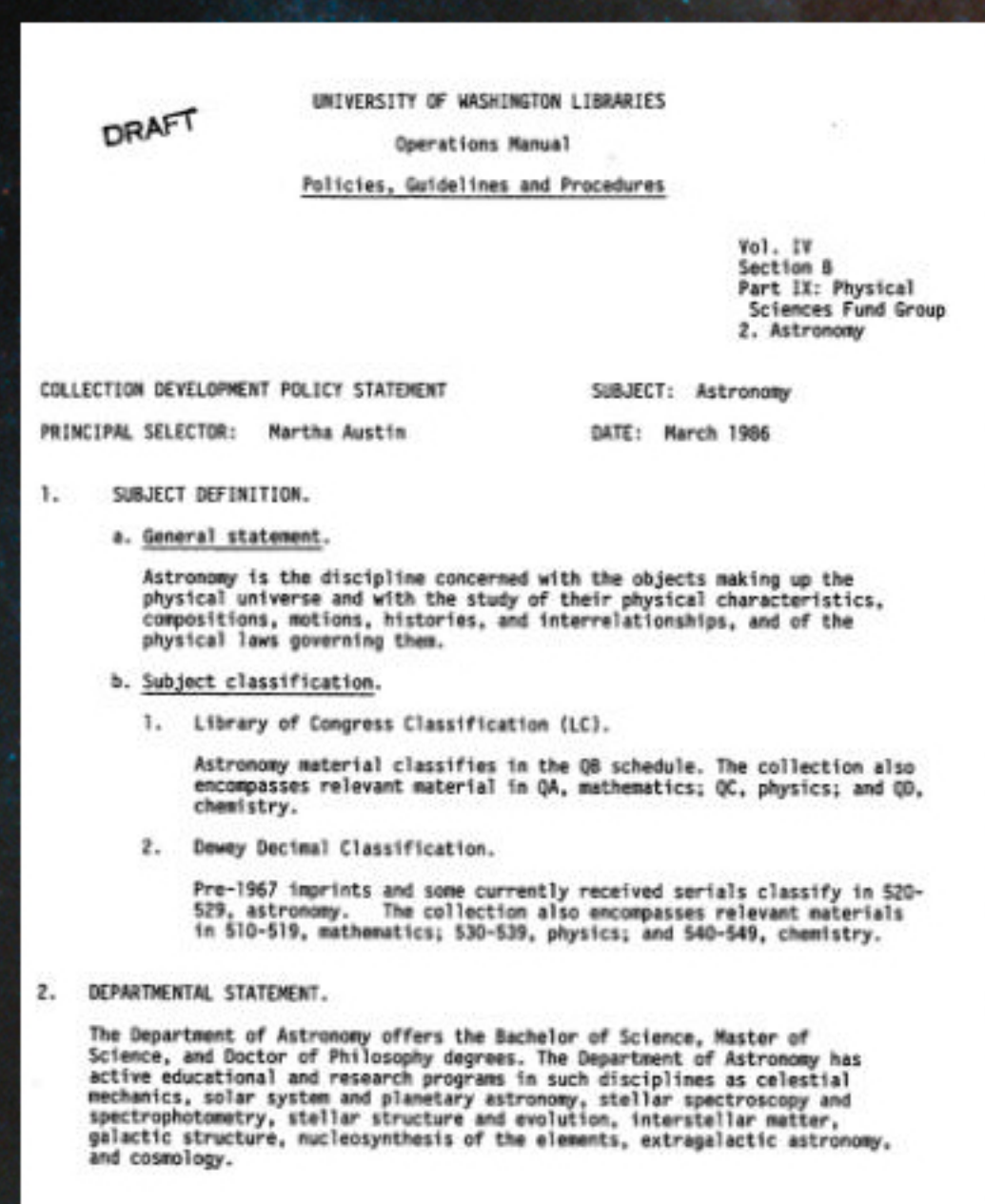


# Astronomy and Physics Collection Policy Update

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Collection development policies guide librarians in making decisions about the acquisition, maintenance, storage, and disposal of materials. As such, they need to reflect the current and anticipated needs of their users. The UW Libraries' Astronomy and Physics collection policies were last updated in 1986, and never ratified out of draft status. We wrote new collection policies for the Physics & Astronomy Librarian, Anya Bartelmann, and created accompanying explanatory LibGuides to make these policies understandable to patrons of the collections.

## Literature Review

To start off, we conducted a literature review of material written about collection development policies and associated documentation, and identified several key documents which we used to guide our written work.

