



Librarians' Forum

Policy for the Promotion and Appointment of Librarians

Introduction

Librarians at the University of Michigan hold academic appointments and are part of the faculty of the University. As such, they have the responsibility to determine the rules of governance under which they may seek to advance their careers as librarians. This policy document describes how librarians obtain their ranks at appointment and are promoted within the University Library System. The separate procedures document describes how this policy is implemented.

The promotion process is based on personal growth and achievement rather than on the responsibilities of a particular position. It acknowledges that in a large research library there are many paths toward professional excellence and assumes an underlying premise that each librarian must take responsibility for the direction and pace of his/her own career. In a system as rich and diverse as this academic library, the promotion process must provide flexibility for advancement for the many specialists and managers that comprise the University Library.

Librarians at the University of Michigan are classified into one of four ranks, which represent stages in the professional development of the librarian's career. The University Librarian and Associate University Librarians (AULs) are not subject to the promotion process. General characteristics of these four stages are as follows:

Assistant Librarian

little experience; developing identity and specialization; beginning professional activities and contributions to library/university community; demonstrates basic skills as a general librarian; works in the context of a unit doing work that is well-defined, short-term, limited in scope, supervised; contributes to planning and managing within a unit; exerts some influence and impact within the unit and larger organization.

Associate Librarian

some experience; competent specialist; contributes to professional organizations and activities (editing, co-authoring, member of committees, etc.) and active on committees and service groups; demonstrates broader skills, greater independence, speaking and writing for varying audiences with only some review; works in context of area of specialization doing complex yet well-defined tasks



Librarians' Forum

and projects both within unit and with other units; plans and manages within unit; exerts greater influence and impact within unit and library.

Senior Associate Librarian

experienced; shows growth and achievement in specialty; contributes and leads in professional activities (research and publication, chairing committees, initiating activities, etc.) and with service groups having a wider scope within the library, university, and/or community; displays breadth and depth of skills, working with an array of audiences, application, and level of formality; works in context of area of specialization in unit and in library at large; plans and manages within unit and among units; exerts significant influence and impact within unit, other particular areas of the library, and possibly the profession at large.

Librarian

broadly experienced; "master" specialist; excellent contributions to profession and specialty, and in service to library, university, and community; demonstrates skills in all aspects of academic librarianship; works with minimal supervision in area of specialization, within and beyond the library, and with colleagues throughout academe; plans and manages for area of responsibility and library at large; broad and sometimes final influence and impact.

Each librarian's rank is based on how closely the individual matches the characteristics of that rank.

These characteristics for each rank are divided into eight categories:

1. Education and specialization
2. Independence, responsibility, judgment
3. Organizational skills, planning, supervision, management
4. Communication
5. Creativity, initiative, vision, entrepreneurship
6. Influence, impact
7. Professional activities
8. Service

The descriptions for each category, found in the section titled *Criteria for Promotion and Appointment of Librarians*, offer a more complete picture of an academic librarian operating at a particular stage in his/her professional development. The descriptions allow for flexibility and choice for each individual in the development of his/her career, with the understanding that no one person is likely to be at the same level in all categories, nor be active in all possible areas within a category. It is the composite picture of the individual which ultimately determines rank.



Librarians' Forum

Promotion Review Committee

The Promotion Review Committee (PRC) is responsible for all tasks associated with the classification of librarians' rank at appointment and subsequent promotion. The PRC also develops and presents training materials about the classification and promotion processes on a regular basis.

Membership

The Promotion Review Committee consists of six voting members, four being elected and two being appointed by the University Librarian. Two members are replaced each year. A member completes a three-year term followed by a one-year term as an alternate. The two immediate past members serve as alternates. In the unusual event that an additional alternate is needed, s/he will be one of the two preceding past members of the PRC.

The voting members and alternates are distributed as evenly as possible among the three upper ranks of librarians and among different library units. To serve on the PRC, a librarian must hold a continuing appointment or a term appointment of at least 50% FTE that extends beyond the term of Committee service.

Members of the PRC will be eligible for election or appointment for another term after an interval of four years following the year of service as an alternate.

An incomplete term of an elected member is filled through a special election; an incomplete term of an appointed member is filled by a librarian appointed by the University Librarian.

Election

The University Librarian appoints a Nominating Committee consisting of three former members of the Promotion Review Committee. The Nominating Committee solicits nominations from librarians and prepares a slate of candidates that promotes diversity and balance within the Promotion Review Committee.

