



ACRL Standards for Libraries in Higher Education

Introduction

The *ACRL Standards for Libraries in Higher Education* are designed to ensure that academic librarians advance student learning, faculty research, and institutional effectiveness by aligning their work with institutional goals and library mission. Grounded in core expertise – information literacy, scholarly communication, collections, and discovery – academic librarians provide inclusive, student-centered services that support teaching, research, and professional preparation. The *Standards* promote quality and support accreditation efforts by aligning with institutional priorities, adhering to professional best practices, and emphasizing evidence-informed assessment.

Library personnel demonstrate the library's value and document their contributions to overall institutional effectiveness and are prepared to address changes in higher education. These *Standards* were developed through study and consideration of issues and trends in libraries, higher education, and accrediting practices. The committee solicited input from librarians and library stakeholders at various types of institutions as well as drawing on research and best practices in the field.

The *Standards* articulate expectations for library contributions to institutional effectiveness. The *Standards* are structured to provide a comprehensive framework using an outcomes-based approach, with evidence collected in ways most appropriate for each institution.

The mission of academic libraries, while varying in context, is predicated around a common expertise in information literacy, scholarly communication, collections, and discovery. Library personnel are leaders in information literacy pedagogy and instruction, teaching students and faculty how to find, evaluate, and use information effectively and ethically for the advancement of learning in higher education. Library personnel are leaders in the facilitation of scholarly communication, providing guidance in research data management, bibliometrics, open scholarship, and intellectual property rights. Library personnel are leaders in collection development and maintenance through the selection, acquisition, organization, and preservation of resources that stimulate learning and effectuate research. Library personnel are leaders in discovery, ensuring that information sought is easily retrieved through employment of their mastery in semantic organization and metadata development. The unique mission of academic libraries and the expertise of library personnel allow for critical and meaningful contributions to institutional effectiveness and the evolving needs of students and faculty.

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Institutions are encouraged to use these *Standards* as they best apply to their local mission and vision. The committee endeavored to be as inclusive as possible, recognizing that each library is different and will adapt the *Standards* accordingly. For example, some academic library personnel might apply the *Standards* within an annual assessment cycle – such as those used for student learning – by focusing on one or two principles per year, while others might integrate the *Standards* into program reviews to structure and present evidence in formal reports, and yet others might use them to guide strategic planning, aligning library goals and initiatives with institutional priorities.

Standards Structure

The core of the *Standards* is the section titled “Principles and Performance Indicators.” The nine principles and their related performance indicators are intended to be expectations – standards – that apply to all types of academic libraries. Nonetheless, each library has its own unique user population and institutional environment that must be considered.

Library personnel are encouraged to use the following outcomes-based method to adopt the *Standards*:

1. align with the principles;
2. identify and select performance indicators that are congruent with their institution’s mission and contribute to institutional effectiveness;
3. add performance indicators that apply to the specific library (for example, open access initiatives for research libraries, or workforce development support for community colleges);
4. develop user-centered, measurable outcomes that articulate specifically what the user is able to do as an outcome of the performance indicator;
5. draw on diverse quantitative, qualitative, and mixed research methods – such as case studies, user experience research, learning analytics, bibliometrics, program evaluation, and benchmarking – to provide data-informed insights;
6. collect data from assessments that demonstrate degree of success; and
7. use assessment data for improvement of library operations.

In some cases, gathering evidence will not require assessment. For example, library personnel might provide evidence of their education and experience sufficient for their positions by compiling a list of staff members with titles, education, and relevant experience held.

In *all* cases, however, principles lead to performance, which requires evidence to measure success, impact, or value.

