

Standards for distance learning library services

Approved by the ACRL Board of Directors, July 2008

by the ACRL Distance Learning Section Guidelines Committee

Part I: Foundations

Executive Summary: The Access Entitlement Principle

Every student, faculty member, administrator, staff member, or any other member of an institution of higher education, is entitled to the library services and resources of that institution, including direct communication with the appropriate library personnel, regardless of where enrolled or where located in affiliation with the institution. Academic libraries must, therefore, meet the information and research needs of all these constituents, wherever they may be. This principle of access entitlement, as applied to individuals at a distance, is the undergirding and uncompromising conviction of the Standards for Distance Learning Library Services, hereinafter designated as the Standards.

The access entitlement principle applies equally to individuals on a main campus, off campus, in distance learning or regional campus programs, or in the absence of any physical campus. The principle applies to all public, private, profit, and nonprofit academic institutions. The principle likewise applies to courses taken for credit, noncredit, and through continuing education programs, and to courses taught face-to-face in classrooms in remote settings, or via any medium or through any other means of distance learning. The Standards delineate elements necessary to achieving this and the other closely related principles provided in the Philosophy section.

Introduction: A Living Document

Since their inception as Guidelines (see About the standards) in 1963, and throughout their close to half a century of revision, expansion, and use, the primary motivation for establishing and maintaining the Standards has indeed been concern for ensuring the delivery of equivalent library services and information resources to college and university students, faculty, and other personnel in remote settings. The Guidelines, from which the Standards evolved, had been under particularly frequent revision and expansion in the past decade. These Standards, like the Guidelines before them, have been prepared by ACRL's Guidelines Committee of the Distance Learning Section (DLS).

Incentive to adapt and expand the Guidelines, leading to their evolving into today's Standards, stemmed from the following increasingly critical factors: nontraditional study having rapidly become a major element in higher education; the expanding diversity of educational opportunities; a growing number of unique environments where educational opportunities are offered; greater recognition of the need for library resources and services at locations other than main campuses; growing concern and demand for equitable services for all students in higher education, no matter where the classroom may be; a greater demand for library resources and services by faculty and staff at distance learning sites; and the expansion and advancement in technological innovations in the transmittal

About the standards

Today's Standards are the culmination of the expansion and revision of the following series of documents, the first of which originated in processes initiated in 1963: ACRL Guidelines for Library Services to Extension Students, 1967; ACRL Guidelines for Extended Campus Library Services, 1981; ACRL Guidelines for Extended Campus Library Services, 1990; ACRL Guidelines for Distance Learning Library Services, 1998; ACRL Guidelines for Distance Learning Library Services, 2000; Guidelines for Distance Learning Library Services, 2004.

With completion of the 2004 revision, which had included only changes to the Introduction and the Revising the Guidelines section, the need for a new, major revision of what was still essentially the 1998 document had become evident, and members of the guidelines committee began the initial work toward making the transition from a guidelines document to a standards document. At that time, Rob Morrison, at Utah State University and later National-Louis University, served as chair of the Guidelines Committee and set out to lead these efforts. Harvey Gover from Washington State University Tri-Cities continued to contribute to the new revision processes as consultant to the guidelines committee.

Rob Morrison set up and led revision activities for three years. Under Morrison's leadership, three major revision hearings and two revision discussion groups took place. The first hearing was at the 2004 ALA Midwinter conference, in San Diego on January 11, the second at the 2005 ALA Annual Conference, in Chicago on June 25, and the third at the 2006 ALA Midwinter Meeting in San Antonio on January 21. One discussion group took place at the Twelfth Off-Campus Library Services Conference in Savannah in April 2006, and the second was a roundtable discussion at the 13th ACRL National Conference in Baltimore, March 31, 2007.

Further opportunity for outside participation in the Guidelines revision has been provided through a wiki, since it was first

made available in 2005. The wiki has been used by members of the guidelines committee to post proposed changes for consideration by other committee members and to request e-mail participation from individuals not on the committee and not eligible to write to the wiki. Michelle (Shelly) Drumm, emergent technology trainer at BCR (Bibliographical Center for Research) and a member of the DLS Web committee, was instrumental in setting up the wiki and has both moved and maintained it since.

