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SAAB MEDICAL LIBRARY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

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SCOPE

This manual applies to all policies, procedures, services, collections, and internal workflows of the Saab Medical Library (SML), and it defines how these local operations relate to the policies of the American University of Beirut's University Libraries (UL).

Subject covered. The manual governs SML services (reference and research support, information literacy and evidence-based medicine instruction, database and advanced search consultation, and evidence synthesis support), collections and resources (the biomedical collection in all formats, research guides, research tools, and online service forms), facilities (reading spaces, stacks, and service points), and internal workflows (local SML procedures and their coordination with UL technical services and other central units).

Persons bound by this manual. These policies and procedures apply to all SML personnel in the conduct of their duties, including the Head of SML, professional librarians, library staff, and student assistants and interns working under SML supervision.

Communities served. The services governed by this manual are provided to the AUB medical, health sciences, and nursing communities: the Faculty of Medicine, AUB Medical Center, Rafic Hariri School of Nursing, Faculty of Health Sciences, and affiliated researchers, students, residents, fellows, and other authorized AUB users.

Exclusions.

- UL central-unit staff are not bound by this manual in the performance of centrally governed functions (acquisitions, cataloging, electronic resources, binding, and preservation); their work follows UL-wide policies and procedures.
- Members of the public and other non-AUB individuals are outside the scope of this manual except where separate walk-in or external-access arrangements apply.
- This manual does not supersede UL-wide policies for circulation, acquisitions, cataloging, electronic resources, course reserves, binding, preservation, and collection development; where local and central procedures overlap, UL policies are the authoritative standard.
- Institution-wide AUB policies and the requirements of external accrediting or governing bodies fall outside this manual except where SML procedures are designed to support compliance with them.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Each topic below states the governing policy, and the procedure that carries it out. The Library follows University-wide library policies where they apply and maintains these local procedures for its own workflows.

1. General Framework and Governance

Policy	SML operates as a subject library within the University Libraries and serves as the primary biomedical and health-sciences information resource for the University's medical, health-sciences, and nursing communities. It supports education, research, evidence-based practice, evidence synthesis, and scholarly communication. SML follows University-wide library policies for circulation, acquisitions, cataloging, electronic resources, course reserves, binding, preservation, and collection development, and maintains local procedures for workflows specific to its users. Where local and central procedures overlap, the University-wide policy is the authoritative standard.
Procedure	• Maintain this manual as the authoritative local guide for Library workflows. • Review and update the manual regularly and when services, systems, or institutional policies change. • Coordinate each workflow with the relevant University Libraries department, and coordinate revisions with those departments before implementation. • Refer unresolved discrepancies, processing problems, and policy exceptions to the appropriate central unit, using University-wide policy as the standard where local and central procedures overlap.

2. Collection Development and Resource Selection

Policy	SML develops and maintains a selective, current, and high-quality biomedical and health-sciences collection that supports the Faculty of Medicine, the Rafic Hariri School of Nursing, the Faculty of Health Sciences, the Medical Center, and other University users. Selection decisions consider curricular relevance, research value, clinical importance, currency, authority, format, accessibility, licensing, expected use, cost, the availability of alternative access, and alignment with institutional priorities. Priority is given to digital access, and duplication is avoided unless justified by demand, reserve needs, heavy use, or the need for both circulating and non-circulating copies. Priority is given to the following categories: • Required or recommended course materials. • Resources needed for accreditation, clinical education, or board preparation. • High-demand titles and titles needed for course reserves. • Resources supporting new programs, courses, or research areas. • Replacement of outdated but still essential materials. • Rush orders requested by academic departments.
Procedure	• Accept requests from faculty members, departments, graduate students, SML librarians, or Head of SML. • Submit requests to the Acquisitions Department using the University Libraries online request form. • Review requests for relevance, duplication, urgency, format preference, and alignment with collection priorities. • Avoid duplication unless justified by high demand, reserve needs, heavy use, or the need for both circulating and non-circulating copies.

