CFLA FCAB

Guidelines for the Education of Library Technicians

Revised 2022. Approved by CFLA-FCAB July 28, 2022

Introduction

The Canadian Federation of Library Associations-Fédération canadienne des associations de bibliothèques (CFLA-FCAB) has established these guidelines in order to describe library technician programs of high quality that maintain currency and competitiveness amid rapid technological advancements and social changes. The guidelines are intended to serve as a national standard for educational institutions in Canada and for employers to note the competencies of library technician program graduates. The document was produced in consultation with the Program Chairs/Coordinators of Canadian institutions offering Library Technician Programs, along with input from library and information industry representatives and library technicians in Canada.

The term "library technician" describes an individual who has completed a recognized diploma program at a college or university in Canada. The library and information industry includes libraries, archives, records and other information centres.

The Role of a Library Technician

The library technician is a key member of a library team and works in various library and information management environments performing essential day-to-day operations. Other key library team members may include librarians and library clerks. A career in libraries or the information service industry demands a wide range of knowledge, skills, and attitudes. A library technician must have excellent interpersonal and communication skills coupled with the ability to perform thorough, accurate work by being attentive to detail. Library technicians must be versatile and able to quickly adapt to a rapidly changing technological environment. Library technicians are employed in academic, public, school, and special libraries (for example, but not limited to, government, corporate, or non-profit organizations). They also may find work in records management, archives, and information management organizations.

Key Educational Requirements

Library technician programs combine theory and practice. Students develop the practical expertise needed to organize, access, and manage information. Students must gain proficiency in all areas of library operations through the educational program, acknowledging that programs may emphasize different areas of expertise.

Educational programs must develop the practical skills required in public and technical services. Students will also develop strong interpersonal and communication skills and

competencies to work effectively within an organizational structure and in a customer service role. Programs develop the ability to recognize, respect, and work with individuals and groups with diverse backgrounds and perspectives. Library technician students will consider ways that social responsibility, ethical behaviour, and social justice are important philosophical foundations for library work.

Admission Requirements

A secondary school diploma or its equivalent is the minimum required for admission to the program; special provisions may be made for the admission of mature applicants. A demonstrated competence in oral and written English or French (as appropriate) is required. Admission requirements may vary from institution to institution, and program admission is based on meeting the institution's admission requirements. A variety of mechanisms, such as personal interviews, letters of intent, or standardized tests may be used to assess the candidate's academic qualifications, language proficiency, and communication skills.

Program of Instruction

Length

Most programs are completed over two academic years. Programs in Quebec are three years, as general education courses are taken throughout. Because of rapid changes in the library industry, the program should normally be completed within five (5) years for part-time students. A diploma is awarded upon completion of the program.

Core Competencies

A library technician graduate should possess the following minimum competencies.

Library Profession, Library Knowledge, and Issues

Demonstrate understanding of different types of libraries and analyze ethical, social, moral, and legal issues as related to library and information management environments.

- Describe the role of the library technician and the changing responsibilities of today's library personnel.
- Describe different types of libraries and information services.
- Discuss cultural, ethical, and professional considerations of the information world.
- Analyze, evaluate, and articulate the concepts of intellectual freedom, censorship, and privacy of information within the library and the broader scope of access to information and knowledge.
- Explain and contribute to the promotion of equity, diversity, and inclusion.
- Discuss accessibility, including legislation and disability technologies and services.
- Identify Indigenization and decolonization efforts in the library and information field.
- Analyze current issues and trends in the information field.
- Identify the importance of local, national, and/or international library associations,

membership, and activities.

Acquisitions and Collections

Apply acquisitions, circulation, serials, and interlibrary loan skills and knowledge to facilitate the management of print and e-resource collection.

- Contribute to collections development policies.
- Determine appropriate materials for selection.
- Recognize the importance of alternative viewpoints and diversification.
- Apply intellectual freedom and censorship principles.
- Discuss and apply copyright principles and legislation.
- Determine appropriate sources for purchase of materials.
- Utilize appropriate bibliographic tools.
- Execute interlibrary loan (ILL) requests.
- Prepare purchase orders.
- Receive and process materials, claiming when required.
- Perform collection evaluation, including needs assessments, deselection processes, and diversity audits.
- Maintain acquisitions, serials, and licensing records.
- Maintain vendor connections and records.
- Maintain budgeting and financial records.

Cataloguing

Describe and classify materials based on current cataloging, indexing, and metadata standards, including but not limited to AACR2, RDA, MESH, LCSH, LCC, DDC, MARC, and DC.

- Perform original cataloguing by applying basic internationally accepted cataloguing rules for description and access.
- Search for derived cataloguing copy, verify cataloguing information, and edit records.
- Apply rules for subject analysis and choice of subject headings and descriptors from various subject heading lists and other controlled vocabularies.
- Apply rules for subject analysis and choice of classification numbers from commonly used classification schedules.
- Maintain library catalogues and shelf list according to recognized filing rules.
- Identify structural biases and inadequacies in existing schemes of knowledge.
- Apply Cutter tables and other book number systems.
- Encode cataloguing records according to recognized standards such as MARC and BIBFRAME.
- Maintain catalogue records.
- Establish and maintain authority files and cross references.
- Apply, develop, and maintain alternative metadata schemas such as Dublin Core.