Members of the guidelines committee, who participated actively with Rob Morrison in the revision activities while he was chair, were Betty Brice, University of Alabama; Marie Jones, East Tennessee State University; and Melissa Koenig, DePaul University.

Axel Schmetzke of the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point provided valuable input on Americans with disabilities issues at the Chicago 2005 hearing. The former Guidelines had neither acknowledged nor addressed these issues.

David L. Bickford, University of Phoenix, participated actively in the roundtable discussion at the 13th ACRL National Conference, making a number of valuable suggestions. Bickford later became a member of the guidelines committee.

Rob Morrison left the committee in 2007 and Jessica Catherine McCullough, ARTstor User Services, took over as chair. Harvey Gover continued to work actively on adding new content, rewriting, restructuring, and refining the final document for submission to the ACRL Standards and Accreditation Committee (SAC) and the ACRL Board for approval at the 2008 ALA Annual Conference. Gover also served as acting chair of the committee in 2008 in McCullough's absence.

New members of the committee, Daniel Gall, University of Iowa, and Jan H. Kemp, University of Texas-San Antonio, provided valuable assistance to Gover in preparation of the final 2008 draft. (*continues on next page*)

About the standards (continues)

An editorial discussion leading to further revisions took place during the online approval process by the DLS Executive Board in April 2008. Specific editorial suggestions were provided by Ruth Hodges of South Carolina State University, Jessica Catherine McCullough of ARTstor User Services, and Allyson Washburn of Brigham Young University. The draft was approved on April 17, 2008.

When reviewing the publication history of the Guidelines, one readily notices the short span in editions from 1998 to 2000. The 1998 Guidelines were approved with the proviso from SAC that efforts be undertaken immediately upon their final approval to make the Guidelines more outcomes oriented through a minor rhetorical revision that would not require as complete a subsequent approval process as would a more thorough revision. This minor outcomes revision was actually initiated during the 1998 approval process, when the guidelines committee members began reviewing the draft document for possible outcomes additions and then Chair, Harvey Gover, prepared an additional precept for the Guidelines Philosophy section, acknowledging the importance of instilling lifelong learning skills through information literacy instruction for students in extended academic settings. With the approval of SAC, that precept was incorporated into the final draft of the 1998 Guidelines.

The outcomes revision continued through the ALA Annual Conference 2000, when it was approved by SAC and the ACRL Board of Directors. Those guidelines committee members who participated actively in the outcomes revision throughout this time included Committee Chair Jean Caspers, Oregon State University; and Geraldine Collins, University of North Florida; Linda Frederiksen, Washington State University Vancouver; Lisa Hinchliffe, Illinois State University; Mae O Neal, Western Michigan University; Bill Parton, Oklahoma Tech University; and Bernie Sloan, University of Illinois-Urbana/Champaign. Susan Maltese, Oakton Community College, then liaison from

SAC to DLS, and Barton Lessin, Wayne State University, chair of SAC, also contributed suggestions and guidance. Harvey Gover, then DLS chair and consultant to the guidelines committee, monitored the entire outcomes revision process, and prepared the final revision draft submitted to SAC just prior to ALA Annual Conference 2000. The final revision draft was based upon a draft insert that had been prepared by Jean Caspers and submitted to the guidelines committee for review on June 6. Gover's final draft consisted largely of an incorporation of Caspers' insert throughout the entire 1998 Guidelines text and was forwarded to Susan Maltese, SAC liaison to DLS, on June 9 for submission to SAC.

During the approval process for the outcomes revision, it was suggested by members of SAC that the Guidelines Introduction needed strengthening and recommended that an additional minor revision be prepared, rewriting the introduction. During the process of revising the introduction, it became evident that the Revising the Guidelines section would also require some corresponding strengthening and revision. These efforts, which led to approval of the 2004 edition, were initiated and prepared by Harvey Gover, then consultant to the guidelines committee, with input from members of the guidelines committee, Linda Frederiksen, chair, Washington State University Vancouver; Betty K. Bryce, University of Alabama Libraries; Deborah F. Cardinal, WiLS OCLC; Catharine Cebrowski, ITESM Tec De Monterrey; Geraldine Collins, University of North Florida; Marie F. Jones, East Tennessee State University; Melissa H. Koenig, DePaul University; Debra Lamb-Deans, Cornell University; and Bernie Sloan, University of Illinois-Urbana/Champaign.

