

Keep@Downsview FAQ

[What is Keep@Downsview](#)

McMaster University Library is collaborating with the libraries at the University of Toronto, Western University, Queen's University, and the University of Ottawa in a new partnership to preserve and ensure ongoing access to low-demand print materials. Extending the University of Toronto's Downsview facility, Keep@Downsview brings together a purpose-built, high-density storage facility that supports long-term preservation, an existing retrieval and transportation network, and new models of desktop delivery, ensuring that low demand print materials remain available for research and study within the province.

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[Why is McMaster University Library participating?](#)

Over the years, the University Library, like research libraries elsewhere, has acquired a sizeable collection of print books and journals. Historically, the purchase of print volumes in advance of anticipated need was the only reliable means of providing the scholarly resources needed to support research and teaching, and building such collections was the primary function of an academic research library.

Studies of the usage patterns of research library collections conducted over many years, using a variety of methodologies, and at a variety of institutions have demonstrated that large portions of these print collections are never or seldom used by the academic community that the library supports. The overall circulation rate of print materials—the number of checkouts annually—is also steadily declining in research libraries across North America.

We believe it is important for these low-demand collections to remain available in support of the research and educational activities of McMaster's academic community. Participating in Keep@Downsview allows us to ensure that this occurs, while creating space within the library to foster new types of scholarship, offer new library services, and support both collaborative and individual work. The University Library's Master Space Plan recognizes and incorporates the need to maintain a significant print collection in the campus libraries and will help to guide development and balance across all of these areas.

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[Are programs like Keep@Downsview a common practice among research libraries?](#)

Yes. University libraries across North America are working together to ensure that infrequently used print materials remain available for research and study. The Center for Research Libraries currently lists many such projects on their [Print Archives Preservation Registry](#).

A good example in Canada is the work of members of the Council of Prairie and Pacific Libraries on the [Shared Print Archive Network](#) (SPAN). Participants in SPAN include major research libraries at the University of Alberta, the University of British Columbia, and the University of Saskatchewan. Also, the Tri-Universities Group—the University of Waterloo, University of Guelph, and Wilfrid Laurier University—has a longstanding partnership that includes a shared storage facility for library collections.

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[How will I access books that are in storage at Downsview?](#)

All titles that are transferred to Downsview will continue to appear in the Library's catalogue. From our catalogue, you will be able to request that books be returned to campus, just as you can with our current storage collection. The delivery of requested materials will not normally take longer than the two-working days expected with our existing storage collection. Requests for individual chapters from a book may be delivered to you as a scanned PDF, just as chapter scanning can be requested from our print monographs in Thode, Mills, and Innis.

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[How will I access journals that are in storage at Downsview?](#)

Journal articles will generally be provided via a scanned PDF of the article, in the same way that scans can be requested from our print volumes in Thode, Mills, and Innis. If necessary, physical volumes can be shipped back to campus, but we anticipate this will be a relatively rare need. As with books, all journals that are transferred to Downsview will continue to appear in the Library's catalogue.

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[Does Keep@Downsview affect recent purchases or new acquisitions for my department?](#)

No, the selection and purchase of new books will continue as usual, and current issues of journals received in print will remain in the campus libraries.

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[How are you deciding which materials to include in Keep@Downsview?](#)

In terms of our book collection, we are fortunate to have a great deal of historical data available to us. The circulation (checkout) history stored in the Library's management system extends back to 1997. Circulation is not the only type of use, of course, and we recognize that reference and multi-volume works in particular will need additional considerations, but overall, this data is the most reliable indicator that we have to assess the usage of physical volumes. We will be considering only those books that have been in the Library's collection for some years to be sure they have had sufficient time to be discovered and used, and initially we are looking only at books that have no record of being checked out.

Journals, not having circulation data, require a different approach. We will consider a number of factors, including whether we have a currently active subscription, the availability of online backfiles, the age of the volumes, and the language of the journal, as well as the subject area covered.

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[Will any parts of the Library's collection not be considered?](#)

Yes, there are several areas of the Library's collection and some specific types of materials that will not be considered in the Keep@Downsview program:

- New and recently acquired books and current issues of journals that we receive in print.
- Many indexes and bibliographies, particularly large ongoing works that would be difficult to retrieve effectively from storage, will be kept onsite as finding tools.
- Multi-volume monographs will not normally be split between locations, and reference-type publications will need specific consideration as they often are easily used within the Library.
- Books, journals, and other materials held in the Library's William Ready Division of Archives and Research Collections are not under consideration. In certain circumstances, materials from the general stacks may be identified during this process for transfer into Archives and Research Collections.
- A number of special formats are beyond the current scope of the program, including LPs, CDs, DVDs, and other audiovisual materials; music scores; sheet maps; and microfilm and microfiche.

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[Can I provide input on materials being considered?](#)

Yes. We are glad to have your thoughts about materials in your discipline so that we can factor them into our decision making process, and we would appreciate your ideas on materials in your subject area that could be placed at Downsview without causing undue difficulty for academic activities on campus.

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[Doesn't the Library already have offsite storage?](#)

The Library does currently use offsite storage located in Dundas. This space was not designed with the storage of library materials in mind. Keep@Downsview will provide a better environment for the long-term preservation of these materials, as well as make the retrieval of items easier. Subsequent collection decisions have also changed the usage pattern for portions of the existing storage collection. As part of our Keep@Downsview process, we plan to return more frequently requested materials from storage to the campus libraries.

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[Will McMaster retain ownership of the materials even though the Downsview facility is managed by the University of Toronto?](#)

Yes. The University Library retains its ownership of materials included in the Keep@Downsview program. All of these volumes will continue to appear in the Library's catalogue and will be included in the statistics that we provide to various reporting bodies. The Keep@Downsview agreement also provides for the partners to share

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ownership of volumes that they hold in common and choose to include in the program.

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[Can I use books or journals that McMaster doesn't own but are added to Keep@Downsview by the other partner libraries?](#)

Yes. These items won't appear in McMaster's Library catalogue but they will be available via RACER request in the same way as items from the partners' on-campus libraries.

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[Community members can currently read McMaster's books by coming to the library. Will they be able to access titles that are in Downsview?](#)

Yes. Community members may continue to access materials from McMaster's collection that move to Downsview. Items may be obtained using interlibrary loan from the requestor's home library and checked out according to normal interlibrary loan policies. Library Services staff at McMaster may also request that volumes be sent to one of the campus libraries for community members to use on-site in the library or to check out in accordance with existing borrowing privileges. Volumes transferred to Downsview have been identified as low-usage materials and we do not anticipate great community interest in these volumes.

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[Where can I get more information?](#)

If you have further questions, please contact Wade Wyckoff, Associate University Librarian, Collections.

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