

# Guidelines for curriculum materials centers

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by the ACRL Education and Behavioral Sciences Section Curriculum Materials Committee

**C**urriculum materials centers (CMC) are essential to the instructional and research needs of students and faculty in programs preparing educators for P–12\* schools. These guidelines describe essential elements of administration, services, and collections for curriculum materials centers in all university and college settings.

These guidelines are intended for administrators at all levels of post-secondary education, particularly education deans or department chairs; library deans or directors; librarians responsible for curriculum materials centers; and accrediting and licensure agencies.

## Terms used

I. *Curriculum materials* are educational resources that provide curriculum and instructional experiences for P–12 students. These materials are used by educators to develop curricula and lesson plans and may also be used in actual instructional situations with P–12 students. These materials also provide information for those doing research.

II. *Curriculum Materials Center* refers to a physical location of a curriculum materials collection. CMCs are often housed in a main campus library, a branch library building, or in an academic building housing the campus education academic programs.

III. *CMC users* are education students and faculty, and may also include P–12 educators, other students, and community members as defined by the CMC's mission.

IV. *Director* refers to the librarian who has primary responsibility for the CMC, including its facilities, administration, collection, personnel, and services.

\* P–12 refers to preschool through 12th grade.

## Administration

### *Mission/goals*

The CMC should have a written mission statement with articulated goals that reflect these guidelines.

I. *Collaboration*—The mission statement, goal setting, and planning should be jointly developed by the CMC director, an administrator from the unit to which the CMC administratively reports, and faculty representatives from the college or department of education.

II. *Review*—The mission statement and goals should be regularly reviewed and updated as needed.

III. *Compliance*—Goal setting should be in compliance with this document of CMC guidelines and appropriate accreditation standards.

### *Budget*

The CMC should have a budget that adequately addresses its needs.

I. *Funding responsibility*—The CMC director and the administrator(s) responsible for budgeting for the unit to which the CMC administratively reports should jointly plan the CMC budget.

II. *Funding level*—The CMC budget should be adequate to ensure compliance with state department of education and other accrediting bodies' standards, college/department of education program needs, as well as particular guidelines in this document in the areas of collection, facilities, services, and personnel. It should be reflective of the

college of education or department of education enrollment.

III. Funding Source—The CMC budget should be funded as part of the unit under which the CMC is administered. This budget does not preclude additional funding from other units or sources.

IV. Administration—The CMC budget should be administered by the CMC director.

#### *Personnel*

The CMC staff should include a director and support staff sufficient to maintain the CMC and all services.

I. Director—The CMC director should have a master's degree from an ALA-accredited program or equivalent and have preparation in curriculum development, teaching methodology, media, and technology. The director should be assigned no less than half time to the management of the CMC.

II. Support staff—The CMC should have sufficient support staff to maintain the CMC and all its functions. The support staff may consist of paraprofessionals or clerical aides, with at least one being a permanent staff member, and graduate assistants and student assistants. Support staff should have sufficient

training to provide a basic level of assistance to CMC users, or refer users as appropriate.

III. Continuing education—The CMC director and staff should have regular opportunities for continuing education so that the CMC reflects current trends in curriculum materials and technology. Continuing education opportunities should extend to support staff as needed.

#### *Facilities*

The CMC should be a distinct facility that provides for effective use of its resources.

I. Location—The curriculum materials center should be located in proximity to the education holdings of the college or university library, or alternatively it should be in the building that houses the college/department of education. The location should be completely accessible as detailed in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

II. Hours—The CMC should, if housed in the college or university library, be open the hours of that facility's operation. If housed separately, or with the college/department of education, it should be open enough hours to meet the needs of its users. Evening and weekend hours should be included if needed.

### **About the guidelines**

Curriculum materials centers (CMCs) have been present in libraries and in departments or colleges of education as resources to support educators since the early part of the 20th century. Calls for standards for CMCs have been made almost from those beginnings. Since these centers have developed from a variety of origins and may serve many different groups and needs, providing guidelines for such centers has been a challenge.

In 1999, ACRL's Education and Behavioral Sciences Section suggested the formation of an ad hoc committee to develop standards or guidelines for CMCs. An informal survey of state education agencies and accrediting bodies was conducted by the Curriculum Materials Committee to determine if such standards

already existed. None was found. In 2000 the committee was formed and charged with "developing published standards or guidelines for curriculum materials centers in the areas of, but not limited to, collection, services, management, budget, personnel, and facilities."

