Reference Librarians Matrix

LEVELS 56 - 59 -- OVERVIEW

Reference librarians at Harvard share a common mission: to optimize the scholarly community's access to the research resources of the largest academic library in the world and the constantly multiplying array of electronic tools for exploring this collection and the intellectual world beyond. All assist faculty, students, staff, and visiting scholars in fast evolving research techniques, as well as the strategies needed to navigate the peculiarly complex Harvard University Library system, with its 96+ units and sometimes bewildering administrative web. This responsibility extends outward to touch upon almost all aspects of the University's educational mission. (The Internet has thrown open a spectacular new world of information -- tantalizing, frequently of dubious quality, and maddeningly unstable.) Reference librarians tackle this challenge in classrooms, scheduled conferences, spontaneous, point-of-use counseling at the reference desk, or wherever librarian and researcher meet.

All participate to a varying extent in collecting and managing the print reference collection for their particular library and in determining which expensive electronic resources are indispensable to their research community. A reference librarian must be conversant in the scholarly discourse belonging to the disciplines served by his or her library, and sufficiently empathetic and imaginative to enter into another's intellectual pursuit. All must be skilled in the art of leading students in reformulating sometimes nebulous or obliquely expressed ideas into terminology amenable to productive research. Teaching-related activities consume a substantial amount of the time and creative energies of reference librarians whether it's researching and developing instructional aids for a specific course, selecting the content and presentation format for a library-use workshop, or leading an entire program of instructional services for a faculty library. Reference librarians do not perform in a vacuum. They typically participate in a variety of activities that further the goals of their unit, the University, and the profession.

It can be challenging to distinguish grade levels based solely on a description of activities carried out, since so many tasks are common to all levels of reference librarianship. Grade level differentials are based to some extent on the degree of acquired knowledge and professional experience necessary to succeed in fulfilling these responsibilities. Other key factors for distinguishing grade levels are leadership, scope for decision-making, level of influence on setting and achieving goals, and degree of impact on the organization and its educational mission. The size of the organization and its organizational structure play a role in determining the level of staff performing particular functions. Factors such as supervisory and management responsibilities, or budget and collection size are more easily codified than the areas enumerated above, yet may be an imperfect measure of a position's true challenges or of its impact on the scholarly enterprise. The following is an effort to equitably meld some concrete, measurable factors with more qualitative criteria.

Level	Function/ Roles	Experience/Scope (Minimum Required)	Common Activities

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56	First career-level reference librarian Typically works under the general supervision of more senior reference staff to provide a full range of reference and research assistance to faculty, students, staff, and other library users	MLS or equivalent degree 2 years library experience *Typical Requirements:* Excellent communication skills, computer literacy, solid working knowledge of print and electronic information resources May require familiarity with one or more foreign languages	• Responds to requests for information in print, microform, and a wide variety of electronic resources • Provides basic services to all levels of user population; interpreting, negotiating, and resolving questions and problems according to established guidelines • Assists researchers in accessing both traditional print and electronic resources available locally and beyond Harvard. Consults with library clientele on research problems and recommends appropriate tools and methodologies • Typically, participates in established teaching programs, by making classroom presentations, presenting workshops, and/or producing library-related instructional aids • May participate in library's "outreach activities" such as giving tours, producing newsletters, and preparing exhibits • Participates in evaluating, selecting, and managing print and electronic resources for the Library's reference and research services • May participate in selecting materials for the general collections in a defined subject area • Interprets and administers policies, relying on experience, judgment, and tact • May assist in monitoring and developing the department's budget by gathering, analyzing, and interpreting data.
56 (cont.)			• Engages in departmental planning efforts and

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57	Experienced subject specialist or generalist Works largely independently to provide a full range of reference and research services to faculty, students, staff, and other library users Acts as a resource for colleagues in their professional development	MLS or equivalent 2nd specialized advanced degree may be preferred (i.e. MS, JD, MD, MBA, etc.) 2-4 years reference-related experience *Typical Requirements:* Excellent communications skills; computer literacy; advanced knowledge of print and electronic information resources; demonstrated judgment and maturity May require specialized language skills Highly developed knowledge of information resources	• Drawing on highly developed knowledge of information resources, consults with and counsels library users in devising research strategies, identifying appropriate research materials, and using them effectively • Applies broad knowledge of applicable print and electronic reference sources • Responds to diverse clientele of faculty, students, scholars, and staff. • May gather analyze, evaluate, and/or summarize data in support of academic research activities • Evaluates, selects, and manages print and electronic information resources for the library's reference and research services • May select materials for the general collection in a defined subject area • Participates in bibliographic instruction and other teaching programs, including consultations with faculty, developing and delivering programs, and designing and producing instructional-aids • Interprets policy and may resolve issues relating to them, relying on substantial reference experience, independent judgment, and tact • Contributes to the improvement of the Library's services, programs, and methodology, particularly in the area of reference and research services
57 (cont.)			• Contributes to departmental planning efforts and may oversee the work flow of individual functions within the department • May supervise or direct the work of professional,

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58	Head of Reference Department Leader of professional librarians, from first career level to senior level, with responsibility to direct and guide the work of the unit in support of academic research and teaching and with attention to the further professional growth of the staff	MLS or equivalent degree 2nd Masters preferred 4 years reference experience and 2 years management experience preferred *Typical Requirements:* Excellent communication skills, computer literacy, advanced knowledge of print and electronic information resources. Reading knowledge of at least one foreign language and /or advanced subject knowledge may be required	• Leads a team of professional librarians in defining, developing, promoting, and delivering instructional and research services to the user population • On behalf of the department, highlights and communicates departmental accomplishments to the Library Director and senior key officers, and advocates for the automation, human resource, physical facilities and fiscal support necessary for the department to fulfill its mission. • Creates a work environment in which professionals continue to grow, learn, innovate and improve within a changing profession • Defines standards and sets goals for department, and recommends reference policy to Library Director • Implements procedures, training, and oversight mechanisms to assure standards are met • Hires and supervises professional, exempt and support staff • Recommends both promotion and dismissal of staff • Plays a key role in the collection development and management of the electronic and print information resources that the library provides. • May negotiate with vendors the terms of acquiring or licensing resources needed for the library's information services • Maintains contact with colleagues within the university and beyond
58 (cont.)			• Anticipates the impact of technology, and educational and research trends on library use. Develops programs to assure the optimal utilization of information resources.

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59	Manager of research/reference department in a large or extra- large library	MLS or equivalent 2nd master's or doctorate preferred 6-10 years reference-related and supervisory experience	• Manages a large professional and support staff responsible for complex reference and research services to a faculty. Ensures that staff are trained and knowledgeable in state of the art reference tools, technology and services • Has extensive human resources and direct budget responsibility for facilitating a broad range of reference and research functions • Exercises a robust comprehension of the fast evolving scholarly enterprise. Develops and encourages development of creative programs to support academic goals; advocates programs, technology, and resource development to achieve the department's mission • Maintains contact with colleagues within the university and beyond. Understands how the rapid rate of development of technology and scholarship influence and are influenced by reference librarianship. Influences how librarians adapt to these changes within own organization and beyond

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