Eligibility for Promotion

Any incumbent at the Assistant, Associate, or Senior Associate level may submit a request for promotion to the next rank. This request is submitted after three years since the date of appointment or the date of submission of the last successful promotion dossier. A request may be submitted earlier if the applicant's



Librarians' Forum

senior manager and AUL agree to support it. This includes full- and part-time librarians and librarians holding successive term appointments.

Promotion at the University of Michigan University Library is a voluntary system established to provide flexibility and choice for each individual in the development of his/her career and to reward professional growth and accomplishment. The librarian initiates the procedure based on the belief that sufficient change, growth, and development have occurred to warrant reassessment of rank.

Librarians' Forum annually notifies all librarians of the deadline to indicate intention to apply for promotion. A librarian may withdraw from the promotion review process at any time before the dossier submission deadline and may re-enter the review process the next year.

Dossier

The documentation package or dossier must include all items from Category I and selected or all materials from Category II. The period under review begins with the date of appointment or the date of submission of the last successful promotion dossier. With the exception of the Curriculum Vitae, all required and supporting documentation must be limited to the period under review.

Category I: Required Documentation

1. Curriculum Vitae
2. The librarian's description of achievements and growth (maximum of 3,000 words)
3. Job description(s) (to be used as an aid in understanding the accomplishments being described)
4. The supervisor's written recommendation for promotion, including a summary of performance evaluations
5. Letters of recommendation from up to seven people

Category II: Supporting Documentation

1. Samples of work that reflect the eight areas of evaluation
2. Samples of kudos (i.e., unsolicited letters of praise)
3. An annotated list of publications, presentations, electronic products, etc.

Other types of material may be included in the documentation package as the candidate and supervisor deem appropriate.

Review of the Dossier

The PRC reviews the promotion review packet and sends its recommendation to the University Librarian.

Created by the Promotion Policy Review Task Force as charged by Librarians' Forum
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Librarians' Forum

A quorum for the vote on promotion is five members of the Committee. Members of the PRC will be recused in the case of a member of the Committee being a candidate for promotion; a supervisor/supervisee relationship with a candidate; or a member of the Committee having written a letter of recommendation for a candidate. Members may recuse themselves for other reasons including personal relationship or conflict of interest. A promotion candidate may also request one member of the PRC be recused for any of the above reasons.

The dossier is the primary source material for the PRC's recommendation. In rare cases, where clarification or a more complete understanding of job duties are needed, the Committee may consult with a supervisor and/or with internal or external experts who have knowledge about a specific type of work. In these cases all inquiries are made under a stated condition of confidentiality by the PRC and by those from whom they seek information.

Recommendation

The PRC notifies the University Librarian of its recommendation for each candidate for promotion. The University Librarian makes the final decision concerning promotion and notifies the candidate and his/her supervisor of the result. In the case of a negative decision, the University Librarian meets with the candidate and his/her supervisor to discuss this outcome. A candidate receiving a negative decision is eligible to reapply for promotion no sooner than one year from notification of a negative decision. The purpose of this delay is to give the librarian sufficient time for further growth.

If the candidate believes that the outcome has been negatively affected by a procedural discrepancy in the process, s/he may appeal to the University Librarian. The University Librarian is responsible for determining on a case-by-case basis what remedial action, if any, is appropriate. If the candidate continues to have concerns, s/he may then consult the Library's grievance procedure.

Rank at Appointment

Rank at appointment refers to the process of determining the classification for any librarian filling a vacant position in the University Library.

Two members of the Committee consult with the hiring supervisor to recommend the rank of the selected candidate(s). The *Criteria for Promotion and Appointment of Librarians* section of this policy is used as the basis for this process.



Librarians' Forum

Amending the Policy

When questions and issues arise that may require amendment of this policy:

- The PRC reviews the issue and prepares a response, which may include a recommendation for amending this policy.
- This response is presented to the Librarians' Forum Board and is shared with the University Librarian.
- The Forum Board has three options:
 - to endorse or reject the recommendation immediately.
 - to appoint a task force to study the issue and submit a report to the Forum Board, at which point they can endorse or reject the recommendation, or refer the question to Forum for discussion and recommendation.
 - to refer the question to the Forum as a whole for discussion and recommendation.
- Once the Forum Board or the Forum as a whole has acted, the resulting recommendation is sent to the University Librarian for approval.

Amending Procedures

Librarians' Forum Board is responsible for the procedures document. Forum Board may update procedures as needed in coordination with PRC, Library Human Resources, the University Librarian and other relevant parties as long as the changes are in line with and do not change this policy.

