

Public Libraries Pathway

A specialization within the Master of Library and Information Science Program
St. Catherine University

Updated: Spring 2017

Introduction

Librarians who work in public libraries have a strong commitment to ensuring equity of access to library materials, programs and services and to understanding and meeting the needs of the communities they serve. Of all types of libraries, public libraries are expected to offer the widest spectrum of educational, informational and recreational services. Many of the functions of public libraries are similar to those of other types of libraries, such as reference and instruction, collection management, access services, cataloging and classification and information systems, but they may vary depending on the size and character of the community. For example, public libraries may be located in urban, suburban or rural communities with diverse populations and socioeconomic levels.

Above all, public librarians must develop an understanding of community preferences for library roles and services, specifically including the promotion of reading and learning. Such awareness serves as a basis for sustaining the support needed to implement the programs necessary to respond to changing needs and expectations. Public librarians must be familiar with the funding and budgetary patterns typical of public libraries, which may be based on municipal, district, county or regional models.

All public librarians require the ability to promote reading and technological awareness. Additionally, many public librarians need expertise in marketing, public relations, advocacy, library legislation and outreach to nonusers and the underserved. Many public librarians move into positions of responsibility, so a strong background in management is desirable.

A useful source for information about public librarianship is the website for the Public Library Association (<http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/pla/index.cfm>), a division of the American Library Association.

Competencies

In the current era of growing information self-service, the competencies that a public librarian should possess are becoming more oriented towards the support of a community's learning and recreational interests, specifically including the promotion of reading, responsive community programming and technological awareness. In the area of information provision, public library programs mirror those of other librarians, although a growing tendency to serve as a community's technological learning center, in addition to a valuable resource in support of reading and lifelong learning, is clearly discernable.

Required Courses

In addition to the following core requirements, all students are required to complete a non-credit-bearing ePortfolio for graduation.

Core Requirements: (for students entering program after Spring 2015)

- LIS 7010 Introduction to Library and Information Science
- LIS 7030 Organization of Knowledge
- LIS 7040 Information Access Services
- LIS 7050 Research Methods
- LIS 7700 Management of Libraries and Information Centers

Highly Recommended Courses:

- LIS 72X0 One course in Materials or Services for Children or Young Adults
- LIS 7380 Transforming Adult Services
- LIS 7480 Collection Management
- LIS 7530 Internet Fundamentals or LIS 7680 Libraries and Emerging Technology
- LIS 7630 Readers Advisory Services
- LIS 7640 Information Literacy Instruction
- LIS 7710 Public Libraries

Alternative Courses:

- LIS 7190 Social Justice and Children's/YA Literature
- LIS 7210 Library Materials for Children
- LIS 7220 Library Materials for Young Adults
- LIS 7230 Services for Children and Young Adults
- LIS 7400 Advanced Reference
- LIS 7590 Digital Libraries
- LIS 7610 Marketing and Public Relations
- LIS 7620 Literacy and Community Engagement
- LIS 7993 Practicum