CORE COMPETENCIES
For Subject Specialist Liaison Librarians
Research Services
Public Services Division
University of Maryland Libraries
(Effective January 1, 2015)

The Research Services Unit within Public Services Division incorporates all subject liaison librarians from all library locations on campus, including Art/Arch, CHEM, EPSL, McKeldin, and MSPAL. The purpose of the Unit is to support the academic needs of the campus community and to provide information and research services to our users in both traditional and emerging and innovative ways, including strong liaison services to campus departments, general and subject-specific reference assistance, teaching subject-specific and general information classes, and developing and managing subject specific collections.

Liaison services are an integral part of the Unit's functions. Liaison services are also one of the foremost strategic initiatives for the University of Maryland Libraries. In 2012-2013 Liaison Task Force was set up to examine liaison services and to provide future directions. The Liaison Task Force Final Report (LTFFR) came out on May 13, 2013, http://libi.lib.umd.edu/sites/default/files/Liaison%20Task%20Force%20Final%20report%2010%20June%2020132%20copy.pdf.

The Liaison Task Force Final Report highlights the basic core competences for Subject Specialist Liaison Librarians. The list below simply extracts them for the ease of use. Subject Specialist Liaison Librarians should consistently work toward achieving basic levels of these competences and excelling in them as they are building their skills and professional knowledge. This document follows the general format of the LTFFR, although an additional section on Professional Development has been added for better clarity. Without consistent professional development we can't do our jobs well.

Finally to help folks read this document: all letter designations are things that are our CORE Competencies. The numbered items below each of the lettered competency is the aspirational framework for that competency, which help us define those competencies and provide us with the framework for improvement and things we should be aspiring towards.

Collections Content and Access

A.   Select material in relevant formats and languages to serve the research, teaching and learning needs of the University community.
1) Recognize the growing trends in, advantages and disadvantages of, and user acceptance of, the electronic format.
2) Identify and select monographs, serials and non-print materials
3) Identify and select materials on the approval plan

4) Respond to purchase requests from users
5) Provide access to materials in alternative formats when appropriate
6) Maintain a collection development policy for your subject area
7) Be aware of opportunities for consortial sharing of collections.

B. Manage collection funds effectively and in a timely manner.
1) Review serial subscriptions and standing orders on a regular basis to insure that they reflect current research and instruction
2) Review approval plan profiles periodically to insure that they reflect current research and instruction
3) Review and manage firm orders and approval plan fund balances
4) Review/Prepare budget reports, projections and needs assessments when necessary
5) Adhere to collections calendar and timelines
6) Participate in special projects such as serials cancellation projects, flipping serial titles from print to online, etc.
7) Manage gift funds if applicable

C. Develop skills with and knowledge of current technologies required for the collection development process
1) Keep apprised of changes and developments in relevant subject areas
2) Keep apprised of publishing trends in relevant subject areas
3) Keep apprised of current issues and trends in collection development for academic and research libraries
4) Acquire knowledge of collection development tools and resources (GOBI/YBP, folders on m:drive, Aleph Acquisitions)
5) Keep up-to-date with University Libraries collection development procedures, standards, and requirements.

D. Analyze collection characteristics and collection usage data to better serve users and keep up with research trends.
1) Review circulation and database usage data
2) Actively engage in physical collection management (includes de-acquisition)
3) Actively contribute toward the development of criteria to inform broad collection management decisions
4) Communicate and collaborate with the Collection Development community
5) Analyze subject area or discipline in order to inform collection development

E. Develop and maintain cooperative and constructive relationships and communicate when necessary
1) With faculty, instructors, students, colleges, and departments
2) With other University of Maryland subject specialists liaison librarians
3) With vendors and book dealers
4) With donors and Library Development Office
5) With Acquisitions Department, Collection Development Council, DSS, Access Services, etc.
6) Works with colleagues on consortia activities.

Reference and Research Consulting

A.   Provide effective, responsive reference service through all media – in-person, email, chat, phone, and other means that may be available as technology changes.
   1) Participate in reference service (both physical and virtual) throughout the Library.
   2) Respond within 24 hours to questions received via email or provide for alternative assistance when unavailable.
   3) Work in a collegial manner with other departments and general reference services.

B.   Monitor and understand the most recent changes in the culture and production of knowledge in the related subject discipline and the knowledge base as a whole.
   1) Use current awareness services and regularly review the professional literature.
   2) Keep abreast of publications and trends in the subject literature.

