices with as few exceptions as possible. The policy shall be written and subject to regular review. Subsequent revisions in the policy shall be incorporated into the written policy. Shelving shall follow the policy rather than devising policy to follow shelving practices.

**Rationale:**

The library exists to provide support for the academic, clinical, and research programs of the State University at Stony Brook and the University Medical Center. Simple, uncomplicated shelving practices will facilitate users' ability to locate materials.

### ***Authority***

Decisions about the correct form of a title to be used for shelving will be based on the use of authority lists. The primary authority shall be **OCLC**. Titles not located in OCLC shall be verified in the primary subject index of the discipline. For our collection, the following shall be used: **Index Medicus** for medicine; **Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature** for nursing and allied health; **Index to Dental Literature** for dentistry; and, **Social Work Abstracts** for social welfare.

**Rationale:**

OCLC is a major authority source already in use in the Health Sciences Library. It has the broadest subject scope of authority lists considered. OCLC generally agrees with *Index Medicus*, the primary data base of medical literature which is also used in the Health Sciences Library. Subject indexes representing the subjects covered by the schools served by the Health Sciences Library will provide extended coverage in specialty areas to complement OCLC.

### ***Physical arrangement***

Shelves shall be set at a standard height of 12". A software program shall be used to determine spacing intervals in the stacks. Items shall be shelved according to the policy within separate location designations. Volumes on shelves which are not completely filled shall be supported by book ends. Volumes in excess of twelve inches in height shall be shelved on their spines. Tall volumes which are also too wide to be shelved on their spines shall be placed flat on

the bottom shelf of the shelving section in which they belong according to the alphabetic or classified arrangement. Unbound serial issues shall be placed chronologically in upright boxes.

**Rationale:**

Setting standard shelf height at 12" allows the majority of the volumes in the collection to be shelved upright. This and the use of bookends ensure greater ease of access for users by permitting readier viewing of the spine markings and is less wearing on bindings. Shelving oversize items on their spines or flat on shelves also does less damage to bindings, preserving volumes for use over longer time periods, and places them as close as possible to their expected location since the collection is too small to warrant a separate "oversize" section. Using boxes for unbound journal, index, and abstract volumes keeps issues of a title together, takes less shelf space than issues lying flat, and allows users to read spine labels more easily. These practices promote a neat and more attractive appearance in the stacks.

Ease of user access argues for keeping material types separated but keeping parts of types (e.g., supplements, special issues) together. The fewer exceptions there are, the easier it will be for users to locate materials.

***Non-print formats***

Titles, parts of titles, supplements, and other addenda in non-print formats, whether they are independent or accompany classified or alphabetically arranged items, will be shelved in the media section of Reserves. Audio tapes, CD-ROM, computer disks, and videotapes will be shelved following the policy guidelines. Microfiche and microfilm formats will be stored in respective cabinets. Notes regarding the availability of these materials and their locations will be in the library's integrated online computer system rather than in the stacks. Individual items may also be marked to draw the user's attention to the non-print companion pieces. An effort shall be made to keep print material accompanying non-print formats together with the respective non-print item.

While electronic journals do not require shelving, they require access pointers which can more easily be located by users in the online catalog than in the journal stacks. Therefore, users will be informed of electronic availability by means of electronic addresses in the library's integrated online computer system.

**Rationale:**

Different formats present shelving difficulties due to the nature of the materials. Preserving the materials and ensuring their retention requires special handling. Since the library does not have a media section nor any special media shelving, the best alternative is to place the materials in the reserve closed stacks. The likelihood that users may need guidance with the equipment to use these materials also argues for their placement on reserve where someone would be available to help them. Accompanying materials often explain the means by which the user moves through the text or other details essential to the effective utilization of the non-print material.

**II. Collection Organization**

### **Arrangement**

Journals, indexes and abstracts, including their supplements and special issues, will normally be shelved alphabetically by title. Books shall be shelved by classification number, utilizing both Library of Congress and National Library of Medicine classification schemes. Cutter numbers shall be read character by character, as if preceded by a decimal even when the decimal point is not typed as part of the call number.

#### **Rationale:**

Since the majority of collection use is for journals, we will continue our practice of shelving alphabetically by title. For the classified items, one classification scheme alone is insufficient for the subject coverage due to the nature of the library's collection. To read Cutter numbers character by character (decimal format) is a standard library practice. The library's online integrated computer system follows this rule in searching and displaying call numbers. The other libraries on campus follow this rule although they do type the decimal point as part of the call number. Therefore, both our system and the majority of our campus users will be accustomed to this practice for our classified materials.

### **Alphabetization**

Journal, index, and abstract titles will be shelved in alphabetical order, word by word, using only significant words and ignoring initial articles. Internal articles, conjunctions, and prepositions will be ignored. Initial prepositions will be considered significant words. Hyphenated words will be treated as one word. These alphabetization principles will apply regardless of the language of origin of the title. Acronyms determined by authority lists to constitute the initial or other portion of the title will be treated as significant words in alphabetizing. Acronyms appearing at the beginning of a title will constitute the first significant word of the title. Acronyms determined to be part of the title will be treated as significant words in alphabetizing.