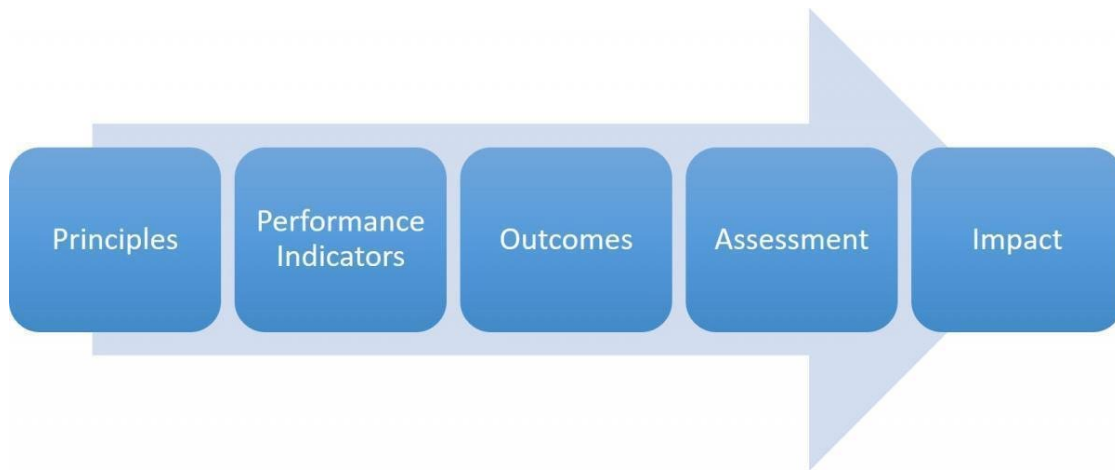
The two forms of the model are portrayed graphically below.

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Evidence-based model:



Outcomes-based assessment model:



The *Standards* document provides examples of outcomes (Appendix 1) and metrics (Appendix 2). These are intended as possibilities only, rather than as checklists of requirements to be completed. Like the performance indicators in the *Standards*, many of the sample outcomes could apply to any academic library. The sample outcomes and metrics are provided along with the standards to demonstrate a pattern and provide possible tools with which to construct measurable outcomes based on local factors.

ACRL defines outcomes as “the ways in which library users are changed as a result of their contact with the library’s resources and programs.” [2] Thus, outcomes are user-centered, whereas performance indicators are library-centered. Since outcomes are user-centered, it is recognized that they are not wholly under library control. Nonetheless, the outcome or impact of the library’s actions is ultimately how the library must judge its success. Local outcomes and metrics should be tailored to the institutional mission, goals, and assessment practices.

Outcomes can be assessed by gathering and analyzing qualitative data, quantitative data, or both. For example, to assess whether students consider access to collections sufficient to support their educational needs, one might survey students and obtain quantitative data. The results might be a metric such as the percentage of students who are satisfied or very satisfied with collections support for

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their educational needs. Focus groups or interviews might be used to solicit qualitative feedback, such as comments. Assessment may involve using metrics to benchmark performance against that of peer institutions or track library performance over a period of time. For example, a ratio of volumes to combined total student FTE or head counts is a metric that could be compared with peers and considered when determining whether collections are sufficient to support students' educational needs. Choice of metrics, like choice of outcomes, will depend on the institution, the accreditation process, and the library-specific context. The power of metrics is in their interpretation and presentation. Outcomes, assessment, and evidence—all are elements of the continuous improvement cycle.

Principles and Performance Indicators

The *Standards* consist of principles and performance indicators. Principles are foundational guiding statements that define the library personnel's core roles, values, and contributions to institutional and library mission and priorities. Performance indicators are specific, measurable expressions of these principles that describe how library personnel demonstrate impact through observable practices and outcomes. Together, principles and performance indicators provide a structured framework for assessment, accountability, and improvement.

Principles

Institutional Effectiveness: Library personnel define, develop, and assess outcomes that enhance institutional effectiveness, applying the insights gained to foster ongoing enhancement.

Professional Values: Library personnel practice a code of ethics and uphold professional values such as intellectual freedom, equity, privacy, and respect.

Educational Role: Library personnel lead the educational mission of the institution to develop and support information literate learners who can discover, access, evaluate, and ethically use information for academic success, research, and lifelong learning.

Discovery: Library personnel enable users to discover information in all formats through effective use of technology and organization of knowledge.

Collections: Library personnel continuously develop, maintain, and provide access to collections appropriate in quality, depth, breadth, diversity, and format to support the teaching and research missions of the institution.

Space: Library personnel provide physical and virtual spaces where users interact with ideas, each other and library personnel to expand learning and facilitate the creation of new knowledge.