From the beginning, those undertaking preparation or revision of the Standards have sought the widest possible input from everyone involved in all aspects and on all levels of distance teaching and learning in higher education. For example, the decision to revise the 1990 Guidelines was made initially

by the DLS Guidelines Committee. Then the official mandate came from the DLS Executive Board at its annual 1996 Midwinter meeting. The revision of the 1990 ACRL Guidelines for Extended Campus Library Services, which produced the 1998 ACRL Guidelines for Distance Learning Library Services, was prepared by Harvey Gover, then chair of the DLS guidelines committee. The revision was based upon input from members of the guidelines committee, members of the DLS Executive Board, the general membership of DLS, and other librarians and administrators involved in post-secondary distance learning programs from across the nation and around the world.

Members of the guidelines committee who initiated or contributed to the revision process for the 1990 Guidelines included: Stella Bentley, University of California-Santa Barbara; Jean Caspers, Oregon State University; Jacqueline A. Henning, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University; Sharon Hybki-Kerr, University of Arkansas-Little Rock; Gordon Lynn Hufford, Indiana University East; Ruth M. Jackson, West Virginia University; Chui-Chun Lee, SUNY-New Paltz; G. Tom Mendina, University of Memphis; Virginia S. O'Herron, Old Dominion University; Mae O'Neal, Western Michigan University; Bill Parton, Arkansas Tech University; Mercedes L. Rowe, Mercy College; Dorothy Tolliver, Maui Community College Library; and Steven D. Zink, University of Nevada-Reno.

Others outside the committee who contributed significantly to the cycle of revision of the

1990 Guidelines included: Thomas Abbott, University of Maine-Augusta; Janice Bain-Kerr, Troy State University; Nancy Burich, University of Kansas, Regents Center Library; Anne Marie Casey, Central Michigan University; Tony Cavanaugh, Deakin University, Victoria, Australia; Monica Hines Craig, Central Michigan University; Mary Ellen Davis, ACRL; Tom DeLoughry, *Chronicle Of Higher Education*; Jill Fatzner, University of New Orleans, ACRL Board, Task Force on Outcomes; Jack Fritts, Southeastern Wisconsin Information Technology Exchange Consortium (SWITCH); Barbara Gelman-Danley of SUNY Monroe Community College, Educational Technology, and the Consortium for Educational Technology for University Systems; Kay Harvey, Penn State, McKeesport; Maryhelen Jones, Central Michigan University; Marie Kascus, Central Connecticut State University; Barbara Krauth, student services project coordinator for the Western Cooperative for Educational Telecommunication of the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE); Eleanor Kulleseid, Mercy College; Rob Morrison, Utah State University; Kathleen O'Connor, Gonzaga University; Alexander (Sandy) Slade, University of Victoria-British Columbia, Canada; Mem Catania Stahley, University of Central Florida, Brevard Campus; Peg Walther, City University, Renton, Washington; Virginia Witucke, Central Michigan University; Jennifer Wu, North Seattle Community College and College Librarians and Media Specialists (CLAMS).

of information and the delivery of courses. To these may be added shifts away from central campus enrollments, the search for more cost-effective sources for post-secondary education, and the appearance and rapid development of the virtual or all-electronic university, having no physical campus of its own.

Online access to library resources has blurred the distinctions between main campus online users of library resources and

distance learning online users. Main campus online users are typically enrolled there, or employed there, and are using online library resources in their dorms or offices, in their apartments, in their nearby family homes, or anywhere they can get Internet access for their laptop computers or other portable devices. These individuals function very much like distance learners and faculty in their online use of library resources and require

some of the same kinds of interactions with library personnel.