Criteria for Promotion and Appointment of Librarians

ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN

Beginner; little experience; developing identity and specialization; beginning professional activities and contributions to library/university community; demonstrates basic skills as a general librarian; works in the context of a unit doing work that is well-defined, short-term, limited in scope, supervised; contributes to planning and managing within a unit; exerts some influence and impact within the unit and larger organization.

1. EDUCATION AND SPECIALIZATION

- ALA-accredited Master's degree. A different advanced degree acceptable in some cases.
- Is in the process of developing a professional identity and an appropriate level of technical competence.



Librarians' Forum

- Demonstrates general skills and knowledge of librarianship, information management, and technology.
- May have some language or subject expertise.

2. INDEPENDENCE, RESPONSIBILITY, JUDGMENT

- Works under close supervision.
- Demonstrates independence, responsibility, and judgment in the context of well-defined, usually unit-based tasks, duties, and projects.

3. ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS, PLANNING, SUPERVISION, MANAGEMENT

- Successful in organizing individual tasks and specific, well-defined projects.
- Contributes to unit planning and/or policy decisions.
- Where there is supervisory responsibility, displays supervisory skills with support staff working on well-defined tasks and projects.
- Applies managerial skills to short-term projects or those of limited scope.

4. COMMUNICATION

- Communicates chiefly with persons within the unit or to whom the unit directly relates.
- Demonstrates success with public speaking, and with writing that is generally reviewed by supervisors.
- Communication is usually task-based, such as teaching a class according to approved guidelines, or publishing library guides, procedure manuals, bibliographies, Web pages, etc.

5. CREATIVITY, INITIATIVE, VISION, ENTREPRENEURSHIP

- Demonstrates ability and willingness to take risks and apply creative problem-solving to issues within a unit or project.
- Identifies opportunities for initiating or improving services and client relations.

6. INFLUENCE, IMPACT

- Influences short-range planning and decision-making primarily within the unit.
- Exercises influence in the context of specific job responsibilities and task force or committee activities.
- Impact of decision-making is such that errors can be detected before adversely affecting the unit or the Library.



Librarians' Forum

7. PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

- Establishes membership in professional organizations.
- Attends professional conferences or workshops.
- Takes advantage of professional development opportunities.
- May be involved at some level in research, writing, or other relevant creative activity such as poster sessions or presentations.

8. SERVICE

- Participates as an effective member of committees and teams, primarily within the unit.

ASSOCIATE LIBRARIAN

Some experience; competent specialist; contributes to professional organizations and activities (editing, co-authoring, member of committees, etc.) and active on committees and service groups; demonstrates broader skills, greater independence, speaking and writing for varying audiences with only some review; works in context of area of specialization doing complex yet well-defined tasks and projects both within unit and with other units; plans and manages within unit; exerts greater influence and impact within unit and library.

1. EDUCATION AND SPECIALIZATION

- ALA-accredited Master's degree. A different advanced degree acceptable in some cases.
- Demonstrates competency in a specific area of librarianship.

2. INDEPENDENCE, RESPONSIBILITY, JUDGMENT

- Works under general supervision.
- Demonstrates independence, responsibility, and judgment in the context of area of specialization and with varied, complex, yet well-defined projects or operations.
- Commits resources within a well-defined area, makes recommendations for action, sets priorities for personal work and possibly for others within the unit.



Librarians' Forum

3. ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS, PLANNING, SUPERVISION, MANAGEMENT

- Successful in organizing and coordinating work in complex projects and/or among functional units.
- Participates in planning and policy-setting for area of specialization and for a well-defined segment of the Library (a unit or functional units).
- Where there is supervisory responsibility, demonstrates supervisory skills with staff of all levels, working on tasks involving multiple functions, and including coaching and encouraging of staff in the growth and development of skills.
- Demonstrates managerial skills in area of responsibility and with work having moderate scope, possibly involving a unit, function, budget, and/or collection.

4. COMMUNICATION

- Communicates within and outside the Library with a wide range of clients, including Library and University faculty, staff, and students, colleagues, vendors, and individuals and groups of diverse backgrounds and informational needs.
- Successful in speaking in various settings and levels of formality, and on behalf of the organization within defined parameters.
- Written communication may include correspondence, articles for publication, grant proposals, planning documents, etc. many of which are reviewed by a supervisor.