Management/Administration/Leadership: Library leaders engage in internal and campus decision-making to effectively and efficiently advance the library's mission through inclusive and ethical leadership, strategic planning, resource allocation, staff development, and collaborative partnerships.

Personnel: Administration provides a sufficient number and quality of personnel to ensure excellence and to function successfully in an environment of continuous change.

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Campus and External Relations: Library personnel actively engage the campus and broader community through diverse strategies designed to communicate, advocate, educate, and celebrate their invaluable contributions to institutional success.

Performance Indicators for Each Principle

1. Institutional Effectiveness: Library personnel define, develop, and assess outcomes that enhance institutional effectiveness, applying the insights gained to foster ongoing enhancement.

1.1 Library personnel define and measure outcomes in alignment with the institutional mission while also developing outcomes that correspond to institutional, departmental, and student affairs goals and objectives.

1.2 Library personnel develop outcomes that are aligned with accreditation guidelines for the institution and programs.

1.3 Library personnel actively build and curate a robust collection of evidence that showcases its impact and value.

1.4 Library personnel communicate their role in enhancing student learning through active engagement with faculty, while also gathering evidence, documenting achievements, sharing outcomes, and implementing improvements.

1.5 Library personnel identify essential activities that promote student success by providing activities that support recruitment, retention, and graduation.

1.6 Library personnel communicate with the campus community to highlight the library's value in the educational mission.

2. Professional Values: Library personnel practice a code of ethics and uphold professional values such as intellectual freedom, equity, privacy, and respect.

2.1 Library personnel support academic freedom and resist all efforts to censorship.

2.2 Library personnel protect each library user's right to privacy and confidentiality.

2.3 Library personnel provide equitable access to all library users.

2.4 Library personnel advocate for academic integrity, intellectual property rights, and deter plagiarism through policy and educational programming.

2.5 Library personnel are committed to a user-centered approach demonstrated in all aspects of service design and delivery.

2.6 Library personnel participate in professional development activities to further their knowledge, skills and competencies.

3. Educational Role: Library personnel lead the educational mission of the institution to develop and support information literate learners who can discover, access, evaluate, and ethically use information for academic success, research, and lifelong learning.

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3.1 Library personnel collaborate with campus partners to develop information literacy instruction for curricula, courses, and assignments using best teaching and learning practices.

3.2 Library personnel collaborate with campus and community partners regarding ways to incorporate library collections and services into impactful learning experiences.

3.3 Library personnel provide appropriate and timely instruction in a variety of contexts, modalities, and pedagogies to best facilitate student learning.

3.4 Library personnel facilitate professional development for campus partners in information literacy, services, and technologies.

3.5 Library personnel educate users on issues related to sustainable and equitable models of information access and scholarly communication.

3.6 Library personnel keep current with advances in teaching and learning technologies.

4. Discovery: Library personnel enable users to discover information in all formats through effective use of technology and organization of knowledge.

4.1 Library personnel organize information for effective discovery and access.

4.2 Library personnel integrate library resource access into institutional web and other information applications.

4.3 Library personnel develop resource guides and provide assistance to access information.

4.4 Library personnel provide and maintain interfaces and systems that include all resources and facilitate access from preferred user starting points.

5. Collections: Library personnel continuously develop, maintain, and provide access to collections appropriate in quality, depth, breadth, diversity, and format to support the teaching and research missions of the institution.

5.1 Library personnel provide access to collections aligned with curricula, research, and institutional strengths.

5.2 Library personnel provide collections that incorporate resources in a variety of formats and methods of access.

5.3 Library personnel collect and ensure access to unique materials through special and distinctive collections.

5.4 Library personnel maintain infrastructure to collect, organize, provide access to, disseminate, and preserve collections needed by users.

5.5: Library personnel promote and support open access initiatives to enhance the availability and accessibility of scholarly communication.

5.6 Library personnel ensure long-term access to the scholarly, cultural, and historical record.

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6. Space: Library personnel provide physical and virtual spaces where users interact with ideas, each other, and library personnel to expand learning and facilitate the creation of new knowledge.

6.1 Library personnel provide sufficient spaces that are safe, secure, accessible, clean, inviting, and conducive to study and research, with convenient hours for its services, personnel, resources, and collections.

