September 2018
Competency Lists for Academic Libraries
With an Australian emphasis
Introduction

Topical Annotated Bibliography

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Introduction

Over the past 10 years or more I have taken a note of competency lists as I see them. This work is an attempt to collect these in one place for the benefit of my Library and Information Science colleagues. A topical arrangement has been chosen to assist the reader to find the most relevant items for their purpose.

The collection has been developed through the eyes of an academic librarian in a particular institutional setting, but is not limited to works specifically relevant to academic library competency needs. Although international in scope, it has an Australian bias. Most of the items included are straight out competency lists. Occasionally a research article has been added where it includes a competency listing(s) or is seen to fill a gap.


Limitations
Annotations included are designed to allow readers to ascertain the relevance of an item to them. They do not always fully represent the content of the item, particularly in the case of articles.

As a comprehensive document would be a daunting read, this list is selective. A good source to keep an eye on is Librarianship.ca, https://librarianship.ca/resources/competencies/. Note that a full list of ACRL standards is available at http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/standardsguidelinestopic.

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Julia Leong
Staff Development Librarian, RMIT University Library
Chair, CAVAL Professional Development Interest Group 2017-8

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Types of libraries

Libraries in general


“This five page document defines the basic knowledge to be possessed by all persons graduating from an ALA-accredited master’s program in library and information studies. Librarians working in school, academic, public, special, and governmental libraries, and in other contexts will need to possess specialised knowledge beyond that specified here.” (Introduction)


Members of ALIA and its Professional Development scheme can choose from a number of specialisations and these are listed on this web page. At the time of producing this document these specialisations were: data, government, health, indigenous engagement, LIS practitioner research, public library, research/academic, schools, and VET Vocational Education and Training. Links on the page lead to more information such as competency lists and skills audit checklists.


Here is a short web document covering required abilities for workers in archives, libraries and records management. These are grouped under the following headings: knowledge of the broad context of the information environment; the purposes and characteristics of information architecture, organisation and access; processes and practices relating to information management; information sources, services and products; and general employability skills.


This brief publication identifies areas of strength of the library and
information sector and core skills and knowledge needed by its professionals. Headings used to group core skills and knowledge are: knowledge of the broad context of the information environment; information seeking; information architecture; information organisation and access; information services, sources and products; information management; generation of knowledge; and employability skills and attributes.


Researchers asked alumni of M.L.S. programs to rate the value of 55 competencies to facilitate curriculum planning. The article gives a literature review and results of the ratings. Table 6 lists the 10 most frequently rated as essential. Table 7 gives the 5 most highly rated by type of library. There are also tables for beginning librarians and experienced librarians, including by type of library.


Minimum competencies are listed for graduate library technicians. These are described as tasks these staff should be able to perform. Compare these with Library Support Staff Certification (2012) which is also listed.


This framework is in the shape of a wheel with ethics and values at the centre. The next band gives four generic skills clusters and eight areas of professional expertise. These are set within the wider library, information and knowledge sector context. On the outside of the wheel is the wider organisation and environmental context. It has been designed to work as a practical online self-assessment tool. Access is restricted to CILIP members.


This skills checklist covers the range of library functions. People can rate how well they can do each item as: really well, well, I can do this, more practice, learn this, or no interest.


This paper provides a common competency profile for information specialists - librarians, records managers, information managers,
archivists, and knowledge managers. Table I: Competencies for information specialists lists 6-11 competencies common to information specialists under the headings of: collaboration, client service, and communication; organisational understanding and strategic alignment; program and service delivery and management; records, information, and knowledge management technical competencies; and personal qualities.


This is an excellent resource compiled from a number of other competency lists and with input from practitioners and leaders. It is designed for any type of library and thus lacks some topics needed for academic libraries. It is particularly useful as it offers many topics and an unusual level of detail on each competency which adds clarity. For example the competency “Communicates effectively using a variety of methods” is expanded by five associated skills and knowledge.


This is now a well-known top-level framework for building understanding and consensus on capabilities needed in a digital organisation. It can be used for staff and curriculum development.


The Library Support Staff Certification (LSSC) Program allows US library support staff, who work in positions which do not require a graduate degree in library science, to demonstrate their competencies and gain certification. Competencies are listed under the following clusters: foundations of library services, communication and teamwork, technology, access services, adult readers’ advisory services, cataloging and classification, collections, reference and information services, supervision and management, and youth services.


