

LIBRARY AND INFORMATION STUDIES EDUCATION
AND HUMAN RESOURCE UTILIZATION
A STATEMENT OF POLICY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 1999 the 1st Congress on Professional Education created four task forces. Task Force #4, Personnel Stratification, now Library Career Pathways, was charged with the review of the means, methods, and expectations for entry into the library professions.

Early in their work, the Task Force reviewed a policy statement entitled, "Library Education and Personnel Utilization" which the Council of the American Library Association adopted on June 30, 1970. This ALA policy document appeared in need of some, but remarkably little revision, given its age. The Library Career Pathways Task Force updated the statement, incorporating a more current view of librarianship and its partner professions.

Major revisions to the document include:

- The substitution of Library and Information Studies and the inclusion of the title Specialist where the terms Library Education, Librarianship, and Library Assistant/Technical Assistant have previously appeared;
- The recognition that the Library and Information Studies realm of practice includes several professions at various levels of entry;
- The acceptance of support staff as integral contributors to and participants in the Library professions;
- A statement encouraging professional preparation which would include a broad educational background for study in the humanities, the sciences, and the social sciences, over preference to a narrowly defined, specialized field of study.

The document continues to demonstrate several points of career entry at levels from high school graduation through the Masters level, considered the terminal degree for professional practice. Qualifications and expectations at all levels are described in narrative form, and through the means of a graphic "Career Lattice".

The statement on career development and continuous learning draws a distinct difference between the individual responsibility for professional development expected of librarians and specialists, and library managers' responsibility for providing access to continuous learning for support staff contributors.

Library and Information Studies and Human Resource Utilization*

A Statement of Policy Adopted by the Council of the American Library Association, January 23, 2002.**

*The policy statement adopted by ALA with the title Library Education and Manpower. In the spring of 1976, the Office for Library Personnel Resources Advisory Committee edited this statement to remove sexist terminology. This version of the statement includes changes recommended by the Library Career Pathways Taskforce in January of 2002 and is offered to the ALA Council for their adoption at the 2002 Midwinter meeting. From January through December 2001, the statement was offered to the library community for comment.

**Throughout this statement, wherever the term "librarianship" is used, it is meant to be read in its broadest sense as encompassing the relevant concepts of information science and documentation; wherever the term "libraries" is used, the term refers to public, academic, corporate, medical and other special libraries; current models of media centers, learning centers, educational resources centers, information, documentation, and referral centers are also assumed. To avoid the necessity of repeating the entire gamut of variations and expansions, the traditional library terminology is employed in its most inclusive meaning.

1. The purpose of the policy statement is to recommend categories of library personnel, and levels of training and education appropriate to the preparation of personnel for these categories, which will support the highest standards of library service for all kinds of libraries and the most effective use of the variety of skills and qualifications needed to provide it.
2. The phrase "library and information studies" is understood to be concerned with recordable information and knowledge and the services and technologies to facilitate their management and use. Library and information studies encompasses information and knowledge creation, communication, identification, selection, acquisition, organization and description, storage and retrieval, preservation, analysis, interpretation, evaluation, synthesis, dissemination, and management.
3. To meet the goals of library service, both professional and supportive staff are needed in libraries. Thus, the library occupation is much broader than that segment of it which is the library profession, but the library profession has responsibility for defining the training and education required for the preparation of personnel who work in libraries at any level, supportive or professional.
4. Skills other than those of librarianship also have an important contribution to make to the achievement of superior library service. There should be equal recognition in both the professional and supportive ranks for those individuals whose expertise contributes to the effective performance of the library.
5. A constant effort must be made to promote the most effective utilization of personnel at all levels, both professional and supportive. The tables in Figure 1 suggest a set of categories which illustrate a means for achieving this end.

Figure 1

CATEGORIES OF LIBRARY PERSONNEL—PROFESSIONAL

Library-Related Qualifications	Non-Library Related Qualifications	Basic Requirements	Nature of Responsibilities
Senior Librarian	Senior Specialist	In addition to the requirements for Librarian/Specialist—relevant experience and continued professional development	Top-level responsibilities including but not limited to administration; superior knowledge of some aspect of librarianship; or of other subject fields of value to the library.
Librarian	Specialist	For Librarian: Master's degree For Specialist: Appropriate professional degree for the specialty.	Professional responsibilities which may include those of management and supervision requiring independent judgment; interpretation of rules and procedures; analysis of library problems; and formulation of original and creative solutions for them. (Normally utilizing knowledge of the subject field represented by the academic degree.)