6.3 Library personnel design pedagogical spaces to facilitate learning and the creation of new knowledge.

6.4 The library's space features functional well-maintained equipment and furnishings.

6.5 The library's spaces are informed by users.

7. Management/Administration/Leadership: Library leaders engage in internal and campus decision-making to effectively and efficiently advance the library's mission through inclusive and ethical leadership, strategic planning, resource allocation, staff development, and collaborative partnerships.

7.1 Within the framework of the library's fundamental mission, the library's mission statement and goals align with and advance those developed by the institution.

7.2 Library personnel actively engage in campus decision-making needed for effective library management.

7.3 Library personnel allocate human, financial, spatial, and material resources effectively and efficiently to advance the library's mission, with a budget sufficient to meet the reasonable expectations of library users while balancing other institutional needs.

7.4 Library personnel cultivate an inclusive workplace by promoting diversity, equity, and respect, ensuring that all staff feel valued, supported, and empowered to contribute fully. They implement policies and practices that actively address biases, foster a sense of belonging, and encourage diverse perspectives in decision-making and library initiatives.

7.5 Library personnel collaborate with multiple institutions, such as through collection consortia or shared services, to enhance cost-effectiveness and expand access.

7.6 Library personnel use a range of formal and informal assessment methods to assess needs, inform decision-making, and identify opportunities for positive change.

7.7 Library personnel communicate regularly and transparently with internal and external stakeholders.

7.8 Library personnel collaborate with campus partners to provide the IT infrastructure that supports all aspects of its operations essential to its mission.

8. Personnel: Libraries provide a sufficient number and quality of personnel to ensure excellence and to function successfully in an environment of continuous change.

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8.1 Library personnel are sufficient in quantity to meet the diverse teaching and research needs of campus and community partners.

8.2 Library personnel have education and experience sufficient to their positions and the needs of the organization.

8.3 Library personnel demonstrate commitment to ongoing professional development, maintaining and enhancing knowledge and skills for themselves and their colleagues.

8.4 Library personnel contribute to the knowledge base of the profession.

8.5 Library personnel provide their professional expertise and are empowered to offer their unique perspectives.

8.6 Library personnel engage with library student employees to provide mentoring and meaningful work that enhances the students' overall academic experience.

8.7 Library personnel continuously examine and adapt their roles to meet the needs of the evolving organization, campus, and community they serve.

9. Campus and External Relations: Library personnel actively engage the campus and broader community through diverse strategies designed to communicate, advocate, educate, and celebrate their invaluable contributions to institutional success.

9.1 Library personnel engage in collaborations on campus, across institutional boundaries, and within their communities.

9.2 Library personnel strengthen external relations through effective communications, publications, and engaging events such as lecture series, author talks, physical and virtual exhibits, workshops and institutes.

9.3 Library personnel convey a consistent message about the library, using unique stories and examples to highlight the value of our resources, services, and expertise.

9.4 Library personnel proactively build and cultivate relationships with potential donors, alumni, and community partners to support library initiatives.

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Appendix 1: Sample Outcomes

This appendix provides sample outcomes for selected performance indicators. It is expected that each library will develop its own outcomes based on the mission and goals of the institution.

The *Standards* include performance indicators, which are intentionally library-centric. Outcomes, however, should be user-centric, preferably focusing on a specific population and articulating specifically what the user is able to do as an outcome of the performance indicator. All outcomes should be measurable, but the method of assessment selected—whether quantitative or qualitative—will vary by institution.

For example, four possible outcomes for Performance Indicator 3.5, “Library personnel collaborate with campus partners to provide opportunities for faculty professional development” include:

- Faculty **integrate** collaboration with libraries into their best practices.
- Faculty **participate** in workshops and other professional opportunities provided by librarians in collaboration with other campus partners.
- Faculty **improve** their research-based assignments and lessons after applying knowledge and skills from professional development conducted by librarians.
- Campus partners **recognize** the value of collaborating with libraries to design faculty professional development opportunities.