3. Periodicals and Electronic Resources

Policy	Print and electronic journals, databases, and continuing resources are managed centrally by the Acquisitions Department. SML liaises with that department to keep holdings complete and accurate, and it may recommend resources, report access problems, and communicate user needs. Selection and renewal decisions consider curricular and research relevance, usage, cost, licensing terms, platform quality, remote access, overlap with existing resources, and strategic value.
Procedure	• Receive current print issues from the Acquisitions Department. • Check that holdings and item information are reflected accurately in the system. • Report errors, missing issues, access problems, authentication issues, broken links, or platform changes to the relevant central unit. • Stamp, magnetize when applicable, and shelve current issues in the designated location. • Request replacement of lost or mutilated issues only for journals of lasting academic, clinical, or historical value.

4. Cataloging, Metadata, and Receipt of New Items

Policy	Cataloging and metadata work are performed by the Cataloging and Metadata Services Department. SML is responsible for checking received items to ensure that physical processing, item information, location, and discoverability meet service needs.
Procedure	• Verify each received item against the catalog record. • Check shelfmark, barcode, item status, location, and other relevant data for accuracy. • Confirm that the item is properly sensitized before shelving. • Report errors to the Cataloging and Metadata Services Department. • Shelf items or route them to the appropriate service point. • Notify requesters when rush orders are received. • Review superseded older editions for retention, transfer, or withdrawal.

5. Gifts and Donations

Policy	SML may accept gifts and donations that support its mission and collection scope. Acceptance does not guarantee permanent retention, cataloging, shelving, or special placement. Donated materials may be accepted, declined, added, exchanged, transferred, or discarded according to UL procedures and collection criteria.
Procedure	• Route donations received through the Acquisitions Department or directly by SML for review. • Receive donated items, record them in an Excel list, and check their availability in the collection.

	• Evaluate donated materials for relevance, currency, condition, duplication, historical/local value, and processing implications. • Coordinate with the University Librarian before adding, transferring, or discarding donated items. • Communicate any required conditions or limitations to donors according to UL practice.
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6. Collection Maintenance, Weeding, and Replacement

Policy	SML's collection should remain current, reliable, relevant, and discoverable for academic and clinical use. Because medical and health sciences information can become outdated and potentially harmful if used for clinical decision-making, patient-care materials should be reviewed carefully for currency. As a general rule, medical and nursing books older than ten years should be reviewed for withdrawal, replacement, transfer to historical collections, or retention only when justified. Retention and withdrawal are assessed against the following criteria: • Currency: Is the item outdated, superseded, or potentially unsafe for clinical use? • Use: Has the item circulated or been consulted recently? • Academic value: Is the title still relevant to AUB curricula, programs, research, or accreditation needs? • Alternatives: Is a newer edition, electronic book, database chapter, or comparable title available? • Condition: Is the item damaged beyond reasonable repair? • Local or historical value: Does the item have Lebanese, institutional, archival, or heritage significance?
Procedure	• Review outdated, obsolete, lightly used, damaged, superseded, or duplicate materials. • Apply objective criteria such as publication date, edition, usage, physical condition, availability of newer editions, electronic access, academic importance, and clinical relevance. • Complete the discard template and submit the list to the University Librarian for approval. • Share the discard template with relevant units, including Library Systems and Applications. • Update item records as needed and route items through the approved University Libraries process. • Identify and order recent editions or replacement titles when needed.

7. Repair and Preservation

Policy	Repair and rebinding decisions balance use, academic and clinical value, replacement options, electronic availability, cost, and preservation needs. Materials are not repaired or rebound automatically where replacement, withdrawal, or electronic access is more appropriate.
Procedure	• Identify damaged items during shelving, circulation, or routine collection review. • Refer damaged monographs to the Head of SML or SML Librarians to determine the appropriate course of action: minor repair, professional rebinding, replacement, retention, or withdrawal.