Some main campus online users do literally become distance learners, or distance learning personnel, by dual enrollment, or through dual employment, in both on-campus and distance learning courses. Often distance learning courses are chosen by students in order to obtain some of the additional services provided through these courses. Other students choose these courses in order to avoid being in a classroom.

Contrasted with the main campus online users and nearby distance learners are those distance learners or instructors who are truly geographically isolated from the originating institution, often hundreds or thousands of miles away. Such individuals frequently have little institutional contact or identity. Further, these individuals also typically have special needs for the services and resources their institutional libraries can supply and are therefore targeted for services to supply those needs.

These categories of main campus online users and distance learning online users differ primarily because of variations in their degree of isolation from the originating institution and the library. The Standards are designed to apply to all categories of distance users of their institutional libraries.

Although some virtual institutions have created their own virtual libraries, many have found it necessary to compensate for their lack of library facilities by contracting with libraries on academically respected physical campuses in order to provide their own students adequate library services and materials. A librarian-administrator from the virtual institution will be stationed at the physical library to coordinate the provision of materials and services to the virtual university students. Combinations of virtual and physical libraries may also be undertaken. Whatever solutions are developed for providing library services and materials to students of virtual institutions, care must be taken to meet the requirements specified throughout these Standards.

In addition to providing their own content, the Standards function as a gateway to adherence to other appropriate standards and guidelines of ACRL, to the extent that each document, or portions thereof, apply to services provided the distance learning community. The most recent editions of these ACRL standards and guidelines may be found at www.ala.org/ala/acrl/acrlstandards/standardsguidelines.cfm.

It is further anticipated that additional guidance will be provided by checklists, guidelines, and standards from other divisions of ALA, or other organizations, such as professional accrediting associations, and the U.S. regional accrediting associations and commissions for educational institutions. Selected specific examples are provided where appropriate in later sections of the Standards.

Guidance in the use and application of the Standards may be found at the DLS Web pages: caspian.switchinc.org/~distlearn/.

A comprehensive bibliography of recent literature on distance learning library services and information on earlier editions of the bibliography can be accessed from the DLS Web pages: caspian.switchinc.org/~distlearn/.

The intended audience for the Standards includes administrators at all levels of post-secondary education, librarians planning for managing and providing distance learning library services, other librarians and library personnel serving distance learning students or working with distance learning program staff, distance learning faculty, funding sources, accrediting organizations, and licensure agencies.

Definitions

Distance learning library services: Library services in support of college, university, or other post-secondary courses and programs offered away from a main campus, or in the absence of a traditional campus, and regardless of where credit is given. Courses thus supported may be taught in traditional or nontraditional formats or media, may or may not require physical facilities, and may or may

not involve live interaction of teachers and students. The phrase is inclusive of services to courses in all post-secondary programs designated as: extension, extended, off-campus, extended campus, distance, distributed, open, exible, franchising, virtual, synchronous, or asynchronous.

Distance learning community: All individuals, institutions, or agencies directly involved with academic programs or extension services offered away from or in the absence of a traditional academic campus, including students, faculty, researchers, administrators, sponsors, and staff, or any of these whose academic work otherwise takes them away from on-campus library services.

Originating institution: The credit-granting body; that is, the entity, singular or collective, and the chief administrative officers and governance organizations responsible for the offering, marketing, and/or supporting of distance learning courses and programs. Each institution in a multi-institutional cluster is responsible for meeting the library needs of its own students, faculty, and staff at the collective site.

Library: Denotes the library operation directly associated with the originating institution. In the case of virtual universities, the library itself may be virtual, or it may be the library of an existing traditional institution, contracted for services and materials to the students, faculty, and other personnel of the virtual institution.

Librarian-administrator: A librarian holding a master's degree from an ALA-accredited program who specializes in distance learning library services and is directly responsible for the administration and supervision of those services. Libraries that use innovative staffing models or distributed service models, which do not have a single specified distance learning librarian-administrator, must assign portions of that position among librarians with the requisite expertise throughout the library operation in order to carry out all the duties and responsibilities specified for the librarian-administrator in these Standards.