The outcome examples provided follow a simple pattern: population, action (verb), object (what the population does). In the examples above, “faculty” is the population. The verb and the object vary (the verb is highlighted in bold). Bloom’s taxonomy and the many elaborations on it are excellent sources of action verbs. Clemson’s “Bloom’s Taxonomy Action Verbs” is just one of many online lists of Bloom verbs. [1]

Note

1. Clemson University Office of Institutional Assessment, “Bloom’s Taxonomy” accessed May 9, 2025, <https://media.clemson.edu/asc/blooms-taxonomy.pdf>.

Additional Sample Outcomes

Principle 1. Institutional Effectiveness

Performance Indicator 1.6 The library contributes to student recruitment, retention, time to degree, and academic success.

Students who use library services improve their academic performance.

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Students describe the role of the library as influential in terms of their successful academic performance.

Performance Indicator 1.7 The library communicates with the campus community to highlight its value in the educational mission and in institutional effectiveness.

The campus administration demonstrates library support through appropriate resource allocation.

The campus administration includes library-related success stories as part of the recruitment efforts.

Principle 2. Professional Values

Performance Indicator 2.4 The library supports academic integrity and deters plagiarism through policy and education.

Plagiarism cases decline in number after the library facilitates workshops about academic integrity.

Principle 3. Educational Role

Performance Indicator 3.1 Library personnel collaborate with faculty and others regarding ways to incorporate library collections and services into effective curricular and co-curricular experiences for students.

Faculty seek the input of librarians on use of library resources in course and assignment development.

Students use library collections for both curricular and co-curricular information needs.

Faculty require students to use a variety of sources from library databases.

Performance Indicator 3.2 Library personnel collaborate with faculty to embed information literacy learning outcomes into curricula, courses, and assignments.

Faculty seek the input of librarians in developing information literacy learning outcomes for their courses and assignments.

Faculty introduce, reinforce, and scaffold learning of information literacy learning outcomes.

Faculty require increasingly sophisticated demonstration of information literacy learning outcomes as students proceed to graduation.

Faculty seek the input of librarians in evaluating the effectiveness of program curricula for teaching information literacy skills.

Students demonstrate proficiency in finding, evaluating, and using information.

Performance Indicator 3.3 Library personnel model best pedagogical practices for classroom teaching, online tutorial design, and other educational practices.

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Librarians design and administer information literacy instruction sessions that incorporate hands-on, active learning techniques.

Faculty seek advice from librarians regarding pedagogical practices.

Students and faculty indicate that the library tutorials are well-designed and effective teaching resources.

Principle 4. Discovery

Performance Indicator 4.4 The library creates and maintains interfaces and system architectures that include all resources and facilitates access from preferred user starting points.

Faculty and students can access collections for educational and research needs from all user locations.

Users choose the library web interface as one of the first steps in their finding activities.

Users characterize the library interface as easy to find and intuitive to navigate.

Users integrate library interfaces and architectures into their daily search behaviors.

Users choose library interfaces to find materials for their information needs.

Users judge integration of library interfaces and resources found through the library as one reason for their success.

Performance Indicator 4.6 The library provides one-on-one assistance through multiple platforms to help users find information.

Users enhance their research skills through one-on-one consultation with librarians.

Users expand the types of sources (e.g., multiple formats—books, journals, primary sources, etc.) consulted when doing research as a result of a one-on-one consultation with librarians.

Users readily transfer the skills learned through one-on-one consultation with a librarian to other research contexts.

Principle 5. Collections

Performance Indicator 5.1 The library provides access to collections aligned with areas of research, curricular foci, or institutional strengths.

Faculty use resources to support their educational and research needs.

Faculty, students, and community users are satisfied with the collections provided by libraries for their educational, business, and research needs.

Students discover the appropriate library resources needed for their coursework.

Faculty locate data sets needed for their research.

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Performance Indicator 5.5 The library educates users on issues related to economic and sustainable models of scholarly communication.

Faculty choose to deposit their scholarly work in the institutional repository.

Principle 6. Space

Performance Indicator 6.7 The library provides clean, inviting, and adequate space, conducive to study and research, with suitable environmental conditions and convenient hours for its services, personnel, resources, and collections.

Students recognize the library as a welcoming environment.

Principle 7. Management/Administration/Leadership

Performance Indicator 7.1 Within the framework of the library's fundamental mission, the library's mission statement and goals align with and advance those developed by the institution.