Circulation

Provide effective customer service, including circulation services and handling of patron

records.

- Perform basic circulation tasks.
- Demonstrate effective customer service.
- Develop, maintain, and enforce circulation policies.
- Apply copyright principles and legislation.
- Troubleshoot and maintain library resources and equipment.
- Apply legislation and ethical best practices with relation to privacy of patron records.

Reference

Conduct in-person and virtual reference interviews and readers' advisory services, and use effective information literacy skills to find, use, and evaluate information critically.

- Conduct reference interviews in order to ascertain user needs.
- Respond to various types of reference requests.
- Perform readers' advisory services.
- Search library catalogues, research databases, the Internet, and other reference tools to locate information.
- Evaluate resources according to standardized criteria.
- Use standard reference tools to answer basic reference questions.
- Use specialized resources for finding information in specific areas.
- Locate materials resulting from reference requests.
- Create subject guides and other finding tools.
- Prepare instructional materials on the use of library resources.
- Instruct library patrons in the use of resources.
- Recognize when information referral is necessary.

Programming, Community Engagement, and Outreach

Plan and deliver programs for customers of all ages and abilities. Promote libraries through social media, displays, programs, and materials, as well as advocacy in the profession.

- Organize and deliver library programs for all age groups and abilities.
- Conduct informational, instructional, recreational, and outreach programs and special events.
- Incorporate accessibility principles in programming activities and resources.
- Create accompanying materials for library programs.
- Incorporate technology into programming, including makerspace resources.
- Prepare library promotional materials using appropriate technology and tools.
- Organize library promotional outreach, campaigns, or events.

● Develop advocacy skills to promote community awareness and engagement.

Technological Literacy

Use a variety of software and hardware to acquire, process, and organize information

- Use general application software for databases, documents, presentations, and spreadsheets.
- Operate and evaluate library management systems for all core library functions.
- Use online tools, including but not limited to websites, video creation, social media, and other programs for library communications and services.
- Apply basic troubleshooting methods.
- Assess technologies and processes using analytics and statistics.
- Evaluate technologies for usability and accessibility.
- Discuss emerging technologies in libraries.

Library Management and Supervision

Explore the role of management in library operations, focusing on organizational structure, human resources, and library financial management.

- Outline theories, practices, and general management principles of library and information settings.
- Identify an organization's vision and mission statements, and the various library policies necessary for library and information management.
- Communicate policy positions on intellectual freedom and social responsibility.
- Apply strategies for de-escalation, conflict management, and self-regulation of emotion.
- Apply staff training principles for a variety of library and information tasks.
- Explain the basic principles of effective supervision.
- Use budgeting terminology, structure, preparation and management techniques to support library processes.
- Describe the basic principles of project management.

Additional Competencies

A library technician program may also include the following additional competencies.

Archives

Demonstrate the information and document management skills needed to work in an archival setting with both physical and digital materials.

- Describe the fundamental theories, concepts, and practices of archives.

- Apply legislation, standards, policies, and ethical considerations governing archival practices.
- Identify the different tools and technologies used in archival settings.

● Describe processes for acquisition and appraisal, description and organization, conservation and preservation, and storage and retrieval of archival materials.
● Explain the basic components, procedures, and technologies of a digitization program.
● Identify the different needs of and services for archival patrons.
● Conduct reference searches using archival resources.
● Explain the relationship between archives and other information organizations.

Records Management

Demonstrate the ability to operate and maintain systems for the collection, classification, retrieval, and retention of records, images, and documents.

● Describe the fundamental theories, concepts, and practices of records management programs.
● Apply legislation, standards, policies, and ethical considerations governing records management practices.
● Identify the different tools and technologies used in records management settings.
● Describe processes for acquisition, description, organization, storage, and retrieval of records.
● Use a records classification scheme and inventory, as well as retention and destruction schedules.
● Explain the basic components, procedures, and technologies of a digitization program.
● Identify the different needs of and services for records management clients.
● Explain the relationship between records management and other information organizations.

Workplace Skills

These are general workplace (soft) skills that should be emphasized and incorporated throughout a library technician education program.

General Emotional Skills

● Demonstrate flexibility and adaptability, reliability, and the ability to self-reflect and be self-motivated and proactive.

Interpersonal

● Demonstrate excellent customer service skills, including the ability to diplomatically interact with individuals and groups.
● Display a passion and desire to interact with a diverse group of customers and needs.
● Approach customer service with empathy and compassion.
● Develop lifelong learning and interest in continuous improvement.

Cultural Sensitivity

● Recognize, respect, and work with individuals and groups with diverse backgrounds and

perspectives.
- Demonstrate the ability to be non-judgmental and attuned to the needs of a variety of individuals with differing backgrounds and abilities.
- Demonstrate integrity and respect for all individuals.

Teamwork & Collaboration

- Work collaboratively in a team environment and develop strong working relationships with colleagues.
- Follow directions when required.