CATEGORIES OF LIBRARY PERSONNEL—SUPPORTIVE

Library-Related Qualifications	Non-Library Related Qualifications	Basic Requirements	Nature of Responsibilities
LIS Associate	Associate Specialist	Bachelors degree (with preferred coursework in library and/or information science); OR bachelors degree, plus additional applicable academic work.	Manager is hired or promoted into the job based on previous library work experience; the library specialist has extensive experience, perhaps supplemented by job-sponsored training in a specialized area—e.g. Interlibrary borrowing/lending; preservation; book searching and replacement; second-tier reference; copy cataloging; etc.
LIS Assistant	Assistant Specialist	At least two years of college-level study; or AA degree, (with or without library technical assistant training) preferred; OR post-secondary school training and relevant skills; OR certificate program.	Tasks performed as supportive staff following established policies and procedures and may include supervision of such tasks.
Clerk (Exact titles vary depending on type of library circumstance.)	Clerk (Exact titles vary depending on type of library circumstance.)	High school diploma or equivalent.	Assignments as required by the individual library.

6. The titles recommended here represent categories or broad classifications, within which it is assumed that there will be several levels of promotional steps. Specific job titles may be used within any category: for example, catalogers, reference librarians, children's librarians would be included in either the "Librarian" or (depending upon the level of their responsibilities and qualifications) "Senior Librarian" categories; department heads, the director of the library, and certain specialists would presumably have the additional qualifications and responsibilities which place them in the "Senior Librarian" category. In addition, the categories are not discreet, library staff members may actually be performing tasks in a number of categories. The categories are not static, but dynamic and are meant to provide a guide to assist in illustrating the wide range of job responsibilities and tasks performed in the library setting.

7. Where specific job titles dictated by local usage and tradition do not make clear the level of the staff member's qualification and responsibility, it is recommended that reference to the ALA category title be used parenthetically to provide the clarification desirable for communication and reciprocity. For example:

REFERENCE ASSISTANT (Librarian)
HEAD CATALOGER (Senior Librarian)
LIBRARY AIDE (LIS Assistant)

8. The title "Librarian" carries with it the connotation of "professional" in the sense that professional tasks are those which require a special background and education on the basis of which library needs are identified, problems are analyzed, goals are set, and original and creative solutions are formulated for them, integrating theory into practice, and planning, organizing, communicating, and administering successful programs of service to users of the library's materials and services. In defining services to users, the professional person recognizes potential users as well as current ones, and designs services which will reach all who could benefit from them.

9. The title "Librarian" therefore should be used only to designate positions in libraries which utilize the qualifications and impose the responsibilities suggested above. Positions which are primarily devoted to the routine application of established rules and techniques, however useful and essential to the effective operation of a library's ongoing services, should not carry the word "Librarian" in the job title.

10. Libraries with limited staff would not need staff appointments in each of these categories. It is urged, however, that this basic scheme be introduced wherever possible to permit, where needed, the necessary flexibility in staffing.

11. The salaries for each category should offer a range of promotional steps sufficient to permit a career-in-rank. The top salary in any category should overlap the beginning salary in the next higher category, in order to give recognition to the value of experience and knowledge gained on the job.

12. Libraries should pay particular attention that stratification of personnel not occur along lines of race, ethnicity, or gender. If these patterns of stratification occur, steps should be taken to investigate and ameliorate possible discrimination. Libraries should promote the full education, utilization, and promotion of all employees regardless of race, ethnic background, or gender. Libraries and programs of library and information studies should be particularly sensitive to discrimination patterns that reflect the prejudices of society and should take proactive measures to combat the effects of these influences.

13. Inadequately supported libraries or libraries too small to be able to afford professional staff should nevertheless have access to the services and supervision of a librarian. To obtain the professional guidance that they themselves cannot supply, such libraries should promote cooperative arrangements or join larger systems of cooperating libraries through which supervisory personnel can be supported. Smaller

libraries which are part of such a system can often maintain the local service with building staff at the Associate level.