The library will revise its strategic goals to align with the institution's new student and faculty success initiative.

Performance Indicator 7.4 Library personnel cultivate an inclusive workplace by promoting diversity, equity, and respect, ensuring that all staff feel valued, supported, and empowered to contribute fully. They implement policies and practices that actively address biases, foster a sense of belonging, and encourage diverse perspectives in decision-making and library initiatives.

The library will implement a climate survey for staff and use results to create three action items for the following year.

Performance Indicator 7.7 Library personnel communicate regularly and transparently with internal and external stakeholders.

The library will publish a newsletter each semester to internal and external stakeholders that features at least three highlights from student support services.

The library will maintain a strategic plan website that tracks progress on goals and initiatives.

Principle 8. Personnel

Performance Indicator 8.2 Library personnel have education and experience sufficient to their positions and the needs of the organization.

Faculty and students consider library personnel sufficient in quality to meet their research and instruction needs.

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Performance Indicator 8.7 Library personnel engage with library student employees to provide mentoring and work that enhances the students' overall academic experience.

Student employees list library personnel as academic and employment references.

Performance Indicator 8.8 Library personnel continuously examine and transform roles to meet the needs of the evolving organization.

Personnel roles align with new library services.

Principle 9. External Relations

Performance Indicator 9.2 The library contributes to external relations through communications, publications, events, and donor cultivation and stewardship.

The community demonstrates its appreciation of the library.

The community demonstrates active use of the library.

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Appendix 2: Benchmarking and Peer Comparison

Use and Value of Institutional Peer Comparisons

Many academic institutions use benchmarks to identify their strengths and weaknesses in comparison to similar institutions. For example, benchmarking can show if an institution or its library has comparable funding or staffing levels to similar institutions in a geographic area, with a similar enrollment, or with other related characteristics. An institution or library can use benchmarking to inform the strategies it develops to enhance its institutional quality and effectiveness.

Libraries should use existing institutional peer groups for comparisons whenever possible. This information may be available from the institution's registrar's office or office of institutional research. An institution may have two peer groups:

- An actual peer group provides comparable institutions.
- An aspirational peer group provides institutions that model future goals.

If peer groups are not already established, a library is encouraged to consult with institutional leadership to develop one or more. Once a peer group has been determined, a library can identify specific data points on which to compare itself against its peers.

Professional associations, government agencies, and other organizations collect and provide access to academic library statistics that can be used for benchmarking. Examples include:

- The Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) conducts an annual survey of all types of academic libraries across the US. ACRL offers *ACRLMetrics*, a subscription online service providing access to ACRL and National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) survey data from 2000 to present.[1]
- The Association of Research Libraries (ARL) collects annual statistics that describe the collections, expenditures, staffing, and service activities of more than 120 member libraries.[2] Staff members of ARL libraries can access ARL survey data via the ARL Statistics Analytics site; non-members can subscribe.[3]

The benchmarks that follow provide just a sample of the many ways libraries can leverage benchmarking to better understand their position in relation to their peers. Library personnel should stay updated on evolving definitions, terminology, and practices that can impact benchmarking activities. Accurate benchmarking is dependent on comparing “apples to apples,” so the data points being compared must be the same. Although some terms may appear similar, they might actually refer to different constructs and involve different questions. For example, one survey may ask for head count and another for FTE. Another survey may consider holdings in terms of volumes and another in terms of titles. As surveys and definitions evolve, it is important to look carefully at the data points to ensure they are the same before benchmarking.

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Principle 1: Institutional Effectiveness

- Number of degrees or other formal awards conferred.
- Graduation rates.
- Retention rates. *E.g.: fall-to-fall.*
- Library expenditures to institution expenditures percentages. *E.g.: Total library expenditures as percentage of total institution expenditures.*

Principle 2: Professional Values

- Number of seats librarians hold on campus committees.
- Number of workshops or library consultations offered on issues, such as copyright.