Philosophy: A Bill of Rights for the Distance Learning Community

Along with the access entitlement principle, the Standards are founded upon the following additional precepts:

Access for Achievement of Superior Academic Skills: Access to appropriate library services and resources is essential for the attainment of superior academic skills in post-secondary education, regardless of where students, faculty, staff, and programs are located. Members of the distance learning community, including those with disabilities, must therefore be provided effective and appropriate library services and resources, which may differ from, but must be equivalent to, those provided for students and faculty in traditional campus settings.

Direct Human Access: Direct human access must be made available to the distance learning community through instruction, interaction, and intervention from library personnel in the provision of library services and in facilitating successful use of library resources, particularly electronic resources requiring computer literacy and information literacy skills.

Additional Investment: Traditional on-campus library services and personnel cannot simply be stretched in an attempt to meet the library needs of the distance learning community without any additional investment. Even with technological developments rendering location less relevant than in the past, distance learning students and faculty still face distinct and different challenges involving library access and information delivery. Special funding arrangements, specialized staffing, proactive planning, and promotion are necessary to deliver equivalent library services and to achieve equivalent results in teaching and learning, and generally to maintain quality in distance learning programs. Equitable distance learning library services are often more personalized than might be expected on campus, because students and faculty in distance learning programs seldom have direct access to a full range of library services and materials.

Mandated Support: The originating institution must, through its chief administrative officers and governance organizations, and the active leadership of the library administration, provide for funding and appropriately meeting the information needs of its distance learning programs in support of their teaching, learning, and research. This support must provide ready and equivalent library service and learning resources to all of the institution's students, faculty, and other personnel, regardless of location. This support must be funded separately, in addition to, rather than drawn from, the regular funding of the library. Innovative or distributed systems should not be used simply to provide distance learning library services in avoidance of making any additional separate investments in these services. In growing and developing institutions, funding should expand as programs and enrollments grow.

- **Technical Linkages:** The originating institution must provide for service, management, and technical linkages between the library and other complementary resource bases such as computing facilities, instructional media, support services for people with disabilities, and telecommunication centers.

- **Meeting Other Standards, Guidelines, Laws, and Regulations:** The originating institution must assure that its distance learning library programs meet or exceed national and regional accreditation standards and professional association standards and guidelines, as well as the mandate for equal program and service access for users with disabilities and compliance with appropriate federal and state laws, such as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Title 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Programs offered in other nations must likewise meet all relevant local and national laws and regulations.

- **Institutional Involvement of Library and Other Personnel:** The originating institution must involve library and other personnel in all stages of the detailed analysis of planning, developing, evaluating, and adding or changing of the distance learning programs.

Written Agreements: The originating institution is responsible, through the library, for the development and periodic review of formal and documented written agreements when resources and services from unaffiliated local libraries are to be used to support information needs of the distance learning community. Such resources and services are not to be used simply as substitutes for supplying adequate materials and services by the originating institution.

Meeting Needs, the Primary Responsibility: The library has primary responsibility for making its resources and services available to its users regardless of physical location. Therefore, the library identifies, develops, coordinates, implements, and assesses these resources and services. The library's programs must be designed to meet not only standard informational and skills development needs but also the unique needs of the distance learning community. The requirements and desired outcomes of academic programs should guide the library's responses to defined needs. Innovative approaches to the design and evaluation of special procedures or systems to meet these needs, both current and anticipated, are encouraged.

Strategic Planning: The library must maintain a current strategic plan and vision for serving distance learners. Strategic planning is an iterative process that includes evaluation, updating, and refinement. Formal planning procedures and methods must be used. These planning methods require input from a broad spectrum of the originating institution's community, including distance learners. The library must likewise include distance learning library services in its mission statement and goals, which serve as a framework for all its activities. The mission and goals should be compatible and consistent with those developed by the originating institution. These methods help the institution prepare for the future by clearly defining a vision and mission, by setting goals and objectives, and by implementing specific strategies or courses of action designed to help meet those ends.

