

Special Libraries Pathway

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

Updated: Spring 2016

Introduction

Special libraries in organizations such as corporations, government agencies, hospitals, nonprofit organizations, museums and associations focus on the interests inherent in the institutions they serve. A special library's collection is often narrow in scope but will be deep in the parent institution's areas of interest. Special librarians are involved in creating, analyzing and managing information; developing targeted services for clients; developing databases; and supporting the information needs of the parent institution.

Competencies

Special librarians must understand the language, culture and information seeking behaviors of its clientele. Often special librarians must understand business and financial practices. The ability to respond quickly and effectively to client requests with qualitative and quantitative information is a necessity. Special librarians should have the necessary skills and competencies to define and produce measurable results in organizations and to be accountable for meeting the information needs of the institutions they serve. Creativity is a special skill brought to organizations by successful special librarians as the need to identify, acquire, manage and share information within an organization often demands unique solutions.

In addition, Special Libraries Association (SLA) has defined the personal competencies necessary for information professionals. According to SLA, every information professional:

- Seeks out challenges and capitalizes on new opportunities
- Sees the big picture
- Communicates effectively
- Presents ideas clearly; negotiates confidently and persuasively
- Creates partnerships and alliances
- Builds an environment of mutual respect and trust; respects and values diversity
- Employs a team approach; recognizes the balance of collaborating, leading and following
- Takes calculated risks; shows courage and tenacity when faced with opposition
- Plants, prioritizes and focuses on what is critical
- Demonstrates personal career planning
- Thinks creatively and innovatively; seeks new or 'reinventing' opportunities
- Recognizes the value of professional networking and personal career planning
- Balances work, family and community obligations
- Remains flexible and positive in a time of continuing change
- Celebrates achievements for self and others.

The Special Libraries Association has detailed competencies for the information professional on its web site: <http://www.sla.org/about-sla/competencies/>

Courses

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

Core Requirements: (for students who entered the program Fall 2011 to 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
- LIS 7790 Touchstone
- LIS 8990 Capstone

Highly Recommended Courses:

- LIS 7450 Searching Electronic Databases
- LIS 7500 Information Seeking and Retrieval
- LIS 7530 Internet Fundamentals and Design
- LIS 7550 Information Policy
- LIS 7740 Special Libraries
- LIS 7920 Information Seeking Behavior
- LIS 7993 Practicum
- LIS 8800 Knowledge Management

Recommended to Choose One:

- * LIS 7400 Reference Sources in the Humanities
- * LIS 7410 Reference Sources in the Social Sciences
- * LIS 7420 Reference Sources in the Sciences
- * LIS 7430 Reference Sources in Business and Economics
- LIS 7440 Government Information Resources
- LIS 7590 Digital Libraries

*FYI: The curriculum is in transition regarding reference sources courses.

Alternative Courses:

- LIS 7160 Leadership in Theory and Practice
- LIS 7270 Information Literacy in the Digital Age
- LIS 7300 Cataloging and Classification
- LIS 7370 Online Information Systems
- LIS 7480 Collection Management
- LIS 7510 Database Management
- LIS 7520 Networks
- LIS 7540 Information Systems Analysis and Design
- LIS 7620 Literacy and Community Engagement
- LIS 7640 Information Literacy Instruction

LIS 7800 Health Sciences Librarianship
LIS 7880 Law Librarianship
LIS 7970 Web Usability and Accessibility
LIS 8820 Metadata for Internet Resources
LIS 8840 Competitive Intelligence

Also see: Information Science Pathway