Principle 3: Educational Role

- Participants at group presentations. *E.g.: Per full-time undergraduate student. Per enrolled student.*
- Number of group presentations. *E.g.: Physical. Virtual.*
- NSSE “Experiences with Information Literacy” Topical Module Survey data. *E.g.: Number of respondents who responded “very much” or “quite a bit” to the NSSE Topical Module question “How much has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in using information correctly?” or CCSSE. E.g.: Worked on a paper or project that required integrating ideas or information from various sources (look for responses “very often” or “often”).*
- Number of information literacy courses for credit. *E.g.: Required information literacy course for credit. Elective information literacy course for credit.*
- Number of repeat faculty requestors of instruction services. *E.g.: Percentage of instruction sessions conducted for repeat faculty requestors.*
- Percentage of faculty who requested instructional services in the past academic year.
- Number of information literacy sessions per instructional librarian.
- Number of courses in which librarians are embedded.

Principle 4: Discovery

- Number of reference questions (transactions). *E.g.: By week. By means of asking. By length of time to answer the question.*
- Ratio of reference transactions to student enrollment. *E.g.: Per full-time student. Per part-time student.*
- Local use of online guides.

Principle 5: Collections

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- Total library materials expenditures per student. *E.g.: Per full-time undergraduate student. Per full-time graduate student.*
- Total library materials expenditures per faculty. *E.g.: Per full-time faculty. Per part-time faculty.*
- Number of titles (physical + electronic). *E.g.: Per full-time student. Per full-time faculty.*
- Total library materials expenditures percentages. *E.g.: Monograph expenditures as percentage of total library materials expenditures.*
- Materials expenditures to total library expenditures percentages. *E.g.: Total library materials expenditures as percentage of total library expenditures.*
- Collections use per student. *E.g.: Per undergraduate student. Per graduate student.*
- Interlibrary loan. *E.g.: Net lender versus net borrower.*
- Unique items through WorldCat Local.

Principle 6: Space

- Ratio of library seats to FTE student population.
- Type of learning spaces and accompanying technology available to the user community.
- Number of hours open each week during academic sessions.
- Number of days open each fiscal year.
- Gate counts. *E.g.: Per FTE student. During extended hours of fall and spring semesters.*

Principle 7: Management/Administration/Leadership

- Cost per hour open.
- Library expenditures percentages. *E.g.: Salary and wages expenditures as percentage of total library expenditures. Materials expenditures as percentage of total library expenditures. Other operating expenditures as percentage of total library expenditures.*
- Total operating expenditures per student. *E.g.: Per full-time undergraduate student. Per full-time graduate student.*
- Total expenditures per faculty. *E.g.: Per full-time faculty. Per part-time faculty.*

Principle 8: Personnel

- Salary and wages expenditures. *E.g.: Per full-time student. Per undergraduate student. Per faculty. Of professional staff per enrolled student.*
- Enrolled students per full-time equivalent (FTE) staff. *E.g.: Full-time undergraduates per FTE staff. Full-time graduate students per FTE staff.*
- Staffing percentages. *E.g.: Percentage of professional staff out of total staff. Percentage of support staff out of total staff.*
- Salaries. *E.g.: Professional staff salaries. Support staff salaries. Total staff salaries.*
- Salaries as percentage of total library expenditures.
- Professional development funding. *E.g.: Per professional staff member.*
- Staff turnover rate.

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Principle 9: Campus External Relations

- Giving to the library. *E.g.: Annual gifts as percentage of total giving.*
- Number of community user library cards.
- Ratio of community attendees per public relations events conducted.
- Number of tours or sessions with high school students
- Social media. *E.g.: Follower growth on Twitter. Number of interactions per Facebook post.*

Learn more about benchmarking in resources such as the following:

Atkinson, P. J. *Quality and the Academic Library: Reviewing, Assessing and Enhancing Service Provision*. Cambridge, MA: Chandos Publishing, an imprint of Elsevier, 2016.

Dugan, Robert E., Peter Hennon, and Danuta A. Nitecki. *Viewing Library Metrics from Different Perspectives: Inputs, Outputs, and Outcomes*. Santa Barbara, CA: Libraries Unlimited, 2009.

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Notes

1. Association of College and Research Libraries, "About ACRL Metrics," accessed March 20, 2017, http://www.acrlmetrics.com/index.php?page_id=11.
2. Association of Research Libraries, "ARL Statistics® & Salary Surveys," accessed March 20, 2017, <http://www.arl.org/focus-areas/statistics-assessment/arl-statistics-salary-survey>.
3. Association of Research Libraries, "ARL Statistics—Analytics," accessed March 20, 2017, <http://www.arlstatistics.org/analytics>.