• **Outcomes Assessment:** The library must make outcomes assessment a major component of distance learning library services. Outcomes assessment addresses the accountability of institutions to determine whether distance students are learning effectively and whether library services are effectively meeting their needs. As an active mechanism for improving current library practices, outcomes assessment focuses on the achievement of outcomes that have been identified as desirable in the goals and objectives of distance learning library services and identifies performance measures, such as proficiencies, that indicate how well the library is doing what it has stated it wishes to do. Outcomes assessment of distance learning library services should take into consideration the greater dependence of libraries on technology, their increasing use of online services, their growing responsibility to provide information literacy skills, their increasing reliance on consortial services, and new developments in the ways in which scholarly information is published and distributed.

• **Information Literacy:** The library must provide information literacy instruction programs to the distance learning community in accordance with the ACRL Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education, as cited below under Services. The attainment of lifelong learning skills through general bibliographic and information literacy instruction in academic libraries is a primary outcome of higher education, and, as such, must be provided to all distance learning students.

Part II: Specific Requirements

Fiscal Responsibilities

The originating institution must provide continuing, optimum financial support for library services to the distance learning community. This support must be sufficient to meet not only the specifications listed below, but also those given in other sections of the Standards, as well as specifications in other applicable ACRL standards and guidelines, and those of professional, state, and regional

accrediting agencies, as noted earlier. This financing should be:

related to the formally defined needs and demands of the distance learning program;

allocated on a schedule matching the originating institution's budgeting cycle;

designated and specifically identified within the originating institution's budget and expenditure reporting statements;

accommodated to arrangements involving external agencies, including both unaffiliated and affiliated, but independently supported, libraries;

sufficient to support staffing as specified in Personnel ;

sufficient to cover the type and number of services provided to the distance learning community; and

sufficient to support innovative approaches to meeting needs.

Personnel

As noted in the definition of the librarian-administrator and in the opening statement of the following Management section, the functions of the librarian-administrator may be dispersed across innovative or distributed library systems among a number of librarians rather than assigned to one designated individual; however, under such circumstances, care must be taken to ensure that none of the essential functions of the librarian-administrator, as provided in the Standards and other closely related documents, are omitted from these systems.

Personnel involved in the management and coordination of distance learning library services include both library administrators and key administrative and support personnel from the originating institution, who participate on the main campus, and at distance learning sites. Among these are the ADA compliance officer or staff from support services for people with disabilities. Participating library personnel include the librarian-administrator and librarians with the appropriate expertise to provide services to the distance learning community.

The originating institution must provide professional and support personnel with clearly defined responsibilities at the appropriate location(s) and in the number and of the qualifications necessary to attain the goals and objectives for library services to the distance learning program, including direct human access for the distance learning community. These individuals may be assigned to the library or in separately administered units, and should include:

- a librarian-administrator to plan, implement, coordinate, and evaluate library resources and services addressing the information and skills needs of the distance learning community;

- additional professional and/or support personnel with the capacity and training to identify informational and skills needs of distance learning library users and respond to them directly, regardless of location. The exact combination of central and site staffing for distance learning library services will differ from institution to institution.

Distance learning library personnel must have:

- classification, status, salary scales, and workload equivalent to that of other comparable library employees, while reflecting the compensation levels and cost of living for those residing at distance learning sites;

- written policies establishing their status, rights, and responsibilities. Policy regarding faculty librarians should be consistent with the ACRL Standards for Faculty Status for College and University Librarians, www.ala.org/ala/acrl/acrlstandards/standardsfaculty.htm, and;

- opportunities for continuing growth and development, including continuing education, professional education, and participation in professional and staff organizations.

Library education

To enable the initiation of an academic professional specialization in distance learning library services, schools of library and information science should include in their curriculum, courses and course units in

this growing area of specialization within librarianship.

Management

As noted above both in Definitions and Personnel, the functions of the librarian-administrator may be dispersed across innovative or distributed library systems among a number of librarians rather than assigned to one designated individual. Care must be taken under such circumstances to ensure that none of the essential functions of the librarian-administrator, as presented below, are omitted from these systems.