One in a series of annual snapshots, this gives valuable insight into competencies sought in job advertisements for information professionals in USA. It offers sample job titles and duties and skills required for various aspects of library work and types of libraries.
From academic and public library directors, and other thought leaders nationwide, Library Journal identified 11 essential skills, and three additional ones for academic libraries, needed by librarians in the next twenty years. Essential were: advocacy/politics, collaboration, communication/people skills, creativity/innovation, critical thinking, data analysis, flexibility, leadership, marketing, project management and technological expertise. The add-ons for academic libraries were teaching, active faculty support and active resource response ("quickly putting together resources and activities to help students respond to and understand current events").

**Values**


Ten core values are listed for Australian library and information professionals.

**Academic libraries**


The ALIA PD Scheme Research/Academic Specialisation is a framework that supports the demonstration of specialised knowledge based on a set of competencies which address the unique opportunities and challenges within the research and tertiary education sectors including three streams: general, research and academic libraries (teaching and learning). Reflective learning for professional practice is guided by the competencies and supported by the Specialisation's Skills Audit Checklists for members.


The knowledge, skills and capabilities are arranged under seven categories and are a good guide to what is needed to work in an academic library. An update to this work is anticipated.

This short document provides a clear context in which the knowledge, skills, competencies and capabilities listed in *CAVAL competencies for academic and research librarians* (Leong & Woods) will be applied. The CAUL document shows what it is that libraries do to enable the university’s mission to be fulfilled.


This paper reports on a qualitative study of perceptions of academic librarians in Pakistan regarding current and required competencies. The research participants were librarians with Masters or a higher qualification at 15 public universities in Islamabad and Rawalpindi. As well as a literature review, description of the research, and discussion of findings, there are Tables of competency lists on: managing information organization and resources; applying information tools and technology; and personal competence.


These competencies are built on the Core Competencies for 21st Century CARL Librarians (2010) which were amended and adapted for the current Australian library and information context. This work outlines the broad spectrum of organisational competencies that are needed in an academic research library workforce.

**Standards**


Nine principles and related performance indicators are set forth regarding the contribution of academic libraries to institutional effectiveness. These are phrased in positive language which is useful when seeking to demonstrate value. Sample outcomes are given to help libraries take an outcomes-based approach.

**Special libraries and specific discipline areas**


While the content of Competencies for special collection professionals overlaps considerably with more general library competency lists, it is a useful supplement for academic librarians working in special collections as it adds important specialist competencies.

The document gives descriptions and lists of elements for six core competencies and enabling competencies for information professionals. It is designed to allow information professionals to articulate their value and consider professional development needs, for employers and students to understand the profession, and for educators in developing curricula.

**Art, Architecture and Design**


Updating the 2006 edition, this revision emphasizes “the specialized skills needed by art information professionals that are beyond general competencies expected of all information professionals”. It is relevant to those working with clients in art, architecture, design and related fields.

**Government**


A notable feature of these competencies is the arrangement in three columns: Basic Stage (Has knowledge of...), Advanced Stage (Has knowledge, skill, or ability to...), and Expert Stage (knowledge, skill, or ability to...). It offers some detail for competencies not always well developed elsewhere (e.g. Best practices and evaluation, Assistive technologies and Staff development), but as it is framed for a specialised audience, not all the content is a good fit for university libraries.

**Health**


A consensus-based, contemporary set of Evidence Based Practice (EBP) core competencies for health professionals is provided in Table 5 of this article. The article reports on a thorough international research project undertaken to inform curriculum development for entry-level EBP teaching and learning. The competencies are not specific to the work of librarians, but will be of interest to those specialising in this area.
On this website six broad competency areas for health information professionals are listed. For each a number of performance indicators are given for Basic and Expert levels. The broad areas are: information services; information management; instruction and instructional design; leadership and management; evidence-based practice and research; and health information professionalism.

Law


Succinctly expressed and attractively formatted, this supersedes the 2001 Competencies of Law Librarianship. The competencies illustrate current thinking around organisational culture and innovative practice. This work is of value to a wider audience than its intended one. Content is organised under six domains: professionalism + leadership at all levels; research + analysis; information management; teaching + training; marketing + outreach; and management + business acumen.