#### **Examples:**

Significant words:

*Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States*  
shelves as *Proceedings National Academy Sciences United States*

Foreign titles:

*L'Encephale* shelves as *Encephale*  
*Der Hautartz* shelves as *Hautartz*

Initial preposition:

*In Vitro* shelves as *In Vitro*

Hyphenated words:

*Naunyn-Schmeidberg's Archiv fuer Pharmacologie*  
shelves as *NauynSchmeidberg's Archiv Pharmacologie*

Acronyms: *AORN, BMJ British Medical Journal, N&HC Perspectives on Community, NMR in Biomedicine*

An explicit exception will be made for the variant titles of *Index Medicus*. All versions of the title (*Index Catalogue of the Surgeon General's Office, Bibliographia Medica, Quarterly Cumulative Index Medicus, Current List of Medical Literature, Cumulated Index Medicus, and Index Medicus*) will be shelved together as *Index Medicus*.

For the purposes of shelving journals, subtitles will be ignored unless the subtitle becomes necessary to distinguish between two similarly titled publications. Punctuation marks will likewise be ignored in alphabetizing unless essential to determine priority of order in shelving.

**Rationale:**

This form of alphabetization is current National Library of Medicine practice and has been in use in the Health Sciences Library. Therefore, it follows an established standard and will not necessitate any change from current practice for library users. Changing to the American Library Association practice of including internal articles, prepositions, and conjunctions in alphabetizing would significantly impact users and staff alike and result in more extensive shifting of journals to accommodate these rules. Due to the primacy of its use in the library, shelving title variants of *Index Medicus* in separate locations would disadvantage users, requiring them to learn or recall and find different shelving locations depending on the time period of their search for information. Subtitles and punctuation distinctions (with the exception of hyphens) have virtually no effect on shelf order.

### III. Serials

#### **Supplements**

Supplements, special issues, and inserts will be shelved with their respective main serial titles, as a general rule. Variant titles will display in the serial records to increase the points of access to such titles. Analytical records in the library's integrated online computer system will also increase the ease of access for users to such materials.

Distinctive supplement titles which are well established and indexed will be treated as independent titles and shelved accordingly.

**Examples:**

*Acta Neurologica Scandinavica Supplementum* shelves after *Acta Neurologica Scandinavica*  
*Trends in Biochemical Sciences. Reference Edition* shelves after *Trends in Biochemical Sciences*.

Individual supplements or special issues with a separate title will be treated as issues of the serial title with a subtitle and will be shelved under the main serial title. Exceptions may be made for substantive special issues meeting particular resource needs. Consideration in making these judgments shall be given to frequency of requests from users, significant reference value or subject expertise of the publication, frequent citation, and stand-alone, independent value of the material. Supplement series which have been classified prior to inception of this policy will continue to be classified, maintaining continuity of these sets.

**Examples:**

Subtitle: *AIDS: A Year in Review* shelves as *AIDS. Supplement*.  
Classified duplicate: *JAMA's* annual education issue shelves as *Annual report on medical education in the United States. Ref W 18 A6151 [year]*

Classified supplement: *Kidney International Supplement* shelves as WJ 300 K46  
[number] [year]

Inserts, which are often ephemeral materials and poorly identified, will be retained and bound with the respective serial titles insofar as possible. Particular attention shall be paid to retaining inserts which are listed in the journal's table of contents or are indexed in the library's authority sources. The Serials Librarian shall exercise discretion in determining whether inserts shall be shelved in the open stacks prior to binding.

**Rationale:**

It is important to keep supplemental materials of various types together with the main serial title due to the nature of the materials. Exceptions are made only to continue a long-standing practice with which our users are familiar. Inserts vary in form and significance, requiring case by case review.

**Multiple sections**

In the case of a serial title which is published in multiple sections with independent numbering for each section, each section will be treated as a separate title for shelving purposes.

In the case of a serial title consisting of multiple sections but having consecutive numbering (or offering the option of consecutive numbering), the serial shall be shelved by the main serial title. Following the bound volumes on the shelf, unbound issues will be separated and alphabetized by the section titles as if they were subtitles of the main serial title.

**Rationale:**

Consecutive numbering will result in the multiple sections being bound together, with the spine label showing the serial title first, resulting in the sections being shelved under the serial title after binding. Rather than shelve unbound issues separately from the bound volumes and under the various section titles, it would be easier for users and would take less shelving space to continue the current practice of shelving the multiple sections under the series title. Sub-grouping the unbound issues of sections by section title would ease the users' confusion in identifying issues for retrieval and enable shelvees to more readily identify title/subtitle distinctions. Multiple sections numbered separately will be bound separately and thus will be treated as independent titles rather than as sections.

**Example:**

*DNA Repair* shelves as *Mutation Research: DNA Repair*  
*Experimental Mutagenesis and Related Subjects* shelves as  
*Mutation Research: Experimental Mutagenesis and Related Subjects*  
*Fundamental and Molecular Mechanisms of Mutagenesis* shelves as  
*Mutation Research: Fundamental and Molecular Mechanisms of Mutagenesis*  
*Genetic Toxicology* shelves as *Mutation Research: Genetic Toxicology*  
*Mutation Research Letters* shelves as  
*Mutation Research: Mutation Research Letters*

**Monographic series**

Unnumbered monographic series will be classified. Numbered monographic series may be classified or shelved alphabetically as serials depending on the nature of the publication.

