

MELSA Collection Policy

Approved 6/17/21 by the MELSA Board of Trustees

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to MELSA about the principles upon which selections are made. It provides staff the goals and guidelines to assist in choosing from a vast array of available materials and then relies upon staff judgement to responsibly execute its intent. Its primary objective is to ensure that public monies are spent wisely so that MELSA can provide relevant materials in sufficient supply to meet demand and make MELSA a dependable resource.

This policy also informs the public of the principles upon which collection decisions are based. This policy describes the role of selection and management in the mission of MELSA to serve a region-wide community of library users. It defines the scope of the collection, provides a plan for continual and strategic development, and identifies strengths in the collection. It connects selection decisions and collection management to intellectual freedom principles.

Purpose of the Collection: The MELSA: Twin Cities Metro eLibrary (“Consortium”) is a partnership of MELSA and its eight member libraries that cooperate in purchasing digital materials for customers. The Consortium collection is developed to offer residents of the seven-county Twin Cities metro area access to electronically formatted materials for all ages. The Consortium offers a diverse collection of the most popular and needed digital formats and topics. By combining resources, the public will be offered a wider range of needed materials than can be offered by each member library alone.

The Consortium provides a decision-making and fiscal model for member library cooperation that encourages libraries to collaborate, while exploring and implementing new information technologies and issues. This model emphasizes sharing costs as well as knowledge and resources.

Responsibility for Selection

Ultimate responsibility for selection of materials and securing and allocating funds for materials rests with the Executive Director, who operates within the framework of budgets, policies, goals, and objectives determined by the MELSA Advisory Board and Board of Trustees. The Executive Director will delegate authority to interpret and apply the policies in daily operation to the Project Manager, who does so with the guidance of the MELSA Collection Development Team.

In applying professional judgement to selection, MELSA will follow these best practices:

- Handle all requests equitably;
- Understand and respond to changing demographics, as well as societal and technological changes;

- Recognize that materials of varying complexity and format are necessary to serve all members of the community;
- Balance individual and community needs;
- Seek continuous improvement through ongoing measurement.

Scope of Collection

The community served by this collection is incredibly diverse and, as such, the collection must reflect the needs, interests, and viewpoints of this large community in its entirety, taking into consideration access needs in a digital environment.

The collection is broad, current, and popular. This collection is not concerned with being completely comprehensive and some subject areas are collected in greater depth than others, as a reflection of current use and demand. The Consortium aims for a balance of popular materials and those in line with the institutional goals of public libraries. The materials chosen support general interest in a broad range of categories.

A variety of reading and comprehension levels are also represented in the collection, based on community need. Materials in languages other than English and Spanish will be added as determined by community need and title availability. The collection also includes materials that are classified as local content either by an author, publisher or subject matter relating to Minnesota.

Currently, the collection consists of eBooks, eAudiobooks, and eMagazines. Materials are selected to support a variety of computer systems and hardware in multiple prevailing formats in order to serve the differing needs of individual users.

Method of Selection

Acquisitions and selection decisions are made in a manner most efficient and cost effective for MELSA.

MELSA does not select through unsolicited materials preview; unsolicited telephone orders, or other processes that require return of materials not selected or meetings with sales representatives. Materials sent to or given to MELSA for purchase consideration will be treated as donations and will not be acknowledged or returned.

General Criteria for Selection & Collection Priorities

To develop and maintain an excellent collection, materials are evaluated according to one or more of the following criteria. An item may be included or excluded on any one or more of the following criteria:

- Culturally and identity inclusive
- Racially diverse
- Contemporary significance, popular interest, or permanent value

- Prominence, authority, significance, and/or competence of author or creator
- Suitability of subject and style for intended audience
 - Materials are purchased for the independent learner rather than textbooks or other curriculum materials designed for the more formal student.
 - General treatments are chosen over those that are specialized, scholarly, or primarily for professional use.
 - Appropriate reading level and subject matter for youth
- Cost, in relation to the wise use of available resources
- Relation to existing collection and to other material on the subject
 - MELSA will make available a representative selection of materials on subjects; it will not seek to acquire all the materials on any given subject.
- Favorable information in published critical reviews or bibliographies
- Requests by member library patrons
 - MELSA welcomes requests that specific library materials be purchased for the collection. Requests will be considered for purchase using the established selection procedures and the Collection Development Policy. Policy and budget may limit the ability of MELSA to provide all requested materials.
- Present and potential relevance to community needs and/or local interest
- Identified, expressed, or anticipated demand in the general community
- Availability of titles from vendors
- Timeliness and accuracy of material including new editions of existing materials.
- Statement of challenging, original, or alternative point of view
- Authenticity of historical, regional, or social setting

In addition to content and availability criteria for selection, given the digital nature of this collection, selectors must also take into consideration format factors. The following criteria will be considered.

- Affordability
- Appropriateness of format
- Illustration rendering
- Narrator's qualifications
- Stability of content
- Usage rights and license models

Relationships to Member Libraries

MELSA recognizes resources of member libraries and shall not needlessly duplicate materials.

Gifts

MELSA recognizes that gifts are an important source of library materials, and as such, welcomes gifts of money to buy such materials. All gift materials must meet the Collection Development Policy criteria guidelines for inclusion in the Library collection. No gifts may be accepted which impose preconditions, such as special collection status, or special circulation

rules. All materials added to the collection are the property of MELSA and, therefore, subject to the same conditions as all other library materials. Once a donation is given to MELSA it will not be returned. MELSA reserves the right to use and dispose of gift funds as seems appropriate for current needs, which may include but is not limited to, inclusion in the Library collection or disposal.

