

# **ACRL Standards for Academic Librarians Without Faculty Status**

*Approved by the ACRL Board of Directors, 2007.*

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*Approved by the ACRL Board of Directors, April 26, 2021*

In order to formally recognize the importance and contributions of academic librarians without faculty status, ACRL endorses these standards. Institutions of higher education and their governing bodies are urged to adopt these standards.

To implement these standards, ACRL shall:

- publicize these standards to college and university administrators and governing bodies, academic libraries, library education programs, library organizations, and agencies that accredit institutions, and
- seek to have these standards formally adopted or endorsed by the appropriate groups listed above.

Academic Librarian status varies widely within community colleges, baccalaureate, masters, and doctoral granting institutions. ACRL supports faculty rank, status, and tenure for librarians but recognizes that not all academic institutions provide faculty status to their librarians. To ensure that their rights, privileges, and responsibilities reflect their integral role in the mission of their institutions, ACRL has developed the following standards for academic librarians without faculty status. This document seeks to unify standards and guidelines for librarians, affirming ACRL's commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion, regardless of the type of academic institution employing librarians. Appointments made without Faculty Status may offer Academic Status, or single or multiple year contracts to academic librarians.

An institution may have a Librarian Series or not, yet the following definitions apply to academic librarians without Faculty status:

- Academic librarian – Professional Librarian with an MLS/MLIS degree, employed by an institution of higher education categorized by the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education classification framework, based on recent institutional data. The MLS/MLIS degree from an ALA accredited or equivalent institution is considered the terminal degree for this appointment.
- Librarians without Faculty Status are recognized by the institution. Academic librarians recognized by institutional policy however their classification is defined, may have some equivalent and/or parallel rights and professional responsibilities as those held by

teaching faculty and/or researchers or different conditions of those responsibilities, dependent on institutional structures. These may include Continuing Appointment, access to special funding for professional development activities of non-faculty appointments or analogous benefits. Librarian titles may parallel faculty ranks or not.

- Librarians without Faculty Status recognized only by or within Library may/may not participate in institutional shared governance; likely have separate compensation and promotion plans and research/scholarship responsibilities and funding. They may be parallel with other employee series within the institution, part of a multi-campus consortia and/or be subject to collective bargaining agreements.
- The academic librarian makes unique contributions to the academic community and to higher education itself. Librarians without faculty status have job responsibilities which include teaching and communication skills, flexibility, and the ability to work collaboratively and independently with other strategic decision-makers and leaders within the institution. Librarians are partners with faculty teaching information literacy concepts and knowledge management skills. Current job descriptions may include general and specialized programming, instructional design, coding and technological skills, fluencies with multiple languages, research and outreach support, assessment, database and web design/management, metadata & bibliographic control, social media, digital scholarship, working with multi- & streaming media and makerspace resources, scholarly communication, data management & curation, archival and special collections management, assessment, equity, diversity and inclusion, and library advocacy tasks in addition to more traditional contributions. Examples of these traditional contributions include developing collections, facilitating access to OER, library resources & materials, and creating new strategies, methodologies, and tools for the academic community. Academic librarians may serve as research or teaching partners and facilitate scholarship as conversation and inquiry into new areas of knowledge.
- Some institutions may offer dual track appointments where some librarians are hired with Faculty Status and others are not. Some institutions may offer both full-time and part-time librarian positions, with or without academic status. In such situations, it must be clear to all academic librarians what the specific recruitment and appointment is for and how that position serves the library, institution and how that librarian is expected to perform to be successfully evaluated.

This standard confirms the institutional work environment for academic librarians to work collegially with the teaching and research faculty and recognizes the need for academic freedom, especially in professional development and research/scholarship, and the ability to participate in library governance.

## **1. Professional Responsibilities**

Academic librarians must be able to exercise independent judgment, academic freedom, and agency in the performance of professional duties. Librarians should be assigned responsibilities

matched to their educational competencies and the needs of the institution and reflect professional impact and judgment. They should have significant latitude in fulfilling their responsibilities. Supervisory personnel and peers should regularly and vigorously review their performance, who have evidence pertaining to the performance, service, and scholarship of those being evaluated, subject to appropriate institutional policy. Review standards and procedures should be published and uniformly applied; reviewers should have access to all appropriate documentation.