These guidelines were reviewed by the ACRL Standards and Accreditation Committee and approved by the ACRL Board of Directors at ALA's 2003 Midwinter Meeting in Philadelphia.

In 2008, the Curriculum Materials Committee of EBSS revised the "Guidelines for Curriculum Materials Centers." The committee membership included Vanessa Earp, chair, and Lisa Baures, Ann Brownson, Julie Derden, Cindy Judd, and Rita Kohrman.

III. Size—The size of the public area of the facility should be adequate to comfortably hold all materials, associated equipment, user study areas, and workstations. Room for collection growth should be available. Staff workspace should be adequate to complete work activities efficiently and effectively, including technical library functions, when necessary.

IV. Seating—There should be enough seating in the CMC to allow users to work individually or collaboratively. Sufficient seating should be available to accommodate the students in an average-sized class in the teacher education program. A variety of seating types may be available, including, but not limited to study tables, carrels, and lounge seating. If the CMC will be used by small children, appropriately sized seating for them may also be available.

V. Maintenance—The facility should be maintained in such a way as to ensure the security and safety of materials, staff, and users. There should be an adequate number of electrical connections and computer ports to meet user and staff needs.

VI. Classroom—The CMC should have its own classroom, or have a convenient space available for formal instruction. This classroom, or its equivalent, should have adequate seating for the average-sized class in the teacher education program. It should be equipped with technology appropriate for demonstration (and if possible, hands-on practice) of electronic and media resources.

#### *Promotion*

The CMC should have a plan for promotion of the CMC, its services, and its collection. Promotion should be directed toward all CMC user groups and stakeholders and should include both formal and informal means.

I. Web presence—A Web presence should be used to promote the CMC, and should be linked to and from the library site and the education site. The Web site should include, but not be limited to, the resources and services of the CMC and links to appropriate curriculum materials sites, such as teaching

activities, standards, children's literature, publishers, etc.

II. Printed brochures/guides—CMC brochures/guides should be available in the library publicity area, the college/department of education office area, and appropriate distance locations.

III. Informal campus contacts—The CMC director should make use of faculty liaison activities mentioned in this document to informally promote the CMC.

IV. School contacts—The CMC should be promoted to appropriate personnel in local schools/districts.

## **Services**

### *Reference*

The CMC staff should provide reference service to its users.

I. Delivery of service—Reference service should be available during all hours the CMC is open, and may include face-to-face, telephone, electronic, or other appropriate methods of delivery.

II. Staff—CMC staff should be trained to conduct an effective reference interview. They should also have knowledge of the CMC's collection and of external resources in order to provide both ready-reference and in-depth research assistance. CMC student assistants should be knowledgeable about the CMC collection and be trained to provide basic assistance. A professional librarian located in an adjacent area may be called on if the CMC is not otherwise staffed.

### *Instruction*

The CMC should have a program for instruction in the use of curriculum-related resources.

I. Collaboration—The instruction program should be developed in collaboration with education faculty, librarians, and others as appropriate.

II. Setting—Instruction may take place within the CMC, in the classroom, or in a virtual environment.

III. Delivery—Instruction, both in person and virtual, should include all appropriate

techniques, such as guides, lectures, Web pages, tutorials, bibliographies, workshops, orientations, tours, and point of need instruction.

IV. Content—Instruction should include research strategies and the selection and evaluation of resources, as well as the use of the CMC collection and services, and instructional technology.

#### *Faculty liaison*

The CMC staff should seek out and maintain professional contact with teacher education instructional units and with individual faculty members.

I. Faculty contact—Faculty contact should be maintained through both formal and informal means, including, but not limited to, telephone, electronic communication, attendance at faculty meetings, instruction sessions, and specialized programming.

II. Accrediting bodies—CMC staff should prepare documentation for visiting accrediting organizations as needed and requested.

III. Collection development—In collaboration with faculty, CMC staff should develop the CMC collection to meet instructional and curriculum materials research needs of both faculty and students.

#### *Distance learning*

The CMC should have a program for serving distance learning users.

I. Collaboration—The distance learning program should be developed in collaboration with teaching faculty, librarians, and others as appropriate.