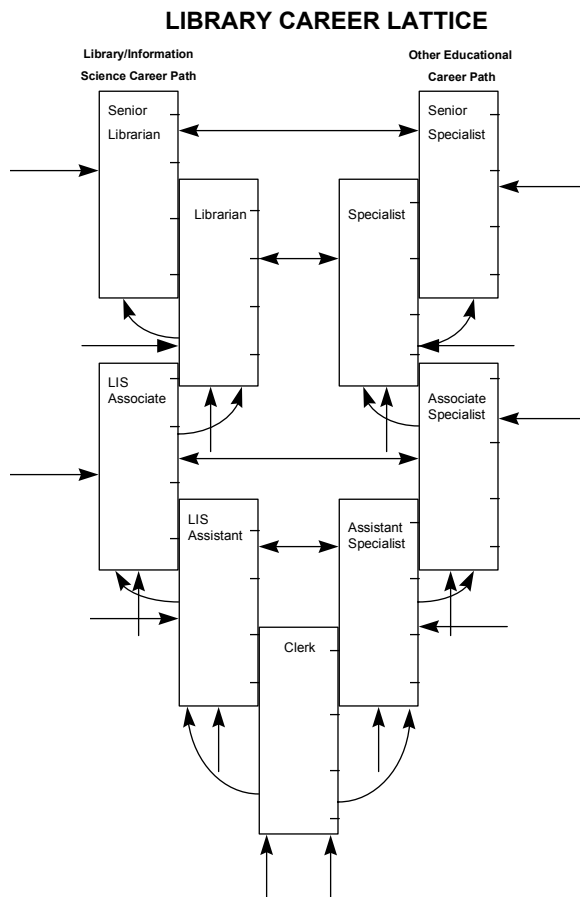


FIGURE 2

If one thinks of Career Lattices rather than Career Ladders, the flexibility intended by the Policy Statement may be better visualized. The movement among staff responsibilities, for example, is not necessarily directly up, but often may be lateral to increased responsibilities of equal importance. Each category embodies a number of promotional steps within it, as indicated by the gradation markings on each bar. The top of any category overlaps in responsibility and salary with the higher category.

Comments on the Categories

14. The Clerk classifications do not require formal academic training in library subjects. The assignments in these categories are based upon general clerical and secretarial proficiencies. Familiarity with basic library terminology and routines necessary to adapt clerical skills to the library's needs is best learned on the job.

15. The Assistant categories assume certain kinds of specific "technical" skills; they are not meant simply to accommodate advanced clerks. While clerical skills might well be part of a Assistant's equipment, the emphasis in an assignment should be on the special technical skill. For example, someone who is skilled in handling multimedia equipment, or at introductory data processing, or display art might well be hired in the Assistant Specialist category for these skills, related to librarianship only to the extent that they are employed in a library. An LIS Assistant is a person with certain specifically

library-related skills—in preliminary bibliographic searching for example, or utilization of certain equipment or technology—the performance of whose duties seldom requires a background in general education.

16. The Associate categories assume a need for an educational background like that represented by a bachelor's degree from an accredited four-year institution of higher education (or foreign equivalent). Assignments may be such that library knowledge is less important than general education, and whether the title is LIS Associate or Associate Specialist depends upon the nature of the tasks and responsibilities assigned. Persons holding the B.A. degree, with or without a library science minor or practical experience in libraries, are eligible for employment in this category. Titles within the Associate category that are assigned to individuals will depend upon the relevance of their training and background to their specific assignments.

17. The Associate category also provides the opportunity for persons of promise and exceptional talent to begin library employment below the level of professional (as defined in this statement) and thus to combine employment in a library with course work at the graduate level. Where this kind of work/study arrangement is made, the combination of work and formal study should provide 1) increasing responsibility within the Associate ranks as the individual moves through the academic program, and 2) eligibility for promotion, upon completion of the master's degree, to positions of professional responsibility and attendant reclassification to the professional category.

18. The first professional category—Librarian or Specialist—assumes responsibilities that are professional in the sense described in paragraph #8 above. A well-rounded liberal education plus graduate-level study in the field of specialization (either in librarianship or in a relevant field) are seen as the minimum preparation for the kinds of assignments implied. The title, however, is given for a position entailing professional responsibilities and not automatically upon achievement of the academic degree.

19. The Senior categories assume relevant professional experience as well as qualifications beyond those required for admission to the first professional ranks. Normally, it is assumed that such advanced qualification shall be held in some specialty, either in a particular aspect of librarianship or some relevant subject field. Subject specializations are as applicable in the Senior Librarian category as they are in the Senior Specialist category.

20. Administrative responsibilities entail high-level specialty, and appointment to positions in top administration should normally require the qualifications of Senior Librarian with a specialization in administration. This category, however, is not limited to administrators, whose specialty is only one of several specializations of value to the library service. There are many areas of special knowledge within librarianship which are equally important and to which equal recognition in prestige and salary should be given. Highly qualified persons with specialist responsibilities in some aspects of librarianship—archives, bibliography, reference, for example—should be eligible for

advanced status and financial rewards without being forced to abandon for administrative responsibilities their areas of major competence.

Implications for Formal Education

21. The academic degree (or evidence of years of academic work completed) is recommended as the single best means for determining that the applicant has the background required for the position. If an ALA-recognized Master's degree or state or provincial certification is unavailable, examinations may be valid and reliable tests of equivalent qualification.