	• Assess each item against frequency of use, academic or clinical value, availability of a newer edition or electronic equivalent, and cost of repair relative to replacement. • Forward items approved for repair or rebinding to the appropriate UL cataloging and preservation departments through the approved transfer process. • Update item records to reflect status while the item is out for repair. • On return, verify condition, confirm sensitization before shelving, and return the item to its designated location.
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8. Circulation and Access Services

Policy	SML provides access to physical collections in accordance with the UL Circulation Policy. Loan periods, borrowing privileges, renewals, recalls, fines, and replacement charges follow UL-wide rules. While stacks are closed to browsing, access is staff-mediated: users identify needed items through the catalog or with staff assistance, and SML staff retrieve available items from the stacks.
Procedure	• Check out and check in physical materials, and retrieve items from the closed stacks. • Support shelving and stacks maintenance, and assist with document delivery for items available at the Library. • Maintain accurate circulation and service statistics when required. • Route interlibrary loan requests to the Access Services Department.

9. Overdue, Lost, and Paid-For Items

Policy	Borrowers are responsible for returning materials on time or paying applicable replacement charges in accordance with University Libraries policy. Overdue notices are generated automatically and sent by electronic mail. After the final overdue notice, an item may be treated as lost and the borrower charged the replacement cost together with any applicable processing or shipping fees.
Procedure	• Monitor system-generated overdue and lost-item notices according to UL policy. • Refer borrowers with lost items to the appropriate Access Services staff or the Head of SML. • Allow replacement with an identical copy or payment of actual replacement cost plus applicable fees, according to UL policy, and in coordination with the Acquisitions Department. • Review lost-paid-for titles to determine whether replacement is needed. • Send titles not selected for replacement to Cataloging and Metadata Services for deletion or further action after getting the University Librarian's approval.

10. Inventory and Missing Items

Policy	SML conducts periodic inventory to maintain accurate holdings, identify missing materials, support collection maintenance, and improve discoverability.
Procedure	• Conduct inventory every three years, or according to University Libraries priorities and staffing capacity. • Request from the Systems Librarian a list of items with available status, and check the shelves against it. • Mark items not found as missing on the inventory list. • Send the list of missing items to Cataloging and Metadata Services for status updates. • Review items missing in two consecutive inventories for withdrawal, replacement, or further action.

11. Reference and Research Support Services

Policy	SML provides reference, research, and instructional support to strengthen users' information literacy and ability to locate, evaluate, and use biomedical information effectively. Services support education, research, evidence-based practice, systematic reviews, scoping reviews, and scholarly communication.
Procedure	• Receive information queries in person, by telephone, by electronic mail, or through other approved communication channels. • Aim to respond to routine questions within one business day. • Schedule complex research consultations, systematic-review searches, or evidence-synthesis requests when needed. • Provide database search support, evidence-based medicine instruction, systematic and scoping review search consultations, research-guide development, publishing guidance, and citation-management support as applicable. • Document complex consultations and maintain search documentation when needed for transparency and reproducibility.

12. Workshops, Events, Instruction, and Research Guides

Policy	SML supports user education through course-integrated instruction, workshops, seminars, library-initiated educational events, online guides, and individual or group consultations, aligned with course objectives, research needs, and learner level.
Procedure	• Accept instruction requests from faculty, departments, programs, administrative units, and other relevant AUB groups. • Align instruction with course objectives, research needs, and learner level. • Proactively plan and offer workshops, seminars, demonstrations, and other educational events open to the AUB community when relevant to identified or emerging needs.