II. Users—Distance learning users should include distance learning faculty and students, whether courses are offered in an off-campus classroom, through teleconferencing, online, or by other means.

III. Services—Services offered should be equivalent to services at the main campus and should include reference, instruction, and access to CMC materials.

IV. Delivery—Distance learning services should be provided by various means as appropriate. Electronic means are particu-

larly well suited to off-campus situations and should be used to their best advantage. Electronic delivery options include, but are not limited to: Web pages, CMC online catalog, online CMC instruction, e-mail/ mailing lists, online discussion groups, and access/ subscriptions to online databases. Other means should be used as appropriate and may include librarian visits to off-campus classrooms, interlibrary loan, document delivery, and agreements with other libraries/CMCs.

#### *Outreach*

The CMC may offer outreach services.

I. Users—Users may include students from other universities, P-12 educators, those who home-school, and other community members.

II. Services—Services may include tours, exhibits, speakers, continuing education opportunities, or other activities that meet the needs of the users.

III. Delivery—Policies regarding delivery of services and access to resources should be in agreement with the appropriate governing unit(s).

#### *Production*

The CMC may provide modern, high-quality equipment and supplies to meet user needs for production of instructional materials.

I. Equipment—The equipment provided for production should allow users to create instructional materials similar to those currently being used in schools, using both traditional and emerging technologies. The equipment should be kept updated, well maintained, and in sufficient quantity to meet typical demand levels.

II. Supplies—Supplies necessary for production of instructional materials should be provided to users, either for free or on a cost-recovery basis and in sufficient quantity to meet demands.

III. Assistance—CMC staff should provide ideas and basic assistance to users, although the responsibility for creating the materials remains with the users.

## Collection

### *General characteristics*

The CMC collection supports the institution's teacher education curriculum with an organized collection of current and high quality educational materials created for use with children from preschool through grade twelve, and adult education materials, when appropriate.

I. Selection—The selection of curriculum materials should be the responsibility of a professional librarian specifically charged with building the curriculum materials collection.

II. Collection development policy—The CMC should have a written collection development policy, as described in the policy section of these guidelines.

III. Organization—The CMC collection should be organized in accordance with current national standards and practices, as described in the access section of these guidelines.

IV. Location—All of the collection should be available in the CMC.

V. Size—The size of the CMC collection should be sufficient to meet the needs of its users, as well as to ensure compliance with state department of education standards.

VI. Format—These resources should represent a variety of formats, including print, nonprint, and electronic.

VII. Funding level—Funding level for collection materials should reflect the enrollment of education majors and pre-service teachers in comparison to other majors within the institution.

### *Collection categories*

The CMC should collect materials in both print and electronic formats, including, but not limited to, textbooks, curriculum guides, children's literature, professional literature, reference materials, education periodicals, media materials, educational tests and measures, and digital content.

I. Textbooks—Current textbooks in all major P–12 curricular subjects should be collected. Several publishers should be rep-

resented for each grade level in major curriculum areas. This collection may reflect the texts used in the public schools in the region, and schools in which the teacher education students receive field placements. The scope and depth of each subject area should depend upon each institution's needs.

II. Curriculum guides/courses of study—Curriculum guides, preschool through grade 12, should be collected annually on the local, state, and national levels. All major curriculum areas should be represented, with emphasis on the certification programs of the college/department of education of the institution.

III. Children's and young adult literature—This collection should include fiction, nonfiction, picture books, folk and fairy tales, plays, poetry, and graphic literature appropriate for preschool through grade 12. The collection should be consistent with the recommendations of standard reviewing tools and include annual acquisition of award books and books from various notable books lists.

IV. Teaching activity materials—Professional teaching materials that provide ideas and activities for lesson planning and curricular development should be collected. All major curriculum areas and grade levels should be represented in accordance with the needs of the college/department of education.

V. Reference materials—Current reference materials, in print and electronic formats, should be acquired. These include materials related to other resources in the CMC (children's literature indexes and bibliographies, educational software directories, etc), as well as reference works intended for use by children and young adults.

VI. P–12 magazines—Magazines intended for use by children and young adults should be included. Professional education periodicals that provide teaching ideas and review curriculum materials, educational media, and children's and young adult literature may also be represented.