### **Duplicates**

Only one copy of a serial title or issue will be shelved in the open stacks. Any duplicate issues or subscriptions will be held in Serials as replacements, for binding, or for serials exchange. A duplicate copy of a supplement or special issue may be classified for the reference or book collection when it has significant value as an independent publication.

#### **Rationale:**

Shelving duplicate copies or subscriptions in the open journal stacks would consume valuable shelf space and would be unnecessarily confusing to shelve. Presently, duplicate subscriptions are purchased for only three titles (*American Journal of Nursing*, *JAMA*, and the *New England Journal of Medicine*) to ensure availability of issues for binding. Shelving these duplicates in the stacks would not fulfill this purpose.

### **Retention List**

A list of serial titles which are not permanently retained due to the lack of permanent research value in the collection shall be kept. The list shall indicate the title, the duration of the period for which the title is retained, the shelving location, and the frequency of publication. A periodic review of the duration titles on the list are to be held shall be undertaken. Issues will be weeded and discarded at regular intervals occurring at least quarterly. The designation of "current" on the retention list shall be defined as "the most recently acquired issues covering the designated time period for that title".

#### **Rationale:**

The library subscribes to ephemeral material which is not intended to be of permanent value to the collection. The duration of retention varies by title depending on the nature of the material and the availability of past issues elsewhere.

#### **Examples:**

<i>Newsweek</i>	weekly	current 4 issues	journal stacks
<i>Publisher's Weekly</i>	weekly	current 6 months	Acquisitions

### **Processing**

Spine labels shall endeavor to clarify the designated shelving title and shall indicate when supplements, special issues, or inserts are bound with the serial title. Special notes regarding special issues or inserts may be made in the library's online integrated computer system. Similar notes in union lists will be made in accordance with the policies of those union lists.

#### **Rationale:**

There is no consistency in the way supplements, special issues, and inserts are handled by publishers, resulting in difficulty designing a uniform policy. Providing clarification through spine labels and analyzed records or notes as additional access points in system entries improves access to supplement materials.

## IV. Further Considerations

### *Finding tools*

Recent years of major indexes will be shelved on index tables to facilitate their use. The indexes shall be those most central to the library's collection and users' needs.

#### ***Rationale:***

*Availability of conveniently located print sources serve as a backup when electronic sources are unavailable, either due to technical problems or lack of a sufficient number of access terminals. They also serve as an alternative for users who prefer to work with printed sources or for users who are restricted from using the library's electronic databases due to our licensing agreements.*

Thesauri, subject and author indexes, and cumulative indexes shall be shelved with the respective journal, abstract, or index title with which they are intended for use even if the tool has a separate series title. An index for an individual journal title will be shelved with that title. If bound separately, the index shall be shelved following the last issue covered by the index. An index volume which contains any reference to journals shelved in the open stacks shall be shelved in the open stacks rather than storage. An index which covers only chronological periods of a title kept in storage will be shelved with the volumes in storage.

#### ***Rationale:***

*An index to an individual title is a finding tool which is intended to be used in conjunction with the title. Shelving the index proximate to the title will provide the greatest ease of access to the user.*

#### ***Examples:***

*Thesaurus of ERIC Descriptors shelves with Resources In Education*  
*Author Index to Psychological Index and Cumulative Author Index to Psychological Abstracts* shelf with *Psychological Abstracts*  
*Biochimica, Biophysica Acta Index* shelves with *Biochimica, Biophysica Acta.*

### ***Storage***

Items in storage shall be shelved following the same policy as those in the open stacks. Items will be retrieved daily Monday through Friday according to the set schedule and re-shelved upon return. They will be held at the Circulation Desk while removed from storage.

A periodic review shall be undertaken to determine whether additional journal volumes need to be moved to compact shelving in the library's on-site storage area. Factors taken into consideration before moving volumes shall include available space in the open stacks, shelving space in storage, and frequency of use.

**Rationale:**

Consistency and ease of access for retrieving items are the primary considerations. Alternate shelving arrangements such as placing the most frequently retrieved titles first will necessitate shifting as the frequency of use data changes and require users to learn or consult lists of titles shelved in a separate section. Also, frequency of use data alone may require moving long sequences of titles (e.g., *JAMA*) when only certain time periods are frequently used.

## **V. Implementation**

Once adopted, this policy shall be phased in, with full implementation expected by the time the library renovation is complete.

Effective use of media and electronic formats will require sufficient appropriate equipment for access to these formats. In particular, it has become apparent that the library will have to install CD-ROM drives or other equipment if CD-ROM's are to be used outside the Microcomputer Lab, and obtain a functional microform reader/printer. Further, the Shelving Committee recognizes that successful implementation and maintenance of this shelving policy will only occur if there is a full-time person dedicated to stack maintenance.