

Standards for Accreditation
of Master's Programs in Library and Information Studies

members. Reference to a subset of the faculty is designated by referring specifically to “full-time” or “part-time” faculty members, or to “each” or “individual” faculty members.

Systematic planning is an ongoing, active, broad-based approach to (1) continuous review and revision of a program’s vision, mission, goals, objectives, and learning outcomes; (2) assessment of attainment of goals, objectives, and learning outcomes; (3) realignment and redesign of core activities in response to the results of assessment; and (4) communication of planning policies and processes, assessment activities, and results of assessment to program constituents. Effective broad-based, systematic planning requires engagement of the program’s constituents and thorough and open documentation of those activities that constitute planning.

Definitions of equity, diversity, inclusion and social justice are included in the Office for Diversity, Literacy, and Outreach Services (ODLOS) Glossary of Terms
<https://www.ala.org/aboutala/odlos-glossary>

A glossary of accreditation terminology is available at the Office for Accreditation website, <http://www.ala.org/accreditedprograms/standards/glossary>

Nature of the Standards

These Standards identify the indispensable components of library and information studies programs while recognizing programs’ rights and obligations regarding initiative, experimentation, innovation, and individual programmatic differences. The Standards are indicative, not prescriptive, with the intent to foster excellence through a program’s development of criteria for evaluating effectiveness, developing and applying qualitative and quantitative measures of these criteria, analyzing data from measurement, and applying analysis to program improvement.

The Standards stress innovation and encourage programs to take an active role in and concern for future developments and growth in the field.

The values of equity, diversity, inclusion, and social justice are referenced throughout the Standards because of their importance when framing goals and objectives, designing curricula, selecting and retaining faculty and students, and allocating resource

The requirements of these Standards apply regardless of forms or locations of delivery of a program.

Philosophy of Program Review

The Committee on Accreditation determines the eligibility of a program for accredited status on the basis of evidence presented by a program and by the report of a visiting external review panel. The evidence supplied by the program in support of the Standards is evaluated against the statement of the unit’s mission and the program’s goals and objectives. A program’s evidence is evaluated by trained, experienced, and capable evaluators.

Program goals and objectives are fundamental to all aspects of master's degree programs and form the basis on which educational programs are to be developed and upon which they are evaluated. Program goals and objectives are required to reflect and support program-learning outcomes and the achievement of these outcomes.

The *Accreditation Process, Policies and Procedures (AP3)* document guides the accreditation process. Section II "Guidelines for the Study and comprehensive review" includes Section II.7.4 "Examples of evidence that might be used to indicate compliance with the Standards for Accreditation." Both the *Standards* and *AP3* are available online from the Office for Accreditation website <http://www.ala.org/offices/accreditation>

Assistance in obtaining materials used by the Committee on Accreditation is provided by the Office for Accreditation. These materials consist of documents used in the accreditation process, as well as educational policy statements developed by relevant professional organizations that can be used to inform the design and evaluation of a master's degree program.

Endnotes

1. *CHEA Recognition of Accrediting Organizations, Policy and Procedures* (1998, revised September 24, 2018); Background, p. 2. Retrieved October 24, 2023, <https://www.chea.org/sites/default/files/pdf/Recognition-Policy-FINAL-Dec-2018.pdf>
2. Committee on Accreditation. Retrieved October 24, 2023, <https://www.ala.org/aboutala/committees/ala/cta>
3. Council for Higher Education Accreditation. American Library Association, Committee on Accreditation. Retrieved October 24, 2023, <https://www.chea.org/american-library-association-committee-accreditation>

Scope Statements for Top-level Standards

Standard I- Systematic Planning

The program implements an ongoing, broad-based, systematic planning process that involves the constituencies the program seeks to serve, includes members of traditionally underrepresented and historically underserved groups, and results in improvements to and innovations in the program.

Standard II- Program-Level Learning Outcomes and Curriculum

Program-level learning outcomes describe what students are expected to know and be able to do by the time of graduation. The curriculum provides descriptions of different courses of study, specializations, or other variations of study. The evaluation includes attainment of outcomes across the program.

Standard III

Program-level learning outcomes describe what students are expected to know and be able to do by the time of graduation. The curriculum provides descriptions of different courses of study, specializations, or other variations of study. The evaluation includes attainment of outcomes collectively across the program.

II.1 Ethics and Values. Program-level learning outcomes and curriculum are designed to incorporate the philosophy, principles, and ethics of the field, including the values of equity, diversity, and inclusion, and relevant professional codes of ethics.

II.2 Program-Level Learning Outcomes. Program-level learning outcomes describe what students are expected to know and be able to do by the time of graduation. The outcomes are informed by the most recent statement of ALA Core Competences, ALA Core Values and include a focus on equity, diversity, and inclusion. For areas of specialization, outcomes are informed by knowledge and competency statements developed by relevant professional organizations. Programs regularly evaluate the attainment of program-level learning outcomes. Learning outcomes are consistent regardless of mode of delivery.

II.3 Curriculum. The program provides a curriculum that enables students to achieve the identified program-level learning outcomes. The curriculum addresses information users, resources, services, and technologies to facilitate information management and use, across diverse contexts and communities. Beyond the required curriculum, programs shall offer additional courses to provide both greater depth and breadth of material. Programs have the option of grouping courses together to create areas of specialization. The curriculum is revised regularly to keep it current.