VII. Media materials—A variety of formats, in both traditional and emerging technologies, should be acquired annually. A range of curriculum concepts, skills, topics, and trends in



P–12 curricula should be represented. Materials collected may include instructional games, posters, kits, transparencies, models, flat pictures, video recordings, sound recordings, computer-based instructional materials, and miscellaneous instructional materials, such as puppets, manipulatives, rock collections, etc.

VIII. Tests—Educational tests and measures that support education courses may be collected.

IX. Web resources—The CMC Web site should include links to the vast array of online resources available to teaching professionals for lesson planning and curricular development. These resources should reflect both current and emerging technologies.

#### *Collection development policy*

The CMC should provide a written collection development policy that guides the selection and acquisition of materials.

I. Mission statement—The policy should reflect and support the mission of the curriculum materials center.

II. Users—The policy should include a statement concerning those served by the curriculum materials center and the extent of that service.

III. Collaboration—The policy should be developed in collaboration with the education faculty.

IV. Objectives—The policy should identify the scope and objectives of the collection.

V. Format—The policy should identify the formats in which materials are to be collected.

VI. Tools and criteria—The policy should identify selection tools, criteria, and processes to be used in choosing materials.

VII. Categories and balance—The policy should set forth the categories in which materials will be collected, such as textbooks, media materials, periodicals, etc., and give guidance for allocating budget resources among the categories.

VIII. Compliance—The policy should address compliance with state standards and appropriate treatment of gender, racial, ethnic, and cultural issues. The policy may address maintenance of a collection of less-

appropriate materials for research and teaching purposes.

IX. Maintenance and weeding—The policy should address regular maintenance of the collection and weeding, as appropriate.

### **Access—physical**

#### *Organization*

The CMC collection should be displayed in an organized manner that makes it easily accessible to users.

I. Arrangement—The collection should be arranged in the CMC in a systematic pattern with some materials intershelfed, while others are shelved as distinct collections within the CMC.

II. Access—The collection should be organized in such a way as to make it physically and easily accessible and ADA compliant. All collection materials, except reserve or historic, should be openly available rather than remotely stored.

III. Storage—The shelving should be appropriate for the various types, sizes, and shapes of materials and sufficient to accommodate all items.

IV. Signage—Adequate and appropriate signage should be clearly posted and visible to direct CMC users to the various areas of the collection.

#### *Processing*

The CMC collection should be processed to promote easy access.

I. Preservation—The collection items should be processed with appropriate reinforcement so that the items are preserved for multiple circulation transactions, yet convenient enough for easy access.

II. Documentation—Local policies and procedures as they relate to CMC materials should be documented in writing.

III. Integrity of unit—Packaging of multiple-piece units should be sturdy and easily maintained to keep the various pieces intact and should be packaged with user access in mind; multiple-piece containers should be labeled with numbers and types of items contained within; when appropriate, individual

pieces should be marked with identifying call numbers so that individual pieces can be readily returned to their appropriate container when separated.

IV. Item labeling—Collection items should be clearly and consistently labeled to promote easy retrieval from shelving areas.

V. Security—Theft detection devices should be used whenever possible.

### *Circulation policy*

The CMC should provide a written circulation policy.

I. User groups—The policy should identify the various user groups served, noting restrictions and privileges for each group.

II. Circulation periods—The policy should identify circulation periods and restrictions for each type of material.

III. Penalties—The policy should state the penalties, if any, that are imposed.

IV. Other policies—The policy should state other regulations, including but not limited to those concerning holds, recalls, interlibrary loan policies, and distance learning students.

V. Automation—The policy should support or encourage use of an automated circulation system.

### *Equipment*

The CMC should provide updated, appropriate equipment, in close proximity to the CMC nonprint materials and in sufficient numbers to meet the needs of users to access all of the various nonprint materials available in the collection.

I. Appropriateness—Appropriate equipment should be provided so all types of nonprint media in the CMC collection can be accessed.

II. Quantity—A sufficient quantity of equipment should be maintained to meet typical demand levels.

III. Location—The equipment should be in close proximity to the CMC nonprint media collection so that access is convenient.

IV. Maintenance—The equipment should be regularly maintained and kept in good

working condition, with a budget and technical support to ensure this.

V. Updating—The equipment should be regularly updated to meet the needs of new technologies.

VI. Computer hardware and software—Appropriate computer hardware and software should be provided to support access to hypermedia applications. Hypermedia is defined as the amalgamation and/or use of graphics, audio, video, plain text, and hyperlinks to present information in a nonlinear format.