22. In the selection of applicants for positions at any level, and for admission to programs of library and information studies, attention should be paid to personal aptitudes and qualifications in addition to academic ones. The nature of the position or specialty, and particularly the degree to which it entails working with others, with the public, or with special audiences or materials should be taken into account in the evaluation of a prospective student or employee. Importance should be placed on the education and employment of individuals with diverse ethnic backgrounds who are multilingual and, additionally, on those who possess a multicultural perspective. When language translation is required in individual job assignments, the proper educational background to be able to write and communicate in a given language is necessary.

23. As library services and technologies change and expand, as new audiences are reached, as new media and technologies take on greater importance in the communication process, and as new approaches to the handling of materials are introduced, the kinds of preparation required of those who will be employed in libraries will become more varied. Degrees in fields other than librarianship will be needed in the Specialist categories. For many Senior Librarian positions, an advanced degree in another subject field rather than an additional degree in librarianship, may be desirable. Previous experience need not always have been in libraries to have pertinence for appointment in a library.

24. Because the principles of librarianship are applied to the materials of information and knowledge broader than any single field, and because they are related to subject matter outside of librarianship itself, responsible education in these principles should be built upon a broad background in education which includes the humanities, the sciences, and the social sciences, rather than a narrowly specialized background.

25. Emphasis in the two-year Technical Assistant programs should be more on skills training than on general library concepts and procedures. In many cases it would be better from the standpoint of the student to pursue more broadly-based vocational courses which will teach technical skills applicable in a variety of job situations rather than those limited solely to the library setting. These programs should combine a strong general education component, library technical specialty courses, and courses related to the library technical specialty program.

26. Undergraduate instruction in library science other than training courses for Library Technical Assistants should be primarily a contribution to liberal education

rather than an opportunity to provide technological and methodological training. This does not preclude the inclusion of course work related to the basic skills of library practice, but it does affect teaching method and approach, and implies an emphasis on the principles that underlie practice rather than how-to-do-it vocational training.

27. Certain practical skills and procedures at all levels are best learned on the job rather than in the academic classroom. These relate typically to details of operation which may vary from institution to institution, or to routines which require repetition and practice for their mastery. The responsibility for such in-service parts of the total preparation of both librarians and supportive staff rests with libraries and library systems rather than with the programs of library and information studies.

28. The objective of the master's programs in library and information studies should be to prepare librarians capable of anticipating and engineering the change and improvement required to move the profession constantly forward. The curriculum and teaching methods should be designed to serve this kind of education for the future rather than to train for the practice of the present.

29. Certain interdisciplinary concepts are so intimately related to the basic concepts underlying library service that they properly become a part of the library and information studies curriculum rather than simply an outside specialty. Where such content is introduced into library and information studies it should be incorporated into the entire curriculum, enriching every course where it is pertinent. The stop-gap addition of individual courses in such a specialty, not integrated into the program as a whole, is an inadequate assimilation of the intellectual contribution of the new concept to library and information studies and thinking.

30. In recognition of the many areas of related subject matter of importance to library service, library and information studies should make knowledge in other fields readily available to students, either through the appointment of staff members from other disciplines or through permitting students to cross departmental, divisional, and institutional lines in reasoned programs in related fields. Intensive specializations at the graduate level, building upon strengths in the parent institution or the community, are a logical development in library and information studies.

31. Programs of library and information studies should be encouraged to experiment with new teaching methods, new learning devices, different patterns of scheduling and sequence, and other means, both traditional and nontraditional, that may increase the effectiveness of the students' educational experience.

32. Research has an important role to play in the educational process as a source of new knowledge both for the field of librarianship in general and for library and information studies in particular. In its planning, budgeting, and organizational design, programs of library and information studies should recognize research, both theoretical and applied, as an imperative responsibility.

Career Development and Continuous Learning

33. Career development and continuous learning is the shared responsibility of the individual, the employer, formal education providers, and professional associations. Continuous learning is essential for all library and information studies personnel whether or not they seek advancement.

34. Employers are responsible for providing training that supports the work of their organization. This can take the form of planned staff development activities or less formal activities such as committee assignments and special projects.

35. Employers are responsible for providing support for individual career development and continuous learning. Examples of support include release time, sabbaticals, tuition reimbursement, and mentoring programs. Such support is essential in hiring and retaining an excellent workforce.

36. Education providers are responsible for developing and making available learning opportunities that reflect the needs of the library and information studies profession. To address individual learning needs and styles, these must be available in multiple formats and in a variety of locations.

37. Professional associations are responsible for providing learning opportunities that meet the needs of their membership. These may take the form of workshops, conference programs, and articles in professional journals. Workshops and conference programs should be planned to ensure adherence to the best practice of adult learning theory.

38. For the individual, career development and continuous learning includes both formal and informal learning situations and need not be limited to library and information studies. In some cases, post-masters and doctoral programs may be appropriate.

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