	• Collaborate, when appropriate, with other University Libraries units, faculties, departments, centers, or AUB offices in planning and delivering instructional activities and events. • Review and update research guides periodically so that links, descriptions, database names, screenshots, and instructions remain current. Develop or revise guides in response to identified teaching, learning, or research needs and avoid unnecessary duplication of existing resources. • Participate in formal courses, instructional programs, and other sessions as assigned or requested. • Where appropriate, collect attendance and/or participant feedback to help assess instructional activities and inform future workshops, research guides, and educational offerings.
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13. Photocopying, Printing, and Scanning

Policy	SML provides photocopying, printing, and scanning services to support teaching, learning, and research, subject to University Libraries policies, copyright requirements, equipment availability, and technology-support procedures. Users are responsible for complying with copyright and acceptable-use requirements.
Procedure	• Maintain user-facing printers, photocopiers, and scanners in designated areas. • Limit staff-use equipment to authorized Library or University Libraries staff. • Refer technical problems to the appropriate technology-support unit. • Remind users that they are responsible for complying with copyright and acceptable-use requirements.

14. Assessment, Statistics, and Continuous Improvement

Policy	SML collects and reviews service, circulation, instruction, consultation, collection, and usage data to support planning, reporting, assessment, and continuous improvement.
Procedure	• Collect relevant statistics using approved tools and methods. • Review trends to inform staffing, space planning, collection decisions, instruction priorities, and service improvements. • Share findings with UL leadership or relevant stakeholders when needed. • Use assessment results to identify policy or procedure updates.

15. Staff Development and Continuing Education

Policy	SML staff are expected to engage in ongoing professional development to maintain service quality and remain current with developments in information and library related services. Staff should complete at least 10 hours of documented continuing education per year through relevant workshops, webinars, courses, conferences, or professional association activities.
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Procedure	• Staff members identify relevant professional development opportunities, including webinars, workshops, online courses, conferences, professional meetings, and association activities. • Staff members seek approval from the Head of SML and University Librarian before participating in activities that require funding, release time, travel, or institutional registration. • Head of SML documents the completed continuing education activities including the title of the activity, provider, date, duration, and relevance to the staff member's role. • Staff development records are reviewed periodically to monitor participation and identify future training needs. • When appropriate, staff members are encouraged to share key learning outcomes with colleagues to support knowledge exchange within SML.
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16. Use of Artificial Intelligence in Research

Policy	SML supports the responsible and ethical use of AI-assisted tools in research, evidence searching, writing, data analysis, and scholarly communication. Researchers remain responsible for the accuracy, originality, integrity, and appropriate disclosure of all AI-assisted work. AI tools must be used in accordance with University policies, research ethics requirements, publisher and journal guidelines, copyright requirements, and data privacy standards, and they support rather than replace expert searching, critical appraisal, and scholarly judgment.
Procedure	• Advise users to verify all AI-generated information, citations, summaries, and recommendations against authoritative sources. • Do not enter confidential, sensitive, unpublished, copyrighted, patient-related, or personally identifiable information into AI tools unless the tool has been approved for that purpose. • Encourage researchers to disclose or acknowledge AI use when required by journals, funders, instructors, or institutional guidelines. • Refer questions involving research ethics, authorship, data privacy, or compliance to the appropriate University unit. • Use AI tools to support, not replace, expert searching, critical appraisal, scholarly judgment, and researcher accountability.

17. Policy Maintenance and Review

Policy	SML reviews its policies and procedures periodically so that they remain current, accurate, actionable, and aligned with UL policies, institutional requirements, and current practice. Additions, revisions, and revocations are justified and approved through the appropriate University Libraries channels.
Procedure	• Review SML policies and procedures periodically or when services, workflows, systems, or institutional policies change. • Identify sections that remain current, require revision, need addition, or should be revoked because they are outdated, redundant, or no longer reflect practice. • Document the rationale and expected impact for any addition, major revision, or revocation.

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- Coordinate revisions with relevant SML staff and UL departments as needed.
 - Submit major changes for approval to the University Librarian.
 - Communicate changes to staff and provide training when needed.
 - Retain a revision history for accountability.