C.   Provide reference tools in the form of written and electronic guides to the literature.
   1) Create and maintain general guides to the resources available to the users in all formats.
   2) Create and maintain a variety of guides to specialized fields within the subject area.
   3) Create and maintain a variety of links to useful internet resources for patrons.
   4) Share information on specific assignments and resources with others working reference hours in other disciplines.

D.   Provide standardized office hours, either in the Library, the Department, or other areas that may be used by students and faculty.
   1) Publicize office hours to users to encourage walk-in consultations.
   2) Work with teaching faculty to identify physical spaces that might be used for the highest exposure of reference services to students and faculty.

E.   Document and analyze data concerning reference transactions with a view to defining and applying best practices in the discipline which might include
   1) Maintain statistics to track numbers and types of questions received through the use of common tools such as LibAnswers.
   2) Regularly review the types of questions being received.
   3) Keep detailed log of consultations being provided and topics discussed as one means improving service.
   4) Add questions and answers to public knowledge base as appropriate to aid future researchers and colleagues.

Teaching, Learning and Literacies

A.   Actively participate in library instruction to the campus community.
   1) Work with faculty to integrate information literacy concepts and skills programmatically into the curriculum
   2) Keep current with relevant University and department curriculum initiatives in order to keep information literacy programs consistent with University curriculum.

3) Promote and offer group and individual instruction to faculty and students in relevant departments.
4) In instructional sessions, teach students to recognize information needs, create successful search strategies, and evaluate and effectively use information resources in all formats.
5) Teach students to understand the research and scholarly communication patterns of their chosen disciplines as well as the economic, social, and legal issues around the use of and access to information.
6) Conduct needs assessment as appropriate and selectively measure instructional outcomes in order to ensure effectiveness of instructional initiatives.
7) Contribute and participate in the PWP, Gemstone and like programs as appropriate.

B.   Commitment to improving personal instructional techniques
1) Keep abreast of national and international developments in information literacy and library instruction.
2) Lead internal (Library) presentations to share knowledge with colleagues
3) Participate in cross-training activities
4) Maintain awareness of professional standards – such as the ACRL core competencies

C. Improving subject expertise
1) Identify and promote the use of core resources through instruction.
2) Identify and use the appropriate vocabulary of the subject area when working in a classroom and with departmental faculty and students.
3) Keep current with precepts, theories, methodologies and topics in the subject area and incorporate relevant ideas in instruction.

D. Instructional technology and methodologies
1) Keep abreast of current instructional technology and techniques
2) Engage in instructional activities that could be face-to-face, blended or online instruction
3) Offer training of databases, research tools, bibliographic management programs, and in other areas to support education and research
4) Develop new technology competencies of new tools as they become integral to the education and research mission of assigned departments

Outreach and Engagement

A.   Library commitment
1) Works collegially with other librarians and staff
2) Maintain a high level of expertise in the subject area served and related areas
1) Stay abreast of new research and information trends in the subject area
2) Share knowledge and subject expertise with others through formal and informal instruction sessions
3) Practice continual needs assessment in assigned areas
4) Subject specialist librarians also work closely with special collections in their area of expertise, collaborating with Special Collection Division curators and staff on collection

development, exhibitions and other public programming, and in advocating the use of primary sources in the curriculum through faculty development and teaching.
5) They participate in outreach to the Libraries in development and fundraising, strategic planning, diversity initiatives, operations, faculty governance, and other areas of service.

B. Campus Contacts
1) Knowledge of the information needs of the community served
2) Maintain personal contact with users on a regular basis
3) Attend faculty meetings – offer to make an annual update presentation
4) Establish and maintain regular office hours in served areas, make regular rounds / site visits to served population(s)
5) Welcome new faculty and staff personally
6) Work with student organizations and groups within the discipline(s) served

C. Campus Outreach and Engagement
1) Actively participate in the intellectual life of their assigned academic units.
2) Support the success of the research and public programs, department projects, galleries, and research centers of their assigned units.
3) Engage with faculty and students as colleagues and as mentors in disciplinary activities.
4) Keep the assigned academic units updated about the Libraries' facilities, collections and services.
5) Engage in fundraising and development activities to the benefit of the Libraries and their assigned units.
6) Collaborate with assigned units in programming and outreach activities.
7) Serve as a resource for scholarly communications, copyright, open access, and the institutional repository.
8) They participate in outreach to the University in development and fundraising, strategic planning, diversity initiatives, operations, faculty governance, and other areas of service.