5. CREATIVITY, INITIATIVE, VISION, ENTREPRENEURSHIP

- Demonstrates initiative, resourcefulness, and originality of thought and approach in problem-solving within limits established for the functional unit.
- Investigates and proposes for implementation new methods, techniques, procedures, and services.
- Identifies and acts upon opportunities for initiating or enhancing services and client relations within scope of responsibility.
- Exhibits understanding of future trends in her/his specialization.
- Acts as primary contact for defined clientele; brings services to the attention of clients and colleagues.

6. INFLUENCE, IMPACT

- Influences recommendations and decisions primarily within the unit, but may also influence Library-wide decisions and issues as a member or chair of committees or task forces.
- Exerts considerable impact on programs and tasks within the unit and may be the person principally responsible for the success or failure of specific activities.
- Acts as contributor rather than final arbiter.



Librarians' Forum

- Contributes to Library, University, and the profession through a growing awareness and understanding about library issues, policies, objectives, programs, and trends.

7. PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

- Contributes to the profession, whether through professional organization or through other efforts. Activities may include work on a committee, task force, or other group; work on projects sponsored by professional organizations; or activity in other professional efforts.
- Is involved at some level in research, writing, publishing, or other relevant creative activity.
- May serve as a mentor to new librarians, graduate students, or undergraduate students.

8. SERVICE

- Contributes as an effective member and/or leader of committees and teams, primarily with groups within the Library.

SENIOR ASSOCIATE LIBRARIAN

Experienced; shows growth and achievement in specialty; contributes and leads in professional activities (research and publication, chairing committees, initiating activities, etc.) and with service groups having a wider scope within the library, university, and/or community; displays breadth and depth of skills, working with an array of audiences, application, and level of formality; works in context of area of specialization in unit and in library at large; plans and manages within unit and among units; exerts significant influence and impact within unit, other particular areas of the library, and possibly the profession at large.

1. EDUCATION AND SPECIALIZATION

- ALA-accredited Master's degree. A different advanced degree acceptable in some cases.
- Additional relevant graduate degree, or progress toward one, is recommended.
- Demonstrates expertise and continued growth in area of specialization.

2. INDEPENDENCE, RESPONSIBILITY, JUDGMENT

- Works under limited supervision.
- Demonstrates independence, responsibility, and judgment in the context of area of specialization and with activities that are broad-based, possibly unit-wide, and/or long-term.
- Commits range of resources within area of responsibility, is accountable for success of tasks and



Librarians' Forum

projects within the job assignment, sets priorities for work accomplished in area of responsibility, makes final recommendations for commitment of resources and action in broad areas of activity.

3. ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS, PLANNING, SUPERVISION, MANAGEMENT

- Organizational skills evidenced by successfully handling many (often simultaneous and conflicting) demands, utilizing whatever resources are available, and including coordination of staff from other units as appropriate.
- Manages planning process in area of responsibility and participates in planning and policy-setting for unit, cluster, and division.
- Where there is supervisory responsibility, demonstrates supervisory skills with staff of all levels, usually involving multiple units and/or functions, and including counseling and advising of colleagues contributing to their professional growth and development.
- Manages resources effectively to accomplish duties which are usually of a larger and more complex scope. Resources can include personnel, budgets, collections, equipment, facilities, etc. in one or more functional units.

4. COMMUNICATION

- Communicates with a broad variety of persons both within and outside the organization, often speaking for the functional unit or the Library at large, effectively presenting Library policy.
- Exhibits flexibility of communication in terms of audience addressed.
- Successful in oral communication ranging from informal conversations with individuals and small groups to prepared addresses and lectures.
- Successful in written communication which covers a wide range of types, and which is usually not reviewed by a supervisor.

5. CREATIVITY, INITIATIVE, VISION, ENTREPRENEURSHIP

- Identifies, analyzes, and resolves varied and complex problems through application of experience, creativity, intuition, and informed analysis.
- Develops, initiates, and integrates new methods, techniques, procedures, and services in and among units.
- Creates environment in area of responsibility that generates new ideas, fosters creative problem-solving, and encourages staff initiative.
- Applies understanding of current and future trends in specialization and area of responsibility.
- Develops and manages services and client relations within area of responsibility.
- Brings services and activities to the attention of Library administration, clients, and colleagues at this and other institutions.



Librarians' Forum

6. INFLUENCE, IMPACT

- Makes final decisions and has significant influence on issues that affect area of responsibility, including commitment of resources.
- Responsible for success or failure of project activities and programmatic elements in area of responsibility.
- Commits resource allocation on long-term basis.
- Exerts substantial influence concerning issues, policies, objectives, programs, and trends within the Library, University, and the profession based on a proven record of achievement in area of specialization and a broad understanding of issues within academic librarianship.

7. PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

- Demonstrates professional growth by the level of involvement or accomplishment within professional organizations or other professional efforts.
- Pursues opportunities beyond the University Library in research, writing, publishing, or other relevant creative activity, such as speaking, teaching, or mentoring.
- Contributes to developments in area of specialization, demonstrating an appropriate level of understanding of current and future trends.

8. SERVICE

- Serves the Library and University as an effective member and/or leader of a team, committee, or larger organization that benefits the Library or the University, including work with groups comprised of faculty and staff from units throughout the University.

LIBRARIAN

Broadly experienced; "master" specialist; excellent contributions to profession and specialty, and in service to library, university, and community; demonstrates skills in all aspects of academic librarianship; works with minimal supervision in area of specialization, within and beyond the library, and with colleagues throughout academe; plans and manages for area of responsibility and library at large; broad and sometimes final influence and impact.

1. EDUCATION AND SPECIALIZATION

- ALA-accredited Master's degree. A different advanced degree acceptable in some cases.
- Additional relevant graduate degree is highly recommended.



Librarians' Forum

- Demonstrates significant and substantial expertise in area of specialization.

2. INDEPENDENCE, RESPONSIBILITY, JUDGMENT

- Works under minimal supervision.
- Demonstrates highest degree of independent responsibility, judgment, and accountability within all areas of job assignment.
- Makes decisions and final recommendations that commit resources on a long-term basis, is responsible for the consequences of personal decisions or those made by staff in his/her area of responsibility.

3. ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS, PLANNING, SUPERVISION, MANAGEMENT

- Demonstrates organizational skills relating to oversight and coordination of several complex or diverse functions, programs, and/or projects.
- Participates in the formation and effective implementation of plans and policies affecting any segment of the organization.
- Where there is supervisory responsibility, demonstrates supervisory skills with all levels of staff, including responsibility for multiple units and for making final decisions regarding personnel matters.
- Counsels and mentors colleagues across divisional and institutional lines.
- Demonstrates excellent leadership in the management of a broad operational area(s) or unit(s), generally including planning, budgeting, policy- and decision-making, and supervision.

4. COMMUNICATION

- Communicates with a broad range of contacts both within and outside the organization, interpreting Library policy and/or professional issues involving complex subject matter and conceptual approaches.
- Exhibits flexibility of communication in terms of audience addressed, including skill and tact in difficult situations.
- Demonstrates excellence in oral and written communication within a wide range of settings and types of writings, possibly including reports of research studies, professional or subject-based publications, or documents of library-wide significance.

5. CREATIVITY, INITIATIVE, VISION, ENTREPRENEURSHIP

- Demonstrates exceptional innovative development, planning, implementation, and problem-solving skills based on experience, creativity, intuition, and informed analysis.
- Proposes new services and new service approaches in a Library-wide context; develops and



Librarians' Forum

implements strategies for integrating same into established policies and procedures within broad area of responsibility.

- Leads staff and colleagues in area of responsibility, demonstrating and encouraging innovative, results-oriented thinking.
- Initiates, recognizes, and rewards entrepreneurial approach to project and program development and implementation.
- Initiates, develops, integrates, and oversees positive client relations within area of responsibility.
- Works with Library administration and with Library and University public relations staff to publicize activities and services to as broad an audience as appropriate.

6. INFLUENCE, IMPACT

- Influences significant, long-range planning and decision-making, extending to all levels of staff, internal and external clientele, and the profession, and affecting collections, budgets, projects, programs, policies, and procedures. May be the final authority in some or all of these areas.
- Serves as a leader within the Library, the University, and the profession, exhibiting substantial breadth and depth of understanding about library issues, policies, objectives, programs, and trends.
- Impact of decision-making is substantial, demonstrable, and can be irreversible.

7. PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

- Demonstrates excellence in professional accomplishments and contributions to the profession through work within professional and/or scholarly organizations or mastery of the area of specialization exhibited through research and publication, teaching, consulting work, or other relevant creative activity.
- Recognized as a leader by peers beyond the University of Michigan.

8. SERVICE

- Shows evidence of exceptional achievement in service that benefits the University Library, contributes to the educational mission of the University through University-wide activities, and/or involves a high level of public service in the community as an extension of his/her career as a librarian.