Acceptance of gifts exceeding \$500 must be approved by the MELSA Board of Trustees.

Collection Management

Collection Management is the systematic evaluation of the collection designed to facilitate the withdrawal of unused or obsolete materials from the collection. Although a digital collection does not have the same space constraints of a physical collection, collection management is necessary to upgrade the collection in terms of relevancy, usefulness, ease of searching, and circulation statistics. Collection management also allows for greater review of the collection, helping to determine gaps and deficiencies, assisting selectors in creating a collection that is more responsive to patron demand and need.

MELSA and the Collection Development Team perform continuing analysis of the use of the collection, the needs and interests of the community, request lists, the availability of similar materials, and cost. These factors will be considered in determining the number of copies of each title MELSA should have and when an item should be replaced or withdrawn.

As a guide, items may be identified for withdrawal when they are:

- Factually inaccurate or obsolete
- No longer in demand as evidenced by circulation history
- Superseded by a new edition or a better title on the topic
- Of no discernible literary or topical merit
- Irrelevant to the needs of the community served
- Available elsewhere through reciprocal borrowing or interlibrary loan
- Identified as in opposition to the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion

In addition, titles may be recalled from the collection at any time by publishers without prior notice or titles may not be available for re-purchase.

Advantage Collections

MELSA member libraries are required to establish individual accounts with OverDrive, known as Advantage accounts.

Member libraries will make Advantage purchases based on their own individual collection development policies.

All materials purchased by MELSA will be accessible to the public, limited only by necessary circulation rules. No rule will be established which would allow preferential use of MELSA

purchased materials for any group or class of patron or which limits the use of materials by any group or class of patron, except as required by law.

Intellectual Freedom

MELSA aims to provide a collection with information spanning a broad spectrum of opinions. MELSA incorporates as part of this policy the Library Bill of Rights and the Freedom to Read Statement. The aforementioned documents are appendices attached to the policy. These principles guide the materials selection policies.

Selection decisions are based on the merit of works as they relate to the mission and goals of MELSA and its member libraries, as well as the expressed and anticipated needs of the community. Materials are selected on the basis of the content as a whole and without regard to the personal history of the author, composer, or producer. Each work is considered on its own merit.

MELSA has the responsibility to serve all the residents of its community. Variety and balance of opinion is sought in the collection. It hereby adopts the philosophy that a public library will not curtail what an individual may or may not read, see, or hear. MELSA strives to make available a representative selection of materials on subjects of interest to its patrons, including materials on various sides of controversial questions to enable patrons to make up their own minds about controversial subjects.

MELSA recognizes that some materials may be controversial or offensive to an individual, but maintains that individuals can apply their values to only themselves. Selection of materials will not be inhibited by the possibility that materials may come into the possession of minors; monitoring the reading and viewing of children is entirely the responsibility of their parents or legal guardians. MELSA does not endorse particular beliefs or views; nor is the selection of any given material equivalent to sanction of the author's views. Anticipated approval or disapproval by persons or groups will not be considered in the selection process.

Reconsideration of Materials

A MELSA: Twin Cities Metro eLibrary user may request that MELSA explain its acquisition of a digital title. Such a request will not result in immediate removal of that item. MELSA will reconsider any material in its collection upon written request from a patron following procedures outlined in Appendix A. The MELSA: Twin Cities Metro eLibrary requests that the user read this MELSA: Twin Cities Metro eLibrary Collection Development Policy before initiating such a request.

Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually by the MELSA Collection Development Team who will recommend changes or revisions to the MELSA Advisory Board and MELSA Board of Trustees, as well as on an as needed basis.

Appendix A

Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials

The following procedures will be followed to process a "Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials."

1. The patron will initiate a "Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials" with their [home library system](#).
2. Formal complaints for digital titles owned by MELSA will be forwarded to the MELSA Project Manager. If contact information is supplied, the MELSA Project Manager will acknowledge the complaint within seven (7) calendar days of receipt.
3. The MELSA Collection Development Team will consider the patron complaint, make a decision, and send a written response with that decision within twenty-eight (28) calendar days of receipt.
4. In the event the patron is not satisfied with the decision of the MELSA Collection Development Team, the patron may request to appear before the MELSA Advisory Board to present their concerns at a regularly scheduled meeting. The Advisory Board will consider the patron's concerns along with the response from the MELSA Collection Development Team. The MELSA Advisory Board will issue a written decision for the patron and the meeting minutes no later than fourteen (14) calendar days following its next regular meeting.
5. In the event the patron is not satisfied with the decision of the MELSA Advisory Board, the patron may request to appear before the MELSA Board of Trustees to present their concerns at a regularly scheduled meeting. The Board of Trustees will consider the patron's concerns along with the response from the Advisory Board. The MELSA Board of Trustees will issue a written decision for the patron and the meeting minutes no later than fourteen (14) calendar days following its next regular meeting. The final decision on appeals rests with the MELSA Board of Trustees

Appendix B

Adopted Intellectual Freedom Documents

1. [Library Bill of Rights](#)
2. [Freedom to Read](#)