D. Professional Contacts
1) Establish and maintain contacts with others working in similar positions at peer institutions
2) Join and become actively involved in professional organizations supporting the subject area – either library-oriented or subject area specific
3) Attend and participate in conferences supporting the subject area
4) Active involvement in listservs and others subject-specific communications mechanisms for the sharing of information
5) Establish and maintain contacts with industry and commercial entities and their representatives serving the subject area

E. External Commitments
1) Active involvement in fundraising & grant-seeking opportunities
2) Involvement in local community activities involving Library and/or subject area expertise
3) Serve as ambassador of the University Libraries at local professional and community events

F.   Marketing and communication
   1) Be aware of the possibilities for reaching users through social media
   2) As appropriate, follow and engage with UMD Libraries social media accounts, including Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, and Instagram
   3) Maintain communications with UMD Libraries' Communications and Development departments.
   4) Participate in Libraries-wide outreach campaigns, for example, welcome back week, surviving finals week, and so forth.

Scholarly Communications and Research Data Services

A. Discover and recruit institutional scholarly output, research data, and other content for inclusion in the Library's digital initiatives, scholarly communication programs, and special collections
   1) Collaborate with researchers to identify data management and curation needs, including identification of datasets and other research materials that could be made accessible via DRUM or other Library services
   2) Identify potential sets of institutional scholarly output (for example, technical reports, working paper series, and proceedings of locally held conferences) for inclusion in DRUM
   3) Identify potential sets of institutional output (for example, faculty papers and administrative records) for accession by the University Archives
   4) Identify potential items or collections (either for acquisition or that already sit within Library collections) that may be part of special collections.
   5) Collaborate with users and Data Research Services to identify and assess potential collections for digitization and online access and use

B. Subject Specialist Liaison Librarians are recognized for their advanced subject knowledge and expertise in
   1) information policy (by which we mean: free and open access, censorship, privacy and protection of public rights)
   2) author and intellectual property rights
   3) A suite of research skills, such as data mining, curation and management customized specifically for their academic specialty.
   4) Subject specialist liaison librarians are consulted on their expert knowledge of the publishing industry and the scholarly communication cycle of faculty in editorial development and production and in the impact metrics for tenure and promotion review.
   5) Emerging forms of research output including Digital Humanities/Digital Scholarship.

C. Subject Specialists Liaison librarians collaborate fully with faculty on complex research projects
   1) Citation management
   2) data creation and preservation
   3) Usage rights
   4) Assist with distribution of finished works and raw data by promoting open access and local, domain, or national repositories.

5) Actively assist in building the university's institutional repository.
6) Provide project consultation on all aspects of data management and long-term data curation.
7) Librarians connect faculty to relevant services and resources across the campus, as well as regional and disciplinary data repositories for long-term archiving.

Professional Development

A.   Attend and actively participate in professional development events
   1) Attend professional conferences, either physically or virtually.
   2) Participate in webinars as an attendee and/or instructor.

B. Monitor trends and initiatives in librarianship and in subject disciplines.
   1) Review professional literature.
   2) Stay current with information from non-traditional sources, such as blogs and videos.
   3) Use current awareness services and tools.

C.   Learn about new resources and services provided by the University Library and by the University.
   1) Attend local seminars and workshops.
   2) Email or meet with colleagues to learn more about specific resources or services that they provide.
   3) Monitor and participate in relevant listservs.

D.   Identify and explore opportunities for providing new or improved services and tools to library users.
   1) Stay aware of new services being offered by other academic libraries.
   2) Test new tools that might benefit library users.

E.   Share discoveries with interested faculty, staff and students
   1) Provide brief updates at relevant committee meetings.
   2) Report back to colleagues after a conference.
   3) Regularly communicate with interested communities through blogs, email, or other social networking tools.

F. Gain and maintain competency with necessary tools.
   1) Use collection management tools, such as Gobi and Excel.
   2) Use web development tools, such as LibGuides, and Hippo CMS.
   3) Learn and use at least one citation management tool (Endnote, Zotero, etc.). We all need to know how to login and import citations. For more advanced work we need to know how to refer to the makers of the software.
   4) Instruction tools: Jing, Camtasia, Canvas, in-class survey software . . .
   5) Reference: Join.me, Libchat, Libanswers, Worldcat UMD, Worldcat KB, SFX, LibX, Reload Button, Linking to resources
   6) Communication: Lync, Skype, Adobe Connect, Google Hangouts

7) Project collaboration: Drobox/Box/Google Drive, Basecamp, Sharepoint, M:// Drive
8) Ebooks: Adobe Digital Editions, tablets (including reading apps), e-readers
9) Video
10) Social media: Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Tumblr
11) Code: HTML, CSS, Javascript, Python, as applicable
12) Open Access/assessment: Orcid, altmetrics, impact factors, DRUM, Open Journal Systems
13) Digital Libraries: DSpace, Fedora, as applicable