

Guidelines for Selection of Representatives to International
Conferences, Meetings and Assignments
Adopted by ALA Council
June 28, 1979

INTRODUCTION

Many activities now being carried on by the library associations of other countries and by international library associations will influence librarianship and related work world-wide in the future. For this reason, and in order to encourage the development of a community of individuals in the United States interested in and knowledgeable about matters of international concern to libraries and library users, it is appropriate to encourage the development of a substantial group of persons accustomed to dealing with international matters and groups.

These guidelines, then, are presented with the conviction that representation of the American Library Association's (the Association) interests at international conferences and other meetings is important and that our interests should be represented by persons qualified to do so. It is also considered important to encourage attendance at international conferences and meetings by members of the Association generally. To be most effective in these efforts, it is required that the Association act with clearly understood policies and practices in its choice of delegates and representatives and in its support of individuals who choose to seek their own development partly through attendance at international gatherings of their peers.

These guidelines are intended to aid the Association's officers, Council, Executive Board and the various units in the selection of delegates and representatives. There may be occasions when the Association or one or more of its units, because of unusual circumstances, may consider it wise to depart from the established criteria for selection. When such is the case, the names of persons nominated should be presented to and approved by the International Relations Committee, the Council and Executive Board.

CRITERIA TO BE USED IN THE SELECTION OF CANDIDATES TO REPRESENT ALA ABROAD:

- A. *Representatives or delegates to international conferences must be active members of the American Library Association.*
- B. *Qualifications of representatives or delegates to international conferences:*
 - 1. The member should be an active participant in the ALA unit or field of librarianship in which he or she will represent the Association.
 - 2. The delegate should be conversant with ALA's official policy in the particular field of representation as well as have subject expertise in the area.
 - 3. The delegate should have had broad library experience and substantial knowledge of the profession.

4. The delegate must be able not only to attend sessions but also must have the skills to articulate the ALA's position clearly and prepare a written report for the Association. The report should include such basic information as purpose of the meeting, the names of the ALA official representatives, highlights of the meetings, e.g., major addresses presented, issues discussed, actions or resolutions of the body, impact of the actions taken on ALA, and recommendations if appropriate that will be useful for future involvement. A copy of this report must be filed with the International Relations Office.
5. Any person nominated to represent the Association abroad must be advised that the Association may not be able to defray cost of his or her expenses and/or if foundation support is not available, then the delegate assumes all or part of the expenses.
6. If a working knowledge of a second language is required, the delegate must be reasonably conversant in the language.
7. Delegates should have an appreciation and an understanding of foreign nationals and their cultures. Previous foreign travel is desirable but not required of delegates.
8. Delegates should be skilled in interpersonal relations.
9. One of the policies of the Association is to develop a large group of qualified representatives. An opportunity should be provided for persons without all of the qualifications to represent the Association abroad. When a delegation calls for two or more persons, one should be selected who has shown special initiative but who does not have international experience. It is incumbent upon the interested unit of the Association to make the appropriate recommendations to the ALA Executive Board.

C. The Association's responsibility:

1. It is the Association's responsibility to encourage participation of the membership in work at the international level.
2. The Association should select candidates to serve as representatives abroad from a pool of both nominated candidates and volunteers, ordinarily, giving preference to nominees.
3. For representation by specialists, the Association should ask for recommendations from the various units of the Association. Each unit should poll its members widely to ascertain interest in international affairs and linguistic abilities.