



PERSONNEL AND
READINESS

OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

MAY - 9 2025

MEMORANDUM FOR SENIOR PENTAGON LEADERSHIP
COMMANDERS OF THE COMBATANT COMMANDS
DEFENSE AGENCY AND DOD FIELD ACTIVITY DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: Reviewing the Department's Military Educational Institution Library Collections

In his January 29, 2025 memorandum, "Restoring America's Fighting Force," the Secretary of Defense directed the Department to eliminate "any program, element, or initiative that was established to promote divisive concepts... or gender ideology," which he described as contrary to DoD's "core mission of providing the military forces needed to deter war and ensure our nation's security." The sole focus of the Department's military educational institutions (MEIs), including the War Colleges and the Military Service Academies, is to train and educate the world's finest military leaders in support of that core mission.

Educational materials at the Department's MEIs promoting divisive concepts and gender ideology are incompatible with the Department's core mission. Therefore, the Secretaries of the Military Departments and other DoD Component heads must: (1) promptly identify any Department MEI library materials potentially incompatible with this core mission; (2) appropriately sequester those materials; (3) confirm the initial characterization through a deliberate review; and (4) determine an appropriate ultimate disposition for those materials. The first two steps must be completed no later than May 21, 2025.

A temporary Academic Libraries Committee (ALC) comprised of knowledgeable leaders, educators, and library professionals drawn from across the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the Military Departments will inform the preliminary identification and sequestration, subsequent deliberate review, and decision concerning the disposition of material confirmed to be inconsistent with direction from the President and the Secretary, as well as with the Department's mission. The ALC developed the list of search terms (Attachment 1) and guidance (Attachment 2) to assist in your initial identification of materials requiring further review. Those terms and guidance are to assist solely with the preliminary identification and sequestration of materials to be further reviewed.

The subsequent deliberate review by experts in the fields of education and the Department's mission will determine the ultimate disposition of the material, based on the totality of the circumstances and findings of relevant facts. The experts of the ALC will recommend criteria and procedures consistent with the Department's mission to inform that deliberate review no later than June 2025.

Throughout this process, the ALC will take a viewpoint neutral approach and apply the definitions of "discriminatory equity ideology" and "gender ideology" from Executive Order 14168, "Defending Women From Gender Ideology Extremism and Restoring Biological Truth to

the Federal Government,” January 20, 2025, and any other terms determined sufficient and necessary to evaluate material that does not focus on educating warfighters. The ALC’s work furthers the goals the Secretary outlined in his January 29, 2025 memorandum by ensuring that MEIs are focused on the core warfighting mission of the Department while upholding the principles of intellectual freedom necessary to educate military leaders ready to fight and win the Nation’s wars.



Timothy D. Dill
Performing the Duties of the Deputy Under
Secretary of Defense for Personnel and
Readiness

Attachments:
As stated

Attachment

1

Department of Defense Academic Libraries Committee Universal Search Term List

| | |
|---|------|
| Affirmative Action Programs -- Law and Legislation -- United States | LCSH |
| Affirmative Action Programs -- United States | LCSH |
| Affirmative Action | LCSH |
| Allyship | LCSH |
| Anti-Racism -- United States | LCSH |
| Critical Race Theory | LCSH |
| Discrimination -- Law and Legislation -- United States | LCSH |
| Diversity in the Workplace -- United States | LCSH |
| Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion | LCSH |
| Gender Affirming Care – United States | LCSH |
| Gender Dysphoria | LCSH |
| Gender Expression | LCSH |
| Gender Identity -- United States | LCSH |
| Gender Nonconformity | LCSH |
| Gender Transition | LCSH |
| Transgender Military Personnel -- United States | LCSH |
| Transgender People -- United States | LCSH |
| Transsexualism -- United States | LCSH |
| Transsexuals -- United States | LCSH |
| White privilege (Social structure) | LCSH |

* LCSH: Library of Congress Subject Headings

Attachment

2

Academic Libraries Committee Guidance

To appropriately address Department compliance requirements with recent Executive Orders (EOs), the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness tasked the Academic Libraries Committee (ALC) with developing the following search protocols and logic for DoD military educational institutions (MEIs) to identify materials in their collections for expert review:

1. Appropriate library personnel should perform subject searches in their online catalog utilizing the attached list of 20 Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH). Each term should be searched individually with a year (publication date) limiter of ≥ 2010 . Searches should be limited to paper and cloth books within the specific library.¹
2. Once MEI library personnel compile the list of titles scoped by the universal search term document, a notation should be entered into the Machine Readable Catalog (MARC) bibliographic record using the 506 field and a “1” for the first indicator denoting restrictions apply.² Code “\$c” should be utilized for the subfield code indicating “physical access provisions.” The notation should state: “currently under review for compliance with recent Executive Orders.” Institutions limited by technology, expertise, or manpower may use a manual and/or rolling notation by posting a note on the catalog or main webpage and maintaining a list of items within the library. **All MEIs must complete this action by May 21, 2025.**
3. Further guidance on the evaluative criteria and final disposition status for these materials is forthcoming. Do not process library materials for final disposition actions until ALC-developed standardized policy is issued and all MEI expert panels complete their subsequent review.

¹ LCSH is the nationally respected taxonomy of terms for classifying library materials since 1898 and all MEIs extensively use this universal tool. LCSH subject-based searches are refined, highly accurate, and more precise than keyword-based searches. Furthermore, the contemporary context addressed by the EOs does not generally exist in literature prior to 2010.

² MARC was developed in the 1960s and is the library record counterpart to the LCSH developed by the Library of Congress. All MEIs use MARC, and it provides a uniform template, coding rules, and readability standard across all online catalog platforms.