The librarian-administrator, either centrally located or at an appropriate site, is the principal and direct agent for implementation of library services and resources in support of distance learning programs, as funded by the chief administrative officers and governance organizations of the originating institution, and as framed through the active leadership of the library administration.

As an agent of both the originating institution and the library, the librarian-administrator manages services and access to resources for the distance learning community. At a minimum, the librarian-administrator pursues, implements, and maintains all of the following areas of management in order to provide a facilitating environment in support of teaching and learning, and in the acquisition of lifelong learning skills.

1. Mission, goals, and objectives

The librarian-administrator:

- develops a written statement of immediate and long-range goals and objectives for distance learning library services, which addresses defined needs and outlines the methods by which progress can be measured;

- promotes the incorporation of the distance learning mission statement, goals, and objectives into those of the library and of the originating institution as a whole;

- involves distance learning community representatives, including local administrators and on-site faculty and students, in the

formation of the objectives and the regular evaluation of their achievement; and

participates in the strategic planning processes of the originating institution and the library.

2. Needs and outcomes assessments

The librarian-administrator is responsible for ensuring and demonstrating that all requirements for distance learning library services are met through needs and outcomes assessments, and other measures of library performance, as appropriate.

The librarian-administrator assesses the existing library support for distance learning, its availability, appropriateness, and effectiveness, using qualitative, quantitative, and outcomes measurement devices as well as a written profile of needs.

The librarian-administrator regularly surveys distance learning library users to monitor and assess both the appropriateness of their use of services and resources and the degree to which needs are being met and skills acquired.

Assessment instruments may include surveys, tests, interviews, and other valid measuring devices. These instruments may be designed specifically for the function being measured, or previously developed instruments may be used. It is critical, however, to choose carefully the instrument, the size of the sample, and the method used for sampling. The instrument should be valid, and the way it is used should be appropriate for the task.

These planning and evaluation processes are ongoing and should be conducted in cooperation with the library and the originating institution. The librarian-administrator:

uses inputs, outputs, outcomes, and assessments as detailed in *Standards for Libraries in Higher Education*, www.ala.org/ala/acrl/acrlstandards/standardslibraries

prepares a written profile of the information and skills needs of the current and potential distance learning community;

conducts general library knowledge surveys, of students at the beginning, mid-

point, and near graduation to assess the effectiveness of their information literacy instruction;

uses evaluation checklists for librarian and tutorial instruction to gather feedback from students, other librarians, and teaching faculty;

tracks student library use through student journal entries or information literacy diaries;

asks focus groups of students, faculty, staff, and alumni to comment on their experiences using distance learning library services over a period of time;

assesses and articulates both the electronic and traditional library resource needs of the distance learning community;

assesses and articulates needs related to library services, including instruction;

assesses and articulates needs for facilities, in both traditional and online environments;

conducts reviews of specific library and information service areas or operations which support distance learning library services;

reviews accessibility of distance learning library services for the entire learning community;

considers distance learning library services in the assessment strategies related to institutional accreditation;

compares the library as a provider of distance learning library services with its peers through self study efforts of the originating institution;

employs assessment and evaluation by librarians from other institutions or other appropriate consultants, including those in communities where the institution has concentrations of distance learners; and

participates in continuous institutional assessment and effectiveness programs and processes.

3. Collections and services

The librarian-administrator:

prepares or revises collection development and acquisitions policies to reflect the profile of needs;

develops methods for delivering library materials and services to the distance learning community;

ensures that needed services identified in the planning process are provided to the distance learning community; and

promotes library support services to the distance learning community.

4. Cooperation and collaboration

The librarian-administrator:

participates in the curriculum development process and in course planning for distance learning to ensure that appropriate library resources and services are available;

works collaboratively with teaching faculty in distance-delivered programs to integrate information literacy into courses and programs in order to foster lifelong learning skills;

promotes dialogue between distance learning and library administrators to ensure cooperation between the two groups;

initiates dialogue leading to cooperative agreements and possible resource sharing or compensation for unaffiliated libraries, where applicable;

develops partnerships that ensure the necessary technology support for the distance learning community; and

acts as an advocate for the distance learning community among colleagues in the library and on campus.