Communication

- Communicate effectively in oral and written English (and French if applicable).
- Demonstrate active and attentive listening skills.
- Develop effective conflict resolution strategies and negotiation skills.

Creativity

- Use creativity and an innovative mindset to solve problems and advance new approaches.
- Demonstrate curiosity: an impulse to seek new information and experiences and consider novel possibilities.

Independence

- Work autonomously; plan and organize own work.
- Exhibit sound judgment in decision-making.

Organizational

- Demonstrate excellent organizational, time-management, and multi-tasking skills.
- Perform thorough, accurate work by being attentive to detail.

Critical Thinking

- Display strong problem-solving skills.
- Demonstrate the ability to exercise good judgment.
- Incorporate information literacy into practice.

Field Placement

The field practice length varies between institutions and typically consists of 30 days of either two shorter practicums or one longer practicum. Practicums may be interspersed throughout the program or scheduled when program requirements have been completed. Field practice is arranged by the course instructor in consultation with the appropriate supervisor at the location in which the practice work is arranged. Progress reports to the program director from both the field supervisor and the student are recommended. It is beneficial for students to identify

personal goals that reflect the knowledge, skills, and abilities learned in the program for their field practice, communicate these to their supervisor(s), and provide a self-reflection upon practicum completion. Accompanying seminars are also recommended to prepare for the field experience and provide job readiness training. It is imperative that the practicum location provide a supervised experience that is varied and appropriate to the knowledge, skills, and abilities of the student.

Alternative Program Delivery

To provide for more flexible options, a library technician program may be offered through continuing education, extension, evening, or online instruction through the educational institution. Where such a program is available, it must meet the standards of the training of library technicians established in these guidelines as well as conform to the requirements of the library technician program offered by the institution. Admission and curriculum requirements must be identical for both part-time and full-time programs. Transfer options between full-time and part-time programs should be available.

Continuing Education

Library technician programs may enable the pursuit of career-enhancing opportunities for graduates. It is recommended that programs offer post-diploma courses, micro-credentials, and certificates that address issues relevant to the career. Where possible, programs should work with partner organizations such as library associations and local libraries to provide continuing education opportunities.

In this way, the standards of education recommended by these guidelines may be extended beyond the library technician program itself, and the standard of performance of graduate technicians can be maintained at an optimum level of quality.

Program Director and Staff

The program director/coordinator and instructors should have a range of experiences in different types of libraries and library services. A librarian with an accredited graduate library degree and at least five years of diverse previous professional experience should direct the program. In addition to a director, it is recommended that the library technician program should have one assistant (instructor or educational assistant) who is a qualified and experienced librarian or library technician. Other sessional or adjunct instructors and visiting lecturers may also be required. Instructors should have a graduate degree in the subject area they are teaching. The director should have a sufficiently reduced teaching load to allow for administrative duties. Time and budget should be available for professional development of all staff. In addition, faculty should be encouraged to be involved in professional activities.

Supporting Facilities

Teaching Facilities

Adequate space, equipment, and library resources must accommodate the number of students enrolled in the program. Where possible, laboratory facilities should be provided for the preparation of projects and use of specialized software or equipment. It is important that the program has access to sufficient computer services and facilities to provide hands-on training and experience in technology and software.

Library Support Services

A library meeting the recommended minimum standards of the American Library Association's Standards for Libraries in Higher Education is required to support a successful library technician program. Students in library technician programs should have reasonable access to all library facilities. Full cooperation and communication between the instructional staff and library staff is essential to the program. Laboratory exercises in the library may be arranged for students, but the library must not serve as a base for all field practice, nor must the library use the technician program as a source of labour without remuneration.

Administration and Budget

The library technician program is an academic program, which must fund its administrative place in the appropriate division of the educational institution. Its administration must be entirely separate from that of the library. Similarly, its budget must be separate and sufficient to allow for the autonomous development of the program.The program budget must provide for both onsite and online delivery (where applicable). It must also ensure the continued upkeep of equipment, supplies, professional tools, etc., and provide for appropriate staff, including regular staff education and development. The program budget must provide for both onsite and online delivery (where applicable), It must also ensure the continued upkeep of equipment, supplies, professional tools, etc., and provide for appropriate staff, including regular staff education and development. The budget should provide the assurance of continuity and growth from year to year.

Advisory Committee

Depending on institutional requirements, a program may establish an Advisory Committee composed of representatives from libraries and other employers in the library and information industry. The committee advises and assists the library technician program administration to make decisions regarding changes and direction of the program. In some cases, advisory committees are not supported by the institution. If this is the case, the program should conduct a regular market analysis to ensure the program maintains currency and relevance to national standards and the needs of local industry.

Location of Programs

Library technician programs should be offered only in centres within reasonable traveling distance of several types of libraries housing adequate collections for student use and field practice. Institutions offering online programs need to work closely with the library community on

a national level to ensure that their students have access to field placements in their region. Programs should be instituted only after a survey study has indicated sufficient regional job opportunities for graduates.

National Library Technician Programs Meeting

Library technician program directors, chairs, coordinators, and instructors are encouraged to attend the National Library Technician Programs Annual Meeting (held in conjunction with the OLA Super Conference, with option for hybrid attendance).