Aspects of library work

Analytics


Proficiencies are listed for staff in academic libraries who are tasked with measuring and demonstrating value in a range of library areas. Categories are: knowledge of assessment in libraries and higher education; ethics; assessment methods and strategies; research design; data collection and analysis; communication and reporting; advocacy and marketing; collaboration and partnerships; leadership; management; and mentoring, training, and coaching.

Leadership and management


LLAMA’s 14 foundational competencies are listed on this webpage. For each a suggested source or sources for further exploration is given.
Learning and teaching


This is a revision of ACRL Standards for proficiencies for instruction librarians and coordinators, 2007. The 2007 document provided ‘proficiencies’ under 12 categories. The revised document moves to an emphasis on strengths rather than skills and organises these under seven roles: advocate, coordinator, instructional designer, leader, lifelong learner, teacher, and teaching partner.


This document expresses how the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers apply in the context of working with learners of English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EAL/D). Despite the specific context it is of value more generally in the learning and teaching area. For each competency the actions/behaviours required are given for graduate, proficient, highly accomplished, and leader levels.


On pages 20-25 of this article, Azmi outlines a suggested new curriculum for Arab LIS schools detailing objectives and learning outcomes. The learning outcomes effectively form a media and visual literacy competency list.


This website lists a series of competencies needed for library staff to be effective technology trainers when assisting patrons.


This article reports on findings of a research study on competencies required for work in library and museum learning spaces. Top competencies and skills needed are indicated, as is the relevance of
higher education for professionals in this area.


The focus is on competencies specific to reference and user services: those common to other roles are not included. These competencies build on ALA’s Core Competencies of Librarianship, Section 5. Reference and User Services and provide lists of behaviours required under the tasks involved in these roles.

**Collections and discovery**


Competencies and soft skills needed for acquisitions work were identified through a systematic review of job advertisements and revised after feedback from acquisitions professionals. Knowledge, skills and abilities, and behavioural attributes are outlined.


The ALCTS web resource offers an up to date list of knowledge, skill and ability, and behavioural competencies for cataloguing and metadata librarians in any type or size of library.


The competencies are presented under the following headings: life cycle of electronic resources, technology, research and assessment, effective communication, supervising and management, trends and professional development, and personal qualities.


This is a supplement to the NASIG core competencies for electronic resources librarians and follows a similar pattern to that document. The supplement describes the skills and knowledge needed for handling print serials.

NAA outlines the skills and knowledge needed “to create and manage information and data effectively to meet business and accountability requirements.” There are two sets of information provided – one for all staff and one for information management/records management professionals. The information management section is subdivided into information management professionals and data for IM professionals. Within each section a number of topics and capabilities are listed for each under four categories: Foundation, Practitioner/skilled professional, Management/specialist, and Executive/lead.

**Research and publishing**


A list of 10 competencies for librarians working in the research data field has been created as part of the ALIA Professional Development Scheme specialisations.


Here you will find roles, competencies and skills for the following four aspects of library activities in scholarly communication: scholarly publishing services, open access repository services, copyright and open access advice, and assessment of scholarly resources.


The author built on previous research and surveyed data librarians to ascertain their ratings of the importance of skills, knowledge and competency items. Cluster analysis identified two groups of data librarians – subject specialists and data generalists. In addition to the research report, a 2-page *Taxonomy of skills and expertise for data librarians* was created. This can be located by viewing the html version of the article and looking for Supplemental files – Appendix B – http://jmla.pitt.edu/ojs/jmla/article/view/306/670#s2-jmla-106-294


This gives four themes that are common to Scholarly Communications Librarians (SCL) work - background knowledge, technical skills, outreach and instruction, and team building. The document also lists
six areas of emphasis that are often involved in SCL work with core competencies within these six areas. The areas of emphasis are: institutional repository management, publishing services, copyright services, data management services, assessment and impact metrics, and personal strengths.


The authors report on research to identify core competencies to support engagement and impact (EI) assessment work for the new Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) national framework.


This is a valuable addition to the competency literature. It lists library roles and core competencies for the area of research data management.


This article presents a very readable overview of the work and findings of the Joint Task Force on Librarians’ Competencies in Support of E-Research and Scholarly Communication which identified emerging roles and competencies in research data management, scholarly communication and Open Access, digital curation and preservation and support for digital scholarship. The Task Force was formed by the Association of Research Libraries (ARL), the Canadian Association of Research Libraries (CARL), the Association of European Research Libraries (LIBER), and the Confederation of Open Access Repositories (COAR).
Alphabetical List


