



### Overview

Resources for College Libraries and RCL: Career Resources offer a highly selective core list comprising approximately 85,000 titles across 117 subjects. RCL concentrates on the traditional liberal arts and sciences undergraduate curriculum and RCL: Career Resources covers those programs offered most frequently at community colleges. Available as a [subscription database](#) and used as a qualitative component in the Bowker Book Analysis System, RCL is a tool used for collection development and analysis, primarily by librarians, along with teaching faculty, students and accrediting agencies. Institutions rely on RCL for recommendations on new titles to acquire as well as older titles to retain. RCL is co-published by ACRL/Choice and ProQuest.

The titles suggested by RCL should be the ones **all academic libraries must hold**. Almost all of these should be titles which can be profitably read and used by undergraduate students in the course of study or research. In most fields, this means works in the English language only. Select titles for faculty or graduate-level use, as well as exceptional but infrequently-used historical works, may also be recommended. While serving as an essential core collection, the RCL selections and subject schema should also be dynamic—responsive to the changing curriculum and reflective of scholarly shifts.

If you have additional questions or concerns, please contact the [RCL Project Editor](#).

### Guiding considerations

Works included in RCL are those monographs and web resources deemed central to undergraduate study in the subject area, including those:

- required or recommended for an undergraduate course;
- useful for undergraduate research;
- reflective of current scholarship;
- considered classic or foundational in the field;
- providing important historical understanding;
- higher-level works most necessary for teaching faculty or advanced undergraduate study;
- textbooks which are essential to the academic library collection.

Because RCL describes a collection specific to the undergraduate curriculum, the level at which a given work is pitched is a legitimate consideration. Is it appropriate for undergraduate students? If it is a complex work, is it accessible to advanced students? Would a faculty member consult it when composing a lecture or preparing a course? It can be challenging to identify amongst scholarly publications those titles most appropriate for an undergraduate audience, yet this remains a vital principle of the RCL project. For RCL: Career Resources, the majority of selected titles should be appropriate for lower-level undergraduate students.

Selection criteria may vary amongst specific RCL + CR subjects, taking account of publication distinctions within disciplines such as the relative emphasis upon monographs, age of materials consulted, adoption of new editions, availability and strength of electronic resources, and other factors. Subject editors will be best situated to judge how these factors affect the collection within a given field. While RCL strives for currency, editors should also be judicious in addressing topics affected by contentious change or receiving unbalanced attention, which may or may not be long-lasting or representative of the curriculum. The bibliography should register changes in disciplines, but should also resist scholarly or publishing fads.

### Selecting particular works

If a work is available in several different editions, the first consideration should be the quality of the material. For example, does a particular edition provide updated content, better notes, a superior translation, critical introductory material, etc? Is one edition widely considered to be the standard and definitive edition of a text?

Other factors may be taken into consideration:

- *Format*: Where the choice exists, and all other factors being equal, please add the paperback rather than the hardback or e-book edition. At this time, include print over electronic unless the ebook version contains superior content.
- *Print status*: While out-of-print status should not exclude a work, consider whether another resource currently available and in print has replaced the out-of-print work in the curriculum. Avoid adding titles which are forthcoming.
- *Cost*: If a particular work is cost-prohibitive for the average two or four-year college library, the editor should give special consideration before selecting it for inclusion.
- *Publisher*: If a particular publisher has produced the accepted scholarly edition of a work, refrain from adding a reprint version from nontraditional publishers (e.g. BooksOnDemand, Textbook Publishers, etc.). It is most critical that RCL recommend the correct edition of a work and the one that librarians and teaching faculty expect a library to retain, rather than including a reprint currently available from an alternate publisher. There may be exceptions for titles long out-of-print.

### Web resources

The content for web resources should meet the above guiding considerations for essential monographs. However, web resources should also be evaluated for credibility, stability, and longevity. Is the site maintained by a credible authority, either an individual scholar or a scholarly society, by a commercial enterprise, or an academic institution? How long has the site been in existence? Has it been updated recently? In addition to these initial evaluations, editors should regularly review and update selected web resources.

### Deselection or weeding titles

Just as academic libraries regularly weed holdings as part of collection management, RCL subject editors will need to make ongoing decisions regarding titles that should be removed. Criteria for weeding titles from an RCL subject area may include works that:

- have been replaced with a newer edition;
- have been superseded in the curriculum by a newer work;
- include outdated or unreliable information (without historical value);
- are broadly no longer useful or central to undergraduate study and teaching.

RCL's aim is a core and essential undergraduate collection; titles should only be weeded if an editor could confidently recommend that the book be removed from the academic library collection.

### Peer review

Each RCL + RCL: Career Resources subject undergoes comprehensive peer review on a rotating three-year cycle. This external evaluation and the suggestions provided by the academic librarians and faculty serving as peer referees provides an important, impartial assessment of current RCL content. Peer reviewers often suggest valuable additions and deletions to the existing subject bibliography, as well as identifying broader shifts in the undergraduate curriculum and the RCL subject organization. The contributions made by reviewers should also be factored into discipline-specific selection and deselection decisions.