Facilities and equipment

The originating institution must provide sufficient facilities, equipment, and communication tools to attain the objectives of the distance learning programs. The size, number, scope, and accessibility of these facilities and equipment must be sufficient to provide timely access for all students, including those with disabilities. Arrangements may vary and should be appropriate to programs offered. Examples of suitable arrangements include but are not limited to one or a combination of:

access to facilities through agreements with a nonaffiliated library;

designated space for consultations, ready reference collections, reserve collections, electronic transmission of information, computerized data base searching and interlibrary loan services, and offices for the library distance learning personnel;

a branch or satellite library; and

online services, including Web-based virtual libraries, electronic communication tools, and course management software.

Resources

The originating institution is responsible for ensuring that the distance learning community has access to library materials equivalent to those provided in traditional settings. Thus, the institution must provide or secure convenient, direct access to library materials in appropriate formats that are of sufficient quality, depth, number, scope, and currency to:

meet all students' needs in fulfilling course assignments;

enrich the academic programs;

meet teaching and research needs;

support curricular needs;

facilitate the acquisition of lifelong learning skills;

accommodate students with varying levels of technological access (i.e., low bandwidth); and

accommodate other informational needs of the distance learning community as appropriate.

When more than one institution is involved in the provision of a distance learning program, each is responsible for the provision of library materials to the students enrolled in its courses, unless an equitable agreement for otherwise providing these materials has been made. Costs, services, and methods for the provision of materials for all courses in the program should be uniform.

Services

Library services offered to the distance learning community must be designed to meet a wide range of informational, instructional, and user needs, and should provide

some form of direct user access to library personnel. The exact combination of service delivery methods will differ from institution to institution. Specific professional standards and guidelines which should be utilized in providing these services include, but are not limited to:

Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education. Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL), American Library Association, 2000. www.ala.org/ala/acrl/acrlstandards/informationliteracycompetency.cfm.

Guidelines for Behavioral Performance of Reference and Information Service Providers. Reference and User Services Association (RUSA), American Library Association, 2004. www.ala.org/ala/rusa/protocols/referenceguide/guidelinesbehavioral.cfm.

Guidelines for Implementing and Maintaining Virtual Reference Services. Reference and User Services Association (RUSA), American Library Association, 2004. www.ala.org/ala/rusa/protocols/referenceguide/virtrefguidelines.cfm.

Professional Competencies for Reference and User Services Librarians. Reference and User Services Association (RUSA), American Library Association, 2003. www.ala.org/ala/rusa/protocols/referenceguide/professional.cfm.

The following, although not necessarily exhaustive, are essential:

- reference assistance;
- online instructional and informational services in formats accessible to the greatest number of people, including those with disabilities;
- reliable, rapid, secure access to online resources;
- consultation services;
- a library user instruction program designed to instill independent and effective information literacy skills while specifically meeting the learner support needs of the distance learning community;
- reciprocal or contractual borrowing, or interlibrary loan services using broad-

est application of fair use of copyrighted materials;

- access to reserve materials in accordance with copyright fair use policies or permissions;

- adequate service hours for optimum user access;

- promotion of library services to the distance learning community, including documented and updated policies, regulations and procedures for systematic development, and management of information resources;

- prompt delivery to users of items obtained from the institution's collections, or through interlibrary loan agreement via courier or electronic delivery system; and

- point of use assistance with and instruction in the use of nonprint media and equipment.

Documentation

Documentation must be maintained in order to indicate the degree to which the originating institution is meeting the Standards. The library and the librarian-administrator should have the following current information available in print and/or online in an accessible format:

- user guides and other library instructional materials;
- statements of mission and purpose, policies, regulations, and procedures;
- statistics on library use;
- statistics on collections;
- facilities assessment measures;
- collections assessment measures;
- needs and outcomes assessment measures;
- data on staff and work assignments;
- institutional and internal organization charts;
- comprehensive budget(s);
- professional personnel vitae;
- position descriptions for all personnel;
- formal, written agreements;
- library evaluation studies or documents; and
- evidence of involvement in curriculum development and planning. //