## **Access—Bibliographic**

### *Cataloging*

The CMC collection should be cataloged in accordance with current national standards, including full subject access.

I. Description and subjects—The physical description of items should follow currently accepted models, including uniform information (title, author, etc.) and subject headings.

II. Documentation—Local policies and procedures as they relate to CMC materials should be documented in writing.

III. Classification—The call numbers on items should follow the latest, most current edition of a nationally accepted classification scheme (e.g., Dewey, LC). The choice of scheme and call numbers can be tailored to fit the CMC's needs. The CMC collection should be cataloged in a timely fashion, with sufficient levels of support.

IV. Cataloger support—Because CMC materials often require longer cataloging time, a model timetable and dedicated time/librarian should be provided for cataloging.

V. Equipment/supplies—Sufficient equipment and supplies for cataloging and processing should be maintained.

### *Indexing*

Bibliographic and holdings information about the CMC collection should exist on the same retrieval mechanism as other library materials.

I. Electronic and remote access—The CMC (and its parent institution) should have, or strive to have, electronic and remote access

to the collection, with sufficient terminals in the CMC.

II. Indexes for uncataloged items—The CMC shall have indexes, preferably electronic, to access noncataloged items (e.g., curriculum guides on microfiche, etc.).

## Assessment

The CMC should have a plan in place for evaluating the achievement of its mission and goals.

I. Plan—The plan should focus on how well the CMC is meeting its goals and objectives relative to its collection, administration, facilities, and service.

II. Frequency—The evaluation should take place on a periodic basis.

III. Methodology—The method used could be accomplished through focus groups, surveys, questionnaires, or other evaluation strategies and should include participation by all user groups. (See Appendix I)

IV. Resources—A variety of published materials related to the management of CMCs are available and should be consulted regularly. (See Appendix II)

V. Results—The results of the evaluation should be recorded and used in reviewing the viability of the current goals and objectives with changes being made where appropriate.

## Appendix I

Adequate and appropriate documentation is vitally important to evaluation of the CMC. Following are examples of types of documentation that may be gathered to show compliance with the guidelines.

- I. Budget reports
- II. Calendars
- III. Collection development policy
- IV. Floor plans
- V. Inventories
- VI. Policies and procedures
- VII. Publication examples (handouts/bibliographies/pathfinders)
- VIII. Publicity materials
- IX. Schedules
- X. Statistics
  - a. Reference statistics

- b. User statistics
  - c. Usage statistics
- XI. Web sites

## Appendix II

Bibliography of resources that are recommended for consultation by CMC directors.

Carr, J. (Ed.). (2001). *A guide to the management of curriculum materials centers for the 21st century: The promise and the challenge*. Chicago: IL: Association of College and Research Libraries, American Library Association.

Curriculum Materials Committee of the Education and Behavioral Sciences Section. (2007). *A guide to writing CMC collection development policies*. Chicago, IL: Association of College and Research Libraries, American Library Association. Retrieved from [www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/acrl/acrlpubs/downloadables/guidetowritingcmc.pdf](http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/acrl/acrlpubs/downloadables/guidetowritingcmc.pdf).

Lare, G. (2004). *Acquiring and organizing curriculum materials: A guide and directory of resources*. (2nd Ed.). Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press.

Olive, F. (Ed.) (2001). *Directory of curriculum materials centers*. Association of College and Research Libraries, American Library Association. Retrieved from [acrl.telusys.com/cmc/index](http://acrl.telusys.com/cmc/index) (New edition forthcoming.) //

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(“OERs” continues from page 287)

10. Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition, Preston McAfee named newest SPARC innovator, [dianahacker.com/resdoc/p04\\_c10\\_s2.html#21](http://dianahacker.com/resdoc/p04_c10_s2.html#21).

11. Allen, 9–10.

12. Ibid., 5 and 10.

13. Creative Commons, [creativecommons.org](http://creativecommons.org).

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16. MIT’s OpenCourseware site, [ocw.mit.edu/OcwWeb/web/terms/terms/index.htm#cc](http://ocw.mit.edu/OcwWeb/web/terms/terms/index.htm#cc).

17. Connexions use the “Attribution,” Creative Commons, [licensecreativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0](http://licensecreativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0). //