## **2. Governance**

College and university librarians should adopt an academic form of shared governance similar in manner and structure to other faculties on the campus. The library exists to support the teaching, research/scholarship, and service functions of the institution. Thus, librarians should also participate in the enhancement of the institution's mission, curriculum, and governance. Librarians should participate in the development of policies and procedures for their library including the hiring, review, retention, and continuing appointment of their peers that define the nature of their work and responsibilities. Having a Librarians Organization or similar structure to affirm and promote the role of librarians within the institution has merits and also allows for communication of the activities of the Faculty Senate or equivalent governing body.

## **3. Compensation and Contracts**

Salaries and fringe benefits should be comparable to and within the range of those paid to those in other academic categories with equivalent education, experience, or responsibility. Salary scales should be adjusted in an equitable manner to contract period and full- or part-time status, as indicated. All academic librarians should have written contracts or agreements consistent with institutional policy. Academic librarians should be appointed by a written contract of no less than one academic year, unless it is for a short-term replacement, such as maternity/paternity or medical leave or meets a temporary staffing need. The contract should state the terms and conditions of service and grant security of employment for the contractual period. After a period of no longer than seven years and through a process which includes peer review, librarians should be granted continuing employment if they have met the appropriate conditions and standards.

Academic librarians who assume additional responsibilities within the organization for an interim period should have job descriptions, compensation/release time, and workload reviewed by supervisory and/or peers consistent to the practices of the institution.

## **4. Promotion and Continuing Appointment**

Academic Librarians should be promoted through ranks and/or steps based on their professional proficiency and effectiveness, consistent with stated institutional standards. The peer review system should be an integral part of procedures for promotion, whether final decisions are made within the Library or externally by a campus/institutional review process. Procedures for

promotion and salary increases should include a peer review at regular annual, biannual, or triannual intervals based on their initial rank and appointment, reflecting previous experience. Librarians should have ranks equivalent to those of the faculty where they are eligible for promotion from Assistant, to Associate to Full Librarian

The academic librarian promotion process must provide protection against illegal or unconstitutional discrimination by the institution, or discrimination on a basis not demonstrably related to the librarian's professional performance, including but not limited to race, color, religion or creed, gender expression, age, national origin or ancestry, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, military or veteran status, pregnancy, political affiliation, or citizenship status.

[The ACRL Standards for the Appointment, Promotion, and Tenure of Academic Librarians](#) is intended for use in the context of librarians with or without faculty status. The objective of this Guideline is to propose criteria and procedures for appointment, promotion in academic rank, and tenure (continuous appointment) for use in academic libraries. Utilizing these criteria and procedures will ensure that librarians and, therefore, library services will be of the highest quality possible.

## **5. Professional Development and Research/Scholarship Funds**

Academic Librarians should be eligible for internal and external research/scholarship and professional development and funds, and other means of administrative support to promote their active participation, even if not required in their job descriptions, in research/scholarship and other professional development activities. These engagements and opportunities should reflect the professional judgment of the librarians in order that they can continue to grow in their positions and be of the greatest benefit to the institution.

## **6. Academic Freedom**

Academic Librarians are entitled to the protection of academic freedom. Censorship of any type is unacceptable whether individual or organizational. As academic librarians they are free to provide access to information regardless of content.

## **7. Dismissal or Nonreappointment**

The institution may dismiss an academic librarian during the contractual period only for just cause and through academic due process. The process of dismissal of librarians should be consistent with institutional policy and/or labor negotiations for other academic dismissals, and should involve adequate notice, peer review, and access to a grievance procedure.

[The ACRL Standards for the Appointment, Promotion, and Tenure of Academic Librarians](#) outlines recommended processes and criteria for the termination of appointment, grievance filing, dismissal procedures, action by the institutional governing board, procedures for imposition of sanctions other than dismissal, and terminal salary or notice.

## 8. Grievance Process

Academic Librarians should have access to timely grievance procedures. These should include a list of grievable issues, procedures to be completed within specified time limits and effective safeguards against reprisal by the institution, or abuse of the procedures by the grievant. They must be consistent with applicable institutional regulations and labor negotiation contracts.

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For standards and guidelines related to librarians with faculty status, please refer to the documents below:

1. [ACRL Guidelines for Recruiting Academic Librarians](#) (2017).
2. [ACRL/AAUP/AAC Joint Statement on Faculty Status of College and University Librarians](#) (1972, reaffirmed 2001 and 2007; revised 2012, revision reaffirmed 2018).
3. [A Guideline for the Appointment, Promotion and Tenure of Academic Librarians](#) (2004, revised 2010, reaffirmed 2018).
4. ACRL [Standards for Faculty Status of Academic Librarians](#) (2007, revised 2011).