Standards for Distance Learning Library Services
Excerpts

Part I Foundations

Executive Summary: The Access Entitlement Principle

Every student, faculty member, administrator, staff member, or any other member of an institution of higher education, is entitled to the library services and resources of that institution, including direct communication with the appropriate library personnel, regardless of where enrolled or where located in affiliation with the institution. Academic libraries must, therefore, meet the information and research needs of all these constituents, wherever they may be. This principle of access entitlement, as applied to individuals at a distance, is the undergirding and uncompromising conviction of the *Standards for Distance Learning Library Services*, hereinafter designated as the *Standards*.

The access entitlement principle applies equally to individuals on a main campus, off campus, in distance learning or regional campus programs, or in the absence of any physical campus. The principle applies to all public, private, profit, and non-profit academic institutions. The principle likewise applies to courses taken for credit, non-credit, and through continuing education programs, and to courses taught face-to-face in classrooms in remote settings, or via any medium - or through any other means of distance learning. The *Standards* delineate elements necessary to achieving this and the other closely related principles provided in the **Philosophy** section.

Philosophy: A Bill of Rights for the Distance Learning Community

Information Literacy: The library must provide information literacy instruction programs to the distance learning community in accordance with the ACRL *Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education*, **as cited below under Services**. The attainment of lifelong learning skills through general bibliographic and information literacy instruction in academic libraries is a primary outcome of higher education, and as such, must be provided to all distance learning students.

Part II Specific Requirements

Services

Library services offered to the distance learning community must be designed to meet a wide range of informational, *instructional,* and user needs, and should provide some form of direct user access to library personnel. The exact combination of service delivery methods will differ from institution to institution. Specific professional standards and guidelines which should be utilized in providing these services include, but are not limited to:

Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education. Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL), American Library Association, 2000. http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/acrl/standards/informationliteracycompetency.cfm

The following, although not necessarily exhaustive, are essential:

- reference assistance;
- online instructional and informational services in formats accessible to the greatest number of people, including those with disabilities;
- reliable, rapid, secure access to online resources;
- consultation services;
- a library user instruction program designed to instill independent and effective information literacy skills while specifically meeting the learner support needs of the distance learning community;
- reciprocal or contractual borrowing, or interlibrary loan services using broadest application of fair use of copyrighted materials;
- access to reserve materials in accordance with copyright fair use policies or permissions;
- adequate service hours for optimum user access;
- promotion of library services to the distance learning community, including documented and updated policies, regulations and procedures for systematic development, and management of information resources;
- prompt delivery to users of items obtained from the institution's collections, or through interlibrary loan agreement via courier or electronic delivery system; and
- point-of-use assistance with and instruction in the use of non-print media and equipment.

American Library Association. *Standards for Distance Learning Library Services.* Chicago: ALA, September 2006. Web. 21 November 2012. Document ID: afcce136-a64c-6094-6de0-7ad1550814c4. <http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/guidelinesdistancelearning>.