

Standards for Faculty Status for Academic Librarians

Approved by ACRL Board, June 2007. Revised October 2011.
Prepared by the ACRL Committee on the Status of Academic Librarians

In order to recognize formally the importance of faculty status for academic librarians, ACRL endorses these standards. Institutions of higher education and their governing bodies are urged to adopt these standards.

To implement these standards, ACRL shall:

- publicize these standards to college and university administrators and governing bodies, academic libraries, library education programs, library organizations, and agencies that accredit institutions, and
- seek to have these standards formally adopted or endorsed by the appropriate groups listed above.

The academic librarian makes unique contributions to the academic community and to higher education itself. These contributions include developing collections, providing bibliographic access to all library materials, and interpreting these materials to members of the college and university community.

Specific services include instruction in the use of print and online library resources and the creation of new tools to enhance access to information available locally, regionally, nationally, or internationally.

Librarians contribute to the sum of knowledge through their research into the information process and other areas of study. Service improvements and other advances in the field result from their participation in library and other scholarly organizations.

1. Professional responsibilities

Librarians must be able to exercise independent judgment in the performance of professional duties. There must be a regular and rigorous review of their performance based on a stated set of institutional criteria. A necessary element of this review is appraisal by a committee of peers who have evidence pertaining to the performance, service, and scholarship of those being evaluated, subject to appropriate institutional policy.

2. Library governance

College and university librarians should adopt an academic form of governance similar in manner and structure to other faculties on the campus.

3. College and university governance

Librarians should be eligible for membership in the faculty senate or equivalent governing body. They should have the same degree of representation as other academic units on all college or university governing bodies.

4. Compensation

Salaries and fringe benefits should be comparable to and within the range of those paid to faculty of equivalent rank. Salary scales should be adjusted in an equitable manner to contract period. All librarians should have written contracts or agreements consistent with institutional policy.

5. Tenure

Librarians should be covered by a stated tenure policy.

6. Promotion

Librarians should be promoted in rank based on their professional proficiency and effectiveness (performance, service, and scholarship) consistent with stated campus standards. The peer review system should be an integral part of procedures for promotion.

7. Leaves and research funds

Sabbatical and other research leaves should be available to librarians consistent with campus standards. Librarians should have access to funding for research projects and professional development consistent with campus standards.

8. Academic freedom

Librarians must have the same protection of academic freedom as all other faculty. Censorship of any type is unacceptable whether individual or organizational. All librarians must be free to provide access to information regardless of content.

9. Grievance

Librarians should have access to the same grievance process as other faculty which include a list of grievable issues, procedures to be completed within specified timeframes, safeguards against repercussions by the institution, and abuse of the policy by the grievant. The process must be consistent with institutional regulations and contracts.

10. Dismissal

Termination of an appointment may be made for adequate cause and through academic due process. The process for the dismissal of librarians should be consistent with university policy for other faculty dismissals.