II.4 Program Completion. Program course offerings and support systems allow students to construct coherent and timely plans of study that address their career goals. Course offerings, scheduling, and delivery methods are consistent with public information and are matched to student needs.

II.5 Evaluation. The curriculum is continually evaluated with input not only from faculty, but also stakeholders: students, employers, alumni, and other constituents, including members of traditionally underrepresented and historically underserved groups. The program's design,

III.2 Program Faculty. There are sufficient full-time program faculty (tenured/tenure-track and non-tenure-track) to carry out the major share of the teaching, research, and service activities required for the program, wherever or however delivered. Teaching, research, and service responsibilities are equitably distributed among the full-time faculty. Teaching involves curriculum development and innovation, instruction, direction of student research, and academic advising. Full-time program faculty collectively provide a range of specialties that support the goals and objectives of the program. Part-time faculty, when appointed, balance, enrich, and complement the competencies of the full-time program faculty.

III.3 Faculty Qualifications. All faculty possess appropriate academic and subject qualifications to teach in their area of instruction at the graduate level and contribute meaningfully to program design and evaluation. Full-time faculty demonstrate skill in academic planning and assessment, have a sustained research and scholarly agenda that contributes to the knowledge base of the field and is disseminated regularly. Faculty regularly update and enhance their knowledge and skills, including skills in equity and social justice; interact with faculty of other disciplines; and maintain close and continuing liaison to relevant areas of professional practice.

III.4 Faculty Workload. Faculty assignments relate to the needs of the program and specializations, and to the competencies of the individual faculty members. Faculty workload assignments are equitable, support the quality of instruction throughout all class sessions and all modes of delivery, and take into account time needed for teaching, academic advising, research, professional development, and institutional and professional service.

III.5 Faculty Support. Compensation for program faculty is equitable and is sufficient to attract, support, and retain personnel needed to attain unit, program, and LIS professional goals and objectives. Institutional funds for research projects, professional development, travel, and leaves are available on the same basis as in comparable units of the institution. Faculty have access to resources and accommodations for disabilities. Faculty from underrepresented groups have access to support and resources specific to documented challenges and oppression in academic settings.

III.6. Faculty Evaluation and Development. The unit provides policies and resources that support and enhance the retention and professional development of full-time faculty. All faculty have the opportunity for professional development activities. Systematic evaluation of faculty considers accomplishments and innovation in the areas of teaching, research, and service, and that evaluation provides data for continuous improvement of instruction and other program goals and objectives. Documented mechanisms for addressing the unique challenges of faculty from underrepresented groups in development and evaluation exist. Within applicable institutional policies, faculty, students, and others are involved in the evaluation process.

Standard IV – Students

The program has processes and systems to recruit, retain, and support students and prospective students, as well as the evaluation and continuous improvement of those processes and systems.

V.1 Values Underlying Infrastructure. Programs show documented efforts to use resources and services in ways that reflect equity, diversity, and inclusion. Resources and services are distributed, implemented, and used by the program equitably and with ~~in~~ ⁱⁿ ~~diversity and~~ ⁱⁿ ~~inclusion.~~ ^{inclusion.}

V.2 Autonomy and Administrative Infrastructure. The program is integral yet distinctive within the institution. Its autonomy is sufficient, within the general guidelines of the institution, to determine the intellectual content of its program, the ~~selection and~~ ^{recruitment and} promotion of its faculty, the selection and support of its students, and the support of the academic program. It has the administrative infrastructure, financial support, and resources to ensure that its goals and objectives can be accomplished. The parent institution provides both administrative support and the resources needed for the attainment of mission and goals. The administrative head(s) of the program has authority to ensure that students are supported in their plan of study, has leadership skills and experience relevant to the program, and understanding of developments in LIS. The administrative head(s) demonstrates ongoing development of administrative abilities and skills in equity, diversity, inclusion, and social justice.

V.3 Participation. The program's faculty, staff, and students have the same opportunities for representation on the institution's advisory or ~~policy~~ ^{governing} bodies as do those of comparable units throughout the institution. Administrative relationships with other academic units enhance the intellectual environment and support interdisciplinary interaction.

V.4 Administrative Support. Program or unit support staff are sufficient in number and expertise to support faculty and students. Staff have appropriate resources and support, compensation, professional development, and systematic evaluation that provides for accomplishment of program and unit goals. Program or unit staff are selected, employed, and offered development opportunities in accordance with LIS professional values, including equity, diversity, and inclusion.

V.5 Physical, Technological, and Information Resources. The program and the unit have access to resources that allow them to accomplish their goals of teaching, research, and service. Physical facilities, online services, and associated technologies provide a functional and accessible working, learning, and teaching environment for students, faculty, and staff. These resources enhance the opportunities for research, teaching, service, and communication. Library resources and university services support the program's curriculum and faculty and student research. These resources promote efficient, effective, and equitable administration of the program.

V.6 Evaluation. Resources and services are sufficient and appropriate to meet the needs of the program. Resources, services, and their use, including efforts to improve equity, diversity, and inclusion, are systematically evaluated and the results applied ~~to~~ ^{to} ~~continuous~~ ^{to} ~~improvement in the~~ ^{to} ~~context of the unit's mission and the program's goals and objectives.~~ ^{continuous improvement in the context of the unit's mission and the program's goals and objectives.}