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Appendix 3: Sources Consulted

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American Library Association, Joint ALA/ARL Building Cultural Proficiencies for Racial Equity Task Force. *Cultural Proficiencies for Racial Equity: A Framework*, 2022. <https://www.ala.org/sites/default/files/advocacy/content/diversity/ALA%20ARL%20Cultural%20Proficiencies%20for%20Racial%20Equity%20Framework.pdf>

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Appendix 4: History of the Standards

These standards were approved by the ACRL Standards Committee on December 5, 2017, and the ACRL Board of Directors on February 12, 2018. They supersede all earlier separate library standards produced by the College Libraries Section (CLS), Community and Junior College Libraries Section (CJCLS), and University Libraries Section (ULS) of ACRL, as well as the 2004 *Standards for Libraries in Higher Education* and the 2011 *Standards for Libraries in Higher Education*.

The first edition of the college library standards was published in 1959; subsequent editions were published in 1975, 1986, 1995, 2000, and 2011. Standards for two-year institutions were first published in 1960 and revised in 1979, 1990, and 1994. Standards for university libraries were first issued in 1979 and revised in 1989. In 1998, on the recommendation of the Task Force on Academic Library Outcomes Assessment, the ACRL Board mandated that all future standards incorporate outcomes assessment. The 2000 edition of *Standards for College Libraries* was the first to incorporate outcomes assessment and was considered a model for the other two library standards.

Representatives from the standards committees of the CLS, CJCLS, and ULS sections met and eventually recommended that the new college library standards be adapted as a single comprehensive standard for use by all academic and technical libraries. ACRL formed a task force in 2002 to accomplish this task. In June 2004, the ACRL Standards and Accreditation Committee and the ACRL Board approved the 2004 document, and the three extant library standards were rescinded.

In 2009, then-ACRL President Lori Goetsch charged a task force to review and revise the standards. A survey of academic library directors was conducted in the spring of 2010. In March 2011, a draft of the standards was published on the ACRL website and made available for comments through a blog. A hearing at the ACRL 2011 Conference in April 2011 provided members with an additional opportunity to provide comments and feedback.

The 2011 *Standards* differed from previous versions by articulating expectations for library contributions to institutional effectiveness. Those *Standards* differed structurally by providing a comprehensive framework using an outcomes-based approach, with evidence collected in ways most appropriate for each institution.

The 2016 task force was charged to review the 2011 *Standards* as part of a typical five-year review cycle and was encouraged to examine changes in library services, operations, and technology in the intervening years. The committee approached the charge through surveys, an environmental scan, and a series of interviews. Four public hearings were held about the revision process—one at ALA Midwinter 2017, a virtual open forum in May 2017, another at ALA Annual 2017, and a final virtual open forum in September 2017. These forums were held to encourage further comment and reaction.

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The 2018 *Standards* differ from previous versions by broadening the scope of some performance indicators, especially those dealing with technology and management/administration in order to make the standards more readily applicable to all types of libraries. These standards also include substantive changes to the appendices to provide a variety of contemporary examples for libraries

The 2025 *Standards for Libraries in Higher Education* build upon the foundation of the 2018 *Standards* with an added and intentional focus on the role of academic librarians. Recognizing that librarian expertise is central to advancing teaching, research, and institutional effectiveness, the revised *Standards* explicitly emphasize expectations in core areas such as information literacy, scholarly communication, collection development, and discovery. This emphasis affirms librarians not just as support personnel, but as educators, collaborators, and strategic partners whose contributions are integral to the academic mission. By embedding librarian expertise into the *Standards*, the task force aimed to ensure that this professional knowledge is both recognized by university leadership and valued by accreditation teams as a critical dimension of institutional quality. As part of the process, the task force updated the literature review, surveyed accreditation and library standards, and revised performance indicators, modifying and adding select illustrative sample outcomes.

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Appendix 5: Members of the 2025 ACRL *Standards for Libraries in Higher Education* Task Force

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