

## Proper Shelving for Standard and Oversize Collections

### **Preamble**

The Rutgers University Libraries support and enrich the instructional, research, and public service missions of the University through the stewardship of scholarly information and the delivery of information services. Comprised of twenty-six libraries, centers, and reading rooms located on Rutgers' campuses in New Brunswick/Piscataway, Camden, and Newark, and with holdings of over three million volumes, the Rutgers University Libraries rank among the nation's top research libraries. An active collection management program instills respect for the library and its collection; and conserves their collection through the application and use of proactive preventive and corrective measures designed to enhance the life expectancy of a collection.

The Collection Management Group, a subgroup of the Access Services Committee, works collaboratively with selectors and Distributed Technical Services staff to maintain the integrity and accessibility of the Rutgers University Libraries' collections. The group, comprised of library staff members from all three campuses, develops accurate shelving practices, optimizes use of shelf space, ensures items locations are accurately represented, identifies items in need of preservation, and maintains collections in sound physical condition at all the Rutgers libraries.

### **Purpose of the Policy**

Books as a commodity are perishable; there is a direct correlation between how collections are handled by staff and patrons and the longevity of a collection. Proper and consistent care in the handling of our collections allows the library to preserve their resources thus protecting and ensuring that users have unencumbered access to information. Books are perishable and damage to a book is cumulative. Improper handling can cause the deterioration of a collection. One method that can be used to increase the longevity of a collection is proper shelving.

### **Policy Statement:**

Proper shelving techniques are important to the maintenance of a libraries collection. Books that are shelved incorrectly often need to be repaired because they have been pulled out of shape by gravity. All books should be shelved standing vertically, upright, and firmly supported on either side by books that are of the same size and not packed so tightly that it is difficult to remove a book from a shelf.

An oversized book should not be shelved on its fore edge (spine-up), because it causes the text block to loosen from its cover, instead it should be shelved with its spine down unless proper shelving allows for the creation of an Elephant Folio Collection.

- All books will be shelved standing vertically, upright, and firmly supported on either side;
- All books should not be packed so tightly that removal will cause damage to a book.
- Oversized books will not be shelved on their fore edge.
- Oversized books shall either be placed in Folio section of a collection (standing vertically upright), an Elephant Folio section of a collection (lying flat), or shelved spine down with a shelving tag if an oversized collection is not available.

This policy is intended to preserve our library collections and improve and maintain the overall longevity of its collections.

### **Applicability**

All full and part-time library employees shall follow proper shelving guidelines; non-compliance may affect the longevity of the Universities collections.