



RESOURCE MANUAL

for The Principles of Accreditation:
Foundations for Quality Enhancement



Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
Commission on Colleges

Third Edition: 2018, First Printing

SECTION 11: Library and Learning/Information Resources

11.1 The institution provides adequate and appropriate library and learning/information resources, services, and support for its mission.

(Library and learning/information resources) [CR]

Rationale and Notes

To provide adequate support for the institution's curriculum and mission, an institution's students, faculty, and staff have access to appropriate collections, services, and other library-related resources that support all educational, research, and public service programs wherever they are offered and at the appropriate degree level. The levels and types of educational programs offered determine the nature and extent of library and learning resources needed to support the full range of the institution's academic programs. Qualified, effective staff are essential to carrying out the goals of a library/learning resource center and the mission of the institution, and to contributing to the quality and integrity of academic programs.

The purpose of this Core Requirement is to ensure that an institution offers adequate and appropriate library collections, services, and other related learning resources to support the mission of the institution. If the institution has research and/or public service missions in addition to its educational mission, the standard applies to those aspects of library and learning/information resources as well.

The levels and types of degrees offered by an institution determine the nature and extent of library-related resources needed to support the full range of its academic programs. In order to adequately support the institution's curriculum and mission, an institution may arrange for its students and faculty to have convenient access to the library/learning resources of another institution or to library-related resources that are shared by a consortium of institutions. In any case, it is expected that the institution provide adequate and appropriate library collections, learning resources, and related services at all locations, including off-campus instructional sites and branch campuses, as well as programs and courses offered through distance and correspondence education.

NOTES

Institutions should include information on learning/information resources housed in the library, other locations, or offered over a network, as appropriate (e.g., curriculum labs, specified reading rooms, computer labs, IT help services, writing centers, online learning management systems). If this information is instead presented in Core Requirement 12.1 (Student support services), that should be clear in the narrative of both standards. Physical facilities and the condition of such facilities (as opposed to contents within the building) do not need to be addressed in this standard, but should be addressed in Standard 13.7 (Physical resources).

Details on how library collections, resources, and services are assessed and results used to make improvements should be found in Standard 8.2.c (Student outcomes: academic and student

services). *Some of that information also may appear in this standard if it helps to establish the adequacy and appropriateness of current collections, services, and other related learning resources.*

Access to library collections and services is specifically included in Standard 11.3 (Library and learning/information access). Thus in Core Requirement 11.1, the emphasis should be on an enumeration of collections, resources, and the types of services offered. Ease of access should be part of Standard 11.3, not the current standard. There will be some duplication of discussion between these two standards.

Questions to Consider

- How does the library determine whether collections are adequate and appropriate for the courses and programs offered, as well as for the research and/or public service activities of the institution (if relevant)?
- Is there a formal collection development policy? Does it work well?
- How are students at off-campus sites and taking distance education or correspondence courses provided adequate and appropriate collections?
- What library and learning/information services are offered (e.g., interlibrary loan, delivery services, bibliographic support, technical support, general help desk, off-site support)?
- How does the institution determine the adequacy and appropriateness of its services?
- What supporting services are offered through the library/learning resource offices as opposed to other academic support offices?
- If collections and services are offered through external contracts or consortia, how is adequacy and appropriateness determined?

Sample Documentation

- Description of library collections in terms of the programs and levels of programs offered.
- Description of library services in relation to the needs of faculty, students, and others (as needed).
- Description of related library and learning/information resources.
- Collection development policies and evidence of implementation.
- Evidence that the institution's library-related resources support all its educational, research, and public service programs wherever located or however delivered.
- Samples of guides, flyers supporting library services, and other direct evidence of library and related resources and services offered.
- Internal and external surveys and reports establishing the adequacy and appropriateness of collections, services, and related resources (e.g., satisfaction surveys, consultant reports).
- Peer comparisons.