## Policies from Comparable Institutions

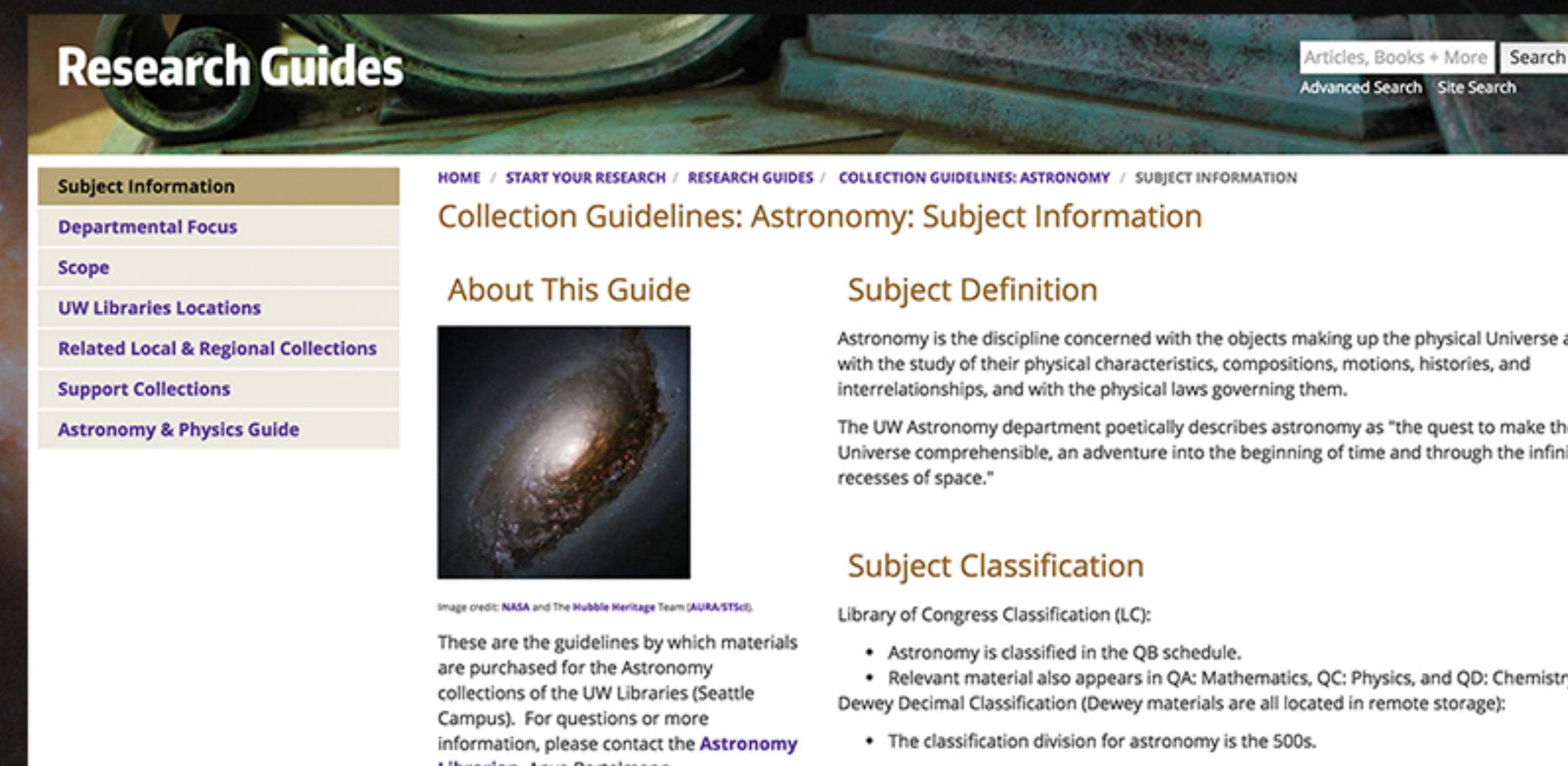
To get an idea of how other libraries approach collections policies, we determined 14 institutions comparable to the University of Washington in each of our disciplines. We investigated their available online collection policies and contacted subject librarians to request back-end policies to examine. We were surprised to discover that many universities have minimal written policies, or no policy at all! We also examined policies from other subject collections at UW.

## Faculty Interviews

Because we wanted our finished policies to reflect the needs of our users, we conducted interviews with faculty, post-docs, and lecturers in the Astronomy and Physics departments to discover how they use our collections themselves, and how they perceive students using the collections. We learned that faculty are most likely to want to access information electronically for themselves, but that if they teach they may also value the availability of physical books for their students to use.

## The Final Product

Using the information gathered during this process, we have written complete policies for our sponsor: they include detailed subject definition & classification analyses, an overview of each department, information on collection scope (chronological, geographical, language, format, and exclusions), related local and regional collections, cooperative loan agreements & acquisition programs, and collection conspectus levels. We have also translated these "librarian-ese" documents into easy-to-understand online, public-facing LibGuides so users may have a better understanding of the UW Astronomy and Physics collections.



Full LibGuide at: [guides.lib.uw.edu/asto-collection-policy](https://guides.lib.uw.edu/asto-collection-policy)

Sponsored by Anya Bartelmann,  
Mathematics, Physics, and Astronomy Librarian

Image credit: NASA, ESA, and the Hubble Heritage Team (STScI/AURA)

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