

User Services Pathway

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

Updated: Spring 2017

Introduction

User services is a broad area of specialization that prepares students to develop, provide, deliver, and evaluate information services to meet the needs of individuals and communities in a variety of information environments. Promoting and teaching information literacy is one of the core responsibilities of user services librarians. The complexity of Web information requires users to develop new knowledge, skills and strategies for making appropriate information decisions. As libraries continue to increase their role as facilitators of learning in constantly changing digital environments, librarians' expertise in information literacy and user education is becoming increasingly important.

Careers

- Academic librarian
- Adult services librarian
- Bookmobile librarian
- Children's services librarian
- Collaborative services librarian
- Computer search librarian
- Concierge
- Cybrarian
- Emerging technologies librarian
- Faculty scholarship outreach librarian
- Immigrant services librarian
- Information literacy coordinator
- Information officer
- Information services librarian
- Instruction librarian
- Liaison librarian
- Open education librarian
- Outreach librarian
- Prospect researcher
- Public librarian
- Reference librarian
- Research librarian
- Subject specialist
- Undergraduate engagement librarian
- Web services librarian
- Youth services librarian

Competencies

The Reference and User Services Association (RUSA) (<http://www.ala.org/rusa>) of the American Library Association provides guidelines for the competencies needed by user services librarians (<http://www.ala.org/rusa/resources/guidelines/professional>). These address access, knowledge base, marketing and awareness, collaboration, and evaluation and assessment of resources and services. In addition, RUSA has established guidelines for the provision of user services for other topics important to providing information access (<http://www.ala.org/rusa/guidelines>).

User services librarians have a diverse range of knowledge and abilities:

- Design, organize, implement, and evaluate services to meet the information needs of their primary community.
- Determine user needs and analyze information sources and services to develop new programs and services.
- Demonstrate excellent face-to-face and virtual reference interviewing skills.
- Use an understanding of web development to help design usable and accessible library websites.
- Use an understanding of emerging technologies to develop participatory library services.
- Use an understanding of teaching methodology and instructional technology to design and conduct information literacy instruction for specific user groups.
- Keep abreast of new knowledge and technologies to enhance practices.
- Collaborate with the user as a partner in the information-seeking process and with other librarians and libraries for effective service provision.
- Advocate for the library and are involved in outreach programs and services
- Assess and evaluate resources and services.

Required Courses

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

Core Requirements:

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

User Services Courses

Highly Recommended

LIS 7400 Advanced Reference
LIS 7480 Collection Management
LIS 7530 Internet Fundamentals & Design
LIS 7630 Readers Advisory Services
LIS 7640 Information Literacy Instruction

Alternative electives:

LIS 7450 Searching Electronic Databases
LIS 7610 Marketing and Public Relations
LIS 7680 Libraries & Emerging Technologies
LIS 7993 Practicum

Information Literacy and User Education Courses

Highly Recommended

LIS 7230 Services for Children and Young Adults
LIS 7240 Technology for Teaching and Learning
LIS 7270 Information Literacy in the Digital Age
LIS 7380 Transforming Adult Services
LIS 7530 Internet Fundamentals & Design
LIS 7620 Literacy and Community Engagement
LIS 7640 Information Literacy Instruction
LIS 7920 Human Information Behavior

Relevant Electives

LIS 7450 Searching Electronic Databases
LIS 7680 Libraries & Emerging Technologies
LIS 7970 Web Usability/Accessibility
LIS 7993 Practicum

Useful Resources for Information Literacy

The Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL) and the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) have established the following standards and guidelines for information literacy:

ACRL. (2012). Characteristics of programs of information literacy that illustrate best practices. Retrieved from <http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/characteristics>

ACRL. (2016). Framework for information literacy for higher education. Retrieved from <http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/ilframework>

AASL. (n.d.) Standards for the 21st-Century learner. Retrieved from <http://www.ala.org/aasl/standards-guidelines/learning-standards>

Also see these pathways: Youth Services, Academic Libraries, Public Libraries