- Usage statistics (with information on size of the user population).
- If the institution provides access to library resources through an arrangement with another institution or provider, copies of contracts and agreements outlining access and services.
- If the institution provides access to library resources through an arrangement with another institution or provider, description and analysis of the adequacy and appropriateness of the collections, services, and other related resources provided under that contract or agreement.
- Mission statement of the library, learning resource center, or other similar support services.

Reference to SACSCOC Documents, If Applicable

SACSCOC policy: [Distance and Correspondence Education](#)

Cross-References to Other Related Standards/Requirements, If Applicable

Standard 8.2.c (*Student outcomes: academic and student services*)

Standard 11.3 (*Library and learning/information access*)

Standard 13.7 (*Physical resources*)

11.2 The institution ensures an adequate number of professional and other staff with appropriate education or experiences in library and/or other learning/information resources to accomplish the mission of the institution.
(*Library and learning/information staff*)

Rationale and Notes

A sufficient number of qualified staff is measured by the effectiveness of the delivery of services to students, faculty, and staff rather than simply the number of staff employed. Qualified faculty and staff members are essential to carrying out the mission of the library and to support various other learning/information services. Overall qualifications are based on academic credentials as the standard qualification for library and learning/information resource faculty and staff; however, other types of qualifications may prove to be appropriate, especially for noncritical tasks or for tasks associated with related academic support services.

Questions to Consider

- How does the institution determine the qualifications of its library and/or other learning/information resource staff?
- How are library support services augmented with nonprofessional staff?
- How does the institution demonstrate that the staff is sufficient to accomplish the mission?

- What professional opportunities are available to the library and learning/information resources staff?

Sample Documentation

- Roster of library/learning resource staff with job duties, academic qualifications, and experience.
- Position descriptions.
- Details related to professional growth and training activities.
- Information regarding the alignment of library/learning staff with the programs/services offered by the institution.

Reference to SACSCOC Documents, If Applicable

None noted.

Cross-References to Other Related Standards/Requirements, If Applicable

Standard 6.2.a (*Faculty qualifications*), if library faculty members are also instructors of record for credit courses

11.3 **The institution provides (a) student and faculty access and user privileges to its library services and (b) access to regular and timely instruction in the use of the library and other learning/information resources.**
(*Library and learning/information access*)

Rationale and Notes

To ensure appropriate use of the library and other learning/information resources, the institution is expected to provide timely and effective access that enables students, faculty, and staff to take full advantage of the learning resources provided by the institution. Furthermore, the institution has a responsibility to provide access to instruction in the use of the library and other learning/information resources. Access to resources, services, and instruction should address students enrolled at off-campus instructional sites, in distance or correspondence courses, or in evening courses, if applicable.

NOTE

Information related to assessing the effectiveness of instruction in the use of the library usually would be included in Standard 8.2.c (Student outcomes: academic and student services).

Questions to Consider

- What services are accessible on campus (e.g., the library, computer labs) versus at off-campus sites and through off-campus access?
- Do students and faculty have different user privileges?
- What are operating hours for the library and other learning resources?
- What services are available electronically when the library or other related facilities are closed?
- What delivery mechanisms exist for instruction and assistance to library users?
- How does the institution provide instruction and assistance to all users at all locations and through all modes of delivery?

Sample Documentation

- Details on user privileges by type of user.
- List of operating hours.
- Services and collections available online and at off-campus sites.
- Documentation of the availability and type of instruction.
- Schedules for instruction in the use of the library and learning/information resources (e.g., at orientation, by request of instructors, on demand).
- Reports of completed library instructional activity that demonstrate broad participation in the instructional program by all segments of the institution at all locations and delivery modes.

Reference to SACSCOC Documents, If Applicable

SACSCOC policy: [Distance and Correspondence Education](#)

Cross-References to Other Related Standards/Requirements, If Applicable

- Standard 6.5 (*Faculty development*)
Standard 8.2.c (*Student outcomes: academic and student services*)
CR 11.1 (*Library and learning/information resources*)
CR 12.1 (*Student support services*)